

23rd February, 1978.

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Dear Sisters and Friends,

Wages Due Lesbians gladly sponsors the meeting called for March 6th, and welcomes the initiative taken by the Association of Bangladesh Women, Black Women for Wages for Housework (Britain) and the Union of Turkish Women in G.B. to fight for the £70m. that Black and immigrant mothers will be losing in the form of Child Benefits when their husbands' Child Tax Allowance is phased out in April, 1978.

As is stated in the accompanying letter, "We are being charged £50million for being deprived of our children", and this is one of the main intentions of this proposed legislation. Lesbian women too are constantly being deprived of our children when we lose custody. Just as Black and immigrant women are penalized for not having the money to be with their children, we are also usually too poor to "qualify" to be "fit" mothers and to be able to defend ourselves adequately in the courts. Our right to have children is being continually questioned and denied us. Black and immigrant women are forcibly sterilized in hospitals. All of us are economically sterilized. There is no right to choose to have children if we haven't the money to feed them. Even abortion is no choice to control our lives if economic necessity forces this decision on us or leaves us defenceless in the hands of the medical authorities.

The withdrawal of this money is also linked to the issue of women living with their children outside this country being refused entry. Economic sanctions will make them ineligible - and many of these women may be lesbian who saw an opportunity to be lesbian by coming to this country. Lesbian women suffer this same restriction of movement, be it if we have to stay in an intolerable relationship with a man for the sake of his financial support, or because laws prohibit lesbians from crossing national boundaries.

'Mothers' Day' is a sick joke when the government is limiting further our possibility to be mothers and bring up our children how and where we want. Besides focussing on the £70m. being taken away, we want to point out that our housework, and a large part of that is bringing ^{ing} up children, has just been estimated at £115 a week. When this evaluation was made no one asked if the woman doing it was lesbian or Black or immigrant. This price-tag shows our work has the same worth and unites us wherever we live and work. That's why we're fighting together for this money - to be with our children, to live where we want.

Until our struggle to have children through A.I.D. gave us national prominence in our own name, lesbian women have always had to fight against being invisible. In endless discussions about homosexual rights there would be not one word about lesbian women. It is the same on the question of race. The Black community was always men, but never women. Little attention has been paid to the successful boycott in Bristol organised by Black Women for Wages for Housework in Nov.'77, to stop the National Front meeting at a school in the heart of the Black and immigrant community. Yet as many as 50% parents and children took part in this two-pronged attack - against racism and the education system which stifles our children sexually and intellectually.

As the Union of Turkish Women has said, "Facism will be broken on the shields of women". This is the kind of leadership that we need now to show all of us how to fight the National Front; and it is traditional, though again not publicized, that women have given the lead in both the gay and Black communities. The attack on the Black and immigrant community goes together with the attack on the gay community. None of us can afford to let this money go. We're all in the same front line.

We strongly urge you to join us in sponsoring this meeting and endorsing the resolution. We ask you to publicize this campaign for Child Benefits For All as widely as possible.

In sisterhood,

Anne Reale

(for Wages Due Lesbians)

STOP PRESS: Maureen Colquhoun, M.P. and herself a lesbian mother will chair the meeting.
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