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LOS ANGELES WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK
COMMITTEE
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JULY 15, 1977

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WOMEN CHARGE LOS ANGELES TIMES WITH INCITING VIOLENCE

Accusing the Los Angeles Times of "inciting police violence against women and children," a delegation of women, led by members of the Los Angeles Wages for Housework Committee, will meet with Times staffwriter Lee Dye at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, July 18, to protest a recent series of articles on prostitution in Hollywood.

The meeting comes in the wake of a July 15 demonstration in Hollywood, also organized by the Wages for Housework group, to protest both the allocation of \$3½ million in public works funds for a new police station in Hollywood and the recent series of "sweep arrests" of juvenile prostitutes.

"We will be demanding from the Times \$2 billion dollars in damages for women and for children," said Beth Ingber, a spokesperson for the International Wages for Housework Campaign, which is demanding decriminalization of prostitution. "By blaming the 'degeneration' of Hollywood on street prostitutes, the Times has incited police violence against women and children, and has made the streets unsafe for us to walk."

The delegation will also accuse the newspaper of biased reporting on prostitution, and will demand that the Times print two statements, expressing an opposing point of view. The statements will be available to the press at a press conference to be held on the steps of the Los Angeles Times Building at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, July 18.

"Far from being responsible for violent crime, it is prostitute women and children who are the victims of these crimes," said Ms. Ingber. "Prostitutes are robbed, raped and beaten by clients, and they are brutalized by the police, but because prostitution is illegal, the crimes against prostitutes can be neither reported nor prosecuted."

Referring to the recent campaign to "clean up" Hollywood, Ms. Ingber said, "Hollywood was built on the exploitation of women and children, and specifically on prostitution -- on the 'casting couch,' in the hotels and bars, and on the streets."

WOMEN SAY:

HANDS OFF US AND OUR CHILDREN!

On July 16 in London, women are putting the government on trial for rape. Organized by Women Against Rape, the protest is against a recent appeals court decision to acquit a soldier convicted of raping a woman. The judges overturned the guilty verdict because a criminal record would ruin the soldier's career.

On July 15 in Los Angeles, women are hitting the streets of Hollywood to protest the intensification of the police attack against the women and children working as street prostitutes, particularly the sweep arrests of juvenile prostitutes, and to demand the \$3-1/2 million earmarked for a new police station in Hollywood.

In London, in Los Angeles and internationally, women and children are resisting the state's increasing violence against us, violence aimed at forcing us to work for free.

HANDS OFF PROSTITUTES!

Whether or not we enjoy it, our sexuality is part of the housework the state requires women to do to keep our partners "gratified," to keep them working. Because men have more money and power, sex is a bargaining point between us and them -- for room and board, cash or better treatment. Those of us who are prostitutes are also making a bargain -- but we demand cash and we make men pay. Cash for our sexual work gives us the money and therefore the power to be independent from men.

Increasingly our children have been making the same struggle. Many of our sons and daughters, refusing the powerlessness of economic dependence, refusing the poverty imposed by the Welfare Department, have gone to the street demanding men pay for their sexual work. The "moral pillars" of society abhor the visibility of "juvenile" street prostitution. They do not abhor our daughters' and sons' invisible poverty and powerlessness; they do not abhor the child abuse committed daily by the Welfare Department; they do not abhor the invisible rape and abuse within the family which many of our children struggle to escape through street prostitution.

The sweep arrests of young prostitutes in Hollywood and the constant harassment of prostitute women are the state's response to our fight to be paid, our fight to be independent. An attack on prostitutes is an attack on all women's right to demand compensation of any kind for our sexual work; it is an attack on our bargaining power.

HANDS OFF ALL WOMEN!

The state's most violent attack on our refusal of free sexual work is rape. Rape is forced labor - labor for which we can demand nothing, labor which we cannot refuse. It is a violation of our bodies and our power.

By acquitting the soldier, the British government is giving the army license to rape women, to push us back into the home to work for free. The price we must pay for being out on the street is either rape by a stranger or rape by the man with whom we went out for "protection." Rape keeps us working at home and on the street -- for free.

The decision by the British court comes as no surprise to us in the US. In Madison, Wisconsin, a juvenile court judge recently gave probation to a young man convicted of raping a young woman in school, claiming that rape is a normal reaction to the free sexual environment. A New Jersey man was acquitted of raping his wife because being raped in marriage is just part of the job. In the US as in Britain, the government is serving notice to all women that lesbian or straight, married or single, professional prostitute or not, we must all provide free sex on demand, that rape is part of our working conditions.

HANDS OFF OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN!

But we are serving notice to the government that we will continue to refuse to work for free. Prostitute women are organizing internationally to defend all women's access to wages for our sexual work. Lesbian women are refusing the free work of serving men and are fighting the state's attempts to take away our children. Our children are attacking the schools -- which is their factory, where they too are working for free. Refusing their powerlessness and their poverty, they are going to the

street, demanding that men pay for their sexual work. And women on welfare, led by black women, are leading the fight to refuse all our free work by opposing the cuts in welfare, a wage for all our housework -- physical, sexual and emotional -- a wage that the state calls welfare to disguise the fact that it is a wage and that all women are entitled to that wage because we all do that work.

