

# HOUSEWORK, THE MULTINATIONALS, AND THIRD WORLD UNDERDEVELOPMENT

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The United Nations' "Status of the World's Women" Report has this year recommended the inclusion of housework in the Gross National Produce (GNP) of countries. This comes at a time when women all around the world - in the United States of America and in Russia, in Britain and in China, in Canada and in Venezuela, in Italy and in Cuba - regardless of the social systems under which they live - are mobilising more and more for the recognition in monetary terms of the work they have done traditionally for free. Women not only produce the work force of all countries but also bear the primary responsibility for training, nurturing and maintaining them, tending them in times of disability or illness, and caring for them when society no longer needs their labour. No society, regardless of its political system, has yet solved the problem of housework. While it is true that socialist countries are far advanced over capitalist countries in the provision of socialised housework facilities and in the right of women to receive compensation for activities associated with their role as mothers, the problem remains, for example, in terms of a lack of urgency in keeping socialised housework facilities abreast of the needs of women who work outside the home, and in the tremendous pressure put on women to participate equally with men in work outside the home in spite of the burden of housework which remains essentially women's work. In most Third World countries the lack of recognition in monetary terms is at its worst. Neither Governments nor Women's Organisations give practical importance to the issue. Should that problem be solved, however, we would still be left with the economic and other constraints posed by the condition of underdevelopment itself. Because of underdevelopment the majority of Third World women do the hardest, most back-breaking and most time-consuming work of any women in the world, yet have access to the least in terms of benefits. Very few Third World women enjoy any welfare benefits at all. Only a small proportion take part in what has traditionally been regarded as the 'work force'. As a result only an extremely small proportion of Third World women have access to any regular income at all.

Housework is the No. 1 occupation of Third World women, whether in their own countries or in the metropolitan centres of Canada, the U.S. and Europe where they have migrated in search of money. Even when women work outside the home their jobs are mostly housework-related. They are mostly employed as domestic helps, in the textile and food industries, in the various child-care related jobs such as teaching, and in the care of the sick and aged. In spite of this no statistics are harder to come by than those related to women's work. In Jamaica, for example, the official statistical publications have no breakdown to show the number of women employed in these various sectors, or the number of women who work at home, the sources of their income etc. Even in the case of Mexico, where more work has been done in this area than in many other Third World countries, the statistics leave much to be desired. Certainly the 'private' area of work in the home has been almost totally ignored. This has serious consequences for economic planning and political development.

The importance of examining this 'private' area of women's existence is obvious when we look at statistics about the involvement of women in waged labour - or 'employment' statistics as they are called. To start with the example of Jamaica again, according to 1978 figures, while the unemployment rate for men is 15%, for women it is 37%, or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times the male rate. For women under 24 the figure is 51%. In Brazil only 13% of women earn a wage. These figures are typical for the Third World. The result is that Third World women are extremely poor, much more so than the men, although they bear more responsibility than men for child-rearing and family welfare. The problem is made worse by the fact that when women do earn a wage, they get 40-60% less than men. Between 1955 and 1976 this got worse rather than better; the gap between the earnings of men and women nearly doubled in world terms. In the developing countries it more than doubled. In all developing countries, the categories where the vast majority of women are employed are the ones with the lowest incomes. In Kenya, for example there are twice the number of women as men in the lowest income category - 50% women as compared with 24% men. In Jamaica 51% of males who head households earn more than 1,000 dollars per year. Only 13% of women earn the same. This extreme poverty of women is very troubling when one considers that it is women among the poor, whether in Central or South America, in sub-Saharan or North Africa, or in Asia, who are increasingly becoming the sole or main providers for their families. On an average more than  $(\frac{1}{3})$  of the households in the Third World are headed by women. In another  $\frac{1}{3}$  women bring in 40-60% of the family income. Moreover it is traditional in many Third World societies, particularly in Africa, for women to support their men when the men are out of work. In the developed U.S. only 14% of families are headed solely by women. So the poverty of Third World women is compounded by the fact that they bear tremendous economic responsibilities. Many can only engage in marginal income-earning activities because of their household and child-care responsibilities. Such earnings are low and erratic, and place their families in a situation of bare subsistence. It is no accident that the 'higgler', whether she sells rural produce or small manufactured goods, is the archetype of the Third World female.

