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April 6, 1973

Dear Mariarosa,

We have just returned to Diano Marina. We enjoyed our visit in Padova, although it was much too brief and our Italian much too lacking for what we should like to have done.

It was particularly good to meet you and to read your pamphlet, which I found quite challenging. I hope when you come to Washington that we will have time for a lengthy discussion of those issues.

This letter is partly to encourage you to be certain to come to Washington and to reassure you that I can get \$100 for your visit! Also I've enclosed the outline of a proposed book that some of us were hoping to do through the Institute for Policy Studies. It is not clear whether we will be able to get the money to do the book, but you might find the proposal of interest before you come.

I look forward to seeing you in late April or early May. Sincerely, Charlotte

November, 1972

IPS Encyclopedia Volume on Women

Editors: Charlotte Punch, Rita Mae Brown, Coletta Reid, Margaret Small

This volume will focus on an analysis of the oppression of women in contemporary American society and sketch a vision of a society in which women are no longer oppressed and the personal and political relations among people of both sexes are significantly altered. Sexism damages all people. However, the system of male supremacy also gives men material and psychological benefits which have varied across class, race, national and historical boundaries. For this reason we will concentrate our attention primarily on the group which has been most directly controlled and exploited by the division between the sexes: women.

I. Primary Essay: Historical Development, Present Analysis, Future Vision

The primary essay will analyze the historical development of woman oppression in pre-capitalist society, will examine the basic aspects of women's lives in advanced capitalist society indicating the major contradictions involved, and will discuss the changes in institutions and consciousness that are necessary and sufficient to end that oppression and create more fulfilling possibilities among people in the future.

The oppression of women is sometimes viewed as a static condition which is a reflection of a natural division of labor and as such is not subject to conscious change. However, women's constantly changing condition clearly indicates that the particular form of her oppression is historically determined. Our effort will be to place the condition of women in its active historical setting, indicating the effect women's work and social role has had on the development and maintenance of culture and examining the different ways in which various cultures have defined women. Specifically we will discuss how

the development of capitalism, industrialization, commoditization, and increased alienation have heightened the contradictions in women's lives. We will also examine the role of women in oppressed minority groups within a capitalist society.

Within this, we will discuss what some of the new structures, relationships, and female/male identities might be in the future. We have divided the basic areas of women's oppression into four categories:

1. Family reproduction, and childrearing: What are the origins of the nuclear family? What is the function of property and possession in the family? What is the social function of the family? What are alternative economic and social units that could replace the family? How would these provide emotional security, childrearing, economic stability, etc.? What would happen to traditional taboos? How would different "family forms" co-exist---communes, new forms of marriage, etc.? What are alternative methods of reproduction and how could these affect women's status? Who would control these and for what ends? Who is ultimately responsible for the well-being of children? What are alternative means of childcare: daycare centers, kibbutz, etc.? How should children be socialized, especially around sex roles? What connections are there between the oppression of women and the oppression of children?

2. Economic exploitation in the home (housework) and in the job market: How basic to women's oppression is the sexual division of labor? What is the relationship of women's work to surplus value? What are alternatives to privatized housework: industrialization of services, communal living, etc.? Should monetary value be given to work in the home? How does the organization of production outside of the home oppress women? What changes must be made in the economy and workplace to benefit women: worker's control, wages and promotion, etc.? What are the implications of present trends toward integration of women into the capitalist work system?

3. Political power: How have women been excluded from power in the past and what are ways to insure and protect women's political participation in the future? What are the forms of governing society that increase the freedom and self-determination of women? What is the relationship between the degree of centralization of political power and women's participation in it?

4. Selfhood, sexuality, intimate relations, religion, and the passions as part of the personal and political struggle for liberation: What is healthy sexuality as a means of self-expression and identity and as an expression of love? What is the relationship between sex, power, and violence in personal relationships and in society as a whole? What is the function of heterosexuality as an institution and ideology in the economy, in social life, and in shaping the consciousness, character, and expectations of individuals? How does heterosexuality function to keep women in "our place?" How does homosexuality affect identity and sex role socialization? How does the socialization of sex roles--masculine and feminine--determine the identity and psychology of individuals? What is the place of the ideology of sex roles in conditioning women to be inferior? How do human relationships meet our emotional needs for love, security, intimacy? How do we deal with jealousy, envy, hostility? How are these affected by different life styles--group living, living in nuclear couples, living with or without members of the opposite sex, living alone?

