

oltre la lettera 26 luglio 74 allegata  
perché conteneva anche cose personali - un.

5 Agosto

Cara Maria Ross - '74

è da un pezzo che non ci  
si sente più - comunque le  
cose vanno bene qui - almeno  
rispetto lo scorso anno che  
è stato piuttosto incasinato  
anche dal punto di vista personale.

Ti mando una copia di una  
mia recente lettera a Selma così  
ti farai un'idea del "lavoro"  
del mio gruppo. Il materiale allegato  
riguarda la campagna per lo sciopero  
delle welfare + working-poor mothers -  
abbiamo tenuto la prima riunione  
pubblica (Agosto 1) e il response è  
stato veramente qualcosa di bello - si  
conta di continuare la campagna in tutti  
i quartieri di Tor. dove ci sono case  
popolari - su 26,000 donne on welfare  
ne vorremmo mobilitare 1000 per lo  
sciopero - scriverò ancora man mano

che le cose si sviluppino - sento molto  
il bisogno di mantenere e stringere  
i contatti con gli altri centri dove  
avanza la politica femminista di  
wages for housework -

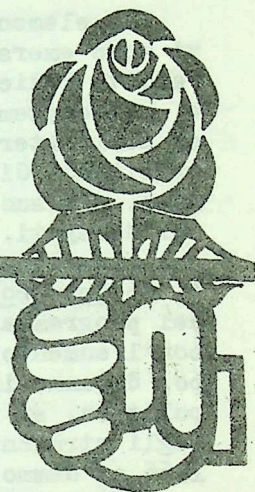
Concludo per adesso -

Saluti affettuosi -

Judy

PS. la sezione sulle donne nel bollettino  
dell'infermiere è stata oscurata  
da una donna nel mio edlettivo -

# ALTERNATIVA radicale



numero unico in attesa di  
registrazione

*[Handwritten signature]*

**PARTITO RADICALE**

ASSOCIAZIONE PADOVANA

Via E. Filiberto, 6

CJC/P n° 9/7196 - Tel. 654.051



DALLA COSTA MARIARO SA  
VIA B. CRISTOFORI 35  
35 100 PADOVA

Cari compagni ed amici,

due elementi, costanti, distintivi e significativi sono emersi negli ultimi dieci anni di vita del Partito Radicale: il rinnovamento dei suoi militanti e, nel contempo, la continuità della proposta politica dell'alternativa laica e socialista al regime democristiano. Ci ripetiamo da tempo che il partito ogni anno, nel suo congresso formato dagli iscritti e non, dai delegati, si "rifonda"; ed è esatto, perchè la sua struttura libertaria consente a tutti i militanti di fare politica, concorrendo sia alla formazione del programma, che all'azione concreta. E perciò, con l'aumento generale delle adesioni, il nostro gruppo, di anno in anno, cresce attorno e nella proposta politica, si rinnova profondamente nei militanti e negli strumenti di lotta. Lo stesso Statuto che nel 1966 ci demmo al Congresso di Bologna, quale programma politico per un'organizzazione libertaria ed autogestita di "produzione" politica, articola, quale importantissimo momento di autogestione, i Partiti regionali e le Associazioni locali, che possono assicurare la continuità del flusso di rinnovamento e di crescita.

Per questo le Associazioni radicali del Veneto, del Trentino e del Sudtirolo, costituirono, due anni fa, il Partito Radicale del Veneto, del Trentino e del Sudtirolo, il cui comitato di coordinamento ha deliberato di seguire l'indicazione del Consiglio Federativo indicendo un Congresso Regionale per il 12 Gennaio 1975 ore 9,30 a Padova, Sala della Gran Guardia - Piazza dei Signori.

La partecipazione è estesa anche ai simpatizzanti e a quanti, specialmente negli scorsi mesi ed in occasione della raccolta delle firme per gli Otto Referendum, hanno espresso consenso ed attenzione all'impegno dei radicali nella grande battaglia per i Diritti Civili, per la realizzazione di una Repubblica autenticamente democratica e costituzionale.

Come risulta dalla mozione generale approvata dal XIV° Congresso di Milano, il Partito ha in corso lo arricchimento e l'approfondimento delle sue tematiche, è impegnato cioè, nella formulazione di una proposta globale, idonea a costituire il programma di lavoro politico che consenta, attraverso l'unità ed il rinnovamento della sinistra, l'alternativa democratica e socialista al governo del Paese.

Per questa ragione, oltre ai compagni iscritti, invitiamo ai lavori del congresso regionale quanti intendano di partecipare all'importante e suggestivo momento della formazione della volontà e delle scelte politiche apportando anche contributi allo studio di soluzioni di problemi specialmente connessi con la realtà regionale e locale.

a buon rivederci e fraterni saluti

IL COMITATO DI COORDINAMENTO  
del PARTITO RADICALE  
del Veneto, Trentino e Sudtirolo

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# I° CONGRESSO del PARTITO RADICALE del

Veneto, Trentino e Sudtirolo

**PADOVA**

Sala della Gran Guardia - piazza dei signori

ore 9,30

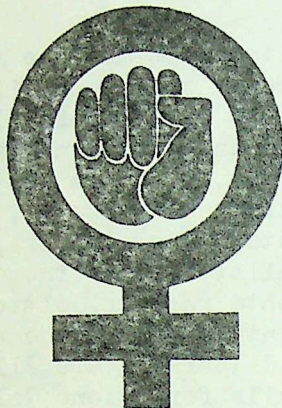


**I**l Movimento di Liberazione della Donna e il Partito Radicale stanno organizzando per il 24-25-26 gennaio 1975 una Conferenza Nazionale sull'Aborto. Questo è il risultato di quasi un mese di riunioni fra Pr e Mld per discutere le iniziative da prendere per portare avanti la battaglia per la liberalizzazione dell'aborto.

Il convegno trova la sua giustificazione negli obiettivi che si propone: creare un momento di chiarezza sulla situazione dell'aborto in Italia e su quale strategia seguire per eliminare l'odioso fenomeno dell'aborto clandestino di massa e affermare il diritto alla piena disponibilità del proprio corpo e alla maternità come libera scelta; fornire dati il più possibile precisi sulle cause e le conseguenze dell'aborto in Italia, sui quali portare avanti una campagna di informazione e contro-informazione per potenziare e allargare il movimento di opinione di massa che si batte per la sua liberalizzazione; dare un punto di riferimento alla classe politica per aprire con questa un confronto preciso; creare una mobilitazione nei confronti del Parlamento perché l'attuale legislazione venga immediatamente modificata; cercare di preparare una piattaforma unitaria di lotta sulla quale far convergere diverse forze politiche per il raggiungimento di un obiettivo comune.

Il convegno si propone quindi di essere il più « completo » possibile sotto ogni punto di vista, senza ovviamente sfociare nella professorialità o nel perfezionismo; si tratta infatti del primo convegno del genere in Italia, di fronte a decine di analoghi, ma di segno opposto, organizzati dall'ordine clericale dei medici o da altri organismi legati agli interessi della chiesa cattolica. Il congresso, che si terrà a Roma e sarà aperto a tutti, inizierà con due relazioni preparate dal Pr e dal Mld sul significato della Conferenza e la situazione e le prospettive generali della battaglia per la liberalizzazione dell'aborto.

Quindi seguiranno una serie di relazioni che esamineranno il problema dal punto di vista genetico, medico, giuridico, sociologico; sono previste infatti una relazione genetico-biologica, una sulle tecniche abor-



**aborto**

tive da quelle usate dalle « mammane » a quelle praticate in America dai gruppi femministi, una sulla legislazione italiana ed i suoi assurdi ed un'altra sulla legislazione negli altri paesi; la relazione fra anticoncezionali ed aborto e l'attuale diffusione degli anticoncezionali o di tecniche contraccettive in Italia; la situazione sociologica che determina l'aborto: dalle influenze clericali, alle strutture di assistenza alla ragazza-madre e ai bambini abbandonati; una indagine sul giro d'affari sull'aborto clandestino; l'aborto nelle fabbriche o al lavoro; testimonianze dirette.

Una seconda parte riguarderà gli aspetti propriamente politici e cioè gli interventi dei partiti e dei movimenti e delle organizzazioni che saranno invitate alla Conferenza: i partiti parlamentari (tranne la Dc e il Msi), i movimenti femministi, le organizzazioni extraparlamentari, i movimenti per i diritti civili, le varie associazioni che promuovono la liberalizzazione dell'aborto e diffondono le tecniche contraccettive (Cisa, Aied, Aed etc.); saranno inoltre invitate singole personalità democratiche del mondo politico, scientifico, culturale, religioso sia italiane che straniere. In particolare sarà presente il Mouvement pour la liberalisation de l'avortment et de la contraception (MLAC) che in Francia è stato uno dei maggiori protagonisti della battaglia per la liberalizzazione dell'aborto ed il superamento della legislazione repressiva.

## CONGRESSI RADICALI REGIONALI

Si sono svolti il 15 di Dicembre i Congressi dei Partiti Regionali della Lombardia (a Pavia), della Toscana, Umbria e la Spezia (a Firenze) e del Friulu-venezia Giulia (a Trieste). Durante i lavori di quest'ultimo si è proceduto all'elezione della delegazione del Friuli-Venezia Giulia al Consiglio Federativo del Partito Radicale, nelle persone dei Compagni: Beppe Argenta (Udine), Lario Pujatti (Pordenone), Gianni Coninotto (Trieste).

## ADELE FACCIO

Al Congresso di Padova interverrà Adele Faccio, del C.I.S.A. (Centro Italiano Sterilizzazione e Aborto), della quale pubblichiamo qui accanto una dichiarazione. A Trieste è già operante un Centro C.I.S.A., mentre è imminente l'apertura, nel Veneto, di altri analoghi consultori.

La relazione introduttiva verrà tenuta da Giulio Ercolessi, della Direzione Nazionale del Partito Radicale.



**I**l Cisa lavora a Milano da un anno e mezzo. Ha eseguito 4000 aborti e 2000 sterilizzazioni.

Il compito del Cisa non è soltanto medico ed assistenziale ma è anche politico, in quanto prima di tutto si tratta di una azione provocatoria nei confronti del sistema maschilistico capitalistico nel momento in cui si dichiara apertamente di fare aborti e ci mettiamo quindi fuorilegge rispetto al sistema.

Inoltre crea un momento comunitario e di presa di coscienza fra le donne che sono state costrette sempre alla clandestinità ed all'isolamento nelle case, come nelle fabbriche e negli uffici.

Oggi non basta più il centro di Milano. Vogliamo aprire tanti centri Cisa quante sono le sedi del PR in Italia e naturalmente ci interessano soprattutto le sedi periferiche, tanto a nord quanto in centro e al sud.

L'aborto è un diritto della donna perché realizza il diritto alla libera scelta della stessa.

Noi del Cisa siamo sempre pronti a pubblicare e diffondere i dati della nostra attività, non siamo clandestini, non ci nascondiamo.

La debolezza del regime si dimostra in questa incapacità a interrompere un'azione che è dichiarata, provocatoria e aggressiva.

Crediamo che l'azione che il Cisa conduce sia una delle prime realizzazioni concrete del problema della liberazione della donna.



## ROMA 24, 25, 26 GEN. CONVEGNO SULL'ABORTO

La battaglia parlamentare sull'aborto è dunque cominciata. Il papa è intervenuto pesantemente, per impedire che il parlamento francese prima, quello italiano dopo, prendano in esame e votino i rispettivi progetti. Le sinistre francesi sono compatte dietro la nuova legge; in Italia, per la prima volta, il PCI dichiara che l'attuale legislazione è insostenibile e va cambiata.

E' ora necessario che nel paese assuma l'iniziativa un grande movimento popolare, di massa. A gennaio, a Roma, il Convegno nazionale promosso dal Movimento di Liberazione della Donna e dal P. Radicale lancerà nuove iniziative, per proporre immediate occasioni ed obiettivi vincenti. Occorre, in ogni città, prepararsi alla lotta, che certamente sarà dura e difficile.



## FIRENZE 4, 5, 6 GEN. II° CONGRESSO NAZIONALE LOC

Abbiamo, quest'anno, realizzato il servizio civile; un servizio civile autodeterminato ed autogestito dagli stessi obiettori di coscienza. Ora, il movimento degli obiettori deve crescere, nel suo impegno antimilitarista e per un servizio civile che sia effettivamente alternativo. Nel momento in cui compagni sono in carcere, pagando di persona il rifiuto al militarismo, dobbiamo assumerci tutta la loro lotta, qualificando e caratterizzando politicamente ogni nostra iniziativa.

Ma soprattutto dobbiamo affrontare i grossi problemi organizzativi e politici che rischiano oggi di vanificare l'azione e la testimonianza di anni. Un servizio veramente alternativo, organizzato su base regionale e che consenta ai compagni un pieno impegno politico, la sua completa smilitarizzazione non solo nei fatti ma anche riconosciuta per legge, rappresenta il primo impegno di lotta della Loc al suo appuntamento annuale. Nello stesso tempo è necessario individuare la nuova funzione eversiva e di rifiuto dell'obbedienza di coscienza ad un esercito che in Italia, come nel resto dell'Europa, si avvia ad una trasformazione da una parte efficientistica e permissiva e dall'altra sempre più caratterizzata da potenzialità autoritarie e golpiste. Diverse posizioni ed analisi si sono manifestate nella organizzazione degli obiettori: il congresso dovrà essere un grosso momento di confronto e di elaborazione di programmi chiari per tutti i compagni antimilitaristi.

Il II Congresso nazionale della LOC si terrà, il 4-5-6 gennaio prossimo a Firenze, presso l'Istituto Stensen (viale don Minzoni 25-A) con inizio dei lavori alle ore 9 del 4 gennaio.

Questi sono gli indirizzi ed i recapiti (postali e telefonici) delle Associazioni Radicali del Veneto, Trentino e Sudtirolo; seguono gli indirizzi ed i recapiti dei movimenti federati al Partito Radicale presenti nella regione (L.O.C., M.L.D., FUORI!) e dell'A.L.R.I. (ass. lib. relig. in Italia) di Venezia.

Associazione Radicale Veneziana - via Felisati 40, 30170 - Venezia-Mestre; tel. 964065 (c/o Ennio Boldrin), 983923 (c/o Massimo Gusso) indirizzo postale C.P. 549 Mestre P.T.; presso l'Associazione sono presenti anche i gruppi veneziani del FUORI! (c/o Franco Roselli); della LOC (c/o Cristina Romieri) del MLD (c/o Paola Pellizzari).

Associazione Radicale Padovana - via Emanuele Filiberto 6, 35100 - Padova; tel. 29613, L.O.C. c/o Alberto Gardin via Emanuele Filiberto 6, 35100 - Padova

Associazione Radicale Vicentina - Contrà del Monte 7, 36100 - Vicenza; tel. 24926 (studio avv. Ferdinando Landi - coordinamento regionale del Partito Radicale) L.O.C. c/o avv. Ferdinando Landi.

Associazione Radicale Veronese - c/o Giuliana Sandroni, via S.Alessio 20, 37100 Verona; tel. 42232

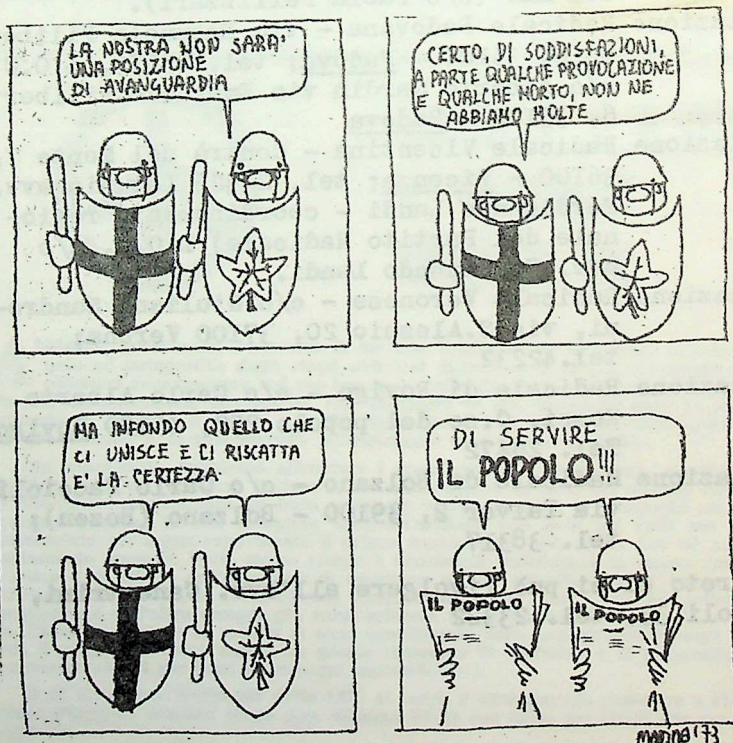
Associazione Radicale di Rovigo - c/o Carlo Alberto Rossi, Corso del popolo 252, 45100 Rovigo; Tel. 26472

Associazione Radicale di Bolzano - c/o Carlo Faccioli, via Talver 2, 39100 - Bolzano (Bozen); tel. 38317

a Rovereto ci si può rivolgere all'avv. Canestrini, via Paoli 33, tel. 23322

Per questo numero il giornale esce in questo formato e sotto forma di lettera a causa di difficoltà tecniche-finanziarie molto pesanti. Speriamo di riuscire, con il vostro aiuto, a migliorarne la struttura e ad uscire con una veste più perfezionata. In attesa della registrazione della testata ringraziamo fin d'ora l'avv. Ferdinando Landi che ha accettato di assumere la direzione responsabile di "ALTERNATIVA RADICALE".

a proposito del "bipartito"



20 dicembre 1974

cicl. in proprio  
 ass. radicale veneziana  
 via felisati 40 Mestre - ve



# WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

Sylvia Federici

active in women's movement  
in N.Y.



Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 p.m.

Unitarian Church, 22<sup>nd</sup> & Chestnut Sts. (basement)

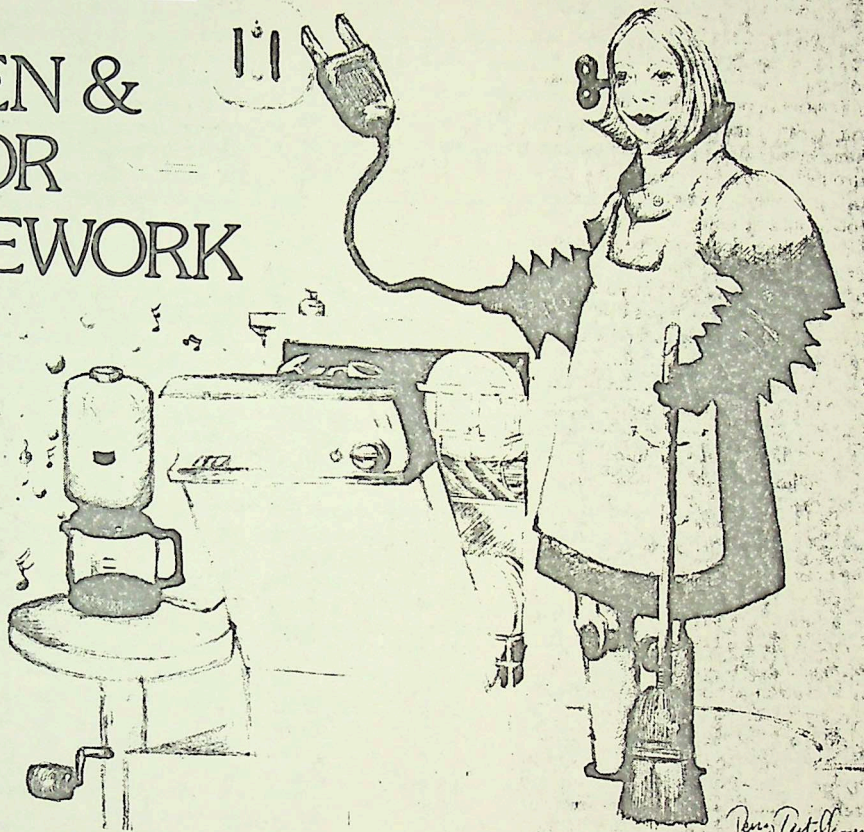
The average American woman works 99.6 hrs./wk. But for the work she does in her own home, wages are zero, there is no sick leave, and no vacations. — If children weren't cared for, if houses weren't cleaned, if emotional needs weren't met, if food weren't prepared, the rest of the work of society couldn't get done. Why is this necessary work that women do so invisible? — Women must clearly unite to gain power. What would happen if women organized to get paid for the housework and childcare they do? If you're interested in discussing

this and related issues, come on May 4<sup>th</sup>. — Organized by: Pat Albright, Carolyn Best, Sue Carroll, Nancy Davis, Mannie Garza, Sara Lee Hamilton, Jean Hunt, Marilyn Rittenhouse.  
Telephone: Germantown Women's Center or Nancy, Sue + Marilyn  
GE 8 - 6266 GR 6 - 0445



# WOMEN & PAY FOR HOUSEWORK

by  
Carol  
Lopate



Pay for housework is an idea which has been around for some time. Recently it has begun to receive serious consideration among feminist groups here, largely as a result of the publication in February 1973 of the English version of Maria Della Costa's pamphlet, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. \* Dalla Costa's analysis comes out of the Italian women's movement and was first introduced to the American women's movement in her article, "Women and the Subversion of the Community," published in *Radical America* (January/February 1972, Vol. 6, no. 1).

Quite briefly, the pay-for-housework argument goes like this. Traditional analyses of the working class have excluded women because their work has not been considered "productive"—or, more commonly, has not been considered at all. These analyses have called women "oppressed" but not "exploited," because "exploitation" would imply that surplus value is extracted from their labor. In contrast, Dalla Costa and other feminists say that women's work in the home produces use value, rather than exchange value, and is

thus a remnant of a pre-capitalist structure existing within capitalism. But, say these feminists, it is clear that women as housewives produce and reproduce capitalism to at least as great a degree as any other working sector. The work of women in the home forms the basis from which emanates all other labor, from which, in turn, surplus value is extracted. Women help reproduce capitalism both through childbirth and through socialization; they keep capitalism running smoothly by servicing its current (and future) workers with food, clothes and sex. Thus women in the home are part of the working class, but they are not recognized as such because they are unpaid. Producing only use value, they remain part of a pre-capitalist structure. To legitimize women as part of the working class, and to free them financially from men, they must produce exchange value. The subsequent demand proceeds directly from the analysis: pay women for housework.

The attraction of this theory is not difficult to understand. First, in a brief and efficient manner, women are

\*Published jointly by the Falling Wall Press, Ltd., 79 Richmond Rd., Montpelier, Bristol B56 5EP, England, and a group of individuals from the women's liberation movement in England and Italy.

Carol Lopate is a writer and an anthropologist. Her poetry has appeared in *Aphra* and elsewhere. She is the author of *Women in Medicine*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

analytically integrated into the working class. Second, a platform for concrete action flows directly from the analysis. Moreover, this demand can be readily understood as developing out of a comprehensive theoretical framework, a fact which might attract the large numbers of women who have not as yet been drawn into the women's movement despite the partial successes of the campaigns around such piecemeal feminist demands as abortion and childcare. Finally, given a capitalist society in which personal autonomy as well as status are gained through money, it may well be that women need to be wage-earners in order to achieve the self-reliance and self-esteem which are the first steps toward equality.

But the attraction of "pay for housework" is not unlike the attraction of union demands: better wages, shorter hours, increased benefits. All of these are far easier to conceptualize and communicate to workers than the demand to change the nature of work itself, a goal which, even when packaged as "workers control," is comparatively utopian and hard for workers to visualize. Just as unions have generally pushed only quantitative demands and have become reformist institutions for integrating workers into the system, feminist concentration on the pay-for-housework demand can only serve further to embed women (and men) in the clutches of capitalism.

Before going further, I want to make it clear that I am not against "reformist" demands as such, i.e., I'm not automatically opposed to demands whose goal is to ameliorate rather than change the basic structure and relations of society. For example, it is irrelevant to me that capitalism may have accepted abortion reform only because its need for workers no longer requires such a high birth rate. I support abortion reform because I believe that the right to decide whether or not to have a child freed women. In a similar vein, I am not opposed to pay for housework simply because it is a reformist, quantitative demand that the system could one day accept, but because instead of freeing women, it will serve to rigidify the sexual and other forms of oppression that we are already fighting against. In the following pages, I want to present a number of reasons why I am against women spending their energies on the pay-for-housework demand.

1) The women who support pay for housework say, quite rightly, that work outside the home is being glamorized and held out as a false carrot. But I do not believe that there has been a sufficient understanding of the quality of work and life inside the home. The lives and aspirations of most housewives have undergone major changes over the past thirty or so years. As men increasingly commute to work, women's daily lives have become more and more separate from those of their husbands. Moreover, the greatly accelerated geographic mobility among both blue- and white-collar workers has left women also bereft of continuity and community with neighbors and, with the decline of the extended family, without the support of relatives who once provided both friendship and assistance. The decrease in house size and the mechanization of housework has meant that the housewife is potentially left with much greater leisure time; however, she is often kept busy buying using and repairing the devices and their attachments which are

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Instead of simply paying women to do increasingly trivialized work, we need to look seriously at the tasks which are "necessary" to keep a house going and to make new evaluations.

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theoretically geared toward saving her time. Moreover, the trivial, manufactured tasks which many of these technological "aids" perform are hardly a source of satisfaction for housewives. Finally, schools, nurseries, daycare and television have taken away from mothers much of the responsibility for the socialization of their children; few women can feel that their children's upbringing is really in their hands.

Instead of simply paying women to do increasingly trivialized work, we need to look seriously at the tasks which are "necessary" to keep a house going and to make new evaluations. We need to investigate the time- and labor-saving devices and decide which are useful and which merely cause a further degradation of housework. We need to investigate the isolation of work done in the home and look for new, possibly communal, organizations for doing housework—even when living arrangements may not be communal.

2) The demand to pay for housework comes from Italy, where the overwhelming majority of women in all classes still remain at home. In the United States, over half of all women do work. The women who stay at home are predominately the very poor, usually welfare mothers who in a sense are already being paid by the state to work in the home (or stay out of the labor market, however one wishes to conceive of it); and women of the upper-middle class. The wives of blue- and white-collar workers usually do not remain at home, even when they have children. They work. The project of bringing American women into the working class is therefore not merely a question of material conditions, but of ideology. Women who work in America are still seen in terms of their husband's or father's class designation; women themselves remain as if classless, no matter what they do or do not do for a living.

The proposal to pay women for housework does not deal with the fact that the ideological preconditions for working-class solidarity are networks and connections which arise from working together. These preconditions cannot arise out of isolated women working in separate homes, whether they are being paid for their work or not.

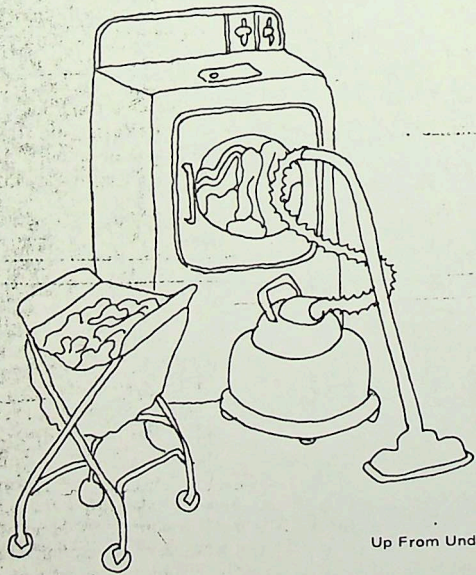
3) The financial aspects of payment for housework are highly problematical. Under our present system of corporate capitalism, pay for housework would not lead to any significant redistribution of income or wealth from the rich to the poor. Instead, the money to pay for housework would come from an already over-taxed working class, either through direct taxation or through special corporate taxes which would in turn be passed on to consumers. Moreover, since most men's incomes are at least partially determined on the basis of their being "family incomes," removal of all

Convincing  
1/21/78

Why

women from financial dependence on men would probably lower the income standards for male work. Concentration on the demand for pay for housework without acknowledgement of the effect on other segments of society would have the same devastating effect on any long-range strategy for alliance and solidarity between men and women workers as the demand for compensatory education and social welfare programs for blacks during the 1960s had on white-black relations. Workers knew that they, not the corporations, ended up paying for those programs.

The question of how one would evaluate what houseworkers ought to earn has provoked some almost funny alternatives, if one has a morbid sense of humor. For example, in Canada in the late 1960s, a plan, actually brought before the government, proposed that women be paid according to their educational background; that is, PhD's doing housework would get the highest rate and high-school drop-outs the lowest. The use of this salary scale for creating intra-class solidarity and inter-class antagonisms among women is not difficult to imagine. A second proposal which I have seen suggests that a composite of all the activities included in housework be made up with their respective average salaries (nursery care at X amount, sweepers at Y, dishwashers at Z, etc.), and that a final salary be based on the proportion of time generally spent in each of these activities. Since the only job on the list with any financial status is nursery teacher, houseworkers' wages would be very low. Finally, a third means of allocating payment might be to make housework competitive with what the woman (or man) could make on the outside. Naturally, this would again create a hierarchy of pay among women, with some women able to make \$30 an hour for washing the dishes, while others would do their dishes for the minimum wage. Obviously, men would receive the highest wage for their work at home.



Up From Under

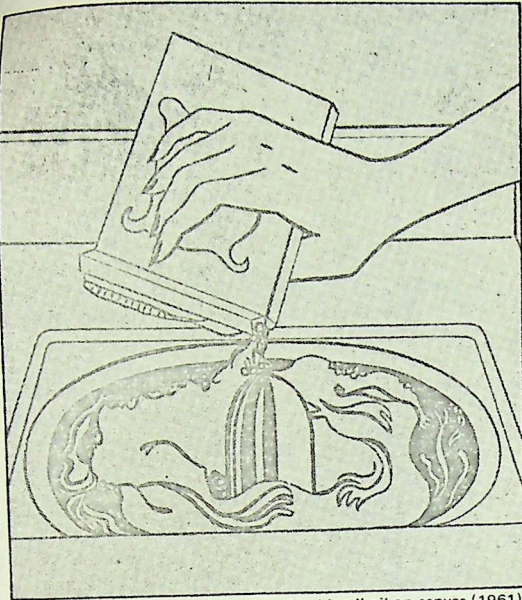
Another question is how houseworkers' work would be judged, and by whom. If the woman (or man) did not sweep behind the couch, would she (or he) be docked? Would there be increases for taking (or demerits for forgetting to take) the kids to the dentist? If the children cleaned their own rooms, would they get paid? Obviously, there would have to be some kind of institutionalized supervisor to investigate the cleanliness of homes and the health of children, since otherwise pay for housework would merely be welfare or a minimum standard income. But the vision of the visiting weekly supervisor smacks of yet another form of welfare investigator or inspector, of yet another arm reaching in from the state.

4) The elimination of the one large area of capitalist life where all transactions do not have exchange value would only serve to obscure from us still further the possibilities of free and unalienated labor. The home and family have traditionally provided the only interstice of capitalist life in which people can possibly serve each other's needs out of love or care, even if it is often also out of fear and domination. Parents take care of children at least partly out of love, and children are nourished by the knowledge that the care they are being given is at least partly on that basis. I even think that this memory lingers on with us as we grow up so that we always retain with us as a kind of utopia the work and caring which come out of love, rather than being based on financial reward. It seems to me that if a child grew up knowing that he cost the state more than his sister because he was a more difficult child, and so took more labor power to raise, that some of our last, ever more flimsy notions of humanity would be blown away like dust in a draught.

There are at least two strong counter-arguments against keeping the family, or whatever living group, in the private sphere: 1) The distinction between public and private should anyway be erased; and 2) This lovely domain of "free giving" that I am calling for has always been at the expense of women. I don't want to go into a long argument in favor of the private sphere. Let me say merely that I believe it is in our private worlds that we keep our souls alive; and that this is so not merely because we live in a capitalist world, but that we will also need private worlds if and when we live under socialism. The problem raised by capitalism is that it is so difficult to keep the private sphere alive when it is being constantly battered down by the commercialization of everyday life and the constant threats to it by the mass media. But we must fight this encroachment, and not simply abandon our last bastion under the guise of liberating women.

Women do not have to transform their labor into a commodity in order to be considered an intrinsic part of the working class or to be part of the struggle for human liberation. The commodity form is an alienated form and women will simply be perpetuating that alienation. The proposition that women must enter the commodity form in order to liberate themselves stems implicitly from a theory which regards capitalism as the inevitable transition stage between feudalism and socialism. Thus women must first be paid for their labor power if they are to move on to the next stage. But I believe there is no such inevitability in these stages. Moreover, to look at housework as a vestige of

with in our job so we'll  
realizing of life.



Roy Lichtenstein, "Washing Machine," oil on canvas (1961).

Ask any man how difficult it is for him to arrange part-time hours, or for him to ask for special time schedules so that he can be involved equally in childcare! Finally, as we have argued and struggled with the men we have chosen to live with, we have found ourselves with little other than moral imperatives to bolster our side. I have noticed the relief of women in meetings when talking about the Dalla Costa analysis: it gives scientific validity to our struggle for equality; we need no longer resort to men's being "good" people.

right on!

But let us go back to the analysis of housework as production, from which the demand of pay for housework derived. There has been an argument in circles of left or Marxist feminists over whether the importance of woman's role within the family to capitalism lies in her role as producer/reproducer or as consumer. The argument for women as consumers is obvious, given the advertisements and commodities which are structured around the created needs of women. And yet, as most feminist Marxists like to point out, production is a more deeply essential category than consumption. The rhetorical battle goes back and forth, in my experience, with a lot of anger on each side. There is almost an unstated presupposition that if women can be shown to be the unrealized "producers," the spine of capitalism, then they will also be the "vanguard of the revolution."

I do not have my own analysis to propose; nor do I have a concrete, radical platform for feminist-socialist action. But I do have one insight which I hope can become part of a framework for analysis which I and others will do in the future and on which I and other women—and men—will act. This is that we women must stop borrowing categories from the Marxist world. We are not a class, since all individuals of a class have a specific relationship to the means of production, and we vary greatly in this respect. We are not a caste, as a caste is an endogamous (self-reproducing) group, often also characterized by a specific economic niche, and there is no way—as yet—that women can be endogamous. Even if we use sperm banks or other forms of mechanized reproduction, the sperm will come from the outside. Some of us may be doing work that has use value but that does not have exchange value, and many of us, including those who receive exchange value for our labor power, may be suffering from an ideology which still attributes to women the power and status of a second sex. The essential thing to remember is that we are a SEX. That is really the only word as yet developed to describe our commonalities. But what do the differences in our daily lives mean for theory and for practice? What does being female actually mean; what, if any, specific qualities necessarily and for all time adhere to that characteristic? I believe that if, as revolutionary feminists, we want to be clear about where we are going, we must also be clear about the terms we borrow from the Marxist analysis. It is a quick way to legitimate ourselves on the left, but it is not a long-range strategy. What we may, in fact, have to do is to devise our own new terms. We may have to decide that housework is neither production nor consumption. We may have to be hazy in our visions. After all, a total reordering of sex and sexual roles and relationships is not easy to describe.

radical feminists

feudalism is to see it merely from one side. The separation between use value and exchange value is itself part of the capitalist stage of development. Unfortunately, in fact, attempts to bring underdeveloped sectors into the capitalist sector have done just that. Nothing more. The revolutionary project is quite another matter.

5) I have left for the end what I feel is the most obvious objection to the pay-for-housework demand: it does nothing to solve the sexual division of labor. Because I believe that feminist goals must be integrated into a total theory of revolution, I would not struggle for a feminist goal which sought to undermine the sexual division of labor if it did not at the same time seek to undermine the commodity form. But, conversely, I am not interested in revolutionary projects which do not include a constant attack on the sexual division of labor.

It is highly likely that the institution of pay for housework would solidify the nuclear family. It is difficult to conceive of the mammoth bureaucracy which would be required, whether public or private, allowing pay for communal houseworkers, pay for a man in a homosexual couple, pay for one of two women living together, or even pay for a man and a woman living in a nuclear situation but out of wedlock.

The demand for pay for housework is clearly an easier one to move on than is the call to abolish the sexual division of labor. The latter would involve a total restructuring of private work. Most of us women who have fought in our own lives for such a restructuring have fallen into periodic despair. First, there were the old habits—the men's and ours—to break. Second, there were the real problems of time: many of us have lived with men who work an eight- or ten-hour day, while we have found ourselves preferring or finding less consuming jobs, which have left us more time for housework.

how

Women's Action Group  
Re  
Mother Led Union

On June 6-7th The Women's Group held a conference in Toronto. The issues were Food Prices, day care, rent controls, the courts and the 75% recoupment on recipient mothers.

The workshops on these five issues all came up with specific action.

The ACTION we are primarily concerned with here is to do with single parent families who are struggling to raise thier families as workingpoor, or Mother's Allowance or Welfare recipients.

In a brief presented on behalf of these Mother Led families it was pointed out that:

(1) "One of the most blantant proofs of discrimination against sole-support mothers is shown by looking at Government-support foster care programs. When a child is placed in a foster home, the child is maintained at a rate of nearly one hundred dollars per month, compared to a rate of thirty to thirty-five dollars per month if he remains with his natural mother. This would suggest to us that a child would be better off in a foster home.

We might ask at this point why there is this difference in finances between foster mothers and natural mothers. Natural mothers must and do, deny themselves all of the necessities of life to sustain their children. This self-sacrifice on the part of a natural mother is a way of life. If a foster mother were asked to make such sacrifices the child would be returned to the agency immediately. So we find here a situation where the natural mother's instinctive, protective nature, to "care for her young", is being used to keep her at a level of poverty that prevents her from having these bare necessities of life. When the natural Mother does not provide a good home atmosphere it is because she cannot cope with the financial beating she is taking.

(2) With regards Earnings:

Under the present F.B .A. structure, the single parent is allowed to earn \$24.00a month and \$12.00 a month for each child. There are few employers anywhere who can provide employment on this limited basis. Therefore, in order to get a job, you must make more than the limit. At this point the Government starts grabbing 75% out of every dollar they have so niggardly provided.

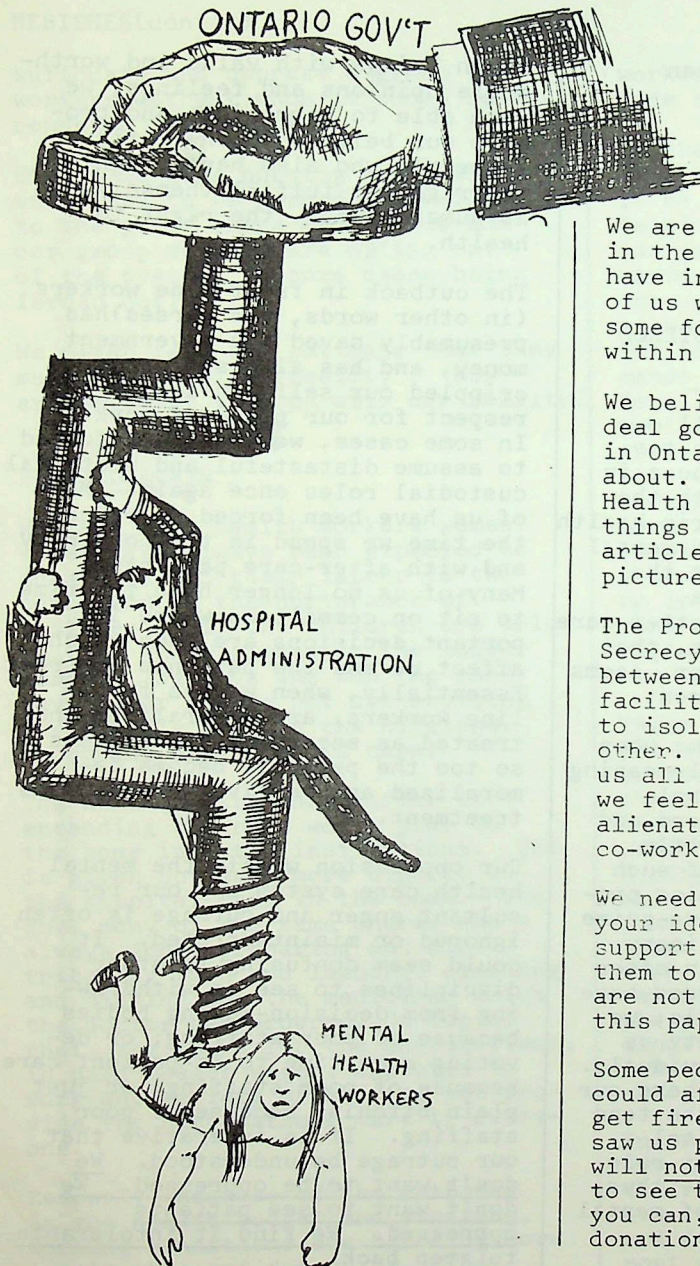
RESOLUTIONS

Because of the blantant discrimination in not only financial levels but in the attitude of the male legislators, that women should remain silent while they thoughtfully deliberate on such important matters as corporate gains and football stadiums, we here and now pledge ourselves to the job of:

Liberating the women in this country who are tied to the poverty line by Government legislation:

Seeing that the women left to rear their children alone, should recieve not only the present assistance available from the Government, but be allowed to earn over and above that amount \$100.00 per month for herself and \$25.00per child per month with a 50% recoupment figure.

That a Mother Led Union be formed to develop specifec actions to put pressure on Government regarding the afore mentioned problems, and in the long-run a guaranteed annual income for every individual, whether working or not, married or not, on family benefits or welfare or not. "



## WHO'S DOING THIS SPECIAL OBSERVATION?

We are a group of people who work in the mental health field or who have informed interest in it. Some of us work in Ontario Hospitals, some for private agencies, some within a health group.

We believe that there is a great deal going on within mental health in Ontario that people should know about. Since the Ministry of Health only wants to let out good things about itself, some of our articles may present a not-so-good picture.

The Province uses the Oath of Secrecy, lack of real interchange between workers from the various facilities, and other measures to isolate us workers from each other. This Newsletter can help us all break down the isolation we feel from each other and our alienation from ourselves, our co-workers, and our patients.

We need contributions. We need your ideas, your experiences, your support, your criticisms. Write them to us. As you can imagine, we are not comfortable in selling this paper.

Some people might not feel they could afford to buy it. We might get fired if the "powers-that-be" saw us peddling it openly. They will not be pleased. If you'd like to see this paper go on and feel you can, we could use the monetary donations too.

## WHO'S DOING THIS(cont'd)

In any event, join us. You can write to us at our temporary mailing address:

Special Observation,  
c/o 86 Madison Avenue,  
TORONTO.

R.N.'S AND R.N.A.'S SPELL  
REGISTERED NEBISHES AND REGISTERED  
NEBISH ASSISTANTS

During the past few years, all psychiatric workers-nurses in particular-have made great advances in mental health care. But, with the present cutbacks in the Ontario health care budget, we as nurses and mental health care workers have felt the growth and progress come to a grinding halt for us. The better care and treatment of our patients, that we strived and worked hard for, seems to be headed for a swift descent.

