

TRIBUNAL INTERNATIONAL DES CRIMES CONTRE LES FEMMES

Dimanche 7 mars 1976

Programme 4ème jour

- 10.00H Introduction et informations
- 10.10H Sexisme à l'égard de femmes prisonnières et de femmes prisonnières politiques
 - introduction
 - rapport
 - discussion
- 12.00H Témoignages sur la persécution des lesbiennes
 - Pays Bas
 - Allemagne
 - Norvège
 - Mozambique
 - Témoignages spontanés
- 12.45H Déclaration sur les événements d'hier
- 13.00H-14.30H Déjeuner
- 14.30H Témoignages en fémicide, pornographie, femmes battues, et prostitution
 - 1. Fémicide (meurtre de femmes par des hommes) - U.S.A.
 - 2. Pornographie - Pays Bas
 - 3. Femmes battues - Angleterre
 - 4. Femmes battues - Scotland
 - 5. Femmes battues - Pays Bas
 - 6. Prostitution - Japon
- 15.45H Témoignages sur les femmes en Arabie Saoudite
- 16.00H Canada
- 16.15H Témoignages spontanés
- 4.30H Interruption
- 4.45H - 19.00H Groupes de Travail
 - * Critiques sur le Tribunal - Dynastie A (à partir de 11.00
 - 1. Femmes battues - Petite salle de conférence
 - 2. Prisonnières politiques - Dynastie B
 - 3. Lesbiennes - Expo II
 - 4. Résultats du Tribunal et "Newsletter" internationale féministe - Dynastie C

- 10.00 Ouverture. Historique du Tribunal
 Message de Simone de Beauvoir
- Informations pratiques générales sur le Tribunal
- 11.00 Témoignages. Crimes médicaux.
- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Belgique | avortement |
| 2. Angleterre | avortement |
| 3. Portugal | avortement |
| 4. Mexique | avortement |
| 5. Allemagne | gynécologie |
- 12.00 Témoignages spontanés
- 12.30 Témoignages. Crimes Economiques. Santé
- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Italie | maternité |
| 2. Puerto Rico | stérilisation forcée |
- 13.00 DEJEUNER
- 15.00 Famille
- | | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 1. Israel | Lois familiales |
| 2. Portugal | La Femme et la loi |
| 3. Japon | mères célibataires |
| 4. Suède | rapport général |
- 15.40 -
- 16.30 Témoignages spontanés
- 16.30 -
- 16.45 Interruption
- 16.45 -
- 19.00 Ateliers

Programme des Ateliers

1. Avortement
2. Stérilisation forcée
3. Gynécologie
4. Self-Help
5. Autres crimes médicaux

Struttura Sociale inferiore -
 → che capiamo i problemi ma non
 ci lasciamo risolvere in via autonoma
 ecco che qui opera una legge di fatto
 dei salari, scelti.

- ~~Il~~ fenomeno di lavoro den. ha già
 e queste leve

Le Finanze si fondono il salario
 delle macchine

Stipendio netto di lavoro. stabilito
 sempre produttore + il sistema
 il salario de fatto x determina scelte
 di effettuare potere di acquisto, di essere.

Le denari con forse non si
 lavorano superiore - e vorranno
 sempre + più

I MAGGIO

NAPOLI

X il

SALARIO

denaro = mal pagato -
 ma non fu lavoro se
 le meno di 2000. (non lavor
 denario) e sera

lavori + macchin = le denari -
 di parte e ~~proposto~~ il ricambio
 tutto questo parte di LD non è pagato

offrire
 servizi
 senza } lavoro non x noi
 il ^{travato} lavoro

recupero delle forze lavoro

* gli ultimi della società non sono colti
 sulla donna x chi non venga risolto
 un problema sociale = un costo sociale
 = ma sempre mantenendo i nostri
nuovi denari

2

Intervento presentato all'assemblea da una femminista che fa parte della campagna internazionale per il Salario Al lavoro domestico sulle prospettive di lotta di tutte le donne contro i crimini subiti dalle donne.

Non voglio solo esprimere la mia profonda solidarietà alle donne imprigionate e perseguitate politiche, ma anche, e soprattutto, affermare che tutte le donne che lottano, nella casa e all'esterno, sono consapevoli che, quando lo Stato non riesce più a controllarle direttamente o attraverso la famiglia, le chiuderà in una sua istituzione, carceri, ospedali psichiatrici, case di rieducazione, ecc.. La lotta contro queste istituzioni è quindi anche la nostra lotta perchè esse costituiscono l'ultimo passo di una repressione che già, a livelli diversi, subiamo ogni giorno.

Tuttavia per tutte noi è molto importante reagire ad ogni tentativo di dividere le lotte delle donne in momenti isolati, per controllarci meglio ed usarci le une contro le altre.

Anche il movimento femminista accetta spesso questa divisione separando le lotte che le donne fanno nel mondo secondo linee estranee alla loro condizione specifica di sfruttamento. Anche in questo tribunale ci troviamo di fronte ad una lista di crimini isolati, a donne divise per nazionalità.

Innanzitutto presentare una lista di crimini, senza porre le prospettive di lotta contro questi crimini, è sempre difensivo. Continueremo a venire ai tribunali internazionali a sentire voci sempre più orribili contro le donne.

Ad ogni crimine contro di noi corrisponde, in realtà, una resistenza al crimine da parte delle donne che mettono in atto lotte individuali e collettive. Le donne lottano e hanno sempre lottato contro il lavoro e la struttura di potere nella famiglia. Lottano ogni giorno contro le condizioni in cui ci vengono imposti i rapporti sessuali sempre a servizio degli altri. Le donne difendono il loro corpo contro le istituzioni mediche, difendono la loro salute in fabbrica distrutta dal troppo lavoro al quale si aggiunge quello domestico. Le donne lottano ogni giorno nelle case, nelle fabbriche, nelle scuole, negli uffici, per ridurre il loro orario di lavoro ed avere più soldi nelle loro mani.

Ad ognuna di queste lotte il sistema risponde con la repressione. Ci attaccano gli uomini a livello individuale per ristabilire il loro controllo su di noi e poter continuare ad usarci per assorbire le sconfitte che subiscono sul lavoro (ad es. se non ci possono più violentare in casa ci assalgono nelle strade). A queste lotte risponde lo Stato chiudendo ci in ospedali psichiatrici e carceri.

Per far fronte a questa repressione, sempre più pesante perchè le donne stanno espandendo le loro lotte in tutto il

mondo per affermare i loro diritti ed imporre i loro bisogni, il movimento delle donne deve ricomporre le divisioni che ci vengono imposte dividendoci per nazionalità, tra madri e non madri, tra giovani e vecchi, tra chi fa l'amore con le donne e chi con gli uomini. Pur riconoscendo la specificità e la diversità delle condizioni in cui viviamo e lavoriamo, fondamentali quelle di razza e di classe, affermiamo l'unità del movimento nella piena autonomia di ogni sua componente.

L'unico modo per non dividere le nostre lotte è quello di attaccare la radice fondamentale del nostro sfruttamento cogliendo la base comune della nostra condizione di donne.

Questa base fondamentale che definisce per tutte noi che cosa significa essere donne, è il lavoro domestico che tutte facciamo nelle case mettendo le nostre energie fisiche, intellettuali affettive e sessuali a servizio degli altri, anche se qualcuna di noi crede di riuscire ad evitarlo, aggiungendo al suo lavoro domestico un altro lavoro, facendo attività politica, socializzandoci in comunità alternative, facendo meno figli, trovando un partner più comprensivo, o amando una donna.

Il lavoro domestico non può essere rifiutato a livello individuale o con un processo di presa di coscienza perchè è troppo prezioso per il sistema capitalistico: serve infatti a riprodurre la forza lavoro, la merce fondamentale per il sistema di produzione, al minimo dei costi e quindi al massimo dei profitti.

Ogni nostra lotta per ridurre o mutare le condizioni di questo lavoro viene attaccata con infiniti e terribili strumenti di repressione, come questo Tribunale ha drammaticamente dimostrato. Noi lottiamo continuamente contro questo lavoro, ma siamo sempre senza potere perchè non abbiamo soldi nostri e quindi siamo sempre le più vulnerabili a tutti gli attacchi degli uomini, dei giudici, della chiesa, dei medici, della famiglia, dei padroni, della polizia.

Solo quando potremo unificare in una prospettiva comune la ricchezza e la creatività delle nostre lotte, saremo capaci di imporre i nostri bisogni, prima di tutto quello di avere soldi nostri che vogliamo dallo Stato perchè risparmia sulla nostra pelle mixati e controlla direttamente le condizioni del nostro lavoro, stabilendo quanti figli facciamo e quando, come li alleviamo (come la testimonianza della mamma Nord Irlandese ha mostrato) è indispensabile avere una strategia di attacco che possa riunire le lotte che organizziamo contro il nostro lavoro in casa e fuori, in un quanto ragazze madri, mogli, lavoratrici nelle fabbriche, negli uffici, nelle scuole, negli ospedali, come ragazze giovani che esigono una vita non controllata dalla famiglia.

Per questo noi ci organizziamo a livello internazionale rompendo le divisioni che ci vengono imposte. Per questo abbiamo portato al Tribunale 4 testimonianze di lotte, collegate tra loro in una prospettiva globale che le unifica.

1. La lotta contro le istituzioni sanitarie nell'Ospedale di Ferrara contro le condizioni in cui le donne sono costrette a partorire.

2. La lotta per il diritto a difendere la propria salute ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ portata avanti dalle operai della fabbrica di orologi Solari di Udine che hanno ottenuto di determinare la qualità delle visite ginecologiche, almeno in parte, la qualità e di farsi pagare le giornate delle visite come orario di lavoro affermando che la cura di se stessi è da considerare, come tutto il lavoro domestico, lavoro di cui si appropria direttamente il padrone. Questa lotta si è diffusa anche ad altre fabbriche vicine.

3. La lotta di una donna del Nord Irlanda, madre di tre figli, contro lo Stato che sfrutta il suo lavoro domestico gratuito e determina, ad altissimi livelli di repressione, le condizioni di lavoro e di vita dell'intera famiglia.

4. La testimonianza di una compagna lesbica che lottando insieme ad altre donne lesbiche e nella prospettiva del salario al lavoro domestico attacca direttamente lo Stato per aumentare il potere di scegliere le condizioni della propria vita di tutte le donne, iniziando dalla possibilità di avere rapporti sessuali in funzione di se stessi e con chi si vuole, libertà che si fonda innanzitutto sulla disponibilità di tempo e di soldi.

Le donne che hanno portato queste testimonianze non si dividono dalle altre donne in base alle condizioni in cui svolgono il loro lavoro domestico (~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ se sono madri o no, se hanno un altro lavoro pagato o se lavorano in casa a pieno tempo). La ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ prospettiva politica in cui si muovono è invece quella di portare un attacco globale contro il lavoro che tutte facciamo nelle case in quanto donne e contro la mancanza di potere che tutte dobbiamo affrontare per la mancanza di soldi nostri e di tempo per noi.

La campagna per il salario al lavoro domestico intende fare sapere a tutte le donne che abbiamo diritto a tutto quello che ci serve e che vogliamo prima di tutto organizzarci ~~xxx~~ affinché lo Stato dia i soldi che ci servono a tutte le donne. Lo Stato che si arricchisce sul nostro lavoro e che determina le condizioni terribili delle nostre vite.

Solo rendendo esplicita questa richiesta di soldi e di maggiore potere per le donne, rendendo chiare e riunendo le lotte che tutte stiamo facendo per avere tempo e soldi per noi, potremo smettere di essere alla mercé di coloro che compiono ogni giorno dei crimini contro di noi, consapevoli che il crimine fondamentale è la massa di lavoro domestico di cui tutte siamo derubate nelle case e che serve a riprodurre la forza lavoro.

Chères Soeurs,

Je regrette profondément que les circonstances ne me permettent pas de me trouver aujourd'hui parmi vous, du moins y suis-je de coeur. Je tiens, en effet, cette rencontre pour un grand événement historique. A la différence de Mexico où des femmes mandatées par des partis, par des nations, ne cherchaient qu'à intégrer la femme dans la société masculine, vous êtes réunies ici pour dénoncer l'oppression qu'elle y subit.

Pour lutter contre cette oppression, depuis assez longtemps déjà, des femmes se sont rassemblées dans de nombreux pays; mais ces différents groupes s'ignoraient plus ou moins; pour la première fois ils vont fusionner et des femmes venues du monde entier prendront conscience ensemble du scandale de leur condition. Vous avez raison de la considérer comme la source de véritables crimes: le statut imposé à la femme aboutit sous des formes institutionnalisées ou non à d'inacceptables attentats contre la personne humaine; contre ceux-ci, il n'y a dans l'immense majorité des cas, aucun recours juridique. C'est pourquoi il est urgent que les femmes se mobilisent pour les combattre par leurs propres moyens.

Fortes de votre solidarité, vous allez élaborer des tactiques de défense, la première étant précisément celle que pendant ces cinq jours vous mettrez en pratique: parler entre vous, parler au monde, mettre en lumière les honteuses vérités que la moitié de l'humanité s'efforce de masquer. En lui-même, ce tribunal est un acte. Il en annonce beaucoup d'autres. Je salue en lui le début d'une radicale décolonisation de la Femme.

Simone de Beauvoir
4 mars 1976

Resolved:

That unpaid housework is robbery with violence.

That this work and wagelessness is a crime from which all other crimes flow. That it brands us for life as the weaker sex and delivers us powerless to employers, government planners and legislators, doctors, the police, prisons and mental institutions as well as to men for a lifetime of servitude and imprisonment.

This tribunal demands wages for housework for all women from the governments of the world. We will organise internationally to win back the wealth that has been stolen from us in every country and to put an end to the crimes daily committed against us all.

first in paper

nil facit Enxellis

TO ALL GOVERNMENTS:

The women of the world are serving notice. We clean your homes and factories. We raise the next generation of workers for you. Whatever else we may do, we are the housewives of the world. In return for our work, you have only asked us to work harder.

We are serving notice to you that we intend to be paid for the work we do. We want wages for every dirty toilet, every painful childbirth, every indecent assault, every cup of coffee and every smile. And if we don't get what we want, then we will simply refuse to work any longer.

We have brought up our children to be good citizens and to respect your laws and you have put them in factories, in prisons, in urban and suburban ghettos and in typing pools. Our children deserve more than you can offer and now we will bring them up to EXPECT more.

We have borne babies for you when you needed more workers, and we have submitted to sterilisation when you didn't. Our wombs are not government property any longer.

We have scrubbed and polished and oiled and waxed and scoured until our arms and backs ached, and you have only created more dirt. Now you will rot in your own garbage.

We have worked in the isolation of our homes when you needed us to and we have taken on a second job too when you needed that. Now we want to decide WHEN we work, HOW we work, and WHO we work for. We even want to be able to decide NOT TO WORK AT ALL - like you.

We are teachers and nurses and secretaries and prostitutes and actresses and childcare workers and hostesses and waitresses and cooks and cleaning ladies and workers of every variety. We have sweated while you have grown rich. Now we want back the wealth we have produced.

We want it in cash, retroactive and immediately. And we want ALL OF IT.

Wages for Housework Committee,
745 Danforth Ave., Suite 301
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA

Wages for Housework Committee
491 Pacific Street,
Brooklyn, N.Y., U.S.A.

Power of Women-Wages for Housework
Campaign

Wages for Housework Women's Centre
129 Drummond Street,
London, N.W. 1, ENGLAND

Statement to the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women

UNWAGED HOUSEWORK : ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE

The crime against us internationally from which all other crimes against us flow is our life sentence of housework at home and outside, serving men, children and other women, in order to produce and reproduce the working class. For this we are never paid a wage.

This crime of work and wagelessness brands us for life as the weaker sex and delivers us powerless to employers, government planners and legislators, doctors, the police, prisons and mental institutions as well as to individual men, for a lifetime of servitude and imprisonment. Our campaign for wages for this work is our demand for power to refuse the social and sexual assaults on our minds, our bodies and our relations - in a word, our demand for power to refuse this destiny of work which we carry in every country, wherever we find ourselves.

It is impossible for us to separate ourselves off by country since one of the greatest crimes against women is the way we have been divided, by the status and income of men we marry, by whether or not we are with men, by whether or not we work full-time in the home, by whether or not we have children, by whether we are native or immigrant, and by language, race and nation, and by the technology of our exploitation.

Power to the sisters and therefore to all the exploited.

New York Wages for Housework Committee
Toronto Wages for Housework Committee
Power of Women-Wages for Housework Campaign,
London

These organisations have initiated and promoted the Wages for Housework Campaign in their respective countries, in South America, Australia and New Zealand, in conjunction with the Wages for Housework Committee in Padua, Italy. At this Tribunal Power of Women from England has been asked to represent Canada and the United States in testifying against the crime of unwaged housework. Literature, videotapes, film and music as well as oral testimony from these countries and from Northern Ireland will be put in evidence.

(For the three addresses, please see overleaf.)



GRUPEMENT BELGE DE LA

PORTE OUVERTE

pour l'émancipation économique de la travailleuse

Rue Américaine 16

1050 BRUXELLES

Editrice : Lucie Hauwel, rue Américaine, 16, 1050 Bruxelles.

Le 23 juin 1975.

Année internationale de la femme.

UN EVENEMENT FEMINISTE : LE TIMBRE-POSTE MARIE POPELIN



Marie POPELIN

(16 septembre 1846-5 juin 1913)

la première femme juriste de Belgique,

celle qui voulut ouvrir aux femmes la porte d'une nouvelle profession, une femme d'action qui eut le courage d'affronter toutes les juridictions compétentes,

celle qui est à l'origine de l'organisation du mouvement féministe,

Marie POPELIN, une féministe,

Marie POPELIN, un exemple,

illustre la volonté d'émancipation des femmes belges.

Bulletin d'adhésion (à renvoyer au Secrétariat général, rue Américaine, 16, 1050 Brux.---

Le (La) soussigné(e)

NOM et PRENOM

ADRESSE COMPLETE

approuve le but du Groupement belge de la Porte Ouverte et désire en faire partie en qualité de membre effectif : 100 F min. par an ; membre bienfaiteur : 200 F min. par an. et verse la somme de au CCP 000-0361649-33 du Groupement belge de la Porte Ouverte ou joint la somme de

Date

Signature.

Après s'être consacrée à l'enseignement, Marie POPELIN entreprit des études de droit et elle fut une des premières étudiantes inscrites dans une université belge. Elle obtint son diplôme de docteur en droit en 1888 et devint ainsi la première femme juriste de notre pays. Elle demanda à prêter le serment d'avocat. Aucun texte légal n'excluait les femmes du barreau, mais le procureur général s'opposa à la requête de Marie POPELIN.

Le 12 décembre 1888, la Cour d'appel rendit son arrêt : elle rejetait la requête de Marie POPELIN avec des attendus marqués d'anti-féminisme : "en raison de la nature particulière de la femme, de la faiblesse relative de sa constitution, de la réserve inhérente à son sexe..." la femme n'a "ni les loisirs ni la force ni les aptitudes nécessaires aux luttes et aux fatigues du barreau". Marie POPELIN présenta un pourvoi en cassation. La Cour de Cassation rejeta le pourvoi le 11 novembre 1889, déclarant qu' "un diplôme de docteur en droit obtenu par une femme ne constitue jamais un titre pour être reçu avocat".

Trente-trois ans allaient encore s'écouler avant que la loi du 7 avril 1922 n'autorisât les femmes à exercer la profession d'avocat ; mais Marie POPELIN était morte trop tôt pour voir aboutir sa revendication. Ce qu'on a pu appeler l'affaire Marie POPELIN est à l'origine de l'organisation du mouvement féministe : La Ligue belge du droit des femmes fut fondée en 1892.

Dès la fin de 1973, le Groupement belge de la Porte Ouverte avait demandé l'émission de timbres à l'occasion de l'Année internationale de la femme ; un seul timbre devant être émis, il a recommandé de choisir l'effigie de Marie POPELIN.

Le Groupement belge de la Porte Ouverte (pour l'émancipation économique de la travailleuse) a pour but d'obtenir :

- que toute femme ait la liberté de travailler et qu'elle soit protégée, comme travailleuse, dans les mêmes conditions que les hommes,
 - que la législation et les règlements relatifs aux conditions et aux heures de travail, au salaire, à l'admission aux emplois, métiers, professions et fonctions, ainsi qu'à leur préparation, soient basés sur la nature du travail et non sur le sexe du travailleur,
 - que la femme, indépendamment du mariage ou de la maternité, ait en tout temps le droit de décider elle-même si elle se livrera ou non à un travail rétribué,
 - que ni les lois ni les règlements ne la privent de ce droit.
-

WHY WE EXPELLED TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK GROUP 1.

NOTES ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTREAL CONFERENCE FEB. 1975

Forward

The weekend of February 22, 85 women, mostly from the U.S., Canada and England, were in Montreal to discuss the direction of our movement. Although we were primarily North American, we understood that our decisions not only affected us on this continent but would have implications for the entire international network and would be part of the development of an international strategy.

For just about all of us, this conference represented a turning point. Two political tendencies were emerging. One based itself on the international nature of capital and the need to fight it on that level. The other gave lip-service to the international nature of capital and clung to the possibility and necessity of the local view. One saw the need for an international campaign for the wage, and therefore for organizational coherence to win it. The other saw wages for housework as a consciousness-raising tool or something to be won in dribs and drabs, here and there, with organization restricted to a conglomeration of groups. One saw leadership as a strength to the movement, to help us move forward. The other saw leadership as a threat to the development of individual members.

