
IWDC CHRONOLOGY

1978

- * IWD 1978 is where we started. At the initiative of the RWL, seven women put out a call for a coalition to organize for International Women's Day. The coalition began organizing in early January. 1,800 people came out to the day.
- * April 18--as part of the evaluation of IWD, we made a decision to continue the IWD Coalition. We passed a motion to support the Fleck strikers and organize a women's solidarity picket, the first of its kind.
- * May 19--Fleck Support Picket--first women's support picket.
- * June 19--we already have three on-going committees: Action, Education and Outreach.
- * June 28--our public forum on abortion. A speaker from IWDC and a rep from a women's group in Quebec.
- * July--Public meeting in support of Fleck strikers. Organized with OWW.
- * August--helped organize benefit for Fleck.
- * October 25--decision to sponsor benefit for Sudbury INCO strikers. We initially saw this as the first of a series on unemployment. We were thinking of a campaign around unemployment.
- * Lesbian caucus is organized and meeting by this time.
- * November 15--proposal for a women's movement meeting, "Fine Kettle of Fish," to discuss lesbians in the women's movement.
- * December--we are discussing the need for a basis of unity. There is reluctance by some to call ourselves a 'socialist-feminist' organization. We are also discussing the role of left groups in IWDC.
- * December 8--the INCO benefit. Speakers include reps from the Wives' and Women's Committee at INCO, no IWDC speaker. Many IWDC people worked planning and organizing the benefit.

1979

- * January--By this time we are referring to ourselves as the International Women's Day Committee.
- * January 24--the first Coalition meeting for IWD 1979.
- * January 31--IWDC meets once as a group during the Coalition.
- * March--IWD 1979--Jobs and Rights for Women. Over 2,000 people attend the rally at Convocation Hall.

- * March 21--the evaluation. One of the major criticisms (besides that we had too many speakers) is the way the 'lesbian issue' was dealt with. There is some consensus that we want to integrate lesbian issues and concerns rather than separate them out as a specific 'issue.'
- * March 24--Fine Kettle of Fish. IWDC co-sponsored this meeting with Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) and the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT). The attempt was to bring together different parts of the women's movement to discuss lesbians in the women's movement. We actually discussed lesbian/straight and socialist/feminist tensions. The meeting was not productive.
- * March 31--IWDC endorses abortion demonstration.
- * April--We begin a series of discussions about 'our future.'
- * May--"Lesbian Perspectives" is the revitalized lesbian caucus.
- * May through the summer. We began a series of perspective discussions focusing on 'our future' and 'who we are.' A small group brought forward a proposal suggesting a 'basis of unity', new structures and a 'campaign-focus' for our work. We moved that 1) IWDC adopt a basis of unity and set up a committee to draft it based on our discussions; 2) IWDC adopt a perspective of consolidating a membership around the basis of unity and that membership in IWDC be based on agreement with this statement, participation in the work of IWDC and attending 3 consecutive meetings with voting at meetings restricted to IWDC members; 3) IWDC adopt an organizational structure and practises consistent with the following principles--regular general meetings of IWDC membership where decisions regarding IWDC's direction are made, ii) a committee structure, iii) committees and individuals are accountable to the general meetings for their actions, iv) effective integration of membership. We set up a basis of unity committee as well as various other work and issues committees.
- * October--the action committee prepares an educational on day care. We decide not to mount a day care campaign as it seems there is very little community support. Action committee disbands, general recognition that it shouldn't operate as an ongoing committee.
- * October--we set up a co-ordinating committee--2 IWDC and reps from each of the committees. In not too long a time the co-ordinating committee is down to just Carolyn and Marg.
- * October--we pass the basis of unity.
- * October--we endorse Quebec's Right to Self-determination.
- * November--We participate in and organize the Radio Shack Women's Picket.
- * November--We endorse the Khartoum (Sudan) Conference of February 1979 and specific suggestions on genital mutilation.
- * November--Decide to attend NDP and OFL Conventions.

- * November 28--We begin discussing IWD 1980.

1980

- * January 6--IWDC does an educational with Women Against Nuclear Technology (WANT) at Church Street Community Centre.
- * January 17--first Coalition meeting for IWD 1980. IWDC has two general meetings and one educational during the Coalition.
- * February 6--educational on affirmative action. We're doing solidarity work for the Bell Strike.
- * February 8--We co-sponsor with the Marxist Institute a public meeting with Roberta Hamilton on Capitalism and Patriarchy.
- * March--IWD 1980, Bread and Roses. 2,500 people. First year of the Fair. Stopped on route to the FAIR at the Bell building; Bell strikers led the march.
- * March 26--set up a new Education Committee.
- * April 17--Fotomat Support Picket.
- * April 23--Educational, Lesbians and the Law.
- * May 6--Take Back the Night demo. 600 women.
- * May 7--Endorse Quebec's Right to Self Determination (again). Do a mailing for a Quebec meeting at OISE. Decide to do a hand book on 'How to Organize a Domstration', (it didn't get done.)
- * May 21--Educational on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value. It's a tense meeting and we decide to have a session on constructive criticism and political debates. Decision to have IWDC members give educationals.
- * June 18--Educational on Matriarch. We decide we want to have educationals more relevant to our practice.
- * July--Endorse statement of Coalition Against Censorship. Educational on Violence Against Women. Decide we want to in work around this issue.
- * September 24--Educational on the Family. Marg and Carolyn resign as co-ordinators; Nancy and Sandy take-over. Motion to do support work for PSAC strike. We send rep to Riverdale Action Committee Against Racism.
- * September--Decide to do a solidarity picket for library workers; they settle before the picket.

