

Wages for housework

campaign bulletin

july 1976 vol. 1 no. 1

Hands Off the Family Allowance

It was a cold and windy day on May 1, but in Toronto and Windsor women from the Wages for Housework Campaign took to the streets to protest the federal freeze in the baby bonus. A series of neighborhood rallies were held in both cities in local supermarkets, playgrounds, and parks. We went to places where women were busy going about their work because, although May 1 is an international workers' holiday, we women keep our noses to the grindstone.

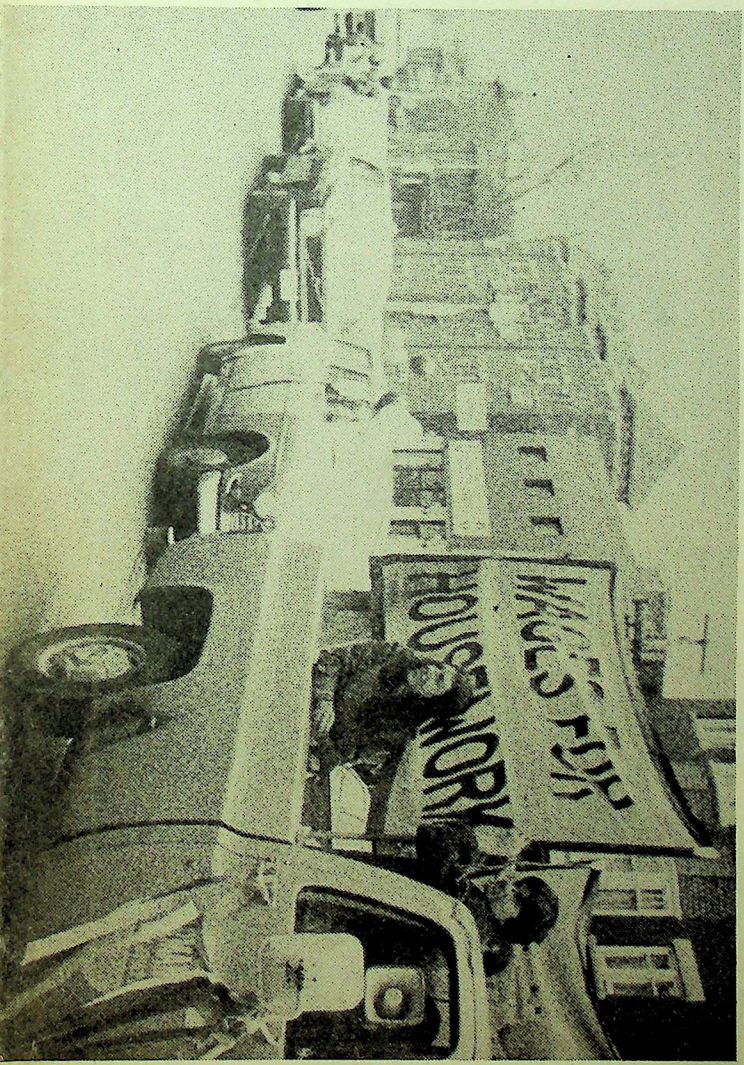
We went with music, banners, speeches, skits, and a photography display of women's work. A colorful motorcade took us through the streets from one rally location to another. At each site, children played with free balloons, while their mothers stopped to listen. A puppet show starring Trudeau's pet alligator "Inflation" brought lusty cheers and approving nods from the crowd.

In Toronto, one of the rallies was held in Italian at the Galleria Shopping Mall where immigrant women and their families were doing the week's shopping. They gathered around to hear the songs of struggle from the Wages for Housework movement in Italy. Hearing their own language brought friendly smiles to their faces. Many came up to chat and take away petitions--one woman said she was sure everyone in her factory would sign it!

The speeches women gave spoke about how much we need the baby bonus, especially now with the squeeze on wages, high inflation, and the deluge of government cutbacks. Each of us spoke from our own situation, many of us for the first time, in public.

A black welfare mother:

"... Before I had a child I had all these fantasies about putting the baby bonus in the bank for my child's education, and I thought I wouldn't have to touch that money. Now I have a child and the government is giving me "wages" for my housework, but my pay is below the poverty line. So when I



May Day 1976 in Toronto

Photo by J. Spurling

get my \$22.08 a month, I have to use it as part of my food money. It's the only way we can survive from one month to the next.

And now I'm facing another reality about the baby bonus. I'm going to have to use it to put a roof over my head, because with the maximum they give me on welfare I would have to let the government put me into a place they want me and not have a choice to live where I want to. I think we should get

that increase to survive and make ends meet. But it's not much of a "wage". And that's why I'm fighting for Wages for Housework...."