Although neither tendency was totally clear at the conference*, one attempted to put forward its point of view as clearly as possible. The other attempted to gloss over differences and obscure the issues. Glossing over differences is part of their perspective: if you only need a conglomeration of local views, why bother to clarify differences and choose a direction?

One tendency emerged as the political direction of the conference. A group of women who most clearly personified the other tendency was expelled.

For many of us, this was a moment of transformation. We had come to understand that what we decided in that room had significance, that we could not afford to be liberals any more, that capital was in crisis and so were we, and that we had to take the offensive and confront the state.

We were not totally clear at the time about what divided us. But we chose anyway, with all our uncertainties on the basis of what we knew and were certain of. Since then, with thought and discussion, we have come to understand much more completely both positions. We are even more sure now that our choice was correct and crucial. We hope these notes help other women in the network, both those who were at the conference and those who could not come.

Beth Ingber

Introduction

1. Political Direction vs Fragmentation.

Most of those who attended the Montreal conference came away understanding one crucial fact better. The daily lives of all women, whatever work we do, whatever relationships we have, wherever we live, are part of an integrated system of exploitation, to which our wagelessness is crucial. The struggles we make are therefore by their nature fundamentally connected. The task we face is not to build and link separate struggles but to understand the connection that objectively exists and to break down the divisions that capital has

* A few people were clear about the campaign, but some elementary questions remained - and remain. For instance the conference began on Sunday to discuss whether the campaign should start with a specific focus for our propaganda, and if so whether we should concentrate first on speaking to women on welfare. RH

imposed on us by making that connection clear and giving it concrete form, building and focussing the power that gives us.

Before this conference a number of us had not understood the difference between linking separate struggles and exposing an essential connection. People kept saying we had to show how struggles, e.g. the nurse's struggle and the housewife's struggle were "all the same struggle" and it sounded to us like the vanguardists trying to brush over the particularity of each situation. People kept saying all struggles were struggles for the wage and we thought there were a lot of other struggles going on too. People kept telling us ideas were power and we thought we were going to submerge ourselves in abstractions, or end up with the politics of "raising people's consciousness". They told us we had to go to all groups of women and talk about wages for housework; we thought we had nothing to say to these women. They told us we needed a campaign for wages for housework, and we understood only one word - not the campaign, not the wages, only the housework. The perspective sometimes seemed merely a useful way of looking at the independent struggles that women are forced to make. We had not understood how the perspective is both a reflection of our objective unity and a tool to give that unity another form and direction, to make a well-connected hand into a fist.

Waged or wageless we are all exploited through the wage relation. Waged or wageless we are all divided through the wage relation, and these divisions are essential to our exploitation. In the struggle for jobs that are the source of a wage each sector of the class is set against all others - the waged against the wageless, the waged against the waged, the wageless against the wageless. The working class isn't fighting for work, it is fighting for money. But the wage labour system is built on the poverty and powerlessness of those without waged jobs: we are forced to work for a wage and we are forced to fight each other for jobs. Trade unions defend the jobs of native white male workers; movements of blacks, immigrants, and women fight discrimination; nationalist movements in the 3rd world struggle for a "socialism" based on wage slavery. Other struggles, which have not been channeled in this direction, have still been undermined by the same divisions. The welfare movement had been isolated in the absence of a concerted movement of other workers to refuse wagelessness without accepting more work. The youth culture was disorganised and directionless; it refused the work but did not get the money. Millions of others struggling for money and against work have not had the power even of such a movement. For all of us, in trade unions, in the Women's Liberation Movement, in the welfare movement, in ad hoc groups, and alone, our unity has been only the objective unity of our exploitation, our enemy, and the motivating impetus of our struggle against them. The perspective of wages for housework has arisen from all these struggles and in enabling us to see at once all our exploitation and the source of our divisions it offers us a way to transform this objective unity into a strategy against work, against divisions, against capital.

Those of us who had not understood how we could base ourselves on our wageless exploitation to make a unified struggle looked for other ways to fight back. The prospect was pretty bleak. You could hope that the revolution would all pull itself together one day. Or you could hope that if everyone made a struggle where they were, to get organised and to win some improvements in their own situation, then these struggles and organisations could be linked, and maybe some day even hit capital all together. The trouble was that this process looked like taking forever. Struggles came and struggles went, and it was hard to see how we could get much stronger. Maybe the "working class" would get it together, maybe not; it was hard to see how we could do anything with our perspective to contribute to the fight for our lives, and hard to see where women would get the power to make sure the fight was on our terms.

This perspective is libertarianism, a conception of struggle as something that takes place in separate, local confrontations with no fundamental concrete connection. From it flows a particular view of theory, of international struggle, of leadership, of autonomy, and therefore of wages for housework.

The document produced by the Toronto Wages for Housework Collective, "Statement of Political Differences with Wages for Housework Group I" began to break for us the stranglehold of this libertarian perspective, and the Montreal conference made still clearer what the differences are in practice between this perspective, which can sometimes sound almost like ours, and the perspective we need in order to move forward.

On the Saturday morning we dealt with the question of what is the wage. In the afternoon we fought over leadership, autonomy, and the international. All day the division was between those who saw the perspective as a way of uncovering the unity of our struggles and situations, as a way of making that unity concrete in a campaign, as a theory which will profoundly affect our practice, and those who saw only struggles around specific "issues" as concrete, who saw the perspective as something we have to "translate" into these issues,

and who thought of our integral connections as "links".

"Links" was the word we finally seized on to define the difference between the two perspectives. It had come up again and again when TGI was trying to express agreement with the concept of an international strategy. Again and again they emphasized that they did not deny the importance of links. Libertarians have always known the importance of links. In Britain they have an organized network with a regular newsletter and conferences. What they cannot envision, as long as they remain libertarian, is a strategy to take on the state as a whole, in which the form, direction, the immediate goals, and the results of local confrontations are shaped by the fact that these confrontations are moments of such an assault.

Saturday night we used the concept of links to draw the line between the libertarians and those who wanted to move in the political direction being laid down by the network. Many had moved in the course of the day to see that capital plans our international wagelessness, that the struggles of women everywhere are integrally connected, and that a campaign for the wage will allow these connections to emerge in a powerful form. Those who could not accept this perspective were caught in a libertarian ideology and view of themselves. The fact that in the past many of us have shared their views does not make them any less destructive. The expulsion has given us the clarity we need to get them out of our way.

FOOTNOTE TO PAGE 6:

In October 1974 Lotta Femminista, an Italian organisation composed of groups with varying degrees of commitment to wages for housework, dissolved because of differences which parallel those dividing the tendencies at this conference. Some groups, which with the dissolution formed the Comitato Triveneto per il Salario al Lavoro Domestico (Piazza Eremitani 26, Padua, Italy), were organising a campaign for wages for housework. The document quoted below was written by Padova Group I in opposition to this strategy. Since the dissolution, the Comitato has been continuing the campaign, and giving feminist direction to the campaign around abortion which is mobilizing thousands of Italian women. Padova Group I organised a demonstration on abortion in conjunction with the women's commissions of male left groups.

II) Every Struggle is a Struggle for the Wage

Silvia Federici's opening speech showed how the international refusal of waged work and of work in the community and the family have caused the crisis. She showed how capital is extending unemployment in an attempt to gain control of the situation, and planning to reorganise itself for the future, using workers' control, Union democracy, drugs, and reinforcement of the family. This presentation set the tone of the conference, by beginning to show concretely capital's international strategy and by bringing home the urgency of acting on ours.

But the specific issues that Silvia raised were rarely directly discussed, because many of us had not understood that our strategy is the campaign for the wage. The lack of understanding was apparent from the start. Some were saying that wages for housework was revolutionary because it was unattainable. Some, in the expelled group, Toronto Group 1 (TGI) said they wanted to "translate" wages for housework into "concrete things", and wanted a campaign "in a specific city". Some had objected to the dollar sign on the New York Button: they found it crude and materialistic, not revolutionary enough. A number of us, till this conference gave us a sense of our power, had simply not believed that a campaign for the wage was possible. The conference showed that it is both possible and necessary, by clearing up a number of points:

- 1) Money is power.
- 2) We need an international strategy if we are to win.
- 3) We need a campaign for cash wages for every woman: to refuse their use of our wagelessness in the crisis. to refuse the jobs they are offering us and leave the jobs we are doing.
- 4) We need the organisational power of a campaign to reach women everywhere, inside and outside the big urban centres.

The struggle for wages is revolutionary, whether it is being made by those who already receive cash directly related to their labour or by those who labour without a wage of that kind. The wage rate--how much work for how much wages--is the measure of our power: it is the bargain we must strike with capital. We say "wage" and not simply "money" because "wage" reflects the reality of our lives in that it implies the relation with capital which is the basis of all our struggles; it implies labour, the other side of the bargain. There is no place to struggle except within the wage relation in which we are all trapped. By struggling within it we will push this relation to the breaking point. We are fighting to price ourselves out of a job.

The amount that we win from capital, in cash and in time and in comforts is all wages--it is all in exchange for our labour. And it determines our life. In this "equal exchange" we always lose. The only question is "how much?" The class struggle is a struggle about how much--how deep a destruction of how much time for how much money. Every moment of our lives is controlled by capital, and we struggle every moment to determine what kind of bargain we are going to make. The bargain we strike determines how much time we can spend on the beach or at meetings, and how much at the assembly line; whether we live in a slum or in relative comfort, what our working conditions are; how much we have to prostitute ourselves for husbands, foremen, heads of departments; how much we see our friends and family and how much work we have to do for capital by working for them, what our relations with them are; how many times we have to say no to our children; how much humiliation we have to accept; how far we can refuse capital's dictatorship over our lives, how soon we can make the revolution.

Both capital and the working class are so essentially involved in this struggle over "how much" that attempts to change the "quality of life" are immediately translated into quantity, and fought for or resisted on that basis. Everyone must count the cost. Those who think they can change the quality of their lives without taking on this battle against capital end up redistributing their poverty and

miserable relationships in new ghettos. Or worse, they help capital invent new schemes for workers' control which are supposed to make us happy and capital rich in one motion, and which in fact serve to help them screw us out of money. We only gain when we gain at the expense of the ruling class.

The wage is how much we are able to win back from capital, and how much we are able to refuse to give them. Every struggle in the class war is a struggle for the wage. Every time women hold back rent, refuse work, shoplift, fight for free facilities or services, or better working conditions or paid time off waged work, we are fighting over the terms of our bargain with capital: we are fighting for wages. And because our bargain with capital is based on housework, we are fighting for wages for housework.

III The Campaign Vs. "Local Issues"

To pose these struggles in terms of wages is already to make clear the fundamental unity in the fights that women make, and it is already to have an idea of what we want to fight for in a specific struggle (time, money, power) and of what we want to avoid (fighting for jobs, or equality, or the industrialization of every aspect of our lives; ending up providing free services...) But its no good knowing what we don't want if we're forced into it anyway. If wages for housework is going to lift these struggles out of their isolation and give them power, we need something more substantial than an understanding in the heads of some organisers. We need an international campaign to win a cash wage for all women, for all the work we do, not as something to be fought for in each workplace, in each launderette, to be won, lost, bargained with, not as part of a deal between women of town X and city hall but as a recognised, established wage that we can count on as the foundation for all our struggles.

The struggle women are making for wages for housework in cash is revolutionary not only because, like all wage struggles, it wins back for us the wealth that we produce and that otherwise goes to build the power of our enemy. It is revolutionary also because it exposes how whole areas of our activity that have been considered "free" or "on our own account" are labour for capital. It thereby undermines the ideology of "equal exchange" which capital uses to keep wages down. In particular it demystifies the labour of women, which has always been veiled by the lack of a wage. It is revolutionary because it gives women a lever of power against that work and against the divisions that have crippled the working class, against capital and all its agents: employers, the welfare state, and men. Every wage struggle is revolutionary, but the success of the struggle for more wages depends on the success of women who are struggling against wagelessness.

The campaign for the wage in cash for every woman is an urgent necessity now, because of capital's increasing use of wagelessness as a weapon against the working class. They have always maintained themselves on the basis of our free labour. But now through inflation they are massively increasing this labour, and because it is wageless there is no extra cost to them. Because we are wageless and our time is not measured they can make us do extra work to carry them through the crisis. They have always used wagelessness to divide us, along lines of sex, race, age, region, third world and metropolis, using the wageless as a threat against the waged, forcing us to compete on the international labour market for the jobs we loathe. Now they hope that a massive increase in wagelessness will reverse the refusal of waged and unwaged work that has put them in crisis. They want it to force us women to put aside the needs we have been asserting and take up again the self-sacrifice, the physical labour, and the labour of consoling and disciplining others that pull a family through a time of crisis. And they want it to bring us knocking at the factory gates, ready to accept any wages for the jobs we've been thrown out of, or the jobs men have been thrown out of, jobs we may need now for the first time because prices have gone up.

The only way to break this attack is to fight for wages without fighting for jobs. to refuse to be wageless any longer. No struggle

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for free services, for time off work, for the wage in any other form than cash for every woman, is an appropriate response to this use of our wageless condition.

This wage will enable us not only to destroy their offensive but to turn it around and escalate massively our refusal of their work. The more we win wages for housework, and the more men follow our lead and win wages for travelling time, for repairing their cars, washing, sleeping, eating, and the housework they will be doing, and the more we all win wages for the labour of unemployment, the more there will be a mass exodus from what is now waged work, and the more they'll have to offer us to induce us to spend our time there and at home in intense exploitation. As we cease to be wageless we will cease to be a reserve army and continue to become a social problem.

Toronto Group 1 never at this conference explicitly came out against such a campaign for the cash wage for every woman. They showed, by their equivocations, by their emphasis on the specific struggle, by their concept of a campaign as something you could wage in one city, and by their refusal to repudiate their previous positions, that their fears prevented them from accepting it as our strategy. But the Padova 1 group in Italy, which in many ways shares their position*, has been more articulate. In October, 1973, they said: "we should not confuse the power we need in order to bring up wages for housework as a perspective, as a trail to follow for ever and in any situation, whatever struggle is going on...we know very well that we will keep wages as a perspective in our minds as well as in our speeches and work for many years, because it takes years to know how to reach it. The problem now is: what must we do during these years in order to build a movement strong enough to begin to make wages a term of struggle."

Their idea of the perspective, separable from the demand for the wage for every woman, is not ours. The idea that we have to wait before making wages a term of struggle is not ours. It leaves women's struggles in precisely the isolated fragmented state which we have to get out of. The way to "build" a strong enough movement is precisely by demanding wages for housework. How do they expect to get the power to win particular struggles, and to make these victories last? And what do they think has been holding us back till now? A lack of understanding? A long-term plan, with a campaign for sometime when we are more powerful is in fact a rejection of the campaign as our strategy.

Without a campaign for the wage, the result of our struggles in almost every case is a productivity deal. When we fight for daycare we either end up working twice as hard to look after the children ourselves and raise funds, or we lose our children to a state institution where the workers are paid pennies because we'd do the work for free, and where the nursery is provided on condition that most of us go out to a job. When we fight for abortion we end up with forced abortion—forced by lack of money, space and time to be with the children we'd like to have, and time to be away from them. And we end up with forced sterilization as part of the deal. Control of our bodies, when we are powerless, means their control of our bodies. When as lesbians we refuse the labour of relating to men and the whole definition of female nature, we find ourselves penniless, ghettoised, powerless, and still housewives, often working twice as hard. Being poor, and being cut off from the masses of lesbian women with children who cannot afford to come out, and cut off from the struggles all women are waging against their work and against their identification with that work, we can still be used as the bogey man against all the other women we need. When we fight for equal pay it is offered—on condition that we accept night work—for us, quite literally, a 2nd or 3rd shift. When we fight for better conditions on the job, or get part-time or flexible hours, capital uses these "concessions" to "help" more and more of us to fit in a second job: it imposes on women a more intensive working day.

Only a cash wage for every woman from the government will enable us to refuse these productivity deals. Because the wage will be for every woman it will be unconditional—we will not have to work in a

factory or office, live with a man, live without a man, have children or avoid having children to get this money. They will not be able to use it to make a bargain with us. It will not be something for which we have to run risks or make sacrifices. Every woman who shoplifts or who takes an extra hour at lunch time is taking the wage for herself. But as Mie Watanabe said, "we've had enough of having nervous breakdowns stuffing steaks into our bags". And we've had enough of that extra hour as a "privilege" or a blind eye that they can blackmail us with and repeal at any time. A wage established as a right will not be something they can always take away but a point at which we can always ask for more, and a basis for asking for more.

The power to win this wage and refuse productivity deals comes from the fact that wages for housework is a battle that unites all women. Here, in the struggle against the totality of our work, we have the power of our numbers. The wage, the threat posed to the state by a movement organised to win that wage, the very size of the demand we are making and the knowledge that we soon may have it, will give us the power to make gains, not deals, when we fight around childcare, abortion, sexuality, jobs. Whatever our intentions, if we organise on a local level without this strategy for building and using our power we will be forced to do exactly what a trade union does; to fight for a compromise which will help us for a while to accept our lives, and help capital to accumulate.

Once we accept the need for a campaign to win a wage from the government it becomes a self-evident priority to spread propaganda across each nation, making known the existence of such a campaign so that people can join it. Propaganda is not something abstract. It is the opening shot of the war and it will continue as an integral part of our mobilization. Padova 1 writes: "such tools as the press, pamphlets and books, meetings and lectures, video tapes, films, etc. are very useful for propaganda on wages but they can never substitute for struggle". "We reject the idea of a national propaganda campaign disguised as a struggle to which all the centers of Lotta Femminista must give priority." Propaganda is not disguised as a struggle and it is not separate from and substituting for struggle. It is part of the struggle we want and a part without which none of the rest can exist. When they set the two in opposition to each other they are thinking of "struggle" only in terms of local actions for specific goals, not in terms of a struggle for the wage which will build our power. Of course it is true that leaflets are not bullets, that a mass meeting is not the kind of confrontation which will bring down the state. But as the movement grows we will have the power to make more and more direct confrontations--to demonstrate, picket, occupy, disrupt, strike for the wage. That kind of growth is impossible if we bury ourselves in the struggle at the corner of our streets. If we don't get on television and make sure everyone knows that the demand, the perspective, and our organisation exist, we'll be pretty helpless even on our own street corners.

A number of people have been asking "what is a campaign?" A campaign is travelling around each country, inside and outside the urban centres, getting on local television and radio, speaking to welfare groups and other groups of women wherever we go. It is spreading literature in many languages. It is newspapers or newsletters to keep contact with women we meet. It is taking our banners and literature to demos and picket lines. It is making ourselves known as a body that can be contacted by women who want to work on the campaign or want our support and the strength that a national and international campaign can bring them in a struggle around a particular issue where they are. It is having centres or headquarters where people can reach us and see what we're about. It is calling a women's strike and march next spring in Washington, Los Angeles, and Canadian and European capitals. It is smaller local rallies or demonstrations before that time. It is building a movement for wages for housework that include all women. It is a film about wages for housework to use for public meetings, records of songs about wages for housework, street theatre about wages for housework. It is taking part in, or initiating local actions, e.g. at Maimonides or in the Mother Led Union.

A) A national propaganda campaign does not preclude involvement in specific or local struggles. When we take part in local actions our goals are many but related. We want to win what time, and money, and power can be won in each situation. We want to give each struggle strength and direction by exposing and concretising its connections with the struggles of other women. And we want to mobilize women for other battles in the war for wages for housework for every woman.

Libertarianism is based on the principle that everyone should organise "around their own situation" and within the limits imposed by that situation. For libertarians this means that it is imposing something on people to go into a struggle basing yourself on a political line that has not been born whole out of that particular struggle; it's still more of an imposition if you are hoping to mobilise people for something else beyond the day care centre, laundry or wage rise they are fighting for at the time. This idea led members of two Toronto groups—the Wages for Housework Collective and TGL—to take part for a long time in the Mother Led Union (MLU) without making clear their relation to Wages for Housework, or, therefore, their relationship to the welfare system and to the MLU. It led women at the New York conference in October to ask what these women were doing in the MLU in the first place, since most of them were not on welfare.

The Toronto Wages for Housework Collective (TWFHC) has left behind this politics of withdrawal. Frances Gregory laid out at the conference how it had reflected their failure to see themselves as part of the working class. Without seeing ourselves as part of the working class we cannot see our connections with other women, and we will always view our own self interest as something external and opposed to other women's.

But even if we do not see ourselves as external we have to go further and understand the internal unity of the class if we are to see how women from one sector can go to women from another and say that their perspective is a necessity for both. Otherwise we will be afraid to talk to other women whose particular situations are unfamiliar to us, we will not know how or why to learn about those situations, and we will not be able to mount a campaign. It is only by seeing and attacking the wageless labour through which we are all exploited that women can stop making "links" based on guilt trips, manipulation, and vague principles of "solidarity", and start breaking down the divisions between us. In organising for money for welfare women we are organising around our own situation, and in building, there and elsewhere, a campaign for wages for housework we are hitting capital in the only way we can—starting from our unity, not from our fragmentation.

IV An International Vs. Links

No divisions are more crippling than the divisions between women in different countries, and particularly between women in the third world and women in the metropolis. Capital plans internationally where to put jobs, where we should have babies, where we are going to emigrate from and immigrate to. The campaign for the wage is our strategy because it attacks on an international level. Our speeches, leaflets, and mobilisations, our decisions about what demands to take up and what position to take in relation to the struggles going on where we are, have to be based on the wageless exploitation common to women everywhere in the world, and on the particular, related forms that that exploitation takes in different countries. We have to know and fight the ways in which capital exploits women everywhere so we can fight to refuse all these options--the factory and the home, forced sterilisation and forced child bearing.