Most of us can remember a time when nurses were no more than well-meaning custodians who were "to control acting-out behaviour"; shepherd and nurture the patients like little children. With the advent of such concepts as extensive inservice programs, team nursing, the nurse-prime therapist, the multi-disciplinary team and nurse involvement in after care and community work, nurses have learned many and varied skills; we have acquired a sense of unity as a group and identity as individuals. We finally reached a point where our opinions were respected at the team (unit)level and at the hospital level. We could play a major role in decision-making processes, thus aiding in the facilitation of mental health care development.

Perhaps more importantly, having gained the sense of recognition as

human beings with valid and worthwhile opinions and feelings, we were able to appreciate and promote our beliefs in the patients as people who also have "rights"-the right to fulfill themselves as human beings, the right to health.

The cutback in front-line workers (in other words, the nurses)has presumably saved the government money, and has also seriously crippled our self-confidence and respect for our place of work. In some cases, we have been forced to assume distasteful and unethical custodial roles once again. Most of us have been forced to reduce the time we spend in the community and with after-care patients. Many of us no longer have the time to sit on committees where important decisions are made which affect us and the patients we treat. Essentially, when we, as front-line workers, are demoralized and treated as second-class citizens, so too the patients become demoralized and receive second-class treatment.

Our oppression within the mental health care system and our resultant anger and outrage is often ignored or misinterpreted. It could seem confusing to other disciplines to see us withdrawing from decision-making bodies because of poor staffing; or devoting more time to in-patient care because of poor staffing; or just plain bitching because of poor staffing. It is imperative that our outrage be understood. We don't want to be oppressed. We don't want to see patients oppressed. We find it intolerable to step back.

Should a system be allowed to

NEBISHES(cont'd)

suffocate and oppress a group of workers without whom it would be rendered inoperable?

Should we as a nursing group allow ourselves to be pushed and bullied to the point where many of us and our group members are opting out of the system, in some cases being forced out?

We often tell our patients that they must "cope" with "reality". How are we going to cope with our reality?

SCREWED AGAIN

Why are most health workers women? Women have always been expected to donate all of their labour to the house and to the nurturance of children until the children are able to take their places in the labour force. The guys who run the show have never had to put out anything for women's work in the kitchens, laundries or for child care.

The woman health care worker is extending the role women play in the home into the institutions. She is given not much more dignity in the hospital than in the home. She does many of the same chores she's always done, preparing and distributing food and laundry, cleaning and dishing out the medicines which the doctor has ordered. On top of that, she works for the institutions, is paid meager wages, expected to work any variety of shifts, yet provide the best patient care to everyone.

Recently, because of the cutbacks in the health budget and staffing, working conditions are becoming more intolerable and demeaning. The

workers can no longer even provide standard patient care.

If the nursing profession were made up primarily of men, would it be one of the lowest paid professional groups? Because they can get away with paying women minimal wages, the male nurses too are underpaid. The roles are not only enforced on the women workers, but because of the sex-role demands male nurses are expected to do all the strong-arm and controlling of what is considered to be physical violence. When ten years ago mental hospital workers were mainly men, they were much more highly paid than general hospital workers. Now, since women fill the positions, it is no longer that way. The health care system is a system of severe exploitation for both women and men workers.

There was a recent CUPE campaign for higher wages. On May 1st outside Toronto General Hospital there were 300 workers dissatisfied with the contract, but union officials got them to go into work. During the whole campaign and union-aborted strike, it was not mentioned that women are paid lower wages than men for the same work! The whole union-run advertising campaign talked about the poor male hospital worker and almost ignored mentioning women (the majority of the workers) altogether.

In the mental hospitals, the nurses have finally begun to move out of the role of servant-to-the-doctor and taken on more responsibilities and decision-making powers. In most cases, they provide the most



## SCREWED(cont'd)

essential services to the patients by being the primary therapists. It's interesting that the cutbacks cut out vastly more nursing positions than other disciplines. The cutbacks did not substantially cut back any psychiatric staff who are much more expensive to have around than nurses. Was the distribution of the cutbacks a means of keeping nurses (especially women) in their places? a means of counteracting the Women's Liberation Movement?

Of course, the big guys are scared of such a Movement, because it means women demanding rights in their work places and in their homes. In the mental hospitals, workers have almost no rights, no rights to even speak out about their working conditions - never mind the right to have slowdowns or strikes to change their working conditions. The people who run things pretend that health workers can't have such rights because the big guys care so much about patient care, when if health were a priority, the money would not be withdrawn from the most essential services. Nurses would not be laid off, allowing the suicide rate in the hospitals to rapidly escalate.

Slowly, women are beginning to support one another and begin to value themselves. If it's frightening to those who have always had control of organizations and of women's labour, then we've begun to make some progress. Let us realize our own value and make demands on the society. As exploited workers in the home and as exploited workers in the institutions, we must struggle for good conditions for ourselves and for the patients. There can not

be good patient care without good working conditions. Our services are very valuable, and yet the society finds ways of demeaning our services and our self-worth because it does not allow us to provide the services that we'd like to in any form.

Who end up doing these services anyway? The big guys have an investment in our servitude and slavery and would like to keep it that way.

If we can become a united group, we have a great deal of strength to demand changes for patients and for ourselves. Only by a united struggle against oppressive and dehumanizing conditions can we fight for better patient care. We must recognize our value and our strength as women and men workers and as patients, and together begin to support one another for meaningful changes.

BLUE MONDAY - AND THE DAYS AFTER

Some days it doesn't seem worth it. You've got to haul yourself out of bed to be at the Hospital at seven or eight o'clock. You've done a couple of different shifts this week because the place is so short-staffed. Your time sense is all out of joint. Even if you've only done one shift, you know you'll have to have split weeks when the new cutbacks for this year are announced in a couple months.

When you get there, you get report from night shift. Sometimes it's just going through the motions. A couple of people acted out last

## BLUE MONDAY(cont'd)

night and had to be given IM's. Quite likely there'll be more crap going on today during your shift. With fewer staff around there's more acting out going on than before. The patients seem to sense the strain you're under and it makes them nervous. With fewer staff you have to rely more and more on drugs to control patients-not to help them get better, just to control them. You heard that giving people IM's without their consent may be illegal and that worries you.

A group will be cancelled today because there's no one to run it.

There's another going-away party this afternoon. These damn collections will make you go broke. There seems to be at least one a week. You heard that the person who's leaving doesn't have anywhere to go-just wants out. Maybe that's the smart way.

Sometimes you get so bloody angry you want to scream. But you heard that somebody at Queen Street got fired just for complaining to the Union. Anyway, under Bill 105 the Union can only bargain for salaries. You know the Union's trying to change all that but how long will that take?

Maybe when the new cuts for next year are announced this summer, you'll know what to do.

In the meantime, you let it go. You try to forget it all when you're at home. But when you get down to it, some days it doesn't seem worth it.

INSANITY. WHO NEEDS IT?

A cross-cultural study originating in the U.K. about five years ago reported that a solid 3% of any population studied was crazy - schizophrenic, possessed by demons, or

however the culture articulated craziness. Most North American estimates indicate that between 10% and 50% of the people in North America are in critical need of mental health care at any given time and another 10% to 25% are in moderate need of such care. If these figures are necessarily contradicting, then one wonders which is right.

The author of the first study concluded that the 3% that he found to be unacceptably insane within any group probably had a physical origin to their conditions. Still, this leaves a huge group unaccounted for.

Basically, two kinds of explanations are given for craziness. Either something is wrong from within the person, or some, harmful outside force is acting upon the person. Examples of the kinds of theories that have been given over the centuries for "within" are: possession by demons or spirits; biochemical imbalance; id/ego/superego conflicts; laziness, and moral damage from masturbation. Examples of the "outside" theories are "bad" family life, non-supportive communities, and "cultural deprivation".

Some theorists and family therapists like Virginia Satir say that the person can best be understood within the context of the family. The crazy person-"Identified Patient"-has a role to serve within the family. Others say that the family is to be seen in the context of the community. The crazy family is serving a purpose within the community. Following this train of thought, it is reasonable to suggest that the "disturbed community" has a "role" and meets some of the needs of society.

## INSANITY(cont'd)

Further, the "disturbed person" has a "role" and meets societal needs.

The "disturbed community", like a ghetto, has several attributes: it is visible; its members do things others might sometimes feel like doing but don't feel they should; it is usually self-destructive, it is usually poor. These attributes allow others in the society to look down on it, to place moral judgements on its members, and to better control their own impulses.

Similarly, the "disturbed person" serves these needs within society. He is watched, judged unacceptable, labelled some kind of "deviant" or "wierdo", scapegoated, and finally rescued or made crazier by the "rescuers"(but haven't you ever wanted to dress funny, talk out loud to yourself on the streets or get really angry?).

Both the "disturbed person" and the "disturbed community" keep other people distracted from looking critically at their own lives and from thinking seriously about ways to change them. Both the "disturbed community" and the "disturbed person" act in such a way as to allow other people to live out some of their own fantasies vicariously. After all, even though it might be healthier, a good worker doesn't cry or yell or express his real feelings at work. That sort of "inefficient" emotionality or spontaneity usually is not tolerated in our society. Further, the "disturbed person" and the "disturbed community" act out the depressed, self-destructive feelings of many other members of the society. Watching others who are really self-destructive can be an emotional release or escape in the same way a violence-filled book or movie can be.

For doing all of this, the "disturbed person" or community gets certain things in return. Identity-even if it's imposed, negative or destructive-is probably the most important(e.g., the

patient who says somewhat proudly but pathetically, "I'm a schizophrenic", "alcoholic" or whatever). Similarly, special privileges are given to such people or groups not to conform with social norms. Special residences are built to house and care for them. They are sad privileges, though, and the residences and care usually have a greater or lesser degree of punishment attached to them. Society as parent acts on both its love and hate for its "special children".

Society is not a vague, undefined thing however. It is comprised of people. Some of the people have a great deal of power over their own lives and the lives of others; some have almost none. We are now at a point at which the people who have power are deciding to cut back services in mental health.

In other ways though, people are realizing the power they really have. More and more people have begun to look at the real quality of their lives. They question the fact that they work hard only to pour the money they get into the bottomless well of inflated consumer goods and services, many of which are really unnecessary. People are questioning the fact that, in a time of apparent economic growth in an apparently "democratic" society, the rich are still getting richer and the poor are literally going without food.

We have been deceived into thinking that we have no power to make creative changes in our lives by people who have stolen our power. Perhaps those of the elite groups who have a great deal of power would like to have those things not questioned. Perhaps they would like us not to change our lives in the ways we would like. Perhaps they would rather use those of us who have been taught to be the clown/scapegoats to distract all of us from seeing what's going on. Someone really does need insanity

DID YOU EVER WISH . . .



YOU COULD GO ON

STRIKE ??

DO YOU HAVE TO CUT INTO YOUR GROCERY MONEY FOR OTHER ESSENTIAL THINGS?  
ARE YOU PAYING TOO MUCH FOR DAY CARE?  
ARE YOU FED UP WITH SOARING PRICES?  
IS YOUR RENT TOO HIGH?



IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES - JOIN THE  
**MOTHER-LED-UNION**  
EVERYONE AND HIS BROTHER GOES ON STRIKE  
*mother* YOU CAN TOO !

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COME TO A UNION MEETING

ON \_\_\_\_\_  
AT \_\_\_\_\_

DAY CARE PROVIDED

MOTHER - LED - UNION  
IS AN ACTION PROPOSED  
BY WOMEN, FOR WOMEN  
AT THE WOMEN'S ACTION  
CONFERENCE

DO YOU HAVE TO CUT INTO YOUR GROCERY MONEY FOR OTHER ESSENTIAL THINGS?  
ARE YOU PAYING TOO MUCH FOR DAY CARE?  
ARE YOU FED UP WITH SOARING PRICES?  
IS YOUR RENT TOO HIGH?



IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES - JOIN THE

## MOTHER-LED-UNION

EVERYONE AND HIS BROTHER GOES ON STRIKE

*mother* YOU CAN TOO !

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

COME TO A UNION MEETING

ON \_\_\_\_\_

AT \_\_\_\_\_

DAY CARE PROVIDED

MOTHER - LED - UNION

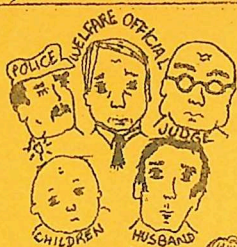
IS AN ACTION PROPOSED

BY WOMEN, FOR WOMEN

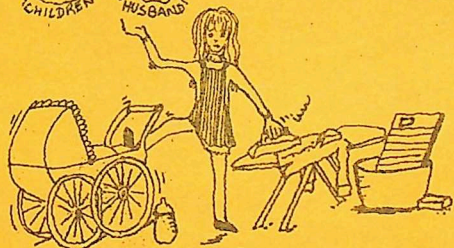
AT THE WOMEN'S ACTION

CONFERENCE

# THE MOTHER-LED UNION



presents  
Mary  
Housewife



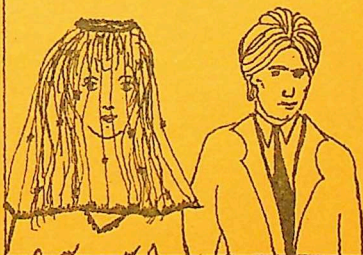
"and you say  
i'm not working!"

HOW I LOVE YOU  
MY DARLING BILL,  
AND YOU LOVE  
ME TOO!



BILL WAS ALL I  
HAD EVER WANTED

THEN THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE ARRIVED

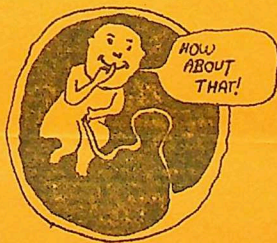


YOU'RE NOT MUCH  
FUN THESE DAYS, MARY

I-I'M SORRY (GULP)  
I'M PREGNANT BILL



9 MONTHS LATER..



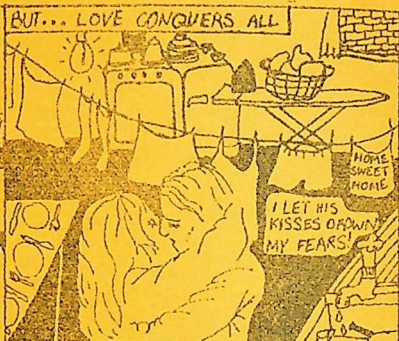
MEANWHILE



AND THEN - 1 YEAR LATER

I'LL STAY HERE - YOU GO OUT + ENJOY YOURSELF

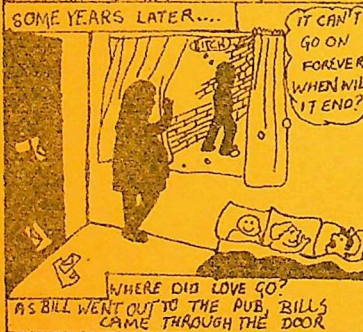
I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR BEING ANNOYED - I'M NOT MUCH FUN LATELY



BUT... LOVE CONQUERS ALL

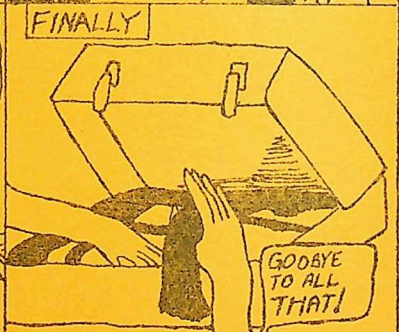
HOW SWEET MORE

I LET HIS KISSES DROWN MY FEARS!



SOME YEARS LATER....

IT CAN'T GO ON FOREVER. WHEN WILL IT END?



FINALLY

GOODBYE TO ALL THAT!

WHERE DID LOVE GO? AS BILL WENT OUT TO THE PUB, BILL'S CAME THROUGH THE DOOR



THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO! I'D START OVER AGAIN AS A NEW ME!

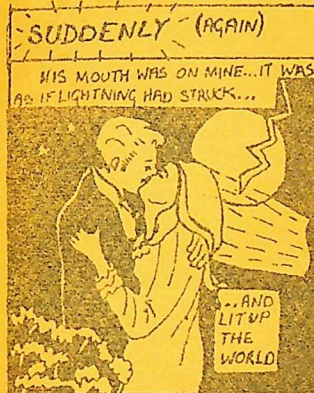
I'LL BE SO LOVELY, NO MAN WILL TREAT ME LIKE DIRT AGAIN!



THERE! NOW I'M BEAUTIFUL! I'M A TOTALLY DIFFERENT WOMAN!

FIND ANOTHER MAN WHO'LL GET ME OUT OF THIS AWFUL LIFE  
- GIVE ME ALL THE THINGS I'VE ALWAYS WANTED  
- TREAT ME LIKE A WOMAN  
- NOT A SLAVE OR MACHINE

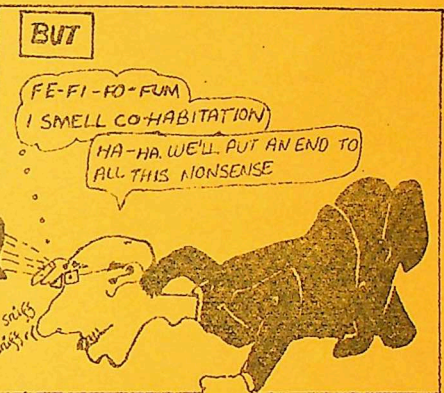
NOW I'LL START AGAIN!



SUDDENLY (AGAIN)

HIS MOUTH WAS ON MINE... IT WAS AS IF LIGHTNING HAD STRUCK...

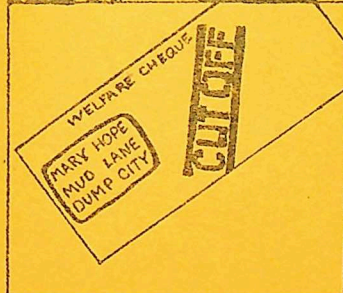
.. AND LIT UP THE WORLD



BUT

FE-FI-FO-FUM I SMELL CO-HABITATION

HA-HA. WE'LL PUT AN END TO ALL THIS NONSENSE



WELFARE CHEQUE

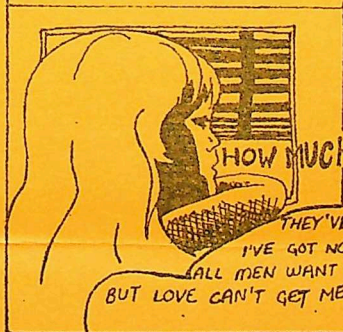
LADDER

MARY HOPE  
MUDD LANE  
DUMP CITY



AND THEN

Eviction Notice Served



HOW MUCH MORE CAN I TAKE?



THEY'VE PUT MY KIDS IN CARE I'VE GOT NO FOOD, NO HOME, NO JOB - ALL MEN WANT FROM ME IS MY BODY. I 'FELL' IN LOVE, BUT LOVE CAN'T GET ME OUT OF THIS.... CAN'T EVEN LOVE MY KIDS NOW





GAZING OUT OF THE WINDOW, SOBBING OUR HEARTS OUT  
IN THE BEDROOM, WAITING FOR THE NEXT MAN TO COME  
ALONG AND LIFT US OUT OF OUR MISERY... THAT'S HOW  
THEY WANT US - ON OUR BACKS AND AFRAID TO  
FIGHT BACK



WHILE WE FACE OUR PROBLEMS ON OUR OWN, WE  
ENDED UP ON PILLS, IN THE LOOPY BIN, IN HOSPITAL, IN  
PRISON - BUT THERE'S MORE THAN 100,000 OF US -  
SINGLE MOTHERS ON SOCIAL SECURITY - WE'RE IN EVERY  
STREET, ON EVERY BUS, IN EVERY LAUNDRETTE, SHOP, PARK.



AND WE'RE GETTING MORE & MORE ANGRY - WITH  
BUREAUCRATS WHO WON'T HEAR, DOCTORS WHO CAN'T  
CURE, "LEADERS" WHO DON'T CARE.

WE'VE HAD ENOUGH  
WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT



WE WANT, FOR ALL WOMEN:

- A GUARANTEED INCOME - SO THAT WE AND OURS KIDS CAN LIVE WELL  
- AN END OF THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN "WORKERS" & "NON-WORKERS"

THE MOTHER-LED UNION DEMANDS  
FOR WOMEN ON FAMILY BENEFITS:

- 1) PARITY WITH FOSTER PARENTS - MOTHERS DEMAND AS MUCH  
MONEY AS THE STATE GIVES FOSTER PARENTS
- 2) HIGHER EARNING CAPACITY - NO CEILINGS ON EARNINGS  
ON A 2<sup>ND</sup> JOB OUTSIDE THE HOME
- 3) FREE DAYCARE FOR EVERYONE - SO WE & OUR KIDS CAN ENJOY  
LIFE INSTEAD OF FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

THERE WILL BE A MOTHER-LED UNION MEETING:

bring your friends, daycare will be provided  
for further information contact Louise at 961-6672 or

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \*  
 \* WELFARE WOMEN SECRETARIES \*  
 \* SINGLE WOMEN NURSES \*  
 \* MARRIED WOMEN WAITRESSES \*  
 \*  
 \* \* \* THE SAME STRUGGLE -- WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK \* \* \*

All women, whether we are self-supporting, on Family Benefits, or living with a man, are housewives. Whether we spend one hour a day or fifteen cleaning our apartments, this society expects us as women to do all the housework, child-rearing, looking after and servicing others that it needs to keep functioning. In other words, to be a woman in this society is to be a housewife. And we all know that to be housewife means to do all this work for no pay.

Men go out and work all day long and get paid for it. Nobody would dare suggest that they should do that work for free. And yet we are expected to do all this housework as an act of love. And because we aren't paid for this work, many of us are forced to get a second job outside the home. And for most of us this means more "women's work" at the lowest wages around.

But women are beginning to change all this. Women are fighting against "women's work" all over the world.

\*\* In Toronto last year, hospital workers (the majority women) and later nurses threatened to go out on strike -- winning 30-50% wage increases.

\*\* In England last year, nurses went on strike demanding paid lunch hours so they would get wages for doing their grocery-shopping at noon.

\*\* In Germany, 3000 factory workers went on strike and won their demand of one paid day off per week to do their housework.

\*\* In Toronto, women in the Mother-Led Union are threatening to go on strike if the government doesn't give them a "wage" increase.

All these struggles are making us stronger. When women on Family Benefits win their demands, it's going to be that much easier for lots more of us to say, pay us for our housework too. It's going to be that much easier for us to demand higher wages when we take jobs outside the home. And it's going to make it possible for more of us to choose whether or not to take a second job outside the home.

And that's why, if the government refuses to meet the demands of the Mother-Led Union, it will have to answer not only to all the women in Ontario on Family Benefits, but to all the women who are fighting for wages for housework -- and our numbers are growing every day.

THE TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COLLECTIVE AND THE WAGES DUE COLLECTIVE  
 SUPPORT THE MOTHER-LED UNION!!

(For more information call: Frances at 537-5148 or Judy at 532-4647)

ATTENTION MOTHERS WITH KIDS AT MAPLE LEAF SCHOOL

Winter has only just begun, and already we're fed up that our kids are still walking four miles a day to and from Maple Leaf School.

It is common knowledge that the absentee rate is astronomical, that small children are harrassed and threatened by older kids on their way home from school, that many women simply can't send their kids to Junior Kindergarten because they have no way of getting them to and from school.

Because the School Board has refused its responsibility of looking after the kids from the time they leave home in the morning to the time they get home after school, it means that they save lots of money. But what it means for us mothers is more work!! In addition to our daily housework, we have to spend more of our time nursing sick youngsters, looking after our kids who should be in Kindergarten, walking up to the school ourselves to pick up the kids etc. etc.

When 15 mothers from the Mother-Led Union went to the School Board on Dec. 17 to demand a schoolbus and lunch-time supervision for the kids, the Board replied that we could set up a lunch program if we ran it ourselves -- on our own time -- unpaid. Well, it's the first time they've admitted that there are facilities for the kids to eat their lunch at school!

But we are already tired enough from looking after our own children for no money. We're not interested in spending our lunchtime looking after a roomful of kids for no pay.

We demand: 1. That the School Board provide bus service for our kids to and from Maple Leaf School, at no cost to us.

2. That the School Board pay for supervision for the kids at lunchtime. That will mean less work for us, and will give us a little more time to ourselves because we won't have to be home at noon to feed our kids.

The Mother-Led Union is having a meeting to discuss our strategy on Thursday, January 2, at 7.00 p.m. in the Recreation Room of 30 Falstaff. Any women who want to talk about our demands, or who want to find out more about the Mother-Led Union\* are urged to come. Child-care will be provided.

-- Falstaff Local of the MLU

\* The Mother-Led Union is an organization of women who are fighting for more money for the work they do -- as housewives, mothers, women on welfare. In addition to fighting for things like the demands of the Falstaff Local, the MLU is organizing women on Family Benefits across Metro to demand parity with foster parents, a higher earning capacity if we choose to get a part-time job, and free daycare for all.

DOMESTIC LABOUR UNDER CAPITALISM

This paper will attempt to define the economic nature of the work performed by the women in the home and its relation to the total capitalist organization of production. It will try to demonstrate that domestic labour does not fall outside the basic mechanism of capital accumulation i.e. the extraction of surplus value<sup>1.</sup> but that, on the contrary, it is the very basis of the capitalist edifice.

Background

The fundamental feature of capitalism is the monopoly of the means of production by a small minority of society who, by virtue of their control, have the power to demand the labour of everyone else. This separation of the labourer from the means of production leaves him no choice but to sell his labour power<sup>2.</sup> to the capitalist who owns the means of production. This buyer-seller relationship is the basic capitalist social relation - a relation of exchange - which functions as the motive power for commodity production and capital accumulation.

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1. This position is held by most traditional analysts. E. Mandel in his An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory claims that women merely produce use-values in the home and since they are not devalued for the market and are therefore not commodities, this means that the women's labour is "pre-capitalist" in nature.
  2. Marx offers the following definition: "By labour power or capacity for labour is to be understood the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any description" (Cap. I, p. 186 )

Capital accumulation essentially consists of the labourer working a full day for his employer but being payed for only a portion of it. The portion for which he is payed is known as "necessary labour time" and the rest is known as "surplus labour time". The necessary labour time is the time it takes the labourer to produce enough value to sustain himself and it is expressed in the form of a wage. Everything over and above it is surplus and is kept by the capitalist. The goal of the capitalist is always to reduce the portion of necessary labour time and increase the amount of surplus so that the rate of capital accumulation is higher. The basic mechanism of capitalist accumulation, then, is the wage relation which ties the labourer to capitalist production by forcing him to sell his labour power as a commodity.<sup>3.</sup>

#### The Labourer as a Commodity

The fact that the labourer sells his ability to work to the capitalist like any other commodity is sold means that the capitalist must be able to assign it a value, and according to Marx :

"the value of labour power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labour time necessary for the production, and consequently also the reproduction of this special article. So far as it has value, it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average labour of society incorporated in it...(Cap. I, p. 189)

The production and reproduction of this "special article"<sup>4</sup>, the labourer,

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3. Marx said in this connection "...the 'free' labourer, thanks to the development of capitalistic production, agrees i.e. is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessaries of life, his birthright for a mess of pottage" (Cap. I, p. 297 my emphasis)

is primarily the function of the domestic worker<sup>4</sup> whose labour time is expended on a whole range of social services such as cooking, washing, cleaning, being emotionally and sexually available, etc. These services are performed within an unsocialized or privatized mode of production - the woman alone in her home - and for this reason they take the form of use values destined for immediate consumption rather than for exchange. Because of this, it is often thought that the domestic worker is "outside" capitalist production and is therefore not part of the working class. But the matter is not so simple. If the value of the labourer as a commodity rests in "...the labour time necessary for (his) production...(and) reproduction" and this labour time is expended, for the most part, by the woman in the "domestic factory" it follows that domestic labour is ultimately related to the production of a commodity and only in an immediate sense to the production of use values.

The labourer "becomes" a commodity when he actually sells himself to a capitalist (labour power...becomes a reality only by its exercise, it sets itself in action only by working. Cap. I, p. 190) and it is precisely at this point that the use values produced by the domestic worker and consumed by the labourer are realized as factors of commodity production.

#### Individual Consumption and Productive Consumption

The labourer is himself a commodity, then, precisely when he sells his

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4. In addition to the domestic worker, a variety of other workers are also involved in the reproduction of labour power such as the teacher, the hospital worker, etc. Increasingly, under advanced capitalism, tasks which were formerly part of the domestic workers' role are being socialized and, it is worth noting, that more often than not it is (again)-women who are filling these jobs in the economy.

labour power to produce commodities for capital. Within capitalist production, the labourer is involved in two forms of consumption, individual and productive; ultimately the two merge and this provides the key for understanding domestic labour as part of the capitalist organization of production. In productive consumption the labourer consumes by his labour the means of production and converts them into products which the capitalist then sells, realizing their value. He then returns part of that value to the worker in the form of wages which the worker converts into means of subsistence and this is his individual consumption. In theory, the two are totally distinct - "in the former, he acts as the motive power of capital, and belongs to the capitalist, in the latter, he belongs to himself, and performs his necessary vital functions outside the process of production" (Cap. I, p. 626). Nevertheless, Marx goes on, "...the labourer is often compelled to make his individual consumption a mere incident of production...he supplies himself with necessaries in order to maintain his labour power, just as coal and water are supplied to the steam engine and oil to the wheel. His means of consumption...are the mere means of consumption required by the means of production; his individual consumption is directly productive consumption" (Cap. I, p. 626 my emphases).

#### Domestic Work as Productive Labour

Inasmuch as the domestic worker is responsible for the greater part of the labourers' consumption of necessaries in the form of daily labour expended on social services, it is misleading to say that she is merely producing use values "outside" the capitalist production process. She is, in fact, servicing a part of the capitalist forces of production, and in that sense, she herself, is also a "productive" worker labouring within the process of capitalist value creation, in the broad sense.

The labour she expends in servicing the wage-labourer is objectified through his labour in the commodities he produces for capital - for this reason her labour must be recognized as "productive", even if indirectly. Marx takes pains to emphasize that "the individual consumption of the labourer, whether it proceed within the workshop or outside it, whether it be part of the process of production or not, forms, therefore, a factor of production and reproduction of capital; just as cleaning machinery does...the fact that the labourer consumes his means of subsistence for his own purposes, and not to please the capitalist, has no bearing on the matter. The consumption of food by a beast of burden is none the less a necessary factor in the process of production because the beast enjoys what it eats" (Cap. I, p. 627 my emphasis).

The work which is performed in the "domestic factory", therefore, is a factor in the production and reproduction of capital, and as such, ~~far~~ from being "outside" capitalist production, it is in fact at its very heart - "the maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and must ever be, a necessary condition to the reproduction of capital" (Cap. I, p. 627 my emphasis). A central aspect of the domestic workers' role in reproducing capital is the bearing and rearing of children, or the production of fresh labour power for capital's consumption. As Marx put it:

The owner of labour power is mortal. If then his appearance in the market is to be continuous, and the continuous conversion of money into capital assumes this, the seller of labour power must perpetuate himself, 'in a way that every living individual perpetuates himself, by procreation'. The labour power withdrawn from the market by wear and tear and death, must be continually replaced by, at



the very least, an equal amount of fresh labour power. Hence the sum of the means of subsistence necessary for the production of labour power must include the means necessary for the labourer's substitutes, i.e., his children, in order that this race of peculiar commodity-owners may perpetuate its appearance on the market." (Cap. I, pp. 190-191)

When calculating domestic labour as a factor in capitalist production (and therefore in its maintenance or reproduction) , it is necessary to include not merely the servicing of the wage labourer as an adult but the long years of labour expended on him from the time of his birth. He is, like any other commodity, "stored up labour" - labour whose value is realized eventually when it is transferred to the commodities he produces for capital. The existence of a time lag from the time the labour is expended on him to the time it becomes objectified in a commodity is of no significance whatever. The point is simply that the care and socialization of children is part of the "productive" role of the domestic worker; both as wife and as mother her labour is functional to the continued survival of capital.

The "cycle" which continually reproduces capital and in which the domestic worker is present at all points consists, in short, of : bearing and rearing a child who, when he grows up, sells his labour power to a capitalist who makes him produce commodities which are turned into capital, from the value he has created he receives a wage for necessaries, this he consumes in order to continue selling his labour power, part of this consumption involves the birth and care of his children destined to replace him on the market when he is old or dead...etc...etc. It is this "cycle" which Marx described as "...the process itself that incessantly hurls back the labourer on to the market as a vendor of his labour power, and that incessantly con-

verts his own products into a means whereby another man can purchase him. In reality, the labourer belongs to capital before he has sold himself to capital...Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and re-produces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage labourer" (Cap. I, p 633).

#### Domestic Work as Unwaged Labour

We have seen that although the domestic worker toils in a "domestic factory" where she is isolated and cut off from socialized production, this by no means implies that she is not producing for capital. The central feature about a woman's labour in the home is not, then, that it is "pre-capitalist" or "outside" capitalist production, but that it is unwaged. When her husband sells his labour power to a capitalist he receives the labour of two people, a "wage-slave" and the "slave of a wage-slave"! This has important consequences vis a vis the wage which the labourer will receive from the capitalist. His wage, the value produced during necessary labour time, covers his "means of subsistence" and includes his wife and children who service and replace him, respectively. Now in calculating necessary labour time it is in the interest of capital to keep it as low as possible in order to maximize surplus labour time. The lower the "means of subsistence" can be kept the better for the capitalist. Under "means of subsistence", as we have seen, fall the whole range of services performed by the domestic worker from cooking, cleaning, and sexually servicing her husband, to childbearing and socialization. Although these services do not at present command a wage they clearly fall within the capitalist wage relation inasmuch as they have a "productive"

function and are part of the overall goal of value creation. The effect of the wagelessness of the domestic worker in relation to the working day of her husband, then, is that the necessary labour time is lowered and surplus labour time is increased. This is another way of saying that the rate of exploitation is higher : more value goes to the capitalist and less to the worker for his "means of subsistence".

One might object that the domestic worker, while indeed wageless in the traditional sense, is nevertheless "paid" by her husband to perform her duties in the home, so that while not under "contract" directly with capital she is by no means a "slave". Perhaps. But the fact remains that nowhere in this "private" transaction is her labour recognized and remunerated as such. It would seem that the money she receives from her husband's wages pay for the "necessaries" in the form of raw material, uncooked food, unlaundered clothes, make-up to be sexually appealing, etc., but the labour she expends (estimated at 90 hours per week) is outside the transaction. Domestic labour isn't even considered to be "real work" in our society precisely because capital has been able to organize it as a "private" area of activity outside the realm of socialized production. When the very same activities performed in the home without a wage are performed outside the home, or rather outside the family as presently organized, they do in fact command a wage : housekeepers, baby-sitters, laundries, restaurants, prostitutes, etc. If the labour expended by the domestic worker were recognized and paid for by capital, the necessary labour time in the working day of the labourer would increase and the surplus labour time would decrease: the value created for the "means of subsistence" would be higher and the capitalist would have correspondingly less.

At present the domestic worker is totally dependent on a man's wage for

her physical survival - her own means of subsistence might be interpreted as a "wage" for her labour, but this would cover, at best, the labour she expends on herself and not in any way the labour expended during her 90-hour week in the "domestic factory". Calculated on a social scale, the value of the social services produced in the home is enormous, and although men are the immediate beneficiaries of these services, ultimately it is capital which benefits because it can appropriate more surplus. Of the total value created by the class as a whole in that "continuous connected process" of capitalist production, capital will be able to give back less as long as domestic labour remains unwaged.

Judy Ramirez  
July 1973

## Remarks on the "right to work"

To pose the "right to work" as a central demand for women obscures the basic fact which is at once the root and continued source of their oppression, namely, that women in the home are already working. Her exploitation consists precisely in the fact that her work is not recognized to be such -- under capitalism that means essentially that it remains wageless. The social services which women provide in the home, in addition to the subjugation of her sexuality to the needs of the capitalist labour market (producing labour power) are activities which are vital to the functioning of capital and as such are in the interest of capital to organize in a profitable way. Capital has organized these activities into artificially privatized units divorced from socialized production. And a whole network of social and legal institutions developed to sanction this arrangement.

The essential point, then, is that women are expected to live their lives within the "private" and isolated confines of the home to produce (give birth) and reproduce (service) labour power for capital, for nothing. This came about historically with the first industrial revolution when the family lost its productive function in agriculture and artisanship (late 18th cent.) and production was reorganized with the factory at its center. At this juncture, men were "freed" for direct exploitation (waged labour) and women were kept in the home for indirect exploitation (unwaged labour). Since this fundamental division took place, capital has been able to pay the man and receive the labour of both the man in socialized production and the woman in privatized production. This has meant above all women's total lack of power vis a vis capital, the real beneficiary of her position, and secondarily vis a vis men, the immediate beneficiaries of her position.

Women's lack of power vis a vis capital can be first seen precisely when she leaves the home to work in socialized production. Capital can dictate the terms of her entrance into the "labour force" at will -- the function of women as a reserve army of cheap labour (during periods of war etc.) is well documented. The fact that today women overwhelmingly work in labour intensive industries such as textiles, food and beverage, electrical parts, etc. and in "professions" which are extensions of her role in the home such as nursing and hospital work (care of the sick), school teaching (socialization) etc. indicates that capital (for reasons of its own) has slowly constructed special places for women in socialized production where her labour can be exploited directly and at a low price. Their ability to do this is linked directly to the powerlessness of women in the home.

Her unwages labour in the home, moreover, continues when she enters the "labour force" so that far from achieving liberation she is instead being doubly exploited by capital. Before choosing the "right to work" as a revolutionary demand for women, therefore, we must carefully analyze the role women have played and continue to play in the capitalist division of labour between factory and home. The two are inseparably linked and the lack of power in one leads to a lack of power in the other. The "working woman", with one foot in both spheres of production, is one of the most exploited sectors of the class as a whole.

The fact that capital has increasingly created jobs for women outside the home is a case of having the "best of both worlds". This is made possible for a whole variety of reasons including the increasing need for a second income and the widely felt urge to gain a measure of independence -- all of

which have made women good raw material for additional, more direct exploitation in socialized production. This means quite simply that capital thinks that it can have it both ways.

Women's liberation developed in opposition to this. Precisely when women began to realize that even after "leaving the home" they were still in a position of inferiority. Precisely at the point in which many more women were getting the opportunity to study and work, etc., they realized that rather than achieving liberation they were experiencing new forms of oppression and exploitation. The key to understanding why lies in the analysis of where she was coming from (unwaged labour in the home). Without it, the nature and depth of her exploitation under capital cannot be clearly grasped.

Judy Ramirez

Therefore the "right to work" for women means doing one job at low wages + one at no wages - that is, to enter socialized production on the terms which capital dictates

FOR THE WOMEN AND SOCIALISM WORKSHOP, OR JUST TO THINK ABOUT

## WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK-- a Socialist Feminist Perspective

We are all houseworkers--the wageless slave of the male laborer. We have been socialized since birth to believe that being a good wife and mother, doing the cooking, cleaning, sewing, supporting family members in times of crisis, and making love are our instinctive inborn female characteristics. Such being the case, we should do all these things for love. Nobody in her right mind would accept hours and hours of unwaged work unless she believed that it was natural, unavoidable, and even fulfilling activity.

WE SAY NO: What we do is WORK and we will no longer do it for love, only for money.

It is in the very nature of capitalism that our work, as work, should be hidden for it benefits capital to get this work done for free. Our free labor goes to reproduce capital in two ways: First, through our uteri, we directly reproduce future workers who are fed into the capitalist system. Second, we provide many free educational and social services in our homes--socialization of children is only one example.

Many of us who are single women do not identify with the housewife because we think we have escaped it. But we haven't because it is in the very nature of housework that it defines us no matter where we go. The jobs we are slotted into are extensions of the work we would be doing at home--e.g. Teaching, nursing, secretary, social work, etc. The fact that we are salaried is not of great significance since the pay is low and the status even lower. The way men relate to us on the job is very similar to the way that they treat their wives-- we are their "office wives". We can't escape the fact that we are all destined to be housewives either in fact or in kind.

To ask for wages for housework will by itself undermine the expectation society has from us, since these expectations-- the essence of our socialization--are all functional for our wageless condition in the house. The demand for a wage makes our work visible, which is an indispensable condition to be able to struggle against it both in its immediate aspect as housework and in its most insidious character as femininity.

We see this demand as an ATTACK on capital and its division of labor that goes from the home to the school, to the workplace, and back to the home again. We see this demand as a way to unify women with a class perspective because we identify with the lowest status and most exploited part of our own womanhood as defined by capital--the existence of the housewife in all of us.

(Women and Socialism workshop is from 3:30 to 5 on Saturday)

Barbara Deming  
RFD 1 Box 98A  
Monticello NY 12701

914-794-7582

*Dear Selma -  
I hope the mail  
will bring you the  
book you ordered.  
I look forward to our  
talk.*

RESPONSE TO ARTHUR KINOY

It was good to have your letter in response to mine. Now we have discussed it face to face, and you have suggested that we try to put down on paper the substance of our dialogue -- so that we can share it with others.

The spirit in which you talk with me moves me very much. You enter territory that is strange to a man. It is hard, you admit, for male radicals to think of themselves as beginners. But you are willing to think of yourself in that way. You hesitated before writing your letter -- aware that you would have to try to speak of what you had never directly experienced and yet, you say, you no longer believe that it is written in stone that a man can never feel what a woman feels -- though he must struggle with himself for a long time before he can. I agree. I remember that many weeks ago I quoted to you Adrienne Rich who speaks of "the ghostly woman in all men", and her phrase affected you strongly. You acknowledged that ghost in your own self -- in childhood, you said, no ghost but a living part of you, which you had felt impelled to kill. I asked you whether you ever missed that part of yourself and you said that you did, and would like to be able to call it back to life. Yes, the day may indeed arrive when a man can feel as a woman; or, rather -- if we struggle for it -- the day may arrive when every one of us can freely feel neither as "woman" or "man" but as the complex individual



person each really is -- the very arbitrary sexual categories that now constrict us, and that now divide us from one another, at last shucked.

Into what new territory can it lead a Marxist if he begins to open himself to feminist insights? That is the question we are seeking an answer to, isn't it? You sense already, I think, that for a while all the thinking about this that you do on your own may disappoint you -- because you will keep discovering that women have had such thoughts before you, and taken them further than you have been able to. When, after your letter came, I sent you the pamphlet called WOMEN AND THE SUBVERSION OF THE COMMUNITY by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, you said that you were tempted to give up your own study of the subject. These two women had said all that you say in your letter, and more. But I was happy when you decided not to be discouraged by this. I think we would all be the losers if you did.