Because of underdevelopment housework or domestic work in the Third World is worse than anywhere else. While in general terms women do  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the world's work and earn only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the income, the situation is even more extreme in the developing countries. In addition the nature and quantity of women's work in developing countries is awesome. Underdevelopment is characterised, among other things, by high rates of 'unemployment', low wages, acute shortages in services such as schools, hospitals, day care, piped water, electricity, roads and transportation, and by a dire lack of technology. Whereas these things affect both men and women, they affect women much more. It is primarily women who take up the shortfall on all services in developing countries; when there are not enough schools or day care centres, it is the women who must tend, educate and make provision for the children; when there are not enough hospitals, it is the women who care for the sick; when roads and transportation are primitive, it is the women who feel it most as they trek back and forth in search of food and survival for themselves and their families; the everyday tasks of cleaning, washing

cooking, marketing and child care consume tremendous time and energy because of the lack of piped water, electricity, technology and roads. only (21%) of dwellings in Jamaica have piped water. In St. Lucia the figure is (11%) and in Haiti it is (3%). Compare this with 95% in the U.S and 97% in Canada. When there is no piped water it means that every drop of water for cooking, washing, cleaning, bathing etc. must be transported on the heads of women and children from the nearest river, or, if one is lucky, from a standpipe somewhere near the village. The lack of electricity and such things as washing machines, and the inability to pay for them even if they are available, means that several hours a week are spent washing clothes by hand. When roads are bad and transportation primitive or inadequate, children have to get up earlier to go to school, women must wake earlier to make preparations to market and to work. The United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs has published a chart showing that the average African woman wakes at 4.45 a.m. and does not finish working until 9.30 p.m. According to that chart the woman gets ready for her day in 15 minutes, and no time is allocated for washing clothes, tidying the house, mending clothes or preparing breakfast and lunch for the family. Even without these things the United Nations estimates that this average African woman does not stop working until 9.30 p.m. A more realistic picture is given by Janet Jagan in a report for a booklet called 'Caribbean Women in the Struggle'. She paints a stark picture of the realities of life for a female sugar worker in Guyana. In the words of Haliman, the sugar worker, "Day na clean when yu start fa work, an' night catch yu when yu come home." Haliman wakes at 3.00 a.m., cooks morning 'tea' for the family, and puts lunch in the lunch pails for herself and her husband, then packs up for the children. After she bathes the children they are taken to an old lady nearby who keeps them until daybreak then takes them to the estate creche where they remain for the day, eating the food Haliman has prepared for them. They are brought back to the old lady when the crecher is closed, and Haliman picks them up when she returns from the fields. When she gets home she cooks the evening meal and washes the clothes. She uses her kerosene lamp to see to clean her children before putting them to bed. 11.00 p.m. is a more realistic time for the termination of days like these.

While women in the Third World work harder, bear more responsibility and are poorer than any other people anywhere, the majority of their work is not recognised by Governments, Development Agencies or political organisations. Neither Haliman nor the old lady in Janet Jagan's story gets any consideration from the State for the child care and family maintenance they do. Development Agencies channel aid to men rather than women, and political organisations consider domestic work 'unproductive'. Even women's groups tend to concentrate on channeling money to 'working' women, i.e. women who work outside homes for a wage. This focus ignores the main work which women do, which is housework, and ignores the plight of the majority of women whose labour is unpaid or marginal. As a result programmes aimed at bettering the conditions of women only affect a small percentage. The State, political organisations and women's groups in the Third World share the same minority focus. The policies and programmes of international Development Agencies also have a tendency to be distorting and