The perspective of wages for housework is based on our international condition, and attacks our divisions at their source. A campaign for wages for housework as an international strategy is not only more significant, but sometimes more possible than "links". Women on a farm in India and women in a shoe factory in East Anglia may not be able to link their struggles, but they can have a common strategy.

This international campaign is still being born, and it is up to us to find theoretical and organisational connections that will help to make it possible. We have only just begun to understand the implications of an international perspective and strategy. We draw some strength from the wages for housework movement in other countries in Europe and North America. But we have hesitated to even think about our connection with the third world. We have sometimes been paralysed by the fear that third world women, inside and outside our own countries, will tell us to go to hell. Terrified of the racism of interference and presumption, we have retreated to the racism of ignorance and silence. We have succumbed to the divisions by which capital conceals and enforces our common exploitation and powerlessness.

The perspective of wages for housework, in identifying women's common situation and struggle, exposes the absurdity of accepting our divisions for fear of being "imperialist". patronising or presumptuous. or "imposing" a strategy on third world

women. We are not imposing a strategy on them any more than on any other women. To imply that we are is to assume that the 3rd world situation is exotic and outside of the capitalist plan which dominates us all. Once 3rd world women are seen in this way their power against capital is denied in the same way as the power of all women is denied by seeing housework as outside of capitalist production. To imply that we can impose a struggle is also to assume that we have a great deal more power over each other than we actually have. The power any woman or group of women has depends on the power of others--in her own country and elsewhere. When we ask ourselves what we are afraid of imposing we see that the greatest imposition we can make is if we do not make a struggle which is relevant to our common needs.

We will not understand the perspective of wages for housework until we have seen in it women's situation in the metropolis and the Third World. The "underdevelopment" of women's kitchens and the general "underdevelopment" of the 3rd World; the wagelessness of women in the metropolis and the identical wagelessness of women in the 3rd World, the wagelessness also of unemployed men there and of whole families working on the land, are all aspects of the same international plan. Our struggle to refuse being "developed" into factories is everywhere a struggle against the same enemy and the same work, if in differing conditions.

We will not know our own power anywhere until this power is uncovered and developed on an international level. The wages we want cannot be won in one country. When working class women in Britain hear about wages for housework they often say "the government couldn't afford it". They are right. There is no way capital would stay in Britain if they were paying wages for housework here and not elsewhere. And even if we could win the wage in North America, the question would remain: how much and who would pay? What wages can women in Los Angeles win for producing labour power for Californian farms and factories if Mexican women can be forced to produce it for free? What wages can New York women win if Puerto Rican women have none? The more capital is able to import and export factories and people, the more limited will be the wages women can win in the metropolis, as well as in the Third World itself.

The struggles taking place in the Third World are already putting the revolutionary movement everywhere in an entirely different position of strength. Nationalist movements are fighting--and defeating--the American, British, and other imperialist states. These movements have as their impetus not only the end of foreign exploitation but the end of capitalism. Women and men are fighting for the power to refuse to beg for jobs. In other places this refusal has reached a large scale even now. These struggles further confirm that wages for housework is as much to the point in the Third World as it is in the metropolis. 3rd World women do not need less because less has been available to them; their view of what modern technology makes possible is set by the same worldwide standard as ours. And in countries that win "independence" class conflict between the population and the state, and new possibilities of struggle open up immediately. The growing importance of money and wages, the development of unemployment, and rapid changes in women's work, families, and position make wages for housework both possible and essential.

In our own material interest, wages for housework groups have to help make possible a movement for the wage in 3rd world countries. The most crucial contribution we can make is to make a struggle for wages for ourselves. For one thing, we weaken capital, and for another if we mount a campaign in North America and Europe every woman in the world will think she deserves a wage. But making propaganda available in 3rd world countries is also part of the campaign. And we may be able to do more. We live in the places where the wealth is accumulated that women create internationally; the power that women everywhere are fighting is centred in the countries where we are. Third world movements have long exploited this vantage point for publicity, anti-war actions, demonstrations, fundraising, and boycotts. For instance take the boycott of Zimbabwe chromium enforced by black American dockers, or the fight in the U.S. and elsewhere against the Vietnam War, which was instrumental in the defeat of the American army by the women and men of Vietnam. If women in the 3rd world demand wages for housework from Wall Street and the City, women in the U.S. and Britain could be an additional source of power for them.

The first step for most of us is to learn something about the conditions of struggle outside the metropolis. When we try to think about the 3rd World our ignorance debilitates us, and enforces the divisions that capital creates.

As we more fully understand the meaning of an international perspective, will make clearer and clearer in practice how we differ from TGL. But already we differ in that their perspective of links has nothing to do with an international strategy. Mario (TGL): "I'm not denying the absolute necessity of an international network to find out what's happening in all cities, and wherever it seems strategically possible to bring all those things together...it's not clear to me how to mount an international but I do see in the particular city that I'm in that there's a preparedness right now that might be able to mount a campaign in a year".

V. Leadership Vs. Self-Protection

The 'Statement of Political Differences' made clear how when we see ourselves as housewives and as part of the working class, and see our perspective as a perspective for women and a perspective for the working class, we see leadership not as an imposition but as an integral part of our struggle. The perspective does not come from outside the class, and we are not outside the class. The perspective offers a political direction which all of us--inside and outside the network--need.

The conference continued the process of making clear what this means for our own internal organisation. The connection was expressed by Suzie Fleming: "If we're not going to be embarrassed about the fact that we're developing a perspective... and that we think that we can contribute something to the struggle that we as women and other women are waging, then surely we equally shouldn't be embarrassed about the fact that when you sit in a room there might be 3 people in that room that are going to contribute more to everyone's development than other people... these things are very closely related..."

This view of leadership implies that leadership must be given the freedom to lead. If the perspective offers a political direction, leadership has to make that direction clear and available to everyone, inside and outside the network, and determine what that direction is concretely in each situation. As Suzie said, "A leader is someone who's going to help me get where I want to go".

Clearly, this does not mean that no one should ever say boo to a leader. People will have to be fighting leaders all the time: fighting over political positions, fighting to make leaders lead more--make them make their politics clearer, make them recognise and help develop the abilities of others in the group. But this is the opposite of fighting to ensure that no one becomes--or remains--a leader. Frances Gregory: "I'm not going to fight against leadership. I might fight so I can take a little leadership myself...but it's not something I do in battle with other women, because we're fighting for the same thing. We're fighting for our power, against capital and against men. We really allowed wages for housework to be obscured by saying that certain people are trying to take power over other people...Those women are trying to take power for themselves and they can only do it when we all take power for ourselves."

The leadership in our movement are followed because they have soon and said most clearly where we have to go, have been the most international in their outlook, have been the first to see the necessity and implications of a campaign. To the extent that they cease to fill that function they will cease to be leaders, and to the extent that others take it up they will become leaders; it should be plain to everyone that there's plenty of room for more.

In contrast to this view of our organisation there was a tendency at the conference which felt a need to try to put some constraints on leaders, to ensure "democracy". In putting forward one form of this view, Sallie Schum separated the question of internal leadership from the question of the organisation's relation with the rest of the class: "There are two ways of looking at leadership...What the perspective of wages for housework can do is offer leadership to the struggle of all women against capital's plans...that's the leadership of the perspective. Then when we're talking about organisation, that's another whole discussion on leadership. And I really appreciate the fact that there have to be leaders in any organisation. What I would like to say about those leaders is that I would like to have that leadership recognised, I would like to have that leadership made explicit so that I understand who they are and what they're saying, and I would like to understand very clearly that that leadership at all times represents the feelings and the interests of everybody that's in the organisation. And that if at some time they don't represent, or go against what the mass of the organisation says that the mass of the organisation have some way in which to challenge that leadership."

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Judy Quinlan spoke for most of the meeting in rejecting this sort of democracy: "The last thing I want in the world is representative leadership. ...a person is in a leadership position because of what they are able to offer. If we all agree on what we want, at the point at which they're not offering what we want, then they're not going to be there any more".

But misgivings remained, and were expressed in a concern that leadership should not stifle the development of other members. It is important to locate the source of those misgivings. We all have experience of people holding and using power over others. That's how capital rules. But in our movement, far from stifling individuals' development, leadership has made it possible, both directly in the process of working together, and by forming and strengthening the perspective, the campaign, and the organisation. It has also helped to deal with the power relations which exist in any organisation and which spring not from leadership but from the different political situations we are based in (see next section on autonomy). The fear of leadership in some cases may come from experiences of leaders failing to do their job, failing to put their power at the disposal of the movement, and of other members failing to ensure that they did. But the fear can only survive where there is no political direction and no hope of victory.

The libertarian view is that since everyone is fighting for herself and on her own home turf there should be no need for leadership. They want to work towards a situation where everyone leads herself. This leads easily to more traditional democratic politics in which the leaders who inevitably do arise are bound all around by an obligation to represent everyone else. It stems from the philosophy that there exists nothing for the leaders to offer—no political direction arising from the total situation of the working class that experience of struggle, theoretical labour, and a good political nose can discover.

Without such a direction not only are we confined to the powerlessness of isolated struggles, but we cannot hope for revolution. We become obsessed with the need to preserve whatever slight control we can grasp over our own situation or over other women. TGL's "local autonomy" is based on what only we can call the "housewife syndrome". We have so little power as women that we become very protective of what little we have; when we form organisations we get very chary of anyone who seems to have a little more than us. We protect our domain. Our jealousy is painful and politically absurd. We struggle to repress it, but it weakens us, and by binding us more firmly in our powerlessness, perpetuates itself. Only the conviction that we can win, that the power the leaders have is real power against capital—and that is a conviction we can easily lose hold of—can convince us that the leaders' power is power in our hands, and that our organisation's power is power to all women. At that point we stop looking for a leadership that will represent all the political confusion in a room, we stop saying no one should move until everyone is ready (they never will be), we stop being reticent in approaching other women, and we begin to look seriously at ourselves and the state. As we give our capitalist function as housewives less sway over our lives and over our personalities, we begin to destroy our sector of the class.

VI Autonomy Vs. Peaceful Coexistence

Libertarians' fear of leadership is bound up with experience and rejection of vanguard party politics. In expressing their concerns in terms of "autonomy" they make use of a concept which was vital in enabling us to break with those politics. What do they mean by it, and what is our difference from them?

Autonomous movements have grown up when sectors of the working class formed organisations and movements which refused to be absorbed in or directed by the organisations of other sectors. Trade Unions and vanguard parties had never based their struggles on our needs. In insisting on the "general interest" and the "unity of the class" they subordinated the struggles of the less powerful sections of the working class to the immediate interests of the most powerful, of white males, often of employed, skilled white males. The rest of us, inside or outside their organisations, were supposed to ignore our own particular experience, forget our own needs, and toe the line—their line. All too often we did: we had no choice.

It was in order to have the power to discover and assert our own needs, against capital and against men that we formed separate, autonomous, self-directing movements. Our autonomy is essential for us: we are fighting for ourselves, for our needs as we define them. It is equally essential for the

rest of the working class: our struggles will reveal their needs, and our power will make the revolution possible.

In contrast to a vanguardist perspective, wages for housework speaks specifically to the needs of the most powerless: full-time housewives with no wage of their own, and those housewives with a small wage for part of their work who are struggling for every penny. For this reason it is sometimes hard for women with a little more power to accept the perspective. They do not want to identify with the housewife. Yet they are housewives, and the perspective offers them too the only way to fight back against their own position. It speaks to the needs of all women because it is based on our common, fundamental situation.

This means that in fighting for wages for housework no woman must give up the needs that she feels in her gut ~~or~~ fight for the interests of another, stronger sector of the class which will gain power or make deals against her. It does not mean that there is no need for autonomous organisation within the movement for wages for housework. We do not know yet what forms that autonomy will take, or what will be the internal structure of the body we have called "the network".

Capital uses all of us in different ways, and the differences have already been felt in our movement—between women with children and without children, women with different kinds of jobs, with different experience, between lesbians and non-lesbians; still more sharp are the divisions among women of different races and nationalities, for example few black women are now in wages for housework organisations. These are not only differences but divisions based on power, and it will be necessary for each of the less powerful sectors to gather its collective strength in order to reveal the implications of the perspective and make sure they are acted on. We need the power and the specific experience of each sector of women to understand capital's overall plan and the strategy and tactics we need against it.

The divisions between women do not necessarily lead to separate organisations. They may lead only to political struggles within an organisation, struggles showing who we are, what we have to fight for, and how particular struggles can and cannot be made. For instance, in the network, a whole area of discussion was opened up on Sunday by the Wages Due Collective, a lesbian group within the network which had been meeting both separately and with TWFFHC. The visible presence of a group of lesbian women, and the things they had to say, made everyone look again at how our relationships, which are defined and determined by capital, affect and are affected by our struggle; at capital's repressive organisation of our lives in which we spend our days working with women or doing "womens work" alone at home and are supposed to spend our "leisure" with men; at the struggle we always make against men, and at the extent to which we can struggle with them; at lesbianism as a struggle against work; at the oppression and at the power of women who do not have men around us, and at how we can mobilise the power that these women, and particularly lesbian women, have to offer. Differences persist (e.g. on "loving" and on men), and the debate continues within the network.

There will always be some differences within the network, and not only differences of emphasis. But this does not mean that we should agree to disagree. It means there will be internal battles as women in different situations fight out how wages for housework is to be presented and fought for by the movement as a whole. It means that we will be able to make a "general struggle" which is not, as in the vanguard parties, a struggle for the immediate interest of the most powerful sector at the expense of the other sectors who take part, but a struggle which is general precisely because it grows from and pushes forward the needs of each ~~sector~~ sector of women. As autonomous sectors fight to impose their views we will ensure not only that we are fighting for what we all need, but that our tactics are appropriate to the real situations in which we are making the struggle; in other words, that we can win.

If different sectors find it necessary to remain outside our network the political struggle will take place nevertheless. Only that struggle will ensure that when we speak and act we are speaking and acting for wages for housework—for a perspective which grows from the situation and needs of every woman.

The extent to which we do this will determine the extent to which this network offers women the power of the perspective. The power of the perspective is not limited to that which the network offers. But the politics of the groups, inside or outside the network, which initiate a campaign for the wage, will have an effect on how that power develops. As the movement grows a lot of people will be saying different things about wages for housework. Some women will push the movement forward by fighting for the wage in a limited form applying to themselves

--for instance MLU's demand for parity, waged workers' demand for paid time off and refusal to do housework on the job. At the same time other women, both inside and outside the movement, and inside and outside the ruling structures, will be acting for capital as state planners. They will be considering what they can demand and offer that will stem the tide and if possible divide us, and force us to do more work. The presence of one or more political bodies which are not speaking only for one sector, which know why they must not stop at a wage for some women, or a little bit of a wage, or a wage we have to pay for, will help to defeat the state planners, and help to lift the struggles of others out of isolation. Whatever we win will give us power against men and against capital. But the scope and power of the movement, and the kinds of victories we win, will be determined partly by the degree to which we can offer our perspective and tactics in opposition to those which the state planners are considering. For this we must be clear about what we want in all its aspects.

So the autonomy which we oppose to vanguard party politics is an autonomy through which sectors of the class, including sectors of women, by organising as sectors within an organisation or by refusing to join it, organise the power to impose on all of us the struggle they see necessary. Is this the autonomy TGI is concerned with?

TGI is concerned not with organising power but with defending themselves against power, not with struggling to impose an essential view of class struggle but with preventing such imposition from taking place. They want a structure and "process" which allow different viewpoints to coexist peacefully in the organisation, rather than one which forces us as far as possible to fight the differences out. The result of such autonomy would be white women going on TV and presenting a racist view of the struggle in the name of Wages for Housework--exactly what would happen with a vanguardist approach.

If it is not peaceful coexistence what else can be their aim in defending not the autonomy of specific sectors but local autonomy and individual autonomy? They can't mean the local groups should not be in the organisation. They can't mean they want to be able to meet together without others--there is plenty of opportunity for that. They can't mean that there is a power relationship which forces each locality to step away from the group to develop its own formulations and the strength it needs to confront the rest of the organisation. If they were speaking for rural areas, or "underdeveloped" areas that might be the case, but it can't be their concern in Toronto. They must be concerned to protect themselves from dictatorship from the centre, afraid that they will have to fight some one else's battle and not their own. If as they say they see the struggle for wages for housework as personally necessary for them, why do they worry about some one telling them what to do? Why don't they want to tell us what to do?

Since the women in TGI are not the ruling class, we have to assume that this fear of power is based yet again on a failure to realize that we can take power and use it for ourselves. It starts with defeat as its premise, with an acceptance of the fragmentation which is the source of our weakness. If you accept fragmentation the revolution is either impossible or will come out of the blue one day. It is nothing you can build towards. And there is no way for women to gather our power.

Their perspective leads some libertarians to imagine that the strategic and organisational connections between struggles emerge for the first time at a final revolutionary moment--they claim Hungary in '56 and France in '68 showed how these connections are unnecessary till then. We have only to ask the question: what was the power of women in those uprisings? to see the difference between autonomy as a basis for our power and autonomy as a rejection of organisation.

Some women in the network have referred to the expulsion of TGI as Stalinist. It is their perspective, not that of the women who pushed for the expulsion, that takes us back to a politics where the class interest is defined by a few of its members and everyone else is too powerless & disorganised for their needs & experience to count. We are not saying everyone should forget their own particular experiences, push aside their own needs as they see them, and take orders from leaders who have pulled a full-blown perspective and strategy from the thin air somewhere over the Atlantic. We do not want a perspective or strategy which is not continually shaped by all the particularity of our individual & collective experience. And we do not want women in the

network who have not at least begun to see the perspective as speaking precisely to their own personal needs and experience. We have to do everything possible to help women who are attracted to the perspective to see this more fully: to come to grips with all its implications, and see how it relates directly to them and how it relates to other women and to the revolution. To do this, and to reach the perspective and the struggle we do want, we need to be organized, we need leaders, we need theoretical clarity and we need a process of political struggle within the network which is the opposite of TGI's "autonomy".

VIII Political Confrontation Vs. "Progress"

The conference itself was an example of TGI's and others' refusal of this struggle. They did not believe there could be an overall perspective and strategy which would determine everyone's actions, in fact they found that idea threatening. They envisioned an organization in which everyone would come in with a different viewpoint, and we would reach a politics of consensus. So they had no impetus to force a political confrontation. Their statements and their questions were incoherent; their answers were evasive.

Some people have been saying that the expulsion was necessary but the "process" of expulsion was bad. What do they think we should have done? Waited till the next conference and taken time there to try and wrest a coherent statement from TGI? They are forgetting that TGI's--and some others' -- incoherence was not an accident that we should have made allowances for but an expression of their politics. TGI claimed that they had not been given a "chance" to explain themselves. They claimed they were being persecuted. They claimed they agreed with everything we said. Anyone tempted to believe any of this should note the following three points:

There has been a whole history of dissension between TGI and those who have taken leadership internationally, and between TGI and TWFHC. TWFHC prepared and distributed a document stating their view of the differences. TGI prepared nothing--not before the New York Conference, after the New York conference or before this conference.

In New York TGI had been very clearly hostile to the kind of international perspective and organization that were being established. They were very insistent about "local autonomy" and angry about the way leadership was functioning. In Montreal they said they had "no disagreement". If this was true, why didn't they dissociate themselves from the position they had taken up? Why didn't they say how they had changed? They would hardly have been alone. Some at the conference objected to the way others were trying to make TGI "eat their words". For most of us in political struggle words are common and palatable fare. When you've changed your mind and believe in what you are doing, nothing is less humiliating than to say so.

Again, if they really shared our perspective, why did they speak in terms of links, intervention, and local campaigns? Why did they accept everything everyone said--conditionally? "Do you think it's important to have an international statement?" Angela: "If we can make that statement useful." Angela earlier: "I have no disagreement with the importance of developing an international group or perspective. Where disagreements or misunderstandings... come up is how in practice we ensure that we build the kind of links that will enable us to be strong." What were the disagreements or misunderstandings? What kind of safeguards did she want, and against what? Why didn't she tell us?

Certainly, it wasn't for want of asking. Judy Quinlan: "I sense that there is something you want to say, like there's something you want not to see... and there's something you want to see... and that you're putting it very abstractly in a conditional thing--well, maybe if, maybe not. I want to hear what it is that you don't want and what it is that you do want." Silvia Federici: "If people have disagreements why don't they say so?"

It is no accident that the most coherent expression of TGI's tendency came in the form of a statement on representative democracy from Sallie Schum, the member who later left them. She was prepared to state her position in such a way that it could be answered.

Not everyone who is unable to express a position is a political enemy. There were many at the conference who were new to wages for housework, including most of the women who had come with TGI. There were others of us who had been in the movement for some time, but who, at the outset of the conference, had deep confusions and uncertainties which often reflected or resulted in a leaning towards the libertarian position. No one was expelled for being new, unclear

or uncertain. New members, including those in TGI were told explicitly that they "should not feel compelled to choose in any way" (Silvia), and that they should only leave if they felt they adhered to the tendency which TGI represented and which was defined in terms of links on Saturday evening. Old members who were uncertain had the opportunity at this conference to begin to see where the different political positions led, to follow them through to their conclusions and decide which direction they wanted to move in. But the rest of TGI and some others at the conference suffered confusion of a different sort. They had a political position, and with the exception of Sallio they gave no indication of being open to changing it.