For a while, let me hazard, your ventures of thought may above all make it more and more possible for you to really hear when feminists themselves speak. Don't flinch when I say this. For a man to learn to hear women -- to really hear them -- well, as Marx says in a passage <sup>Sheila</sup> Rowbotham quotes (page 62) "A personal consciousness of the opposite sex is an historical achievement". By the opposite sex he means of course (the passage makes clear) woman. The sex is, for Marx himself, still man. Nevertheless he was able to say that

when man could succeed in "perceiving the woman as another human being with a distinct consciousness" he would take a next step in the creation of his own nature.

There are men who would interrupt me here to ask: And when do women intend to perceive men as human beings? But I don't think you would ask that. I think you would agree that the very difficult next step that women are now taking -- and so making history (and so, too, making possible a next step by men -- and then, let us hope, a step by all of us together out of what Carolyn Heilbrun(?) has called "the prison of gender")- this step for omwne is the step of perceiving themselves as human beings, each with a consciousness distinct from the consciousness of any man. The act of perceiving women in a new way, which Marx could see as a historical necessity, women themselves, very naturally, are the first to take. Though Marx, as you note, was unable to see that this would have to be so -- to see women as history's agents here (unable himself, that is, quite to see us as equally human). Or to see that our action would be in the nature of a work strike. For woman's work, to date, has been precisely the work of helping not herself but man to become what he feels he must become. That is really -- isn't it? -- what both the Dalla Costa pamphlet and your letter to me are all about: the fact that this form of production -- the production of men by women -- has been overlooked by Marxists. As Dalla Costa puts it, "A woman's first job is to reproduce other people's labor power." "Previously," Selma James writes, "so-called Marxists

could not see that women in the home produced...The commodity (women in the home) produce...is...the living human being -- the laborer himself."

You point out in your letter (and Dalla Costa in her pamphlet) that without the reproduction of this commodity, living labor, the system itself could not function. In your words, it is "the creating source of surplus value." And as you say, an extraordinary fraud has been perpetrated here, because this commodity women produce in the home has been expropriated virtually without payment. (Women, the slave of a wage slave, as Dalla Costa puts it, is really the slave of the boss. Her man's wage commands a much larger amount of labor than has ever been acknowledged in factory bargaining.) Most incredible of all, you say, "the workers, the women, who produce this most essential of all commodities for the capitalist, living labor, are not even recognised...as a class of workers producing a critical commodity!"

Yes, incredible. But we had better believe it. And we had better analyse closely what has prevented recognition of the obvious.

I think a necessary first question to ask is: what is the precise nature of the production which Marxists have overlooked for so very long?

In your letter, where you speak to this, you begin by reexamining Marx's concept of surplus value -- that profit which is accumulated into capital. Marx defined it, you remind

me, as the difference between the exchange value of the commodity produced by workers (those he recognized as workers) and the value put on the workers' labor power -- that is, the wages paid them. He goes on to say that the value put on any worker's labor is determined, just as the value of every other commodity is determined, "by the labor time necessary for (its) production and consequently (its) reproduction." But then, you say, a curious thing happens: Marx seems to forget the second half of what he has just written. His "definition of the value of living labor revolves almost exclusively around the maintenance of the labor. Discussion of the value to be attributed to the reproduction of living labor never develops." (You note that he writes, "The labor time requisite for the production of labor power reduces itself to (the) necessity for the production of (the) means of subsistence".) This lapse, you think, is the origin of the subsequent inability of Marxists to see women as essential producers and therefore as potential agents of revolutionary change.

I wish I had thought to ask you while we were talking the other day: what, exactly, then, do you mean by the maintenance of living labor and what, exactly, do you mean by its reproduction? By its reproduction you mean, for one thing, I suppose, the bearing and rearing of children who will be a new generation of workers. But this isn't -- is it? -- the only work that women do that you think Marxists have omitted in

their analyses? (Do you mean more than this by the term "reproduction of living labor"?) You are aware, I know, that it is acknowledged, both by Marxists and by capitalists, that the worker has to be able to feed and clothe and house not just himself but a family -- or there will be no next generation of workers. In terms of the price of food, of rent, etc etc, the value to be attributed to labor's reproduction is dealt with. It is simply not dealt with in terms of any price that should be set upon a mother's labor. That labor is taken for granted -- by both capitalist and Marxist.

But so is the labor of the wife -- the labor of serving not children but husband. Isn't there much more to the maintenance of living labor than Marx acknowledges, for all his discussion of "the production of the means of subsistence"? By maintenance he seems to mean only that the worker has to be able to pay for food that has been grown and clothes that have been manufactured, etc etc. I am not well-read in Marx, as you know, but I gather that he fails to acknowledge that the food the laborer eats must not only be grown but shopped for, cooked and served, and cleaned up after; the clothes that he wears not only manufactured but washed and mended (if they are not actually made in the home), etc etc. (As Dalla Costa remarks, men often "do not even know that they have been waited on (by women), so natural it is to them for mothers and sisters and daughters to serve 'their' men". And this would seem to have been so even in the case of Marx.)

But what is more -- what is very much more: When Marx writes about the "means of subsistence" he refers only to material means -- doesn't he? I would call this his most serious oversight. Selma James says of the commodity, living labor, "This is a strange commodity, for it is not a thing." How true. The boss -- reckoning how to make a profit -- chooses of course to regard it as a thing. But the Marxist, it seems to me, can hardly afford to forget that it is not that. The plain fact is: the man who labors does not subsist simply on food and drink.

Selma James herself tends to write almost as though he did. Speaking of that strange commodity, living labor, she says, "The ability to labor resides only in a human being whose life is consumed in the process of producing. First it must be nine months in the womb, must be fed, clothed and brained; then when it ~~wor~~ks its bed must be made, its floors swept, its lunchbox prepared, its sexuality not gratified but quietened, its dinner ready when it gets home... This is how labor power is produced and reproduced when it is daily consumed in the factory or the office." I think this ~~description~~ <sup>describes</sup> its production and reproduction too narrowly. Unless by "sexuality" she means everything that term could possibly mean.

Dalla Costa's vision is wider. She writes, "The woman's role in the family is not only that of hidden supplier of social services who does not receive a wage...(Her) function is essentially that of receptacle for other peoples emotional expression...This passivity of the woman in the family is

itself 'productive'...It makes her the outlet for all the oppressions that men suffer in the world outside the home and at the same time the object on whom the man can exercise a hunger for power that the domination of the capitalist organisation of work implants...She acts as a safety valve..."

People hungered for power before the capitalist era, I have to comment. But Dalla Costa is certainly describing with accuracy here a form of maintenance that Marxists have overlooked. The wife makes it possible for the laboring man -- no matter how exploited he is at work, no matter how alienated he feels there -- to feel, in relation to her, once home, that he is Somebody, is still "a man". And yes, this service is certainly "productive" -- productive for capitalism: it is an essential service to that system in which the capitalist gets away with theft (the theft of surplus value). For if the wife did not play the role that she plays, the laborer would surely see that theft takes place -- would see that he gives very much too much away, almost gives away in fact his very self. The wife (if she is what is known as "a real woman") is able to provide him with the illusion that he has not lost that self.

I agree with you. Woman is "the creating source of surplus value." When she is not the laborer herself, she is reproducing the laborer and she is maintaining the laborer.

She is reproducing and maintaining, of course, both laborer and boss. Women of all classes are reproducing and maintaining

men of all classes. Maintaining, above all, their pride in themselves (or false pride).

This seems to me important to note: this commodity for men -- pride in themselves as "real men" -- can be produced by women who perform little or no housework. A lady of leisure, who has servants to keep the house for her, can produce this commodity. She is sometimes, even, better able to produce it. Her "uselessness" can make the man feel even more "useful" himself. This so-called "useless" woman is in fact used.

You should look for a book by Andrea Dworkin, to be published in April by Dutton -- WOMAN-HATING. (That is a title the publishers gave it, not the title she wanted; she wanted to call it FREEDOM OR DEATH.) She has a relevant chapter on Chinese foot-binding -- that hideous custom which for centuries forced women to do the work of binding the feet of their daughters -- the work of crippling them -- to produce for men the luxurious sense that, in contrast to women, they were heroic, powerful. (She tells how in "love" play, the little shriveled foot was always fondled. The fetish of this foot "became the primary content of sexual experience for an entire culture for 1,000 years".) The richer a man, the more crippled a wife he could afford to keep -- since he could also afford servants to do the work she was disabled from doing. Andrea tells me that since writing her book she has learned that the wives of the well-to-do were forbidden ever to cut their fingernails. Their long nails made them so helpless that they were unable even to wipe their own behinds, and had to have this done for them.



Yes, the more helpless a woman allowed herself to be made, the more pride in himself (the more "virility") she produced for the husband who could afford her. This was so clearly the case in ancient China that it makes it easier to see that it is the case in our own culture too -- that here, too, "useless" women are productive. And that working women are asked to produce a good deal more than Marxists have ever taken into account -- more than even you, I think, are now taking into account. I had never realized that even peasant women in the old China had their feet bound. They were bound very much more loosely, because these women had, after all, to perform heavy labor. But bound they were (the toes turned painfully under). A distinction between the two sexes had always to be made in this way. To be manufactured. As Andrea notes, "footbinding did not formalize existing differences between men and women -- it created them. One sex became male by virtue of having made the other sex...something other...called female." Something maimed, dependent. Maimed -- this is of course precisely Freud's image of us, isn't it? The violence of mind-binding imposed upon us this time. Woman, with a body able to bear and nurture children (with the brief assistance of a man), is supposed to think of that body as a mutilated version of a man's! Through this mental contortion producing, again: Man, the Proud. That is the labor we are invariably assigned: to produce men who are proud of themselves. That is the labor we are assigned, whatever our class. And this demands of us

always that we consent to seeing ourselves as less than men -- dependent on them for our lives.

More and more men, these days, are eager to show how little is asked of women. Just the other day, for example, a man writing for the OP-ED page of THE NEW YORK TIMES wrote of how he had blocked the time it took him to do the housework one week when his wife was ill. Hardly any time at all. Of course he didn't have the care of small children; nor, as I recall, did he refer to women who hold down jobs in factory or office and come home to do the housework too. But the real point is: it's not just time that women have been robbed of. The theft of a woman's sense of herself as a complete person -- autonomous self-sufficient -- produces for the husband his surplus sense of himself.\*

In your letter to me you suggest that a recognition of woman's real role calls for the making of radical demands. Among these demands, you think, should be the sweeping demand

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\* One book recommended to me by a male friend because it claims that women exploit men, not men women, has been written by a woman, Esther Vilar: THE MANIPULATED MAN. Women get men to do all the real work, she says, by playing dumb and by pretending to love and admire them. I read this book, myself, as slave's humor, an act of mischief -- the author stealing back from men that very pride which women feel compelled to spend their lives producing for them. My male friend seemed almost convinced by her that the slaves, not their owners, are in control -- and disturbed by the thought. In the photograph on the dust jacket, Vilar wears a sly smile. Sly but forced. Her humor lapses. Sometimes she simply describes with angry disgust the dependent condition of women.

that all women involved in the production of the "commodity" living labor be paid a wage commensurate with the most skilled workers (a wage to be financed directly from the profits of industry.) But how radical is this demand, actually? If a woman's very Self is being stolen from her, what wage can compensate her for the theft? Isn't the only demand that could be radical enough the smashing of the role, itself, that women have been assigned? And this is what Dalla Costa demands: "The role of housewife...must be destroyed...Women must completely discover their own possibilities." I agree. This is the only truly radical demand.\* (And the program that Shulamith Firestone sets forth -- which I quoted in my first letter to you -- spells out, I think, a way to destroy the role.)

When we talk about the exploitation of women, we are not talking simply about an unfair division of labor. We are talking about an unfair division of being. Woman is supposed to want to produce not her own self but man's self. She is supposed to think this the only possibility there is for her -- to produce her husband, to produce her son. (Here I think again of Freud. Do you recall that in Freud's vision of us, we, poor women, consumed by penis-envy, are able to be relieved of that envy, to feel completed, only when we give

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\* The demand for a wage for housework can be useful first step in smashing the role of housewife, of course. For it makes that role more ~~is~~ visible. Dalla Costa says that she has come more and more to see it as useful in just these terms.

birth to children who do possess the penis -- give birth to man-children? What debasement of the role of mother. Not mother as one who mysteriously gives birth to life distinct from hers. Mother as one who gives birth to a life in which she must then seek to find her own -- for she is naught until she does. Yes, a kind of devouring of one's own children is demanded, in fact. And then bad-mouthed, of course. Think of Philip Wylie's tirades against mom-ism.)

The woman is asked to produce not her own self but man's self -- to find her own self in that labor. The name given this surrender of autonomy is of course "Love". And this is why women's labors have for so long been invisible. It is time to give the term "labor of love" a new reading. Love has been exploited labor.

When I started going to women's conferences, I was struck by the fact that one phrase was spoken over and over again by the women attending: "I don't want to give my energies to men any longer!", "I don't want to give them my energies!", "And I don't want to give my energy to any woman who will just take it and use it for men!" One day it suddenly occurred to me: What they are talking about here is what Marxists mean by surplus value. Too much has been stolen from us. Do you remember what Mary Wollstonecraft cried: "I cannot live without loving, but loving leads to madness."

Yes, too much has been stolen from us. And again let me

note: it has been stolen from all women. From women of all classes. Doesn't this mean, perhaps, that women of all classes are potential subversives? I think, myself, that they are just that.

Dalla Costa never makes this point. And yet she writes: "domestic work...is essential to the production of surplus value. This is true of the entire female rôle". (Underlining mine.) And she writes: "...every goal that tends to affirm the individuality of women against this figure complementary to everything and everybody, that is, the housewife, is worth posing as a goal subversive to the continuation...of this role.

Do tell me your response to this suggestion: that all women ( a little more than half the population) should be thought of as potential radicals.

I appreciate that for a Marxist (male or female) to entertain any such thought must be peculiarly difficult. For it jolts the whole assumption that class struggle alone will bring about the just society. I received a letter from Andrea Dworkin the other day, in which she talked about how hard it is to find adequate words to describe (to those who are not feminists) the kinds of profound structural changes that we believe must take place. She wrote, "It's like some kind of shift in the earth." It is just that. And (whether or not one is a Marxist) the mind itself must accomplish a great shift to be able to think of it.

But, as I say, for Marxists perhaps it is especially hard. Did you notice the very honest acknowledgement that Selma James makes: "...history...is not simple. We have to note that some of the most incisive discoveries of the (women's) movement...have come from women who began by basing themselves on a repudiation of class and class struggle." She goes on to say, "The task of the movement now is to develop a political strategy on the foundations of these discoveries," and she salutes Mariarosa Dalla Costa for her analysis which, she says, rejects on the one hand feminism subordinated to class but on the other hand class subordinated to feminism.

Here, though, is a question I have ~~te-ask~~ -- with which I may startle you: Do not Marx and Engels themselves -- without quite realising that they are doing so -- subordinate class to feminism? Here is how Selma James herself puts it:

"For Marx...the family, even before class society, had the subordinated woman as its pivot; class society itself was an extension of the relations between men on the one hand and women and children on the other, an extension, that is, of the man's command over the labor of his woman and his children."

And here is Engels in THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE, which I am beginning to read (and thank you for sending to me): "In an old unpublished manuscript, the work of Marx and myself in 1846, I find the

following: 'The first division of labour is that between man and woman for child breeding.' And today I can add: The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male. Monogamy was a great historical advance, but at the same time it inaugurated, along with slavery and private wealth, that epoch, lasting until today, in which every advance is likewise a relative regression, in which the well-being and development of the one group are attained by the misery and repression of the other. It is the cellular form of civilised society, in which we can already study the nature of the antagonisms and contradictions which develop fully in the latter."

If class society is an extension of man's command over the labor of "his" woman and "his" children, then why does it not clearly follow that to attain a classless society we must destroy man's command over woman and children (eliminate that possessive pronoun)? Which is of course the feminist goal.

Here is a passage I read to you the other day from Andrea's essay about feminism in the November 23rd AMERICAN REPORT. I told you that I agreed with it and asked you whether you could: "Patriarchy is a system of ownership wherein women and children are owned. Patriarchy is the original authoritarian model, the molecular totalitarian model, and every tyrannical form is derived from it. The destruction of the master-slave

political scenario, however we describe it (capitalists-workers, whites-blacks, rich-poor etc) requires the destruction of the source of that scenario -- patriarchy. The destruction of the psychologies and behaviors which we call dominant (master, male) and submissive (slave, female) or aggressor-victim, demands the destruction of the source of those mental sets and behaviors -- patriarchy... Violence is interwoven into the social fabric because it is the substance of sexuality as we know it... To transform the world we must transform the very substance of our erotic sensibilities. "

Andrea titled her essay MARX AND GANDHI WERE LIBERALS -- FEMINISM AND THE 'RADICAL' LEFT. She wrote in it, "To the extent that the Left is not consciously and conscientiously feminist, that is, to a very great extent, it cannot help but perpetuate the same forms of <sup>dominance</sup> ~~deeminance~~ and submission that it purports in other areas to oppose." She names Marx "liberal" But does not all that she is saying follow from what he was saying?

"Patriarchy is the original authoritarian model". Or as you have put it, "Women are the creating source of surplus value." Now Marx saw this and now he didn't. But don't you agree that he saw it? Don't you agree that feminists are now looking at the very truth he was looking at -- simply staring at it steadily? Women are of course more able to do this. It is hard for man whose pride is produced by woman to look steadily at the truth that women should halt this production.



I read you the passage from Andrea's essay, and I read you, too, a passage from Susan Sontag's essay in PARTISAN REVIEW of a year ago -- THE THIRD WORLD OF WOMEN. Again I said that I agreed with her and asked you whether you could. Sontag was replying to a series of questions, and the question just asked her had been: "What is the relationship between the struggle for women's liberation and the class struggle? Do you believe the first must be subordinated to the second?" She wrote "The structures built around the existence of two sexes...are irreducible to structures built around the existence of social classes...The oppression of women constitutes the most fundamental type of repression in organized societies. That is, it is the most ancient form of oppression, pre-dating all oppression based on class, caste and race. It is the most primitive form of hierarchy. Because this is so, I do not see how 'patriarchal oppression' (your term) can be considered as any kind of contradiction...On the contrary, the structure of this society is precisely based on patriarchal oppression, the undoing of which will modify the most deeply rooted habits of friendship and love, the conceptions of work, the ability to wage war (which is profoundly nourished by sexist anxieties), and the mechanisms of power. The very nature of power in organized societies is founded on sexist models of conduct...The task is not so much to exploit a contradiction as to dislodge this most profoundly rooted of structures. The woman's movement must lead to a critical assault on the very nature of the state -- the

millennial tyranny of patriarchal rule being the low-keyed model of the peculiarly modern tyranny of the fascist state."

Marx's dream was of course the withering away of the state. Feminists are now asking: how can a growth wither away whose roots are still hardy?

Yes, the task of the women's movement is to "dislodge this most profoundly rooted of structures", which itself roots all other oppressive structures: patriarchy, man's command of the labor of "his" woman (and "his" children) -- the labor most especially of producing for him his pride in himself.

I said to you the other day, and I believe it more and more, that it would be tragic if the new party you want to help to found should fail to commit itself to this same task -- the task of ending the sexual division of labor and division of being. This has been named a feminist task. It should be named as well a humanist task.

How did patriarchy come into being? It is intriguing to look at Engels' answer to this question. "That woman was the slave of man at the commencement of society, he writes, "is one of the most absurd notions that have come down to us from the period of Enlightenment of the 18th Century. Woman occupied not only a free but also a highly respected position among all savages and all barbarians of the lowest and middle stages and partly even of the upper stage." He describes the early "communistic household, in which most of the women or even all

the women belong to one and the same gens, while the men come from various other gentes." (Bachofen is his source.) This household, he says, "is the material foundation of that predominancy of women which generally obtained in primitive times." In those times, he agrees with Bachofen, there was group marriage. And there was mother right. Descent was reckoned solely through the female line.

He next describes the transition from group marriage to the pairing family. He agrees with Bachofen that women must have been responsible for this "advance". Here is his reasoning: "The more the old traditional sexual relations lost their naive, primitive jungle character, as a result of the development of the economic conditions of life, that is, with the undermining of the old communism and the growing density of the population, the more degrading and oppressive must they have appeared to the women; the more fervently must they have longed for the right to chastity, to temporary or permanent marriage with one man only, as a deliverance. This advance could not have originated from the man, if only for the reason that they have never -- not even to the present day -- dreamed of renouncing the pleasures of actual group marriage." Engels, as an historian, does seem to get ahead of himself here. If the relationship between the two sexes was not yet one in which the man was master, why should it have been any more oppressive to the woman to mate -- at will -- with several men than to mate with one man? On the

other hand, if man was already master, and could force his attentions upon her, how did marriage to one man gain her "the right to chastity"?

He next raises the question of how the transition came about from the pairing family -- easily dissolved -- to strict monogamy ("for the women only, of course". Of course.) He asks what "new social driving forces had come into operation". And here is his answer: Up until this time, fixed wealth had consisted almost entirely of the house, clothing, crude ornaments and the implements for procuring and preparing food. Food had to be won anew day by day. But now the domestication of animals and the breeding of herds that with the most elementary care increased in numbers and provided rich sources of food introduced an entirely new kind of wealth. "According to the division of labor then prevailing...the procuring of food and the implements necessary thereto, and therefore also the ownership of the latter, fell to the man; he took them with him in case of separation, just as the women retained the household goods. Thus, according to the custom of society at that time, the man was also the owner of the new sources of foodstuffs -- the cattle...According to the custom of the same society, however, his children could not inherit from him...The property had to remain within the gens...Thus, as wealth increased, it, on the one hand, gave the man a more important status in the family than the woman, and, on the other hand,

created a stimulus to utilise this strengthened position in order to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance in favor of his children. But this was impossible as long as descent according to mother right prevailed. This had, therefore, to be overthrown, and it was overthrown...The overthrow of mother right was the world-historic defeat of the female sex."

A number of thoughts come to me. He speak of the father wanting to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance "In favor of his children". He might more accurately have written "in favor of his sons", for he really means sons here. But he might more accurately still have written "in his own favor". It strikes me that the father was very probably less interested in his sons having property than in his sons being property -- his.

For one thing, he must have wanted their willing labor in caring for his new wealth in cattle. If at his death the cattle were to pass into hands other than theirs, the sons would have much less interest in helping him to care for them. Engels points out that, with the herds, for the first time in history it was useful to have other people working for you. When food was still won anew from day to day, human labor power "yielded no noticeable surplus...over the cost of its maintenance". But now it did yield surplus. So "slavery...was invented." Vanquished foes began to be used as slaves, he tells us. In fact they constituted part of the new wealth, along with the cattle. Clearly, too -- though in the passage

I've just quoted Engels does not put it in any such words -- it was now in the father's interest to hold the sons in a kind of bondage. And of course it was in his interest to hold the wife -- as an obedient breeder of "his" sons. Before pairing marriage, it had not been possible for a father to say: These children belong to me. But now it was. "Pairing marriage," Engels notes, "had introduced a new element into the family. By the side of the natural mother it had placed the authenticated natural father."

The man had, of course, an interest in claiming his sons as "his" -- that predated his need for their labor with the herds. And Engels fails to take this fully into account when he decides that Bachofen was "absolutely right" in saying that pairing marriage "was brought about essentially by the women". The woman's interest in achieving through this new living arrangement a supposed "right to chastity" would seem a good deal less real than the man's interest in authenticating his paternity. For if prehistoric woman held a highly respected position, why was it, after all? It was because maternity needed no authentication. In the Preface to the 4th edition of THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, Engels notes precisely this: the "original position of the mother as the sole certain parent of her children assured her, and thus women in general, a higher social status than they have ever enjoyed since." Yes, the woman was from the beginning recognised and respected as a giver of life. Before it was realized that the man played a part in reproduction too, she

must have been regarded by man with some awe. And clearly was. The earliest divinities were female. Engels knew from Bachofen that this was so. He still slights in his analysis the question of the very real wealth this once gave woman -- which is to say the self possession. One must count among possessions possession of one's self. And Marx and Engels do sometimes speak in just these terms -- in terms not only of the production of things but of the production of one's own nature. Early man must have been very jealous of woman's nature.

The overthrow of mother right, Engels notes with reason, "was the world historic defeat of the female sex." But he doesn't look steadily at the reason. He doesn't think to speak in terms of this particular kind of wealth the woman had once held -- the wealth of self-possession; and he doesn't think to speak in terms of theft of that wealth.

There is one passage in his essay that I cannot read without bitter laughter. He comments that it was not so difficult to overthrow mother right as it appears to us now. "For this revolution -- one of the most decisive ever experienced by mankind (sic) -- need not have disturbed one single living member of a gens. All the members could remain what they were previously. (Underlining mine.) The simple decision sufficed that in future the descendants of the male members should remain in the gens, but that those of the females were to be excluded from the gens and transferred to that of their father."

All the members could remain what they were previously, indeed! The pairing marriage, Engels notes, placed by the side of the natural mother the authenticated father. But he fails to note that the overthrow of mother right amounted to the natural mother's disauthentication.

He does (in the Preface to the 4th edition) refer to Bachofen's "absolutely correct" reading of the ORESTEIA as a drama that proves there was an historical overthrow of mother right by father right. But he fails to quote from the ORESTEIA the passage that is most relevant here. When Apollo and Athena bring about the acquittal of Orestes for the murder of his mother -- finding the act justified because his mother had killed his father (killed him, let me interject, because he has sacrificed one of their daughters) -- this acquittal of Orestes, he agrees, reflects the overthrow of mother right. But he doesn't quote from Apollo's argument in justification of Orestes. He does quote the furies who have excused the mother because she was unrelated in blood to the man she slew, and accused Orestes because he has killed his closest blood relative. But he doesn't quote Apollo. Apollo argues:

"The mother is no parent of that which is called her child, but only nurse of the new-planted seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts." Father right was not just a matter of affirming paternity. It was a matter of denying maternity.

This fact is reflected in the subsequent change in



religious practise. It is not that from now on new divinities are worshipped who are both female and male. God, the Creator of all that is, is now supposed to be seen as simply Father. Once we have struggled free of this superstition, it can be seen as comical, grotesque -- "a kind of cosmic joke" as Mary Daly puts it (in BETWEEN GOD THE FATHER)  
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But of course for long centuries it was, for women, no joke at all. For as Mary Daly comments, "If God is male, then the male is God." And he has been expected to be treated as such. If man in prehistory felt inferior in nature to woman, if he suffered from his awe of her, he gained with the victory of father right not his equal right to self respect, but revenge.

Engels does really say as much: "The overthrow of mother right was the world-historic defeat of the female sex...The woman was degraded, enthralled, the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children." In effect, he says it: the woman's very possession of her own nature was stolen from her. And yet he seems unable to look steadily at all this implies in terms of the source of men's wealth -- their wealth in goods and their wealth also in pride.

(To be continued)

Dear Barbara Deming:

It is more than overdue that I attempt to respond to your paper; that I begin to struggle to put down in words my thoughts and reactions which have been starting to form ever since my first reading of your paper. A word is owing to you on the long delay. It is now late November and I received a copy of your paper in early September. The delay is not merely the result of the driving compulsion which your discussion compelled, to read books hitherto ignored: particularly Sheila Rowbotham's *WOMEN, RESISTANCE, AND REVOLUTION*, and Shulamith Firestone's *THE DIALECTIC OF SEX*. To be as honest as possible the delay was grounded also in deeper problems -- a hesitation based partly in a recognition of an ignorance deeply rooted in years of blindness to the dimensions of the question, and partly resting on a fear of arrogantly conceptualizing about issues I did not share a direct perception of or full experience with. I have taken some courage in the words of William Thompson in his Foreword to his 1825 book which I read about for the first time in Sheila Rowbotham's chapter on "Utopian Proposals." Rowbotham comments (at p. 48), that Thompson in his "tribute to Mrs. Wheeler at the beginning of the book...says that although he can't feel as she would because he is a man, he can still state the facts of the case." I no longer even believe that it is written in stone that I or any man can never "feel" as a woman can because we are "men," but that is a long hard struggle few of us have even begun to undertake, and as Rowbotham points out in another context the ultimate resolution of this effort to share and merge our feelings as human beings and not as separately defined sexual categories may be "beyond our present imaginations." It is not too soon, however, for men to attempt, as Thompson tried to do 150 years ago, to try to honestly and as best they can, to "state the facts of the case."...This is not out of guilt or fear or decency or morality. It must be done, for as Rowbotham concludes in her book, "it is...a crucial part of any strategy to be employed against advanced capitalism." (p.246)

Permit some relatively random reactions to your thoughts, particularly in the light of the exciting experience of reading your paper, the mind-blowing quality of the experience of reading Rowbotham, the challenge and perception of Firestone, and the consequent compelled reading, rereading and reconsideration of certain of the Marxist studies of the past in light of these new and demanding questions thrust forth.

Out of your paper, Rowbotham's and Firestone's books, emerged loudly and clearly a both shocking and upsetting insight which for me had that rare quality of illuminating a fundamental truth with an explosive flash. Neither in the early utopian socialist discussions, nor in the later "scientific socialist" writings of Marx and Engels and their 19th and 20th century followers, even to the most contemporary of socialist and communist theorists, was there, in Rowbotham's words, any "concept of an historical agency of women" in fundamental social change. As she wrote in connection with a critique of Marx himself, "the specific oppression of women was never studied in the exhaustive manner which Marx applied to the exploitation of the worker. He looked

at women's situation more tangentially. There is no sense of women's agency for social change as there is for the worker." As Rowbotham, herself a Marxist, points out in respect to the most advanced of classic and contemporary Marxist writing, "although 'man' is used in the generalized sense of human being, there is still no concept of a historical agency of women. Woman is still the 'other,' part of the world outside as perceived, grasped, controlled by men... She appears as an indication of the state of society, not as a social group in movement, developing consciousness in history. The female is rather a representative symbol of man in relation to nature... The transformation of the relation of man to woman is thus an essential feature of communist society, but still the action of women themselves does not emerge as an essential part of the process." And as you and many other women have pointed out, this particular weakness in analysis is also a glaring deficiency in the original paper I wrote, TOWARDS A MASS PARTY OF THE PEOPLE.

From this failure in analysis flow many serious problems which if unrecognized and uncorrected can result in the derailing and destruction of any efforts, no matter how well-meaning or otherwise thoughtful, to build a social movement powerful enough to destroy the last stronghold of world imperialism; the awesome responsibility history has placed before the people of this country. This failure in analysis which has characterized socialist theory from the utopians to present-day Marxists results not only in weakening and undermining the enlistment of women, the majority of the people, in the struggle to liberate the whole world from the strangling impact of American capitalism. It consciously aids and perpetuates the domination of the present system not only upon women themselves, but upon all humanity. As long as the level of women's struggle for emancipation and freedom from domination is viewed as just another level or gauge of man's struggle for freedom from capitalist oppression, rather than as you put it, using the words I applied to the liberation struggle of Blacks in this country, "a special, a unique a catalyst role" in the overthrow of capitalist domination, the male characterizations of women's struggles will remain, as Firestone puts it, meaningless lip-serving rhetoric in a male defined program for a new but still male dominated society, itself destined for failure in its stated goal of creating a world of human freedom and equality.

For me, the key to beginning to grasp the analytical path which can illuminate the central role of women as a critical social agency for radical change, to use Rowbotham's words, was your analogy to the analysis of the role of Black struggle in this country which I attempted to spell out in the original paper. For some of us white radicals who participated in the incredible upheavals of the Black southern movements of the early sixties, one of the most lasting learning experiences was the beginning of an understanding that the explosive and central nature of this struggle for Black liberation in the heart of imperialist North America flows not only from a deep "moral imperative," to use Rowbotham's phrase, but from an objective analysis of the material origins of Black slavery as the economic structure of a colony

embedded in the very heart of the capitalist homeland, a unique development necessitated by the demands of the processes of the primitive accumulation of capital required for the growth of American capitalism. As you restated in your paper, this "built into the very heart of their system a basic internal contradiction...they built into the very innards of the system a time bomb," which has already, and will again, shake the capitalist system to its very foundations. Such an analysis places the question of the relationship of the movement for radical social change to the struggle for Black liberation on a wholly different plane than "guilt," "fairness," or even "moral imperative." The Black movement emerges out of such an analysis as a "critical agency for social change" which the general movement for radical change must learn to participate in fully, support totally, and accept leadership from. Otherwise, neither movement can achieve its objectives.

You suggest that a careful analysis of the "more disguised bondage of women" will reveal the existence of "another timebomb in the system's innards." If this is so, as I increasingly believe to be the case, such an analysis can become a fantastically important addition to what we are all searching for and what Sheila Rowbotham calls the "strategy to be employed against advanced capitalism."

Both Firestone and Rowbotham although vastly different in their techniques of analysis, suggest, I think, the key to such an understanding. Both writers point out, from different vantage points, the incredible fact that Marxist analysts from the very beginning, have explored and developed the implications of only one-half of their own formulation of what constitutes the definition of the essence of the capitalist mode of production.

In SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC, one of the classics of Marxist theory, Engels characterized the "two great discoveries" of Marx as the "materialist conception of history" and the "revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value." This later "revelation" Engels said, "lays bare the essential character of capitalism...which was still a secret." The exposure of the heart of capitalism was "done by the discovery of surplus value." He went on to explain, "It was shown that the appropriation of unpaid labor is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labor power of his laborer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes." Engels concludes, "...with these discoveries socialism became a science. The next thing was to work out all its details and relations."

The role of the working class as the central agency for the overthrow of the system of capitalist production flowed directly from this analysis. It was the extraction, the robbery to put it more plainly, of the surplus value which the worker produced which ultimately shapes the working class into the active agent with a most direct stake in opposing and abolishing

the system of robbery itself. This analysis in turn depends upon the further development by Marx and Engels of how the value of labor power is determined in capitalist production. The surplus value, the profit which is accumulated into capital, is the difference between the exchange value of the commodity created by the living labor of the worker, and the value of the labor power the capitalist pays for. This value, the wages paid living labor, Marx spelled out in CAPITAL, "is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labor time necessary for the production and consequently the reproduction of this special article." But at this point in the discussion a curious thing happens which repeats itself throughout all or most of Marxist analysis. The refinement and development and definition of the value of living labor revolves almost exclusively around the maintenance of the labor. Discussion of the value to be attributed to the reproduction of the living labor never develops. This seems to me to be the origin, the initial weakness, in the subsequent inability, which Rowbotham speaks of so sharply, in Marxist analysis to understand women as an "agency for revolutionary change."

For example, Marx continues at this crucial point in the discussion in CAPITAL to say, "Therefore the labor time requisite for the production of labor power reduces itself to that necessity for the production of those means of subsistence; in other words, the value of labor power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the laborer." (CAPITAL, Vol. I, pp. 170ff.) But living labor, essential to the production of capital, requires, as Marx concedes, not only its maintenance, but its reproduction. The labor which goes into its reproduction, which is essential to the creation of the surplus value upon which the entire system rests, is either wholly unpaid, or at best subsumed as a minor item, not paid to the workers, the women, who produce the commodity, living labor, but may be included as a minor item in figuring the cost of maintaining the man. The reproduction of this commodity, living labor, without which the system itself could not function, the creating source of surplus value, is expropriated by the capitalist virtually without payment at all. And most incredible of all, the workers, the women, who produce this most essential of all commodities for the capitalist, living labor, are not even recognized or acknowledged as a class of workers producing a critical commodity!

How is this extraordinary fraud perpetrated, this robbery of value which probably constitutes a substantial portion of the total surplus value extracted by the capitalist class? It is through the utilization by the present system, of the pre-capitalist division of labor within the family in which the myth of "women's role" in reproducing the species as her unpaid duty to the man becomes the justification for the capitalist's total expropriation of the labor value involved in the woman's labor in reproducing the commodity, living labor, without which, as Marx brilliantly explained, capital could not accumulate, and the capitalist system could not survive. Thus by perpetuating and sanctifying the pre-capitalist sexual division of labor through the form of the family, the capitalist class has achieved this incredible tour de force! It hides and camouflages the fact that women in producing living labor are in reality an exploited laboring class in capitalist production. They are in fact, a super-exploited class in that, unlike those working in a factory or office, they remain, like the slaves in a slave economy, working for bare subsistence, "owned"

virtually for life, and until very recently subject to the total control of the master. And the height of the irony is that by utilizing the pre-capitalist sexual division of labor embodied in the family, the task of maintaining this role is assigned, not to the capitalist or even as in a factory, to the foreman agent of the capitalist, but rather to the working class man, the husband, who the myth says, is "entitled" to this unpaid labor of the woman expended in the critical reproduction of living labor. In a certain sense then, the working man, in enforcing the practices of male supremacy in the home, in the same manner as the white worker who engages in continuing the practices of white supremacy in the factory or community, is acting as the agent of their own principal enemy, the capitalist class, in perpetuating the ideologies which simultaneously mask the super-exploitation of both the women and the Blacks, while making incredibly difficult an alliance between those with the greatest stakes in overthrowing the system of exploitation itself.

I recognize that an analysis of this kind requires an extraordinary amount of thought, refinement, debate and modification. Perhaps it will not withstand the rigors of intense examination. But this is hardly a surprise when one recalls the over 100 years of study, struggle, and polemic which Marxist students have spent in spelling out the implications of the social relations which flow from a minute examination of the determination of the value of labor based upon the cost of its maintenance, and the almost total absence of any such minute examination of the implications of the social relations flowing from any examination of the value of labor based upon its reproduction.

But even at this first moment of reaction to the implications of this analysis certain thoughts emerge:

1) This concept of women as the workers who reproduce the commodity essential to the functioning of the capitalist system, living labor itself, and who through their super-exploitation, camouflaged by the ideology of the family and the myth of the "woman's role," provide an important source for the creation of surplus value, the cornerstone of capitalist accumulation, may establish a theoretical basis for both the recognition of the struggle of women as objectively as "agency for social change" (Rowbotham) in the same sense as the industrial workers are, and may help to correct what Rowbotham characterizes as a weakness in the ideology of revolutionary feminism itself which, as she points out, tends to consider "women's need to struggle (as) still a moral imperative (which) remains voluntary, an exertion of the will." She relates this to an inability to break with utopianism since theoretically "there is no apparent way in which women could not help but act in some manner towards a socialist society." (p. 82) The relationship of women to the mode of production as the workers who through their labor reproduce the key commodity upon which capitalism, rests, living labor, lays the objective basis for the recognition of their existence, not as the "other," but as a class with a direct and intimate

relation to the means of production, as women, and not solely through their entrance into the work force in the factory or office, (Rowbotham has a fascinating discussion of the impact of the failure to understand the role of woman in the reproduction of living labor, upon their social role and relationships within the work force), and consequently with the objective potential of becoming an "agency for revolutionary change," since the struggle for their liberation from the super-exploitation of their labor leads them directly into the center of the battle against the accumulation of surplus value by the capitalist class-- the same objective analysis which for years has led Marxists to base their understanding of the objective historic role of the working class upon.

Such an analysis requires a deep consideration of the fundamental programmatic demands which a recognition of women's role as a class in the production and reproduction of the commodity, living labor, calls for. Among these demands would emerge, I think, the sweeping demand that all women involved in the production of this "commodity," living labor, be paid a wage commensurate with the most skilled workers, a wage to be financed directly from the profits of industry, and paid directly to the women themselves. A radical demand? Yes, but one flowing directly from the analysis of the camouflaged and hidden role of women in the productive process itself in the production and reproduction of the commodity which is the basis for the accumulation of capital itself.

2) More than this, such an analysis begins to lay the basis for a struggle among men for an understanding as to why the battle against the ideology of male supremacy, the concept of the "woman's place," the mores and ways of life which flow from the pre-capitalist sexual division of labor within the family, must not be as Firestone correctly characterizes it so often as being, a guilt-ridden, half-snide, "nod" to the "eccentricities" of a passing fancy, "women's liberation," but rather a central struggle against an ideology which is a principal weapon of capitalist oppression and a primary obstacle to the development of an essential alliance with one of the main "agencies for revolutionary change." This is a struggle which will not be won overnight, which like the struggle against racism will continue for years, but cannot even be opened in a meaningful way unless it is understood as not "only" a "moral imperative," but as a struggle essential to the reaching of the goal of human liberation from imperialist oppression.

3) It now seems to me, that the development of such an analysis will have to become central to the building and growth of the concept of a mass party of the people. We have argued at some length that at this moment in the nation's history, the key, the path, to the overthrow of the system of capitalist oppression, lies in the building of a new political form--a mass party of the people as an instrumentality for the taking of political, economic and social power by the people. It is impossible to build a mass party of this type without the active

participation of the women, a majority of the people, themselves objectively a powerful "agency for revolutionary change" whose energy, strength, and leadership, is urgently required in the struggle to change the system. Without their active participation and leadership no mass party as we visualize is a possibility.

Simultaneously, the immediate and long-range programmatic demands of the class of women, as is true of every oppressed and nationality in present capitalist society, call for and require fundamental changes in the existing society. The demand for the end to the super-exploitation of women and the "brands of inferiority" which Rowbotham brilliantly characterizes as "to be a woman is to be an inferior animal, an inferiority...indelible like the skin of a Black" (p. 49), cannot and will not be accepted by the present rulers of society whose mode of production rests upon this exploitation.

This means, that perhaps for the first time, at least in this country, the objective basis is present for an approach which says loud and clear that the call to men who seek the radical solution, to honestly battle against the ideology of male supremacy and throw themselves into the struggle for the liberation of women, and the call to radical feminists to throw themselves into the struggle to replace the capitalist system, are not as Rowbotham correctly characterizes them as being up till now only "moral imperatives," but are in reality political and actual necessities for men and women radicals alike. It may be that a mass party of the people which develops a scientific analysis of the relation of women as a class to the capitalist mode of production may for the first time be able to begin to struggle for an understanding that an alliance between revolutionary feminism and a revolutionary struggle against capitalist society is a practical necessity for both movements.