One woman spoke in Italian:

"...When we come to Canada as immigrants we face more work than we could have ever imagined. Not only do we have to continue our work in the home but we have to take a second job in a factory as well to keep the family income at a decent level. The minute we step out of our homes we realize what's waiting for us: all the worst jobs in the sweatshops that others refuse because the pay is so low and the rhythms of work are so incredibly high.

Then, when we leave the factories, we have to wait in line at the supermarket and pick up our children at school and then go home to start a whole second shift of work: housework. It's a double load of work, more than we could have ever imagined.

That's the reason we are joining together with many Canadian sisters who are telling the government that we don't intend to just keep working harder for less money. We know this crisis they're talking about is an effort to control us more and tell us we can't have more money even though we see all around us how rich Canada is...."



May Day 1976 in Windsor

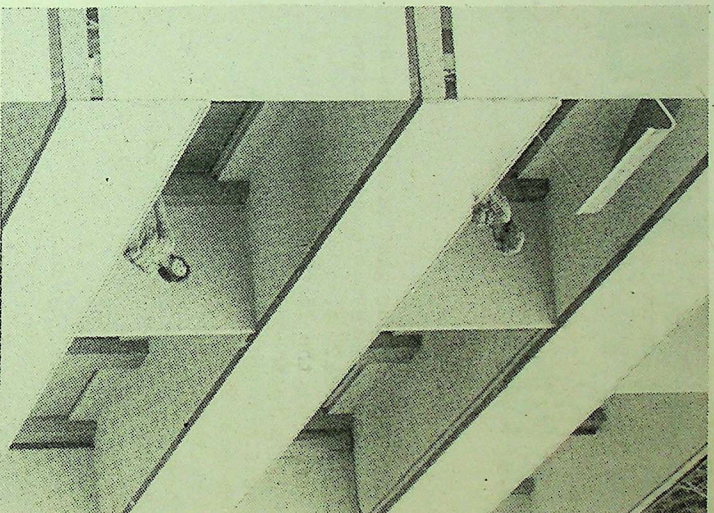
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A lesbian woman:

"...Lesbian women, like all women, are always short of money. Many of us have been forced to support ourselves entirely on the low wages of women's jobs. As our jobs start to disappear, with the cutbacks in social services, health care, and some industries, we're threatened with losing even those small paycheques. As lesbians we've always had to face that threat. It's bad enough that we could be fired for being lesbian. Now, along with other women, we're having a harder time just getting hired.

Right now a lot of lesbians and other single women find themselves being forced to look for a man. Women who would like to come out as lesbians can't afford to abandon what little security marriage offers. Why should we have to depend on a man? None of us, straight or lesbian, want to be pushed into relationships because we can't afford to be on our own.

Many lesbian women are mothers too, struggling to bring up our children either without a man, or hanging on inside a marriage until the children are grown up. If there's a separation with or without a court battle, we often lose our children--only the men have the money to support them. If we keep them, our already low standard of living drops even lower.



In Regent Park, dozens of children came to hear the singing and clamor from the puppet show while their mothers listened, at a distance, from their apartment windows overlooking the play-ground.

Photo by R. Wessim

That's why Wages Due Lesbians is actively organizing in the Family Allowance Protest, speaking out as lesbian women as widely as possible. We've had a very positive response everywhere. Most women haven't said a lot, except "of course", "why not?", or as one woman said, "that makes sense. We women are all the same, it's the same floor we have to scrub".

So let's see some money for all those dirty floors. We demand the Baby Bonus increase and wages for all our work. We refuse to hide our lesbianism any longer. And we know there are millions more of us...."

A sole-support mother:

"... What I want to say is that a few years ago maybe you could live on \$300 a month. But now everything has gone up and costs \$400 a month. But we're still getting \$300. Where is all the money? We don't have it. So what happens -- we don't eat every day. When I haven't eaten in a couple of days and I go out into the street and I see a Cadillac, how do I feel? Here's somebody going down the street in a Cadillac... they've got so much money, and we don't have enough... And it's not our fault, it's the government who puts us in this situation. The government has the money. It most definitely has the money. The only way they are going to listen to us is when we organize. They won't listen to us as individuals. We have to organize. Join the campaign for Wages for Housework!"

When we collect 10,000 signatures we are going to Ottawa to let the government know that we intend to protect the only money that comes directly to us for some of the work we do in our homes. We want every penny of the baby bonus we had coming, and we want a full wage for housework for all women!

Women at work on their "day off"

MONTREAL -- On May 2, 1976, a "popular festival" dedicated to the immigrant family was held in the Italian community. The organizers were from a coalition of immigrant community groups, and they drew 500 men, women, and children to the day's free festivities. A local school auditorium was packed for the program of music and theatre. Quebecois "chansonniers" came to entertain and express solidarity with immigrant workers. A Chilean group performed with hand made instruments. And the many children present applauded enthusiastically and cried for more.