When we press for precision and for theoretical clarity we are not grammarians quibbling over words or hacks in love with a hard line. We do it because lack of clarity is dobilitating. It is a handicap that has in some libertarian circles been taken as a sign that the speakers are on the side of the powerless, even as a proof of sincerity. In fact it enforces their own lack of power, and it undermines also the power of those who are trying to make a struggle in the same organisation or movement. We are concerned to be clear because without clarity we cannot know what we are fighting for and what we are fighting against, who are our friends and who are our enemies, what are the implications of what we are saying for how we have to act; because without it we can flop around between a working class feminist strategy and a state plan, without seeing any contradiction and without moving, decisively, to confront the state. The onus is always on those who are trying to hold on to a revolutionary strategy to free themselves from those who prefer confusion. The latter only rarely feel the need to make a distinction.

It was clear that TGI felt at the conference the power that the network represents, and did not want to be cut off from that source of strength. It was clear that they wanted to be as agreeable as possible. They had decided that they could work with us, and did not want to give us a chance to decide that we could not work with them. The refusal for this reason, of some in that group, to stand behind their politics made alot of people very angry, and clinched for many the question of whether they should be expelled. Members of Wages Due summed it up: "That group is refusing the process of struggle."

There were some who felt that we were picking on TGI, that they had not taken a stand against us and should have been left alone. This policy would have been disastrous. Every discussion, then and in the future, would have been inhibited, held back and continually interrupted by the need to deal with a tendency based on a different perspective. The expulsion was essential for us to clear our own heads. Without it we would have been unable to speak freely: we would not have known what context our words would be placed in or how they would be understood. Our search for tactics would have been held back and interrupted by those who did not share our strategy. We would have spent another conference dealing with a tendency which refused to come out, but which set the tone and the boundaries of our progress. We would have had what Silvia called "a network which is not a network, full of mistrust, which will not enable us to act". We would have been unable to trust members of our own organisation to speak for us in public; we would have panicked when they got on the media. We would not have been able to develop either the understanding or the public identity we need in order to oppose those who try to make capitalist development the end of women's struggles.

IX Revolution Vs. Capital

If the form TGI gave their politics failed to protect them and spurred their expulsion, their position itself made the expulsion inevitable. As Silvia said many times at the conference, not every political difference has to lead to a split. But this one did. Judy Quinlan, of Wages Due: "We came here specifically planning to connect with (TGI) and hear their side of the story. Now I'm feeling that I've been a goddam liberal to do that.. (Toronto Wages For Housework Collective's "Statement of Political Differences") very clearly defines the biggest, most important and most upsetting split happening in the Wages for Housework movement. I want that split formalised, I want it dealt with, and I want it finished." In Italy, where the libertarian position has been stated relatively clearly, the groups who wanted to work for a campaign had already formed their own organisation in 1973. As one woman said in Montreal, "how do you work with people who don't believe in Wages for Housework?"

Well before the conference people in the network had been worried about saying others were "not for wages for housework". Even on Saturday night when this question was put there was an uproar in the room. How do you say someone who says she's for the wage is not?

To answer this we have to look at different ways of viewing a demand. A Trotskyist who said she was for wages for housework would put it forward as a transitional demand--not as something she wanted to get but as something to raise the consciousness of other women; in organising around "other issues" she would not use those struggles to build a movement for the wage. Libertarians find the concept of transitional demands insulting to the working class. But they think the demands we can mobilize around must be thrown forward by "the class itself"--excluding us--in local struggles. Since the wage we want for housework cannot be fought for locally or by one sector of women, libertarians too can only see this wage as an abstraction, a consciousness raising tool. For Trotskyists and Libertarians both, demands either arise within the limits of a specific struggle or serve merely to raise people's consciousness of what they can't get under capitalism. Neither conceives of a demand as something we can mobilize around and win which will increase our power and enable us to refuse the lousy choices capital offers us.

For Trotskyists who want to plan the new society from above, and for libertarians who see no way to break through our fragmentation, the revolution is separate from local and sectional struggles. They can therefore only see those struggles as leading to reforms: some actual, quantitative gain for us, and a rationalisation of the capitalist system.

For us the struggle for wages is a struggle to progressively increase and mobilize our power, and to break down the divisions between us. In fighting for wages for housework we put forward a demand which can unite struggling localities and sectors on the basis of what we need and not by subsuming one sector's interests to another's. We are giving focus to what is already a worldwide movement against work and for money. And we are pushing the wage relation to the breaking point. Whatever rationalisations the working class and capital invent, our struggle for more will press capital harder and harder up against the wall.

The libertarian perspective separates the total from the concrete, separates revolution from struggles and demands, separates women from each other, and sends us fleeing to concrete, isolated struggles where we cannot defeat capital.

We have seen in many contexts how the libertarians' acceptance of fragmentation is an acceptance of defeat. They are not alone in this acceptance. All of us live with defeat all around us. We are defeated every time we clock in to a job, everytime we come home tired and cook, every time we make "love" when we'd rather go to sleep, every time we have an abortion when we want a child, every time we are jealous, every time we breathe this filthy, cancerous air. We are defeated every time a woman is raped, every time a woman is forcibly sterilised, every time someone's husband dies in a mine, every time a child is turned away from a hospital because her mother has no cash. For all of us, it's hard to believe that we can win. We are tempted to put our hopes in partial victories and turn to isolated struggles which we know are concrete, instead of setting our sights on a revolution which seems unreal. This political perspective represents the power and ideology of capital in our heads. A group which puts it forward represents capital in our organisation. An acceptance of fragmentation and an acceptance of defeat can only lead to defensiveness, self-protection, and compromises with capital which will inevitably be at the expense of the least powerful sections among us--and at the expense of us all.

TGL is not the ruling class in disguise. They are no different from the rest of us, and their viewpoint is native to us all. But they represent a stage in working class ideology and organisation which we have passed or are passing, a stage of weakness and disorganisation in which capital's hold on us was firmer. We have tried to show concretely how, in practice, the presence of this tendency would hold back the movement for wages for housework. It remains to make the point in general: people who believe that what we're doing is impossible can only tie our hands.

The vote at the conference to expell TGL was passed by 43 to 2, with 20 abstentions. I hope these notes have helped some of the abstentions to see the irrelevancy of kid glove politics, and the urgency of what we have to do. We feel daily the effects of capital's strategy, and daily become more certain of our own. We have to get those wagons on the road.

Ruth Hall APRIL 1975

A number of women, including Beth Ingber, Sidney Ross, Jenny Lister, and Suzie Fleming have helped me to clarify the points made in these notes, and share this analysis of the events at the Montreal conference and of the tendencies that have emerged, there and elsewhere, in the wages for housework movement.

Testimony on Unwaged ^{Housework} Northern Ireland
I understand that there are some women who are opposed to my speaking today. But I am very glad of this opportunity to speak because I come from Northern Ireland and although Northern Ireland is always ^{on} the news ^{with} a woman's point of view is never heard.

I come from Belfast which is occupied by the English State. They have the soldiers there to stop the people trying to free their own country. I come from one of the segregated areas which is Catholic. The state has the area sealed off by Iron gates at the end of all the streets and we the women of minority areas have suffered a lot through state control. First because it's hard to get hold of any money. When you apply for a job in Northern Ireland you have to state which school you went to and all the firms know right away what religion you are. Eight years ^{ago} my husband was made redundant at work, he applied for about 10 jobs which he was well qualified for and was turned down because of his religion. So he went to Scotland to work. The state paid his fare over and since then I have not seen him. He sends me some support for my three children whose ages now are 13, 9, and 8. What I get from him now is well below National Assistance level. Although the state knows this they will not give me a penny towards the support of my family. I have even applied for free ^{school} dinners for my children. I have been turned down because the government judges my needs by what my husband earns and not by how much he contributes to his family. The point is that I have no rights by law. I am not the only housewife in our area like this. I know of others who have five and six children and the state gives them a bare subsistence. When these people apply once a year for the clothing grant which they are entitled to for their children, they are turned down. The state sees women as cogs ^{in the wheels} in their machine and cogs that are not even worth oiling. This is how the state works in the houses of Belfast.

The woman is not paid for the work she does. She is not give any wage for the time she gives to the state which is 24 hours a day. I started doing housework when I was 12 years old. The same as my daughters. And up until now I have never ever received a retaining fee either from the state or from my husband who was Jack-of-all-trades. More so since my husband left me as I now have to do all the house the jobs that he did, like papering and painting and general repairs to the house. Also I now have the full responsibility of rents, rates, electricity and trying to clothe the children, without the extra pound from my husband and although I am now living below state subsistence level the state refuses to pay me for my work.

But this same state rules the home, from the way that you get a flat or a house. You are not allowed to paint the house the colour that you want, then when a woman is due to have a baby the state says which hospital she is to go to. In a lot of cases the doctor induces labour so that the baby is born in the states time and not in its own natural time. When she leaves the hospital the state in the form of the welfare tells you how much weight your baby puts on and whether she should be walking and talking. Then when she is 4½ years old they tell you the child must go to school. They decide what sort of an education ^{she} must have. Whether she has a high enough I.Q. for grammar school or secondary. If what she should leave, then try to put her into a job they want her to do and not what she wants to do. If the child is a slow learner - there is no hope for her. She will be given any old job and if she refuses she is then classed as a trouble-maker. While the children are growing up and while the state is dictating what is right in the home the woman who obeys the state orders does not receive one penny in wage. Not if through ill health or anything else she does not come up to standard when the state needs her. It and takes the women to court. The reason a lot of women are ill-health and ^{suffer} depression is because they have money problems in the home. If the state were doing what is right and paying a woman her rightful wage she would

very little
have ~~no~~ health problems.

I applied for work at the employment exchange. The state trained me a leather stitcher and there are only two factories which would employ me and they are off the Shankill Road. I had to turn these jobs down because they are in the heart of a ^{loyalist} loyalist area. I have been threatened with my life if I am seen there again. When I explained this to the Social Security officer she made me sign a form to say I had refused two jobs and then I was told I would not get any benefits at all. All I am getting now is 5 pound a week. If I was being paid for housework I would need to go out to work. My family and myself would not be living under the conditions we are living in.

Another way the state is in the home in Northern Ireland is through the soldiers. Women, whose husbands and sons have been interned or sentenced for political reasons, and their sympathisers. When the soldiers raid one of these homes the women and children are insulted and degraded by the army. Many a time the woman woke up with a soldier standing over her. The raiding Patrol had burst in the door and he would tell her that this is a raid - we are going to search your house - get out of bed. When the woman asked him to leave the room he just laughed. She could not get her dressing gown. She had to wrap one of the blankets around herself and get out of bed. If there was a military policewoman with them if she or any of her children were girls. If she wanted to go to the toilet - she would go with her. If the woman tried to hit the soldier for being so insulting she would be beaten up. And make no mistake about it this is the only time that the state treats women

women as equal to men in the matter of integration and integration and
 sentence being that the "Needlers" to say the only reaction which the
 state gets from the women is not submission but retaliation in the form
 of stone throwing, fighting and harassing the soldiers in turn. And
 also we want wages for the work that we do at home.

If wages for housework were granted in Northern Ireland it would
 mean a lot of people would give up their jobs in factories as they are
 forced to work there at the moment through sheer necessity as there are
 not enough jobs in the country at the moment and the rate of
 unemployment is very high there. And then the unemployed could get
 work and there would be a surplus of jobs which in turn would mean
 the large business people would have to raise the factory workers'
 wages to keep the people working for them, and because there would
 be a surplus of jobs, the fear which the Protestant people have of
 losing their jobs, which is one of the reasons the unionist government
 was in power so long, would have been solved, and the people of
 N. Ireland would start to think what has the British government been
 doing with the money they have been asking out of us all these years.
 And they would soon start to realise that the so called British
 share-holders had been using them to line their own pockets and the
 ones they should have been fighting and fearing all along was not
 the minority but the state. Then the way to a free and united
 Ireland would be seen as a better course than unity with England.

When women unite and win wages for housework they will then realise
 how they have been exploited by the governments of their countries
 and will also be able to be independent of men. Which in turn will
 make them realise that they need no longer be door mats to male
 bullying and dominance.

Rose Craig

Statement to the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women

UNWAGED HOUSEWORK : ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE

The crime against us internationally from which all other crimes against us flow is our life sentence of housework at home and outside, serving men, children and other women, in order to produce and reproduce the working class. For this we are never paid a wage.

This crime of work and wagelessness brands us for life as the weaker sex and delivers us powerless to employers, government planners and legislators, doctors, the police, prisons and mental institutions as well as to individual men, for a lifetime of servitude and imprisonment. Our campaign for wages for this work is our demand for power to refuse the social and sexual assaults on our minds, our bodies and our relations - in a word, our demand for power to refuse this destiny of work which we carry in every country, wherever we find ourselves.

It is impossible for us to separate ourselves off by country since one of the greatest crimes against women is the way we have been divided, by the status and income of men we marry, by whether or not we are with men, by whether or not we work full-time in the home, by whether or not we have children, by whether we are native or immigrant, and by language, race and nation, and by the technology of our exploitation.

Power to the sisters and therefore to all the exploited.

New York Wages for Housework Committee
Toronto Wages for Housework Committee
Power of Women-Wages for Housework Campaign,
London

These organisations have initiated and promoted the Wages for Housework Campaign in their respective countries, in South America, Australia and New Zealand, in conjunction with the Wages for Housework Committee in Padua, Italy. At this Tribunal Power of Women from England has been asked to represent Canada and the United States in testifying against the crime of unwaged housework. Literature, videotapes, film and music as well as oral testimony from these countries and from Northern Ireland will be put in evidence.

(For the three addresses, please see overleaf.)

TO ALL GOVERNMENTS:

The women of the world are serving notice. We clean your homes and factories. We raise the next generation of workers for you. Whatever else we may do, we are the housewives of the world. In return for our work, you have only asked us to work harder.

We are serving notice to you that we intend to be paid for the work we do. We want wages for every dirty toilet, every painful childbirth, every indecent assault, every cup of coffee and every smile. And if we don't get what we want, then we will simply refuse to work any longer.

We have brought up our children to be good citizens and to respect your laws and you have put them in factories, in prisons, in urban and suburban ghettos and in typing pools. Our children deserve more than you can offer and now we will bring them up to EXPECT more.

We have borne babies for you when you needed more workers, and we have submitted to sterilisation when you didn't. Our wombs are not government property any longer.

We have scrubbed and polished and oiled and waxed and scoured until our arms and backs ached, and you have only created more dirt. Now you will rot in your own garbage.

We have worked in the isolation of our homes when you needed us to and we have taken on a second job too when you needed that. Now we want to decide WHEN we work, HOW we work, and WHO we work for. We even want to be able to decide NOT TO WORK AT ALL - like you.

We are teachers and nurses and secretaries and prostitutes and actresses and childcare workers and hostesses and waitresses and cooks and cleaning ladies and workers of every variety. We have sweated while you have grown rich. Now we want back the wealth we have produced.

We want it in cash, retroactive and immediately. And we want ALL OF IT.

Wages for Housework Committee,
745 Danforth Ave., Suite 301
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
Wages for Housework Committee
491 Pacific Street,
Brooklyn, N.Y., U.S.A.

Power of Women-Wages for Housework
Campaign
Wages for Housework Women's Centre
129 Drummond Street,
London, N.W. 1, ENGLAND

Intervento presentato all'assemblea da una femminista che fa parte della campagna internazionale per il Salario Al lavoro domestico, sulle prospettive di lotta di tutte le donne contro i crimini subiti dalle donne.

Non voglio solo esprimere la mia profonda solidarietà alle donne imprigionate e perseguitate politiche, ma anche, e soprattutto, affermare che tutte le donne che lottano, nella casa e all'esterno, sono consapevoli che, quando lo Stato non riesce più a controllarle direttamente o attraverso la famiglia, le chiuderà in una sua istituzione, carceri, ospedali psichiatrici, case di rieducazione, ecc.. La lotta contro queste istituzioni è quindi anche la nostra lotta perchè esse costituiscono l'ultimo passo di una repressione che già, a livelli diversi, subiamo ogni giorno.

Tuttavia per tutte noi è molto importante reagire ad ogni tentativo di dividere le lotte delle donne in momenti isolati, per controllarci meglio ed usarci le une contro le altre.

Anche il movimento femminista accetta spesso questa divisione separando le lotte che le donne fanno nel mondo secondo linee estranee alla loro condizione specifica di sfruttamento. Anche in questo tribunale ci troviamo di fronte ad una lista di crimini isolati, a donne divise per nazionalità.

Inanzitutto presentare una lista di crimini, senza porre le prospettive di lotta contro questi crimini, è sempre difensivo. Continueremo così a venire ai tribunali internazionali a sentire sempre più orribili contro le donne.

Ad ogni crimine contro di noi corrisponde, in realtà, una resistenza al crimine da parte delle donne che mettono in atto lotte individuali e collettive. Le donne lottano e hanno sempre lottato contro il lavoro e la struttura di potere nella famiglia. Lottano ogni giorno contro le condizioni in cui ci vengono imposti i rapporti sessuali sempre a servizio degli altri. Le donne difendono il loro corpo contro le istituzioni mediche, difendono la loro salute in fabbrica distrutta dal troppo lavoro al quale si aggiunge quello domestico. Le donne lottano ogni giorno nelle case, nelle fabbriche, nelle scuole, negli uffici, per ridurre il loro orario di lavoro ed avere più soldi nelle loro mani.

Ad ognuna di queste lotte il sistema risponde con la repressione. Ci attaccano gli uomini a livello individuale per ristabilire il loro controllo su di noi e poter continuare ad usarci per assorbire le sconfitte che subiscono sul lavoro (ad es. se non ci possono più violentare in casa ci assai sono nelle strade). A queste lotte risponde lo Stato chiudendo ci in ospedali psichiatrici e carceri.

Per far fronte a questa repressione, sempre più pesante perchè le donne stanno espandendo le loro lotte in tutto il

mondo per affermare i loro diritti ed imporre i loro bisogni, il movimento delle donne deve ricomporre le divisioni che ci vengono imposte dividendoci per nazionalità, tra madri e non madri, tra giovani e vecchie, tra chi fa l'amore con le donne e chi con gli uomini. Pur riconoscendo la specificità e la diversità delle condizioni in cui viviamo e lavoriamo, fondamentali quelle di razza e di classe, affermiamo l'unità del movimento nella piena autonomia di ogni sua componente.

L'unico modo per non dividere le nostre lotte è quello di attaccare la radice fondamentale del nostro sfruttamento cogliendo la base comune della nostra condizione di donne.

Questa base fondamentale che definisce per tutte noi che cosa significa essere donne, è il lavoro domestico che tutte facciamo nelle case mettendo le nostre energie fisiche, intellettuali affettive e sessuali a servizio degli altri, anche se qualcuna di noi crede di riuscire ad evitarlo, aggiungendo al suo lavoro domestico un altro lavoro, facendo attività politica, socializzandoci in comunità alternative, facendo meno figli, trovando un partner più comprensivo, o amando una donna.

Il lavoro domestico non può essere rifiutato a livello individuale o con un processo di presa di coscienza perchè è troppo prezioso per il sistema capitalistico: serve infatti a riprodurre la forza lavoro, la merce fondamentale per il sistema di produzione, al minimo dei costi e quindi al massimo dei profitti.

Ogni nostra lotta per ridurre o mutare le condizioni di questo lavoro viene attaccata con infiniti e terribili strumenti di repressione, come questo Tribunale ha drammaticamente dimostrato. Noi lottiamo continuamente contro questo lavoro, ma siamo sempre senza potere perchè non abbiamo soldi nostri e quindi siamo sempre le più vulnerabili a tutti gli attacchi degli uomini, dei giudici, della chiesa, dei medici, della famiglia, dei padroni, della polizia.

Solo quando potremo unificare in una prospettiva comune la ricchezza e la creatività delle nostre lotte, saremo capaci di imporre i nostri bisogni, prima di tutto quello di avere soldi nostri che vogliamo dallo Stato perchè risparmi sulla nostra pelle ~~mixxi~~ e controlla direttamente le condizioni del nostro lavoro, stabilendo quanti figli facciamo e quando, come li alleviamo (come la testimonianza della compagna Nord Irlandese ha mostrato) è indispensabile avere una strategia di attacco che possa riunire le lotte che organizziamo contro il nostro lavoro in casa e fuori, in ~~mm~~ quanto ragazze madri, mogli, lavoratrici nelle fabbriche, negli uffici, nelle scuole, negli ospedali, come ragazze giovani che esigono una vita non controllata dalla famiglia.

Per questo noi ci organizziamo a livello internazionale rompendo le divisioni che ci vengono imposte. Per questo abbiamo portato al Tribunale 4 testimonianze di lotte, collegate tra loro in una prospettiva globale che le unifica.

1. La lotta contro le istituzioni sanitarie nell'Ospedale di Ferrara contro le condizioni in cui le donne sono costrette a partorire.

2. La lotta per il diritto a difendere la propria salute ~~portata avanti dalle operaie della fabbrica di orologi Solari di Udine che hanno ottenuto di determinare la qualità delle visite ginecologiche, almeno in parte, la qualità e di farsi pagare le giornate delle visite come orario di lavoro affermando che la cura di se stessi è da considerare, come tutto il lavoro domestico, lavoro di cui si appropria direttamente il padrone. Questa lotta si è diffusa anche ad altre fabbriche vicine.~~

3. La lotta di una donna del Nord Irlanda, madre di tre figli, contro lo Stato che sfrutta il suo lavoro domestico gratuito e determina, ad altissimi livelli di repressione, le condizioni di lavoro e di vita dell'intera famiglia.

4. La testimonianza di una compagna lesbica che lottando insieme ad altre donne lesbiche e nella prospettiva del salario al lavoro domestico attacca direttamente lo Stato per aumentare il potere di scegliere le condizioni della propria vita di tutte le donne, iniziando dalla possibilità di avere rapporti sessuali in funzione di se stessi e con chi si vuole, libertà che si fonda innanzitutto sulla disponibilità di tempo e di soldi.