counter-productive because of their failure to recognise the key role of women in the development of Third World societies. In Africa, for example, 80% of agricultural field labour is done by women, and 80% of Africans depend on the land for a living. Women bear the prime responsibility for the fundamental welfare of the region. Yet Development Agencies channel their aid primarily to men, and focus on the development of cash crops to earn valuable foreign exchange, at the expense of the subsistence agriculture on which Africans depend for food, selling the surplus to earn money to buy the things they cannot grow. In the Upper Volta Valley Authority resettlement scheme, established by the World Bank as a model for some multi-million dollar projects, the women have to neglect their crops to help the men grow cash crops, yet it is the men who get all the money, and the women are reduced to begging the men for money to run their households. On irrigated rice settlement schemes in Kenya the situation is almost identical. The women are naturally very resentful. Even when women do not join in cash-cropping, they are deprived of the man's help in tending the home crops. The result is that these plots, on which the majority of Africans depend for food, are neglected, and food production in Africa has fallen rather than risen between 1969 and 1979 (by 1.4%). This is against the background of an increasing population. The cash crop policy as pursued by the World Bank is therefore actually creating starvation in Africa rather than increasing the welfare of the African people. It is the multinational companies who benefit most from these policies. They control marketing, prices, shipping etc. and the bulk of the foreign exchange which is earned from these cash crops in fact ends up in their hands. The tremendous profits made by these companies in the Third World are made largely out of the exploitation of female slave labour, productive work which contributes to profits but is not paid for. Moreover, the policies which make that exploitation possible increase the burden of women's work while decreasing their ability to look after their families.

Any attempt to recognise women's work, in the Third World as elsewhere, must express itself ultimately in terms of money. Money is the means by which value is recognised and socially useful labour compensated in all our societies. The economic independence of women remains a sham as long as their economic rights are not recognised. Women have a right to money and social benefits not only for the work they do in factories, schools, hospitals etc., but for the work they do at home and in the fields, which is necessary for the maintenance and development of society. Women's groups in the Third World presently concern themselves almost exclusively with the rights of women who work for wages. The promotion of such benefits as maternity leave for 'working' women is revolutionary in Third World terms, when one considers that formerly women's groups concentrated on such things as sewing, cooking and craft labour, with little attention to the question of monetary consideration. ~~xxxxxxxstaxx~~ Those that did promote economic independence through the development of craft training and other skills, did not yet begin to conceive of the possibility of the State channeling benefits towards women who were not employed in private industry or within the State machinery. In general that situation persists in the Third World today, though significant advances are being made here and there in the area of benefits for women who work for wages. The fundamental fact, however, is that the majority of Third World women, including those who work for wages, will see no end to their exploitation until the work that women do outside

the wage market is recognised in the way that society recognises all other socially useful labour - in terms of money. Until that is done the majority of Third World families will continue to suffer hunger and all the other attendant ills of poverty, and women who work for wages will continue to be badly paid for what millions of women are doing in their homes for free. Not only will their wages remain low, but they will continue to have little opportunity for recreation or leisure because of the burden of performing their paid and unpaid jobs at the same time.

In Third World countries mobilisation around the question of women's work must address itself to the disparities between developed and developing countries which is the result of the exploitation of Third World economies by the multinational companies which control the economic life of the developed countries of the capitalist world. While it is true that our own Governments and people need to become more sensitised to the whole question of women's work, practical recognition of that work depends largely on the extent to which we are able to control the profits made out of the cheap labour of our people and the exploitation of our natural resources. Very little technology exists in the Third World. Of \$150 billion spent every year on technological research and development, only 3% is spent in the developing countries. This lack of technology means that we have had to depend on the expertise of the developed countries for the development of the raw materials on which our economies depend. The prices of our raw materials are controlled by the multinational companies and are set without reference to the needs of our economies. These profits are in general extremely low and bear no relation to the profits the raw materials generate when they are converted into manufactured goods. Since we lack the technology to do the manufacturing ourselves, and since these companies have a big say in the access of these products to the world market, we are largely at their mercy. Increasingly, however, our people and government are organising to have more and more control over the prices of our raw materials and the profits they generate. The IBA, OPEC and the NIEO are cases in point. Our women have a big interest in this movement against big capital. Our ability to build roads, schools and houses, to provide piped water, electricity and all the other needs of our people is dependent on our ability to control our economies. Any development of these facilities helps to reduce women's work, and the problems of Third World people in general. But apart from these 'general' benefits, the more specific needs of women, in particular the ability to compensate them in monetary terms for the work they do, are also dependent on the movement against international capital and its exploitation of our economies. In Jamaica in 1973 the bauxite companies moved \$350 million out of the country in profits. If we take a look at what \$350 million could have meant to Jamaica's women, we find that it could have paid all the women in Jamaica the minimum wage for 17 years, it could provide all Primary School children with one meal per day for 16 years at current rates, and it is almost 9,000 times the present expenditure on day care. It could have built hundreds of factories to employ thousands of our women who presently earn no wage or who would prefer to work at something other than housework. \$350 million could have revolutionised the lives of Jamaican women.

