

“What’s happened to us because of burning out” was the topic of one workshop held in August 1996 in northern Serbia at the conference Women and Peace. The following was circulated by Zorica Mrsevic of Women in Black, Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

In spite of all that we’re going through, still we are changing the world, we are strong women, we can do everything, dare everything...

But, we feel so tired... * growl at anybody coming closer than five meters * don’t want to answer any telephone calls * hate the telephone * hate the computer * hate women clients * make nasty jokes about our clients * dare not to say openly that we hate them * sometimes feel like the loneliest persons in the world * frequently experience diarrhea, flu, bronchitis, headache, pain in stomach, etc. * have disturbed periods, disturbed dreams, disturbed hormonal situation * never arrive on time, never meet deadlines *

cry for no reason * cry to impress someone, or when it is ideologically or politically correct * hate funders and their grants, specially the generous ones * f*** off all terms and deadlines, specially those concerning sending final reports * hear buzzing in our ears and heads * frequently perspire without knowing why.

...Like our cats or parrots, sometimes we have the impression that we are not normal and the worst is that the others also have the same impression.

...We used to think that to recover, we needed a two-week holiday per year of work. Now we think we need a holiday of one year to recover from two weeks of work.

...We split into smaller and smaller groups, only to repeat in them the same conflicts and wishes to separate * write accusing letters to funders against former friends * accuse each other via the yellow press * become disappointed in

feminism * become lesbians * stop being
lesbians * neglect our private life * neglect the
children * neglect our own appearance * neglect
our studies * neglect old friends * lose our
positive traits, even forgetting that once upon a
time we had these * expel others from our groups
* get expelled by others from their groups *
isolate each other * readily lose our temper, crying
and shouting at each other at the slightest excuse
* ignore each other * drop dead from fatigue.

In the morning we are not able to get up
from bed.

...We can't stand older people * can't stand
young people * women our own age make us
specially nervous. We read only the last pages in a
book * don't read anything * don't go to the
theater or cinema any more * hate theater anyway
* secretly watch Sport Alive on TV and enjoy it
very much! knowing how we could be condemned
by our feminist friends for doing so * don't meet

anybody except women from feminism whom
we'd rather didn't meet.

...We enjoy intrigues * recognize the need
for balance between negative and positive stresses
but don't find the balance...we're fed up with
foreigners visiting us like animals in a zoo!

Our dreams? Just to live a normal life...not
have to dress up...go to market, do the chores that
normal women do...We don't have any dreams
of tiredness, because as soon as we put our heads
on the pillow, an alarm clock rings but it's as if we
had gone to bed only a few minutes ago.

...We gain weight...lose weight...smoke more
and more...become skeptical, biting, waspish,
cynical, inconvenient, irresponsible, revengeful...!

...In Belgrade we couldn't even dream of
saying this openly...

i am Only human!

women "burned-out" by war

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