* October 8--IWDC Educational on Sexuality. Decide not to endorse the Ban the Klan Rally because we are hesitant to call on the state to ban an organization, how will that be used against progressive groups.

* October 22--begin discussions for IWD 1981. Decide to put forward a concrete proposal, get feedback prior to first coalition meeting, so there is already a strong statement at the first coalition meeting. There is lots of debate around whether this method is democratic.

* November 19--we decide to bring our banners to El Salvador and Albert Johnson demos.

* December 3--Motion re IWD to put forward major themes and general analytical statement, not string of demands. Decide to integrate lesbian issues. We are discussing our 'yellow promo leaflet.'

* December 7--Personal Politics Day #1. Talked about friends and sexuality. Day began with a presentation on constructive criticism and how to do it. Successful.

1981

* January--Join National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Feel we have a role to play in putting forward a socialist-feminist perspective.

* January--decision to organize Women's Solidarity Picket for Hospital Workers. In addition to the picket we speak at a rally for the Hospital Workers.

* February 8-- Passed edited IWDC 'yellow leaflet.' This is the first time we call ourselves 'socialist feminist' in public.

* February--Decide to push for woman from coalition as main IWD speaker, not star or outsider.

* February--Send two reps to the Women and the Constitution conference. Again we want to put forward a socialist feminist perspective. We endorse 'holding' of the conference.

* February--Decide to participate in meetings around bath raids. IWDC speaker at Queen's Park Rally. Send letter to cops and McMurtry objecting to 'this blatant form of harassment.' Endorse CGRO rally for sexual orientation in Human Rights Code, IWDC has speaker.

* March IWD--Women Stood United, Women Stand United. 3,000 people. First year of Red Berets.

* March--Send reps to the NAC Conference.

* March 18--Our evaluation of IWD. Decide we were correct to put forward strong position in the beginning and asking people to unite around that. Decide to hold a public forum Against the Rise of the

Right--aim to strengthen the alliances developing between women's movement, lesbians and gays, immigrant community, anti-racist struggles and union people. Decide to also build for a Mothers Day abortion rally four days after the forum.

March--Decide to hold an IWDC mixed fund-raising dance. Later we decide we're too tired.

March--Discussion about whether we should advertise our regular meetings in papers like the Clarian. Raises the whole question of who can be a member of IWDC? what basis do people have for joining? what do they have to agree to?

March--endorse Soviet feminist Mamanova; qualified support as we don't know much about her.

April 1--IWDC joins WWIW. Decision to make working with immigrant women a priority. Decide to co-sponsor, with WWIW, a meeting with Domitilia, a woman from Bolivia.

April--Decide to organize a series of educational on our allies and another personal politics day. Education committee reconstituted again.

April 29--Decide to have an on-going trade union committee to develop our work and contacts in relation to the trade union movement.

May 7--Rise of the Right Forum. 300 people.

May 9--Tel Air (Communications Workers of Canada) picket in Oshawa. IWDC has a speaker. As a result of discussions in the trade union committee we are not just doing statements of support when we speak but try and do a broader socialist-feminist analysis.

May 10--IWDC Mother's Day Action--largest abortion action for years in Toronto.

May 13--Domitilia meeting. Success. First major meeting with both women's movement and immigrant/solidarity community people

May 20--IWDC joins OFL Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care. We find it impossible to attend the meetings (they're during the day in the suburbs) and to really have an impact on the reform nature of the coalition.

May--We endorse RACAR Festival against the Klan for May 31, IWDC speaker.

May--Co-ordinating Committee report on structure. Outlines CC's responsibilities as administrative and political. Suggests: formalizing our practise for endorsements; need to discuss why we endorse; need to clarify relation between committees and group as a whole; need to be consciously committed to developing new people's skills. We set up second-line cc to advise co-ordinating committee over the summer.

