

A Call to the Women of America:

**We call on the
women of this
land to join the
July 4th Coalition
in Philadelphia on
the bicentennial
day to demonstrate
that Gerald Ford's
celebration does
not speak for us.**

**July 4th Coalition
P.O. Box 998, Peter Stuyvesant Sta.
New York, N.Y. 10009
Tel. [212] 673-1776**

On July 4, 1976, Gerald Ford, Nelson Rockefeller and many other "dignitaries" will be in Philadelphia to preside over an outrageous spectacle claiming to celebrate this Bicentennial year.

The Bicentennial, we are told, is a time to celebrate 200 years of freedom, justice, and equality for all. But what do **we** have to celebrate?

What do we have to celebrate when the gains we have made in recent years are under attack? When presidential candidates run on anti-abortion platforms, and regulations against the sterilization abuse of thousands are threatened; when affirmative action job programs are lost and millions of women across the country are unemployed; when daycare programs are shut down making it impossible for countless others to work; when welfare rights are trampled upon, threatening the very survival of millions.

What have we to celebrate when the women's movement itself is the target of a vicious campaign to weaken and ultimately destroy us as an organized social and political force. This is exemplified when women all over the country, particularly lesbians, have been harassed and jailed for refusing to testify before grand juries against their sisters.

**WE HAVE NOTHING TO CELEBRATE
BUT OUR HISTORY OF STRUGGLE
AND OUR DETERMINATION TO
CONTINUE IN THAT STRUGGLE.**

Demonstrate on July 4th for the ERA as a minimal guarantee to equal consideration in the job market.

Demonstrate for the services that allow us to work, for the right to control our bodies and to change those social policies that simultaneously would deny us the right to abortion and force us to be sterilized.

Demonstrate for our right to survive and grow as a movement, to defeat the calculated and well-financed attacks against us.

Demonstrate for our rights as women, and to make clear that those rights are integral to the struggle of all working people.

Demonstrate in Philadelphia on July 4th with tens of thousands of our sisters and brothers from across the country—demonstrate for our rights and for the freedom of all oppressed people.

We, who are half the world and the backbone of the nation, who feed and clothe its people, who bear and raise the children and serve as the emotional, sexual and psychological support which enables men to return daily to their oppressive jobs.

We, who grease the wheels of America and keep the country working must make our voices heard on this historic occasion. While the attention of the world and the country is focused on Philadelphia on July 4th, we must be there to tell the truth that President Ford will ignore or deny.

**THE TRUTH IS THAT WE HAVE NEVER
HAD FREEDOM, JUSTICE OR EQUALITY.
IT IS CLEAR THAT OUR "FOUNDING
FATHERS" NEVER INTENDED THESE
PROMISES TO APPLY TO US.**

We are denied basic economic freedom. We are forced to depend on our fathers, husbands, poor paying jobs, or a welfare system that does not provide enough. We are not paid for the work of caring for our homes and families, while we bear the future labor force. As available labor we can be and are used as a threat to workers with jobs, fostering competition and generally keeping wages down. As workers we are paid less than men doing the same work. Among women workers, Black and other third world women are paid lowest of all.

We are denied the freedom to decide when, if and how we are to bear children. Our right to abortion is attacked while U.S. government programs continue to impose forced sterilization. Again, third world women—Native American, Black, Mexican, Puerto Rican and other Latins, Asians—are

doubly victimized by such population control with genocidal ends.

We have no justice before a law that considers us second-class citizens. The Equal Rights Amendment is yet to be ratified: a sign of how threatening our equality is to the present system and those who profit from it.

There can be no equality as long as we are divided from our sisters by racism, created by a few crumbs tossed to those of us who are white. To justify these small "steps up" some white sisters adopt racist assumptions and beliefs. Problems and anger are vented against Black and third world peoples so we become divided and fight each other instead of those who own the banks and big corporations and oppress all of us. We can see this going on in Boston right now.

We have no equality when we are denied educational opportunities to develop fully our skills and potential.

We have no justice in the courts and prisons. We are denied the right to see our children who are placed in foster homes and juvenile detention centers. We are forced into abortions and sterilizations. We are raped.

We who chose to love other women, we who are lesbians, experience all these injustices intensified. We are discriminated against in jobs, housing and are denied the right to raise our own children. In order to survive, most of us have been forced to live a lie: to pretend that we are not lesbians.