In working on the questions outlined above, the essay will include discussion of many questions raised in other volumes of the Encyclopedica, particularly in relation to race, class, culture and forms of political control. A fundamental question we share with other projects is what are the possibilities for resolving the contradiction between individual needs and socially useful and practical methods of organizing groups of individuals. We seek to outline possibilities that are adequate for meeting the needs of women and other people who have been denied self determination under white male control.

Our framework is based on the understanding that conflicts between individuals and groups of peoples are reflections of inequalities in power. Our vision is similarly one of a revolutionary cultural pluralism in which the bases of power (sex, race, class, age) are destroyed and social structures based on equality and maximum freedom to choose the definition and form of one's life are maintained.

II Strategy

Our perspective is that women can never have self determination in a society organized, controlled and run by men for the profit of men. Women cannot control their own lives as long as they are defined by their relation to men (wife, mother, servant, worker). Women need a new society in which they are guaranteed basic human needs and the physical and psychic space to define themselves.

The first question to answer is what brings about women's consciousness and what are the preconditions for change. This section will evaluate efforts by women to gain greater self determination and self control. We will discuss the major strategies being proposed for changing the present condition of women's lives, discuss the problems each strategy involves and how different approaches complement or contradict each other. We will indicate what have been the failures of past efforts in action and in analysis. We will attempt to outline the stages of development a woman's struggle will take and what some of the indicators of success are and will be. We will also discuss how the process of creating a revolution affects one's goals and the society you create and how the choices made along the way determine the choices you have in the end.

While we approach the question of strategy from our own position as women in the independent women's movement for several years, we will not limit the discussions of strategies to our own. We will discuss efforts in

other societies and the variations in strategies caused by differing material conditions. Some of the concrete struggles we want to look at are:

In the US: Women's National Political Caucus and reformist women candidates
Women's culture- art, media, theatre
Women's health- self help, education
Women's bodies- self defense, sexuality
Work- discrimination, education, exploitation
Third world women's struggles in the US

Outside the US: This is less defined presently but will involve investigating and discussing strategies with women in other Western, white male controlled cultures(eg. Canada, England Italy, Germany). We will also include the perspectives of women in third world cultures from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Our discussion of strategy will include an analysis of the relationship of racism and national imperialism to sexism.

III Short essays dealing with specific aspects of the analysis and vision in depth might include:

1. Age
2. Alternative means of reproduction
3. Sexuality as part of selfhood for women
4. Sexuality as part of selfhood for men
5. New Family Forms
6. Language as a tool of oppression or liberation
7. The role of the arts
8. Religion- ancient religion's focus on women and its meaning today
9. Intimacy, love, security and jealousy
10. Analysis of specific institutions which mirror the society at large, eg.
article on prisons and how sexuality is reflected in one's political situation
11. Discussion of specific institutions and how they would be different in

the future, eg. article by women's health groups on a new health system.
12. Specific articles discussing women's situation and visions in different countries and cultures in depth.

Proposed consultants: (Tentative list--- we have not asked most of these and expect to add others)

Frances Beal, Jesse Bernard, Barbro Blackington, Elisa Buenaventura, Toni Cade, Frankie Cox, Gene Damon, Barbara Deming, Roy Eddy, Linda Gordon, Vivian Gronick, Robin Morgan, Kenneth Pitchford, Edward Slough, someone from the arts group- Black Butterfly, and someone from the Gay men's Skyline Collective in DC.

In our June 1972 proposal we suggested the names of many of the people we plan to consult for advice and/or articles in particular areas

IV Workplan

Nov-Dec 1972

1. Divide responsibilities for primary essay
2. Contact persons for advisory committee (above list)
3. Discuss volume with potential contributors
4. Plan a springtime meeting of consultants and potential contributors to go over ideas and work of volume in progress

Jan-June 1973

1. Work on research and initial drafts of primary essay
2. Editors travel and discuss the volume with others (Charlotte in Africa and Europe; Rita and Coletta in US)
3. Hold spring conference to go over work in progress and general ideas

July-Dec 1973

1. Continue work on primary essay
2. Get definite commitments for articles for final section to be written by Jan1, 1974
3. Solicit and develop graphics for issue

4. Editors travel, aimed specifically at discussing and evaluating practical projects in the US and elsewhere (Rita in Europe, Charlotte and Coletta in US)

Jan-Mar 1974

1. Collect semi-final drafts of articles and primary essay and graphics
2. Hold conference with consultants early in the year to review material and graphics
3. Edit and re-write essay and articles and put together with graphics in final form

SEPTEMBER 1, 1974----- Be ready for publication!