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**PROGRAMMATIC MANIFESTO FOR
THE STRUGGLE OF HOUSEWIVES
IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD**

- A. 1) Women are a social stratum with specific connotations.
- A. 2) Women, even when they carry out wage labour, are in their mass situation workers, housewives.
- A. 3) Housework is the only slave labour that still exists within capitalist society. This means that women do work in the house, without any time limit and unpaid, in exchange for their living maintenance.
- A. 4) Hence women are a proletarian stratum, though not in the orthodox sense.
- A. 5) Bourgeois women play an ambiguous role, enjoying privileges to a greater or lesser extent.
- A. 6) We women insert ourselves into the revolutionary

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process of the proletariat. This we regard as the only way to eliminate our own exploitation and exploitation in general. However, we regard it as necessary to organize ourselves on an independent basis as a proletarian stratum with its own precise goals, which the traditional class organizations have never understood or wanted to organize.

- A. 7) We women assume on our own behalf the task of making ourselves recognized and struggling as a *mass proletarian stratum with its own place within social productivity*.
- A. 8) We women reject the principle that so-called "domestic" work is the "natural" inherited attribute of women. We therefore also reject goals such as the payment of wages to housewives. On the contrary, we affirm all labour hitherto carried out by women, that is: cleaning the house, washing and ironing, sewing, cooking, looking after children, taking care of the old and sick, are forms of labour like any other, which could be carried out equally by men or women and are not of necessity tied to the *ghetto of the home*.
We also reject the capitalist or reformist attempt to solve some of these problems (children, the aged and the sick) by the setting up of *state ghettos*.
- A. 9) We women, realizing the precapitalist nature of our work, nonetheless reject the reformist solution of *gradualism* in the attainment of our liberation. We deny that labour recognized as productive, that is capitalist exploitation, can be liberatory for anybody.
- A. 10) We women assume an articulated programme of struggle with demands which are *immediately* inserted in the revolutionary process for the attainment of *communism* and the *liberation from labour*.
- A. 11) We women present ourselves as a galvanizing force in the urban and rural neighbourhoods, mobilizing all these exploited strata that capitalist planning by its exclusion of them from the directly productive process, has relegated to a position of incapacity to organize

themselves and recompose themselves as part of the working class.

- A. 12) We are working for the revolutionary suppression of the capitalist division of labour, for the establishment of a community in which all types of needs and the organization of labour required to satisfy them are *placéd on a social basis*.

PROGRAMME OF STRUGGLE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

- B. 1) The immediate aims of our struggle are:
- (a) *All cleaning of houses to be carried out by those people, men and women, who wish it to be done, are charged with it and paid to do it by the local council or the state. (By "paid" we mean through-out by the council or state; equally by "free" we mean paid by the state as a public service.)*
 - (b) *Establishment within all neighbourhoods of social centres supplied with laundry services, completely free where both men and women can wash and iron their clothes.*
 - (c) *Establishment of neighbourhood canteens with male and female personnel in charge and paid where anybody who wishes may eat free of charge.*
- B. 2) As far as *children* are concerned, we stand for the following principle: the process of bringing up and socializing children is not the private task of women but of society as a whole. However, since *this society is divided along class lines*, the process of bringing up proletarian children must be *exclusively* the responsibility of the proletariat. Therefore, we struggle for:
- (a) Free nurseries;
 - (b) Sufficient nurseries to cater for all children within each area and sufficiently near their homes;
 - (c) Nurseries with open-air gardens and spaces;
 - (d) Nurseries with *no religious personnel*;

- (e) Nurseries in which the task of supervision and child-care is carried out by *a number of the parents themselves, paid to do so*. This struggle itself should be organized in such a way as to allow parents to comprehend the development of the children and to develop to the fullest the child's understanding of the external world and not to repress it. This must be done through *class channels* (comrades who are specialized in such matters) and *not the channels of apparently "neutral" science*.
 - (f) Nurseries without limited time schedules, both as regards the entry and departure of children or of parents who wish to be with their children or those who wish to assist in child care.
 - (g) One part of the nursery to be devoted to the *newly born* with qualified personnel who may also be chosen by the parents (for example women experienced in child rearing). The personnel would however be controlled by the fact that the nursery would be within the neighbourhood and fully accessible to its members.
 - (h) Proletarian parents to demand and practise the right to propagandize their point of view in elementary teachers' training colleges and all other schools and university faculties which train elementary teachers to organize their struggle in common.
- B. 3) For *the ill and the old and chronic sick* who cannot be cared for in the home we demand health units and special care services, *within the neighbourhood and free of charge*, where personnel specialized for medical help be provided but where there is to be no limitation against the entry of non-specialized people (relatives or friends of any sex or age) nor the departure of those within, nor as regards any activity which those living in the neighbourhood may wish to pursue.

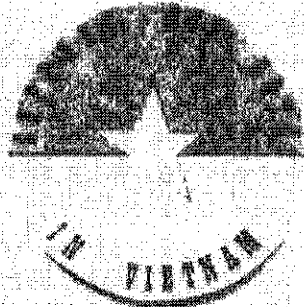
- B. 4) Every neighbourhood must have a *medical surgery* with sufficient personnel. Visits and distribution of medicine must be free. Contraceptives must be included in free medical service.
- B. 5) THIS REORGANIZATION AND SOCIALIZATION OF LABOUR IS, IN OUR VIEW, ONLY POSSIBLE WITHIN THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. IT HAS REVOLUTIONARY SIGNIFICANCE AS OPPOSED TO CAPITALIST RATIONALIZATION ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT A DRASTIC REDUCTION OF THE WORKING DAY IS ACHIEVED, FOR ALL, MEN AND WOMEN, WHICH WOULD ALLOW QUALITATIVELY GREATER POSSIBILITY OF SOCIAL LIVING. ALL THIS MEANS A WORKING WEEK OF 20 HOURS.
- C. 1) After specifying the precise goals of women, we align ourselves, both as housewives and as wage workers, with the struggle of the working class and the whole proletariat for:
- (a) Guaranteed wage, separated from all productivity and working hours;
 - (b) Drastic reduction of working hours, on the basis of equal pay and work sharing with free access for women to all jobs;
 - (c) Elimination as far as possible or reduction to a minimum of unpleasant, dirty work;
 - (d) Total elimination of night shifts which upset the physiological balance of individuals;
 - (e) Free and beautiful housing;
 - (f) Efficient and free transport;
 - (g) Free schools for all.
- C. 2) This last point (Section C) is extremely generic since it does not discuss the discriminations that women undergo at the place of work, in terms of both pay, job hierarchy, and types of work. It does not provide objectives on this question. This is justified to the extent that this programme is for the *struggle of women in the neighbourhood* and reference to general goals, within the factory or outside, is only made in order to

clarify the nature of the overall process of struggle within which we wish to insert ourselves. We shall deal in a further document with the specific goals of women as wage workers. At this stage we emphasize that wage labour only concerns a minority of women and does not encompass women at the mass level.

Movimento di Lotta Femminile, Padova
July, 1971

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