



# **WOMEN AGAINST RAPE ARCHIVE**

**(WAR)**

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Catalogued by Barbara Vesey, June 2021

# **WAR      Women Against Rape Archive      1976-2016**

**Name of Creator:** Women Against Rape

**Extent:** 1 Box

**Administrative/Biographical History:** Women Against Rape (WAR) is a grassroots multi-racial women's group founded in 1976. It is based at the Crossroads Women's Centre in London and works closely with Black Women's Rape Action Project, set up in 1991 to make visible the experiences and demands of women of colour.

They provide rights information and provide support and advocacy. They also take up individual cases on the basis of collective self-help. WAR campaign for justice, protection and compensation for all women and girls who have suffered sexual, domestic and/or racist violence. This includes survivors of any age, race and nationality, asylum seekers, women with disabilities, trans women, sex workers. Women Against Rape have won changes in the law such as making rape in marriage a crime. They have set legal precedents such as the first private prosecution for rape, after the authorities refused to bring a rapist of two sex workers to court.

**Custodial History:** Deposited with Bishopsgate Institute by Women Against Rape, 14 June 2021.

**Scope and Content:** Papers, ephemera, correspondence, press cuttings and other material regarding campaigns and activities of Women Against Rape, particularly concerning the law around rape in marriage (1976-2016)

**System of Arrangement:**

No further arrangement required.

**Language/scripts of material:**

English

**Access conditions:**

OPEN

**Copying conditions:**

Photocopying, scanning and digital photography (without flash) is permitted for research purposes on completion of the Library's Copyright Declaration form and with respect to current UK copyright law.

**Finding Aids:**

Copy of handlist available in researcher's area.

**Rules and Conventions:**

Compiled in compliance with General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G), second edition, 2000; National Council on Archives Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names, 1997.



- Fact Sheet – undated
- Daily Mail Cool Face of Justice, 4 October, WAR members chanted 'Get the judges out' during the traditional procession of judges from Westminster Abbey
- Women Against Rape newsletter
- Campaigning suggestions sheet (undated)
- Daily Express 'Woman Power!' - Judge McKinnon feels the pressure of protesters against rape, December 1977

**OPEN**

**WAR/3**

**Papers, 1978**

**1978**

Includes:

- WAR Open discussions leaflet, London 1978
- Home Office response, July, to Maureen Colquhoun MP (the first out lesbian MP in the UK) who wrote raising rape sentencing
- Criminal Law Revision Committee letter to Ms Philby explaining the process of the Committee which has been looking in to the law on rape in marriage since 1976 and is due to report soon
- Open discussions on Rape, race and prostitution, throughout March-June, invitation letter to the discussions, two Guardian letters argue For Prostitutes, Against Prostitution, from English Collective of Prostitutes & Prostitution Laws are Nonsense, and from WAR, 21 December
- Campaign Suggestion Sheet (undated and side two missing)

**OPEN**

**WAR/4**

**Papers, 1979**

**1979**

Includes:

- Evening Post article Group accuse judges in rape cases, 27 February 1979
- Scarlet Women article, 'Rape like charity, begins at home' December 1979
- Warpath: WAR newssheet, winter 1979/80

**OPEN**

**WAR/5**

**Papers, 1980**

**1980**

Includes:

- Several clippings 6 November 1980 marking the Working Paper from the Criminal Law Revision Committee on rape in marriage

- Blackpool Evening Gazette 'Making WAR when it's not love' a Bury housewife interview
- OPEN**

**WAR/6**

**Papers, 1981**

**1981**

Includes:

- Times article reports Conservative Women's National Advisory Committee disagrees the law should be changed as it's 'impractical'
- Daily Mail article 'An old country saying ...' in which a magistrate gets criticised for sexist remarks in a case, making jokes about domestic violence
- Mirror reports various women's groups organising against violence, including in films
- Hackney Gazette Judge Buzzard is criticised for putting a convicted rapist on probation
- Series of articles report WAR's evidence to the Criminal Law Revision Committee (published as a book called The Rapist who pays the Rent 1981, & 1984)

**OPEN**

**WAR/7**

**Papers, 1982**

**1982**

Includes:

- Resolutions passed at WAR conference at Church of the Holy Cross in Kings Cross, February 1982
- Open letter to Home Secretary William Whitelaw, February, & petition 21 September
- Camden & St Pancras Chronicle reports 'Husband gets four years for raping wife' (they were separated) May 1982
- Daily Telegraph 'Rape case judge should be sacked say feminists' when Judge Wild said in an acquittal that women who say no don't always mean no, 11 December

**OPEN**

**WAR/8**

**Papers, 1983**

**1983**

Includes:

- Parliament debates an amendment to the rape law put by John Tilley MP: Bill and excerpt from Hansard March
- WAR leaflet: Where do we go from Here? April

- Harvey Proctor MP brings a Parliamentary Order to discipline Ruth Hall of WAR for making threats, April 1983
- WAR press release, Press conference in House of Commons, and letter to the public, April
- Public meeting leaflet 'Parliament Considers Rape in Marriage', in Camden Town Hall, May
- Leaflet Fringe Meeting at October 1983 Labour Party Conference in Brighton, on Rape in Marriage with John Tilley MP

**OPEN**

**WAR/9 Papers, 1984 1984**

Includes:

- Publication of 2nd edition of The Rapist Who Pays the Rent - Evidence to Criminal Law Revision Committee (Falling Wall Press, 1984)

**OPEN**

**WAR/10 Papers, 1985 1985**

Includes:

- Publication of Ask Any Woman – A London inquiry into rape and sexual assault (Falling Wall Press, 1985) women's safety survey by WAR which revealed the first ever figures on rape in marriage and racist sexual assault. Associated leaflets, press release, adverts for books, Some Key Facts (side two upside down)

**OPEN**

**WAR/11 Papers, 1988 1988**

Includes:

- WAR statement: Rape in Marriage – the Most Common Rape of All, April 1988
- Evening Standard 'Sack this sex case judge' re Judge Sir Harold Cassel QC

**OPEN**

**WAR/12 Papers, 1989 1989**

Includes:

- WAR's written objection February 1989 to incorrect statements made by the police, and

transcript, on Breakfast TV chat show The Time, The Place, Nov 1988

- Times report 'Rape attempt victim seeks action against QC over questioning',
- Various articles report landmark rape in marriage case in Scotland, March
- WAR press release on Scottish law change
- Evening Post reports Sheila Cunliffe taking a proposal to criminalise rape in marriage to a national Democrat party conference quoting WAR's campaign
- Guardian interview 'Fear and Loathing of the Marriage Bed' illustrates a World in Action TV programme 'The Right to Rape' (February 1989) and Kate Painter survey conducted by Centre for Criminology at Middlesex University (ARK Market Research). This research corroborated WAR's 1985 survey Ask Any Woman findings that 1 in 7 women have been raped in marriage
- English Collective of Prostitutes & WAR joint press release about a woman whose husband was on trial for raping a prostitute woman. She protested in support of the victim together with WAR & ECP outside court
- WAR press release welcoming a new proposal to compensate women who give birth as a result of rape, 20 December

**OPEN**

**WAR/13**

**Papers, 1990**

**1990**

Includes:

- Law Commission Recommendation for rape in marriage to be made a crime and associated documents: including meeting and correspondence with Brenda Hoggett (now Lady Hale), WAR letter welcoming provisional recommendations endorsed by 337 organisations and 56 MPs and distinguished individuals

**OPEN**

**WAR/14**

**Papers, 1991**

**1991**

Includes:

- WAR letter to Wilpower, 5 January
- WAR letter to Justice Simon Brown, 11 January and his reply

- WAR letter to Justice Owen, 15 January and his reply
- 14 Feb WAR comment to Law Commission paper (Rape in Marriage paper 116, November 1990)
- Caribbean Times article, 19 February
- WAR letter to The Independent, short comment to New Law Journal, 22 February
- WAR press release, 28 Feb re Court of Appeal hearing held 27 February
- WAR letter to Guardian, 1 March
- Detective Inspector Baker, Met Police, Guardian letter, 28 March and WAR's letter in response in Guardian, 30 March
- Letter to Guardian, 21 March
- WAR article in New Law Journal, 22 March
- WAR and Wages Due Lesbians press releases, April
- Letter to WAR from Law Commission, 12 April
- Law Commission paper, 15 April
- Two letters to Rights of Women about their leaflet and article where they take credit for the rape in marriage campaign, 24 May
- Black Women for Wages for Housework press release, 17 May
- WAR press comment to Pink Paper, 17 May
- WAR press release – call to a Press Conference in House of Commons, 6 June
- Independent article 'Rape case wives should not be made to testify', 20 June
- Guardian report of a case, 2 July
- WAR letter to Radio 4 Today programme, 2 July
- WAR press comment to Spare Rib, July
- WAR's summary of its response to the Law Commission Rape in Marriage paper 116, July
- WAR letter to Harry Cohen MP, reports on meeting with the Law Commission, 5 July
- Gold leaflet for WAR Fringe meeting in Brighton, 'Rape in Marriage - Making this crime illegal', 2 October
- Hammersmith Chronicle article, 10 October
- Landmark House of Lords ruling on R v R the judgement (23 October 1991) –
- Standard x 4 articles; Manchester Evening News, 23 October
- Times front page reports cheering women evicted from the Lords, Guardian, Telegraph,



Independent x 3 articles, Yorkshire Post, 24 October

- WAR press comment on the hearing and ruling
- Telegraph, The European, 25 October
- Guardian Law Report, 30 October
- Guardian reports John Mc Granaghan cleared, 31 October
- Letter to WAR from Law Commission, 1 November
- New Law Journal articles, 1 November
- Letters from WAR to Guardian, Telegraph, Observer, 3-7 November
- Letter to WAR from Law Commission, 21 Nov
- Pink Paper publishes letter by WAR, 23 Nov
- Guardian publishes letters by WAR, 4 & 8 Nov
- Unpublished letter from Payday to Guardian, 13 Nov
- WAR letter to TV AM about Helena Kennedy, 10 December

**OPEN**

**WAR/15**

**Papers, 1992**

**1992**

Includes:

- WAR Press release: A victory for Black and Immigrant women, 17 January
- WAR article in Times, vs compelling wives to testify, 21 January
- WAR report for publication in Legal Action – how we helped a wife increase her compensation award from £3000 to £25,000; and short report of same
- WAR letter to Llin Golding MP from two Black women about race, 20 March
- WAR press release about Harry Cohen MP's Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 27 Oct
- Harry Cohen MP's Bill – the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill (printed House of Commons original and a photocopy), 2 November

**OPEN**

**WAR/16**

**Papers, 1994**

**1994**

Includes:

- WAR press release celebrates the removal of the word 'unlawful' from the rape law – the final change in statute, 13 June

**OPEN**

**WAR/17**

**Papers, 2016**

**2016**

Includes:

· The Law & Politics of Marital Rape in England  
(1945-94) in Women's History Review Adrian  
Williamson.

**OPEN**