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215 Superior Avenue
Dayton, Ohio 45406

March 19, 1975

Maria Rosa Dalla Costa
Via Bartolomeo Christifori 35
Padova, Italy

Dear Maria Rosa Dalla Costa,

Recently we learned that you would be coming to the United States this summer to teach at Godard College. We were very glad and excited to hear this news.

While you are in the United States there will be a very large and important conference on Socialist Feminism. Plans have been worked on for the past six months. A steering committee of women representing Socialist/Feminist unions from all over the United States has been making the plans. We expect at least 600 women to attend, possibly many more. The dates are July 4-6th, three full days. The location is → Antioch College, in Yellow Springs, Ohio ... 1½ hours by air from New York.

I am writing to ask you to attend, and to ask you to be a speaker at the conference. I think it would be a great opportunity for you to talk with many American women who share similar political views, and who could really benefit from hearing your ideas. We would be very pleased and honored if you would accept this invitation. However, you should know that your presentation will not be the major focus of the conference. Rather, you will be speaking on an equal level with a number of other women.

The enclosed agenda should give you an idea of what the conference will focus on. As you can see, we wanted equal emphasis on theory, strategy and tactics. We wanted to put a great stress on organizing. We expect a great many women organizers and activists to attend the conference, as well as women who are more academically inclined.

If you are willing to attend, please let us know immediately. (If possible, please send us any recent writings, or an outline of what you might wish to speak about.) Then, we can begin to work out details.

All of us sincerely hope you will be with us on July 4th.

As a sister,

Julia Reichert

JULIA REICHERT
for the Steering Committee
for a National Conference on Socialist Feminism

PS - As you can see, the enclosed is a draft of the agenda... details are still tentative...

Socialist Feminism Conference--July 4, 5, & 6

Yellow Springs, Ohio--Agenda

Developments in the last year lead us to believe that the time is right for a national conference on socialist feminism. In the face of rising expectations, women have been particularly hard hit by soaring inflation and unemployment and federal cutbacks in social service spending. 1974 saw more labor militancy among unorganized workers than in decades, with women often providing leadership as well as forming the bulk of the rank and file. Liberation struggles in the third world have raised consciousness about the international implications of capitalism and imperialism.

At a crucial stage of development, the women's movement today is potentially the most powerful revolutionary force in this country. There has been tremendous growth in the number of feminist organizing projects and self controlled women's alternative institutions. Segments of NOW have become radicalized, seeing the limits of reform politics. In 1974, the Coalition of Labor Union Women brought together working women who seek to consciously organize around their self interests as women. Third World women have begun to identify themselves as feminist and to organize as such.

While our numbers swell, our politics and practice have failed to reach out to significant sectors of women. Many women are feeling the limits of the politics of feminism and personal liberation as well as recognizing the continued failure of male dominated sect groups and leftist organizations to speak to the oppression of women in realistic ways. Across the country women have begun to discuss these questions. Many are organizing socialist feminist study groups, ~~organizing~~ collectives and unions and beginning to develop a politics and practice which can coalesce these emerging forces of women.

WHO IS ORGANIZING THE CONFERENCE?

The conference has been organized by a planning committee supported by and made up of representatives of the following socialist feminist groups and unions: Berkeley Oakland Women's Union, Boston Area Socialist Feminist Organization, Chicago Women's Liberation ^{UNION}, Lexington (KY) Socialist Feminist Groups, New American Movement Women's Caucus (represented by the Dayton Socialist Feminist Group), New York City Women's Union, Radical Women (Seattle), Twin Cities Women's Union (Minneapolis),

and Valley Women's Union (Northampton, MA). The planning committee, which first met in November of 1974, has been working collectively to design and build for the conference.

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

The idea of the conference grew out of a desire to facilitate communication among the growing number of socialist feminist and activist women and to seriously examine major questions of socialist feminist theory and practice. The women's movement with a variety of practice, has had little sense of strategies for building ~~the~~ a mass revolutionary movement and offering realizable alternatives to capitalism. In fusing and building on the politics of both socialism and feminism, women are developing theories which make sense, and strategies that are effective. We see the conference as a place to nurture this process, to share our experiences in an open and analytical way and to assert socialist feminism as a strategy for revolution.