While our struggle as women is part of the struggle of the whole people, women also have to wage an additional struggle against the male-defined politics of our countries and against the idea that work

that goes on outside the wage market and in homes is merely a private matter and has no claim on the resources of the society. As Third World women we have to be careful not to get caught in the confines of male-defined analyses which fail to recognise our work in its totality.

The need for this struggle is clearly demonstrated when one looks at the experience of women in the socialist countries. Socialism has done far more than capitalism to facilitate the participation of women in work outside the home. Socialised housework institutions, mainly day care centres, are therefore more available than anywhere in the capitalist world. However, the tremendous advances made by women in the socialist world have themselves provided stark evidence of the fact that the burden of housework is the ultimate obstacle to the full participation of ~~xxx~~ women at all levels of society. The tremendous advance of women under socialism is indisputable. In the Soviet Union 75% of women are doctors. In the U.S. the figure is 9%. In the Soviet Union 35% of the engineers are women. In the U.S. the figure is less than 1%. 70% of Cuban doctors are women. A detailed examination of the situation in a number of socialist countries, however, shows clearly that in spite of the tremendous advances, few women are involved in leadership or management roles, and the majority of women continue to be employed in lower-paid jobs. In Vietnam they work mainly in light industry, public health and education. In education although they constitute 54% of the work force, they are only 1/5 of the lecturers in higher education. In Bulgaria, where they constitute over 50% of the work force only 25% of managers are women. In Hungary only 15% of skilled workers are women. Women's earnings are 30% lower than men's. Though 85% of teachers are women, only 17% of Principals are women. In Cuba while 25% of workers are women, only 15% of leadership posts are held by women, and only 6% of Party cadres and officials are women. Only 13% of the Party membership is female. In the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, while women are 50% of the membership, only 19% of the leadership at the national level is female. Yet this is the highest level of female leadership among the main political institutions in Cuba. In the Unions it is only 7%, and in the Federation of Cuban Youth 10%. In his speech to the Second Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women, Fidel Castro, speaking on this subject, said, "These figures reflect the reality that after 15 years of Revolution we are still politically and culturally behind in this area. The reality is that there are still objective and subjective factors that discriminate against women." Investigations carried out by the Communist Party of Cuba show that the objective factors all boil down to one thing - housework. Both men and women in Cuba, when asked what was the greatest obstacle to female involvement in posts of responsibility, replied overwhelmingly that the problem was "the responsibility of domestic tasks and attending to husbands and children." A survey of 251 Cuban working women showed that they spent 13 hours a day from Monday to Friday between housework and their jobs. They spent 11½ hours per day doing housework on weekends because of the accumulation of tasks during the week. To quote the document from the Communist Party of Cuba, "If we count up the time spent in commuting to the workplace, in taking children to nursery or school, in making purchases, washing, ironing, cooking, cleaning, looking after children, caring the ill or aged in the family, one can see that women