Before the buffet dinner and dance a member of the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee addressed the crowd in Italian. She spoke about the Family Allowance Protest and the need to protect the pittance which presently

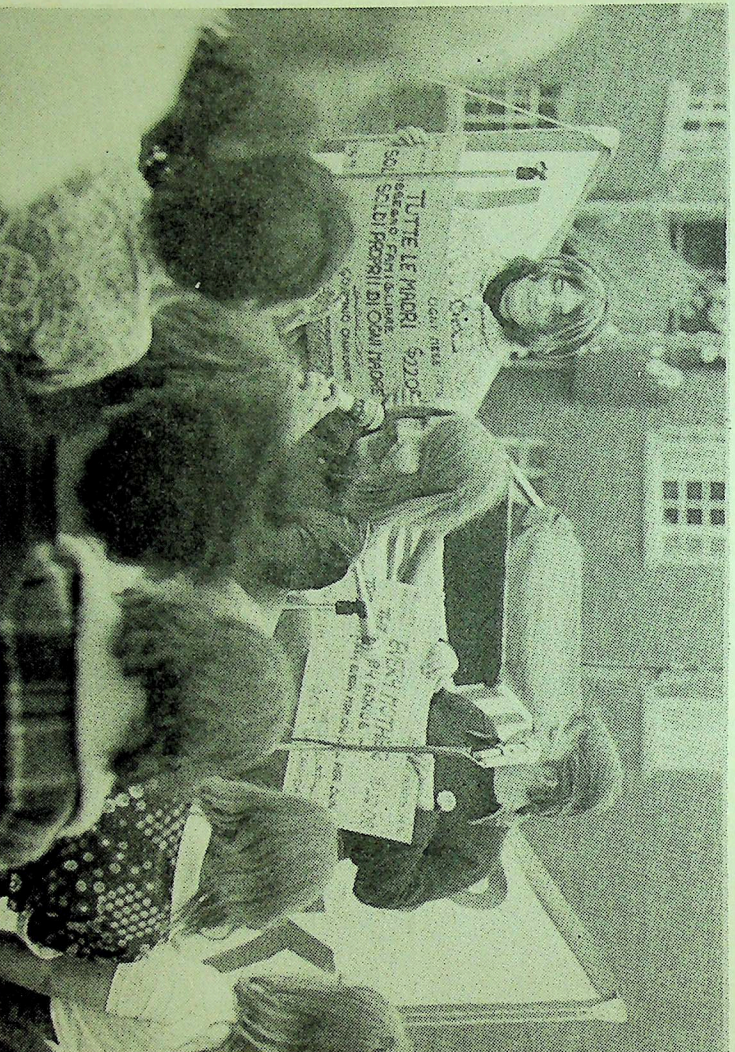


Photo by F. Wyland

recognizes some of our work in the home. The response came readily. Women lined up outside to sign the petition, and many brought their husbands along to sign in support. The men asked repeatedly about the demand that the Family Allowance be removed from taxable income, and signed only after seeing it in writing! Many of the younger women attending school came to sign because they said that don't want to "get stuck doing all the work our mothers do".

It was obvious just from looking around that even on a festive occasion when women are out of their homes for a few hours, that we are the ones who have to chase after the kids, feed the little ones, and do all the clean-up. As the elderly food co-ordinator put it, while working away behind the scenes in the kitchen, "it sure would be nice to get some money for all this work!"

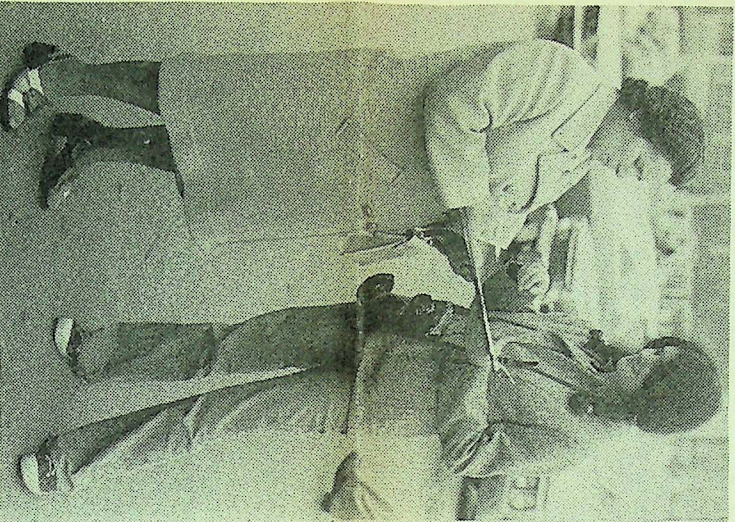


Photo by E. Myland

Editorial: Why a campaign for wages for housework?