Le donne che hanno portato queste testimonianze non si dividono dalle altre donne in base alle condizioni in cui svolgono il loro lavoro domestico (~~se sono madri o no, se hanno un altro lavoro pagato o se lavorano in casa a pieno tempo~~). La ~~prospettiva politica in cui si muovono è invece quella di portare un attacco globale contro il lavoro che tutte facciamo nelle case in quanto donne e contro la mancanza di potere che tutte dobbiamo affrontare per la mancanza di soldi nostri e di tempo per noi.~~

La campagna per il salario al lavoro domestico intende fare sapere a tutte le donne che abbiamo diritto a tutto quello che ci serve e che vogliamo prima di tutto organizzarci ~~ma~~ affinché lo Stato dia i soldi che ci servono a tutte le donne. Lo Stato che si arricchisce sul nostro lavoro e che determina le condizioni terribili delle nostre vite.

Solo rendendo esplicita questa richiesta di soldi e di maggiore potere per le donne, rendendo chiare e riunendo le lotte che tutte stiamo facendo per avere tempo e soldi per noi, potremo smettere di essere alla mercé di coloro che compiono ogni giorno dei crimini contro di noi, consapevoli che il crimine fondamentale è la massa di lavoro domestico di cui tutte siamo derubate nelle case e che serve a riprodurre la forza lavoro.

Resolved:

That unwaged housework is robbery with violence.

That this work and wagelessness is a crime from which all other crimes flow. That it brands us for life as the weaker sex and delivers us powerless to employers, government planners and legislators, doctors, the police, prisons and mental institutions as well as to men for a lifetime of servitude and imprisonment.

This tribunal demands wages for housework for all women from the governments of the world. We will organise internationally to win back the wealth that has been stolen from us in every country and to put an end to the crimes daily committed against us all.

f. h. a. j. j.

LOTTA ALL'OSPEDALE DI FERRARA

1983 - BASTA FALCONE
1984 - LETTERE APERTE
1986 - TRIBUNALE DI BRUXELLES

Il materiale d'informazione che divulghiamo in città da un anno è stato portato in questi giorni al Tribunale di Bruxelles, sui crimini perpetrati contro le donne nel mondo, organizzato dal Movimento Femminista Internazionale.

Queste notizie sono state riportate dalla stampa, dalla radio, dalla televisione a livello nazionale e internazionale.

E' lo scandalo al quale Medici e Amministrazione credono di poter rispondere con querele per diffamazione.

Questa volta si appigliano ad un macroscopico errore di stampa, che riporta come nostra affermazione che: "Su 92 bambini nati recentemente il 50% sono spastici".

Nei nostri documenti più volte diffusi è invece scritto: "Su un campione di 92 bambini assistiti dal Centro Provinciale Spastici più del 50% ha subito lesioni gravi per decorso patologico del parto".

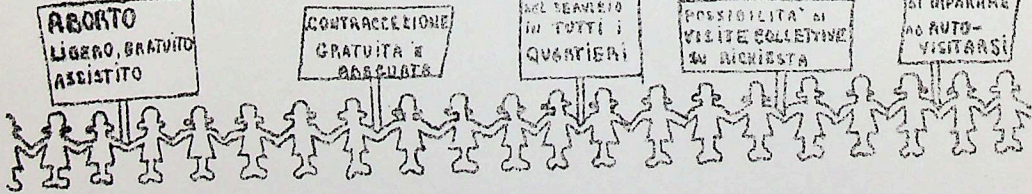
CI SIANO STUFATE DI COMUNICATI E DI DENUNCE,
VOGLIAMO CHE LA SITUAZIONE ALL'INTERNO DEL
REPARTO MATERITA' CAMBI RADICALMENTE.

V O G L I A M O



In risposta alla nostra lotta gli Amministratori della città schierandosi dalla parte dei baroni della medicina hanno proposto di dare la responsabilità dei Consultori ginecologici cittadini al prof. Tortora, direttore della Clinica Ostetrica incriminata.

Anche nei CONSULTORI vogliamo difendere la nostra salute: - chiediamo l'immediato ritiro dell'incarico al prof. Tortora e ...



-il controllo delle donne sul funzionamento della struttura.

CONTINUIAMO LA LOTTA PER DIFENDERE LA NOSTRA SALUTE

Raccogliamo testimonianze di donne su come hanno partorito in Ospedale. Tutte le interessate possono rivolgersi direttamente a noi. La sede è aperta tutti i Venerdì dalle 17 alle 20 e Giovedì dalle 21,30.

II.3.1976
C.I.P. Via U. Bassi 13/A
Fusetti V.

GRUPPO FEMMINISTA PER IL SALARIO AL LAVORO DOMESTICO DI FERRARA

LOTTA DELLE DONNE

ALL'OSPEDALE S. ANNA DI FERRARA

COME ABBIAMO COMINCIATO

LE DONNE ATTACCANO LE ISTITUZIONI

LA RISPOSTA DEI MEDICI

L'ORGANIZZAZIONE DELLE DONNE

DIFFUSIONE DELLA LOTTA

PROCESSI POLITICI

PROSPETTIVE DELLE NOSTRE LOTTE

GRUPPO FEMMINISTA

PER IL SALARIO AL LAVORO DOMESTICO

Via Dgo Bassi 13/1 FERRARA

Greetings from Montreal! This is a contribution to our discussion on our relationship with the Left, an attempt to put their attacks in perspective.

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF DOMESTIC LABOUR: A FALSE DEBATE

The polemic against the wages for housework perspective often takes the form of a theoretical discussion of the productivity of domestic labour. Marx defined productive labour as labour that directly adds to capital; therefore, productive workers have social power since capital can continue to exist only with their cooperation. Their social power lies in the threat to capital of the potential withdrawal of their labour. Unproductive workers, they argue, cannot destroy capital by withdrawing their labour, since their labour does not produce capital in the first place.

Arguments about the productivity of domestic labour are really questions of social power: what sectors have social power? where does the struggle against capital take place? For various reasons, the traditional Left continues to argue that domestic labour is unproductive labour, i.e. that housewives have no social power, and therefore, real political organization must take place at the point of industrial production, in the factories, where real social power lies.

It is insufficient to answer these attacks with our own quotes from Marx. WFH is an attack on the Leninist concept of party organization and therefore threatens the hegemony of Left parties in the anti-capitalist struggle. It is in this context that we must reply. However, I supply one short quote from Marx on the question of domestic labour:

"It remains true however that the commodity appears as past, objectivised labour, and that therefore, if it does not appear in the form of a thing, it can only appear in the form of labour power itself... Productive labour would therefore be such labour as produces commodities or directly produces, trains, develops, maintains or reproduces labour-power itself."

Even the most sophisticated Left attack, Wally Secombe's article "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism" (New Left Review #83), is merely a more elaborate attempt to relegate women to a secondary, auxiliary role in revolutionary struggle, raising "Women's ~~ixi~~ issues" in a purely agitational, shit-disturbing attack on capital. "Mobilizations of housewives raising demands for the socialization of housework, demands against the state, demands for price-watch committees, etc.--such ~~ix~~ actions can make a tremendous contribution to the advancement of the class struggle particularly if they are combined with simultaneous proletarian initiatives." (emphasis in original)

Lise Vogel ("The Earthly Family", Radical America, Fall 1973) thinks that Marx didn't discuss domestic labour because "Marx...like his contemporaries, was imprisoned with a male perspective that ultimately distorted his understanding of the family and of women's productive activity in general." In spite of this, Vogel sticks to Marx's (earlier) definition of productive labour as being labour that is necessarily waged and produces capital to conclude: "Dallacosta...confuses being necessary to the system with being 'productive' in the strict sense." This kind of reasoning--that Marx was limited by sexism, and didn't discuss housework, but using his definition anyway to ~~ix~~ discredit Dallacosta's analysis--is an example of an awkward attempt to advance theory (equated with going "beyond Marx", i.e. criticizing him) while falling back on the old orthodoxies and century-old definitions to deal with the first real theoretical advance of the women's movement over the outmoded trade-unionist strategies of the Left.

Theories of Surplus Value Part I (Progress Publishers, Moscow) contains a large section on ~~ix~~ theories of productive and unproductive labour in which Marx mentions prior definitions of productive labour and criticizes them for their historical short-sightedness. Before the industrial revolution, the Physiocrats stepped forward to claim that only agricultural labour was productive, the ideological reflection of the dominant form of economic organization at the time: agriculture. "Though wrong in thinking that only agricultural labour is productive, the Physiocrats put forward the correct view that from the capitalist standpoint, only that labour is productive which creates a surplus value; labour which produces a net product, not for itself, but for the landowner." (TSV p 153)

When merchant capital dominated England's economy, the Mercantilists claimed that trade, not agriculture, was the source of all value: "The basis of their (the Mercantilists) theory was the idea that labour is only productive in those branches of production whose products, when sent abroad, bring back more money than they have cost (or than had to be exported in exchange for them)... (TSV p 203)

In 1819, David Ricardo promoted the interests of industrial capital by claiming that the labour of landowners was unproductive. And Adam Smith (Wealth of Nations, 1776) was among the first to advance the notion of productive labour as the production of ~~x~~ commodities, labour which is directly exchanged with capital and produces value greater than the cost of its own subsistence.

Marx saw quite clearly ~~his~~ his own role in the historical evolution of a definition of productive labour. He drew from the Physiocrats their concept of surplus product, from Adam Smith the commodity, and formulated his own definition linked to the development of industrial capitalism in the mid-nineteenth century.

"Productive labour, in its ~~meaning~~ ^{meaning} for capitalist production, is wage labour, which, exchanged against the variable part of capital (the part of capital that is spent on wages), reproduces not only this part of the capital (or the value of its own labour power), but in addition produces surplus value for the capitalist. It is only thereby that commodity or money is transformed into capital, is produced as capital...only that labour power is productive which produces a value greater than its own." (TSV p 152)

The single most important advance that Marx made over all pre-existing theories of productive labour was the productivity is determined by the social relations within which the labour takes place, as opposed to the Physiocrats, for example, who claimed that all value comes from the land, and could see value only in real physical production (eg. vegetables).

"These definitions are therefore not derived from the material characteristics of labour (neither from the nature of its product nor from the particular character of the labour as concrete labour), but from the definite social form, the social relations of production, within which the labour is realised. An actor, for example, or even a clown, according to this definition, is a productive laborer if he works in the service of a capitalist (an entrepreneur), to whom he returns more labour than he receives from him in the form of wages." (TSV, p 157)

Marx's theory of productive labour is no less historically determined than those of the Physiocrats, Mercantilists, Ricardo or Smith. The social relations and economic organization of mid-nineteenth century capitalism, specifically, the factory as the basic unit of industrial production, impose their own limits on the actual content of his discussion of productive labour. The fact that Marx did not discuss housework as it presently exists, as women's work in the home, may be due to the fact that the concept of "domestic science" did not develop until the latter part of the nineteenth century among the middle and upper classes. (Research into this question is obviously something we need to do-- how was domestic labour organized, the role of women in the industrial labour force, women in the home, women who worked as domestic servants for the middle and upper classes, etc.)

An analysis of the nature of domestic labour, and the social power it commands, must then proceed from two basic assumptions:

- 1) That the productivity of labour is a function of the social relations within which it takes place, and
- 2) That the development of capitalism in the past century has progressed from the factory as the basic unit of social industrial production to the social factory, the total capitalisation of all social sectors, particularly the home.

From that basis, the debate about the productivity of labour with reference to Marx's definitions is placed in perspective: these discussions are thinly veiled ideological (not theoretical) attacks on our attempts to construct an autonomous women's movement, disguised as "scientific" research. We reject the Left's static view of social power as given, and replace it with a perspective of wages for housework that ~~changes~~ changes the social relations themselves, and bring the struggle against capital into the community, where the reproduction of labour power takes place.

Responses are requested:

Susan Wheeler
3940, rue Berri
Montréal, Québec H2L 4H1
Canada tel. (514) 845-0419

all'interno della favolosa

CAOS AL TRIBUNALE FEMMINISTA DI BRUXELLES

Le «demivierges» assaltano il congresso

DAL NOSTRO CORRISPONDENTE

Bruxelles, 6 marzo

Gli uomini, forse, ci opprimono sul piano umano e politico, in casa e sul lavoro: ma Dio ci salvi da un mondo tutto di donne.

Dopo avere vissuto tre giorni in quel microcosmo femminile che è il Tribunale internazionale dei crimini contro le donne, si è frastornati dalla confusione, dal disordine, dalla caterva di parole, e si è profondamente delusi dalla incapacità del congresso di indicare una alternativa alla attuale « schiavitù dell'uomo padrone ». Così come è, la condizione femminile è certo insoddisfacente: ma bisogna riconoscere che mille donne insieme non sono ancora riuscite a gettare le basi di una strategia comune, capace di rivalorizzare il loro contributo alla società. E diffatti le due scrittrici francesi che dovevano prendere oggi la parola si sono ben guardate dal farsi vedere la stessa Simone De Beauvoir si sta probabilmente rimangiando le alate parole del suo messaggio, che salutava il convegno delle femministe come una « data storica »

Se il Tribunale continuerà nell'orgia di vani lamenti che lo ha contraddistinto finora, si dovrà concludere che nel ventesimo secolo la donna non è ancora matura per essere « deconionizzata ». Tutto ciò può essere folcloristico, ma è anche molto triste.

A parte qualche testimonianza dal significato « civile », come la denuncia delle condizioni in cui in genere è attuata la maternità in Italia ed è imposta la sterilità in certi paesi del continente americano, si sono udite a Bruxelles solo testimonianze di casi pietosi, certamente tristissimi, ma isolati e senza alcun suggerimento pratico di relazione alla oppressione alla violenza, all'ingiustizia di cui soffrono le donne. Il comitato organizzatore se ne è talmente reso conto, che per ben tre volte oggi ha cercato di discutere la coscienza collettiva delle presenti, con un invito a mutare il programma e a riunirsi in comitati di studi per preparare una linea di azione comune, rinunciando ad una inutile manifestazione di vittimismo. Questi appelli sono caduti nel vuoto.

Se il lato costruttivo del congresso lascia a desiderare, non così avviene per quello pittoresco talvolta al limite dell'equivoco. Le bellicose discepoli di Saffo hanno organizzato un colpo di mano per protestare contro la discriminazione di cui si sentono vittime da parte delle altre congressiste e perfino di quelle appartenenti ai partiti di sinistra che le considerano « borghesi individualiste ».

Erano certamente più di un centinaio le donne che nel pomeriggio, dopo un « all'erta alla bomba » durato mezz'ora, hanno invaso il palco della presidenza. Portavano sul petto un cartello che diceva: « Io sono lesbica, amo le donne » e sulla schiena un secondo foglio che a lettere cubitali poneva la domanda: « E tu? ». Alcune si erano coperte il viso con un fazzoletto, per evitare di essere riconosciute in patria attraverso i reportages televisivi.

Il loro proclama, letto con voce stentorea, rivendica il diritto ad una anomala situazione: « Essere lesbiche non è solo un fatto sessuale, ma anche culturale e psichico, che investe l'intera personalità »; pro-

testa poi contro il « razzismo » di quanti le tengono al bando senza considerare che « anche noi siamo state violentate e continuiamo ad essere sfruttate dagli uomini, anche noi abbiamo problemi di famiglia e di lavoro »; precisa, infine: « Non amiamo gli uomini, non perché non possiamo, ma perché non vogliamo ».

L'irruzione del manipolo di donne dai tormentati amori è terminata in un coro generale, sottolineato dagli applausi della platea. Approfittando del momento, una « rivoluzionaria » francese è volata sul palco come una erinni, ha strappato i tre microfoni e si è messa a urlare insulti « contro la gerarchia del comitato ». Si è cercato di calmare l'esagitata con un secchio d'acqua in testa, e ne è seguito un parapiglia generale, degno di un film western.

La calma è tornata dopo oltre un'ora: le congressiste hanno ritrovato la concordia ascoltando ripugnanti episodi di violenza carnale dove, finalmente, il colpevole era uno solo, l'uomo.

Mila Malvestiti

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TERMINATE LE SEDUTE DEL TRIBUNALE FEMMINISTA

Sentenza a Bruxelles: colpevole

DAL NOSTRO CORRISPONDENTE

Bruxelles, 8 marzo

L'attesa dichiarazione universale sui diritti femminili è rinviata a tempi migliori; il Tribunale internazionale del crimine contro le donne, ha chiuso stasera i battenti tra molti applausi, ma senza alcuna mozione ufficiale. Forse domani saranno presentati alla stampa dal comitato organizzatore come bilancio positivo le prese di posizione dei gruppi di studio che, al lavoro da ieri, hanno cercato di salvare il salvabile tracciando le linee di una futura strategia di lotta contro le violenze fisiche, morali, economiche, sociali e politiche di cui sono vittime le donne nel mondo moderno.

La verità è che il congresso, più che un tribunale, è stato una tribuna che è servita a millecinquecento delegate provenienti da cinque continenti, di conoscersi, di raccontarsi i propri problemi, di compiangersi a vicenda, ed infine di riunire le idee per organizzare la rivolta contro il maschio oppressore. Si voleva costruire una diga contro lo strapotere dell'uomo, ma la forza femminile si è suddivisa in mille rivoli con diverse direzioni.

Il risultato politico più significativo è senza dubbio il ravvicinamento delle donne israeliane e palestinesi: grazie al femminismo, hanno superato gli odi di parte firmando in comune una dichiarazione di condanna delle «strutture maschili» che cercano di separarle; esse si propongono ormai di lavorare insieme, mano nella mano, per le conquiste del mondo femminile.

Sul piano umano avrà forse più risonanza la lettera, indirizzata da alcune celebrità come Simone de Beauvoir, Jeanne Moreau, Giulienne Halimi e sottoscritta da cinquecento congressiste, al pa-

dre di una quindicenne belga che sta lasciandosi morire per amore. Vitolett ama un uomo di 41 anni, che il padre, definito «oppressore e castratore», ha fatto gettare in carcere per corruzione di minorenni: la figlia, disperata, da 43 giorni sta facendo uno sciopero totale della fame e, se pure verrà salvata, porterà tutta la vita le conseguenze di questa vicenda, dato che la salute è ormai distrutta. In questa missiva le donne esprimono la totale solidarietà con l'infelice giovanetta, respingono la tesi che l'autorità paterna conceda poteri di vita e di morte sui figli, si appellano ai sentimenti umani dell'inflessibile genitore perché «renda vita e salute alla sua creatura», concedendole l'emancipazione legale nonostante la

giovannissima età e, quindi, l'autorizzazione alle nozze.

Altri documenti, applauditi dall'assemblea ma non votati ufficialmente, denunciano il martirio delle prigioniere politiche, la tristissima situazione delle donne anziane, la mortificazione crudele delle madri nubili, l'assurda violenza contro le donne percosse dall'uomo, padre o marito che sia: in diversi paesi si cercherà ora di creare dei centri di ricoveri per queste disgraziate. Le moderne amazzoni, seguaci di Saffo, chiedono invece libertà di scelta del partner della propria vita sessuale.

Le italiane si sono battute soprattutto per la concessione di un salario per ogni donna in quanto tale: a loro avviso, il mancato pagamento del lavoro domestico, che opprime sempre anche quanti hanno un'occupazione fuori casa, è «un furto attuato con violenza, è un crimine che sta alla base di ogni altro crimine». Se, cioè, le donne potessero avere dallo Stato un salario non sarebbero più alla mercé dei vizi né delle violenze maschili, e potrebbero reagire «ad una vita di servitù e di prigionia». Tutti i governi del mondo sono dunque invitati a retribuire il lavoro casalingo, ma avrà mai un'eco questo appello? Ad ogni modo il 1.º maggio inizierà a Napoli una campagna nazionale e internazionale per il salario al lavoro domestico.

«Donne di tutto il mondo unitevi» proclama il manifesto di un altro gruppo di lavoro, che riconosce al Tribunale il merito di aver dato una definizione femminile della violenza: essa cioè non si limita ad esempio agli attentati terroristici come pretendono gli uomini, ma è anche lo sfruttamento della donna come madre, figlia, sorella.

Tutta questa fioritura di prese di posizione disparate testimonia della totale libertà di azione delle congressiste e, naturalmente, del poco coordinamento dei lavori. Così è avvenuto che un gruppo di studio, dopo cinque ore di discussioni, ha richiesto l'eliminazione delle cause della prostituzione nella società attuale, anche a seguito della denuncia di una giovane e graziosa giapponese, secondo la quale i bagni turchi nell'impero del Sol Levante costringono le inservienti a concedersi ai clienti per arrotondare uno stipendio di fame. Contemporaneamente però l'assemblea ha dato la parola ad una baldanzosa trentenne americana che si è presentata come «una prostituta degli Stati Uniti». Dopo aver protestato per l'etichetta di «puttana» che si è trovata incollata addosso dal tempo del suo primo arresto nel 1962 («Anche se il tribunale allora mi ha dichiarato innocente»), ha finito per fare un'apologia del «mestiere» che ha denunciato come «la più antica ingiustizia e non la più vecchia professione del mondo». Ha accusato il governo tedesco di essere «il più grande prosenetta, perché mantiene legalmente le case di piacere», ed ha chiesto ufficialmente che «gli atti sessuali compiuti in privato tra adulti consenzienti siano riconosciuti come un servizio pubblico e non come un'attività criminale punibile dalla legge».

Poiché il Tribunale di Bruxelles non ha saputo definire una strategia di lotta ai crimini contro le donne, verrà organizzato tra un paio di anni un'altra assise internazionale. Nel frattempo comitati di lavoro si terranno in contatto per mantenere accesa la fiaccola del femminismo.

