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STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST COLLECTIVE

Apparently by chance but actually because each of us felt a need for such a contact, women from the women's liberation movements of four countries found themselves together in Padova, Italy, over a period of two days. These countries are the United States, England, France and of course Italy. All of us have had or continue to have contact with sections of the extra-parliamentary left and found that we had in common certain attitudes to that left and within the women's movement.

We identify ourselves as Marxist feminists and take this to mean a new definition of class, the old definition of which has limited the scope and effectiveness of the activity of both the traditional left *and* the new left. This new definition is based on the subordination of the wageless worker to the waged worker behind which is hidden the productivity, i.e. the exploitation, of the labour of women in the home and the cause of their more intense exploitation out of it. Such an analysis of class presupposes a new area of struggle, the subversion not only of the factory and office but of the community. It also presupposes the struggle in the two areas of production, the home and the factory, as interdependent to communist revolution, and the destruction once and for all of the auxiliary nature of women's struggle within the struggle of class. This assumption of the auxiliary nature of women's struggle flows directly from the misconception that women's labour in the home is auxiliary to the reproduction and development of capital, a misconception which has so long hindered us all.

Within the women's movement, therefore, we reject both class struggle as subordinate to feminism and feminism as subordinate to class struggle. Class struggle and feminism for us are one and the same thing, feminism expressing the rebellion of that section of the class without whom the class struggle cannot be generalised, broadened and deepened. We believe these two positions in the women's movement have been a response to the *masculine management of the class struggle*: either our uncritical acceptance of their fragmented political theory and practice, or our

uncritical rejection of class in response to this acceptance.

While we place ourselves unambiguously among the revolutionary forces in whatever country we find ourselves, we reaffirm the necessity for the autonomy of the women's movement. This autonomy has appeared to be limited to a negation of the left. It is in reality the positive expression of the level of female struggle. It is because only an autonomous movement is looking for women's lever of social power that it offers the only possibility of discovering the aims, forms and places of that struggle, and thus the possibility of driving it forward. Therefore our relations with the left, while we may utilise information and contacts, will always be secondary and subordinate to that autonomy.

For these reasons we wish to maintain and develop our own international contacts, our own publications in translation and our own joint discussions which aim ultimately at joint mass actions transcending national borders.

International Feminist Collective
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THE POWER OF WOMEN AND THE SUBVERSION OF THE
COMMUNITY by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, a
Marxist Feminist book, has been published by the Falling Wall
Press, 79 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5EP.
Price: 25p plus 4p postage.