Women work for nothing the world over. In the "advanced" countries, we do it "for love" in our ghettoized homes and for next to nothing in our ghettoized jobs outside. Also wageless, our sisters in the Third World work their fingers to the bone cutting cane in the fields and washing clothes by a stream. But none of us accept this work anymore as our "natural destiny". We want other choices. That is why the Wages for Housework movement exists, and that is why it is an international movement.

In Canada, as in the U.S., Italy, Mexico, England, etc., everyone is talking now about the "value" of housework and "recognition" for housewives. The media has covered our activities extensively and brought the Wages for Housework Campaign to many women who fight alone in the isolation of their homes.

Our biggest problem, in fact, is to find ways of speaking with one another. The isolation of our work has kept us weak and unorganized. Why else would Trudeau dare to make his biggest cut-back the Family Allowance -- money that goes to mothers for some of the work we all do in our homes? Any other cut-back affecting millions of workers to the tune of \$220 million would have caused an immediate outcry. That is why in many countries we are now organizing on an unprecedented scale.

The crisis has unmasked just how vulnerable our unpaid work in the home makes us. All levels of government are cutting back at the expense of women. Wage freezes, inflation, and cutbacks in daycare and social services are all heaping more unpaid work into our hands. Who

spends the extra time shopping for bargains when prices rise? Who cares for the sick when a hospital is closed down? Family Allowance and welfare cuts take money out of our hands as if we had no right to it and hadn't worked for it in the first place. As to the "liberation" of going out to work, why is the concentration of women in all the low paying "glorified housework" jobs growing, and why are we the first to lose our jobs in the crisis, such as they are? The government is even making it next to impossible for married women to get UIC--we're just supposed to go back home penniless and make do with whatever our husbands feel like giving us.

No other workers in our society are in such a weak position. Being wageless in the home makes us weak wherever else we go and whatever else we do. That is why the Wages for Housework Campaign in several countries is organizing to protect the money we already get for some of our work as part of the fight to win a wage for all of it. With the Family Allowance Protests in Canada and England, and the fight against welfare cuts in the US, women are defending the only money that comes directly into our own hands for looking after our families.

This is in the interest of all women because it challenges directly the unpaid work which is the root of our pervasive position of powerlessness as women. It immediately increases our bargaining power everywhere. In the home, to refuse a 24-hour working day, and the isolation and dependence that go with it. In the paid labor force to refuse the lowest wages and the poorest working conditions of any workers.

That is what the Wages for Housework Campaign is all about.

WATCH JUDY RAMIREZ OF THE WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE ON A RETURN OF "CONFRONTATION" ON SATURDAY, JULY 24

<p>4:45</p> <p>5:00 to 5:30</p> <p>5:30 to 15:00</p> <p>15:00 to 16:00</p> <p>16:00 to 17:30</p> <p>17:30 to 18:30</p> <p>18:30 to 19:30</p> <p>19:30 to 20:30</p> <p>20:30 to 21:30</p> <p>21:30</p>	<p>16:00 to 17:30</p> <p>17:30 to 18:30</p> <p>18:30 to 19:30</p> <p>19:30 to 20:30</p> <p>20:30 to 21:30</p> <p>21:30</p>
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<p>5:50</p> <p>6:25 to 6:55</p> <p>6:55 to 7:55</p> <p>7:55 to 11:55</p> <p>11:55 to 12:30</p> <p>12:30 to 13:15</p> <p>13:15 to 16:30</p> <p>16:30 to 19:30</p> <p>19:30 to 21:30</p> <p>21:30</p>	<p>6:25 to 6:55</p> <p>6:55 to 7:55</p> <p>7:55 to 11:55</p> <p>11:55 to 12:30</p> <p>12:30 to 13:15</p> <p>13:15 to 16:30</p> <p>16:30 to 19:30</p> <p>19:30 to 21:30</p> <p>21:30</p>
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Family Allowance Fight in England

In 1972 the British government started tampering with the Family Allowance system which gave women 90p (about \$1.80) for the first child and £1 (about \$2.00) for each child after that every week. They wanted to re-route it by tying it to men's wages through a tax credit scheme, instead of giving it directly to a woman in her own name. Women responded with a nation-wide campaign to defend "the only money we can call our own."

The government's proposed scheme would have made many women ineligible either because the men they weren't with had no wages or because they weren't with men at all. Candidates for exclusion: welfare mothers, self-employed, unemployed, student mothers, wives of students, families of strikers, and wives of prisoners.