**AND STILL, THE MEN WHO RUN OUR
COUNTRY AND OUR MEDIA TELL US,
"YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY."
YES, WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY. . .
A LONG HARD WAY.**

We come from the Native American Indian nations, our land stolen from us, still fighting after generations of genocide and broken treaties.

We come in chains from the African continent and sold into slavery; we come from forced breeding and raped mothers.

We come from Mexican soil, from a land which today is occupied by conquest by the United States; to be terrorized, arrested and transported as "illegal aliens" from our own land.

We come from the colonized island of Puerto Rico where 40% of the people have been uprooted by the economic pressures of colonialism and forced to migrate here; where colonial authorities have sterilized one-third of all women of childbearing age as part of an overall plan aimed at the destruction of an entire nation.

We come from the colonized continent of Asia to build the railroads, to toil and sweat and be victimized by unceasing racism.

We come from Europe where we were peasants and laborers; where we were sold as indentured servants or brides and brought to the colonies; we have come as immigrants for centuries from every nation of Europe to toil in the slums and sweatshops and on the farms of America.

We come, Native American, white, Black, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Asian, women from every single Latin American nation, a long **hard** way of resistance and struggle. Every right we have, from the vote to unionization, to the right to control our bodies, comes from a long hard road of resistance and struggle—of struggles that involve not only women and our specific rights but the rights of all humanity.

We are the women of France whose cry for bread sparked the French Revolution.

We are Harriet Tubman who led 300 slaves to freedom, and we are Sojourner Truth who defended women's rights in the fight against slavery.

We are Mother Jones who organized thousands of workers into labor unions, urging them and us to "pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."

We are Lolita Lebron who led the bold attack on the U.S. Congress in 1954 to demand world attention on the colonial terror to which the people of Puerto Rico are subjected.

We are Rosa Parks who refused to move

to the back of the bus in Montgomery one day in 1955, and sparked a massive civil rights movement.

We are Inez Garcia, Yvonne Wanrow, Joanne Little and Desi X Woods, defending ourselves and our children against rape and abuse.

We are Terry Turgeon, Ellen Grusse and Jill Raymond, who stood up against the grand juries by refusing to testify against their sisters and were jailed, and whose example strengthened all our sisters and brothers who are now faced by FBI and grand jury harassment.

We are the garment workers whose heroic fight for better working conditions is commemorated every March 8th as International Women's Day, and we are the Farah strikers who only last year won the right unionize.

We are the women of Vietnam, who fought in the factories and on the battlefield for their rights as women and for the liberation of their country.

In Philadelphia on July 4th our struggle against a system that denies our equality and conspires against our very humanity will unite with those struggling for economic and racial justice, for national independence and peace, will unite into one powerful movement that will take up the cry:

- For the right to a decent life at a living wage—including the right to organize protection on the job, equal pay and equal work and adequate welfare benefits.
- No discrimination on the basis of race.
- Quality health care for all people—including free and safe birth control and abortion, stop forced sterilization and the right to as many healthy children as is desired.
- Right to quality education for our children and readily available, quality childcare.
- No discrimination on the basis of sexual preference.
- Right to freedom from physical abuse, including the right to defend ourselves and our children.
- Ratify the ERA, defend affirmative action.

Join us in Philadelphia on July 4th.

**Partial list of women sponsoring the
July 4th Coalition:**

Ella Baker

Norma Becker
War Resisters League

Josephine Butler
D.C. Statehood Party

Marilyn Clement
Inter-Religious Foundation for Community
Organization

Pam Costain
Twin Cities Womens Union

Virginia Collins

Barbara Dane

Stacey Gottlieb
Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union

Sara Lee Hamilton
Nationwide Women's Program, AFSC

Karen Kollias
Quest, a feminist quarterly

Roberta Lynch
Chicago Women's Union

Dale Melcher
Valley Women's Union, Massachusetts

Dorothea Manuela
District 65, Boston

Leora Mosston
ACLU Education Action Fund

Holly Maguigan
Attorney, Philadelphia

Digna Sanchez
Puerto Rican Socialist Party

Lynn Weikart
N.Y. State Democratic Party

*Organizations listed for identification only

I have to be with you in Philadelphia on July
4th. Please send information immediately on
bus and train departures from my area.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Mail at once to: July 4th Coalition, P.O.B.
998, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York,
N.Y. 10009 Tel. (212) 673-1776