We say: HANDS OFF OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN! The "Save the Children Campaign" - pretending to "protect" our children from "sexual deviants" - is not only attacking the right of lesbian women to keep our children but the right of our children to determine their own sexuality. We defend our children's right to choose, our daughters' right to refuse to serve men for free. We defend all our children's right to refuse free work, their right to be and work on the street without the fear of arrest, their right to a wage for their sexual work so that they can command money and power.

And we demand our wages, wages for ourselves and our children, wages for all our work so that we and our children can refuse to prostitute ourselves in any way.

On July 16 in London, women will be demanding the £4 billion defense budget because the defense department has never defended women. On July 15 in Los Angeles, women will be demanding for ourselves and for children the \$3-1/2 million earmarked for the new police station because the police department as well has never defended us; it has only policed us. And we are demanding for ourselves and for children \$2 billion in damages from the Los Angeles Times for a series of articles blaming the "degeneration" of Hollywood on prostitutes, for inciting police violence against women and children, and making the streets unsafe for us to walk.

We join the women in England in saying:

NO to rape
NO to the arrests of prostitute women and children
NO to the cuts in welfare
NO to the attack on lesbian custody rights
NO to poverty
NO to forced labor

WE DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE END TO THE HARASSMENT OF YOUNG PROSTITUTES

WE DEMAND THE END TO THE HARASSMENT OF ALL PROSTITUTES

WE DEMAND THE ABOLITION OF ALL LAWS AGAINST PROSTITUTION

WE DEMAND AMNESTY FOR ALL PROSTITUTES AND THE REMOVAL OF ALL CRIMINAL RECORDS RELATING TO PROSTITUTION

WE DEMAND FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN THE \$3-1/2 MILLION EARMARKED FOR A NEW HOLLYWOOD POLICE STATION

WE DEMAND FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN \$2 BILLION IN DAMAGES FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES FOR INCITEMENT TO VIOLENCE AGAINST US AND FOR MAKING THE STREETS UNSAFE FOR US TO WALK

Written by the Los Angeles Wages for Housework Committee
Sueldo Por Quehaceres del Hogar
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Endorsements:

(Due to the urgency of the situation, we are releasing this statement with only the initial endorsers listed. We will, however, reissue the statement with an up-to-date list of endorsements.)

Wages for Housework, San Francisco
Lesbians from the Wages for Housework Campaign, San Francisco
COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), San Francisco
CAT (A National Institute for Working Women), Los Angeles
Lesbian Tide Magazine, Los Angeles
Feminist Communications, San Diego
Las Hermanas, San Diego
Womancare, San Diego
Orange County Feminist Women's Health Center, Santa Ana
Center for Women's Studies and Services, San Diego
Page I; Books by and for Women, Pasadena

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WOMEN SAY: HANDS OFF US AND OUR CHILDREN

On Friday, July 15, Los Angeles women will be demonstrating in Hollywood against the current police attack on the women and children working as prostitutes. They will also be demanding for themselves and for children the \$3½ million earmarked for a new police station in Hollywood.

The marchers will point out that the police station was rejected by the voters in last November's ballot and that the \$3½ million in public works funds being devoted to the new facilities would find better use in women's and children's hands.

"The attack against street prostitutes is an attack on women's fight to be paid for our work and to gain economic independence," said Beth Ingber, spokeswoman for the Wages for Housework Campaign, which is organizing Friday's event.

"Just as we are fighting against our poverty and dependence, our sons and daughters are fighting against theirs. To get access to money, many have gone to the street demanding pay for their sexual work. Women and children are the sellers and men are the buyers, because men have the money and we don't," she said.

"The 'moral pillars' of society abhor the visibility of 'juvenile' prostitution. But they do not abhor our daughters' and sons' invisible poverty and powerlessness; they do not abhor the child abuse committed daily by the welfare department; they do not abhor the everyday rape and abuse within the family. Young people refuse to tolerate these conditions and for many, prostitution is the only alternative."

The demonstration will begin at 8 p.m. at Hollywood Blvd. and Highland, and will proceed to the Hollywood police station at Fountain and Cole, where the women will present their demands for the \$3½ million appropriation and the immediate end to the harassment of all prostitutes.

"Early next week, we will demand for ourselves and for children \$2 billion in damages from the Los Angeles Times for a series of articles blaming the 'degeneration' of Hollywood on prostitutes," said Ms. Ingber. "The articles have incited police violence against women and children and have made the streets unsafe for us to walk."

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(The attached statement, "Women Say: Hands Off Us and Our Children" is being circulated widely in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. The press is welcome to reprint it.)