4) In the introduction to her book, Sheila Rowbotham explains that she has "tried to trace the fortunes of an idea. It is a very simple idea, but one with which we have lost touch, that the liberation of women necessitates the liberation of all human beings." (p.11) I have attempted here to begin for myself the exploration of that idea. It is not easy. As Rowbotham so keenly remarks, "beginnings are hard to find. People don't see themselves as beginners." And male radicals particularly find it hard to "see themselves as beginners." This is part of the centuries of imprint upon all of us of the ideology of male supremacy which each successive stage of society has pressed upon us to justify the inequalities and exploitations flowing from the sexual division of labor within the family. And as Rowbotham and Firestone remind us so sharply, this ideology has often stifled and corrupted radical and revolutionary organizations as well as institutions of the established order. It occurs to me now that certain of the distortions and deep-rooted problems in the functioning of the classic "vanguard party" concept which has plagued the left in this country and abroad, and which I touch on in the original paper on a "mass party," are related in part to the failure of these parties to develop an analysis of women as "an active agency of



revolutionary change," and the consequent tacit, and sometimes overt, acceptance and perpetuation within these organizations of the ideology of male domination, which in life can only have the effect of strengthening and reinforcing the functioning within these organizations of an elite hierarchy. Rowbotham points out that "just as the women's revolt in political terms spoke for those who were silent within the revolutionary movement, the economic organizations of women...encouraged the organization of all workers who were low down even within the working class. Both carry the revolutionary possibility of breaking through established caste hierarchies which continually develop actually within those movements which attempt to resist and overthrow the capitalist class hierarchy" (p.116). This is an insight which can become fantastically important for those of us who are becoming increasingly convinced that the building of a mass, edemocratic, anti-hierarchical party with a leadership truly responsible to its membership is crucial to the tasks which lie ahead. The mass involvement of women in the creation, building and leadership of the mass party will require the thoughtful evolution of a theory which soundly bases in a scientific analysis, the conception of women as a crucial agency for revolutionary change, at the same time as it requires an honest and unending struggle against the ideologies of male supremacy. I think Rowbotham is suggesting here a profound truth which few have perceived--that the very struggle, theoretically and in practice, with both women and men, to involve masses of women in the creation, organization, and leadership of a mass political party, strengthens the struggle against the development and perpetuation of a dominant elite in the control of such a party. Without such a struggle the concept of a mass party cannot succeed. It will die before it is born.

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There are so many more facets to the question which stir within me and which I want to explore. But as Rowbotham teaches we must learn to see ourselves as "beginners." This is for me a beginning. The exploration of these ideas and the innumerable avenues they open up, so crucial I now believe to the building of a mass party of the people, must proceed apace, individually, collectively, women with women, men with men, and if we are to succeed in this most difficult, but most crucial of tasks, women with men. I deeply believe that the opening of these questions, the explorations, the discussions, the testings in practice, will begin, just begin, in the closing words of your paper, "to make it possible for us truly to bring ourselves into each other's presence...and into our own presence."

In the spirit of the struggle  
to build the "sisterhood of man"

Arthur Kinoy

## DRAFT ORGANIZATIONAL PROPOSAL

Premise: the May Day rally was the opening shot of an ongoing campaign which is, at this stage, a propaganda campaign aimed at connecting women who have always been separate in order to build towards common mobilizations that demand wages for housework directly from the State for all women

Main prongs of this stage of the campaign:

- A) preparation and distribution of materials
  - a- mass circulation pieces like May Day pamphlet to be used for all occasions, from conferences to supermarkets, etc.
  - b- pieces through organized feminist movement; virtually everything we have through network of women's centers, Bookmobile, etc.
  - c- writing and publishing for feminist, "leftist", and immigrant organs to expand our audience and impact
- B) speaking to women's groups
  - a- search out Tenant's, daycare. employees grzoups, etc., in the city and outlying areas for meeting and workshops
  - b- continue speaking at conferences and special events for visibility and exposure
  - c- forge relationship with wm in organizing situations eg. MLU, for ongoing support and identification with w. for h. / our political work consists in helping them connect with other women and generalize their demands and struggles
- C) research
  - a- collect all materials on pay for housework, different studies, schemes, etc.
  - b- collect government pronouncements on housework eg., UN, NDP, PQ, etc
  - c- look at guarant. annual income schemes in Canada and US
  - d- data on female employment patterns, eg., use of part-time work, job ghettos, overall trends, etc.
  - e- data on other workers' struggles, eg., key labor settlements, specific demands, etc.

Two key instruments in campaign in coming months:

- A) petition

use it in all situations as the minimal identification of wm with one another to begin establishing that the demand of w. for h. is in the interest of all wm / use especially as a link transcending geography and different daily circum.
- B) media

search out radio, TV, and press interviews and coverage to continue steering away from pay for Housewives, in an isolationist sense, and pushing the homogeneity of wm's condition and need for w. for h. / circulation of petition an "in" for continued coverage

Three main points in our political approach

- A) we always address all wm as housewives, whatever the situation or their particular circumstances
- B) we always try to connect the wm we speak to or contact to as many other sets of wm as we can with what we say, our materials, and our organizational help
- C) in that vein, we use the petition, first and foremostly, as a way to connect many different sets of wm to one-another and link them in a visible organized way / later on, petition might serve as spring board for further mobilization such as regional demo at Queen's Park and/or national one in Ottawa, etc.

Division of labour: the amount of activity involved in the above outline, even though it's very sketchy, is considerable. We have to operationalize certain ways to divide up the work that won't waste "colletive " time on all details but at the same time gives people a chance to get involved and learn to handle different aspects of the work. Discussion needed

# Intro to May Day pamphlet

## INTRODUCTION

This past February a group of eighty-five women, from six countries, met for two days in Montreal, Quebec, to discuss how to organize together to get wages for housework for all women.

We chose May 1 - a day of international workers' struggle - as our first common effort at a public mobilization for wages for housework because all over the world women have been saying that society rests on our labour and that we, like all other workers, need wages to fight against our exploitation.

The very fact that we were meeting together expressed our greatest strength: that in many parts of the world we are, simultaneously, identifying our condition of powerlessness with the unwaged work that we all do in the home - and fighting against it.

In this pamphlet we have collected all the speeches given at the May Day rally in Toronto, as well as a number of materials from other wages for housework rallies in Italy, Britain, and the USA. We place them side by side because they represent a new level of power for us all: in spite of our differences in language, nationality, and culture, our needs as women are the same and our fight together for wages for housework will ~~partially~~ <sup>begin to</sup> undermine the divisions which have thus far weakened our struggle.

When we returned from Montreal we had two months to organize the May Day rally, and for the 14 of us in the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee it meant an incessant flow of activity. We rented a small office in the attic of a women's center, and each of us contributed <sup>to the rent</sup> one day a pay per month to meet expenses. By stealing time away from housework and "leisure" hours, we each worked as hard as our resources allowed, discovering all sorts of "hidden" skills and talents.

We prepared and distributed 5000 leaflets and posters, in four languages (English, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese), and at the rally itself passed out 1000 more. We went around speaking to a number of women's groups - tenant's, daycare, employees, etc. - and to thousands more in two phone-in radio talk shows for 2 1/2 hrs. each, and one brief television appearance.

Two weeks before the rally, there was a full-page article on the first page of the "Women's Section" in the Toronto Star titled "Should Housewives Be Paid?". It presented the Committee's position and spoke about our rally and the international network of wages for housework groups. For the next three days the telephone in our office rang constantly - women calling from all over the city saying "right on", "it's about time", etc.

At noon on Friday, May 2, City Hall square was full of sun and full of people. Many were from nearby offices having lunch, many were on route to government offices, and some were there specifically for the rally. It began with live music, and soon we were speaking to a crowd of 250 people. Many of them were women - secretaries, clerical workers, immigrants - all of them listening intently and taking our leaflets away with them.

Each of us spoke directly from our daily situations. As nurses. As students. As waitresses. As office and factory workers. As full-time housewives. As welfare mothers. As lesbians. Each of us linking ourselves to one another, and one set of introductory remarks linking our fight for wages for housework to the struggles of other workers and other women all over the world. The rally lasted 1 1/2 hours and, during that time, we spoke to approximately 500 people. radio

The media was there and we received wide coverage; several news spots that morning announcing the rally, 5 or 6 radio interviews in the course of the rally, national TV news coverage (5 minute report), and 3 local TV news items. Since ~~initially~~ <sup>initially</sup> there has been a two-part news program on wages for housework based on our rally - six out of eight people interviewed were favourable! - and a national Gallup Poll was conducted with 49% of the population in favor of a wage for housework. Already we have reached many more people than were there with us on May 2, and we are continuing our organizing to extend the movement for wages for housework to all women in all situations.

The "Women's Liberation bookmobile" which is touring all of Ontario this summer - both rural and urban centers - is stocked with materials on wages for housework and holding public meetings wherever it goes to create a network throughout the province. Video-tapes of the rally and other slides available to women's groups, and we, in the committee, are happy to accept speaking engagements wherever women are organizing. ~~and interested~~

The Toronto May Day rally served as an "announcement" that we are on the scene and that we have begun our drive to reach out to other women and organize for wages for housework.

Contact us at "Clementine's", 342 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ontario, or telephone (416) 922-2034, Tue and Thu. 12-6pm

The Toronto Wages for Housework Committee  
June 1975

OPENING REMARKS

MAY DAY RALLY -- WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE

BY JUDY RAMIREZ

We are celebrating May Day as women because we consider ourselves part of the great mass of workers in this country and throughout the world. Regardless of our particular circumstances -- whether we're full-time housewives, single, with or without children, young or elderly, immigrant or native-born, lesbian or straight, we are all housewives. Because we are women we are all identified with the work of servicing others, looking after their physical and emotional needs, and providing this society with people who can function from one day to the next because we are there to renew and restore them with our labour.

To the degree that this work has been made synonymous with being female, it is considered our "role" which we fulfill by working for husbands, children, patients, supervisors, and people in general "for love".

This set-up turns housework into a huge layer of invisible work which our entire society rests on -- without it, men wouldn't get to their offices and factories each morning; children wouldn't get to school; hospitals, restaurants and offices wouldn't function -- ~~and~~ <sup>but</sup> which we know is work because we're exhausted at the end of the day. Our work is invisible and we're expected to do it as a labour of love and as a matter of course because it is unwaged. If you don't have a paycheque to show for yourself, you can't possibly <sup>be</sup> working.

But we are here today to denounce the deception of women's work, to refuse the identification between that work and our "nature" as women. Because we're tired of spending our lives in the service of others "for love".

We have borne the effects of our wagelessness for too long. Our dependence on a man's wage -- or on the State for charity -- has meant the subordination of our personalities and our sexuality to the needs of everyone around us. We have had to give up the right to our time and our energies in exchange for survival. How many of us would be -- or have been -- destitute when our men have decided to leave us for younger women or because we weren't towing the line? And how many

women on Government Benefits have had to suffer invasions of privacy, demeaning questions on how their time and money is spent? And what about those of us who thought we were escaping the fate of being "only ~~housewives~~ <sup>housewives</sup>" by continuing our education and getting special training only to have to face the fact that 3% of women ever get near a management job and that for us to become "professionals" means to take jobs in nursing and teaching which are, as we all know, traditionally low-paid female occupations. *Our ghetto-ized existence in the home leads to job ghettos outside the home.*

But we aren't just sitting around watching it happen. All over the world women are rebelling. After a decade since the women's movement began, internationally, the fall in the rate of birth in many countries is a sign of women's refusal to increase their work-load by having more children. The current activity surrounding abortion in Canada, in Italy, and elsewhere, is building our power to determine the quantity and the conditions of our work. High divorce rates show the leverage many of us have gained to leave intolerable situations; it's like walking off the job in industry when conditions are too dangerous. The rise in female crime rates (mostly thefts) show that whether they give us a wage or not we don't want to do without.

But we know that when we fight back they try to make us pay. And for many of us the conditions of our struggle are desexualization (frigidity), alcoholism, ~~barbituates~~ <sup>depression</sup>, child-battering, insanity. These refusals on our part to function -- however involuntary they might seem to be -- are our way of saying "no" to society's role for us, and to the State which keeps it alive and well in legislation, education, manpower planning, welfare policies etc. etc.

Our refusal to accept our role and our work, and our demand for wages, is part and parcel of the struggle of millions of other workers around us, both male and female. We are all living through a crisis which <sup>in Canada</sup> is saddling us with unemployment rates of 8½% and which means that, in our thousands, we have the threat of wagelessness hanging over our heads. And 8½% is only the national average; people in Windsor, in auto and auto-related industries, are facing 25% unemployment rates, native

peoples 40%, and in the Maritime provinces 18 - 25%. All this while corporate profits are "healthy", as they say in the financial reports, and while the tax structure springs new loopholes to keep it that way every day. While workers face inflation rates of 10 - 12% (which is forcing many a housewife to protect her family's standard of living by shoplifting) corporations get away with paying only 12% of the tax burden to the 50% paid by the mass of individual workers.

But the response of workers all over this country is clear -- every one is demanding more -- a bigger share of the wealth, crisis or no crisis. The longshoremen <sup>in Quebec</sup> are defying back-to-work legislation because they want a 60% wage increase and a guaranteed 40-hour pay-packet regardless of whether or not there's work. The message is clear: our needs, and not whether they can provide work for us, is the basis for our demands.

And this is the general climate among the one million workers who are negotiating new contracts this year. One million workers, all of whom are in a "catching-up" mood, demanding raises of up to 71% over a one year period like the postal workers. (From \$4.59 to \$7.85 an hour for mail sorters). Even workers who have not been traditionally militant are in on this. Nurses are saying, "We're tired of the blackmail -- we can't afford to work for love", and by just threatening a strike, won a 44% wage increase recently in Winnipeg. Civil servants who make up fully 75% of these one million workers are getting more and more militant in their demand to catch up with workers in other sectors.

We're all getting wise to the fact that we -- you and I -- are not the State (contrary to what Laura Sabia says), and that this society is run on the "adversary system", with the corporations' profits and the State's control over us pitted against our needs for more money and our fight for more power over our own lives.

In this context of stepped-up expectations and struggle, we are here to say that as women, as unwaged housewives, we have more "catching up" to do than anyone else. We are no strangers to crisis because as the least powerful workers in this society, we are always

absorbing the shocks in the system. When food prices go up, our working hours increase because we run around looking for bargains which then take longer to cook. And when this coincides with high unemployment levels, we are also the first to get expelled from the labour force to become unwaged full-time instead of part-time.

Those of us who hang on to our jobs are often -- like the great number of immigrant women in this city -- doing ~~essential~~ <sup>that must be done but</sup> jobs that are so heavy and low-paid that no one else ~~would~~ <sup>will</sup> take them. There are thousands of immigrant women on three-month work permits that work ten to twelve hours a day for pay below the minimum wage because permits are not granted for the better jobs and, however miserable their situation is here, it is better than going back. Immigration policy blackmails women into the worst jobs around, and keeps them so busy, also in their homes by not providing necessary social services, that it is often impossible to organize a struggle. Many who might be here today in response to our publicity in four different languages, are locked up in sweatshops while many others are afraid to leave their homes because their husbands might find out and make trouble.

And there are still others of us who are offered "new job opportunities" -- even during a crisis -- because the men are trying to make a fight for a better deal and we are used as a pressure on them to stop. They just opened the mines in the Yukon to women to "alleviate labour shortage problems" (Globe, 4/5/75) -- when they need us for hard dirty work, the whole femininity mystique can be easily disposed of! They'll use the impetus of our own struggle for liberation to tie us to a second job on their terms.

Wages for housework as an international movement is organizing against all ~~that~~ <sup>this</sup>. Like the longshoremen in Quebec, we don't care about their work, we want the money. Here in Toronto the women on Family Benefits (in the Mother-Led Union) have said clearly that they aren't interested in legislative schemes that will help them "work their way off welfare" because "if 'work' was the way to get off welfare, there certainly wouldn't be any mothers on welfare!" In other words, not a

second low-paid job in order to join the ranks of the "working poor", but more money for the work they're already doing in their homes.

In Germany last year, 3000 <sup>immigrant</sup> women working in a factory went on strike demanding five days' pay for four days' work -- the fifth day was for housework in recognition that that too is work.

Three years ago in England, when the government tried to take the Mothers Allowance away from the women and re-route it through the man's wages, 50,000 women signed a petition which stopped them.

Last year in Italy the government and the Vatican held a national referendum against the divorce law, counting on the support of the so-called "backward" segment of society, that is, women, who, <sup>instead</sup> ~~are not~~ turned out en masse to vote for it. These same women are now making a fight for abortion rights, and many of them are organizing from within a national campaign for wages for housework.

We in Toronto, who have also begun to organize against the un-waged ~~work~~ <sup>housework</sup> we do as women, and therefore also against more work at low wages, can see the international dimensions of this struggle because women from all over the world live in this city, and this makes visible the fact that, despite very real differences of language and culture, we are all in the same situation as women and we all need more money and less work.

In the coming months we will continue to build, in Ontario and throughout Canada, what we are beginning here today -- a movement of women who are tired of staying "in our place", and who do not see liberation as coming from more work.

In June of 1973, 800 women at the Feminist Symposium in Montreal, passed a resolution demanding wages for housework from the State. Today, we are beginning to actively organize our struggle to back up that demand with increasing numbers of women in Canada and internationally.

More than any other workers, we want to "catch up", because we are starting with nothing. Our wages as women, as housewives, are long overdue!!



I am an average woman. I am a housewife. A woman who has swept floors, smiled to get jobs, served tea, worked in offices, serviced men and others in a million and one different ways. I am also a woman who has constantly struggled since I was young to have more time to live the life I wanted to lead -- to do less of other people's work and more of the things I wanted to do. And struggled for more money and time to do them. I am a woman who hates all the things about my life that makes me feel less alive. I am a woman who loves other women. I am a lesbian.

I am a woman who gets whistled at on the streets, a woman who can only get poor-paying jobs, finds food prices too high, and can't find a place to live that I can afford. I am a woman who wants to have children but who doesn't have the money to support them. I am a woman who has to constantly fight to have loving relationships. Like all women I have to live in a closet, masking my real needs and strengths. And like all women, every step forward we make as women makes me stronger.

But there are some things that are different in my life than other women's. I can't legally be openly affectionate with the women that I love. I can't legally work in the civil service. I can't cross the border. I can't love another woman until I am 21. I can be fired, evicted, harrassed, and I have no legal rights. All of these things make my life a struggle.

But the greatest obstacle in my life is that society says that I am not a real woman. Society says that a real woman is a woman who services a men emotionally and sexually. The main reason why society is so harsh on lesbianism is that as long as this society gives women no choice but

to be slaves to men, then it gets a lot of hard work done for free. No wonder everyone is taught to see women loving women as perverted. They don't want us to point out the work involved in heterosexuality. They don't want us to be with each other because that will mean we won't be serving men, and we just might get together with each other to change our lives.

And this has really been a big problem in my life because it makes me and all other women see women caring for other women as sick and unnatural. This keeps women from getting too close to each other.

But what I have come to realize is that this is what society tries to do to any woman who steps out of line. They say we are crazy and give us tranquilizers and shock treatments. Or they call prostitutes who get money for their work the dregs of the earth. And they call women *on welfare* who ask for money for the work they do parasites. How many times have we been told that we were too masculine or unlady-like? or that what we need is a "good lay", when what we were doing was saying we wanted to live our lives our way -- not the way that men or bosses or society would like us to.

So, lesbianism is used as a threat to keep us in line. It sure used to work on me. Everytime someone called me a queer, I used to work extra hard to prove that I was really just a nice sweet girl and didn't like other women. But now many women -- both straight and lesbian -- are saying that we do like other women, and we are refusing to be nice and sweet any longer.

We are struggling to take control of our own lives. We are standing up for each other. We are refusing to let these words divide us any longer. We are saying that we are lesbians and that it is possible to love other women. We are saying that women are far out. We are saying that as women we want to put our energies into growing with other women.

What I know now is that I will no longer stay hidden from and separated from other women. Because my life is being controlled by that same system that is controlling every other woman's life. I know now that any woman who points out by her existence ~~existence~~ and actions that she wants more from this society than she is getting will be told she is sick. I am saying that we know now that what is sick is the way society uses us to do all the work we don't want to do. All the work that we do that we don't get paid for! And all the work that we do that we are underpaid for!

I as a lesbian am refusing one area of the work that women are supposed to do. I know that by refusing that work, I am saying we can all refuse that work. But that still leaves all the other work we all do. I am still a housewife. We are all housewives. And we have no choice until ~~until~~ we have the power to refuse that unpaid work.

I know that I still cook, clean, get ready for work, and can only get women's work. As this is the basic condition of my life, I am joining with all other women to fight for the wages that we are all owed. What I realize as a lesbian is that I don't want to service men in those ways any more. I want to refuse working conditions which make me subservient to a man. Working conditions which isolate me from other women. Working conditions that have kept my life so private that I

didn't know other women's lives and struggles were so much like my own.

The fight for wages for housework brings together women who are married and who are single; heterosexual and lesbian; young and old; and of every race and nationality. We are all going to fight until we get back all the money that we have worked for. And until nothing again is called natural that doesn't make us strong.

18

1

I AM A NURSING STUDENT. - WHAT DO I DO? I WORK 60-70 HOURS A WEEK, SCHOOLWORK, AND I DON'T GET PAID FOR IT. BUT THAT'S NOT ALL I DO. FRIENDS DIDN'T BELIEVE I WORKED AS MUCH AS I SAID I DID, SO I COUNTED THE HOURS I SPENT. IN ADDITION TO THE 65 HOURS OF SCHOOLWORK, WHICH INCLUDES CLASSES, HOSPITAL TIME, AND HOMEWORK, ADD IN THESE HOURS. 28 HOURS TO COOK AND EAT, 3 HOURS TO DO MY LAUNDRY, 3 HOURS TO DO FOOD SHOPPING AND 3 HOURS A WEEK GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL, ~~AND~~ 56 HOURS A WEEK FOR SLEEPING, FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF 158 HOURS. 158 HOURS OUT OF A TOTAL 168. THAT LEAVES ME 10 HOURS OF FREE TIME, 10 LOUSY HOURS WHICH ARE SPREAD OVER 7 DAYS.

THE NURSING COURSE USED TO BE 3 YEARS OF TRAINING IN A HOSPITAL SCHOOL. WE WERE GIVEN ROOM AND BOARD, ~~PLUS~~ ~~MONEY~~ IN RETURN FOR SLAVE LABOUR FOR THE HOSPITALS. NOW WE PAY TO LEARN AND THE HOSPITALS STILL GET US AS FREE LABOUR. I WANT TO GET PAID TO LEARN. I'M BEING TRAINED TO WORK FOR THE HOSPITALS, I AM BEING TRAINED TO CARE FOR THE SICK PEOPLE IN THIS SOCIETY AND THAT TRAINING IS WORK. I WANT TO BE PAID FOR IT.

O.K. I FINALLY MADE IT AS A GRADUATE NURSE, AND I START GETTING SOME MONEY. WHAT DO I DO AS A NURSE?

(2)

I DO HOUSEWORK. SURE WE LEARN A FEW SKILLS, LIKE GIVING NEEDLES, BUT REALLY WE DO HOUSEWORK. WE CARE FOR THE YOUNG, THE SICK, AND THE OLD. FOR EXAMPLE, WE AS WOMEN USED TO LOOK AFTER OUR ELDERLY IN OUR HOMES, NOW THEY ARE SHIPPED OFF TO NURSING HOMES AND HOSPITALS. HOSPITAL WORK IS WAGED HOUSEWORK. ITS FRAGMENTED AND DIVIDED AMONG DIFFERENT PEOPLE - LAUNDRY, KITCHEN, HOUSEKEEPING, NURSES, BUT ITS STILL TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE, MAKING SURE THEY ARE WASHED AND FED AND THAT THEY GET BETTER, SO THEY CAN GO BACK TO WORK.

NURSES AND AUXILIARY HOSPITAL WORKERS HAVE BEEN PAID LOW WAGES BECAUSE WE ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE CARE OF THE PATIENT OUT OF LOVE. AS WOMEN IN THE HOME, WE TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE FOR FREE, OUT OF LOVE. WE ARE TRAINED TO ACCEPT NO PAY AS HOUSEWIVES AND LOW PAY WHEN WE WORK OUT OF THE HOME. WE ARE SAYING NO TO ~~NXXX~~ LOW PAY AND NO TO NO PAY.

LAST SUMMER WHEN NURSES AND AUXILIARY WORKERS THREATENED TO GO ON STRIKE FOR HIGHER WAGES, THE HOSPITALS SAID "WHAT ABOUT THE PATIENT?" WE EXXXXX SAID "DEDICATION DOES NOT PAY XXXX RENT". BY THREATENING TO BREAK THE EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL OF LOVE, WE GOT OUR ~~27~~<sup>30</sup> TO ~~4~~<sup>50</sup> % INCREASE.

WHEN WE AS WAGED HOUSEWORKERS STRUGGLE TO BREAK THE  
 EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL, WE GIVE STRENGTH TO THE UNWAGED  
 HOUSEWIFE AS SHE BEGINS TO FIGHT FOR ~~MYRXXXXXEX~~ A WAGE.  
 WHEN NURSES IN ENGLAND THREATENED TO WALK OUT LAST SUMMER  
 ONE OF THEIR DEMANDS <sup>WAS</sup> TO BE PAID FOR LUNCHHOURS SO THEY  
 COULD GET PAID FOR <sup>DOING THEIR</sup> ~~THEIR~~ GROCERY SHOPPING. THIS DEMAND  
 IS A RECOGNITION OF THE TWO JOBS THEY DO- ONE WAGED,  
 ONE UNWAGED. THEY ALSO CALLED ON OTHER WOMEN TO JOIN THEM  
 ON ONE DAY - ALL OUT ON THE EIGHTH- WOMEN WHO WORKED IN  
 FACTORIES, SHOPS, AND HOMES BECAUSE THEY SAW THEY  
 COULD GET SUPPORT FROM ALL WOMEN BECAUSE WE ARE ALL DOING  
 THE SAME WORK. SOME OF US <sup>AND</sup> WAGED AND SOME OF US PARTIALLY  
 WAGED.

WOMENS WORK. UNPAID EVERYTIME I TURN AROUND - AS A  
 STUDENT, AS A NURSE, AS A HOUSEWIFE, ITS ALL THE SAME  
 NO MONEY. THAT'S WHY I WANT WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK.

*Babe*

The fact that I am so NERVOUS being here will give it away that I have been a housewife for a long time.

I have been married for 28 YEARS and I am not used to standing up expressing my own ideas...I am usually Bill's wife, or Reni, Marji, Barbi Bernard, Theresa or Joey's Mom.

I LOVE my husband and my six children so I am not telling you I am ~~a di-~~ ~~contented or disturbed female in relationships with my family.~~ *and but that's not the point*

*he said* I RESENT being told I haven't worked since I got married. I haven't collected a wage, but I have certainly worked.

I started out making 1 BED, doing the laundry, cooking and cleaning for two people.

As my family GREW, my work load increased, my hours became longer - often through the night if any of the children were sick - and my responsibility became greater.

If I worked for a COMPANY my wage would have become higher, I would have received some fringe benefits and longer holidays.

*Summer away from home* The only CHRISTMAS Bonus we get, is Triple the work load and our holidays just seem longer if we are washing diapers without a Machine and cooking on a hot plate that you can't have both elements on at once.

If I were to apply for a salaried JOB now, I would have to put on my application that I have been unemployed for 28 yrs...Imagine!!

I am not even a Canadian Labour Force STATISTIC unless I take a second job. What we do in NEVER considered work. When one of my sons was little he said "When I get as big as you Mommy, I am not going to do nothing and not get any money" Our job will never be considered work until we do get a wage.

SOCIETY has brain washed us into thinking our floors have to always shine, our dishes sparkle, our bathrooms be odour and germ free, our meals gourmet delights and our hair and make up perfect.

All the while we remain the SMILING loving wife, and the gracious hostess.



Maybe I could create a SUPEPWOMAN comic, but if we are so super, why arent we rich?

When I first heard of the WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK issue, I was at a Women's Conference in Montreal with my daughters. I wanted to shout out and ask if it please could be RETRO-ACTIVE - I have such a lot of back pay coming.

*It might not come in my time but I want to join the struggle so that it will come for you younger women.*

## Frances

This year, my mother asked me to not send her a Mother's Day present. She said she thought Mother's Day was a bit of a con job. That the work she's done as a mother is worth a lot more than flowers one day of the year.

So, I'd like to dedicate my speech to her, in recognition of the struggles we're both making to change our lives.

all day with kids -- but not for me, because I'm not a housewife. I'm liberated!

And you know, for many years I really believed that. I really believed that by avoiding marriage, by not having kids, and by refusing stereotyped women's jobs, I would be a liberated woman. And it's only after 27 years of frustration that I see that no matter what I try to do with my life, I can't avoid being a housewife.

When I met a man I rather liked a few years ago, we began living together. He thought that by refusing to get legally married, we were somehow going to have a liberated relationship. And because of the power of the women's movement, I have been able to demand a certain division of labour around housework. Although it is far from equal. But what I was really thinking by not getting married was this:

That I would never be like all those housewives that I've seen doing all the shopping and laundry and grocery work. I would not be the one who does the cooking, washing dishes, cleaning, fixing up the apartment, looking after the man I live with sexually and emotionally, and everything else I do for several hours every single day, wouldn't be housework. It would be something different. Like something you do for love, or for fun, or for self-fulfillment. But it slowly dawned on me that all these things I was doing was housework, and that it was exactly the same work as what every married woman does. And that in fact I am a housewife just like them.

A couple of years ago, if somebody had told me that I would be up on this platform today ~~xx~~ talking about why I want wages for housework, I would have said they were crazy. I would have said wages for housework makes sense for my mother, or any other woman who is stuck at home all day with kids -- but not for me. Because I'm not a housewife. I'm liberated!

And you know, for many years I really believed that. I really believed that by avoiding marriage, by not having kids, and by ~~xxxxxx~~ refusing stereotyped women's jobs, I would be a liberated woman. And it's only after 27 years of frustration that I see that no matter what I try ~~xx~~ to do with my life, I can't avoid being a housewife.

When I met a man I rather liked a few years ago, we began living together. We thought that by refusing to get legally married, we were somehow going to have a liberated relationship. And because of the power of the women's movement, I have been able to demand a certain division of labour around housework. Although it is far from equal. But what I was really thinking by not getting married was this. That I ~~would never be the same as all those housewives that I've seen~~ <sup>was never really in the same situation</sup> ~~do~~ <sup>shopping & laundry with every week</sup> ~~every week in the laundromat and the grocery store~~ for the last 5 years. Somehow the cooking, washing dishes, cleaning, fixing up the apartment, looking after the man I live with sexually and emotionally, and everything else I do for several hours every single day, wouldn't be housework. It would be something different. Like something you do for love, or for fun, or for self-fulfillment. But it slowly dawned on me that all these things I was doing was housework, and that it was exactly the same work as what every married woman does. And that in fact I am a housewife just like them.

Now a lot of people think that women will be liberated when they all go out and join the paid labour force. Even though for the vast majority of women it just means a second job to add to the one they already have in the home. Well, for a long time I agreed with that. So I set off for university where I expected to be trained for a job in the foreign service or something equally exotic. Well, it didn't take me long to realize that most women graduates end up as secretaries or nurses or in other areas referred to as "women's fields". Somehow it ~~sounded~~ sounded like glorified housework to me. So, I managed to get a job as a management trainee for one of the banks, where I was promptly routed into the personnel department. There I was expected to be stylishly dressed, cheerful at all times, and keep the coffee machine going. That wasn't in my job description though. My job description said I had to teach new tellers customer relations. That is, how to be stylishly dressed, cheerful at all times, and to keep the coffee machine going. All it was was housework. I was doing the housework around the office, and then I was telling tellers to do housework in their branches. And this is what I had gone to university for?

So I quit, and went to work in a factory. In a way I saw factory work as somehow less stifling to me than the job at the bank. At least there I could wear jeans, didn't have to wear make-up, could swear when I felt like it. I guess I'm saying it was less "feminine". And somehow I was beginning to think that being feminine meant being a housewife.

I survived working in factories by saying that I wasn't really like the other women I worked with, because I could quit any day. I said that every day to myself for over three years. Three years of

wiring record players, putting little discs in hydro meters and other equally repetitive, mind-numbing tasks. The work itself of course isn't housework. But the boredom and the isolation of working by yourself all day, not being allowed to talk to anyone certainly reminded me of housework. And at the same time, of course, I and all the other women had to go home exhausted every night to cook and clean and do everything else so that we and the men we lived with would be in shape to go to work the next day.

Now by this time I had no illusions left that being part of the paid labour force is in any way liberating. But, because I had to have an income, I decided to get the easiest job I could find. And that I decided ~~meant~~<sup>going</sup> back into an office. By now I knew that I hated bosses, so I wasn't going to try to ~~be~~<sup>become</sup> one again myself. So I became a receptionist. What I didn't realize was that I was going to become the office's wife. A receptionist's job is to do what the men are supposedly incapable of doing themselves. So I had to answer the phones, take messages, make excuses for the men when they took two hour lunch breaks. I was supposed to know where all the files were and what was in them, and where everything was kept in the office. I had to re-order supplies before they ran out. I was expected to type my boss's personal correspondence on top of my regular work-load. And of course, I was expected to take coffee in to my boss, even when he was <sup>just</sup> sitting there talking with a bunch of other men about baseball or the women walking by on the street. Whenever I had made time for myself for a ~~phone~~<sup>man</sup> call or to type a personal letter, some boss would inevitably try to get me to do some of his work "just to keep me busy".

And last Easter when the workload had been especially heavy for a period of time and the women had taken short lunches and worked a lot of overtime, one of the bosses "rewarded" ~~maxx~~ each of us with a little Easter basket containing a couple of jelly beans and a 10¢ Easter egg.

Now I knew that when I got the job I was in for some pretty boring work, typing and filing and stuff. But all the other aspects of the job -- putting up with the boss's stupid jokes, having to put up with their idiosyncrasies when I wasn't allowed to have any of my own, keeping cool and calm when the men were going nuts. I just couldn't stand it. And you know. ~~I~~ I really noticed that an awful lot of the other women in the office weren't putting up with it either. For example, when a new boss was hired and he ~~tried~~ to throw his weight around, the women simply refused to do any work for him. Only when he was forced to acknowledge the typists' power would they begin typing again. I think increasinly women are beginning to revolt against the kind of jobs we're forced to get, and the kind of roles we're forced to play.

But it's becoming so clear to me now that we will only be able to go a short distance towards liberation until we attack that work and identity that I, and no other woman, has been able to escape. That of housewife. And that's why I want wages for housework. At this point, housework isn't even recognized as work, because we don't get paid for it. And because we do it for free in our homes, most of the jobs we get outside our homes are just an extension of housework.

The bosses think they've got a good deal going. Because if we do all that labour for free in our homes, then we're not going to ask for much money to do essentially the same work outside our homes, are we.

I don't want to be a housewife, but I am one. And as long as I don't get wages for the housework I do inside and outside my home, I don't have much power to struggle against it. But when we get the money for doing it, then that ~~wi~~ work will no longer be taken for granted. We will then be able to challenge the ~~qua~~ equation between being a woman and being a housewife. That's why I'm part of the struggle to get wages for housework.

Ellen A.

I would like to say a few things about my life. I've been working as a waitress for some time now. I've worked mostly in places where I served liquor as well as food, so the tips weren't <sup>crisis</sup> ~~bad~~. I "chose" this job because I have to eat and pay the rent and I have no other skills besides the skills of being a woman, a housewife. And that is what waitressing is all about. It is the work of serving and satisfying other people, only on a public instead of a private scale. That is why I call it housework. All women are taught to do this from the day we are born. In fact our very identities are tightly bound up in this work, whether we are secretaries, mothers, nurses, waitresses, or full-time housewives.

(hostess blurb)

What makes me the most angry about this type of work is the unrecognized part, this part that is supposed to come naturally to us. You feel <sup>the way</sup> ~~it~~ first when you go for the interview and the manager ~~says~~ asks you to take off your coat and turn around. You feel it when you put on your uniform and have to listen to all the comments about how nice your legs ~~are~~ or your ass is. You feel it when the customer says smile honey, like you were some dog doing a trick for money. And you are.

The system of tipping does several things to you- one, it means that your boss gets away with paying you minimum wage or close to it if you are unionized. After all, you girls get all those tips.- let me just add, that it depends on the place just how much you make, as well as on your looks. The older women generally get stuck in the greasy spoons and family restaurants.- It means also that you are dependent on the goodwill of the customers which often isn't so good. It means your relationship with him- and here I'm speaking about men customers, particularly in drinking places- is based on the money you are going to get if you play your cards right. The minute you ~~say~~ don't laugh at his jokes, say no to his offer to take you out, or no you don't want to make a couple of bucks, you can forget about the tips. You have broken the pact that has been set up between you- set up not by you but by your relationship around money-that you will be nice, gracious, coy, etc. in return for his favours. You have to keep the anger that this generates repressed all the time, because nice girls - that's another thing, they always call us 'girls'-



nice girls don't act like that, after all, women are supposed to be sweet, smiling, and pleasant by nature. You can't afford to get angry.

There are other relationships that are destroyed by these conditions too. And I mean not just the tipping system but the very fact that you have to sell your ability to work and your body and your feelings, your very life, for someone else's profit.

You are in a very touchy situation with other women who come in as customers. Generally, women don't tip as well or as often as men. For one thing we don't have the money. When we do, it feels very awkward to be giving money to another woman. We've been told that you tip for the service, but we know that part of that service isn't directed to us. So there are a lot of tensions created between <sup>the waitress</sup> you and the women customers. I still feel uncomfortable when I go into a restaurant even though I have been on the other side of the counter myself.

It used to be easy to get 'good' waitress jobs. Now it's getting more and more difficult. They know that you have no choice because ~~the money is so tight that there are no jobs available~~ jobs are getting scarce and lots of women are looking and can take your place at the drop of a hat. And you have no choice because there are all those <sup>unpaid</sup> housewives who need money too, and as things get tight they are waiting to fill our uniforms. It would make a big difference to my life if women were paid for the work we do at home (which even I do as a single woman, plenty of it). We would have some bargaining power to refuse some of the working conditions and <sup>low</sup> pay and some of the work that we are now forced to do because we ~~need to eat~~ <sup>have no choice</sup>. We could begin to refuse 'women's' work when we go to jobs outside our homes, because we no longer ~~will see it as~~ <sup>will see</sup> ~~it as~~ <sup>is</sup> second nature to us. ~~And we could begin to break down the connection between our role as women and the work we do. I want to be able to choose what I do with my time and that means having the money to do that. That is why I am fighting for wages for housework.~~

WINCO

Steak 'N' Burger

A Friendly

In most restaurants the responsibility for pleasant dining finally comes to rest on the "waitress". She is the one who can really make a guest feel at home — welcome — wanted. Only she can create the genuine atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality. Her personality and attitude will either bring him back for another meal or send him away for good with burping indigestion.

The good "waitress" is mother, hostess, saleslady and "public relations agent", all in one. She must be a happy person herself, she must like people. She must be service minded.

CAPITAL'S  
PLANS FOR  
WOMEN . . . . .



to our HOSTESSES

She must have highly developed social skills "plain good manners", if you please. Her personality must emanate charm, friendliness and genuine desire to please. She must have a high degree of selflessness.

Now for heaven's sake let's not call a lady like that a "waitress"—she's a real HOSTESS in every sense of the word.

Therefore, we no longer have waitresses — each and every lady in our employ is truly a HOSTESS.

Credit  
Travis Elliott  
Management Consultant

EAT BETTER FOR LESS • WHERE CLEANLINESS COMES FIRST HOSPITALITY COMES NATURALLY

Patrice

I work in a hotel as a chef-apprentice. When I tell strangers this simple fact they usually get excited and say that it's interesting that someone like me would get the opportunity to get into a male dominated trade and that I must be experiencing the freedom and independence that is attached to the skilled cooking industry. As much as I fall for flattery, I am impressed by my daily experience that my lot in life is at best a glorified housewife.

People who work in hotels tend to be single or divorced. One way or another we are familyless. Whether we like them or not families certainly have a function in this society. They get us to go back to work each day. The wageless members of families depend on the wage earners and part of the way the wageless pay for their dependency is to absorb tension. Women and children often take the brunt of a man's frustration partly because we are socialized to expect it and importantly because if he doesn't take it out on us his frustrations with his work will either cause him to quit or get fired. And then we lose that way too if we depend on his money.

It seems that as an unstable cook without family ties my life would be different. But the whole family reappears again in the kitchen. This is just great for the hotel because we remain divided against each other. Some have more power and money others have less and absorb the tensions of the kitchen.

Women on our job, as in most Kitchens, do the finer more painstaking work, but generally aren't considered to be skilled. Because our mothers trained us for free on their time in their kitchens and as all women are familiar with handling food our skill is thought to be a natural attribute and we aren't especially paid for it. We also have little job security.

Since all women cook at home, everyday, for free and they do it for nothing we are supposed to be happy with the little that they pay us. And if we aren't happy any other woman could fill our place.

When a man learns to be a cook he starts from scratch. He learns to cook fast sloppy, but fast. He learns how to do his job takes his money and goes home. He would never cook at home if he doesn't have to.

8 hours a day is more than enough. †

When a man leaves a job the next to take his place is either trained in a gov't financed school or he brings with him years of experience that the hotel has to respect by paying for it.

Because we are calm and passive women cooks deal directly with the waiters. Some waiters have a nasty habit of walking over the people they work with to get a bigger tip from the customer. They will hassle ~~the cooks~~ us for more sauce on the dessert, extra dressing on the salad, two cherries on the ice cream, etc

As women we are taught not to fight, not to get angry at others or if we do get angry to internalize our frustration. This saves the hotel money because if we get frustrated rather than getting into fights they don't have to supervise us as much. As the male cooks and waiters are always at each others throats, the chef, the person who controls the cooks, spends several hours each day taking the orders from the waiters and giving them to the male cooks. As the authority in the kitchen, he sees that antagonisms are kept down.

As women we are forced to take this friction. ~~Some women~~ Of course we refuse it as much as we can but often we seem defeated. An older woman's personal refusal of her role, her housework is seen simply as bitchiness. Where as my anger is amusing, it's laughable. As one powerless punk i seem a little bit hopeless. But with the power, the international power of wages for housework it doesn't seem so funny.

Sallie

MAY 2ND SPEECH.

I am a sole-support mother. I recently took on a job - a second job. I did it because I have two children to support and I needed the money. I already had one job - I was a housewife and a mother but that job was not recognised as work and therefore I didn't receive a wage.

Before, when I was married, my husband paid me something out of his wage which made my job seem worthless and gave him power over me. Then after the divorce I was given some money by the State, but they didn't pay me a wage for my job. Instead they gave me welfare and then they had direct power over me.

When I was on Welfare I joined the Mother Led Union and I want now to read you a letter that I wrote to Premier Davis as a member of the Union.

March 25<sup>th</sup> 1915.

OPEN LETTER TO PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS FROM SALLIE  
SAOM - MEMBER OF THE MOTHER-LED-UNION.  
DEAR SIR,

I feel good because I'm organising; it's the first time for ages that I've felt I can do something and because we're doing it they tell us that we're dreadful and we're not good mothers and we don't care about our kids and what are we doing out in the streets shouting and screaming. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Davis, we're doing it in response to your organising -- yes, your organising, Mr. Davis. You want to know about your organising? -- you are organising poverty. You say there's a crisis, an economic crisis. Well we're sick of hearing about your crisis, Mr. Davis; we've got one of our own: for some of us it's called starving, for others having no where to live, for others having to give up our kids or have them taken away, for others it's lying and cheating the welfare to make a few extra bucks, for others it's prostitution. Yes, Mr. Davis, I'll bet you've never heard of the welfare prostitute women who sell their bodies so that their teenage daughters can have a winter coat and keep up with the style.