Mila Malvestiti

Donne-pilota esuberanti in Uganda

Nairobi, 8 marzo

Il presidente dell'Uganda Idi Amin ha invitato sette allieve che stanno seguendo un corso per conseguire il brevetto militare da pilota a frenare la loro esuberanza sessuale dopo aver saputo che due di esse sono rimaste incinte.

«Alcune di voi non hanno rispettato il regolamento e così ora si trovano in stato interessante» — ha detto Amin alle allieve — se venite a trovarvi in stato interessante il vostro rendimento di pilota ne risentirà».

Il presidente ugandese, secondo quanto riferisce l'organo del governo «Voce dell'Uganda» avrebbe altresì esortato le donne a accantonare i piaceri sessuali per concentrarsi tutto sul corso.

Per il futuro, a evitare il ripetersi di simili episodi, Amin ha detto che le donne che faranno parte della prima squadriglia aerea femminile dell'aeronautica ugandese, oltre alle tecniche di volo, verranno istruite sui metodi anticoncezionali.

“Donne”

France

VIOL, TORTURE, et CONDITION FEMININE

La torture est dénoncée comme allant à l'encontre de la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et le Code de Nuremberg.

Et les droits de la FEMME?

Définition de la torture: sévices corporels ou psychologiques perpétrés contre la volonté de la victime, dans le but d'anéantir l'Autre en tant que personne, pour briser sa révolte.

Dans le cas de la femme qui refuse un rapport sexuel qui lui est alors imposé par la force, cela s'appelle le viol. Le viol défini juridiquement et reconnu comme un crime n'est que physique: il se limite à la pénétration du pénis dans le vagin contre le gré de la victime. Mais en fait, le véritable crime est l'anéantissement, par l'homme, de la femme en tant qu'être. Il s'agit de briser sa révolte en la torturant par le sexe, physiquement et psychologiquement.

Le viol est un crime de classe: les hommes en tant que groupe contre les femmes en tant que groupe. Toute femme peut être victime d'un viol: enfant, jeune fille, femme seule, femme mariée, femme âgée...et même femme morte. La société cautionne le viol et en est complice, car elle admet une situation permanente d'insécurité pour toutes les femmes. La femme qui refuse le statut qui lui est proposé par l'idéologie patriarcale est violée moralement tous les jours par toute une série de structures et d'institutions visant à nier son intégrité, son identité propre.

La femme vit dans la peur du viol depuis son enfance. Un nombre étonnant de petites filles sont victimes d'agressions sexuelles dans leur famille même, ou de la part de leurs proches. Le climat de terreur ainsi créé persiste à l'âge adulte et pousse la femme à chercher la "protection" là où elle ne peut jamais en être sûre: chez les hommes. D'ailleurs, toute femme, dès l'enfance, victime potentielle du viol, est culpabilisée et accusée de provocation - on retourne sur les femmes ce dont les hommes sont coupables.

Il en résulte, en France, que le viol est un crime dont on parle très peu et dont les femmes hésitent à se plaindre. Une femme violée sur vingt, seulement, ose porter plainte (1.538 en 1974), et le nombre de plaintes qui arrivent devant les tribunaux est encore plus réduit. Souvent une plainte pour viol est commuée en plainte pour coups et blessures (voir les cas d'ANNE & ARACELLI, d'EVE et de MONIQUE). Parmi les hommes accusés de viol, peu sont condamnés, les peines infligées ne sont pas sévères, et souvent ne sont pas purgées dans leur totalité.

Trois témoignages personnels sur le viol seront présentés par le groupe Tribunal français (EVE, HELENE, ANNE & ARACELLI), ainsi qu'un quatrième cas dont la victime ne sera pas présente (MONIQUE).

EVE a été violée par trois hommes à la suite d'une soirée improvisée avec un groupe de jeunes rencontrés dans son immeuble. Le juge d'instruction n'a pas encore retenu sa plainte pour viol, et les trois violeurs sont actuellement recherchés pour d'autres délits.

HELENE a été violée à l'âge de 14 ans, par le meilleur ami de son père qui venait de mourir. Sévèrement traumatisée, elle a souffert de troubles psychologiques pendant des années et n'a parlé de son expérience qu'à l'âge de 18 ans. Traitée de putain, culpabilisée, elle n'a jamais osé porter plainte.

ANNE et ARACELLI, qui ne se cachent pas d'être lesbiennes, ont été violées pendant leurs vacances en France en été 1974, par trois hommes, après une lutte violente. A la suite d'une longue bataille juridique, leurs agresseurs, poursuivis d'abord pour coups et blessures, seront traduits devant les Assises, accusés de viol.

MONIQUE prend un verre chez un couple rencontré dans un bar et se trouve contrainte de vivre une scène d'"Histoire d'O". Juridiquement elle n'a pas été "violée" puisque, malgré les tortures qu'elle a subies, elle n'a pas été pénétrée par un pénis. L'organisateur de cette soirée n'a pas nié les faits, les considérant comme bénins...

Le viol est le seul crime où la victime est traitée en accusée, car c'est un crime que la société préfère nier plutôt que punir. Par le viol, l'homme cherche à soumettre et à humilier la femme et, si possible, à la faire participer à sa propre soumission et à sa propre humiliation. Ce sont ces buts même que cherchent à atteindre les structures de la société patriarcale: famille nucléaire, exploitation économique, hiérarchie de classes, religions autoritaires, militarisme, contrôle de nos fonctions reproductrices, systèmes d'éducation sexistes, prostitution, pornographie, licence sexuelle déguisée en "libération". Tant que ces structures subsisteront, nous serons continuellement violées.

Pour que nous cessions d'être des victimes, nous devons nous-mêmes prendre en main la lutte contre le viol. Nous pouvons, individuellement et collectivement, rompre le silence: dénoncer les hommes qui nous violent; porter plainte, malgré la honte, le dégoût, l'envie d'oublier; poursuivre nos actions en justice jusqu'au bout; réclamer, non seulement l'application des lois existantes mais aussi la révision des lois sur le viol; lorsque nous sommes violées, exiger à avoir affaire à des femmes médecins, des femmes juristes, des femmes policiers; nous soutenir mutuellement, moralement et matériellement, dans toutes nos démarches; APPRENDRE A NOUS ASSURER ET A NOUS DEFENDRE.

Un lundi soir je rentrais chez moi, vers 21h. J'habite au 4ème étage. Au niveau du 3ème j'ai trouvé un groupe de types assis dans l'escalier. Ils m'ont suivie en chahutant; et quand j'ai ouvert ma porte, l'un d'eux est entré avec moi dans mon studio; il m'a dit qu'ils attendait ma voisine qui n'était pas encore rentrée, il m'a demandé de les laisser attendre chez moi. J'ai accepté, ils ont mis un mot à la porte de la voisine, et sont tous entrés chez moi. Ensuite, ma voisine, ayant trouvé le mot un peu plus tard, est montée. Est arrivé aussi un couple. Certains sont allés chercher un électrophone et des boissons, ils ont amené de l'alcool. Soirée "normale" - discussion, danse, Ils m'ont raconté qu'ils étaient des étudiants. Il n'y avait pas de quoi se méfier...

Deux types ont essayé de flirter avec moi, ils m'ont coincée, ils ont essayé de m'embrasser. Ils essayaient de me raisonner en me disant: "Pourquoi tu ne veux pas? je ne suis pas phallo, je ne te plais pas? tu es quand même une fille libre," etc. Moi j'ai dit et redit, "mais non, je n'ai pas envie!" A un moment donné j'en ai eu marre, je suis sortie, je suis même descendue dans la rue, un type est venu après moi pour me raisonner, me disant qu'ils allaient se calmer, et je suis remontée.

Je suis allée dans la salle de bains pour me laver les mains. La salle de bains est très petite, deux personnes y tiennent debout à peine. L'un des types est venu me coincer là-dedans, en bloquant la porte. Il a baissé son pantalon, a essayé de baisser le mien, il y a eu une bagarre, je me suis débattue, j'ai quand même réussi à sortir. C'est alors que, très perturbée, je me suis effondrée, et ma voisine m'a dit "puisqu'il t'embête, tu peux aller chez moi." Nous sommes descendues toutes les deux. Arrivées chez elle, elle m'a proposée de m'asseoir sur le lit, et c'est alors que je me suis aperçue que son type était rentré derrière nous. Il lui a dit de partir, elle s'est tirée, et je me suis retrouvée seule avec lui. Il a encore essayé de me persuader par le discours, le temps d'une phrase, puis tout de suite il a commencé à me brutaliser, j'ai commencé à crier, il m'a à moitié étranglée, il a réussi à me déshabiller, et il m'a violé. Après, il m'a dit: "Maintenant j'ai gagné quinze francs."

Il y a eu un remue-ménage, les autres sont entrés dans le studio, puis je me suis retrouvée seule avec un deuxième type qui m'a violée aussi. Ensuite il est parti pour laisser la place à un autre. Entre le deuxième et le troisième viol, j'ai essayé de trouver mes vêtements pour m'échapper, et j'ai découvert qu'ils les avaient pris. Après mon troisième viol j'ai réussi à sortir, nue, sur le palier, je suis montée chez moi, ils m'ont suivie, ils m'ont poussée sur le lit et je me suis mise à hurler. Un voisin a entendu et a crié à travers le cloison, "Si vous n'arrêtez pas, je vais appeler la police!" J'ai crié, "Faites-le, faites-le!" et alors les types ont eu peur et sont partis.

Le viol est avant tout la négation de l'être. Après le viol, le viol continue: on est violé moralement au nom de la justice. L'interrogatoire, le fait de répéter les détails est éprouvant, mais en plus de ça est exigé de la femme violée des preuves qu'elle l'a été. Et ces preuves fournies sont retournées contre elle. Le fait d'avoir des érosions dans le vagin n'est considéré que comme le résultat d'un acte sexuel "un peu brutal" mais "tout à fait normal". "Une femme ne peut pas être violée" - dicit mon juge d'instruction. Sa plainte pour viol, déposée au commissariat, n'a pas été enregistrée, seules avaient été retenues les plaintes pour vol et coups et blessures. Je me suis faite examiner par un médecin de SOS Médecins qui s'est affolé et ne m'a pas examinée correctement, il a constaté les coups et a marqué seulement "traces de viol". Parce que je souffrais, je suis allée voir ma gynécologue qui a trouvé les érosions, quelque temps après. Pendant le viol, je n'ai pas eu conscience d'avoir eu mal physiquement; ce que j'ai ressentie plus fortement, c'était le regard de l'autre qui me niait en tant qu'être. Je n'étais rien, je n'étais qu'un objet, son objet.

La justice ne comprend pas pourquoi une femme violée ne fait pas preuve d'une résistance surhumaine et d'un calme olympien, et pendant le viol et après. Pendant l'interrogatoire, nous n'avons pas le droit de cracher. Pour les flics, si une femme craque, c'est parce qu'elle ment et non parce qu'elle a vécu une situation traumatisante. Moi-même j'ai eu souvent envie d'abandonner pour ne plus être obligée de revivre par le discours cet épisode. On n'a pas toujours le courage d'affronter policiers, juge d'instruction, surtout si on est seule. C'est pour cela que j'appelle à la solidarité entre femmes.

Testim

This testimony was first presented as a speech in a shopping street in northwest London in September 1975. It was part of a street event to communicate with other women as they were doing their work - the housework of shopping. We organised music, puppets, street theatre, a visual display as well as speeches. Each speaker talked for herself as mother, teacher, lesbian, claimant, waitress, teenager, about her needs and struggles for time and money of her own. The following speech describes the speaker's involvement in a struggle in a local factory, how the union operated to divide women, and how the Wages for Housework Campaign opens the possibility of winning, against companies and unions.

I come from America, but I've spent some years living and working around Harlesden. Most of the time I have worked in factories - Chesebrough Ponds and at McVities. I hate the places. I hate the work. I go out to work because I need the money, not because I love putting rolls of biscuits or jars of cold cream in boxes. I go for the money and I go for the company, because it can get lonely working at home.

I remember the first time I got a job in a factory I was shocked that in there you're not supposed to be a human being any more. You're not supposed to have rights or needs of your own, you're supposed to be totally at their command. And if you're a woman it's worse - they think they can push us around even more than they dare push men around. They expect us to clean the floors, they stop us talking to our friends, they time us when we go to the toilet. They give us the fastest, most fiddly, most boring jobs, and then pay us less for it.

When I first started I couldn't understand how anyone could put up with it. I didn't see why we couldn't just say no, when we have to go we have to go, whether or not there's someone to relieve me I'm not going to stand here and hold myself. But after a while I saw it wasn't so simple. We were being blackmailed the whole time by the management. They knew we needed the job because we needed the money and they took full advantage of that. I was with a group of young women at Chesebrough Ponds and we were fighting back all the time - we took days off whenever we could afford to, and like everyone else in the factory we didn't work any harder than we had to; if the caps were on loose and the vanishing cream was going to vanish all over the place, we didn't care. But the management still had the whip hand. So some of us, women and men, tried to organise. We thought if we had a union they wouldn't be able to push us around so much, keep us late in our break times, pay some women more than others. So we tried to get a union in, the TGWU (Transport and General Workers Union).

And that was when we found out how the management was keeping us down. Because we found out that they had us all divided up - every department

separate from the others, cold cream and lacquer and lipstick; they had full-timers separate from part-timers, permanent workers separate from temps, and more than that, even in the same department we were divided among ourselves: young against old, white against black, Irish against English. They had each set of women competing with the others for jobs - for the jobs with the most pay, and just to keep working there in the first place - and the older women were, the longer they'd been working there, the more they had to worry about losing the job. But all of us were worried, because none of us could afford to get sacked, and sent home to work without wages.

The biggest division was between us women and the men. There were a lot more women than men at Chesebrough Ponds, but when it came to organising, the men sometimes thought that what counted was what happened to them, that what we had to do was support their demands. They were getting a lot more money than us, and the women decided we wanted equal pay. It took us a while to convince the men of that, though. Some of them gave us the same story management gave us - that we didn't need the money, that we had a man to support us, or if we didn't we should get one. Some men would rather we didn't get so much wages, so we have to depend on them. On average men's wages in England are about twice as much as women's, and as a result men have the upper hand - whether they're our husbands or our boyfriends or just working with us, they have the money and they use it to tell us what's what. Some of us didn't have a man - some of us didn't want one - some of us were even bringing up children on our own. And a lot of us who were with men didn't want to be dependent on them for our nights out or to buy our clothes. We knew we were working harder than the men. And when we got home we didn't stop working. Nobody was going to shop and cook for us, and a lot of us were shopping and cooking and cleaning and washing for other people as well. We were working two shifts instead of one, and only getting half the pay. In the end there were so many of us at Ponds that the men knew they couldn't get anywhere without us, so they had to accept that we were going for equal pay. They knew that if we couldn't fight for what we needed, no one would get anything at all.

So we made a lot of headway at Chesebrough Ponds, got a lot of people together. And we made some gains in the end - we shook the management up plenty, and got a rise, I forget how much because I never saw it, it was £2 or £3, which was worth more in those days, and the women got a bigger rise than the men. But we never got what we were fighting for. We were relying on the union and the union was against us. The union organisers wanted us in the union because they wanted the dues - the district organiser told me so himself. But they didn't want trouble. And when they saw that

there were people at the gates with leaflets, that there were a lot of angry people inside, that we were having meetings among ourselves, that the women were pushing for what they wanted, they thought it might be a branch that would be a lot of trouble, for them and for the management. The union man said that. He said that once a branch starts like that, there's no end to the trouble. What he meant was that there's no end to us trying to get back what belongs to us, and refusing to be pushed around. And that's not what the union wants, because another thing the union organiser said, at a big meeting up the road at the Willesden Junction Hotel, was that the union is for people who want to work. We knew then that the union wasn't for us, because we didn't want to work, we worked because we had to, because we weren't getting any money for the job we were already doing at home. And at the same time the union found out that it wasn't profitable for them to back us, so they did just what the management wanted: they told us to cool it. No leaflets, no meetings, just leave it to them; they'd take care of everything for us, they'd "negotiate". And they cooled it so well that it fizzled out completely, and we never got a union in there at all.

Since then I've seen that that wasn't such a disaster, that having the union wouldn't have made too much difference. Because I've worked in a lot of places since then that have unions, and I know it's not the union that counts. What counts is how much we can get over the divisions between us, and how much we have to worry about losing the job. I spent over a year working in factories in America, and they all had unions. I got good wages; you do make money over there. But believe me you're barely alive to enjoy it. I knew after my first day that I'd never known what the word "work" meant before. It's a hard push all the time, and long hours. The overtime is compulsory - if they say you're working another two hours or coming in on the weekend, then you work those hours. So by the time you get home you're half dead and your feet are killing you and you've still got all the housework to do. I've seen some of the same kind of things coming in over here, compulsory overtime and shift work, and it scores the daylight out of me. Shift work and overtime are bad enough for a man who's got someone looking after him - and for the woman who has to look after him - but it's even worse when women are forced to do it, because it's on top of all the housework. I have friends who've worked nights and then tried to look after their kids in the daytime. One woman's kids ended up in care, and she herself tried to commit suicide.

That fight at Chesebrough Ponds was three years ago, and times have changed since then. In some ways it's harder now, because we are really

being attacked with those layoffs and prices. They're trying to put us at the mercy of the employers. But for me what makes the difference is that now there is a Wages for Housework Campaign.

I've been thinking about how we're going to get equal pay, how we can stop the management from pushing us around just because we are women, how we are going to get organised. And I've come to the conclusion that it's not just a question of what happens in one factory, but a question of how much all women, in all factories, and in offices and restaurants and hospitals, and women working alone for no wage at home, how much all women can win by making the fight together.

When we were organising at Prinds we knew, even before we started, that we couldn't rely on the union. We'd seen how unions operated in other places and we didn't like it. But we had to hope we could win with the union because we didn't see anyone else to go to. And we knew we needed to be connected with people outside. What we didn't see clearly then was that there were a whole set of people outside that we could have got strength from, and instead of helping us get together with those people, the union cut us off from them. We had sisters, friends, neighbours, some women in a women's group, who were ready to be involved, but the union said it was not their business. For the union it was a very narrow business, just between them and Chesebrough Prinds.

But it's never a narrow business. Because what happens to some of us has an effect on all of us. If Walls (where they make sausages) is shutting down and laying women off, it means we can't talk back to the supervisor at McVities (where they make biscuits). We can't walk out and get a job at Walls. If full-time housewives have no money of their own, then they are outside waiting for our jobs. So if we want to win, we can't fight in isolation. At some time in our life each of us may be a full-time housewife; at some time in our life each of us has to go out to work as well as working at home. When we're divided between those of us who are inside the factory and those of us who are outside, we are divided against ourselves. We're forced to scab on each other, forced to scab on ourselves, because without a wage for the work we do at home we are desperate enough to accept what the factory will offer us. If we have a job inside we're afraid to lose it, afraid to stick our necks out, because the management can turn to our friends and sisters outside to fill our places in the line. And yet our friends and sisters are the ones who could be giving us strength fighting with us instead of being forced to compete with us for jobs.

At Chesebrough Prinds we didn't know how to bridge the gap, how to make a fight that could break down our isolation inside those gates and give us the strength of other women. But with the campaign for Wages for Housework, we are finding out how to do that. Because Wages for Housework is for every woman. We know now, that as this campaign grows women in different jobs, jobs with wages and jobs at home without wages, will be more and more in contact with each other. If there had been a campaign for Wages for Housework when we made our fight at Chesebrough Prinds it wouldn't have been one small group of women in Harlesden against an international company and the biggest trade union in Britain. We would have been part of a fight that women were making in different situations all over the world, and if the union hadn't done what we wanted, we would have pushed it out of our way. And we would have won.

Ruth Hall
Wages for Housework Women's Centre
129 Drummond Street, London N W 1, ENGLAND

march 8th : what we want . . .

BECAUSE : The independence is first economic independence

- it is the first way to escape from loneliness of each in her home
- it is the first condition to refuse the traditional tasks' division and to assign their equal sharing ;
- working outside, we are learning the world ourselves, we are taking self-confidence and boldness.

THE FIRST DISCHARGED, THE LAST ENGAGED . . .

WE REFUSE TO BE WORKERS IN DELAY, eternal ~~xk~~ balance strength , sended back to our kitchens when the bosses don't need us any more.

Rkone-POULenc(chimistry) :the women whose husbands are working in the same firm see their wages halved , they must halve~~x~~ their working time. Some where else , ; married women are first discharged.

In Paris and subway, 70 more women than last year ask for work and the rate of unemployment, that takes off any possibility of formation, qualification, promotion , that confines us in the less-paid jobs, the less interessant, that forbid us any participation in the firms' struggles.

WE WANT time to live, to think, to fight, and not only to run from home to factory, passing through the market place, the child-carecenter or at the nurse's.

WE WANT reduction of working time for all (women and men)!

WE REFUSE "feminin" jobs, unqualification (60% of women are unqualified workers), unclean jobs that make that women's wages are 33% lower than men's.

WE REFUSE that the way to advancement goes through the boss's bed.

WE REFUSE that so many of us complete their ridiculous salary with occasional prostitution.

WE WANT the admission to all formations, qualifications.

EQUAL WAGES TO EQUAL WORK !

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

We have fought in the movement for liberation of abortion and contraception (PLAC) to chose our maternity

- to prevent our pregnancies for becoming rates
- to prevent thousands of us from dying after clandestine abortions
- to prevent us from jail after abortion
- to prevent our sexuality from being a sin that merits punishment

WE REFUSE the guilty pressions that look for making us return on our decision each time to second abortion

WE REFUSE the selection by money that relieves the one who don't have any to clandestine abortion or non-desired-child.

