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Greatest strength  
This awareness + experience is the  
greatest strength women possess already in  
Portugal. There is directness, frankness about  
being a woman. No hiding behind any screens.  
No hitting around the bush. Whenever there is  
a meeting among  $\bar{w}$ ,  $\bar{w}$  speak freely about  
their own experience in relation to men  
and social  
Even at <sup>a</sup> very low level of political inter-  
vention,  $\bar{w}$  make the connection between their  
personal lives as women and the ecopo-  
litical system in which they are caught.

For instance, in the rather unstable political  
situation of P., at the level of the super-  
structure there is competition, fight ~~etc~~  
level with weapons of ~~and~~ the industrialized  
society + the make-believe of the parliamentary  
system where the decision-making power is  
everyday further + further away from the  
individual citizen.

The political evolution in this country + the  
role some women have played in it ~~provoke~~  
in  $\bar{w}$  have developed among  $\bar{w}$  the  
conviction that they are, they can





a real collective force in P. The practical trans<sup>13</sup>lation of such conviction is still to be found in a massive way. But little by little we gather in different meetings throughout the country + affirm the need to find new ways to convey that force + to use it. During the very week in which I am writing these notes a daily newspaper has tried to ~~make a sabotage~~ ~~the~~ undermine that force. ~~the~~ They we of this country ~~we~~ found each other during the difficult months Oct/Nov/Dec. 80, one of the several moments in which freedom + democracy were in real danger. They realized that they have another way to deal with politics + society. Everywhere in the country they emerged to form a "network" of women. In a few months the network is spreading and reinforcing women's strength. They decided to do it in a simple way, ~~without~~ ~~convening~~ by word of mouth, sketched



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sheets with their questions + reflections  
went throughout the country. They considered  
time had not yet come to make it public.  
But one newspaper got hold of a few  
facts, including one letter. Immediately,  
they were criticised as non-democratic  
(because men were not present!), calu-  
to + made object of vulgar comments  
by journalists. The interesting fact, however,  
is that, immediately, most of the  
conservative newspapers + radio stations  
have taken up the news + have spoken  
about it as a major event in the  
political scene! Of course, we protested,  
gave interviews, reasserted themselves  
as full citizens, having the right to  
meet when + wherever they ~~to~~ consider  
it necessary. But, beyond the polemics  
is the fear that we will upset the  
institutions ~~made~~ men have created!  
This is but one episode of the assertion  
of we as a collective force in this country.



What is at stake in all this? 15

Where is the platform where all these questions are found in a nutshell?

In Portugal the cutting-edge issue is the world of work. We participate in all activities and have, more than in any other country, a disproportionate percentage in so-called masculine activities (e.g. economists, architects, engineers). Most of them are in ~~the~~ paid work out of sheer necessity - no well-thought choice, no horizon in what they do. They have to live their own lives + be responsible for them, also in economic terms. Work is however totally dominated by the "paradigm of progress", the greatest underlying myth the patriarchal society has produced in modern times. Several dogmas are not questioned: ~~the importance~~ the fact that the human factor in industry is not taken into account.



when productivity is examined. 16  
Hence the total disfunction between  
human resources + planning of economic  
activities. Hence the social inability  
of many activities which are only geared  
to ~~break~~<sup>foster</sup> artificial needs in order to  
invite people to the consumption of  
useless + superfluous goods, while either  
for the same persons or for the vast  
majority of the population basic needs  
are not fulfilled.

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