have to make a great effort to study and have little or no time to take part in cultural activities or to rest. Add to this the time needed to participate in political and mass organisations. " The same report (1976) stated that the problem had become so acute that a large number of women, professionals and skilled workers included, had abandoned work outside the home because they could not cope with the situation. The problem is by no means peculiar to Cuba. A leading Hungarian advocate of women's rights, speaking on the situation of women in Hungary, had this to say. "Something has changed, but not enough. There are contradictory pressures on a woman. Women are expected to be all things at once. They should be loving and caring wife-mothers, and yet at the same time they have to learn to be competitive and achievement oriented..... This is not equality. This is not liberation." Continuing, she said, " Working women still spend 4½ hours per day on housework. Men spend 1½. Services are not well developed; shops and buses are overcrowded, restaurants and convenience foods are expensive and there are few mechanical aids such as washing machines. This means that housework is not only time-consuming, but energy- and nerve-consuming too." Similarly in Russia women spend 30-40 hours per week on housework. Washing is usually done by hand, and shopping is a daily time-consuming chore. The flood of feeling about this situation, on the part of both women and men, was demonstrated when in 1969 the Russian magazine 'Nova Mir' published a story which portrayed in diary form the problems of a woman trying to bring up small children, hold down a demanding job, and keep her marriage together. The story touched a sore spot for many Russian women and men, and newspapers were flooded with letters about women's status. For many Russians the story raised questions about a society where 80% of women work outside the home - about the housework they had to do at the same time, about the primitive contraception methods they had to rely on, and about the ~~xxxxxx xxxkxthayxhzdxtxxxxxxaxk~~ shortcomings of State nursery care. Women in socialist countries, like women everywhere, are waging a spontaneous struggle against this housework burden which they are forced to bear without compensation, and against the erosion of their leisure and the quality of their lives when they are expected to perform two jobs at the same time. In Cuba many women refused a second job and forced the Communist Party to recognise their plight. In Hungary they fought against the State's attempt to restrict their right to abortion. Abortion had been easily available in Hungary since 1956, and the types of contraception available had improved. Women were using both so effectively to refuse the extra work involved in child-rearing that there was a very sharp drop in the birth rate. So the State took steps to make it harder for women to refuse to have children, by refusing abortions to married women with less than 3 children. The women lost their battle for free abortion; but they won the right to stay at home until their children were 3 years' old, without losing their jobs or pension rights. They also won wages for child rearing in the form of monthly payments from the State during that period when they were at home looking after the child. Money for housework is something that women in socialist countries are struggling for, just like their sisters in the capitalist world. The recognition of house work as a socially necessary job which has to be done and has to be paid for is the ultimate

criterion by which socialist commitment to the equality of women will be judged.

The possibility for the full equality of women does not exist within the exploitative economic and social relations of capitalist society. Capitalism exploits women, and through them their men, by paying for the labour of one worker when they benefit from the labour of at least two. Women produce, train and maintain the labour force without which capital could not function. But women have no money to show for this work. Capitalists make more profits because women are not paid for their work. Then they turn around and make the men pay from their already meagre wages. But they also invent a whole philosophy about the role of the female which is designed to keep the woman in her place as society's household slave labour. Part of this philosophy concerns the form and role of the family, the guardian of all those wonderful traditions which keep us working for free, and keep us and our men tied together for economic rather than emotional reasons. This philosophy is as alive in the socialist countries as it is under capitalism. The idea that women's work has no value, is non-productive or even degrading, is a foundation pillar of socialist theory as we presently have it. This insidious assumption of capitalist society sneaked into socialist theory and practice because when Marx was writing, and at the time of the October Revolution in Russia, the women's movement had not yet developed the strength of conviction to insist that the Revolution deal with the problems of their 'private' lives. The Revolution insisted that such 'private' problems should be put aside while men and women together concentrated on the 'important' tasks of the Revolution. Now in the decade of the 70s the worms are beginning to turn. Women are demanding recognition for the vast amount of work they do in this domestic sphere, and they want that recognition in the way all other socially useful work is recognised - through cash. Socialist theory as constituted up to now must undergo a critical re-examination of its position on the question of women's work. As long as this work is considered non-productive, as long as no value is put on it whether it is done in the home or outside, the full equality of women cannot become a reality. Until socialist societies realise that their attitude to housework reeks of the indoctrination of capitalist society, and change that attitude accordingly, the full equality of women will remain an elusive ideal. Women in socialist countries are struggling with the problem of housework, just like their sisters elsewhere. The male-dominated establishment is resisting. The resistance has already been mentioned in relation to the struggle around abortion in Hungary. It is also evident in the fact that in spite of the tremendous pressure of public opinion on the issue in the Soviet Union from the 60s up to the present, up to 1976 no appreciable advance had been made in solving the problem. On International Women's Day in 1976 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union took note of the issue by putting forward a resolution on the need to increase laundries and carry-out meal services. In Cuba there is reluctance to spend State money to develop adequate housework services. The statement of the housework problem in the report "On the full exercise of female equality" is very vivid, and the case for much wider provision of socialised services etc. very strongly argued, and accepted. In spite of this the final resolution of the document states, "The Revolution has made great efforts investing considerable State resources in the establishment of nurseries, boarding schools, scholarships and other services, but these



are not sufficient to fill the needs brought about by the necessity to incorporate women into socially useful work, and present resources do not allow us to do much more in this area for now, so we must seek other solutions." The reference to socially useful work shows clearly that housework is not considered to be socially useful, and accounts for the low priority that it is given as a revolutionary objective.