WE REFUSE that the right remains formal...

BECAUSE the only hospital in Paris where abortion is practiced without discrimination of race or price, has seen its service of gynecology-maternity closed.

BECAUSE in Aix-en-Provence 6 working women are today risking two years of jail and heavy fines because they had helpe~~x~~ a woman to abort.

WE WANT free child-carecenters with women and men as staff, because child-care is a collective problem and not a speciality which is written in our chromosomes.

WE WANT child-carecenters which are opened the whole day and night that let us do other things than work and our housework

WE WANT FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND

WE REFUSE this role of sexual articles that let our body be the target of perpetual aggressions
 WE REFUSE to pay because we are women sexual and affective misery that this society secretes
 WE REFUSE that to walk alone (that means without the men) means to be permanently harassed (in the streets).
 Harassed like two belgian girls were Marseille, by three good family fathers.
 WE WANT that rape must be recognised as it is really a sexist crime.

 WE REFUSE that behind the walls of home thousands of women are beaten by their husbands, their companions,
 women whose shrieks the neighbours don't hear,
 women that the cops send back to their house
 women who don't leave because they are afraid
 because they don't have any job
 because they don't know where to go
 because there are the children
 because elsewhere it's loneliness
 because we have been learned to undero..

 In the home for unmarried mothers Pauline Rolland, in Paris
 Women work for 100 french francs per month, maximum
 women are enclosed and not allowed to go out after 9.30 PM, nor to receive visitors
 women risk for nothing seeing their child being placed in Public Assistance, and risk to be thrown out in the street,
 women are at the mercy of the administration of the clinic-day keepers

 NOY AUX VOTERS PRISONS !

THESE ARE THE POSITIONS OF ICF THE PARISIEN AND SUBVANT
 COLLECTIVES (GROUPS IN FIRMS, IN DISTRICTS , IN SCHOOLS AND
 HIGH-SCHOOLS) ARE CALLING FOR A DEMONSTRATION IN PARIS FOR
 THE 8th OF MARCH. THIS DEMONSTRATION IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY
 THE M.L.A.C. (MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION OF ABORTION AND CONTRACEPTION)
FRANCE

Discrimination at Work

AKTION UNABHÄNGIGER FRAUEN
Tendlergasse 6/1-2, 1090 Wien
Austria

The situation of Austrian women working outside the home

The role expectations of Austrian women are deeply rooted in tradition and conventions. Women still want to marry, they believe that for them emotions are more important than for men and they do not consider themselves creative and productive. More than 50 percent of the women are convinced that their role is to take care of the household and the children. In marriage the man should be better educated and should receive a higher salary. The education of the children is considered to be a woman's duty.

Opposed to this picture is the fact that 39 percent of the work-force in Austria are women. From among these nearly 50 percent have at least one child below 15 years of age to take care of; but even the majority of these women do not agree with mothers working outside the home. That means that the majority of the women by no means work because they want to, but because it is an absolute financial necessity. Hence in textile industry, an area primarily staffed by women and very badly paid (82 percent of the women earn less than AS 2000 (Bfr 4000;-) a month) more than 80 percent of the workers work mainly for financial reasons. If we combine the role image of Austrian women with the absolute financial necessity to work outside the home, we clearly realize the permanent situation of conflict in which these women must live.

This described role image is practiced in Austrian schools from the very first grade onwards (in curricula and textbooks) and is intensified in the mass media and in advertising. The acute contradiction between the expected female role and reality has three main practical effects:

1. The dual workload of the wife and mother working outside the home (the household and the children are a woman's task, men hardly help);
2. It serves as an ideological superstructure for the partly extremely low pay received by women (women's work is considered as "additional income");
3. It causes a variety of psychosomatic and psychic complaints (stress illnesses, neuroses; drug addiction).

II.

The role forced upon women is also responsible for female work to be concentrated on a few groups of professions. Usually these are professions with low pay anyway (services and office work). Also, nearly 70 percent of the women working outside the home are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. The average female wage is two thirds below that of men.

Women in Austria 2

Many more women receive piece wages than men. The wage level in professional groups with a high percentage of women lies below the general wage level in Austria. It is true that in most professional groups the type of training and the type of activity determine the wages, but this does not apply in areas where men and women really do the same work. There is absolutely no equality of activity. Still "male" working qualities (hard physical work) are higher valued than "female" qualities (skill, perseverance in complicated and monotonous jobs), i.e. less paid. We would like to quote some examples:

In clothing industry more than 80 percent of the work force are women. The wage tariff contains 11 wage groups, the work processes are graded according to the type of work done in the various wage groups. 75 percent of the women are working in the three lowest wage groups.

The metal industry employs about 55,000 women: there are 11 different wage groups in this industry; the criteria for the wage groups are type of training and type of activity. It is rare that women receive professional training in this branch, but 20 percent of the semi-skilled female workers are skilled workers from other branches, mainly dressmakers, hairdressers, saleswomen. Two thirds of all semi-skilled women are occupied in the lowest of all semi-skilled groups. The higher wage groups are actually only reserved for men. Two thirds of the semi-skilled men in metal industry receive the wages of the highest semi-skilled groups. Women are always paid on the basis of the collective agreement, men's wages are generally higher than the collective agreement. Women who have received a full training in a different profession receive the wages of a semi-skilled worker, men who have learned a different profession are classified as skilled workers.

The sweets and canning industry has a woman's share of 60 to 75 percent. The wage groups distinguish between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In spite of this principle the actual wages of women are no more than 85 to 90 percent of the men's wages. Attempts to classify the women in the same categories as the men usually lead to difficulties among the male employees!

In the low voltage electricity industry women are classified as semi-skilled workers in the lowest wage group. Their work consists in manual assembly work according to instructions given via a pedal-operated dictaphone. It requires extreme acoustical and optical concentration and the women working for piece wages are under permanent time pressure. In the entire metal industry there is no example where men in the same wage group were required to work under similar pressure.

In many firms the highest categories automatically are classified as male (1. cook, 2. foreman, 3. qualified worker) followed by the

the 4th category of male workers; the 5th group is the female foreworker and from there downwards all further groups are female. Of course, the wages sink the further down one goes. It is obvious that these groupings discriminate against women and are far from corresponding to reality.

III

Of course, it is hardest for mothers working outside the home. Although the legislation for pregnant women at work are relatively progressive, they still bear considerable gaps. Especially for shift and conveyor belt workers and for workers receiving piece wage the basically correct prohibition of such jobs during pregnancy has its negative effects in that the women lose part of their wages. The maternity year to which every salary or wage earning woman is entitled is highly problematic. Firstly, a woman cannot or hardly live on AS 2 200 (Bfr 4 400) a month (for married women) or AS 3 300 (Bfr 6 600) (for unmarried women). Secondly; this year can only be taken by women, and never by the father. This, of course, has its effects on the income and job advancement opportunities of women.

Once she has gone back to work after the maternity year her multiple workload begins right away. The number of crèches is minimal, that of child care centers utterly insufficient. There are virtually no all-day schools in Austria. Most women must bear the entire burden of housework and education of their children in addition to their work in the factory or in the office. The total working hours generally amount to 12 to 13 hours daily, quite frequently up to 16 hours daily.

Part-time work praised as a good way out of this dilemma cannot be considered as a solution. It is restricted to a few professional groups (cleaning jobs, housekeeper, domestic servants, saleswomen, administrative jobs, teachers). The women exclusively work in subordinate positions, they have no job advancement possibilities. Part-time work is a good bargain for entrepreneurs who need to pay less overtime and whose workers are less tired. Part-time work cements the woman's responsibility for household and children as well as her job discrimination. It is no real alternative for women. Still, 30 percent of Austrian women work part-time.

IV

Summary:

1. The role expectation of women in Austria and actual reality have nothing in common at all;
2. From the very start female workers are financially discriminated by their wage group classification;
3. Female office staff is discriminated in a less overt manner; they have very few opportunities of improving their position;
4. Mothers working outside the home suffer most from the discrepancy between role expectations and reality. Apart from the general exploitation at their job they are exclusively responsible for household and child education. In addition they are socially disrespected because the socially accepted role for a mother is to stay with her child;
5. Part-time work for women propagated by associations of entrepreneurs and by parts of the Austrian Government must be rejected as a new attempt to discriminate women.

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CHILE: THE REPRESSION OF WOMEN UNDER THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Chile is a Latin American country with a population of 10,000,000. It is a country divided by class where the women are suffering and have suffered the repression of poverty which is immersed upon the people by the ruling class.

In September, 1973, a military coup supported by the national bourgeoisie, assisted and financed by the CIA and multinational companies, took power in Chile. President Salvador Allende and thousands of women and men who resisted the coup were assassinated.

The ruling class considered that the military coup and the dictatorship that followed were justified because the people, women and men, --workers, peasants, slum-dwellers, white-collar workers, students-- had been fighting for freedom from the economic exploitation and dehumanization which capitalist society had imposed upon them.

The dictatorship removed the people's political rights and suppressed their trade union, judicial and economic rights. But the ruling classes, their military lackeys and international allies, have not been totally victorious. The people's desire to win their liberation is still very strong and they have rebuilt from scratch their political assassination within the resistance.

Political consciousness is repressed by prisons, torturers, and threats of death. Right from the beginning of the dictatorship, women and men were arrested, thrown in makeshift detention centres and subjected to the same treatment, the only differences being in the way sexism is used.

In two and one-half years, the junta is refining its system of torture imprisonment and assassination. A secret police has been created, the DINA, with unlimited powers. At their disposal is a network of secret prisons and concentration camps throughout the country.

Political repression always has two stages for its victims. The first is in the secret prison, where the prisoners are massed together and subjected to interrogation and torture. They are kept there on a pitifully meager diet, sometimes days, sometimes months (journalist Gladys Diaz Armijo was held for three months), and there are many who never leave. There was the case of the 119 "desaparecidos", among them 21 women, whom the junta pronounced dead and out of the country in July, 1975; these "desaparecidos" are prisoners whom the junta does not admit to having arrested, yet the Council of Churches Committee for Cooperation for Peace in Chile has been keeping a careful and detailed account.

The time spent in the secret prison is the most degrading and brutal period of physical and mental torture. Here the prisoners live under constant threat to their physical and mental integrity; threats against children are made to put pressure on the prisoners, a method that is used in the extreme against women. Sexual lasciviousness and aggression is another weapon used against the women. There is no rest, night and day the guards and torturers take turns working on the prisoners.

Once the prisoners have sufficiently recovered from the physical tortures, and they are lucky, they are recognized as being political prisoners and are then transferred to the concentration camps or to the ordinary prisons.

The only concentration camp which now has a section especially for women in Chile is Tres Alamos in Santiago. Since December, 1974, the number of women detained in Tres Alamos has never been less than 100. They have the right to receive weekly visits and to a higher quality of food, thanks to the women's organization within their prison section; they have fixed times set aside for sleeping at night and most have their own bed. But the guards are always present and always watching. The threats, punishments and arbitrary actions by the camp authorities continue as always. Regulations restrict the times the women can leave the cells, their topics of conversation, songs (songs are now forbidden), etc..... Any violations of the rules, real or imaginary, are punished with the suspension of visiting rights, restrictions on the pleasanter activities of the women, solitary confinement in filthy cells, and return to the secret prisons. The possibility of being returned to the prisons where they have been tortured is a constant threat to which all the detainees are exposed. The camp is extremely small, without external windows, hot in summer and cold in winter.

The fate of those women held in normal prisons is practically the same. The guards try to turn the ordinary prisoners against the political prisoners through lies and deceit. The political prisoners eventually undergo a farcical trial and afterwards must live condemned by this "justice".

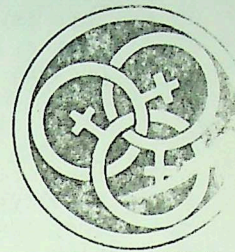
Women have been detained as hostages for their husbands, sons and daughters; even worse, the authorities detain or threaten to detain their children as hostages. This isn't all; the wives of political prisoners frequently lose their jobs and suffer the hardship which follows. In the minds of employers in Chile, it is a stigma to be the wife of a political prisoner.

The repression to which the people are subjected includes all women, not only those involved in the resistance movement but also those who show their solidarity with their class, and those who profess to neither know nor care anything for politics. The violent nature of the economic crisis and the police state affects everyone.

Great Britain, February 1976

"Women's Campaign for Chile"

stichting "blijf van m'n lijf"



telefoon 020-942758 - giro 3290231 - postbus 4214, Amsterdam , The Netherlands

Tribunal on crimes against women

7th of March, 1974

Contribution to the discussion of women-battering. Situation in Holland.

Women-battering isn't an uncommon event in Holland. We can't offer you statistics because no one bothers to find out the facts about this crime. In the Dutch judicial system it is a crime with a high penalty but usually it never gets that far. No research has been carried out about marital violence. There are some institutions in Holland where women can find shelter for a short period of time (up to 3 months). These institutions aren't very clear as to the reasons why women want to live there. They mention 'marital problems' which can mean a lot of things. Women-battering doesn't exist as such in the terminology of welfare institutions. When a woman has been battered by her husband then there exists a 'relational problem' or 'a disturbance in the communication between the marital partners'. The 'solution' has to be sought in 'bringing the marital partners together again'. A woman told us about her 'relation-therapy': "When I told my therapist that I was afraid of my husband because he tried to strangle me last night, the therapist answered: Mrs. X, just put yourself in your husband's place, how difficult it must be for him that you are afraid of him".

In October 1974 "Blijf van m'n Lijf" (means something like "Stay off my body") opened a refuge for battered women and their children. The address is secret. "Blijf van m'n Lijf" helps women on their own account, not in terms of their relation or their marriage they fled from. It doesn't deal with men at all.

There are two goals to be realised: to offer a safe shelter for battered women and their children and to make the problem of women-battering known and widely publicised.

Since the refuge opened her doors, about 300 women accompanied by 600 children have come to the refuge. Also other institutions have noticed that more women came to them with the specific complaint of being battered. It turns out to be a widely spread and big problem. We think we only have seen a very few of the women who are actually being battered. We found battering is not bounded to certain socio-economic classes. The nature of the battering has many forms:

pounding on the head, with or without a stick; dragging by her hair through the room; hitting in her stomach, on the back or in the loins; making the woman having a miscarriage by kicking her in the stomach; kicking her a broken nose or ribs; putting a fork in her back; placing an iron on her body; breaking some vertebrae; striking her on a chair to the floor; strangling; throwing her from the staircase; keeping her awake day and night by threatening her with a knife.

Many women told us that they had tried many times to escape, but failed by shortage of a safe refuge. They usually fled to family or friends. Their husbands knew immediately where they could go to find them. The official welfare and service institutions didn't take their problems seriously and tried to get them back where they, in their opinion, belonged: "at home".

Police refuses to note down their complaints about battering. "His is a marital fight, ma'm, we can't do anything for you, you'd better go home".

Doctors give some first-aid. They often refuse to give a certificate which she can use at the police station. They evidently want to stay 'clear' from giving any evidence whatsoever.

Laywers keep women also 'at home' by telling them that they lose their right on the house when they leave 'voluntarily'. This is totally untrue, a lot of women claimed their houses and got it back. They advise the woman sometimes not to get a divorce because 'you mightn't get out alive'. However they don't offer help to find a safe refuge. They hold the opinion 'a blow happens in any good marriage'.

Social work and therapeutic institutions : start from the (in fact not-existing) equality between the partners. Both partners have to tell their own stories, listening to the other partner. The therapist just listens to both of them and stays 'neutral'. He or she supports de facto the right of the strongest one, which is the man. For it is only that they come home, and the man will make her feel that he didn't like what she just told the therapist. Next time the woman won't tell anything anymore.

Family and neighbours usually don't know anything about the problems of the woman. Women don't like talking about the battering, out of fear or shame. Later on they notice certain things or start disbelieving the repeating stories about 'having bumped into a door'. Sometimes they offer help, for instance room in their own home. This often causes many problems: the husband might start threatening the family and/or neighbours as well and can find his wife easily. And sometimes they start helping, but can't continue due to lack of space in their own home. Also they might try to persuade the woman to go back home to 'save her marriage'.

When a woman has been battered a long time, one year after the other, she gets other problems as well : she loses weight, or on the contrary crams herself continually with food, gets skin rashes, becomes irritated, also with her children. She might become 'crazy': she walks in the streets shouting and crying, 'sees things'. Then she'll be treated with being admitted to a psychiatric hospital. And men speculate on this: "I'll pester you just so long till you'll be admitted to an asylum".

Women in this situation find themselves in a vicious circle: when they are battered and stay at home, they'll be labelled as masochistic, neurotic or hysteric and when they leave home, they find themselves labelled as irresponsible and not able to care for themselves and their children.

Since we started, the problem of battering has been recognised more than before. Although a lot of people still start laughing and ignore the problem, it has lessened.

Women have to speak openly about the problem. Women can leave the home if they want to. We ourselves feel it would be a good thing when there were more houses for battered women. Some women, we presume, don't come to the refuge because they consider Amsterdam "too far out" for themselves. It would be good if there were more houses in several regions of Holland.

Another problem we find it difficult to solve, is getting permanent housing facilities for battered women. It turns out that a lot of women have to stay in the refuge for a long period of time, because they can't find suitable and safe accommodation for themselves and their children.

The starting point is still that women have to speak up about this specific crime against themselves. Only then they can find and create solutions and in the long term press other people to offer facilities they need and have a right to.

If you are interested in how we set up our refuge and the way it is run, you can phone us nr. 020 - 94 27 58 or write to:

"Stichting Blijf van m'n Lijf", postbusnummer 4214, Amsterdam, Holland.

SITUACION POLITICA DE LA MUJER EN ESPAÑA

ANTECEDENTES

La mujer española, en el último tercio del siglo - XIX, es un ser que pasa su vida bajo la tutela del varón, - bien sea su padre bien sea su marido, equiparada a menores y sordomudos, ni siquiera su estado de viuda la equipara, en - cuanto a derechos políticos se refiere, a los varones.

El Diputado Castejón en el curso de las Cortes -- Constituyentes de 1869 exponía: "Cada individuo sin consideración a su fortuna, cada ciudadano, nada más por el hecho - de serlo, tiene derecho de sufragio, puede contribuir a mejorar los destinos de su país, puede tomar parte en la regeneración de su patria. Pues en consideración a este derecho se paga el impuesto personal.... ¿Qué derecho de sufragio tiene la mujer que es cabeza de familia y paga contribución?".(1)

Aunque estas frases podrían tomarse como un intento de lograr para la mujer española un derecho de los hombres de que carecía, se trataba meramente de un inciso para justificar la supresión de la Comisión de Consumos, que se prescribía bajo la premisa: "quien paga elige".

Nada más lejos de la Constitución Española de 1869, que el reconocimiento de este derecho político de la mujer, aunque esta Constitución en otros puntos supuso un corte -- avance en el inmovilismo decimonónico, que otorgaba a la mujer una mínima participación política.

La legislación electoral del siglo XIX y la misma Constitución Republicana, al tratar del derecho al sufragio y el derecho a ser elegido, sonete a éstos de forma constante al condicionante de estar en plenitud de Derechos Civiles.

La mujer de 1869 no lo está. Por ello su participación política se ve anulada por las leyes constitucionales del país. Aunque, de no ser así, el mismo contexto social en que se mueve la hubiera llevado a los mismos resultados.

Derogada la Ley Sálica por la Pragmática Sanción - de Carlos IV y puesta luego en vigor por su sucesor Fernando VII, la única función política que le es permitida a la mujer española es la de ser reina. Aunque detrás de este hecho se oculta la lucha política entre legitimistas y liberales - por la obtención del poder.

1 Crónica de las Cortes Constituyentes de 1.869
J. Rodríguez Morales - Imprenta Manuel Galiano. Madrid 1869

En el siglo XIX cualquier intento femenino de participar en la vida política o cultural del país es un hecho aislado y costoso. Tal es el caso de Concepción Arenal y, -- vencido el siglo, de María de la Cruz, que van cómo la comprensión de la Sociedad. Pero una participación en la vida del país, distinta a la atribuida a la condición femenina, va minando su fortaleza y las lleva en ocasiones al desánimo. Se abren en este siglo las puertas del mundo del trabajo industrial para la mujer. Pero el trabajo que se le ofrece a ésta no será una conquista sino una carga más que soportar. Las capas más desfavorecidas de la población femenina acceden a la nueva industria, como ya desde tiempo inmemorial le habían hecho a las faenas agrícolas.

Según María Campo Alange, el analfabetismo femenino alcanza un 90% en el tercio final del siglo XIX. La mujer, pues, habrá de aceptar salarios bajos, ocultar su estado de gestación por miedo al despido y trabajar más de 16 horas. El Proyecto de Ley Sallarés Plá de 1892, establece que las mujeres entre 16 y 23 años trabajarán un máximo de 16 horas con descanso de una y media, a las que hay que añadir el cuidado de la familia.

La intervención de la mujer en los nascentes partidos políticos y en los sindicatos será nula. No tiene conciencia de unos derechos típicamente femeninos por los que luchar; pero jugará en el mundo laboral un papel político importante precisamente gracias a su pasividad. Ante una huelga, reivindicataria de derechos lesionados o en apoyo de mejoras salariales, la mujer en la fábrica y el terrateniente en el campo siempre encontrarán en la mujer una cantante a la que acudir para romper huelgas, cuando la situación llegue a un punto extremo y difícil.

A los comienzos del siglo XX, no existe en España ningún movimiento feminista coherente que intente no ya la participación de la mujer en la vida política del país, sino la mera conciencia por parte de las mujeres de que son seres con entidad y con capacidad para la propia realización.