Campaign groups sprang up all over the country. Women took time from their housework to circulate petitions and talk to other women. The mothers on welfare took the lead in demanding that the Family Allowance be given on top of welfare payments and that it cover each child. They were fighting for the right to more than a subsistence standard of living and for the right to have money for their children without having to depend on a man.

It was a fight opposed by the unions and many of their supporters in the women's movement. Both the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress favored the tax-credit scheme, with weak provisos. Their position rests on the idea that the Family Allowance

is for the children, rather than for the mother who looks after them. They did not support the fight that women were making to defend the Family Allowance as the only money that recognizes that we bear the responsibility for children in the eyes of society and should be paid for it.

The contest was between the Family Allowance as a universal right of women and various forms of income supplementation for families, ie. children in a nuclear family situation. The Campaign exposed very forcefully that what the government and its friends had in mind was making dependence on a male wage earner a condition for women getting money for their children. And that, in any case, the money would not be given to women but as a "supplement" to the man's wages. Lost completely in all of this is the question of a woman's right to money for the work of looking after her children regardless of whether she is with a man or not.

The Campaign continued for over one year and women collected 50,000 signatures on their petition. As in Canada now, they went to supermarkets, laundromats, tenant's associations, factories, offices, and schools. They fought to keep control of their struggle in their own hands, away from those more interested in "rationalizing" government expenditures than in recognizing women's unpaid work.

The women in England won the central demand of their Campaign, that the money keep coming directly to them in their own names. It was a great victory against the government's attempt to render women's unpaid work even more invisible than it already is. And it brought together sole-support welfare mothers with married women "supported" by men to fight for the money that will guarantee us all more choices and less dependence.

Recently the Wages for Housework movement in Britain has re-opened

the question of Family Allowance with a petition demanding that it be indexed to the cost of living. At a time when inflation is lengthening our work day in the kitchen, government cutbacks are throwing a lot of work back into the home, and women are being used massively as cheap labor outside the home, we are demanding the recognition of all our unpaid work by defending the little money we get now and by fighting for a proper wage for housework for all women from the government.



Photo by J. Milito

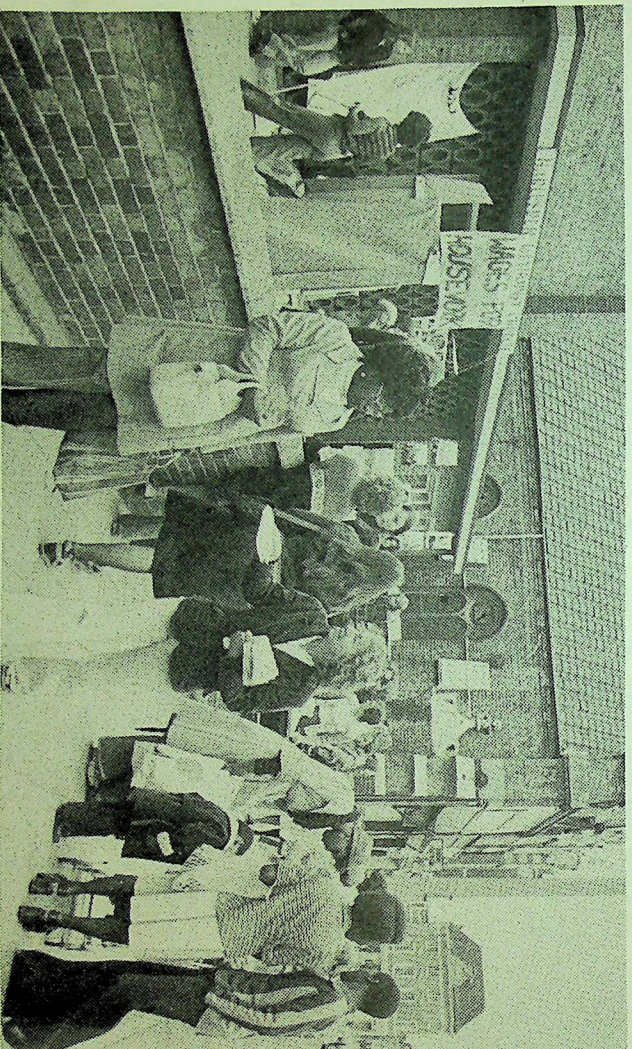
Cut working hours so men can help in home, labor says

On May 21, 1976, the Toronto Star carried big labour's pronouncement on housework on the front page. Women's struggle against unpaid work has made housework big news, and even the unions are breaking their historic silence on the subject. The Canadian Labour Congress had just issued a policy document on women workers adopted at their national convention in Quebec. It called for educational and promotional measures to encourage men to share the housework in order to open up more "opportunities" for women workers.