The list is endless, Mr. Davis, and the one thing that's common to us all is a lot of hard work-- yes, work, Mr. Davis -- for we do work, not a regular 8 hour day with pay, but often 16 hours without pay. You don't recognise our work as work, Mr. Davis -- you give us welfare; we're charity cases, welfare bums; you expect us to work for love. Well have you ever tried living on love, Mr. Davis? -- it hurts! It hurts when you send your kid

off to school with holes in his boots, and when he wants to join the school choir and you can't afford the uniform and you can't afford the day trips, and you can never afford a holiday. And when you get up every night with the baby and then there's the next day and night and the day after that and you're there by yourself and it's always you that has to do the work and you can't afford a babysitter or private daycare and you can't get state daycare because they tell us that we don't work.

And after you've said no to the swimming lessons and the judo and the cinema and you've taken all the blame, you begin to feel pretty mad, Mr. Davis. And you go to bed and lay there and you think well what about me -- I do all this work; I live in all this misery and guilt and you know that people call you a welfare bum! Then you start to get angry, Mr. Davis, and the anger is beautiful because, when it comes, you know that it's not you to blame. You're not a bum. For the first time in your life, Mr. Davis, you recognise your enemy -- it's you, Mr. Davis, you and all the rest of your friends in the government and the big businesses who don't care about mothers, and who don't care about children. You don't care about any of us workers.

So, when you talk about your crisis, I always cringe, Mr. Davis, because I know that what you're talking about is taking something else away from me. We have to cut back social services, we have to cut back education and health care, you say. Well, what does that mean, Mr. Davis? -- it means that you want us women to absorb your crisis! Well tough; it's like I said before: we've got our own crisis, its an economic crisis, it costs us a lot. Only this



time, Mr. Davis, we know where it's coming from and we intend to do something about it!

We want more money and a better life -- we want to regain our dignity. Pay us for the work we do in the home. We demand:

1. parity with foster mothers
2. a higher earning capacity for benefit mothers
3. free 24 hour community controlled daycare.

Sallie Shum  
Member of The Mother-led-Union.

As I said before, I've just come off welfare - I took on a second job. I work in a distress centre for women and children. The women who stay with us there come from situations of marital breakdown. They have often been married for ten to fifteen years. They have nothing to show for it. No home, no furniture, no dignity, no money. When they leave, they move out into apartments with their children - the welfare gives them beds and a welfare cheque that is nowhere near enough to live on. Whereas for the ten to fifteen years that they were married they were middle-class housewives - today they are the welfare mothers. It happens all the time and it's time we women did something about it - whatever we are doing, whatever situations we are in, we are all exploited in the same way, as unpaid houseworkers.

Because I am now a community worker it isn't to say that I am not still a housewife. I ~~work for 8 hrs~~ <sup>work for 8 hrs</sup> in the distress centre and then go home, pick up my children and work for another four to eight hours in the home. The two jobs, right, one paid, one unpaid! If I lose my job I may end up on welfare again.

If the women in the distress centre had been paid for the work they had done in the home they wouldn't be on welfare today. There would be no need for distress centres. I say pay us for the work we do in the home. And I say I will be my sister's keeper when I say we want ~~RES FOR HOUSEWORK~~ <sup>RES FOR HOUSEWORK</sup>

May 2nd. speech

Lissa

I'm a child-care worker-young, single, "independent", and I used to like to ~~xxxx~~ believe that really, I could live my life differently from the mass of women. The state would still like me to believe that-to keep us all divided from eachother. But now I know it's a farce.

I'm single-but I still do housework, and everyman I meet still thinks of me as a woman, a housewife, someone who works for love.

I'm "independent" - I don't live witha man, take care of or support a man-but the plumber still calls me "sweetheart."

I don't wear a lot of "fashionable" clothes or make up, but men still hassle me on the street because they think we're all "available". I still walk home at night in fear.

I'm childless-but not because I don't want children. I can't afford to have the children I do want. I can't afford it financially. I can't afford it emotionally.

I fought for abortion because their contraception isn't safe or effective, because it's important to be able to say, "No, it's my body." I won't have kids unless I want them."

But abortion isn't the rightx to choose, it's the right to say no.

I want to be able to have the children I want to have without raising them in poverty on Family Benefits, alone with a mother who's going mad with resentment and anger at the children she want~~s~~ to love, because there's no good day care, not enough money, we're tied to eachother and there's no place for either of us to go.

I want to be able to have the children I want to have without working another 40 hours outside the home to make a little more money. And then getting the kids to and from day care, doing all the house-work when I get home, being always, always tired-too tired to give

anything to the kids, never mind to myself.

The jobs I can get outside of the home are all extensions of my position as a housewife. I've been a ~~childcare worker~~ nurse's ~~aid~~ aid-taking care of people, a child care worker, taking care of other people's children. I worked in an electronics factory onee for 3 days-all I could stand- putting little tiny washers on metal bases. That was the women's job because we were supposed to be good with "small things."

~~XXX~~ And the pay, for whatever I do, is rotten. After all- there are women doing all that work for nothing. I do all that work for nothing when I get home.

When you're used to working for no pay at all \$110. a week sure seems like a lot-until you try living onit.

And where ever I work, whoever I work for, besides whatever it is I'm supposed to do they get a built in tension-manager, understanderer of people's problems, smoother-over of troubled waters. For free. And that's not easy work. Contrary to popular opinion, it does not come "naturally". I've had 20-odd years of on-the-job training- to be a woman, to be understanding, to put others first, to work for love.

I want WFHW so I can refuse all of that. Pay me for ~~the~~ all of the work I already do and then I'll be able to make some real choices  
-whether to live with a man or not  
-whether to have children or not  
-whether to work at nother job or not.

Our movement is giving me strength. Our movement is giving all of us power.

589 College Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
Tel. 532-4647

12 Maggio 1975

Corriere Canadese  
1000 Lawrence Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario

Gentile Editrice del "Quadrerno del Mercoledì":

Il vostro inviato, Sergio Tagliavini, non è stato in grado di cogliere la sostanza del nostro discorso sul salario al lavoro domestico, inconstante l'abbia dichiarato "una causa giusta" avendo assistito alla manifestazione fattasi il 2 Maggio a City Hall.

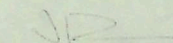
Noi del "Comitato per il Salario al Lavoro Domestico" sosteniamo che tutte le donne sono casalinghe perché "il lavoro di casa" è strettamente identificato con il sesso femminile e ognuna di noi è stata socializzata, fin dall'infanzia, ad assumersi questo lavoro come espressione della nostra "natura".

Le conseguenze di ciò sono ormai note: la casalinga a tempo pieno deve subordinare tutte le sue energie ai bisogni del marito, figli, suoceri, genitori, ecc., senza avere quel minimo di indipendenza che le consentirebbe di scegliere per se stessa nell'area della maternità, la sessualità, il lavoro esterno, lo studio dell'inglese, la vita sociale, e via di seguito. Le tocca sempre sottostarsi al parere ed ai desideri degli altri e a lavorare ininterrottamente giorno e notte.

Per coloro di noi che riusciamo a seguire gli studi o, magari, evitare il matrimonio per qualche anno in più, è ben noto che finiamo con i lavori meno apprezzati e meno pagati: i, cosiddetti, "lavori femminili", maestre, infermiere, segretarie, impiegate, ecc., ecc. Questi lavori sono, in larga misura - come abbiamo precisato nei vari interventi in 2 Maggio - estensioni del lavoro domestico, cioè, la cura dei bambini, dei malati, e degli vecchi. Tocca farli a noi perché giungo donne e perché l'unica nostra alternativa è il lavoro non-salarato in casa-lavoro che ci attende, in ogni caso, dopo le otto ore in fabbrica o ufficio. Per questo diciamo che casalinga non è solo la donna che lavora a tempo pieno a casa.

Con la richiesta del salario al lavoro domestico ci accomuniamo tutte in quanto donne; le nostre circostanze cambiano ma la nostra condizione fondamentale è uguale. Niente di strano che identifichiamo la maestra, la donna di casa, la studentessa, l'impiegata, e la prostituta. Cito mia nonna, un'emigrata dalle Puglie, che diceva della sua vita da casalinga: "sono schiava di giorno e puttana di notte". Quelle che lei sentiva, ma era costretta ad esprimere privatamente nei momenti di rabbia, noi, oggi, siamo in grado di apertamente, rivendicando con la nostra lotta una vita migliore.

Cordiali saluti,



Giuseppina Laezza  
per il Comitato per il Salario al  
Lavoro Domestico



The Wages Due Paper

The perspective that results in the demand for wages for housework recognizes that housework is not women's biological destiny. We have all been raised to think that we will "naturally" do the cooking, cleaning, raising children, looking after men, because we are all women. Wages for Housework says that we do ~~not~~ this work because we are trained to do this work, because the state needs us to do this work.

Heterosexuality is part of the definition of our housework. It is a role that has been imposed on us by and for the benefit of capital. Heterosexuality is the morality that says that all women "naturally" serve men sexually (and in other ways- emotionally, physically etc. ) We know that many women are lesbians, many women are 'frigid', many women are celibate, so we know that heterosexuality is not in our genes, but in our training for the work that we must do. We create and service the workers of the world (including ourselves). The existence of lesbianism points out to us that this work is not the result of our biological nature, Lesbianism exposes fucking as WORK.

The institution of our ~~owrk~~- our factory- is the family. In the family we do the work of producing and training a new generation of workers. In the family we do the work of maintaining the man, so that he is able to work another day. In the family we act as a discipline on the man, because we must force him to work so that we and our children don't starve. Our needs become the needs of the family, and the needs of the family are capital's needs. It is our wagelessness that guarantees that we do not place our own needs or the needs of our children above those of the family and capital. Without money we have no way to meet our own needs- we even have problems defining them for ourselves.

The existence of lesbianism helps define the sexual needs of women. It is the expression of all women's need to control our own sexuality, just as demanding community controlled daycare is an expression of our need to be free from the responsibility of training new workers. It is not in itself a solution to our sexual needs. It is not in itself a ~~political~~ victory. But it is a struggle against capital's institutionalization of our sexuality nevertheless.

One of the services that women perform for men and the state is fucking. Our job as cunts is separate from loving or having children. Bearing children is a separate job that only happens to require fucking as a prerequisite. Loving is something we try to do in spite of capitalism, not because of it. Loving serves the state

insofar as it is necessary for the sexual service of the man or the maintenance and training of our children etc. The state tries to convince women that fucking is a "labour of love" in the same way that it tries to convince us that cooking breakfast and raising children is a labour of love. We may enjoy frying eggs. We certainly may love our children. We may even like fucking. But these facts don't change the fact that all these things are work and are not performed only for ourselves and our families. In fact, it is because these things are work for someone else that it is often so hard for us to love at all.

The existence of prostitutes also makes visible that fucking is work. When a woman is most desperate because of her wagelessness, she can always take a wage for fucking. This serves the state by ensuring that even men who cannot be sexually relieved in the usual way of marrying a woman (buying a slave), can still be sexually serviced so that he can work the next day. Prostitution certainly does not serve women, and it is doubtful whether it serves the man's interests (except as defined by capital). So it obviously serves capital. Prostitution is not a fight against our work, but it does serve to define to all of us the nature of our work.

Because lesbianism is a refusal to sexually service men it is a fight against that work. One of the crucial working conditions of heterosexuality is isolation of women from each other. Lesbianism is a refusal of some of this isolation. In lesbian relationships we still take care of ourselves and other women (other workers) so it is not an escape from our work. But because we are doing this work with other women, it is a form of workers' control. When we fuck with a man, he thinks that he is escaping from work. Women know that fucking is work. Men do not. For the man, fucking seems an escape from work - he is the boss. It shows. We can feel it. That is why it is so hard for us to love the man who fucks us. When we sleep with a woman, we are still serving the state - she too must be kept just happy enough to keep working. But at least when we spend our time and sexual energy on women we are also maintaining her for her struggle against our work. That's workers' control.

As lesbians, we do not think that we are any stronger than, any better than, any different from other women. All women are fighting against our work in different ways, and lesbianism is just one of those ways. Lesbianism is a struggle, and because we have all, as women, built our own power, we, as lesbians, are able to be open about what we are, how we are fighting, what we need. All of us are houseworkers - we are no different in the eyes of the state. We are no different in the work that we do. We are no different in that we fight against that work. We were all raised to

believe that heterosexuality was part of our "nature". And we, too, have believed it. That is why it is often painful to be a lesbian. We feel like freaks. It is only when we remember that NO WOMAN LIKES HOUSEWORK, and therefore in the eyes of the state we are all freaks, that we can feel stronger. It is the struggle of ALL women that has given us the strength to come out as lesbians. Our existence and our struggle as lesbians therefore gives strength to ALL women. All women, women who are called lesbians and women who are called straight are existing under capitalism for the same purpose- to serve capital through serving the family and men. This is what we mean when we say that all women are straight. Lesbians are part of women's struggle against Capital. NO WOMAN WANTS HER SEXUALITY TO BE SUBJUGATED TO THE NEEDS OF THE STATE- TO THE NEEDS OF CAPITAL. This is what we mean when we say that all women are lesbians. Until we have completed this fight against our subjugation, no woman is free of it. Lesbianism is part of that fight. It is not an absolute victory, but it is ~~always~~ always a victory that we can struggle at all. And every struggle gives us the power to fight harder.

As lesbians become visible, we are able to see, as women, that we are fighting against the institutionalization of our sexuality - against our role as men's fucks. Each of our different positions- straight, celibate, lesbian - is the point from which we are fighting.

Lesbianism is used as a threat to keep all women down to keep us in line. We must take this threat and turn it around against the state, to refuse capital's power to discipline us. We must take the words lesbian, dyke, queer, that they lay on us and define them for ourselves. This is why it is important for lesbians to be visible within Wages for Housework.

We are not saying that all women should be lesbians, but we are saying that as lesbians we are struggling in the interests of all women. Instead of being paralyzed by the threat of lesbianism, we can use that threat by never denying the possibility of our own lesbianism. Even in individual relationships with individual men when we need a lever to fight back, we can always leave open the possibility of lesbianism.

People think, sometimes, that lesbians don't do any housework. When a lesbian stands up and explains why she needs wages for housework it becomes clear that ALL women are doing housework. The amount is irrelevant, because being a woman means that our lives are defined by the fact that universally women are housewives.

This paper is an attempt to start some dialogue on lesbianism in the wages for housework movement.



POSTSCRIPT:

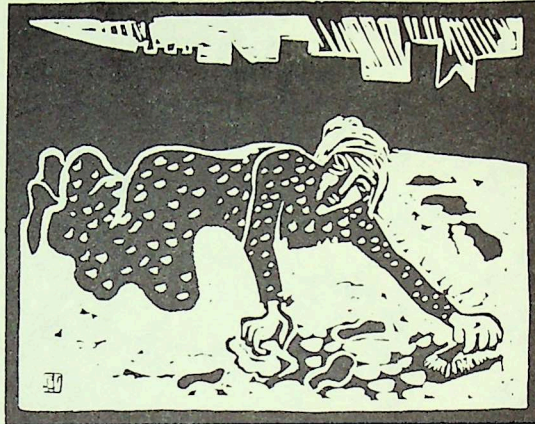
This paper has been written so many times that we have lost count. The rough drafts, rewrites, meeting notes etc., which we have saved for our own interest probably weigh several pounds. We hope that as a beginning statement on lesbianism from a wages for housework perspective it helps clear up some of the problems we all had. It was written by the Waged Due Collective in Toronto, Canada. Originally we were all women who had been through the women's movement, the lesbian separatist movement, and had eventually been convinced of the wages for housework perspective. We had a lot of help and criticism from straight sisters in wages for housework, as well as from lesbian women who are still afraid of the definition of themselves as housewives (afraid of straight women- through long herstories of being excluded by 'straight women's movements'). We still have a lot of questions. The damage that has been done to lesbian women by capitalism is something that we didn't get into much in this paper- but should be discussed. In many ways it is the same damage as has been done to all women. In some ways it is unique. It is easy to resent straight women when you are a lesbian - it is hard to overcome this. None of us has been comfortable with this resentment - we all know in our hearts that something is not right when this happens- that we are fulfilling someone else's plans. Now we have the tools to deal with it. Now we have a perspective that explains it- and that we are part of without having to keep quiet about our lesbianism. The strength that we have gained, as lesbians, through Wages for Housework, is something that we want to share with all women. It is one thing to know that you are fighting. It is something quite different to know that you are not alone.

The Wages Due Collective.  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 Canada.

Ellen Agger  
 Lorna Boschman  
 Betty Burcher  
 Judy Quinlan  
 Patrice Simister  
 Boo Watson  
 Ellen Woodsworth  
 Francie Wyland

# CENTRO DONNE CENTRO DONNE CENTRO DONNE

23 Aprile



Gratis

VENITE ALL'APERTURA DI QUESTO NUOVO CENTRO STABILITO COME LUOGO DI RITROVO

PER NOI DONNE DELLA COMUNITA' ITALIANA

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LA GIORNATA INCLUDERA' :

- 2 FILM IN ITALIANO E INGLESE
  - MATERIALI INFORMATIVI GRATUITI SULLA MATERNITA' E LA SESSUALITA'
  - INFORMAZIONI E ASSISTENZA PER I PROBLEMI RELATIVI ALLA DONNA
  - DOCUMENTAZIONI SULLA CONDIZIONE DELLA DONNA IN ITALIA (IL REFERENDUM SUL DIVORZIO E L'ABORTO, ECC.)
  - PROPOSTE PER IL PROGRAMMA DEL CENTRO DONNE
- 

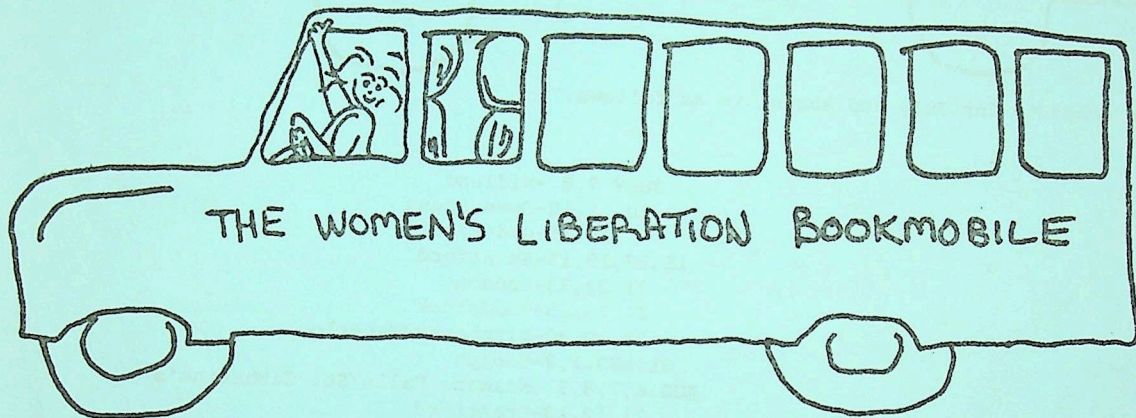
TROVIAMOCI IN TANTE PER STABILIRE FRA NOI DONNE QUESTO PRIMO CONTATTO !

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Per informazione, telefonate: Clara Costa o Giuditta Ramirez 924-7161

at 368A College Street (2nd floor), Toronto  
924-7161

Office hours: 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.



Women outside of the cities, especially in Canada where distances are so great, are isolated from each other and their movement. The Bookmobile is an attempt to break down this isolation by providing access to feminist materials and ideas, and by helping women to contact each other.

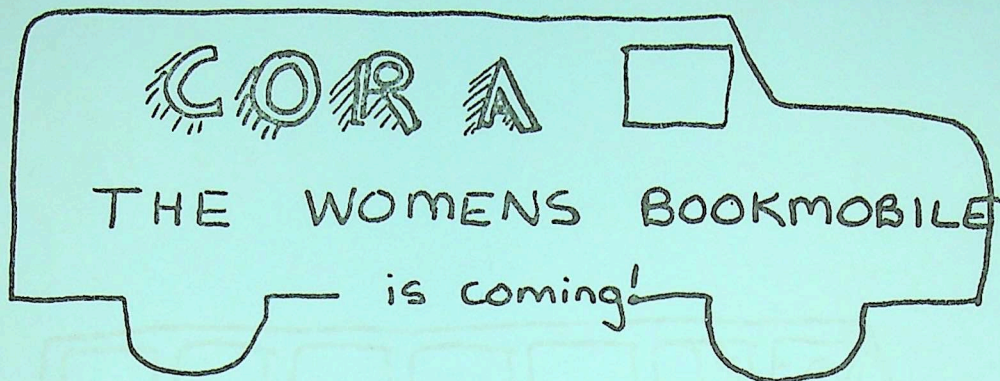
**BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP:**

- if you would like the bookmobile to visit, write to us.
- if you can help us find parking space, do advance publicity, or would like to have meeting with us, contact us. We would like to talk with you and your group. We have video equipment on the bus which can be used for meetings.
- any suggestions are welcomed.

The bus will be parked in some main site open to everyone, staffed by four women. We will be having meetings with the women of the community, with community groups working with issues of concern to women, and will be having public showings of films and video tapes.

If you or your group can assist us in setting up meetings, doing advance publicity, or suggesting other people who might like us to visit them please contact us. Our schedule is still flexible.

For Information : Lorna or Ellen  
342 Jarvis St.  
Toronto  
922-2084 (416)  
921-6517



The schedule for July and August is as follows:

JULY 7,8 -Midland  
9,10,11,12-Owen Sound  
14,15-Goderich  
16,17,18,19-Stratford  
21,22,23-London  
24,25,25-Woodstock  
28,29,30-Kitchener/Waterloo  
31,AUG.1,2-Guelph  
AUG.6,7,8,9 -Niagara Falls/St. Catherine's  
11,12,13-Brantford  
14,15,16-Windsor  
18,19,20-Sarnia

We are a travelling Women's Centre,  
Bookstore, Resource Centre. We are  
starting our second venture this summer.

With.....

Books, Pamphlets, Newspapers, Leaflets,  
Films, Video Tapes, Magazines on....  
LAW,HERSTORY, NON-SEXIST CHILDREN'S  
BOOKS,WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK, PHOTOGRAPHY  
AND THE ARTS, POLITICS,SEXUALITY ETC.

# WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

## ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWIVES

*We all cook, clean, sew, be sexy, be good listeners, wash the dishes, look after children, smile a lot, do the laundry, do the shopping, make ends meet, decorate, etc. And we do it all for no wages.*

*When we work outside the home we are doing two jobs - for half the price of one. Because women are used to working without wages, the bosses can pay us less and get away with it. Because we are used to thinking that housework is "trivial" or "comes naturally" to us, we end up in jobs that are just an extension of housework; teaching, nursing, cleaning, waitressing, office work, prostitution, social work, etc.*

WE ARE ALWAYS CHEAP LABOUR OUTSIDE THE HOME  
BECAUSE WE ARE SLAVE LABOUR IN THE HOME

We want to fight against our work all  
over the world.  
Internationally women are demanding  
wages for housework



PUBLIC MEETING

TIME:

PLACE:

On March 16, 1974 Ferretto Square, which seemed forever consecrated to the "worker's movement", conceived as the movement of "maleworkers", was for the first time with workers of the home and of the factory; by women united against their common exploitation, in the home first and outside of it.

For several months, that is, since the Fall of 1973, the Veneto Committee for Wages for Housework had established a network of contacts, mostly in the Venice area, between groups of women who up to that time had been kept carefully divided by the traditional organizations: first by the trade unions and the parties, while the extra-parliamentary groups had just followed the beaten path.

Precisely because we started by positing housework as the first link in the chain of exploitation that enslaves all women and allows capital to discriminate against women on the outside job, the Committee was able to "take the right road". That is, the Committee tried to make channels of political communication among all women, and, therefore, to create the possibility for a growth of political power for all of us, so that women who are already in a stronger position would give strength to women who are in a weaker position. But if it was not to be based on a merely ideological solidarity that never develops real roots, this unification could only be based on the acknowledgment of our common exploitation: housework.

Nobody had ever taken this road.

In fact, politicians, would-be leftists, trade unionists, and the Women's Commissions of the parties and the (supposedly) leftists groups all agreed on the premise that women are "nothing"; thus, they all were convinced that there is no need to analyse the condition of women. It never crossed anybody's mind that women are the labor power which is consumed in the process of producing and reproducing labor power, though this productive process is known, for it is experienced by everybody.

They all had started from the capitalist appearance and, consequently, had considered women always and only as someone else's appendages. And, as appendages, they had seen them divided first of all into mothers, wives, daughters, fiances, single women, etc. They did not see, however, the basis on which these different roles are built, and, consequently, they did not understand the basis on which these divisions are founded. On the contrary, we women had seen very clearly this basis and we have identified it with housework. For each of these roles is based on a determinate quantity and quality of housework that women must do in the home. A woman must provide her husband not only with the maximum amount of housework, but also with all the duties that housework involves; love-making included. A sister is not expected to provide this latter service to her brother, in the same way as she is expected to provide an amount of housework much inferior to that which is expected of a wife with respect to her husband, or of a mother with respect to her children. Now, the roles to which the highest productivity of housework correspond are generally those of wife and mother. Moreover, on a mass scale they coincide, because to be a wife generally means to be also a mother. Therefore, the woman who is a wife and a mother (besides being a sister, a daughter, etc.) represents the highest level of productivity of housework. But also those today who are sisters, daughters, fiances, etc. tomorrow will be wives and mothers, for the cycle of housework is determined in such a way that it requires certain roles during the period of our heavy training (daughters, sisters, fiances, etc.), and other roles during the period of the highest productivity (wife and mother). The woman who refuses to go through the cycle of housework, and thus refuses to guarantee her consumption as labor power at the most highly productive level is further divided from other women. This is the woman who, though

she is a wife, does not want to bear children; it is the woman who, though she has children, does not want to be a wife; it is the woman who, does not want to be either a wife or a mother. These divisions, too, are mystified by capital through moral and ideological judgments. But in reality they are determined by the lower productivity of housework.

It is clear, then, that this first order of division is in fact built on different levels of productivity of housework which are imposed on us women.

The fact that this division was never questioned by anyone contributed to codify a capitalist hierarchy among women based on the higher or lower productivity of their work: housework.

Furthermore, as wives (mothers, daughters, sisters, etc.) women were defined in turn as proletarians if the male wage which commanded them was that of a proletarian, bourgeois if the income which commanded them was that of a bourgeois. No one saw that in every case women did not have money of their own in their hands for that common work which all of them did. And that this basically determines a lack of power for all of us.

Being defined always and only with respect to the level of power (or non-power) of a man, women were divided among themselves from the viewpoint of the (non) analysis, of the (non) objectives, of the (non) political strategy. They were divided not only in terms of the class to which 'the man' belonged, but also according to the hierarchies of power within the class itself to which 'the man' was subject.

If we, on the contrary, define women precisely on the basis of their work, we must assume that all the women who on a mass scale do housework, who are labor power consumed in the process of producing and reproducing labor power, are workers: they are the workers of the house. They are workers without a wage of their own, but they are workers. The fact that on a mass scale women are unwaged workers has determined such a radical lack of power in working class women as to determine a lack of power even among bourgeois women. In fact, the wife of a powerful man, for example, certainly enjoys a reflected power through her husband, but she is not powerful on her own. The wife of a man who has a low level of power has little power because of the low level of power of her husband, but to his low power she adds her own lack of power.

There exists a condition of weakness common to all women, that is a lack of power of their own such that can provide a common ground of struggle for all.

Besides this type of divisions others were being postulated and fixated. Some of them were never put on paper (it would have been too much) but they were always said and thought. These are the divisions based on 'aesthetic' appreciation: beautiful-ugly, and those based on moral judgment: saints - prostitutes. It is worth while to point out that the highest productivity of housework has been the object of positive moral judgment (that woman - who works like an animal - is a saint), while the refusal and the rebellion against housework has always been the object of a negative moral judgment (that woman - who does not do her duty - is no good).

Other divisions instead have been written about and theorized. Starting always from a definition of women as wives, mothers, daughters, seen as appendages to everything and everybody, rather than as workers of the house, they all have further divided women into "non-workers" (the housewife) and "workers" (the women who have an additional job outside the home). And again, the woman with a "clean" job - these are the ~~factory~~ factory workers, employees, shop-girls - and those with a "dirty" job, the prostitutes.

Also this further order of divisions was based on the fact that housework was not recognized as work. This prevented them from ~~seeing~~ seeing that housework is the ground of exploitation common both to the housewife and to the woman who also works outside of the home, and that prostitution is nothing but socialized housework.

#### TO MAKE LOVE IS HOUSEWORK.

They had always approached women starting from the divisions of power capital has created among us, taking them as "natural" and therefore "inevitable", or worse yet, as "a consequence of the backwardness" of the women themselves, and therefore, after all, "well-deserved". In this way they reinforced these divisions, and also caused guilt feelings in those women who have not performed "brilliantly" in the race for "emancipation" - and as housewives we all know what that is. Thus, these ~~political~~ political organizations tended to strengthen, instead of destroying, the objective divisions created by capital and the consequent lower degree of power some women have with respect to others. It is worthwhile, however, to make it clear once and for all that this is the relation the so-called political forces with a leftist reputation have always established not only with women but with the whole class.

But in the case of women this has been particularly damaging, because by ignoring the "housewife" as "too weak", "non-organizable", or "too backward", or even "non-existent as a worker", these political forces deprived women of any possibility for a mass organization. All women, in fact, as we well know, are fundamentally "housewives", that is, ~~x~~ "workers in the home"; for housework is the "first and only front where we all are and which determines all aspects of our life".

But nobody ever started from this and consequently nobody ever tried to build an organizational continuity between the woman who works in the home and the woman who also works outside the home. Aiming at "keeping the divisions", they had never even tried to make an organizational connection between the woman who works in the big factory and the woman who works in the small factory, the woman who works in the countryside and the woman who works in the city, between the woman who must accept a textile machine in the home and the woman who must run out to work at a textile machine in a plant.

We, the women of the Committee had started precisely in the opposite way, by assuming that the power divisions capital has created must be destroyed. Obviously, this does not mean - as some would like to believe - giving up the power some of us have already gained against capital; on the contrary, it means for all women, and therefore for the entire working class, to gain the greatest power against capital.

We, as women, can achieve this growth of power only if we organize ourselves starting from that battle front in which we all are, that is housework. Only in this way will it be possible, always and in every place, to bargain around the entire work we do: housework first of all and, in addition to it, also the secondary jobs, and thus bargain around the entire wage, the entire work-time, and the entire conditions of our life, in one word, OUR SOCIAL POWER which is based on them.

Given that this is our perspective, how would we move in practice to build it organizationally?

In facing this problem one thing became immediately obvious to us: we had to put an end to the isolation of women's struggles. We had to put an end not just to the isolation of the four domestic walls, but also to the isolation of those invisible walls whereby women who struggle in a factory never see those who struggle in the home, women who struggle around daycare in a neighborhood never see those who struggle around daycare in



another neighborhood, the isolation whereby the woman who enters a doctor's office does not know that the way she is treated is the way all the other women waiting outside, and all the women in the hospitals will be treated, and therefore does not know that her revolt can join that of the others.

Let us say it again: the isolation of our struggles is a direct consequence of the fact that all the so-called political forces have wanted to see only partial aspects of the exploitation and oppression of women, and therefore have built a wall of silences around every "part" or "aspect" which they were interested in recognizing.

Our viewpoint, to bargain immediately around all our exploitation, gave us also - we were to discover it for the first time - the possibility of thinking of a moment of mobilization common to all women, and therefore the possibility for the first time to break every division and every isolation.

How to build this?

We, the women of the Committee, as all other women, had little time and money for "political work", that is, to build an organizational network which would give more strength to all women and, consequently, to us too. But we began to think of some instruments in a strategic way. In Padova it was the problem of the center. Not only had we to be ready to travel in order to have meetings, to mount a debate to establish a first contact with women in other cities, or other villages; it was also crucial that these women have the possibility to easily reach us. As we know, few women have cars. Thus, we chose a center close to the bus and ~~to~~ train station. It was extremely handy. Many women, some from villages, could "come and go back" in one afternoon, without any member of their family even ~~g~~ being aware of it, and without their interfering.

The centre was open regularly a few days a week, to answer any questions of the women who came, to give information, to offer reading materials and a chance to speak with other women; and it became immediately the place for a series of meetings which grew as our contacts grew. The address, the opening time of the center were publicized also in the papers and in any other way. We, the women of the Committee, would take turns to keep up with the meetings, as we would take turns in traveling around.

At first, the function we performed was essentially this: to make contact with the greatest possible number of women. What was our immediate perspective? To go a first time in the streets all together, with the only demand which could see us all together, and which therefore would give us a new power to bargain all the rest: **WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK.**

This was our immediate objective. And then?

We will go many times again in the streets, all together, always with this demand until we be not thousands but millions; for while we in Italy are putting forward this demand, our sisters in every country are moving on the same demand. We won't have to wait long before we are millions.

Until the unification of women is large enough, strong enough, until we have all gone into the streets many times together, we will not have an idea of where to concentrate our organizational effort, where we will be able to strive harder, because there we are strongest and with what forms of struggle.

Building the first demonstration on the demand of wages for housework (the March 10 demonstration) has meant giving an organizational basis to the increasing refusal of housework which every woman feels and expresses in more or less open revolts. The price we women pay for this refusal is high. Men black our struggles, they blackmail us, they beat us, they

kill us. It is horrifying to read in the papers, over the last few months, of women murdered by their husbands explicitly because she refused to do housework.

Already many hours which have not been spent doing housework - whatever the price we might pay - have been spent here in Veneto, writing documents, having meetings, making bulletins with information about our struggles, travelling, taking pictures, making movies, songs, in one word, preparing for the 10th of March demonstration. This was and continues to be the phase of the underground strike, of the increasing refusal of housework. Next time, in the Spring of '75, there will be an open strike. Not a national strike yet, but a strike by a network of women such as no trade union or party ever succeeded in organizing, a strike by a network that overcomes the objective divisions created by capital.

We said in the square: "Today we are opening the campaign for wages for housework". Had we further detailed what we meant by a campaign, probably none of us would have said anything more than to keep multiplying what we had done so far, to have many more women than were in the square on that day. But precisely because we had constructed a first occasion, afterwards it was much more clear, to us and to all the women who participated in the demonstration, what ~~x~~ it means to build a campaign for wages for housework. And this is precisely what has to be emphasized: the 10 of March caused a leap in the organizational capacities of all the women who participated in it. Not only the older woman had seen beside her the younger, the woman with children had seen beside her the woman without children, the factory worker had seen beside her the shop-girl, the student had seen the woman who does piece-work in her home; in one word, every woman had seen the condition of the other women; but also through the impact of our speeches, of the interventions each of us made, speaking perhaps in public for the first time, the interdependence of every aspect of her condition as a woman and the interdependence of her condition and that of the other women came to light. Precisely because of this, once back home every woman had the power to see with new eyes her life environment, discover the ties that tie her to the other women, and thus succeed in focusing with them on the possibility of an organizational network/.

Obviously, even before that, many of ~~w~~ us were involved in organizational situations. We were involved in the daily struggles over daycare, prices, the condition of the neighborhood, rent-reductions, wage discrimination, and on the defense or search for a job. But we also knew the sense of weariness and weakness induced by our sustaining such hard struggles, struggles for which we pay a higher price than anybody else, and which do not guarantee us any power as women and any possibility of a permanent organization, based on our interests and controlled by us.

Now, with the 10 of March we had given ourselves first of all a new perspective in which to move. This new perspective, wages for housework, had given us for the first time the possibility of a mass organization, because, as we said before, and as we said in all our speeches, "housework not only claims all of us, but it is the work which determines all other aspects of our life". For this very reason this perspective had given us not only the possibility of a mass organization, but also the only possibility of a permanent organization. In fact, while the struggle over daycare ends when we take the daycare center, the struggle for wages for housework ends only with the end of housework itself. As long as we have to spend one minute of our day to reproduce ourselves, not as free individuals, but as labor power for others - and this is housework - labor power others will exploit, our struggle against housework will not end. Even to put rollers in our hair every Saturday (because a shop-girl must have a nice hair-do) is housework we perform for the bosses. If we were free individuals we would or would not put rollers in, our choice would be dictated only by our

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taste, not by somebody else's, our boss's need to make us into a model shop-girl who attracts more customers. And this is only one example among thousands. The same holds true for all that we do in order to reproduce our body and mind. A comrade from the West Indies, who having intuited (thanks to female teachings) what is housework, began to better "visualize" our entire "working day", commented: "Well, those who are commanded by capital never punch out." Brushing our teeth is housework, putting lipstick on is housework, making love is housework, sleeping is housework, and it does not make any difference that we also x like a lot to sleep, for the fact that we sleep guarantees the existence of capital.

Our perspective is that everything, as long as it is commanded to us, must be paid for to us. And we must get everything paid for by those who want us to brush our teeth, put lipstick on and go to sleep early so that we can get up early in the morning. If they want to impose all this on us, it means that they profit from all this. Then as long as they are forcing us to do something, they are always indebted to us, whatever the wage level we have reached. It goes without saying that our struggle for wages for housework does not end with a certain wage level, but with the destruction of their command over us to make us work. That is, with the destruction of every class relation, with the end of the bosses, with the end of the workers of the home and of the factory and so of male workers too.

And our reproduction?

We say immediately that it will not require housework any longer. Housework will not exist any longer in the same way as forced labor will not exist. Given our present technological possibilities, and the present level of technological invention, every possible solution is at our disposal. At one condition, however, that we break the class relation which prevents us from enjoying the benefits of these inventions.

Only if our time is not commanded by others, only if our space is not confined by others, will we be able to develop our full capacities: the capacity to understand, to invent, to act and to build completely different social relations.

Earlier we said that the 10 of March with the political perspective it expressed has concretely demonstrated to all of us the possibility of building a permanent organization. The roots of this organization that we began to build were grounded in the daily struggles of women, but freed at last from the accumulated debris of the male tradition which always suffocated them. Only a male interpretation of women's struggles could see in the struggle over the price of steak our interest as defending the man's wage, rather than our interest to have first of all a wage of our own to be able to afford a steak for ourselves. The same holds for the struggle around housing. Only a male interpretation could see this women's struggle as satisfied when the house would be assigned to the "head of the family", without thinking that women could aspire to have a house of their own, independently from their being the reproducers of an entire family: a house where to live alone, or with a female friend, or with a child, or with a man, but not necessarily with a man.

All the struggles over prices and housing - we can say without fear of error - expressed first of all women's need for autonomy, a need for money of our own, space of our own, free time of our own. But in order for the totality of our interests, that these struggles and thousands of others expressed, to emerge completely and find an organizational form, it was necessary to break with the male management of class struggle. When as women we decided to interpret our struggles ourselves, and to define our own interests ourselves, we were able for the first time to ground our AUTONOMY as our strategy. In fact, for the first time were we able to see the totality of our

interests, and therefore, try to build our full organizational power from the ground up. That is, an organizational power that always, at every moment would represent the totality of our interests.

It was a clear break with men and their organizations, precisely because men and their organizations by interpreting our interests in a limited and distorted way, had deprived us of a definitive strategy against our exploitation. Thus, they had confined us to political impotence, that is to depend on capital, to depend on capital's strategy for us. We were condemned by male interpretations to start from the branches (the outside job rather than from the roots of our exploitation.) We were condemned to bargain over partial interests (the job that supplemented the male wage in order to support our families) rather than bargain over our whole interest: to have immediately a wage of our own starting from the housework we all do, not to preserve but to destroy the family, which is based on our unwaged work. Thus, we were condemned to fight from a defensive position; we were confined to struggle to prevent capital from worsening our condition, instead of being able to struggle like waged males to destroy our exploitation.

OUR LACK OF AUTONOMY FROM MEN, FROM MALE ORGANIZATIONS WAS A LACK OF AUTONOMY FROM CAPITAL. It meant that we were condemned, let us say it again, TO DEPEND ON CAPITAL, to depend on capital's choices for us.

When we decided to interpret our struggles ourselves and the needs they express, we were consequently able to outline a definitive strategy and thus BUILD A IN ORGANIZATIONAL TERMS OUR AUTONOMY FROM CAPITAL.

This must be thoroughly clarified, because up to this day there is a tendency to confine the meaning of feminist autonomy to the fact that we hold meetings separately from men. To have meetings separately from men has been an indispensable condition for building a strategical autonomy. But to limit ourselves to having separate meetings, while moving around a male strategy means to let what we have thrown out of the door come back through the window. And all the political organizations and their Women's Commissions are in fact under our windows waiting to jump in.

As we said before, only the demand of wages for housework allows us to struggle against the totality of our exploitation, for it allows us to bargain around our entire work-time, the entire wage of our work. This then is the only demand on which we can build a definitive strategy, and all those - men and women - who are against this demand, want to come back through the window to disarm us. If the Women's Movement sponsors their strategy it means that these people have already come back through the windows of some Women's Centers.

March 10 1974 was the last of three days which expressed the organizational efforts of many months of work: the continuous search for money to travel around, to print and distribute 20,000 leaflets, to print and circulate 6,000 wall posters, to rent a movie theater, a stage with amplifiers in the square of the rally, to run off and off-set piles of materials which were essential to distribute during the months of preparation, and particularly on that day, to build a photographic show which lasted for three days in the square, to rent the movies to be shown.

There was always the problem of time: time that was continually snatched at night, on Saturdays and Sundays, for many of us "on the job", typing stencils instead of office correspondence while the boss was in the other room, meeting with our sisters pretending to sell them a sweater behind the counter of a department store.

TIME and MONEY. Now that our political struggle had begun we needed even more time and money. Our power, our liberation depended on how much time we could spend or on how much money we succeeded in extracting from anybody, to prepare adequate tools of struggle.

The 10 of March was also the first testing of the tools we had created and of their ability to provide a clear and immediate communication among all the women present.

In the morning at the Excelsior movie theater in the Ferretto Square we showed two feminist movies: "The Struggle is Not Over", and "The Adjective Female" produced by the Roman Feminist Movement. The first pictures the demonstration of March 8, 1972, 1973, and the second pictures the first public protest about the situation of abortion in Italy, the situation of women forced to work in the general markets, the struggle of women who had occupied a factory in Rome, the heaviness and fatigue and monotony of housework. Admission was free. Many women entered with their children. In the intervals, in the movie theater, the Musical group of the Committee, who had composed songs would sing with guitars. Many women in the room started singing (and the children too in their own way). The rhythm was easy to learn and the words were immediately grasped for they spoke of a reality which they knew all too well. Many men came in "to see". It was the first time they saw movies made by women for women. They had a rather bewildered look on their faces and they were silent.

