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New York, June 10

Dear Sisters,

time is going by very fast, in only three months we will have our next conference and yet no concrete proposal has yet been put forward. This is why we are circulating our agenda, hoping that we can all agree on the issues we most need to discuss and clarify.

We have tried to be as detailed as possible, because the clearer we are about our expectations the less we run the risk of being frustrated and wasting our time.

Let us know what you think of this proposal - if there is any issue which has been left out, what contribution (presentation, paper, research, etc.) you want to make. It certainly would be very helpful if even before the conference we can agree on reading certain documents, circulating position papers, etc.

Hear soon from you all
our love and power

New York Wages for Housework
Collective

PROPOSAL FOR THE CHICAGO CONFERENCE

* SHOULD WE HAVE A PUBLIC MEETING?

Definitely a public meeting can be very important for the work the Chicago women are doing in boulding a campaign for wages for housework. At the same time we need all the time we have available to discuss our organizational projects: the time we have is never enough and our conferences are the only occasions in which we get together from all over the world to plan our strategy and discuss our problems. Consequently we agree with the Chicago proposal (see Newsletter) and we also propose:

A public meeting should be held before the conference starts. It should be organized by the Chicago women together with women from the network who are willing to go to Chicago one or two days before the conference.

We emphasise the need to invite women only to this meeting. We totally disagree with the Chicago women when they say (see Newsletter) "we strongly believe women should not let themselves be divided over the issue of men" (p.12). The point is that women are already divided by capital precisely through men. To get together among ourselves to discuss our problems, in the form we choose, with the words we want is the minimal indispensable condition to assert our autonomous power. Despite its limitations, the Women's Movement made this clear: the possibility for our unity, and for our strategic autonomy begins when we stop worrying about what men expect from us, what they will do and start to get together among ourselves on our terms.

Over and over we have seen --we have experienced in our guts-- the difference it makes to be in a meeting with women only and to be in a meeting also with men.. A whole set of restraints, fears, competition set in which immediately distort the nature and the purpose of the meeting. We suggest that we stop worrying about the women who might be turned off if we do not let the men in --if these women have not felt the need yet to meet just with other women they might not be very receptive to our perspective anyway. We should worry, instead, about all the women who will be turned off because the men are present and might even decide not to come.

In any case to meet organizationally with women only is the least we can do when we espouse a perspective that takes as its starting point the recognition of a hierarchy of power between women and men. Are we angels that these power relations cease to function in our case ???

We definitely expect to have a precise response on this issue, because this is not a question of "taste" but an important political choice, since organizational autonomy is the key to our perspective and strategy.

We also propose that the conference be a strictly internal conference i.e. only those groups or individuals should be invited who are already committed to building a campaign for wages for housework. Our conferences in fact are not the place where we attract new women, but the place women who are already committed need to have to discuss common problems and hopefully joint action.

We propose that the Conference be divided into three sections.

SECTION I - WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK AS A PERSPECTIVE AND AN ORGANIZATION

This section should consist of a presentation and discussion of the main political assumptions of 'wages for housework' as an international perspective and organization. The purpose of this section is to clarify on what grounds do we come together and call ourselves 'wages for housework' international'. The presentation and discussion should address itself to the criticisms and tendencies which have emerged during and after the Montreal conference within our network. (cfr. the Montreal document). It should clarify what it means to fight for 'wages for housework', what is the meaning of these 'tendencies' which have been put forward and decide on what we do agree and on what we do disagree and what are the indispensable conditions for us to work together.

We propose that the presentation be given by Selma James, because she is one of the women who already in 1972 have founded the International Feminist Collective, and since then she is one of the women who internationally has given the most important contribution to the building of a campaign for wages for housework. (The International Feminist Collective was the first organization that explicitly launched the strategy of wages for housework at the international level. It is the objectives of this organization that most of us in the network identify politically).

We also suggest that in preparation for the conference we read Ruth Hall's analysis of the Montreal conference and express the stand we take toward it. In fact, it would be good to know if we have major disagreements between ourselves even before we go to Chicago, so that we don't end up wasting our time, money and energy in useless fights.

SECTION II - ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT - CAPITAL'S PLANS AND OUR PLANS.

The purpose of this section is to develop the discussion we had in Montreal concerning capital's strategy (the crisis, the projects of reconversion of the economy etc.) and the possibilities and necessities for action it presents for us.

This section should include :

- 1) a general presentation on the overall international context (possibly by Selma James or Silvia Federici) -
- 2) analysis of specific situations --specific capitalist plans, which are crucial to discuss in relation to our struggle. For example, in Montreal, women from the Toronto Committee promised they would report on the proposals for 'wages for housework' ~~PK~~ presented by some Canadian parties. (e.g. use of immigration in US and abroad - Population control - State intervention in The community - etc.)

The criteria that should guide both the presentation on the international context and the specific reports is that they ~~xxx~~ should provide an indication of what forms of struggle are open to us --what specific actions we want to initiate. -It is also crucial that we have reports on capitalists plans by the women who come from different countries. (So far we expect England, Italy, Canada- We don't know about Germany and Mexico).

SECTION III HOW TO BUILD A CAMPAIGN

This section should clarify what it means to build a campaign; what are our organizational criteria for deciding How and where we start and what instruments we need. This section should include :

- a) A general presentation, by women who have already a long experience in organizing around wages for housework. (We propose Maria Rosa Dalla Costa, who is definitely coming).
- b) Reports of struggles in which we have already participated (e.g. Maimonides, May Day, etc.)
- c) Proposals and discussion of possible joint action (for example a march/demonstration for wages for housework to be held next spring on International Women's Day, etc.)
- d) Workshops to discuss the instruments we need to build a ~~camp~~ campaign. These workshops should meet simultaneously and then report to the general meeting. We propose workshops on : literature, including our publications (Women in struggle etc.) popular pamphlets, leaflets etc. Here we should plan our future publications, keeping in mind that we need literature that can be used on a mass level i.e. written in a language every woman can understand, published at a very cheap cost so that possibly we can give it away for free.

media how to use the radio, TV, videos and above all the risks we might run in using the media. L.A., Philadelphia, Toronto etc. have had already many experiences with the media and they should tell all of us

the lessons they have learned.

Theater - movie - songs - cartoons

Whoever has proposals in this respect should organize a workshop with women who have the same interests. (for example in New York we are preparing a series of comic strips - women in the Triveneto Committee (Italy) have made an album with wfh songs and a play, etc.

As part of these workshops we should also discuss the possibility of an ongoing newsletter, or journal -- Do we have the resources available for a journal etc.

Let us know what you think of these proposals, what suggestions you have not only with respect to the general structure and purpose of the conference but also with respect to specific contributions you might want to make.

Love, Power and Money
New York Wages for Housework Collective