- * June 3--Educational on El Salvador and why IWDC should take a stand on national liberation struggles. IWDC building a women's contingent for El Salvador Demonstration.
- * June--evaluation of the Rise of the Right Forum--not enough time to develop people's political and organizational skills thus most of the work falls on 'old' people; not enough time to have adequate discussion of issues surrounding the event in the committee as a whole.
- * June--endorse Lesbian and Gay Pride Day June 28/81.
- * June 17--Discussion of our immigrant and anti-racist work.
- * June--Decide to have discussion in the fall re our role and work in the Women's Service Network (didn't happen).
- * July 15--CUPW Support Picket; trade union committee is very active with CUPW work. Endorsed Popular Summit Conference in Ottawa. Sponsor Chilean woman coming to Canada to talk about situation in Chile.
- * August 5--Decide to do more work on CUPW, for the first time put out a specific leaflet with our perspective. Our support for right to strike and maternity leave (this demarcates us from many women's groups who just support on basis of maternity leave demand.) Endorse Sistren--women's theatre group from Jamaica coming in the fall.
- * August 12--Endorse Parkdale NDP anti-Klan Rally. Banner and speaker.
- * August--Speaker at Bruner Commission (on police/gay relations). By this time we've done a lot of work against the bath raids but still no full discussion of why and what we support; we are clear we're opposed to police harrassment.
- * August--First solidarity picket for Irwin Toys . . . Trade union committee doing a lot of work around Irwin. Leafletting and trying to get out to picket line once a week.
- * August 12--Educational on Beyond the Fragments. First time we have general discussion on socialist feminism. Not really productive.
- * September 9--Endorse GLARE anti-positive parents rally. Decide to send out fund appeal letter; it's our first and the response is great.
- * September 23--Educational on Women's Movement and IWDC. Start discussing the need for new meeting space; we're too big for the lounge at University Settlement. Broadside wants articles on coalition politics and history of IWDC; we're interested but say our discussion of these issues as a group first priority--then article. History committee struck--to begin working on IWDChistory. Set up IWD 1982 committee.
- * October 7--endorse Action Day Care Direct Grant Campaign. Proposal from IWD 1982 committee. New Members committee established (doesn't really get off the ground). Endorse 'Dykes in the Street' demo. Educational on Lesbian Feminism.

- * October 8--IWDC Support Picket with Irwin Toy.
- * October 23--3 alternative proposals for IWD 1982. New committee set up. Motion to support strikers at Wardair. Agree for Trade union committee to do four leaflets for OFL--Micro-tech, Rise of the Right, Right to Strike and IWDC.
- * October 25--Personal Politics Day #2--Surviving as Socialist feminists and evaluation of how we work together in IWDC. Successful day. General feeling that we need more time for political discussion and analysis of the work we are doing. Evaluation and analysis has to be ongoing and integrated into our work.
- * October 28--decide to endorse and attend the CLC Ottawa Demo Against High Interest Rates. Co-ordinating Committee Report--suggests a two-day session on strategy and structures which in part would clarify role of co-ordinating committee. Telegram in support of two women who disappeared in El Salvador.
- * November 1--Potluck and discussion with Shelia Rowbotham on socialist feminism in Britain.
- * November 4--Trade union educational. Concentrated on our intervention in the OFL for November 30. At OFL we have table and distribute 3 leaflets; much more of a presence than previous years. We decide not to put forward leaflet on Rise of the Right since it's an issue we are having some disagreement around in relation to IWD 1982.
- * November 9--IWDC presents daycare brief at Queen's Park.
- * November 15--all day meeting to discuss IWD 1982. Decisions: to provide political leadership in coalition, not do all the work; work to build a real coalition not so dependent on IWDC; initiate coalition; maintain separate existence as IWDC through life of coalition.
- * November 18--educational on our work with immigrant women.
- * December 2--further discussion of IWD; lots of debate around our different analyses on the Rise of the Right. Endorse the Right to Privacy Committee's ad in the Globe.

1982

- * January 6--decision to co-sponsor forum on socialist feminism with the Marxist Institute. We will be working on this over the summer. Endorse ban of sales of South African liquors--Ontario.
- * January 13--first coalition meeting. IWDC meets twice during coalition mostly to evaluate our role in the coalition.
- * March--IWD 1982. Close to 4,000. Rally and Fair. IWDC has party 5-9. Women's only dance.
- * April 7--Internal two day conference scheduled for June 12/13. Agreed to do workshop on Strategies for Organizing Women at Rape

* April 7--Internal two-day conference scheduled for June 12/13. Agreed to do workshop on Strategies for Organizing Women at Rape Crisis Centre Conference May 29/30. Agreed to have 2 reps at workshops at Rise of Right Festival and to donate \$50. Decide to hold public meeting on "Women Struggling in Central America" with WWIW and solidarity groups. Agreed to give deputation re daycare on April 15 at City Hall.

* April 21--Doing Solidarity work for Brinks strikers. Solidarity Picket scheduled for May 6. Decide to send reps to planning meeting with Farmworkers union for possible public meeting.

* April 24--IWDC has speaker on Micro Tech at conference/workshop organized through Humber Labour Studies .