There were others, however, who with quickness of wit managed to "say the right thing at the right moment". These were the militants of Avanguardia Operaia (Workers' Vanguard), who came to see us going out of the movie theater with a pamphlet of their own on abortion. They said: "After all, if you have understood anything it is because Lenin taught you". We answered them from the stage - so that our answer could reach the ears of all their allies scattered in the square - "No, Lenin on this has never said anything that makes any sense, and neither has Marx. The Women's Movement has started from where no man had ever arrived" (1)

The images shown by the movies were unusual: deformed bodies of old women, policemen charging the Roman feminists who were demonstrating, women speaking of the condition in which they had aborted. All this without any male mystification. But if the images were unusual for a movie theater, the women who were present recognised themselves in these images. One could hear comments from many points: "It is just like this." They would ask the other women - those who went through the rows distributing leaflets, small pamphlets, the texts of the songs - what that day was organized for. When they would hear: "Because they must pay us for housework", they would say "It is right", it was something they had never thought about, though many times they would say with anger, "I work so much for nothing".

When the show ended it was lunch time. Many women rushed home. The men as usual hung around the square, looking at the posters, the banners, the pictures of the show, and at us who were singing, speaking with other women, and shouting slogans. Then, one of us took the loudspeaker and started shouting in their ears: "Men, where are your wives? Women, come to the square to struggle. Men, go home to cook."

1) Their allies were: Lotta Continua, Manifesto, Quarta Internazionale, P.D.F.U.P., Organizzazione Comunista, Circolo La Comune. They had gathered together with Avanguardia Operaia at the movie theater Marconi to babble about the "emancipation of women", in a room crowded with men.

By 1:30 the square had emptied for the Sunday meal. It was at that time that it was possible to see immediately with one look the marvellous floral taste with which the Communist Party had decorated the walls for the 8th of March, filling them with posters. The scene was reminiscent of ~~D~~ Dannunzio's "yellow daffodils fever", except that instead of daffodils, on the posters, there were mimosas. But the effect was the same; crazy. And crazy were the words that invited women to "emancipate themselves" and "to give help" (to whom it was not clear) to come out of the crisis. Luckily our posters were purple, otherwise they would be confused. And luckily we put banknotes, large and well visible, in the hands of women, so women understood immediately that we are the party of ~~women~~ money, not the party of work. Since that day the party of work has increasingly emphasized its floral relation to women's struggles.(1)

Around 3pm the square started filling up again: it took just that much time for women to feed their family and wash the dishes. But the news that in the afternoon in the square there would be shows with feminist songs and debates must have circulated very widely because we saw many older women coming, who ruffling the "Bulletins" on the stalls read at last something about themselves. Older women, who listening to the songs, felt that we spoke of them too. Older women, who leaning out of the windows (we saw many of them) heard that we spoke of them too in our speeches. "Women not only get the mockery of social pension, but they continue to work in the home, they continue to do housework until they die." "When we are old we find on our shoulders the role of grandmothers, which means that we must raise also our grandchildren for nothing and in this way they keep us working as mothers until we die." "For a woman there is menopause; menopause could be treated, but no, she must suffer. And it is ten years of our life they take away. An older woman does not have the right to love, she is discriminated against sexually, she has no ~~x~~ right to receive sexual attention; she must be only a grandmother."

In the square arrived also all those women who had not been able to come in the morning. The women who came to the square for a Sunday walk on their husbands' arms met with the women who had come specifically for the demonstration, leaving their husbands many miles away.

There was a strange tension. Those of us who continued to distribute leaflets and documents saw the out-stretched hand of a husband who wanted to see what this was about before handing it to his wife; and the wife often did not have the power to say: "Wait a minute, this is for me." The situation of the women walking on their husbands' arms worsened when we started speaking at the microphone. It was clear that the husbands liked neither the tone nor the content of our speeches, because they would drag their wives away, putting pressure on their arms, ignoring the protests of the women who wanted to stay and listen.

And then there were the soldiers on leave, who were more than happy to have a chance to speak with so many women. Seemingly interested in what we were saying, some ~~men~~ asked us what we wanted. "Wages for housework - we told them - for all the work we do at home without which the State could not survive, and for which the State doesn't want to pay us". The words

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1) In Il Corriere Della Sera (November 7, 1974, p.3) we read a statement made by Rassinovic, at a meeting in Monza, for the re-launching of recruiting for the Communist Party in Brianza. "If while we go by in a protest demonstration we meet a woman in a car, not only do we offer her a propaganda leaflet, we give her also a rose". We start being suspicious about the function of carnations.

(n.b. the red carnation is one of the most popular symbols of the Italian P.C.I.)

"state" and "housework" caused them immediately to change their attitude, from courteous to thoughtful. After looking at each other and around a bit, and after talking among themselves, they came to tell us: "You are right; we too in the Army have to wash dishes and toilets; the State should give us a wage too for this work". "Only now we understand the burden of our mothers"(1)

In the square there were a series of episodes and comments which would suggest political directions and outline the path of a new class unification. From the "Even our grandchildren we must raise" of the older women, to the "You are right, the State should give us a wage too" of the soldiers, the hours, the years of housework that each one discovered that they do became the common "thing" against which the most diverse sectors of the class expressed a common rebellion.

In a group of factory workers who were considering for the first time - because they heard it for the first time - the possibility of wages for housework, some said: "Thanks a lot, but if they would give a real wage for housework, everybody would stay at home." Others would not say anything, realising that this was something big, perhaps the biggest thing they had ever heard, something that would put into crisis "world equilibrium", and "certain values", even if they did not see clearly in what way. Thus, while some would comment "I prefer to give money to my wife myself. For Christ's sake, we are not animals, sure I don't want her to lack anything. What is mine is hers",; others would remain silent and thoughtful.

A woman from the committee, the wife of one of these workers, joined the discussion. She laid out with passion her viewpoint on the issue which had come out, throwing out also things which she had been brooding about for a long time and we with her. First of all, she started making it clear that there would not be anything wrong if once housework is waged men would decide to do it; and if a man feels pleasure in giving money to his wife he could keep doing it also after his wife has a wage of her own.

At one point, some said that after all they agreed, that after all it was right that the State would give women a wage; after all with two paycheks in the family you could keep your head above water. Actually, in the case of a strike, probably one could get by better. They told us that they were struck by a sentence uttered in the square: "No strike has ever been a general strike. When half the population works in the home, in the kitchens, while the others strike, it is not a general strike." They asked how she thought - how we thought - we would get to this general strike. At this point she told them what had been in her mind for a long time, and she answered that in order to achieve this they should be ready to shut down the factories and join us in the square when we would decide to have the next demonstration.

It was a very straightforward political direction. Our strategy allowed us to give some new direction also to the other ~~xxxxx~~ sectors of the class.

The discussion went on around "what is housework". ~~Through~~ Through our words they discovered, some with surprise, others with dismay, that they too did housework, even if much less than women. They discovered that fixing the sink and changing the light bulbs etc. were not small favors they conceded grudgingly to their wives, but housework. They discovered that many of the activities they engaged in every day were housework. They also began to see more clearly how this relates to commuting to work. They had already struggled hard to get it paid as work,

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1) This episode was reported in L'Espresso by a particularly careful reporter.

but were now able to see it in a new light. It was not only the hours expended for the bosses outside the factory (time and travelling to and from work), but many more to be added to those. And they also began to see more clearly the shortcomings their struggle around commuting had had, shortcomings which were determined by the limitations of their objective, and therefore the limitations of the involvement in the struggle by other sectors of the working class.

It will depend on our strength and level of organization whether the issues raised in this discussion in the square on the 10 of March will become turning points for the theory and revolutionary practice of the male working ~~xxxx~~ class. However, for the present, let us see their immediate effects.

. First of all, the men started thinking of the hours of housework they too perform and of the possibility of bargaining over this work, precisely because we had opened the struggle around it. And the fact that we intended to bargain around this work had not only opened their eyes about the actual length of their working day, it had also given them an essential basis of strength to be able to bargain over it.

Besides this, for the first time, some waged males thought of uniting with us on the basis of our objectives (which not accidentally also expressed their class interest) rather than repeating to us as usual that we had to unite with them on their objectives, even if their objectives never succeeded in expressing our interests.

Our strategy opened up for the first time the possibility of a class unification, which would happen not through the repression of the sectors defined as weaker - we women first of all - but springing from our autonomous organization as women, would bring a new level of power for the entire class, rather than a further stratification of power.

Trieneto Committee for Wages for Housework  
Padova, November, 1974



HOUSEWIVES' INITIATIVE

Kensington Counselling and Information Centre  
348 College Street, Toronto  
(416) 929-3240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 1979

On Saturday, October 27, Toronto's immigrant women will hold a public forum titled "A View from the Kitchen." Discussion will centre on the value of the housework they perform -- in their own homes and in the homes of their Canadian employers.

Among the featured speakers will be Joan French, a leading advocate of women's rights in Jamaica. President of the influential National Union of Democratic Teachers, Ms French will be in Toronto on a fact-finding mission regarding the status of West Indian women in Canada.

Also speaking will be Montreal-based reporter Sheila Arnopoulos, author of "Problems of Immigrant Women in the Canadian Labor Force" (Advisory Council on the Status of Women) and expert on immigrant domestic servants.

At a time when controversy surrounds the immigrant community in Metro Toronto, "A View from the Kitchen" will bring together black and white women -- immigrant and native-born, grass-roots organizers and full-time housewives. In the words of Joan French "Housework is women's work in Trenchtown and Cabbagetown, in Italy and India. It is the language all women understand... the bottom line in the universal fight for women's rights."

"A View from the Kitchen" begins at 1PM at Jorgenson Hall (Mini-Theatre), Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, 380 Victoria Street. We extend a special invitation to members of the media to interview the speakers at 12:30PM, or during the break at 2:30PM.

For more information, please contact Judith Ramirez at: (416) 929-3240

964-3426 or

862-1530

# THE UNION VOICE

A SURPI Newsletter

Friday October 26, 1979

## "A view from the kitchen"

by Frances Gregory

Amory John, SURPI Director of International Student Affairs, will be one of four panelists speaking at the Forum "A View from the Kitchen: Immigrant Women Speak Out on the Value of Housework", to be held at Ryerson on Saturday, October 27.

Why a forum on the value of housework? Since International Women's Year in 1975, the value of women's work in the home has emerged as one of the most vital issues in the drive for equal rights. More and more people are realizing that the low status of women in the home contributes to the exploitation of women in the paid labour force.

## Time out

The Time Out Centre now in its second year is pleased to announce the expansion of its operating programs. In recognition of the Ryerson Communities need, a Home Economics student, Lorna Wood, will be working out of the Centre as a Community Placement student. Lorna, a third year Consumer Studies major, will be in the centre as a resource person dealing with nutrition or consumer problems. Appointments can be easily arranged at the Time Out Centre.

Groups and seminars will also be operating shortly relating to student needs. Are you concerned about a weight gain or loss? Not sure about your rights as a student consumer? Lorna is the one to see. Do it today—don't delay!

Immigrant women in particular, are concentrated in low-paying jobs such as office cleaning, the textile industry, and domestic servitude, where efforts to upgrade the pay and working conditions are made more difficult as long as housework is regarded as unproductive activity by society at large.

Joining Amory, who will be speaking on "The Immigrant Welfare Mother", are: Joan French, President of the National Union of Democratic Teachers, Jamaica, "Housework in the Third World", Judith Ramirez, Founder of the Immigrant Women's Centre and Spokeswoman for the Wages for Housework Campaign, Canada, "Housework in Canada", Sheila Arnopoulos, Author of "Problems of Immigrant Women in the Canadian Labour Force", "The Immigrant Domestic Servant", and Frances

Gregory, Housewives' Initiative and SURPI Staff Moderator.

Organized by Housewives' Initiative, funded by Wintario, and supported by SURPI, ERA of Women, International Students Society, and many other community groups.

Following the Keynote Panel there will be workshops on Welfare Rights for Immigrant Mothers and Upgrading the Status of Immigrant Domestic.

Join the debate on the value of women's work in the home, and its effects on immigrant women in the family, the community, and the paid labour force.

The debate is to be held on October 27, 1979. The panel will begin debate at 1:00 in the Mini Theatre (A-60), the workshops will be held at 3:00 in the Common Hour Lounge (Pub). Everyone welcome!

## President's letter

The Anti-cutbacks protest continues, and we've made headway.

Each area of the campus has begun to find real problems related to lack of funding in their programs. Photo Arts students are requesting 24 hour access to their building on Bond Street; Architecture students had ten articulate points to make about their lack of funding—including the need for 24 hour access, and the need for longer library hours at the King St. Campus. Electrical Technology students are using equipment that needs repair. Students in the Business Computers



Mary Zeldin

Photo by Jerry Davey

program need their computer terminal linked up again.

Course Unions are becoming stronger in this anti-cutbacks fight. If you can visit SURPI sometime very soon to tell how cutbacks are real in your program, more progress can be made. Our information gets to Academic Council, the Board of Governors of Ryerson, and to the Ontario provincial government in various ways (rallies, petitions, lobbying).

## Inside

50¢ Movies      Print shop  
Meetings        NUS

TORONTO STAR OCT. 30, 1979.

# Better deal demanded for immigrant maids

By Louise Brown Toronto Star

Metro's grass-roots immigrant women's groups are beefing up their fight for tougher laws to protect the women they call "modern day slaves."

This week a coalition of women, spearheaded by Employment Services for Immigrant Women (ESIW), will send the federal and provincial governments a five-point set of demands to improve working conditions for domestics.

They're demanding that:

□ Ontario immediately re-introduce and pass a bill to cover 12,000-plus domestic workers by the minimum wage law. Maids are among the few types of workers not guaranteed minimum wage in Ontario.

□ Both levels of government fund independent community groups to act as grass-roots watchdogs, to which domestics can go with complaints about unfair working conditions.

□ A foreign domestic be allowed to sign the contract between her employer and Canada Manpower, which sets out her working conditions, and that this contract be legally binding. Few foreign domestics even see, let alone sign, this contract, said ESIW counsellor Anna Menozzi.

□ All women working in Canada on temporary work permits be allowed to apply for landed immigrant status without having to go back to their homeland first, which Menozzi says, few domestics can afford to do.

□ Immigration laws be clarified to pro-

tect a landed immigrant whose sponsor falls through and can no longer afford to sponsor him or her.

The resolution was endorsed by more than 75 women at a weekend forum on immigrant women and domestics, which drew both Canadian and foreign-born women, particularly from the West Indies, Italy and South America.

Organized by ESIW and the Housewives' Initiative with a grant from Win-tario, the forum attracted Japanese, black and Italian community groups, Ryerson's student union, the Immigrant Women's Centre and Wages for Housework, among others.

The forum was held just two weeks after the Ontario Legislature blocked a New Democratic Party bill that would have covered domestics under most terms of the Employment Standards Act, including the \$3 minimum wage, the 48-hour work week, overtime provisions (at least time-and-a-half after 44 hours per week), seven paid public holidays per year and two weeks' paid vacation after one year of service. The bill also proposed two weeks' termination notice after one year of service.

"We were so frustrated that the government blocked the bill, but we're simply starting all over again to raise public awareness of the exploitation of domestics," Menozzi told The Star in an interview.

ESIW, a non-profit job counselling and placement centre, gets about seven calls a day from domestics who feel they're being

abused, said the spokesperson.

"We get calls from women who work long hours for bad pay, who sometimes complain their employer wants them to have sex with him, his friends or his brother," said Menozzi.

"What do we tell these women? We tell them the truth — that they have no rights. But we tell them not to get frightened by the employer. If they are fired, we try to find them a good family to work with."

ESIW is now circulating 5,000 copies of a special bulletin with first-person stories by three domestics, who tell of situations ranging from sexual harassment on the job to an 80-hour week at \$70 a week.

This candid bulletin, the first collection of complaints by Metro domestics willing to be named and photographed, will be circulated through Forest Hill, Rosedale and affluent areas of Scarborough and North York — where it will reach the most domestics, said Menozzi.

# Housewives should be paid, women's seminar told

CONTRAST NOV. 1, 1979

By Charmaine Montague

Unpaid labor in the home is the root of the other problems for women says Joan French, president of the National Union of Democratic Teachers (in Jamaica).

French was one of the five immigrant women speaking at a seminar held last Saturday. The seminar was on the value of women's work in the home.

French says housework in the Third World is a lot worse than anywhere else in the world because of the economic development.

Third World women spend up to 17 hours per day doing housework.

Eighty percent of the women in Jamaica are below the minimum wage level and while these women do two thirds of the work they only receive one tenth of the income.

"When mothers don't earn money in the Third World children literally starve", she added.

"Money is owing to women from the work they do in the home", according to Judy Ramirez, founder of Immigrant Women's Centre and spokeswoman for Wages for Housework Campaign.

"It is imperative for women to look at this problem because it illuminates the reason why women are so universally poor", she added.

In Canada 500 million women do housework on a full time basis. They work 90 hours a week without any benefits. This army of unpaid workers forms the basis of this society, Ramirez says.

"There are 10,000 domestics in Canada. The reason why there are so many is that Canadian women aren't attracted to this kind of job," says

Sheila Arnopoulos author-ess of "Problems of Immigrant Women in the Canadian Labor Force".

She says immigrant domestics are taken advantage of by their employers.

For example, if a family goes to Florida on vacation the helper usually goes along. This trip is considered a holiday for the helper even though she takes care of the children while she is there.

Domestics are literally at the mercy of their employers because employers are not bound to the papers they sign stating that certain things will be provided for their help-

ers, Arnopoulos added.

"Are we supposed to come here as cheap labor for Canadians?" Amory John asks the audience.

John is director of International Student Affairs at Ryerson Polytechnical In-

stitute.

"We have to question this society because it is not being fair to immigrant welfare mothers. The cutback on loans to single mothers has prevented them from certain things

they would like to do," says John.

"If women are given the opportunity they will work", she added.

Acting as moderator for the seminar was Frances Gregory.



Joan French

## HOUSEWIVES SPEAK OUT

By MARLENE BOYADJIAN

A group of women spoke out against what they called the injustice and lack of appreciation doled out against women by the government and society, at a meeting last Saturday.

The meeting, held at the Ryerson mini-theatre, was held to focus attention on the hidden contribution of women within the home.

Judith Ramirez, founder of the Immigrant Women's Centre, told a predominately female audience, that women, isolated and alienated in the home, want to be recognized as having contributed to the productive work force in a meaningful way.

"Often women, after years of nurturing children, depending on husbands and being constantly on call, end up with little compensation, income or pension. In Canada today, more than two-thirds of our widows live below the poverty line," she said.

Although living in a man's world has never been easy, for many women in Third World countries, it is becoming increasingly impossible, she added.

Joan French, a Jamaican teacher and advocate of women's rights, said that in Canada, welfare is a sort of recognition of women's work, but in Jamaica, women are seldom appreciated as having contributed to the economy.

"In a country where one-third of all households are run by women, who have to face insurmountable odds, working 17 hours a day, malnutrition, inadequate schools and hospitals and a lack of technology are only some of the problems faced," French said.

Asking husbands to pay their wives is only adding to the socio-economic problem," said French, "because with 33 per cent unemployment, many men are barely making a living themselves. But when there is no running water, when children can't go to school because of lack of shoes, it is the women in the home who must face the burden."

French is in favor of public aid outside the home. She said wages could be paid in the form of a school feeding



**A VIEW FROM THE KITCHEN:** Joan French [2nd from right] was one of the main speakers at a public forum where the value of housework was discussed.

Photo by Marlene Boyadjian

program, where the mother would be relieved of the burden of providing food and the child would be guaranteed a nourished and balanced meal.

Sheila Arnopoulos, journalist and author of "Immigrant Women in the Canadian Work Force," claimed that struggle extends to Canada with the plight of immigrant domestics. There are now more than 10,000 domestics in Canada on work permits with little rights and threat of exploitation and deportation. It was pointed out there is a high rate of emotional illness among these domestics, especially those from the Caribbean.

Intimidated by employers, taken advantage of because of their low status, underpaid and overworked, many of these women feel completely helpless and misused. "When they come to Canada," said Arnopoulos, "they are supposed to receive \$70. for a 40-hour week, with weekends off and a two week vacation, but these conditions are seldom met."

## New Black Cultural Centre to open in 1980

Construction has begun on a Black Cultural Centre in Amherstburg, Ontario.

The 6,000-foot building will cost \$350,000 and will open in 1980.

The Centre will include a log cabin, restored and furnished to appear as it was when black settlers first came to Essex County.

The Nazery A.A. Methodist Church organized the project and construction begins with a \$90,000 neighborhood improvement grant. Funding for the other \$260,000 is still in progress.

Nov 3 1979 COALITION FOR GAY RIGHTS IN ONTARIO

M.C. MARTIN ANDRAS  
SOUND RUTH DWORIN  
LIGHTING KELTIE CREED  
STAGE  
MANAGER DAVID MARRIAGE  
POSTERS SANDRA HELLARD

P R O G R A M M E

ARLENE MANTEL SINGER AND GUITARIST  
TOM WARNER CHAIRPERSON, CGRO HUMAN  
RIGHTS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE  
GUEST SPEAKER  
TERRY PHILLIPS CHAIRPERSON, ONTARIO GAY  
TEACHERS' CAUCUS  
DR. JOHN ALAN LEE  
AND DON BARLOW CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE GROUP  
BRAINARD, JIM ,  
DAVID & RUSSELL THE CGRO SINGERS

I N T E R M I S S I O N

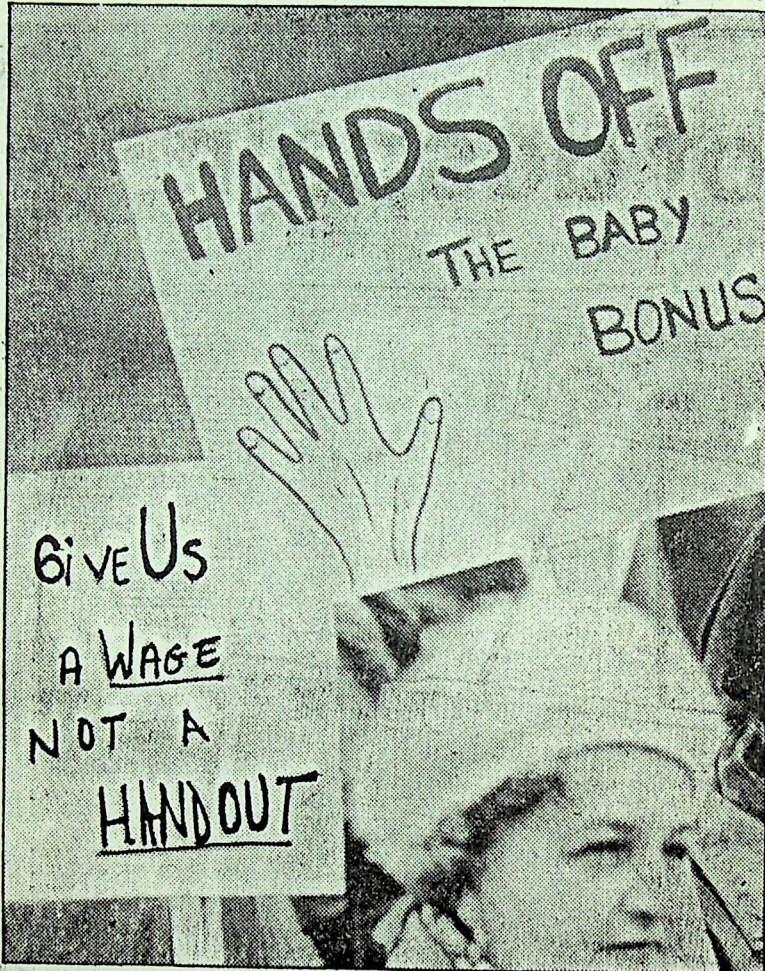
ROBIN TYLER THE SMASH-HIT LESBIAN  
FEMINIST STAND-UP COMIC  
JIM MONK CHAIRPERSON, COALITION FOR  
GAY RIGHTS IN ONTARIO  
ROBIN TYLER  
ROBIN, ARLENE, BRAINARD, JIM, DAVID AND RUSSELL

→ ROBIN TYLER'S RECORD ON SALE IN THE LOBBY  
PROCEEDS TO THE LESBIAN MOTHERS' DEFENCE FUND

THIS RALLY AND CONCERT ARE SPONSORED BY THE  
COALITION FOR GAY RIGHTS IN ONTARIO (CGRO)  
TO BENEFIT THE CAMPAIGN BEING CONDUCTED BY  
ITS HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE TO HAVE  
"SEXUAL ORIENTATION" INCLUDED IN THE ONTARIO  
HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AS A GROUND ON WHICH  
DISCRIMINATION OUGHT TO BE PROHIBITED IN  
EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND ACCESS TO SERVICES.  
CGRO IS A COALITION OF LESBIAN AND GAY GROUPS  
ACROSS ONTARIO WHICH WAS FORMED IN 1975.

Human Rights Campaign Committee  
Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario  
Box 822, Stn. A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1G3  
TELEPHONE (416) 977-1605

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
29 Granby Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1H8



BABY BONUS BANNERS

Demonstrators protesting against the Government's plan to review family allowance legislation march on Parliament Hill yesterday.

INTERCEDE  
c/o Employment Services  
for Immigrant Women  
348 College Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S4  
Phone: 922-8017 (days)  
537-3037 (evgs)  
November 24, 1979.

Dear friends:

The debate about the working conditions of domestic workers has been a high profile issue in the media, women's movement, and government circles for some time now. A number of immigrant and Canadian-born women -- both domestics and in groups working with domestics -- have formed a coalition called INTERCEDE (International Coalition for the End of Domestics' Exploitation). Member organizations to date include: Employment Services for Immigrant Women, Labour Rights for Domestic Servants, Housewives' Initiative, the Wages for Housework Campaign.

The objectives of INTERCEDE are to win the attached resolutions, and to work immediately:

1. To get the pseudo contract signed by Federal Immigration and employers of domestic workers on work permits made legal and binding on the employers, and;
2. To make sure that the bill to bring domestic work under minimum wage legislation passes when it is re-introduced in the Ontario legislature this spring.

We are writing to you for two reasons. First of all, for those of you in the Toronto area who are interested in working with the Coalition's objectives, this is an invitation to get in touch with us. There's a great deal of work to be done! Secondly, to those of you who are working on the issues of domestic workers in other parts of Canada, or who have information that would be of use to us, we would appreciate it if you would pass it along. And of course, we will keep you informed of what we're doing.

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours

*Frances Gregory*

Frances Gregory for INTERCEDE



INTERCEDI  
C/O Employment Services  
245 College Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S4  
Phone: 922-8017 (ext.)

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FORUM "IMMIGRANT WOMEN SPEAK OUT"

Immigrant and Canadian-born women at the Forum "A View From the Kitchen: Immigrant Women Speak Out on the Value of Housework," sponsored by Housewives' Initiative and held at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute on October 27, 1979, unanimously demand that:

1. The government of Ontario immediately reintroduce and pass a Bill that would include domestic work under all minimum wage legislation.
2. The contract currently signed by the Ministry of Employment and Immigration and employers of domestics on work permits be signed by the domestic worker concerned as well, and that this contract be legally binding.
3. Independent community agencies be funded by the government to ensure that the minimum wage legislation and the terms of the domestic workers' contracts are observed by employers of domestic workers.
4. All women who are presently in Canada on work permits be allowed to apply for landed immigrant status immediately.
5. Welfare rates be raised immediately to a living wage, and that immigrant women be allowed to apply for welfare with no threat of deportation.

For further information, contact:

Employment Services for Immigrant Women --- 922-8017  
Wages for Housework Campaign --- 465-6822

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours  
Frances G. Brown  
FRANCES G. BROWN FOR INTERCEDI



# Grapevine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LESBIAN MOTHERS' DEFENCE FUND • WINTER 1979/80  
TORONTO, ONTARIO



Robin Tyler in concert

## Fund-Raising Performance by Lesbian Comic

May 18, 8PM. The air is charged with anticipation. Several hundred lesbians fill the auditorium at St. Paul's Centre in downtown Toronto. Many have lined up early to get tickets after registering to the Binational Lesbian Conference. We have been organizing for weeks -- posters, tickets, mailing lists -- Now all the last minute details -- Isn't Ruth on sound? -- What happened to the notes for the introduction?

Then at last over the loudspeaker, "And now, the woman we've all been waiting to see ... Robin Tyler." Up the stairs she comes leaping onto the stage in leather boots, waving kisses to all the mothers in the front rows. "Hello, I was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. For us, Minneapolis was the deep south!" Cheers and laughter fill the hall. "I came out when I was sixteen," she continues. "My best friend Sherry became the role model for every woman I ever loved: a cross between Grace Kelly, Katherine Hepburn, and Humphrey Bogart!"

For one hour Robin performs her powerful blend of humour and deep political conviction: "Anita Bryant is to music what paint-by-number is to Christianity" ... "yes, I believe in wages for housework! ... little did I know when I said 'I do' how much I'd have to" ... "I happen to agree with the Right to Life, because if you don't they'll kill you."

Afterwards, in a short lecture, she speaks passionately about the rights of lesbian mothers:

*Some of my lesbian sisters reject lesbian mothers because they have dared lay with men. Yet had their mothers not lain with men, they wouldn't be*

*here to protest the lesbian mothers. Others object to lesbians raising some little boys, and I agree. Lesbians shouldn't raise "some" children. We should raise all children, for we understand prejudice, have compassion, and sure as hell, would do a better job!*

The front rows are on their feet! Robin leans forward to clasp the hands of a lesbian mother reaching out. Her voice rising with emotion, she concludes: "I too am a lesbian mother, because I care about every child born to one of us. We need our own 'Save the Children' campaign. I want to save our children -- all the little kids out there who are going to grow up to be homosexuals and lesbians. I don't want them to suffer the way many of us did. We have to save our children from oppression and discrimination."

Then it was over. We filed out slowly, feeling stronger, richer, and more determined to fight.

A heartfelt thank you, Robin, from all of us in the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund.

- Francie Wyland

Proceeds from Robin Tyler's performance were shared with the Winnipeg Women's Building. Our portion was allocated for production and distribution of "The Grapevine".

Be sure to see Robin Tyler in concert on Saturday November 3 -- Gay Human Rights Day -- at 8PM, at the Faculty of Education Auditorium, 371 Bloor St. West. Tickets are \$3.00 at the Toronto Women's Bookstore.

## Where We've Been...

May 19-21: Binational (Canada & Quebec) Lesbian Conference, Toronto. We used our literature table as headquarters and exchanged tidings with women from all over. We led a workshop on child custody -- with a special appearance and inspiration from Robin Tyler -- and helped begin organizing for the commemorative women's issue of The Body Politic (Canada's gay liberation newspaper).

The Winnipeg contingent (from Wages Due Lesbians and the new Women's Building) included the Painted Ladies Theatre troupe. They wowed everyone at the Sunday banquet with their original and moving play about a housewife coming to terms with her daughter's lesbianism.

May 31: The Globe and Mail featured a full-page article on lesbian mothers and the LMDF; and the French CBC aired an interview with Melinda X. of the LMDF

June 3: Francie Wyland and Melinda interviewed by CHEZ Radio, Ottawa

June 10: LMDF pot-luck supper

June 30: Francie Wyland and Wendy, a law student working with the LMDF over the summer, went to Ottawa for the annual conference of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition. Francie spoke on a panel made up of all the defence committees working in the country, and then both joined the march to Parliament Hill, where Francie was interviewed by local newspapers and radio stations.

July 8: Francie led a public meeting on organizing around child custody, in Boston, MA, where she exchanged experiences and ideas with the Gay Parents Project and the Men's Childcare Collective. Then she was interviewed by the Boston Gay Community News about the history and goals of the LMDF (July 28, 79)

August 12: LMDF pot-luck supper

August 24-26: Six LMDFers drove to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival where we got very cold, heard terrific music, exchanged addresses and news with scores of women, and made contact with M.O.M. -- Mothers of Male children -- who are organizing for better child care for their kids at future festivals. So far, while girls are allowed in, boys over nursing age have been billeted miles away, with questionable supervision.

September 15: LMDF information table at the Cabagetown (east Toronto) Cultural Festival; lots of good will and a little financial profit. And Ellen Agger's and Francie's article on "Lesbian Custody Strategy" appears in Ouest: A Feminist Quarterly, Washington, DC.

September 23: pot-luck picnic in High Park

September 27: The Special Women's Issue of The Body Politic hits the news stands, with 4 pages on lesbian mothers, co-ordinated by the LMDF

---COMING UP ---

November 7: Francie appears on "Street Talk", CHCH-TV (Channel 11 in Toronto) to speak about gay adoptions, at 7PM

Sometime soon: Melinda X and Mrs. Z from the LMDF will be seen on the Joyce Davidson Show, CFTO-TV

Very soon: Francie will be part of a delegation of lesbian & gay spokespeople to Ontario Attorney General Roy McMurtry to demand inclusion of homosexuals in the Human Rights Code, and an end to discrimination against lesbian mothers in custody cases.

## ...And Where We're Going

Among the women from all over Ontario who have contacted the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund in recent months are:

-- Sally\*, a welfare mother from eastern Ontario, who is trying to win back custody of her 5 year old daughter from the Children's Aid Society, and to end the CAS's supervisory power over her younger children. The oldest has had some brain damage and emotional problems since birth. The younger ones are fine. Sally hopes that no one besides her lawyer knows of her lesbianism, but she's finding it hard to maintain the level of secrecy she's decided on for now.

"I'd like to go to the local gay dances, just to get out and see people, but I'm terrified someone will see me there, and tell someone else. Maybe, when this fight is over I'll be able to have a night out with friends."

Jane, who is informally separated from her husband. She has their two children only on alternate weekends, and has decided not to fight for custody now because she could not afford to keep them on her own salary. She wants to formalize her agreement with her husband about access, and to have some control over her husband's behavior while the children are with him.

"Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but when the kids are with me, my girl-friend sleeps at her own place. My husband has had his girl-friend sleeping in the same room with him and the kids -- and it's a four-bedroom house!"

-- Helen and Pris, both mothers of pre-teenagers. They met each other through their involvement with the Boy Scouts, and secretly became lovers several years ago. Now they both want to leave their husbands but they're reluctant to disrupt their children's lives to such an extent.

"We'd have to leave this part of town, our houses, our community involvement, but we could manage that. I think we'd both rather live under a bush than stay with our husbands. But the kids -- they'd have to get used to a new school, lose old friends and give up everything we can give them now because our husbands make good money -- the music lessons, summer camp, all that. I don't know."

-- Cindy and Sharon who are fighting to keep Sharon's 2 year old daughter. Her husband left her a year ago, and made no effort to see his daughter. He knew before they married that Sharon had had women lovers. Now, not knowing about Cindy, he has threatened to fight for custody and "expose" Sharon if she ever enters another gay relationship. Because he has a criminal record and a history of drug abuse, Sharon may not have to go to court; her lawyer will have a good chance to negotiate a winning settlement.

(\* everyone's names have been changed in these accounts)



# LESBIANS MAKE HEADLINES

CANADA -- "ALMOST HALF OF ALL CANADIANS FIND HOMOSEXUALITY EASY TO ACCEPT," the Weekend Magazine (August 18, 1979) headlined the results of their recent poll. 47% find homosexuality "very" or "fairly" easy to accept. 24% of Canadians have a more favourable view of gay people now than they had five years ago. While another study showed that people still feel uneasy about gays working as elementary school teachers, it's clear the lesbian and gay movements have shown people that we're pretty much like everyone else.

The Saskatchewan Law Reform Commission issued a report on child custody laws recommending that the strength of ties between child and parent be the basis of custody decisions. "Relationships established by caring, loving adults should be more important than financial resources, sexual conduct and, in rare cases, blood relationships." (The Globe and Mail)

INTERNATIONAL -- Was Eleanor Roosevelt a lesbian mother? The New York Times (Oct. 21, 1979) reported that a correspondence consisting of more than 3,000 letters between Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok, a reporter and author, were discovered this year by Doris Faber, who is writing a biography of Lorena Hickok. The two women wrote to each other -- sometimes twice a day -- for thirty years, from 1932, the year FDR was first elected president until 1962, when Eleanor died.

"Hick darling," Eleanor wrote, "oh, I want to put my arms around you, I ache to hold you close. Your ring is a great comfort. I look at it and think she does love me, or I wouldn't be wearing it."

The two women often travelled together, and Ms. Hickok sometimes stayed at the White House. They lived near each other in Hyde Park from 1954 until 1962.

INTERNATIONAL - Dr. Martha Kirkpatrick conducted a study of lesbian mothers in Los Angeles. In comparing them to heterosexual mothers, she found that women in both groups tended to have the same problems, the same solutions, and to lead similar lives as parents. (from ZNS)

INTERNATIONAL - Kent County, Michigan lesbian mother Raelynn Smith won custody of her 4-year old son Jayson when Judge George Cook wrote, in his opinion, "Lesbianism was only one of several factors in deciding custody. It is rather the kind of care -- true love, security, affection and counselling of discipline -- that are important. Thus, if two female homosexuals can give that kind of care, it matters not that they are lesbian, nor does it matter that the child is male or female." Smith's ex-husband, Army Specialist 4 Stephen Smith, had based his care largely around Raelynn's homosexuality. (from Lesbian Tide, July/August, 1979)

INTERNATIONAL - The British Medical Association has advised doctors that it is not unethical to help lesbians have babies by artificial insemination. (Last year the news that some sympathetic doctors had helped impregnate dozens of gay women hit the headlines in England and North America. Other doctors treated it as a scandal and tried to have them barred from continuing the service).

This decision by the Ethical Committee of the BMA leaves the question completely to the discretion of the doctor and the patient. (Lesbian Tide)

INTERNATIONAL - Somewhere in the USA a lesbian mother was being grilled in court by her ex-husband's lawyer, about the details of her sex life. The next day the mother brought a friend along with her who had turned a few tricks with the lawyer. The friend didn't say a word, but by sitting in the courtroom she made the lawyer uncomfortable enough to stop that particular line of questioning. (from Mom's Apple Pie, the Newsletter of the Lesbian Mothers' National Defense Fund, Seattle, Washington)

## Human Rights Begin with Gay Rights

On June 18th, 1979, Dr. Robert Elgie, Minister of Labour for Ontario, announced in the Legislature his undertaking that a new Ontario Human Rights Code "will be introduced to this Legislature, probably early in the fall".

A major effort is now being organized by the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario, to build an effective lobby to ensure that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation will be barred in the new Code. This is a once-in-a-decade chance to gain long-sought amendments to Ontario's Human Rights Code.

A new Code will help protect lesbians and gay men from discrimination in employment, housing, and access to services. And while custody decisions fall outside the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission, our hand in court will be much stronger when we can point to the HRC's affirmation of our right to fair treatment in other areas.

For more information write to:

The CGRO Human Rights Campaign  
29 Granby Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1H8

SOON

I will march  
I will fight  
Not today, not tomorrow  
But I will.

Today I listen, learn  
Stockpile, categorize  
But that will end.

And I too will one day  
be able to stand strong,  
firm to fight with and for  
us.

I will become  
visibly and audibly -- me.

- Jenner

# The Girlfriend's View (conclusion)

During the years Melinda and I lived together without her son, Melinda would look after the money. I would give her my pay and she would take care of rent, bills, food, and if I needed anything, I would ask her. If we could afford it, okay ... if not, that was okay, too. I liked it that way, because I didn't have to worry about anything.

Then Jim came, and that changed everything. When he saw me giving Melinda my pay, he thought it was funny. Normally, what other people think doesn't bother me, but it got to the point where he was getting everything -- clothes, shoes, money, etc. -- whenever he wanted it and he was not the most careful person in the world.

He'd rip a coat, tear his shirt, wear out shoes in record time and play outside in his best clothes. I'd tell him to be careful, or change his clothes, and he'd laugh and say, "Who cares? My mother will buy me some more." And she would too!

Then I'd ask Melinda, "What about us and what we need?" And she would say Jim needed this or that. So I would have to go to work looking like a bum. Everyone knew I shared the apartment with another girl and that I had no kids. They wondered what I did with my money! They meant well when they tried to help me work out a budget, but I was beginning to resent Melinda and Jim very much.

It felt like Melinda only cared about Jim, and the hell with me. "Why should I have to do without because of Jim?", I'd say to myself. "After all, he's not my kid." So we fought, and almost broke up over all this.

But we talked it over and decided to split everything -- rent, food, and bills -- down the middle. Melinda's responsible for her share, and her son and bird. And I look after myself, my dog, two cats and the hamster. It's better for her this way since she can do whatever she likes without worrying about me yelling over buying Jim too much. And I have money left over to treat Melinda to dinner once in a while. It's nice.

Melinda and I still disagree about raising children, but we're "discussing" more than "fighting" now.

I try to stay out of arguments between Melinda and Jim. It's hard because I can't stand to see her upset. I try to just be here when she wants to talk.

Jim and I get along okay, considering we have such different personalities. We do like to get together and play football and baseball. We go shopping together, and end up at the pinball machines. In the summer we go swimming. I taught him to play poker. Now he wins all my money.

- Frieda M.



Gayle Bezaire won "conditional" custody of her son and daughter in Windsor, Ontario in January 1979. In April she lost her children because Judge McMahon ruled that Gayle had violated certain stipulations he had originally ordered, eg. that she should not live with anyone without the court's approval.

Gayle moved to Calgary in May, where she has a steady job and is saving money for the upcoming appeal for custody. She founded a Gay Parents' group there which provides support for gay mothers and fathers, with the help of information from the LMDF.

Her expenses so far total \$5000, and her appeal -- including travel, psychiatric assessment and expert witnesses' fees -- may cost almost \$3500 more.

Gayle has a good chance of winning her appeal on the basis of evidence that she is the better parent, but she needs your help immediately. Please send your donation to:

The Gayle Bezaire Defence Committee  
c/o P.O. Box 395, Station M  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2J1

## CBC DOCUMENTARY

Rose Kastner is an associate producer with the CBC on the staff of "The Fifth Estate". She has recently helped in the making of two documentary films -- on leukemic children, and breast cancer -- the latter of which won an Emmy Award. Now she is planning a film on gay people in Canada, about the problems we face and the fights we make in our personal lives for dignity and strong relationships.

Ms. Kastner hopes to interview hundreds of gay women and men on the telephone to get an idea of who we are, and then to choose a few from these to appear in the movie. She guarantees the anonymity of any caller, and will accept long distance calls at her office.

We're excited about this chance to become visible to millions of people, even if all our faces can't be shown, yet.

Call (416) 925-3311, Ext. 3227; or, in the evening (416) 656-9229.

### I Want to Support the LMDF

I will send \$\_\_\_ every month -- remind me if I forget!