La mujer española de esta época tiene una pseudo-identidad de clase por reflejo de la familia a la que pertenece. Su acceso al mundo del trabajo en el taller o en la fábrica se producirá en virtud de una imperiosa necesidad económica: primero en el proletariado y más tarde en las clases medias económicamente débiles y vergonzantes. Pero su educación seguirá siendo deficiente.

Para M^{te}. Aurelia Capmany, "la situación marginal de la mujer, que la incapacita no solo para toda la actividad política sino que hasta modela su actitud indiferente, fue para las feministas anglosajonas una lección que debía desaparecer. La inserción en la vida política es, pues, condición necesaria para hacer viable todo movimiento feminista".

La Ley electoral de 8 de Agosto de 1.907 continúa negando el voto a la mujer y somete el derecho a elegir y -- ser elegido al hecho de ser varón.

Los grupos feministas en España que comienzan a tener una cierta cohesión hacia 1920, según la citada autora, adoptan en esta época dos actitudes distintas y en algunos casos irreconciliables.

Existe un feminismo católico, conservador y opertunista, representado por Dolores Moncerodé y Celsia Regie, directora del periódico "La Voz de la Mujer", y otro, revolucionario y socialista, afín a María Cambrils, Clara Campoamor, Margarita Nelken y Victoria Kent.

El primero intentará españolizar las corrientes feministas que llegan de Europa, y, consciente de la realidad de la mujer española, encanalará su fuerza potencial hacia su incorporación a las profesiones auxiliares y a las consideradas específicamente favorables a la condición de la mujer.

Los representantes del segundo grupo dedican su esfuerzo al estudio de las causas de la pasividad femenina y a su potenciación, en base a la necesidad de una auténtica educación igualitaria que lleve a la mujer a la incorporación a la vida activa del país.

La Institución Libre de Enseñanza, inspirada por Fernando de los Ríos, será la primera entidad educativa que mediante la coeducación brindará a la mujer española el acceso a una educación no específicamente "femenina". De sus aulas, principalmente, saldrán las mujeres que tendrán acceso a la Universidad (1). Pero su influencia se limitará a una clase social determinada, la burguesía intelectual, y a una zona geográfica concreta.

Estas mujeres, al igual que las que han comenzado su andadura política en la España de los años 30, serán la excepción que confirme la regla de la situación real de la gran masa de española; sin apenas diferencia con la mentalidad de sus madres y abuelas, una gran parte de las mujeres de la época de la República sólo han evolucionado en lo puramente externo. El resto del país sigue con siglos de retraso.

Durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera, se dio entrada a algunas mujeres en los Ayuntamientos y a 15 en la Asamblea Nacional; pero este hecho no supone una conquista sino una designación que pudiera responder a las más variadas motivaciones. Lo cierto es que en 1931, recién caída la monarquía, cuando se prepara la nueva Constitución que habrá de inspirar el futuro ordenamiento jurídico, son las mujeres que de modo individual han conseguido un acceso a profesiones liberales o a los escaños de las Cortes Constituyentes las que lucharán su voz contraria al otorgamiento del voto a la mujer. Clara Campoamor por el partido radical, Victoria Kent por Izquierda Republicana y Margarita Nelken socialista.

) En 1910 el Ministro de Educación Julio Berruall dió acceso a la Mujer española a la Universidad.

En 1919 ésta última había publicado en la prensa una carta abierta en la que exponía su postura: "Una reforma humana de nuestro Código, perfectamente, al considerar a la mujer una perpetua menor o una perpetua demente es un absurdo sencillamente grotesco y una crueldad que nada justifica, pero: ¿el voto? ¿El voto que hace que las mujeres influyan directamente en la marcha de un país? (1)

Conociendo la trayectoria de Margarita Nelken, la interpretación de lo expuesto hay que buscarla en su profundo conocimiento de la mujer española de la época. Cuando las leyes son más avanzadas que la situación social y educacional del estamento al que van dirigidas, producen un efecto contrario al deseable. El voto en manos de la mujer de 1931 pasa de ésta a su mentor más próxima, con lo que se pone en manos de las clases menos propicias al cambio, un arma poderosa con la que combatirán incluso la incorporación de la mujer a la vida del país. La tan repetida frase: "Las izquierdas dan el voto a la mujer y ésta vota a las derechas", adquiere un profundo significado.

La obra legislativa de la República recogerá en diversos cuerpos legales el voto femenino (aprobado por 161 votos a favor y 121 en contra) y contenido en el art. 36 de la Constitución, la ley del divorcio y matrimonio civil, y diversas reformas penales y civiles que favorecen a la mujer.

En 1936 son cinco las mujeres diputadas, una de ellas directora general de prisiones, otra en la carrera diplomática, y es muy importante el número de éstas que pertenecen a partidos políticos, principalmente de izquierdas y que durante la guerra civil ofrecen una militancia activa. Estas cifras son indicativas del ímpetu con el que accedió la mujer española a la nueva situación, pues si bien en abstracto pueden resultar pequeñas, en el contexto de la gran masa de mujeres supone la existencia de individualidades con gran fuerza. Dolores Ibarruri, entre las dirigentes del partido comunista, y las mujeres anarquistas desarrollarán en estos años en el frente y en la retaguardia una actividad política importante.

La mujer española ha comenzado en la República de 1931 su andadura política. El derecho al voto, el de ser elegida, la definitiva ruptura de barreras da acceso a profesiones liberales, y el impulso que se pretendía dar a la enseñanza hubieran podido cimentar una pujante situación para la mujer que hubiera situado a ésta en los años cuarenta más cerca de sus vecinas europeas.

(1) Ms. Aurelia Caymany: (de profesión mujer).

de la mujer en España

6.1.2 LEGISLACION Y PARTICIPACION POLITICA A PARTIR DE 1.939

El nuevo Estado español, constituido con caracter nacional al termino de la guerra civil, supondrá en su visión de la mujer, un retroceso consecuente con la pérdida de los derechos políticos que le había sido otorgados por la Constitución Republicana de 1.931 y en sus Leyes subsecuentes. Pero en su mayoría, la mujer española no advirtió la desaparición de unas leyes igualitarias que no había solicitado ni había tenido tiempo de comprender.

En 1.939 la doctrina falangista será elevada a la categoría de ideología oficial del Estado, pero en relación con el tema que nos ocupa hemos de decir que José Antonio tiene una idea precisa de la función a desempeñar por la mujer:

"Tampoco somos feministas, no entendemos que la manera de respetar a la mujer consista en sustraerla a su magnífico destino femenino y dejarle funciones varoniles. A mí siempre me ha dado tristeza ver a la mujer en ejercicios de hombre, toda alongada y desquiciada en una rivalidad donde lleva, entre morbosa complacencia de sus competidores masculinos, todas las de perder. El verdadero feminismo no debiera consistir en querer para la mujer las funciones que hoy se estiman superiores, sino en rodear cada vez de mayor dignidad humana y social las funciones femeninas".(1)

Quedan vedadas para la mujer desde este año de terminación de la guerra civil, profesiones que tenía abiertas anteriormente, poniéndose en marcha una política laboral que fundamentada en diversas leyes como la Ley de Protección a las Familias Numerosas (1.941) subsidios familiares, etc. impulsaron a la mujer a permanecer al cuidado del hogar.

Como ejemplo de la legislación discriminatoria de que hablamos citaremos la orden del Ministerio de Trabajo de 27 de Septiembre de 1.939 que dice así:

"La Ley de Funcionarios de 22 de Julio de 1.936 y su Reglamento, expresan de modo terminante e inequívoco, que no todos los puestos de la Administración del Estado son adecuados para la mujer, dejándose al arbitrio de cada Ministerio señalar los cargos que ésta no deba ocupar por la índole de los mismos".

En su virtud éste Ministerio ha acordado disponer que dentro de la plantilla del mismo no podrán desempeñar la categoría de Jefe de Administración los funcionarios femeninos, ni ser ocupados por ellas los cargos de Delegados, e Inspectores de Trabajo".

(1) Discursos: 1.935

El Marco ideológico-jurídico en el que se ha desarrollado la mujer española durante los últimos 40 años a la combinación de la expansión de esta causa

El Fuero del Trabajo de 9 de Marzo de 1.938 proclama que: "El Estado prohibirá el trabajo nocturno de las mujeres y de los niños, regulará asimismo el trabajo a domicilio y liberará a la mujer casada del taller y de la fábrica."

Coherentemente con esta Ley Fundamental comienzan a promulgarse leyes laborales limitativas de la acción al trabajo de la mujer. En este sentido citaremos la Orden de 17 de Noviembre de 1.939 que fija las normas para la inscripción de mujeres en las Oficinas de Colocación y que en términos generales cierra el paso a toda mujer que no pueda demostrar que es cabeza de familia. (1)

El Decreto de 28 de Diciembre de 1.939 establece -- las funciones a desarrollar por la Sección Femenina de las -- FET y de las JONS. En su artículo 1º define que "la Sección Femenina es el Organismo del Partido a quien se confía la formación política y social de las mujeres españolas en orden a los fines propios de FET y de las JONS. Igualmente, encomienda a la Sección Femenina con carácter exclusivo "la disciplina en la formación para el hogar de las mujeres pertenecientes a los centros de educación, trabajo, etc. dependientes del Estado, de acuerdo con los respectivos Ministerios."

De este modo la Sección Femenina de FET y de las JONS asume una parcela de la formación de las niñas españolas. Esta formación será opuesta a las modernas tendencias de la -- coeducación, e los sobrecargados cursos del bachillerato se añ -- dican horas lectivas de cocina, labores, trabajos manuales, -- economía doméstica, e incluso la formación del espíritu naci -- onal e formación política se impartirá con diferentes textos -- de los usados en los centros de educación masculina.

La Orden Ministerial de 5 de Mayo de 1.945 supedita -- rá la obtención de títulos académicos de Bachiller e enseñan -- zas similares a haber aprobado las genéricamente denominadas -- "enseñanzas de hogar", por parte de los estudiantes-mujeres.

En los centros de formación dependientes de modo ex -- clusivo de la Sección Femenina se encansa desde este momento -- la participación de la mujer en el mundo del trabajo, median -- te el fomento de las profesiones auxiliares consideradas como -- típicamente femeninas. (2)

(1) La Ley de 15 de Julio de 1.954 establece en su preámbulo que "la protección a la familia es el primer paso hacia la implem -- tación del salario familiar y para el reintegro al hogar de -- la mujer casada trabajadora".

(2) Decreto 2 de Marzo de 1.945, desarrollado en la Orden de 28 -- de Marzo de 1.945: Enseñanzas en las escuelas-hogar y de man -- das (artes del vestido, del tejido, trabajos artísticos y em -- pleos auxiliares).

Si bien la participación política de los españoles por vías de elección, se ha visto considerablemente restringida los últimos cuarenta años, la participación femenina ha sufrido durante este período mutilaciones que añadir a los numerosos derechos políticos del resto de la población.

En 1.967 la Ley de 28 de Junio, reguladora de la elección de Procuradores en Cortes por el tercio familiar, hizo extensivo el voto que desde 1.939 ostentaban con exclusividad los cabezas de familia, a las mujeres casadas pasando éstas desde ésta fecha a participar en las elecciones que se efectuaban con participación del tercio familiar. (1)

La Ley de Referendum Nacional de 1.945 estableció que "todo Proyecto de Ley aprobado por las Cortes, cuya trascendencia le aconseje o el interés público lo demande, deberá someterse a Referendum de todos los españoles mayores de 21 años sin distinción de sexo, estado o profesión".

De acuerdo con lo dispuesto en esta Ley Fundamental, en dos ocasiones se ha sometido a la consideración del país, y consecuentemente de sus mujeres, la aprobación de una Ley de rango superior: La Ley de Sucesión a la Jefatura del Estado de 7 de Junio de 1.947 y la Ley Orgánica del Estado de 10 de Enero de 1967.

En la primera y en su art. 9 se dice:

"Para ejercer la Jefatura del Estado como Rey o Regente se requerirá ser varón y español...."

En el art. 11 se añade:

"Instaurada la corona en la persona de un Rey, el orden regular de sucesión será con preferencia de la línea anterior a las posteriores, en la misma línea el grado más próximo al más remoto, con preferencia al varón sobre la mujer, la cual no podrá reinar, pero sí, en su caso, transmitir a sus herederos varones el derecho". (2)

Este mismo cuerpo legal al tratar de la constitución del Consejo de Regencia, establece que éste estará formado por el Presidente de las Cortes, el Prelado de Mayor jerarquía, y antigüedad, Consejero del Reino, y el Capitán General en activo y de mayor antigüedad de los Ejércitos de Tierra, Mar y Aire. Resulta reiterativo hacer constar que la mujer española, aún en el caso de ser Procurador en Cortes, tiene difícil acceso al Consejo de Regencia, ya que dos de los tres miembros que lo componen pertenecen a Estamentos en los que la entrada de la mujer está vetada. Únicamente en el caso, improbable, de que una mujer ocupara la Presidencia de las Cortes, podría pertenecer a dicho Consejo.

(1) Los Decretos de 29 de Septiembre de 1.945 y de 30 de Noviembre de 1.948 limitan la elección por el tercio familiar a los cabeceras de familia.

(2) El discurso ante las Cortes del Presidente del Gobierno de 28 de Enero de 1.976 trasluce una voluntad de reforma en este punto.

→ Venos pues que las dos únicas veces que se ha llenado a las urnas de forma masiva a la mujer española, se han presentado a aprobación global cuerpos legales que entraban una demostración de las facultades femeninas para ocupar la más alta magistratura del país. La mujer española pasó en estas ocasiones por alto la infravaloración que se hacía de la mujer, de lo que puede deducirse una falta de identidad de la española, en las fechas de referencia, ya que no tenemos noticia de que se alzara alguna vez contraria a ésta discriminación.

→ Indudablemente la mujer española puede acceder a las Cortes, a los Ayuntamientos, Diputaciones Provinciales y Gobiernos Civiles, pero en la mayoría de los casos ve dificultado su acceso a los puestos de mayor responsabilidad, al no contar con el apoyo de un grupo que impulse su elección y que siempre prefiere, salvo excepciones, a un hombre.

En la Ley de Régimen Local de 24 de Junio de 1.955 y en su artículo 83 se dice: "El cargo de Concejal será obligatorio y gratuito", estableciéndose en la misma Ley los casos en que la excusa al cargo puede ser aceptada. En el artículo 80 de la misma Ley se refleja: "Podrán excusarse del desempeño de cargo de Concejales los mayores de 65 años, los impedidos físicamente, las mujeres, los funcionarios de las carreras judicial y fiscal, los eclesiásticos y los militares".

Igualmente, el artículo 234 de la misma Ley y, en cuanto trate el cargo de Diputado Provincial, remite como motivo de excusa los ya expuestos para los Concejales.

Estas excusas, que pueden ser racionalmente válidas en los otros supuestos que contemplan, suponen para la mujer, como contrapartida a una excusa del deber político, la negación de individuo con plenitud de derechos y obligaciones.

→ En 1.960 la Sección Femenina de las FEF y de las JONS presentó a las Cortes un Proyecto de Ley sobre los derechos políticos, profesionales y de trabajo de la mujer, aprobado el 15 de Julio de 1.961. Dicha Ley establece en su preámbulo:

"La Sección Femenina de FEF y de las JONS, que a lo largo de este último cuarto de siglo ha tenido encomendada la formación de la mujer española, proyectada al servicio de la patria, orientando y dirigiendo en todo momento ese fecundo quehacer ha podido comprobar cómo encontraba pleno asentimiento en Asambleas Nacionales de diverso carácter, la idea de conseguir el acceso de la mujer a aquellas profesiones y tareas públicas y privadas, para las que se encuentra perfectamente capacitada, sin más limitaciones que las que su condición femenina impone".

En su artículo 1º., la Ley reconoce a la mujer los mismos derechos que al varón para el ejercicio de todo clase de actividades políticas, profesionales y de trabajo sin más...

limitaciones que las establecidas en la presente ley.

De su contenido se destaca que la mujer legítimamente puede participar en la elección y ser elegida para el desempeño de cualquier cargo público.

La mujer puede ser designada asimismo para el desempeño de cualquier cargo público del Estado, Administración local y Organismos Autónomos dependientes de uno y otro. (Artículo 2)

En las mismas condiciones que el hombre, la mujer puede participar en oposiciones, concursos-oposiciones y cualesquiera otros sistemas para la provisión de plazas de las Administraciones Públicas, asimismo tendrá acceso a todos los grados de enseñanza. (Artículo 3).

Se exceptúan de lo dispuesto en el número 1 del artículo precedente, el ingreso en:

a) Las armas y cuerpos de los Hidrantes de Hierro, Mar y Aire, salvo que por disposición especial expresa se conceda a la mujer el acceso a servicios especiales a los mismos.

b) Los institutos armados y cuerpos, servicios o ejercicios que impliquen normalmente utilización de armas para el desempeño de sus funciones.

c) La Administración de Justicia en los cargos de Registradores, Jueces y Fiscales, salvo en la jurisdicción de menores y laboral (derogado en 1.966).

d) El personal titulado de la Marina Mercante, excepto en las funciones sanitarias.

Se cita aquí únicamente la parte meramente política y profesional de la ley, por estar la situación laboral incluida en otra parte de este trabajo pero hemos de recordar que el igual que con fecha 1 de Febrero de 1.968 se dictó un Decreto que aplica a la esfera laboral el contenido de la Ley de 22 de Julio de 1961, y ni aun así la situación discriminatoria de la mujer en la esfera laboral se ha remediado, no existen decretos similares que apliquen esta Ley al sector político.

En el año 1.974 se publica en el B.O.E. el Instrumento de Adhesión de España al Convenio sobre los Derechos Políticos de la mujer, abierto a la firma por la Asamblea General de la O.N.U. de 30 de Diciembre de 1952, que sustancialmente establece:

Artículo 1.- Las mujeres tendrán derecho a votar en todas las elecciones en igualdad de condiciones con los hombres, sin discriminación alguna.

Artículo 2.- Las mujeres serán elegibles para todas las Organizaciones públicas electivas establecidas por la legislación Nacional en condiciones de igualdad con los hombres sin discriminación alguna.

Artículo 1.- Las mujeres tendrán derecho a ocupar cargos públicos y a ejercer todas las funciones públicas establecidas por la Legislación Nacional, en igual de condiciones con los hombres, sin discriminación alguna.

En el citado Instrumento de Adhesión se dice:

Los artículos I y III de la Convención se entenderán sin perjuicio de las disposiciones que en la actual legislación Española determinan la condición de cabeza de familia.

Los artículos II y III se entenderán sin perjuicio de que determinadas funciones, que por su naturaleza se le puedan ser ejercidas de manera satisfactoria únicamente por hombres o únicamente por mujeres, lo sean exclusivamente y según los casos por aquellas o por estas, de acuerdo con la legislación Española.

El hecho de que la Adhesión Española se produzca con 22 años de retraso y con las limitaciones expuestas, da ya patente que la actual legislación del país referente a los derechos políticos de la mujer es de completo atraso.

En la actualidad de nada tendría únicamente quedar vetadas a la mujer la Jefatura del Estado, muy difícil toda su inclusión en el Consejo de Regencia. Pero en la práctica, el sufragio que se le ofrece a la mujer en este campo está plagado de obstáculos, impuestos por la misma estructura de la sociedad en que vive.

En Mayo de 1975, y según datos tomados del estudio realizado por María Jesús Vázquez (2) para la Asociación Española de Mujeres Juristas, existen los siguientes cargos públicos ocupados por mujeres:

- Un Director General (tercer lugar en la escala jerárquica del Departamento Ministerial), frente a los 95 cargos similares ocupados por hombres.
- Administración Local:
Presidentes de Diputación: ninguna mujer.
Diputados Provinciales: 7 mujeres de un total de 51 hombres.
Alcaldes: 38 mujeres de 8.530 Municipios, todas ellas en Municipios de segundo orden.
Concejales: 245 mujeres.
- Gobernadores Civiles: ninguna mujer.
- Procuradores en Cortes: 8 mujeres de 560 Procuradores, ninguna por el tercio sindical.
- Ninguna mujer en Comisiones Internacionales en las que haya en esta representada.

(2) Congreso Internacional de Mujeres de la Federación Internacional de Mujeres de Carreras Jurídicas.

Participación de mujeres en:

- Partidos políticos; No están legalizados (1).
- Sindicatos: Hay mujeres únicamente en la base.
 26.035 enlaces de 148.360
 6.341 Vocales jurados (10%)
 Vocales Provinciales 16%,
 Presidentes Nacionales de Sindicatos: ninguna mujer
 Procuradores en Cortes por el tercio sindical: ninguna.
- Organización Maestros de Colegios Profesionales: ninguna mujer

→ Esta organización social dificulta el paso a la mujer hacia la actividad política, el mismo libro blanco de la Seguridad, que ha motivado la reforma educativa de los años 70, propone encaminar a la mujer hacia profesiones adecuadas a su condición.

~~Lo que por uno por lo que, no sólo la mujer, sino la sociedad en que ésta se desarrolla, debe impulsar la idea de que cada individuo independientemente del sexo o que pertenezca, debe gozar de una igualdad de oportunidades y que de este desaprovecharse ninguna categoría ni ningún sector de su vida construya una discriminación tal como ya acontece.~~

Se trata ante las leyes ~~de~~
 sus ideas frecuentes sobre
 su condicionamiento para un
 tipo de profesiones o de trabajo u
 otra.

(1) Existe pues una carencia de estadísticas que puedan aclarar la cuantía de la participación femenina, y en posibilidad de acceso a puestos de dirección.