Not surprisingly, their "solution" is to spread the housework around a little more so that more people rather than less are doing unpaid work. To women's struggle to abolish housework as unpaid labour, the unions are answering with policies to extend it to include men too!

With men doing more of the unwaged work at home, we women would be freed for more work outside the home -- in the low-paid job ghettos we are fighting to refuse. What it amounts to is a neat formula to give us all -- women and men alike -- less money for more work.

Little wonder that men are beginning to organize in support of wages for housework -- if we women don't get the money they will get stuck with more and more of the work! Labour's proposals would guarantee that while women are out being "liberated" at the minimum wage the men will be slaving away at home on their "time off work". No thanks.



General Strike (Iceland)

The unions in Canada are talking these days about staging a general strike. But as long as women are still doing unpaid work in the home, it may be a strike, but it sure won't be a general strike.

The only general strike we know of took place in Iceland last October 24, when not the men but the women went on strike, immediately paralyzing the entire country.

The corporations, which depend on women's unpaid labour in the home to get male workers to their jobs every morning, found that the few men who made it to work that day arrived late, hungry, untidy, and with a couple of kids under each arm.

Most of them gave up and went home early, and meanwhile 90% of the female population of Iceland gathered for a demonstration in the capital. When the women finally went back to their jobs inside and outside their homes, no man or boss was questioning the power that we women hold in our hands.

The crisis in New York: women organize

The crisis we have all heard so much about in the "Big Apple" is compounded by proposals for federal welfare cuts. 85% of welfare recipients in the US are unsupported mothers who have a full-time job at home and are running families on shoestring budgets.

As with the cutbacks in Canada, those in the US hit women hardest. Women of all ages, backgrounds, and race. Since January 1975, for example, senior citizens and the disabled who don't qualify for social security because they "never worked" get a form of assistance which is like welfare, but without food stamps. Needless to say, the majority of these are women who spent their lives "just doing housework" and are expected, in their old age, to live on less than the average welfare recipient.

At the same time, millions are being spent to detect "welfare fraud" -- sound familiar? And threats have been made by President Ford to cut off 5 million of the 19 million who are on the food stamps program. In New York the cuts in daycare provisions mean that although 1 in 3 mothers with pre-school children has a second job outside the home, only 900,000 of their 6 million children are in licensed childcare centres.



Photo by D. Richardson

And there's more. The US Department of Agriculture has cut back \$100 million to provide milk and high protein food for pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants. With Canada cutting back the \$220 million in Family Allowance payments to mothers, Trudeau and Ford are obviously of one mind -- that women are an easy target to pay for their "crisis".

But as in Canada, women in the US are fighting back. The New York Wages for Housework Committee organized a one-day conference on the welfare cuts, held on April 24, 1976. It was attended by 150 women from different parts of New York City and by delegations of women from Wages for Housework Committees in Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston, and Los Angeles.

The conference highlights were a panel and an open-mike session in which women spoke freely about the effects of the cutbacks on their lives. There were many older women who are living on so little that now they can't afford to both eat and pay their rent. And there were many black women, who also met separately later in the conference, and who have since formed their own Wages for Housework group. The success of the conference was that it brought many different women together on the basis of our common exploitation as unpaid workers in the home. Young women. Old women. Women with children and women without. Lesbian, straight, married and single. Black, white, and Chicana.

There was a great feeling of elation that the divisions which the State has put between us, we can undermine with our struggle. The "crisis" is bringing us together to fight for all the money we have never received as our only protection against more poverty, and greater dependence on men and on the State's greedy "charity".

The massive welfare movement of the 1960's was led by black women and was

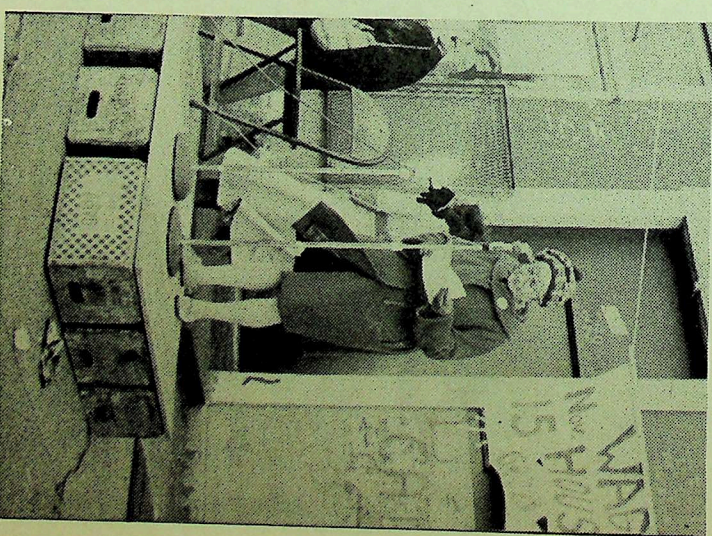


Photo by D. Richardson

The effect was to give women an unprecedented level of power--to refuse dependence on men and to refuse the "liberation" of a second job, at the lowest wages, which we're forced to take when we have nothing else. The present crisis and the threat of further cutbacks in welfare are the impetus for renewed struggle to protect what we've already gained and extend it to a full wage for housework for all women everywhere.

of families on welfare rose from 1½ million in February 1969 to 2½ million in October 1970.