I can't make a monthly pledge, but here's my donation of \$5 \$25  
\$10 \$50

name \_\_\_\_\_

street address \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ province \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

Make cheques or money orders payable to the LMDF, P.O. Box 38, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 4E1; Telephone (416) 465-8822

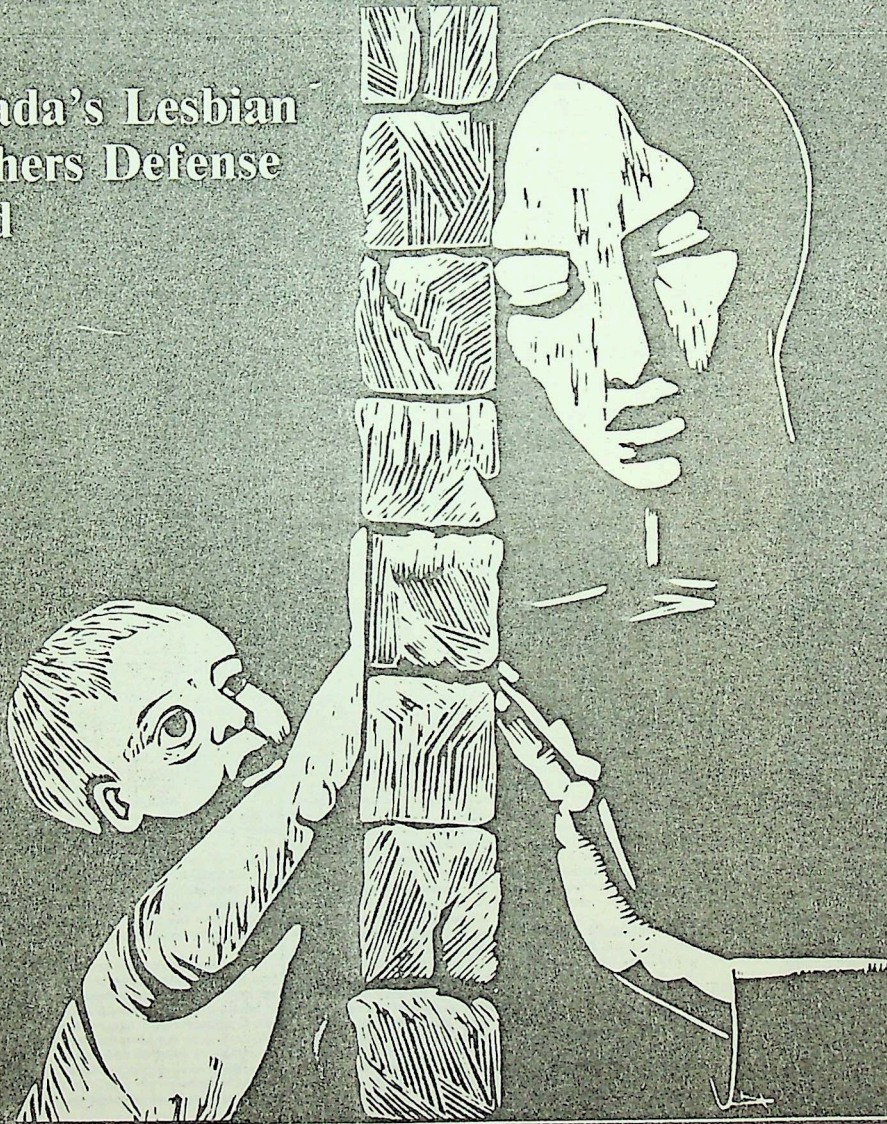
# Gay Community News

VOL. 7, NO. 2

THE GAY WEEKLY 50c

JULY 28, 1979

**Canada's Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund**



**Black Women's Poetry Weekend**

**Lesbians Win Custody**

*Cage Aux Folles Reviewed*

# North of the Border

ISSN: 0147-0728

**ews**  
JULY 28, 1979

Francie Wyland, founder of Canada's Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund, author of Motherhood, Lesbianism and Child Custody, and member of the organization Wages for Housework, was recently in interview with GCN, she talked about lesbian mothers and custody issues, explained the demands of wages for housework, and expressed her views on coalitions between lesbians and gay men and her reaction to Body Politic's article "Men Loving Boys Loving Men." Following are excerpts from that interview.

By Gia Berkman

GB: How did Canada's Lesbian Mother's Defense Fund get started?  
 FW: We started formally a year ago at the International Women's Day Celebration in Toronto. But we had really started organizing around custody issues about three years before that as a group of lesbians from "Wages for Housework." We were campaigning to get Canada's Baby Bonus raised. This is a small monthly sum that every mother gets, and a lot of mothers who depend on that money are gay.

GB: You campaigned openly as lesbians?  
 FW: Yes.  
 GB: Did you meet with a lot of resistance?  
 FW: We expected a lot of resistance and we were pretty terrified. I'd never gone door to door with a petition and said "Hello, I'm gay." We concentrated mostly in Toronto's public housing projects. We found that 90% of the straight women who answered the door said "I don't care what you are or who you sleep with, you need more money and so do I. Where do I sign?" And a large number of women said "I'm a lesbian too. I can't say anything because if it gets around the neighborhood, Children's Aid might move in on me, but I'll sign the petition and circulate it." The number of women who can be visibly lesbian is like the tip of the iceberg. Most lesbians are prevented from coming out because of being in marriages they can't afford to leave or because of the risk of losing custody.

GB: What was the result of that campaign?  
 FW: We won 10,000 signatures later the Baby Bonus was raised.  
 GB: Did you organize the Defense Fund right after that campaign?  
 FW: It was the beginning of a process. None of us at that point were mothers. As a lesbian group we were just beginning to look at the importance of talking about custody. We began to look for ways to do that — interviews and articles in the paper, TV spots. As a result of that publicity, a lesbian mother got in touch with us who was right in the middle of trying to get her kids back after they'd been with their father for four years. We started collecting a lot of data about other custody fights in Canada, the U.S. and England, networking with other defense funds, raising money to help her, and looking for sympathetic lawyers. We got a lot of publicity about her case without using her name. Two years later she won unconditional, unsupervised custody. It started us off with an amazing victory. Then, because of that, other lesbian mothers started getting in touch with us. So we founded the defense fund as a permanent resource for lesbian mothers. We try to publish information about what strategies have worked and what has failed. We look for all the publicity we can get.

GB: What kind of reception have you gotten from straight media?  
 FW: They've been amazingly receptive. It's taken a while. At first, the radio and newspapers thought they were doing us a favor. Their general perspective on gay women was that we're sick and that "lesbian mother" is a contradiction in terms. But this year the front pages of the family sections of both the big national newspapers in Canada ran articles about lesbian mothers. We also had national TV coverage and radio shows, and coverage in the feminist press and the gay press. Every time that happens, even if it's not a great article, it's publicity and as a result we get more calls from people who need some help. There's such an explosion these days. Women are not staying in intolerable marriages any more or letting their children go without a fight. I think we're one of the most exciting things happening for everybody. We're like the leading edge of everybody's fight for sexual freedom.

GB: At the Cambridge Women's Center, I met once a week with a support group of other lesbian mothers, and we also organize events with our kids. Are you doing anything like that?  
 FW: A big part of what we do is to put the mothers in touch with each other. We've just started a newsletter. We also have monthly get-togethers with lesbian mothers, their lovers and kids, in the cases where they know, the lawyers who are working with us, and any women who just want to help with the Fund in any way they can, with whatever time they've got. Then the ongoing work gets done by a core of people who have more time.

GB: Is this core group still mostly women without children?  
 FW: No, now there's a core of about a dozen mothers from all over southern Ontario. They're really an amazing mix of women, from age 50 to 16. They're assembly line workers, women who've been married to men with lots of money, welfare mothers, and women from the Prostitutes Organization. It means that every step of the way we have to tailor the work we do to who we are. Women who are active in the Defense Fund are unusually active in other areas too, such as on their jobs or in tenant organizations. We aim to talk about the situation of lesbian mothers . . . as being an important aspect of any fight that we are making.

GB: How does the Wages for Housework campaign tie into that fight?  
 FW: It ties in in a very organic way, because it's hard to talk about custody rights without talking about the need of women for money to afford to be able to keep our kids and bring them up with a standard of living that they deserve.

GB: Doesn't Canada already give "wages for housework" in its Baby Bonus program?  
 FW: The Baby Bonus is close to the structure that we want because every mother gets it. It's once a month, \$20.00 per child. It's only a pittance, but it's a kind of recognition that it costs money to raise kids.

GB: And this is given regardless of whether the woman is working or not?  
 FW: Right, and also whether she's married or not, an immigrant or not. But Wages for Housework is striving for a universal wage for all women, regardless of marital status, whether we have children or not, just to recognize the value of that hidden layer of work that society depends on. Women's basic handicap is our poverty.

GB: Why should a woman with a paying job who maintains only herself, not a family, receive extra "wages" from the government?  
 FW: Because she's doing a job that's essential to society. She's doing a job that's essential to society. She's doing a job that's essential to society.

FW: In a sense what you're saying is absolutely right, and the first women who will get that money are the mothers. That in itself will be an enormous strength to us, women without kids, because employers won't be able to palm us off with low wages any more. The biggest deprecator of our wages is the fact that there are women lining up for the lowest paying jobs around just to get their hands on something. We aim for a universal wage just because the differences in our lifestyles as women are pretty circumstantial. I live on probably half the money that a man makes. A man who works can usually afford to eat in restaurants and have his clothes cleaned. Also, whatever job I get, I'm usually looking after the people around me — and that's not in my job description.

GB: Is this universal wage only justified while there's such a large gap between the wages that men and women make on their jobs?  
 FW: I think it's the best way to attack that wage gap — looking at where it comes from. I see wages for housework as a step towards independence.

GB: Well, it may be a step toward economic independence, but at the same time wouldn't it put women in a very dependent place in regard to where that money is coming from — from the government? In some ways couldn't it hook women up to a greater dependency even if they get more financial freedom?  
 FW: Well, my experience has been that whenever I had more money it's meant more freedom for me, and it's been that way for women I know. Even though welfare is a pittance, not enough really to live on, it's meant the possibility for a lot of women to leave marriages they don't like . . . and a lot of those women are gay. We're talking about just expanding that ground under our feet so that we've got more possibilities.

GB: But I would think it needs to be expanded in some way that includes autonomy from the government, because welfare, at least in this country, often just trades a domineering husband for a domineering system that tells you how much money you can spend and how you're supposed to spend it.  
 FW: That's true. Welfare women are talking a lot about how they're making the same fight against the state that other women are making against their husbands.

GB: In addition to trying to get some kind of universal wage for housework, are your efforts also directed at creating a different kind of system so that there's not all that patriarchal control?  
 FW: Right, and we really begin with welfare. That's every woman's insurance policy. We want it expanded, with fewer controls on it. We've been pretty active in the welfare movement in Canada, and we've met a lot of lesbian mothers that way.

GB: Have you also worked with lesbians without kids? Have you found any support from them?  
 FW: Yes, we've found a lot of support from them. They're very active in the welfare movement.

## Solemn Celebration: Black Women's Poetry

By Linda Stein

The benefit poetry readings on July 6 and 7 were held in support of the Coalition for Women's Safety. This Coalition includes a number of grassroots women's groups that have recently formed to deal with the insane violence perpetrated against women. These predominantly third world women's groups came together as the brutal murders of Boston area black women increased from one to six in the present number of twelve and one white woman. The powerful weekend events were organized by the Support Group for Women's Safety who plan to do further fundraising events to support the work these active Coalition groups are doing. Special thanks go the Mercedes Tompkins who emceed on Friday night, Kate Albrecht for production, and Merle Johnston, Anita McFadden and Cheryl Williams for sound.

Both evenings were solemn celebrations, a celebration of our power as women in coming together, and our strength in surviving in a racist, misogynistic world; solemn in that we were acutely aware that what had brought us together that weekend was our victimization, especially that of black and other third world women.

The solidarity of third world women was most apparent to me on Friday night, when eight black women poets read their works at the Solomon Carter Fuller Center in Boston to an audience of over 200. Much of the poetry focused on the violence that black women are forced to live with. As Barbara Smith, a black feminist writer and activist, said that night, "Violence is always on black women's

minds, with a woman's movement, without a woman's movement." Most of the poets also included one or two celebratory poems which provided the much needed perspective that there is hope, there is still joy to be found, but without ever forgetting the deep wounds and scars implanted in women's psyches.

The evening began with La Tri-BA, a women's percussive ensemble who played with definite virtuosity and roused the energy in the room to a high intensity the syncopated rhythms and flute-like recorder riffs.

Fahamisha Shariat Brown was the first to read, interpreting other black women poets including Mari Evans, Pat Parker and Ntozake Shange among others. She spoke of the blues as the music of defiance, of "I am", rather than of resignation. She talked of violence against women, and the way it is treated, such as when the courts're fastest and murderer of women a "crime of passion." To suggest the healing energy that black women possess, Brown read a poem by Mari Evans: "I am a black woman . . . tall as a cypress/ strong beyond all definition/ still defying place and time and circumstance/ a sail impervious, indestructible/ look on me, and be renewed."

Beverly Smith read a detailed piece about the many forms of violent murder against black women, followed by Dianna Christmas whose poems were often delightful and always sensitive, such as "Dolly-Don't Die!", a poem to her daughter in which she says, ". . . come the day you die/ will you be glad you came?" Her

wry statement, as "Nothing" "white" it see black like me. Along with Smith share entries which concrete at that arose women as t. As a white larly struck problems a and white gether. through, I needed to it's now. I women bec, their e all got to new; black and non- never come women's politics, at "Smith."

"White wo ship from one of the black fem would pull

Donna was defini many wor Much of Afro-Ame and widsd contempore poems she ces in an where the each other "spirit of come back when whir sisters of it and econ

## Aux Folles ewed

# wages for housework committee

p.o. box 38, station e, toronto, canada m6h 4e1 (416) 466-7457



January 24, 1980.

Hi folks,

Two WFH Bulletins, one Grapevine, a special lesbian issue of the Body Politic, and a Forum on the value of housework later, here we are to update you on the doings of the Toronto campaign. The major news is the value of housework Forum held in October, and developments out of that. In our last mailing we emphasized the networking we had been doing with other women's and community groups around a variety of issues. That is definitely the organizational form the Toronto campaign is taking, with very exciting results.

## A View from the Kitchen: Immigrant Women Speak Out on the Value of HW

We decided that in order to deepen the debate on the value of housework, it had to be presented from the point of view of immigrant women both in Canada and in the Third World.

For the panel we invited Joan French to come up from Jamaica (she is president of the National Union of Democratic Teachers, an expert on women and underdevelopment, and an old friend of Selma's whom Frances got to know when she was living there); Sheila Arnopoulos, a Montreal reporter whose report "Immigrant Women in the Canadian Labour Force", commissioned by the Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women opened the floodgate of media interest in the situation of domestics; Amory John, a black student and welfare mother who helped write the welfare handbook "How to Get What's Ours"; and Judy.

All the women there (about 80, one third of whom were black women representing a number of different black community groups) were very excited by the presentations, and went on to unanimously pass the resolutions (on the back of the Intercede letter) in the workshop which followed. In order to give the speeches wider circulation, we are planning to reprint them soon in pamphlet form.

The ethnic media was very turned on by the Forum: major articles in the two black newspapers, an interview by Joan on the most popular Toronto black radio show which led to a dozen phone calls to our office, as well as an entire page in the Italian daily!

At the workshop, much of the discussion centred on domestic workers on work permits (which are granted by the federal government to Third World women allowing them to do domestic worker for a stated employer for a one year period, but giving them no legal



rights whatsoever). It was decided to hold a further meeting for women interested in organizing with domestics. (See below).

Joan's visit was invaluable in turning around the ongoing Canadian debate about immigration. By describing the effects of Third World underdevelopment on women, and immigration as women's struggle for the money and technology denied them at home, she laid strong groundwork for the fight against the state's "concern" that Canada can no longer "afford" immigration.

Joan got a fantastic reception wherever she shope -- to several groups of black women, black students' groups at two universities, two women's groups, a number of classes, and the Board of Directors of the Canadian Save the Children's Fund.

INTERCEDE (International Coalition to End Domestics' Exploitation). A couple of weeks after the Forum, a number of women, black and white, Wages for Housework, Employment Services for Immigrant Women, and Labour Rights for Domestic Servants formed INTERCEDE to fight, initially, to bring all domestic work under labour legislation (including minimum wage, hours of work, unemployment insurance etc.) Current plans include a meeting next month with groups from Vancouver and Montreal who are doing similar work to establish a national network; preparing a brief much like the one we did a few years ago on the Family Allowance; and fighting to get minimum wage legislation for domestics passed when it is introduced in the legislature this spring.

Domestic work is a very popular issue in the media, and INTERCEDE as well as Judy at the Immigrant Women's Centre are key reference points whenever any of them want a story.

The Bulletin on domestic workers, produced in time for the Forum, was a joint production by ESIW and WFH, with a dozen women from those groups involved in it. It's proving to be our most popular issue yet.

THE LESBIAN MOTHERS' DEFENCE FUND is continuing to grow internationally (see the interview with Francie in the centrefold of Gay Community News). They were also key in pulling together the lesbian issue of the Body Politic.

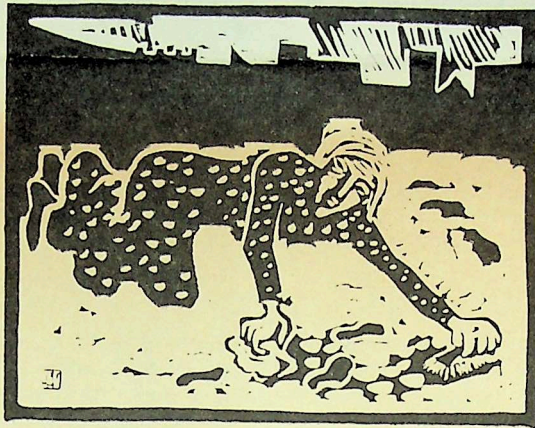
In the works is a concert at the Ontario College of Art with Robin Tyler to take place on February 29, with none other than Boo taking the lead act.

If you want additional copies of any of this material, let us know.

Power!

Toronto Wages for Housework  
Campaign

# A VIEW FROM THE KITCHEN



**Immigrant Women Speak Out  
On the Value of Housework**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1 — 5 PM  
RYERSON POLYTECHNICAL INSTITUTE  
JORGENSEN HALL  
380 VICTORIA STREET**

## **KEYNOTE PANEL**

1 PM MINI-THEATRE A-60

**JOAN FRENCH**, President, National Union of Democratic Teachers (Jamaica)  
"Housework in the Third World"

**JUDITH RAMIREZ**, Founder, Immigrant Women's Centre; Spokeswoman, Wages for  
Housework Campaign  
"Housework in Canada"

**AMORY JOHN**, Director, International Student Affairs, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute  
"The Immigrant Welfare Mother"

**SHEILA ARNOPOULOS**, Author, "Problems of Immigrant Women in the Canadian Labor Force"  
"The Immigrant Domestic Servant"

**FRANCES GREGORY**, Moderator, Housewives' Initiative

## **WORKSHOPS**

3 PM COMMON HOUR LOUNGE

- 1) Welfare Rights for Immigrant Mothers
- 2) Upgrading the Status of Immigrant Domestic

---

Supporting Groups: *Annex-Japanese Cultural Centre, Black Education Project, Communication Centre, Employment Services for Immigrant Women, Gallery, Rights for Domestic Servants, Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund, Opportunity, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Era of Women (Ryerson), International Student Campaign, Women Working with Immigrant Women*

**ORGANIZED**

# why talk about housework?

Since International Women's Year, in 1975, the value of women's work in the home has emerged as one of the most vital issues in the drive for equal rights. As part of its "Decade for Women", the United Nations has recently called on all countries to include housework in their Gross National Products. To educate public opinion, the United Nations has compiled resource materials from around the world which analyse and quantify women's work in the home.

In Canada, two landmark studies, **Opportunity for Choice** (Statistics Canada and the C.D. Howe Research Institute) and **Five Million Women** (Advisory Council on the Status of Women) mark the beginning of the new trend to reassess the value of work in the home, long taken for granted as a social and economic "given".

In Ontario, popular materials such as "About Face: Toward a Positive Image of the Housewife" (Ontario Status of Women Council) have received wide circulation and effectively focus public attention on the hidden contribution which wives and mothers make to society.

At a recent public forum at the St. Lawrence Centre, in Toronto, women's rights advocates catalogued the negative psychological effects which stem from society's failure to recognize housework as a productive activity. Chief among these are a sense of isolation and low self-esteem — common occupational hazards for the housewife. The result is an invisible barrier to meaningful participation in life outside the home, which robs the entire community of valuable human resources.

This is especially true for immigrant women, who also face racial, cultural, and linguistic barriers. The immigrant mother carries the heaviest burden during the family's long and often difficult adjustment to life in Canada. Frequently suffering from culture shock herself, and from inter-generational conflict, she is the least likely member of the family to receive community support and recognition. Denied a basic sense of accomplishment for her role in the home, she is therefore deprived of the springboard to greater involvement in the "world outside".

Never is the isolation of the immigrant mother greater than when she becomes a sole-support parent, for whatever reason. If not unaware of her right to welfare, for example, she fears community disapproval because "immigrants are here to work". The common prejudice against welfare as "charity" locks many an immigrant mother into dead-end marriages or dead-end jobs.

The low status of work in the home contributes to the exploitation of women in the paid labor force. Immigrant women, in particular, are concentrated in low-paying jobs such as office cleaning, the textile industry, and domestic servitude, where efforts to upgrade the pay and working conditions are difficult, at best, as long as housework is regarded as an unproductive activity by society at large.

Join the debate on the value of women's work in the home, and its effects on immigrant women in the family, the community, and the paid labor force!

4/19 175

Cara Maria Rosa —

è uscito proprio oggi quest'articolo sulla Toronto Star — il giornale più grosso (circ. 765,000!) — che ci fa da pubblicità per il 2 Maggio. Malgrado il fatto che la questione del salario è impostata male, cioè "pay" for housewives, etc — siamo riuscite a dire alcune cose fondamentali quale chi è casalinga, che vogliamo soldi che il nostro potere è il gran numero che riciamo, ecc. ecc. Comunque si apre qui per noi tutta la questione del media, chi ci appoggia, come, insomma chi ci portiamo dietro — tutti problemi nuovi che però voi in Italia avete già affrontato. Infatti Silvia, in questi giorni, sto preparando un documento sull'organizzazione che si rifà a tutti i vostri documenti — una specie di rimpasto che a noi sarà molto utile.

Il libro "Le operai della casa" è stupendo! lo tradurrò io (ci siamo divisi un po' i lavori con Silvia — Claire si occuperà del francese) appena superiamo il 2 Maggio. C'è molto da fare ma il numero di quelle serie e responsabili cresce pure.

Ti mando anche una copia del questionario che usavamo al nuovo Centro Donne dove lavoro io. Siamo andati alla radio già due volte e le donne italiane hanno reagito molto favorevolmente. Ti terrò informata perché è uno sviluppo veramente bello questo — tutta la nostra pubblicità <sup>per il 2 Mag.</sup> (accusa) è stata distribuita qui a Tor. Dalla Coalizione di gruppi etnici che conto circa 70 organizzazioni. Si par-

leva anche — ovviamente — Della donna immigrata  
il 2 Maggio perché é assurdo a Tor. non  
collegarsi con il grosso numero di donne ingrate.  
Il movimento femminista "ufficiale" ne parla poco —  
ma noi, fra l'altro, vogliamo sollevare  
questa cosa. Sono stata invitata ad una  
grosso conferenza locale su "Women in the  
Work Force" per parlare della donna ingrate  
e dall'agenda di <sup>in anticipo</sup> distribuzione (si terrà il 3 Maggio)  
hanno incluso ~~il problema~~ come parte  
del discorso sull'immigrazione il salario al  
lavoro domestico! Perciò s'inizia a fare strada.

Parlando con Selma qualche settimana fa  
al telefono ho deciso di cambiare il miei  
programmi estivi — cioè, io e Silvia ci reclameremo  
in Inghilterra verso il 12 luglio per assistere  
alla Europe-wide conferenza. Dopo di che ver-  
remo in Italia, e di lì chi sa dove — ci si  
dovrebbe riposare anche da qualche parte.  
Comunque ho molta voglia di vederti e  
conoscere le altre e parlare più a lungo  
della vostra situazione lì — e stata  
una bellissima notizia la vostra mobilitazione  
per la questione dell'aborto — veramente una  
vittoria per la nostra linea politica.  
(abbiamo ricevuto qui dei documenti  
che tentano di stabilire dei contatti internazionali  
che ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ — li hai visti?)

Chiudo per ora — fatti sentire  
ti saluto cara mente,

Judy —

Mar 9  
The Toronto Star

# Children better off in foster homes, mothers union says

By JO CARSON

The clenched fist was shown yesterday as 100 members of the Mother-Led Union demanded a raise in allowance payments.

They marched from the Legislative building, Queen's Park, to a panelled Macdonald Block room to present their case before representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Clenched-fist posters were displayed and voices edged with anger punched out their complaints against Premier William Davis and Social Services Minister Rene Brunelle.

Bearing the brunt of the criticism for the Ontario Government were Mr. Brunelle's assistant deputy minister, John Anderson, and Len Heagle, executive director income security division for the ministry.

Both found themselves without a defence as the women charged that the men were "only caretakers" with no authority to speak to their demands.

Jean Lance, mother of four, pointed out in a presentation that the recent increase of 13 per cent given as a children's allowance "figured out to be 25 cents more a day per child."

But unions around us every day are striking. We're learning . . . from the nurses with their raise of 50 per cent. MPs demanded a 50 per cent increase on top of an already enormous salary."

Mrs. Lance pointed out that mothers who receive benefits work against overwhelming difficulties to raise their children. "Would the Government rather that they do their job half-right . . . and see these future citizens instead in penal institutes or repeating the poverty cycle?"

She said the cost to the taxpayer would be much higher if the mothers neglected their responsibilities.

"Would the Government think it better if all benefit mothers give up their children? Would the taxpayer not have to pay higher taxes because foster mothers receive three times more than we mothers do for doing the same job?"

"Maybe that's the answer: we all switch our kids around in foster homes and then we will know that our kids are financially taken care of," she said to loud applause and bitter laughter.

Mrs. Lance said the Mother-Led Union demands the right for benefit mothers to earn more without being penalized on their allowance payments.

She outlined the inequity of the present allowable earnings: A mother with one child may earn \$100 a month, but the mother with eight children is allowed only the same earnings.

"How can her children benefit? We are asking that the amount be \$100 per month for each mother, plus \$25 for each child . . .

"As it is now, mothers can work only two days a week. Where can you find work for two days a week? Besides, our earnings can be almost wiped out by paying babysitters, transportation and for clothes. It does not pay for most mothers to work with the present setup . . . How could a mother get day care?"

Her group cannot get part-time day care, Mrs. Lance said. She argued that the work done in the home should be considered as part of a full-time job.

"We are ostracized and

can't get day care because we are told we do not work full-time. So the only alternative for benefit mothers is to pay a babysitter.

"We believe the day-care system should be changed so that if a mother wants to work part time she can get day care, or if she wishes some time away from her children for a break she can get day care too."

Joan Clark, chairman of the Mother-Led Union, attacked a statement made by Premier Davis. She quoted: "Ontario is a place where men, women and children of every walk of

life and every background thrive and prosper in an atmosphere of decency and dignity."

Mrs. Clark noted that the Government's proposed guaranteed annual income schemes, according to the Ontario ministers, have been designed to give people the opportunity to work their way out of welfare.

There was loud applause as she said: "If work was the way to get off welfare, there certainly wouldn't be any mothers on welfare."

Mrs. Clark argued that 3-500,000 Canadian women with

children should be regarded as fulltime members of the labor force.

"Decency and dignity require this," she said. And if the Government is serious about a guaranteed annual income, a good place to start would be to bring family allowances in line with other child support programs—for example the foster child rates of more than \$100 a month per child.

Because most women fall into the working-poor class when they enter the labor force, she cautioned the audience to examine closely any discussion of a guaranteed annual income.

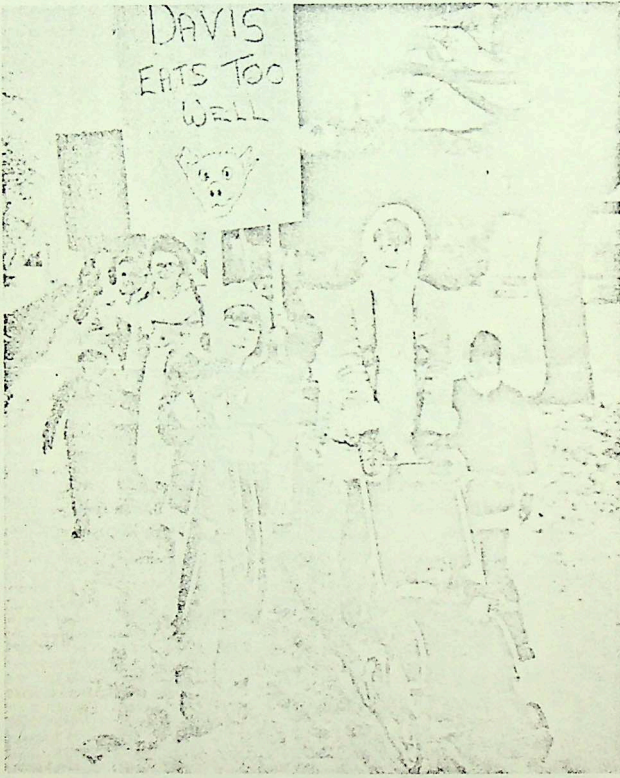
"It would be very wise at this point to be sure that women are not being divided against each other. Whether she decides to work in her home or takes a second job outside the home, she is being

handed the same amount of peanuts."

Mrs. Clark voiced the suspicion that proposals for the guaranteed income are political games "to keep taxpayers mad at the poor and let government off the hook for all their mismanagement, waste and inability to set up priorities that would make Ontario the place described by Premier Davis."

When Mr. Anderson prepared to say thank you and accept the presentations for Mr. Brunelle, he was faced with an antagonistic audience.

Sallie Shum, mother of two children, said she was not ready to accept a mere thank you. "We are going to come back and back. We will not be divided by the stupid, bureaucratic little ploys of being passed from one caretaker to another. Deliver that message to Mr. Brunelle."



Members of the Mother-Led Union march at Queen's Park to ask for more money.

# TODAS AS MULHERES SÃO DONAS DE CASA

SEJAMOS OU NÃO NOVAS, VELHAS, CASADAS, SOLTEIRAS, COM FILHOS SEM FILHOS, NA ESCOLA, EM CASA, NO ESCRITÓRIO, HOSPITAL, OU FÁBRICA, TODAS NÓS DESEJAMOS TER MAIS TEMPO LIVRE E MENOS TRABALHO. ESTAMOS CANSADAS DE RECEBER ORDENS A DE POR OS INTERESSES DOS OUTROS SEMPRE PRIMEIRO, SEJAM ELSELES OS DOS NOSSOS MARIDOS, FILHOS, PAIS, DOENTES, OU CHEFES. PELA RAZÃO DE QUE SOMOS MULHERES TODOS NOS FORCAM A SERVIR OUTROS ONDE QUER QUE ESTEJAMOS - TODAS SOMOS MÃES E ESPOSAS - E NÓS QUEREMOS SER PAGAS POR TODO O TRABALHO QUE FAZEMOS.

NÓS QUEREMOS: PA



# SALÁRIO PARA TODAS AS DONAS DE CASA

EM TODO O MUNDO OS TRABALHADORES CELEBRAM O 2 DE MAIO.

AS MULHERES TAMBÉM SÃO TRABALHADORAS.

VAMOS SAIR DOS NOSSOS LUGARES DE TRABALHO, DENTRO OU FORA

DO CASA, E JUNTARMO - NOS NA:

## MARCHA DO DIA 2 DE MAIO

TODAS AS MULHERES, IRMÃS NESTE MOVIMENTO, EM ITALIA, ALEMANHA, INGLATERRA, E ESTADOS UNIDOS, VÃO TAMBÉM SAIR EM MARCHA NO DIA 2 DE MAIO. NOS ESTAMOS A ORGANIZAR - NOS INTERNACIONALMENTE.

LUGAR: CITY HALL HORA: 12:00 NOON  
FESTIVAL & FILMS 7:30 P.M. DO DIA 2 DE MAIO 342 JARVIS ST.  
PARA MAIS INFORMAÇÃO CONTACTE THE TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK  
COMMITTEE 532-4647 924-7161 (JUDY) 922-2084 (OFFICE)

# NOI DONNE SIAMO TUTTE CASALINGHE

CHI GIOVANE, CHI ANZIANA, CHI SPOSATA, CHI MADRE, CHI STUDENTESSA, CHI IN FABBRICA,  
UFFICIO, O IN OSPEDALE, VOGLIAMO TUTTE ESSERE PUI LIBERE E MENO CARICHE DI LAVORO.  
SIAMO STUFE DI ESSERE SEMPRE A DISPOSIZIONE DEGLI ALTRI, DI SERVIRE SEMPRE I NOSTRI  
MARTI, PADRI, FRATELLI, FIGLI, PROFESSORI, PAZIENTI, O CAPIUFFICIO- OVUNGUE, CI  
TRATTANO TUTTE DA MADRI E MOGLI. MA ADESSO VOGLIAMO I SOLDI PER TUTTO IL LAVORO CHE  
FINO ADESSO CI HANNO FATTO FARE "PER AMORE" PERCHE SIAMO DONNE. BASTA CON I RICATTI  
VOGLIAMO.

# IL SALARIO AL LAVORO DOMESTICO

IN TUTTO IL MONDO GLI OPERAI CELEBRANO IL 1 MAGGIO.

**ANCHE NOI DONNE SIAMO OPERAIE**

LASCIAMO, DUNQUE, IL NOSTRO POSTO DI LAVORO DENTRO O FUORI CASA E TROVIAMOCI



## TUTTE IN PIAZZA IL 2 MAGGIO

ANCHE LE NOSTRE SORELLE IN ITALIA, GERMANI, GRAN BRETAGNA, E GLI STATI UNITI,  
MARCERANNO IL 2 MAGGIO. SIAMO IN TANTE!

LUOGO: MUNICIPIO (CITY HALL)

ORARIO: MEZZOGIORNO

PER INFORMAZIONE TELEFONATE A GIUDITTA PRESSO IL "COMITATO DI TORONTO PER IL SALARIO  
AL LAVORO DOMESTICO" 532-4647 O 924-7161



# ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWIVES

WHETHER WE ARE YOUNG, OLD, MARRIED, SINGLE, WITH CHILDREN OR NOT, ON WELFARE, IN SCHOOL, IN THE HOME, OFFICE, HOSPITAL OR FACTORY, WE ALL WANT MORE FREEDOM, MORE TIME, AND LESS WORK. WE ARE TIRED OF TAKING ORDERS AND PUTTING EVERYONE ELSE FIRST, BE IT OUR HUSBANDS, FATHERS, TEACHERS, CHILDREN, PATIENTS OR SUPERVISORS. BECAUSE WE ARE WOMEN, THEY EXPECT US TO SERVE OTHERS ALL THE TIME; WHEREVER WE GO, WE ARE ALL WIVES AND MOTHERS. WE WANT THE MONEY FOR ALL THE WORK WE'RE SUPPOSED TO DO "FOR LOVE!" WE'VE HAD ENOUGH BLACKMAIL! WE WANT:

# WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

ALL OVER THE WORLD, WORKERS CELEBRATE MAY DAY.

WOMEN ARE WORKERS TOO!

LET'S LEAVE OUR PLACES OF WORK, WHETHER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE HOME AND JOIN TOGETHER



## march for may day on may 2

OUR SISTERS IN ITALY, GERMANY, GREAT BRITAIN, AND THE U.S. ARE ALSO MARCHING MAY 2. WE ARE BUILDING OUR POWER INTERNATIONALLY!

PLACE: CITY HALL

TIME: 12 NOON (BRING YOUR LUNCH)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE.

CALL OUR OFFICE AT 922-2084, MON. TO SAT., 12 TO 6:30 P.M.

# TODAS LAS MUJERES SON AMAS DE CASA

SEA LO QUE FUERE, JOVEN, VIEJA, CASADA, CON HIJOS O SIN ELLOS, EN LA ESCUELA, EN LA FABRICA, OFICINAA U HOSPITAL, TODAS NOSOTRAS QUEREMOS MAS LIBERTAD, MAS TIEMPO Y MENOS TRABAJO. ESTAMOS CANSADAS DE RECIBIR ORDENES Y QUE PONGAN ANTES QUE A NOSOTRAS , YA SEAN NUESTROS MARIDOS, PADRES, HERMANOS, HIJOS, MAESTROS, PACIENTES O SUPERIORES. PORQUE SOMOS MUJERES NOS PONGAN A SERVIR A OTROS TODO EL TIEMPO - DONDE QUIERA QUE VAYAMOS - TODAS NOSOTRAS SOMOS MADRES Y ESPOSAS. QUEREMOS DINERO POR EL TRABAJO QUE ELLOS ESPERAN QUE HAGAMOS 'POR AMOR'. HEMOS TENIDO CHANTAGE MAS QUE SUFICIENTE.

QUEREMOS

## **SALARIOS POR EL TRABAJO QUE HACEMOS EN CASA**

EN TODO EL MUNDO LOS TRABAJADORES CELEBRAN EL DIA DE MAYO. LAS MUJERES SON TRABAJADORES TAMBIEN! DEJEMOS NUESTRO LUGAR DE TRABAJO, YA SEA DENTRO O FUERA DE CASA Y JUNTEMONOS EN LA

### **MARCHA DEL 2 DE MAYO**

NUESTRAS HERMANAS DE ITALIA, ALEMANIA, GRAN BRETANA, ESTADOS UNIDOS, MARCHARAN TAMBIEN EL 2 DE MAYO.

LUGAR: CITY HALL

HORA: 12 p.m. NOON

FESTIVAL,  
7:30, VIERNES,  
EL 2 DE MAYO  
342 JARVIS ST.



FOR INFORMATION CALL THE 'TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK  
COMMITTEE' 532-4647.

# WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK



MAY 2

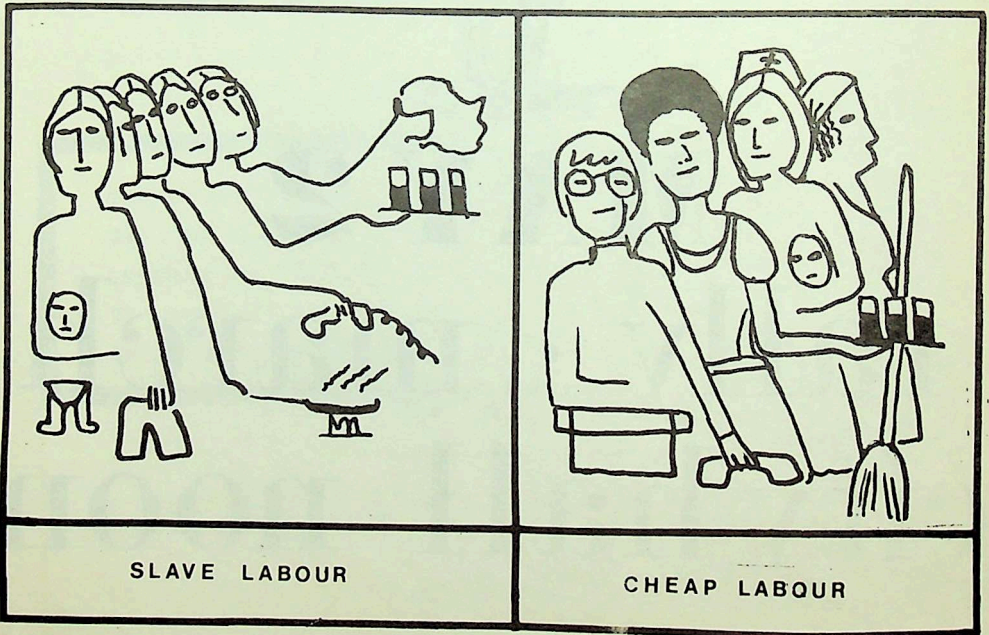
rally · march  
city hall - noon

## ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWORKERS

*We all cook, clean, sew, be sexy, be good listeners, wash the dishes, look after children, smile a lot, do the laundry, do the shopping, make ends meet, decorate, etc. And we do it all for no wages.*

*When we work outside the home we are doing two jobs - for half the price of one. Because women are used to working without wages, the bosses can pay us less and get away with it. Because we are used to thinking that housework is "trivial" or "comes naturally" to us, we end up in jobs that are just an extension of housework; teaching, nursing, cleaning, waitressing, office work, prostitution, social work, etc.*

WE ARE ALWAYS CHEAP LABOUR OUTSIDE THE HOME  
BECAUSE WE ARE SLAVE LABOUR IN THE HOME



ALL OVER THE WORLD WOMEN ARE FIGHTING AGAINST THE WORK WE DO

IN ENGLAND: Women are refusing to pay rent on the houses they have kept clean for years. When the government tried to take the family allowance away from women a national campaign was mounted which stopped them.

IN GERMANY: Three thousand women went out on strike to win one paid day a week to do their shopping and laundry etc.

IN THE U.S.A.: Women in a psychiatric hospital in New York demanded and won one hour off a week to organize for better wages. When that wasn't enough they demanded and won another hour.

IN CANADA: In Ottawa secretaries went out demanding to be paid for the amount of work they do rather than by the status of their bosses. In Toronto the Mother - Led Union, an organization of welfare mothers, is demanding parity with foster mothers who get a lot more money for the same work.

IN NORTHERN IRELAND: Women are waging rent strikes and are self-reducing utility rates. They are daily facing the violence of British troops and although hundreds of women have been jailed resistance is growing.

IN SPAIN: Women are in the forefront in the resistance against fascism. They face torture and death. Two feminists have recently been accused of assassinating the prime minister.

IN ITALY: Some women in Trento are on trial for announcing that they have had abortions. An abortion clinic was closed in Florence and the women and doctors arrested. Ten - thousand women marched in protest in Rome.

IN INDIA: The State is bribing women with transistor radios to submit to sterilization and birth control. Internationally women want the right to choose whether or not to have children.