I have spent considerable time on the issue of housework in socialist countries, not only because some of them qualify as 'Third World', but because women in all parts of the Third World can hope to solve their many problems only by looking in a socialist direction. Only socialism can solve the many problems of underdevelopment which affect them directly. At the same time Third World women have to rid themselves of any illusion that once the Revolution triumphs their interests will necessarily be pursued with the vigour they deserve. Certainly every opportunity will be provided for their involvement in work outside the home, because once the whole basis of economic production is changed from a private to a social form, there is usually a shortage rather than an oversupply of labour, as happens so often under capitalist conditions. To get recognition for their housework and create alternatives to the double job may, however, necessitate a revolution within the revolution. It is therefore extremely important that women defend their specific interests before, during and after the revolution. These specific interests cannot be treated as 'secondary', or women who mobilise around them accused of being divisive and of splitting the unity of the revolution. On the contrary, if there is to be true unity in the revolution, the programme of that revolution should at all times address itself to solving the specific problems of women. The bottom line in the list of problems is the question of housework and its recognition as socially useful labour. Whether a society claims to be socialist or not, if it does not address itself to that recognition, it cannot claim to be truly committed to the full equality of women.

And finally, a word on the question of immigrant domestics in Canada. Third World women come to Canada and other developed countries first and foremost because the Canadian State needs them. Third World women fill this need because it allows them to earn money that they would not be able to earn back home. Besides housework is second nature to most Third World women; in this area they are skilled workers, and in the developed world domestic working conditions tend to be better because they have at their disposal labour-saving devices which are inaccessible in their home countries. So they emigrate for two reasons - money and less work. But I repeat, the Canadian State allows them to come NOT as an act of charity, but because it needs them. The worsening world economic situation in recent times has meant that there are more and more people from the developing countries who are trying to get into the developed countries to reclaim some of the wealth which has been robbed from their home countries and used to provide the benefits of life in developed countries. The Canadian State and the big companies which it supports are resisting this pressure to reclaim stolen profits, and are trying to safeguard these profits by cutting back on benefits previously won by the Canadian working class. Immigrant domestics are the bottom end of that working

class - the most powerless and the easiest to victimise. So they are taking the hardest cuts. Evidence shows that instead of being given landed immigrant status, more and more domestics are coming into Canada on work permits which only allow them to work for specified periods, usually a year, as nothing but domestics. When their time is up they must go home, unless they are very lucky and get another work permit, again specifically for domestic work. They are paid below the minimum wage and have no rights to any social benefits such as welfare or pensions, although they pay social security contributions. In modern times this is as close to the slave trade as makes little difference. With landed immigrant status immigrant domestics were at least able to apply for Canadian citizenship after a time, and to gain access to education and to better paid areas of employment, as well as social benefits. If the Canadian State wins in its struggle to deprive immigrant domestics of their rights as workers, it will win in its struggle to cutback on the most fundamental rights presently enjoyed by the rest of the Canadian working class ... in education, in health, in housing etc. The struggle for the rights of immigrant domestics and the struggle of the whole Canadian working class against cutbacks are one and the same struggle. If immigrant domestics lose their struggle, the whole Canadian working class stands to lose.

The struggle of immigrant domestics is also part of the Third World struggle to redress the economic imbalance between developed and developing countries. That imbalance is caused by the fact that profits from Third World countries end up in developed countries, so we come to developed countries like Canada to reclaim some of that wealth. Immigrants, and particularly immigrant domestics, are here by right - the right of their labour performed on behalf of the developed countries both in the Third World and in those developed countries when they go there as immigrants. Immigrants are not here to receive charity, nor are they burdens to the Canadian State. It is in this context that the struggle for the rights of immigrant domestics has to be understood. The pressure to make immigrants feel 'grateful' for the sub-human treatment they are receiving from the Canadian State comes from people who feel that immigration is an act of charity. They don't understand it when immigrants are so vocal and act as if they own the place. The reason is that immigrants know they have a right to be here, and to have their needs fulfilled by the Canadian State. This is the real state of things, and it is necessary for us to be frank with each other if we are really to ~~max~~ understand and help one another.

Finally I must thank you for the opportunity to say these few words on the question of housework from a Third World point of view. Special thanks go to Housewives Initiative of Canada and to the Wages for Housework Campaign in Toronto for making this occasion possible.