Who is the conference for?

The conference is open to any woman ~~participating~~ sympathetic to the goals of socialist feminism. ~~the~~ We see it as a working conference on socialist feminism. Such a conference can help socialist feminists join with other activist women to forge a more cohesive and potent revolutionary movement.

The time is not right for setting up any kind of ~~socialist feminist~~ national organization--this is not our goal. ~~on the other hand,~~ ^{NEITHER IS} the conference ~~planned as~~ ^{planned as} an ~~introductory~~ introductory debate on the merits of socialist feminism. ~~There~~ There are a variety of tendencies developing among socialist feminists, we want to provide for dialogue and growth of our politics with ~~the~~ a feminist and open spirit. In order to provide a beginning point for discussion, the planning committee has set forth three principals of unity for the conference, which follow:

- I. We recognize the need for and support the existence of an autonomous women's movement throughout the revolutionary process.
- II. We see the connections between oppression based on race, class, sex and sexual preference and believe that any revolutionary movement must struggle against all simultaneously.
- III. We believe that socialist feminism is a strategy for revolution. We believe that debate on these principals would be divisive and counter-productive. We are planning for between 600 and 900 women. ~~the~~

HOW IS THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZED?

The projected format for the conference has been collectively designed to provide equal emphasis on theory, strategy and practice, while recognizing that it is unproductive to discuss one without relating it to the others. The conference setting, physically, structurally, and spiritually, will be open and humane while providing for interaction on various levels. through individual and small group discussions as well as ⁱⁿ extended workshop time and open discussion during meetings of the whole.

Initial theoretical presentations and discussion ~~are~~ provided for in three meetings of the whole. We have planned these gatherings ~~with~~ feeling that such theoretical discussion ^{will provide a basis} ~~is~~ necessary to further exploration and analysis of various ~~the~~ strategies, programs and tactics during the weekend. Major questions will be discussed, such as 'what are the implications of class to a socialist feminist movement?' 'How do we develop a ^{practice} ~~politics~~ which speaks to the oppression of third world women?...Lesbian women?' 'What are relationships between oppression in the home and on the job?' 'How do we develop strategies for taking power?' etc. (Economics, International perspective--should these be added?)

The backbone of the conference will be strategic workshops ~~meeting~~ ~~throughout~~ throughout the weekend. We see three primary areas in which socialist feminists are developing and using various strategies: I workplace organizing, II community organizing & organizing in the social services, and III ^{developing} socialist feminism as a strategy for revolution for all peoples. Conference participants will choose one of these areas, according to interest and experience, meeting four times during the weekend. Each ~~workshop~~ ^{workshop will be} ~~subdivided~~ ^{after one large meeting,} subdivided into smaller groups, moving from the general to the particular. (See the agenda for further clarification.) The planning committee has designed this structure believing that it will provide room for ~~the~~ discussion of major questions in the most humane and productive way. We feel that rather than offering a pot pourri of interesting subjects, that it will give participants time to share experiences extensively and to get down to the nuts and bolts of ^{developing strategies for} organizing.

A third kind of experience the conference offers will be ⁱⁿ small workshops on a variety of topics. Many of these ~~workshops~~ will grow out of the strategic workshops, being practical discussions on methods of using various strategies. These small groups will offer opportunities to share skills, exchange information and discuss issues raised during the conference. Workshops are planned on subjects like: use of media, women's

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theater, , building socialist feminist unions, direct action organizing, building various alternative institutions, feminist therapy, lesbian feminism, etc.

Throughout the conference we have allowed time for cultural events, exercise, dance and singing. -----?