---

WE ARE ALL    TEACHERS   \*   SECRETARIES   \*   NURSES   \*   SOCIAL WORKERS   \*  
CLEANERS   \*   PROSTITUTES   \*   WAITRESSES   \*   COOKS   \*   CHILD  
CARE WORKERS

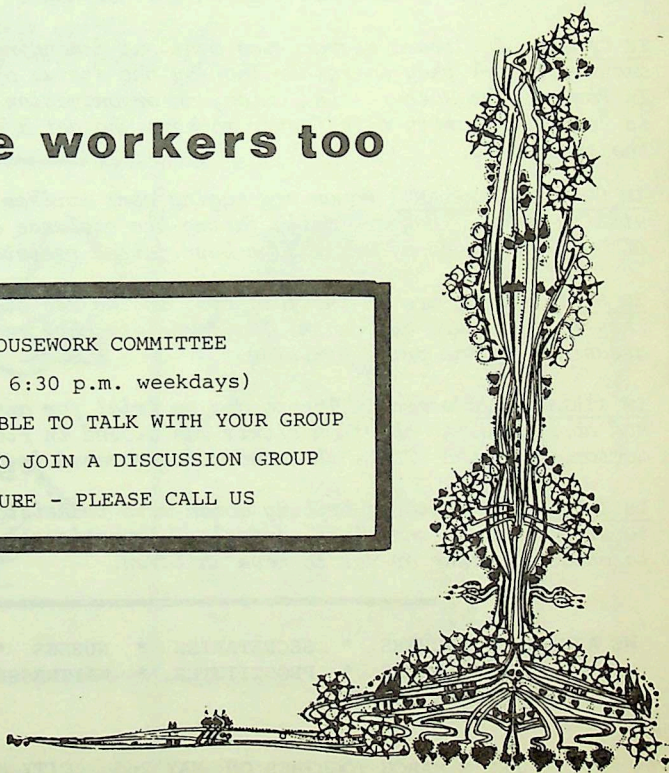
LET'S MARCH TOGETHER ON    MAY 2nd    CITY HALL AT NOON

# MAYDAY IS INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY

if women were paid for all we do  
there'd be a lot of wages due

women are workers too

TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE  
922-2084 (1 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. weekdays)  
SPEAKERS ARE AVAILABLE TO TALK WITH YOUR GROUP  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN A DISCUSSION GROUP  
OR GET SOME LITERATURE - PLEASE CALL US



C E N T R O D O N N E

Questionnaire for Italian Immigrant Housewives

I General Information

- name
- age
- marital status
- citizenship
- place of birth
- occupation
- occupation of spouse
- schooling
- in Italy
- in Canada
- language(s)
- spoken
- read
- written
- do you have a driver's license ?
- do you have a library card ?
- what materials do you read ?
- do you belong to any organizations ?
- do you go to church ?
- does your husband ?
- why did you move to Canada ?

II Work Inside the Home

1. How many people live in your house?  
  What are their relationships to you?
2. How many people do the housework?  
  Are they male or female?
3. What are the ages of your children?  
  Are they at home:  
    nursery school:  
    school:
4. How many hours per day does housework/childcare take you?  
  
  What are the major responsibilities involved in each?
5. How does this compare with the type and amount of work your husband does?
6. What is your attitude toward housework/childcare, ie. do you see it as 'women's work' ?

7. Do you have any time for yourself?

How much per day?

Who takes care of the children if you have an appointment or go shopping, etc.?

8. Who does your housework/childcare when you are sick?

9. Do you ever get a holiday?

Do you think you deserve one?

10. Do you have any money of your own?

11. Do you consider the baby bonus your money?

How is it spent and who decides?

12. Who makes the financial decisions?

Who pays the bills?

13. Why did you get married?

14. Did you plan the size of your family?

15. Do you think women inside the home work as hard as men outside the home?

16. Do you think housework/childcare is "real" work ?

Why doesn't it get a wage like other work?



17. What would you do if you had a wage for housework/child-care?

18. What is the worst part of being a housewife?

What is the best part?

III Work Outside the Home

1. Have you ever worked outside the home?  
in Italy:

in Canada:

2. Have they been seasonal, part-time, full-time, temporary, etc.?  
in Italy:

in Canada:

3. What is the highest pay you have ever received?

How long ago?

Where?

4. Are you presently working outside the home?

Where?

What do you do?

Are the majority of workers male or female?

Is your supervisor male or female?

How many ethnic groups are represented?

Are you able to communicate with one another?

Would you be interested in taking English lessons on the job on company time, your time, or combination?

How many hours per day do you work?

How much time does it take you to travel to and from work daily?

How much money do you make?

Are lunch hour and coffee breaks included?

5. Do you fit your housework in with your outside job? How?

6. When do you go shopping?

To the laundromat, etc.?

7. Who takes care of your children while you are working?

How much does that cost you?

How much is left from your wages?

8. Are you satisfied with the care your children receive?

How much time do they spend with their father?

10. Why do you work?

to help out the family:

to get out of the house:

to have money of your own:

to meet other women/men:

11. Would you be able to meet other women if you didn't go outside the home to work?

12. Do you know any non-Italian women?

What do you think of them?

13. Do you have any friends?  
male or female?

how much time do you spend together?

14. Is your situation similar to other women's you know?

15. Do you think younger women will have the same life as you?  
Why?

16. Would you encourage your daughter to marry as soon as possible?  
Why?

17. All told, do you feel you work as hard as your husband?

#### IV Sexuality

1. Making love has often been described as a duty or responsibility of a wife to her husband. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. Do you ever make love when you don't want to?

3. Do you ever make love when he doesn't want to?

4. Do you usually enjoy making love?

5. Are you ever too tired from housework ( or other work) to make love?

6. Do you have as much time as you would like to make love?

The right conditions?

7. Have you ever been told you are frigid?

Do you think you are?

8. Do you tell him what you would like him to do to arouse or satisfy you?

Does he do it?

9. Do you do the things he wants you to do even if you don't want to?

Why?

10. Do you ever masturbate ?

How do you feel about masturbation?

11. Do you ever feel sexually attracted to other men?

To women?

12. Do you talk about sex with your children?

With your friends?

V. Problems of Immigrant Life

1. What is the biggest change for you from life in Italy

2. Has it created special problems for your family?  
husband:

children:

yourself:

parents:

3. Describe any problems you have encountered in dealing with  
schools:

government agencies:

hospitals:

immigrant services:

4. Do you think there is a need for a Women's Center for immigrant women like yourself?

Are you interested in participating in discussion groups with women in a similar situation?

Why?

What is the most useful thing the Women's Center could do with its resources?



Inside story, page H3  
Comics, page H5  
Leisure, pages H6 and H7



# SHOULD HOUSEWIVES BE PAID?

A month ago 15 Metro women set up a Wages for Housework Committee after a year's study of the idea.

On May 2, women in Toronto and groups of housewives in Britain, Europe, North and Central America will rally to lobby for pay.

Is it economically feasible for a government to pay housewives?

Canadian statistics for 1972 showed there were more than 3.9 million women keeping house. If each had been paid a minimum salary of \$5,000 it would have cost Canada more than \$19 billion.

Star staff writer Anne Carey interviewed several women and reports their divided views here.

Star photos by Dick Darrell

Throwing in her kitchen towel is Frances Gregory who thinks housewives should be paid for toil

**YES:** says mother Frances Gregory the state benefits from our work

**I**F you work, you should be paid for it.

That is the simplest argument for paying wages for housework in a capitalist society where labor is rewarded with money.

And that's the argument made by Judith Adam, the co-ordinator of the Mayor's Task Force on the Status of Women, for attaching a dollar value to housework.

In that respect, she is in full agreement with the new Toronto Wages for Housework Committee set up a month ago by a core group of 15 Metro women who have been studying this new concept for over a year.

They are part of an international network of small groups of housewives in Italy, Germany, the United States,

pendence as well as financial compensation.

It is leery of tax cuts and subsidies as pay because these could be linked to the income-earner's tax return.

"We don't want our men disciplining us if we don't come up with dinner on time, or sex that night," said Ms. Gregory. "And, we'd fight very strongly if government said 'okay, we'll send around \$25 a week and a job inspector.'"

Ms. Ramirez said that, recently, 3,000 women struck a factory in Germany to win 5 days' pay for 4 days of factory work and a paid day to shop and do housework.

Those women could pressure their employer, she said, because they were already earning a wage and could just

asked The Star not to reveal the office's street address so that they will not be harassed by crank visitors.

Corporations and governments have not assigned a monetary value to housework, nor has the law, said Toronto lawyer Rosalie Abella.

"The woman who is at home and can't go out to work, wants to be able to acquire assets and build for her future security," she said. "But, during the course of that woman's life, there may be no way (under present property law) that she is entitled to any money."

"I'm definitely for recognizing the housewife's contribution, and if you take away the legislative problems, I'm for wages for housework," said Ms. Abella.

**NO:** says bank manager Kathleen Cook it would be a big cheating set-up

"The economy couldn't possibly afford people staying at home and being paid for housework."

That is a fundamental reason for not paying wages for housework and, in capitalist societies, economic arguments can't be ignored or downgraded.

That is also the opinion of bank manager Kathleen Cook, who runs the branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia at Jarvis and Charles Sts.

"Housework is the hardest work and the end result is not concrete. I wouldn't stay home and do it for a million dollars. Housewives should command the biggest salary they can, but it just is not possible," said Mrs. Cook.

"Most families I see these days have to have both adult members working to support the family, and I can't see

gain a freedom to do the work "that keeps body and soul together" in their own time, at their own rate of speed, without supervision or interference from anyone, said Mrs. Cook.

"I don't think wages for housework is workable, period. Who's going to support these women, if their husbands don't?" asked Mrs. Cook.

If the government became their employer, "paying housewives would turn out to be the biggest cheating set-up yet," she said.

Marjorie Pinney, executive officer of the Ontario Council on the Status of Women, is another who asks where government would find the tax dollars to pay housewives.

"Why should society be maintaining X number of women to clean X number

"It's absolutely ridiculous. It couldn't be more stupid. If these 15 women in Toronto have the panacea, then I'd like to meet them. I've looked at this for at least 20 years. There isn't a country in the world yet, that has come up with an answer," she told The Star.

"Every actuary I've talked to has said it's absolutely a nightmare. It can't be done," she said.

Mrs. Sabia said there are other ways to ensure that women who choose to stay home get their money's worth—through property laws, family benefits, a guaranteed annual income and pension plans. And they deserve a share in their husband's property and his business, she said.

Dull mediocrity

capitalist society where labor is rewarded with money.

And that's the argument made by Judith Adam, the co-ordinator of the Mayor's Task Force on the Status of Women, by attaching a dollar value to housework.

In that respect, she is in full agreement with the new Toronto Wages for Housework Committee set up a month ago by a core group of 15 Metro women who have been studying this new concept for over a year.

They are part of an international network of small groups of housewives in Italy, Germany, the United States, Britain, Sweden, France, Mexico and Canada who are forming pressure groups to lobby for pay.

Where the committee and Ms. Adam (among others) part company is on the question of how housework should be paid for and by whom.

"The federal government has such tunnel vision," said Ms. Adam. "It sees working as something that takes place in public situations. They just think this concept is pie in the sky."

But, she added, the federal government already has shown it can implement and fund complex social concepts like medicare, unemployment insurance, baby bonuses and welfare.

### Hard cash

Wages for housework "definitely could be implemented" through special subsidies, tax cuts and other forms of monetary relief, said Ms. Adam.

The committee disagrees. It believes that cold, hard cash should be the form of payment for housework. It also believes that all who do housework should be paid whether they are male or female, single or married, poor or affluent, with or without children.

Two committee spokeswomen talked to The Star: Frances Gregory, 27, who lives common-law and is childless, and Judy Ramirez, 28, who is also childless and is separated from her husband. They describe themselves as housewives.

"We are conditioned to that role and we function as housewives whether full-time or part-time," said Ms. Ramirez.

"Business and government are getting two workers for the price of one (for the full-time housewife)," said Ms. Gregory. "The corporations and the state really do benefit from our labor so they should pay for it."

"We give them a labor force—ourselves, the men we serve, and the next generation of workers," said Ms. Ramirez. "That's the commodity we produce as housewives."

The committee argues that money must be paid directly to the housewife so that she can gain a measure of inde-

pendence, because these could be linked to the income-earner's tax return.

"We don't want our men disciplining us if we don't come up with dinner on time, or sex that night," said Ms. Gregory. "And, we'd fight very strongly if government said 'okay, we'll send around \$25 a week and a job inspector.'"

Ms. Ramirez said that, recently, 3,000 women struck a factory in Germany to win 5 days' pay for 4 days of factory work and a paid day to shop and do housework.

Those women could pressure their employer, she said, because they were already earning a wage and could hurt the economy by withdrawing their productivity.

### Only one lever

"But, the invisibility of housework makes it hard to identify," admitted Ms. Ramirez. That means the only lever available to the full-time housewife is her numbers.

"All housework should be paid for, whether women or men do it. And men should also get in on the struggle for it," said Ms. Gregory.

The Toronto Wages for Housework Committee is only for women, she added. "because housework is so predominantly women's work at this point."

The committee plans a rally at City Hall on May 2. Women interested should call 922-2084.

The committee has already received crank phone calls and Ms. Gregory



MEMBER of the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee planning May 2 City Hall rally is Judy Ramirez.

Corporations and governments have not assigned a monetary value to housework, nor has the law, said Toronto lawyer Rosalie Abella.

"The woman who is at home and can't go out to work, wants to be able to acquire assets and build for her future security," she said. "But, during the course of that woman's life, there may be no way (under present property law) that she is entitled to any money."

"I'm definitely for recognizing the housewife's contribution, and if you take away the legislative problems, I'm for wages for housework," said Ms. Abella.

"But, there is a serious problem here. Who pays them?" she added.

Ursula Appolloni, the Liberal MP for York South, objects to the idea that the government should be the paymaster for housework.

She suggests that husbands who can afford to should do so; the government could then offer the husband-breadwinner tax incentives "which we hope he would pass on to his wife."

"We mustn't give tax incentives to those who don't really need them," said Mrs. Appolloni. But, she believes our society should put a monetary value on housework.

### Tough questions

Should the quality of housework as well as the family income, size of home and number of children be the criteria for pay? All of these are tough questions but they're only the tip of the iceberg, Mrs. Appolloni said.

"The main problem would be to form an administration to see if the job is being done," she concluded.

When a wage for housework is publicly debated, it is important to remember the basic job benefits presently enjoyed by many housewives.

In return for skills involved in up to 12 occupations—dietitian, food buyer, cook, dishwasher, housekeeper, laundress, seamstress, maintenance worker, gardener, chauffeur, practical nurse and nursemaid—the housewife can look forward to:

—Food, clothing and shelter, but no salary.

—A work-week which requires she be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

—No pension plan.

—Other fringe benefits such as holidays, extended health, medical and accident insurance are at the discretion of the employer.

—Job security is not guaranteed, especially as she approaches middle age. Severance pay is also at the discretion of the employer, and her job-skills can't be transferred easily to a similar position.

That is a fundamental reason for not paying wages for housework and, in capitalist societies, economic arguments can't be ignored or downgraded.

That is also the opinion of bank manager Kathleen Cook, who runs the branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia at Jarvis and Charles Sts.

"Housework is the hardest work and the end result is not concrete. I wouldn't stay home and do it for a million dollars. Housewives should command the biggest salary they can, but it just is not possible," said Mrs. Cook.

"Most families I see these days have to have both adult members working to support the family, and I can't see very many working women willing to support other women to stay at home," Mrs. Cook told The Star.

### Basic choice

She herself has worked all her life, raised a family and done the necessary housework. Now she can afford to hire people to help with the housework.

Freedom of choice is a basic tenet in our democratic society, and in choosing to stay home women freely choose unsalaried work, said Mrs. Cook.

In return for no salary, housewives



WORKING women won't pay taxes to support women who stay at home says bank manager Kathleen Cook.

own time, at their own rate of speed, without supervision or interference from anyone, said Mrs. Cook.

"I don't think wages for housework is workable, period. Who's going to support these women, if their husbands don't?" asked Mrs. Cook.

If the government became their employer, "paying housewives would turn out to be the biggest cheating set-up yet," she said.

Marjorie Pinney, executive officer of the Ontario Council on the Status of Women, is another who asks where government would find the tax dollars to pay housewives.

"Why should society be maintaining X number of women to clean X number of floors? It's a wasteful use of energy," she said.

"I wouldn't be against paying for it, but economically it's ridiculous," she said. "Society can't find enough tax dollars."

Housework would have to become a more public activity, through community kitchens and laundry facilities for example, if government was to pay for it, Mrs. Pinney suggested.

No government would pay unless it could be monitored, she said.

### It's ridiculous

Banking credits with the government that could be applied to buying retraining, day care, tuition, etc. by full-time housewives is one suggested payment method.

Mrs. Pinney said, that although this would require federal-provincial-municipal co-operation, the three levels of government have solved such problems before and could do so again.

A ny wholesale re-distribution of money income within the economy to include a new group of as yet unsalaried workers who number in the millions would be a massive undertaking.

"Paying housewives cold cash is out and out the worst form of socialism that could bankrupt this country," said Laura Sabia, chairperson of the Ontario Status of Women Council.

What would it cost to replace the housewife with professionals capable of doing her work? New York's Chase Manhattan Bank, in 1972, worked it out as follows:

JOB	HOURS PER WEEK	RATE PER HOUR	COST PER WEEK
Dietitian	1.2	\$4.50	\$ 5.40
Food buyer	3.3	\$3.50	\$11.55
Cook	13.1	\$3.25	\$42.58
Dishwasher	6.2	\$2.00	\$12.40
Housekeeper	17.5	\$3.25	\$56.88
Laundress	5.9	\$2.50	\$14.75
Seamstress	1.3	\$3.25	\$ 4.22
Practical nurse	.6	\$3.75	\$ 2.25
Maintenance man	1.7	\$3.00	\$ 5.10
Gardener	2.3	\$3.00	\$ 6.90
Chauffeur	2.0	\$3.25	\$ 6.50
Nursemaid	44.5	\$2.00	\$89.00

The total cost per week \$257.53, per year \$13,391.56.

in Toronto have the panacea, then I'd like to meet them. I've looked at this for at least 20 years. There isn't a country in the world yet, that has come up with an answer," she told The Star.

"Every actuary I've talked to has said it's absolutely a nightmare. It can't be done," she said.

Mrs. Sabia said there are other ways to ensure that women who choose to stay home get their money's worth—through property laws, family benefits, a guaranteed annual income and pension plans. And they deserve a share in their husband's property and his business, she said.

### Dull mediocrity

"But, I'm getting a little browned off at some women who think the state owes them a living," said Mrs. Sabia.

"So, the lazy and the indolent and the strong and the ones who work hard are all going to be paid. Then, we'll have a dull mediocrity about us. If that's what the women's movement is about, I don't want to be a member of the human race."

"The state is you and I and everybody else at work, and I'm a housewife. The last thing I would do for a housewife is to pay her."

Dr. Katie Cooke, the chairman of the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women, said the council has not discussed or taken an official position for or against wages for housework. Therefore she declined to comment on the issue.

But the council has affirmed two principles concerning the contribution of spouses to marriage, she said.

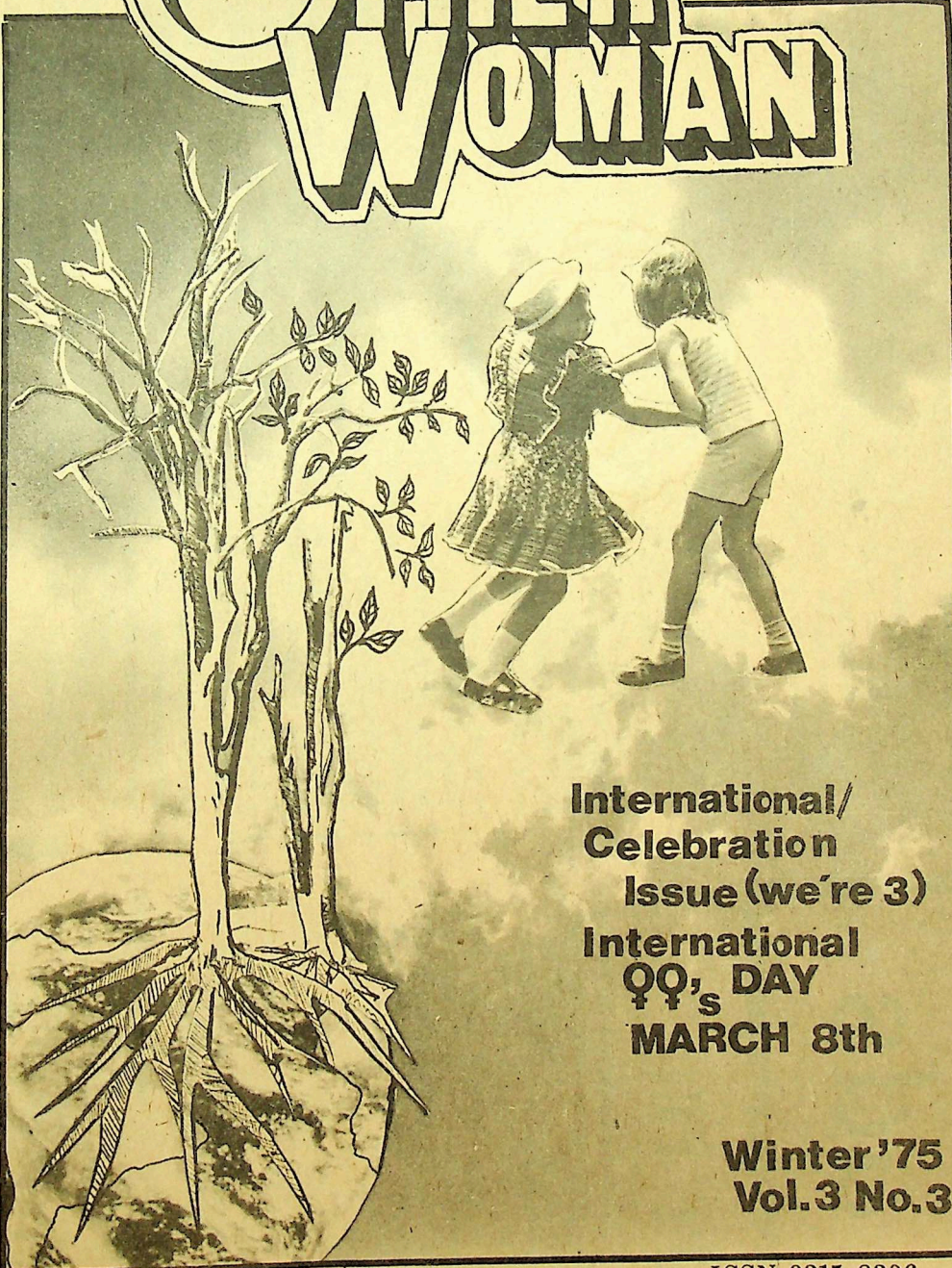
"The council states that marriage should be an equal partnership. That implies that the partners decide who does what. Don't think we've ever suggested that that can be decided from the outside."

The council goes further, said Dr. Cooke, when it affirms that "both spouses — irrespective of what contribution they make — perform a contribution that is equal."

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# THE OTHER WOMAN



kate middleton

International/  
 Celebration  
 Issue (we're 3)  
 International  
 ♀♀'s DAY  
 MARCH 8th

Winter '75  
 Vol. 3 No. 3

CANADIAN WOMAN'S PAPER

ISSN 0315-8306

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second class mail 2948



## EDITORIAL

We do not support the male-decreed International Women's Year. Across Canada, women are protesting govt. plans for I.W.Y. since they have not been consulted nor represented. Middle-class women's groups are, as usual, privileged by fund allotments which discount other women's groups which come from either ethnic or class backgrounds. Women are not getting funding for grassroots organizing and doing work that will directly affect women's lives. The money is "wisely" invested in groups that are guaranteed not to bring about social change or action.

Professional women architects at UBC are requesting funding for an elaborate women's pavilion which will benefit very few and cause very little significant change in women's condition. Why do academics sell out; why don't these women put their time and energy into providing low cost housing for working women and/or day care centres? We think this is a monument symbolizing professional women's lack of political perspective.

A group of prominent Toronto women artists, writers and entertainers has asked the federal government for \$150,000 to stage a festival promoting women and the arts this year. The idea of promoting art is fine; the idea of elitism in art is not. This festival appears to be organized by "prominent" women artists for prominent artists, and may tend to make less well-known artists feel alienated. Even the choice of location for meetings is discriminatory. News of this only reached us via the established media in Toronto and not through the existing feminist communication network.

In the Yukon, women have drawn up resolutions which protest being ignored. See below:

"(Be It Resolved) That we are opposed to the allocation of funds by the International Women's Year Secretariat for regional and national conferences.

And Be It Further Resolved That the monies being allocated for Yukon participation in the western regional conference instead be made directly available to support relevant impoverished women's organizations in the Yukon.

And Be It Further Resolved That a Board of Representatives of Yukon women's groups be established to determine priorities and distribute monies."

Regina City Council has decided to mark International Women's Year by naming streets after prominent women in the community. The number of streets to be so named was not determined. Streets and buttons will not help us. They are a method of cooption; a form of recognition to try to pacify our growing radical demands that cannot be met under capitalism.

The acceptance of the women's movement as a bourgeois movement is being propagated by the govt. to undermine a movement that has been long in existence. Socialism is a long-time enemy of capital-

ism and working-class women who have the greatest potential to initiate social change have been ignored as not being part of the women's movement.

# 3 YEARS

## T.O.W. TALK

Notice the cover. Believe it or not, it relates to the rest of the paper in the following fashion.

(1) All our international articles are represented by the world which is the circle in the bottom left hand corner.

(2) The tree growing out of the earth represents the branching out of women around the world.

(3) The young women on the cover represent the celebration of womanhood which is something we can do without any "fucking govt. grants".

There are only 3 major sections on the cover. Numerologists will understand how strong is the number 3 which is associated with communications (Vol. 3, #3, 3rd birthday!). Reliable sources tell us that this is also the number of T.O.W.

Please note we are experimenting with column styles. How do you like it?

An article on printing in the series of "How To's" will be in our next issue as we ran out of space.

The Wages for Housework issue is potentially explosive. We have not had time to collectively discuss it but feel that women in Canada should discuss this. Think what would happen if women everywhere demanded wages for housework/maintenance.

It has been a time for conferences. See Saskatoon Conf. and Lesbian Conf.

T.O.W. feels it important that women question the whole electoral system. This govt. is not representative and the article on "Grassroots Organizing: Political Alternatives" hopes to be a position paper for self-government.

Since this is our 3rd birthday, the centrefold is dedicated to US, our herstory. T.O.W. has evolved through several crises toward several more and, hopefully, this illustrates political changes within us and the women's movement in general over the years.

Help us to celebrate our 3rd birthday by coming to our benefit on Feb. 15th at Bathurst United Church, 8pm (\$1.50). Help us to celebrate our 4th year by working on T.O.W. We need you!

The Bluejay has done it again by ejecting feminists for being too "dykey". Their clothing rules are macho and their thinking is reactionary. Going by appearances is oppressive. "True lesbians are women who love other women - not women who dress like men." A quote from one of the owners.

Reliable sources tell us that

20 new relationships started and 5 broke up as a result of the workshop on Sex and the Single Lesbian followed by the Multiple Relationship workshop at the Lesbian Conference.

# editorial page

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Toronto's YWCA offers a wide variety of courses and programs of interest to women. Presently courses in self-defence, carpentry, Women's Liberation School, and many other events are being featured. An auto mechanics course is being offered (it started Jan. 13 but may still have openings). This course is being held at the GM Dealer's on Yonge and Rosewall. These people have offered facilities and an instructor. The course is \$20.00 for 10 weeks or what you can afford.

IF ANYONE IS OR KNOWS OF AN AUTO MECHANIC WHO WOULD BE INTO TEACHING WOMEN FOR FUTURE COURSES PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.

For more information call:  
North Program Centre: 487-7151  
West: 762-8169; East: 466-9878

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linda, elaine, gillean, kate, pat, cindy  
& the dumont ducks  
who print this paper  
at their worker-run shop

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

# WAGES FOR HOUSE

*How was the Wages for Housework perspective introduced in Canada?*

A small group of women met in Italy in 1971 and formed the International Feminist Collective and from there have come most of the initiatives in spreading wages for housework internationally. Two of its members, Selma James, of England, and Mariarosa Dalla Costa, of Italy, made a tour in Canada and the US in 1973. The Montreal Feminist Symposium was the culmination point for the entire tour. 800 women heard the initial address which Selma gave on the opening night of the conference, and on the final day a resolution was passed unanimously demanding wages for housework from the State! Since that time a number of us have spread the perspective through literature distribution, public speaking, circulation of video tapes, and involvement with women's struggles. Last October the first attempt was made to gather together women who were committed to developing this political perspective; we had a conference in NY attended by 50 women from 6 countries and set up an informal network. We are now planning another conference for the end of February in Montreal when we hope to issue a political statement which defines our basis for working together. It is open to all women who share this political perspective. There has been a tremendous response in Canada so far and we think wages for housework will have a growing impact both in the feminist movement and outside it.

*How was your collective formed?*

Until about 6 months ago we were part of a mixed political group. We made a political split from the men and established a wages for housework collective. Before that, we were sympathetic to this perspective but there was a lot of confusion in our minds about what that meant organizationally in terms of autonomy from the men and what it meant in terms of organizing with women. So we felt it was really essential to make a break from the men in order to get any political clarity for ourselves, and since then there has been no holding us back! Our present focus, as a collective, is to build the wages for housework perspective through contact with women's struggles, preparing and distributing materials, and public speaking. At the moment, we are working with 2 other groups in Montreal and NY collecting and editing all the wages for housework materials in English and issuing a "Women In Struggle" series and a "Wages for Housework Notebook" series. Afterwards, we plan to translate things from Italian and, hopefully, from other parts of the world as the network becomes larger and more cohesive. We are also planning a public meeting here in Toronto on Friday, Jan. 31, 7.30 at Bathurst St. United Church. We are not in-

terested in sectarian debate with the Left or others who disagree; we want to meet women who are organizing themselves and who, by discussing wages for housework, will be better able to do so.

*Have you done any organizing with women's issues and how do you see your role as a feminist collective?*

Some of us have been working with the Mother Led Union which grew out of a welfare women's conference last June which demanded, in resolution form, "A guaranteed adequate annual income for individuals, whether working or not, married or not, on welfare or not..." Within this framework, we are organizing in the MLU to mobilize women on benefits to demand parity with foster parents removal of all ceilings on earnings from a second job outside the home, and 24 hour community daycare for both women working outside the home and full-time housewives. These women are planning to go on strike to support their demands and are also organizing around neighbourhood issues in various "locals". We see these as wages for housework demands because they are saying that women, regardless of their specific condition, need more money, more time, and less work. Which is another way of saying more control over our lives. We are working with the MLU because we believe that when one group of women makes a struggle it means more power for the rest of us, so that there is a material link between the interests of women on benefits and our own. It is the framework of more money for women and the recognition of the vast amounts of unwaged labour that we all perform for the State that allows us to identify the interests of all women in struggle with those of the mothers on benefits, and as a result support the particular struggle they are making. We feel, also, that the kind of coverage that TOW has given the MLU is a concrete source of power for those women. The feminist movement, in fact, by its very existence, is a tremendous power to all women making a struggle, whatever their particular circumstances; nationality, etc. We see our role and that of the feminist media as supporting the struggles of women everywhere not only by spreading information and "reporting", but by putting them within a political framework that makes the material connections visible. We can't really build our power as women any other way.

*Could you explain the perspective of wages for housework and how it is different from other feminist positions?*

We start with the fact that in capitalist society there is a whole division of labour along sexual lines. Women have to do the social chunk of labour that involves reproducing the labour force. It is clearest in the case of the working class housewife but includes

the rest of us too; she is the proto-type that defines us all. Those of us in more "middle-class" situations (because of birth, family background, job classification, educational level, etc) are still tied, in a fundamental way, to the sexual division of labour. For years now the feminist media has exposed the way women in all situations have to cater to other people; secretaries cater to bosses, nurses to sick people and the hospital hierarchy, wives to husbands, daughters to fathers and brothers, etc. Our role as women consists of oiling the machinery of capitalist society to keep it running as smoothly as possible, to act as shock absorbers and to service the needs of others both physically and emotionally. And we don't just do it as unwaged workers in the home; we do it also in waged work (for no extra money, of course) and that puts us all, as women, in a proletarian situation. It is not so much saying that all women are working class but, rather, that the capitalist division of labour presses many more women into service than just the full-time housewife. Wages for housework as a political perspective helps us to see that to be a woman means to perform unwaged work as part and parcel of the functioning of this society.

We see wages for housework as being in the interest of the mass of women. The few women who have been able to "make it" by working for the State rather than against it are the ones who have to make a choice between the power that capital offers them and the power which comes from joining with women who are making a struggle. Our perspective is for all women who identify with the mass of women and see their power in relation to the struggles that have been made by women everywhere and not for those who are busy trying to maximize their own power at the expense of rest. We agree that feminism does not deal in exceptions but in averages (refer to "Open Letter To Successful Women" in last issue of TOW). That is very important because any power that any of us has comes from the struggles of the mass of women, not from the privileges capital has bestowed on a few. The women who are making it and cannot see how their position is the result of all our struggles are busy building their own power and trying to take the feminist movement in the direction of further integration into capitalist planning. We want to go in precisely the opposite direction - towards a stronger attack on capital's plans to use us and "rationalize" us, because accepting their plans for us always means accepting an extension of their exploitative control over our lives.

*Do you disagree with women getting jobs outside the home?*

We say that women's work is so

# WORK \$£



pervasive in this society that all women - except the very rich - are housewives and therefore workers. Our liberation begins with the recognition of that fact. It is the key to our (class) identity as women. We can see that in the civil service now they have male typists, but these men would never be asked to make coffee or be expected to do tension management in the office which female typists do all the time as a matter of course. No man is expected to add an attractive element in the corner or put up with sexual advances as a requirement for the job. We feel they can expect it of us because it is an extension of the unwaged work we do in the home. It shows the extent to which we are all housewives regardless of whether we are full-time mothers and wives. Which is why we disagree with those who say that women must get jobs outside the home in order to struggle for liberation. As if we could just stop doing the housework - in fact, we end up doing two jobs instead of one. It is true that sometimes those of us who work outside the home have enough power to demand that the man we live with share the housework etc. but these "liberated" relationships are often a kind of self-delusion. Doing dishes, laundry, shopping, etc. you might be able to divide that equally but there is no calculating the responsibility women always assume, the sexual and emotional support we are trained to give as a reflex, the many ways we are constantly forced to pick up the slack, etc. There is never any end to our work because it encompasses our entire role as women - and that is not a quantifiable thing.

*What is your alternative?*

The first step is to demand wages for housework so that women's work is recognized as work. This is a fundamental prerequisite to any redistribution of housework and ultimately to abolishing the whole capitalist sexual division of labour. It is also the beginning of our struggle to refuse further exploitation outside the home in a second job. And when we demand wages for housework we are not saying we want to spend all our time doing housework, Quite the reverse! We want the money so we can have the power to refuse it! If you don't have money in this society

you are powerless, you can't make any choices. Which means you can't leave your husband, or you're forced to take another job. Some of us have unwanted children because abortions, if you can get one, cost money. Some of us are forced to have abortions because the children we want we have no money to feed. Wages for housework would mean choices. It would mean the power to tell your husband to fuck off and do what you want for a change, the power to refuse work in a sweatshop or for office overload, the power to think of yourself instead of bowing to others all the time. With the demand for wages for housework we already begin to build our power to refuse the entire female role that capital saddles us with. We think this demand is the logical culmination of all the propaganda the feminist movement has made about women. It is time to move beyond descriptions and denunciations of women's role and organize to end our first exploitation as unwaged workers in the home. This will begin to build our power to destroy the whole female role and the society to which it is so essential.

*Why is the demand of wages for housework directed to the State?*

We say that wages for housework must come from the State because the State is the ultimate beneficiary of our labour. It is the State that plans the size, quality, and distribution of the labour force and at all points depends on our unwaged work. And it is the function of the State to keep capitalist society running smoothly; and to the extent that it succeeds, it exploits women. Because women's work is so pervasive, it really makes no difference whether you're a man or not, or whether you have a family or not. For those of us who are with men, an important part of this demand is that it will give us independence. To ask the money from the man would only be tying the knot tighter instead of beginning to loosen it. Also we all get robbed by capital, even men, so to ask them for the money instead of the State, would be to redistribute the poverty rather than demanding more of the social wealth we have all created with our labour.

*What would women do if they had wages for housework?*

No woman has ever asked us what she is going to do with her free time when she receives wages for housework! Most of us would have no problem because we have never been able to do what we want so we have some catching up to do! Women with children say: all I have time to do now is discipline the kids and act like a cop. They have no time for themselves and they have no money of their own. Wages for housework begins with the struggle involved in demanding the money and many women are using their time to make that struggle rather than do housework. The Mother Led Union is an example. Those women aren't going to win anything without coming out of their homes and fighting together, and that's exactly what they're doing. The kind of relationships that develop in struggle and the excitement felt when you begin to see your power means that those women are not going to go back home afterwards for business as usual. It will break down their isolation as housewives and give them a point of contact to build on. The struggle for wages for housework will begin to link women everywhere so that we can win back the time that has been stolen from us, the money they never gave us, and the choices we were all denied.

*What about the charge that wages for housework would be dividing the working class?*

Wages for housework starts with the fact that the working class is already divided. The Left makes the accusation that to demand wages for housework and to make struggles autonomously as women is to divide the working class rather than unite it. We are totally fed up with the Left talking about the working class as if it were totally homogeneous. There are all kinds of contradictions within the working class, divisions along the lines of sex and race, which overwhelmingly mean divisions between those who have a wage and those who don't. We don't think these divisions will just disappear by invoking the "general interest". We are convinced that those of us with less power must organize our own struggles in our own name, and on our own terms, and that, as we gain more power, the rest of the working class will join with us rather than our having to join them from a position of weakness, forever subordinating our own struggles. As a group, our experience in the Left showed us how our struggles as women were always reduced to the "woman's question". We realized we were never going to make a revolution that way. You can't develop a working class perspective by excluding half the working class! The whole thrust of wages for housework as a political perspective is to end the divisions within the working class, between the waged and unwaged. This is a fundamental attack on capitalist society and the State which keeps us all divided in order to better exploit us. We see women as a central part of that attack. As women build

Cont. page 24

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their power, then other sectors of the working class will join with us because we have some strength to offer them. At some point men will see that it is in their interest to come out of the factories on strike to support our demands for community daycare because they to want to spend time with their children, and by joining together power of women we are building the power of the entire working class in order to fight together against the way capital organizes our lives and for the power to decide for ourselves.

*Does Wages for Housework include women in the third world?*

Wages for housework is an international perspective which looks at the exploitation of women not only in the advanced countries but also in the third world. Because you can't really see what is happening in one place without looking at the whole. Capital plans our exploitation in a concerted way on an international scale and that's how we must plan our struggles. In the past, the feminist movement has mistakenly raised demands which did not take into account all women and as a result played into the hands of the State which wants to use even our struggles to keep us divided.

The birth control and abortion issues are a case in point: women in the third world are having birth control forced on them because capital wants the number of workers who are going to make a struggle against "development" cut down. When the movement here said we want free birth control and abortion on demand third world women were right to wonder why we were making demands that could be used against them. Also the Black and third world population

in the U.S. We demanded abortion when they are facing genocidal sterilization policies in their communities. The demands which any section of women raise, in any part of the world, must be within the framework of a broader political perspective which is based on the fact that capital exploits us all in different ways. If they say to some of us that we should have children and we demand abortion, and to others of us that we mustn't have them and we refuse their birth control. The only way to further our interests on an international scale is to demand the choices they want to deny us. We all want the right to have children whenever and with whomever we wish, and the right to not have any at all. The more power we have to decide for ourselves the less power capital has over us to subject our sexuality and our lives to its development. Building our power internationally is the only way we can subvert their plans to exploit each one of us differently and use the struggles that we make against one another.

The Wages for Housework Collective is anxious to meet other women. For information on speaking engagements or literature, contact Judy at 537-7271 or Frances at 537-5148. FIRST in a series of Political Discussions on Wages for Housework. 233A College St. 7.30 pm. Feb. 20th. Thursday. For more information, call Francis 537-5148.

Public meeting with Suzie Fleming and others from the Power of Women Collective from England. It will be on Wed., Feb. 26, 7.30 p.m. at Bathurst United Church. (Child care provided.) For further info, call Fran: 537-5148.

# serious satire

# This is page 24

*Note: The pronoun "she" in this article has been changed to "he" in order to protect the innocent.*

*Think about the difference it makes.* from WOMEN CAN ENJOY SNOWMOBILES by Stan Davies, Toronto Star staff writer.

Men have a tendency to distrust the snowmobile. Once the engine is started it vibrates as though it were alive. Touch a control and it leaps off like a frightened deer.

Despite men's liberation, men really are not like women. They have no great desire to subdue this buzzing, obstreperous little monster. And it's been the same throughout the ages. The first horse riders, car drivers, skiers, airplane pilots certainly were not men, but many of them do all these things now.

And with some encouragement, men will like snowmobiling.

So here are some tried and true suggestions for every woman who wants her man to enjoy snowmobiling as much as she does. It might even make him think the whole thing was his idea.

Take it very easy the first time you are out with your gentleman. Suppress all desire to show off the speed of your machine. Never get into a situation where you have to demonstrate your great skill in overcoming the difficult- or even the impossible.

Go to great lengths to give the impression that there is no difficulty, no hazard.

Make the initial trip quite short, and if possible take him to a place where the winter wonderland is at its best. It's good anywhere right after a snowfall. Be gentle. Find a quiet spot where one, or two, can commune with nature.

Let him get his fill of the winter scene and be the first to suggest moving on. Arrange and plan the trip so that you can eventually get to a very smooth area.

Then comes the moment of truth- ask him to drive.

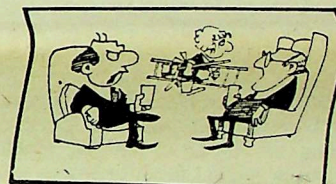
If the terrain is smooth and the engine is working well, it's

*"I work in a hotel. I am pretty well the only young woman in the kitchen and a lot of people get into fights with each other and in a lot of ways I do tension management. I have these qualities because I am expected to have them as a woman."*

Women are the only part of the working class that starts on-the-job training immediately. From the time we are born it just goes on all the years we are alive. They keep telling us who we are, how we should look, how we should relate to people, and so on. We are constantly catering to everyone else, having to pick up the slack, and we are trained to do it as a reflex. It isn't natural. It's something that has been programmed into us because they need it. Maybe we can't just refuse to do it all over night, but we want the money for it - that way we can build our power to destroy it all together.

We have to start looking at all the "hidden" ways that women do work: Fertility is work. Miscarriages are work accidents. Frigidity is absenteeism. Rape is forced labour. By demanding a wage, we begin to look at the things that happen to us as women in a different way - we see them as capitalist work and we see our struggles as part of the struggle of the entire working class to destroy capitalist society.

## THE LOCKHORNS



*"Loretta was offered a good job last week, but believe me no wife of mine is going to work."*

very likely that he will subconsciously assume control and handling of the machine. Once his natural father instincts take over and he wants to look after it, you can relax. Your problem is over.

But one very important thing. Never take a boy snowmobiling unless he is dressed warmly. No man is good company if he's cold, and it's possible to get very cold when snowmobiling.

The problem of man's relation to the machine is a perpetual one.

COMMENT: That was a pretty fair example of our oppression as women, whatever our class. Can we really let ourselves be patronized in this way? It is hard being a woman today but can we continue to allow Stan Davies and others like him to perpetuate their male ego fantasies at our expense? You see, it has been an entirely male trip to further pollute our environment with fumes and noise. It is not up to us, as women, whether we can relate to machines such as snowmobiles but to come together to save ourselves from our mental and emotional environment as well.