Out of our bathrobes and into the streets!

In Canada, the Family Allowance and welfare are the only money any woman gets from the government for the work of raising children and looking after our homes. Family Allowance barely covers the cost of a child's milk (or of a nice night out for us!) and welfare guarantees a life of poverty. But it's the only monthly cheque we can count on without having to ask a man, or having to work a second job outside our homes. It's that money that has allowed increasing numbers of women to leave marriages that they can't stand, to have kids without getting married at all, to refuse to take on a second shift.

And it's that money, and the little bit of freedom it's given us, that is under attack by the government. First the federal government, by freezing the promised cost of living increase in the Family Allowance, that cost every mother in Canada \$3 a month per child.

Then, more recently, Ontario's Minister of Community and Social Services, James Taylor, announced it was time women on welfare learned to get up, get dressed, and be somewhere on time. And to "encourage" women to do so, he brought in legislation that forces any employable welfare recipient to take any job offered to her, whether part-time, seasonal, or suitable, or else lose her benefits (which of course she would if she got a paid job).

When the response from women on welfare came fast and furious, the Mother Led

Union organized a demonstration protesting against the forced labour of a second job in addition to the one they already have of raising their kids -- Mr. Taylor tried "to clarify" the legislation. He didn't intend, so he said, to force mothers with infants off welfare. Not because he recognized the work involved of small kids, but because he didn't want to break up families, risking more government expense later on. Instead, he was after women with "able-bodied" children, who wouldn't have to worry about daycare, because of course there isn't any.

And what kind of jobs will these women get? Undoubtedly the lowest paid, the worst conditions, the longest hours -- the jobs that everyone else refuses to do. And then home again to the next shift, the unpaid one -- housework -- which Mr. Taylor pretends isn't a job at all.

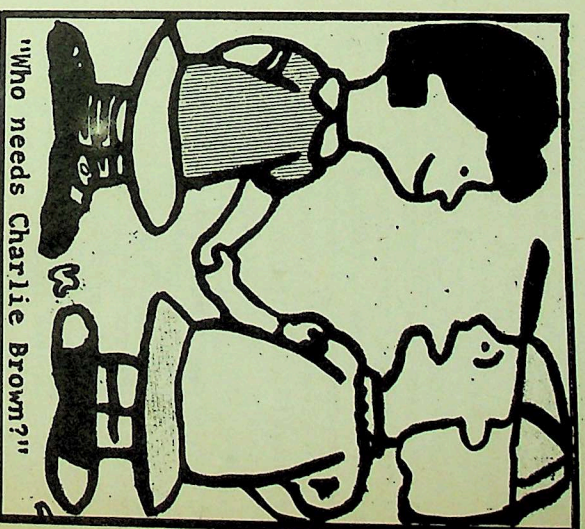
The government resists calling welfare a wage for housework. It prefers to call it charity. But more and more women consider welfare to be a partial wage for housework, and more and more are demanding that the government pay all women a proper wage for all our housework.

Looking for a job is a full-time job

It seems that everyone but the Unemployment Insurance Commission knows that there are few jobs available. You register at UIC because you can't get work, but the UIC doesn't seem to think that. One claimant was told in her group interview about rights and obligations, "We take a negative attitude towards the claimant. We assume you are not looking for work, and it's up to you to prove to us that you are!"

For students who register with UIC, the work of being "unemployed" is even

the wages for housework campaign bulletin more intensified. Students are expected to be looking for a job daily (a minimum of two searches per day) and report weekly to Canada Manpower and every other week to UIC. Students who thought they were leaving the hassles of school behind, of reporting in, getting assignments done on time etc., find that now they just have a different boss to report to.



The Coalition Against Cutbacks

The Coalition Against Cutbacks, which on paper is supposed to be a broad coalition of groups opposed to government cutbacks, left some of its underwear showing around the demonstration it organized on April 3, 1976 at Queen's Park.