Needs dynamite closing paragraph

AGENDA

(Attached)

Dear Sisters—It's been a real struggle to write this. We feel it needs a lot of work, but I want to get it out to you for reactions, revisions criticisms, etc. My understanding of what our assignment included was that this is to be an agenda explanation as well as the kind of thing that would be in our brochure on the conference. I feel like it's too long and also that a lot of things are left out. I'm sending it in this rough form hoping to get back reactions as soon as possible so that we can have a better revision (hopefully a final version) in time for the regional get together sessions. Some of my self criticisms follow: The language is not simple enough. How revolutionary (How many assumptions do we want to make?) do we want to sound? I think there should be more on why we think it's important to develop theory, and why we think it is important for socialist feminists to think about and develop strategies. I think the concept of the strategic workshops needs to be more clearly laid out. Also there are some things that we (planning comm.) haven't settled on which I think should be included—like 1. What are the major theories to be discussed at the conference? 2. We need the 'S*F as a Strategy for Revolution' workshop to be more clearly explained. 3. Does soc-fem need to be more clearly defined in this thing? (I think so) if so how? 4. Is the purpose of the principals of unity to discourage (exclude) women who don't support from them coming? (The news release from Lexington sounded like the principals were only to describe agreements of planning groups and not meant to define agreements at the conference). 4. I think it would be really important to solicit and include support from Third World feminists for the conference—this could make a difference in appealing to other third world women.

Sorry this isn't in better shape—and that it is so late. We'll be working on it, editing and changing it, while waiting for your replies. It would be good if you could write (or call Julia-222-0170 or Robin-223-3296) by Wed. Mar 19.

In love and (whew!) struggle,
Robin Suits for the Dayton group

P.S.: I'll have a new home phone number listed with the operator this week, hopefully.

Robin

AGENDA

FRIDAY, JULY 4:

- 9:00-10:30--Registration
10:30-12:00-- Introductory Meeting of the Whole--
 A Welcome to the conference and Overview of Socialist
 Feminism in Historical Context
12:00-1:30--Lunch
1:30-2:30--Meeting of the Whole--New theoretical developments in
 Socialist Feminism
2:45-4:00--Small Group discussions of theoretical presentation
4:15-5:30--Small Special Interest Workshops
5:30-7:30--Dinner
7:30-8:30-- Strategic Workshops--three simultaneous meetings:
 I. Work Place Organizing
 II. Community Organizing/Social Services
 III. Socialist Feminism as a strategy for revolution
Each of these will meet with a short presentation on various strategies
raising questions for further discussion in smaller groupings.
8:45-10:00--Strategic Workshop Subdivisions
 I. Work Place Organizing
 a. Organizing the Unorganized
 b. Working with Supportive Working Women's Organizations
 c. Working with Organized Unions
 d. The Coalition of Labor Union Women
 II. Community Organizing/Social Services
 a. Building a Community Organization
 b. Direct Action Organizing
 c. Client - Worker alliances in Soc. Service organizing
 d. Building Alternative Institutions
 III. Socialist Feminism as a Strategy for Revolution
 a->etc. ????

SATURDAY, JULY 5

- 9:00-9:30-The Economy--Meeting of the Whole on the state of the
 economy and how we can relate to it as Socialist Feminists
9:30-10:30- Exercise, Sharing in Whole group
10:30-12:00- Meeting of the Whole on the Implications of Race,
 Class and Sexual Preference for our Movement
12:00-1:30-Lunch
1:30-3:30- Strategy Workshops meet again as in Fri. night 8:45-10:00
3:45-5:30- Special interest Workshops
5:30-7:30-Dinner
7:30-On- Feminist Play, Party

Sunday, JULY 6

- 9:00-10:30- Final meeting of Strategy Workshops as outlined in
 Friday night 8:45-10:00
10:45-12:00- Special Interest Workshops
12:00-1:30-Lunch
1:30-3:30- Regional Meetings--Approximately 6--
 These groups will spend about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours on discussing regional
 networks and about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour on criticism and discussion of the
 conference.
3:45-4:15- Final Meeting of the Whole--Brief Wrap up by Planning
 Committee and group song