The Wages for Housework Committee, a member of the coalition, had asked to speak about the Family Allowance Protest at the event. After bouncing the request from one committee to the next, it eventually landed back in a general meeting where in an open vote the request was defeated. Then someone proposed that because the Family Allowance freeze affected millions of women across Canada, the Coalition adopt as one of its major slogans for the demonstration, "Hands Off the Family Allowance." The proposal was passed by a majority vote.



QUEENS'S PARK, TORONTO. Women from the Wages for Housework Campaign at the Ontario Federation of Labour Rally on April 28, 1976.

Photo by H. Sterling

We hope they don't lose the letter

we're sending withdrawing from the Coalition.

Letters...

"Hurrah for your campaign! As an over-tired working mother I fully appreciate the work I do in my home. But housework is little appreciated except if it hasn't been done. By working outside my home, I have acquired two jobs...."

- Oshawa

"Would you please send me a petition to sign. I buy clothes and/or food for my three children with my Family Allowance."

- Don Mills

"In the name of all mothers who want our rights, like our sisters in Italy. We aren't asking for much. Canada is rich and doesn't give us assistance. We want wages for housework."
(Translated from Italian)

- Toronto

"My sister is a secretary at Local 444 here in Windsor and she would like some forms as she states many men are interested in the Family Allowance not being taxed and wages for housework."

- Windsor

Protest News...

TORONTO -- Ellen Agger of Wages Due Lesbians addressed an audience of 500 people at a Coalition Against Cutbacks Rally on March 22, 1976. "All the independence from men that we have fought for as lesbian women is under attack. The only solution to this situation is economic independence for all women..." It was the first time in memory that a lesbian woman spoke publicly about the effect of the government cutbacks on lesbians.

KITCHENER-WATERLOO -- A group of women have recently formed a Family Allowance Committee. They have gone around speaking to community groups about the Family Allowance Protest, and have begun canvassing at the shopping centres and door to door in different neighbourhoods with the petition. They report that the response from the women of K-W, a greater proportion of whom have jobs outside their homes than any other city in Canada, is fantastic.

OTTAWA -- The Native Indian Brotherhood endorsed the Family Allowance petition and sent it back with 25 signatures squeezed on.

TORONTO -- A group of men has written a statement supporting our fight against the Family Allowance freeze and for wages for housework, saying that the government's cuts in money for women means an increased financial burden for men. They are planning a public meeting for men in August to discuss how wages for housework is in their interests. For information, contact Men Against the Family Allowance cutback at 416-465-6073.

VANCOUVER -- The Vancouver Opportunities Program reprinted in full the Family Allowance Petition in their news-

paper Help Yourself recently. The Body Politic of Toronto did so as well, and The Other Woman reprinted excerpts.

WINDSOR -- The Sandwich East Citizens' Association wrote asking for 200 copies of the petition to circulate in their area, and the treasurer of the organization spoke at the May Day Rally there.

NOVA SCOTIA -- A woman contacted us from New Waterford a few weeks ago to say that she thought wages for housework were long overdue, and to send

her more petitions because she was planning to organize Nova Scotia!

TORONTO -- The old song "Pack up your troubles...and smile, smile, smile" just doesn't ring true these days, as some women discovered who took the Family Allowance petition to the Toronto Islands one fine weekend. Even though everyone was supposed to be forgetting their troubles for "a day off", hundreds signed the petition and stopped to complain about the freeze in the Family Allowance and the general lack of money.



Photo by F. Myland

The Family Allowance Song

-- Written collectively by Boo Watson and other Committee members

*Refrain: Hands off. Hands off.
The Family Allowance.
Hands off. Hands off
That monthly cheque.
It's a mother's money
It's a woman's wage.
It's not nearly enough,
But it's got to stay.*

*It's a crisis he cried. That Mr. Trudeau,
I haven't got enough of the people's dough.
Macaroni and cheese ain't bad so they say,
So I'll just take the Family Allowance away.*

*It's a crisis he cried. The nation's defence.
I need 10,000 troops at each Olympic fence.
Women watch TV in their bathrobes all day.
So I'll just take their Family Allowance away.*

*It's a crisis he cried. The corporations won't meet.
The bills that are hanging around at my feet.
The MPs are hollering for a raise in pay.
I'll just have to take the Family Allowance away.*

*It's a crisis he cried. But as I can see every day
Women are used to all work and no pay.
Mothers are used to self-sacrifice
So I'll just put the Family Allowance on ice.*

*It's a crisis he cried. Women won't foot the bill!
They're making a Protest we can hear on the hill.
They're demanding a wage for their work all day
They won't let me take the Family Allowance away!!*

How can you join the Family Allowance protest?

- 1** Sign the petition. Get your families, friends and co-workers to sign too.
- 2** Post the petition at your local laundromat, supermarket and welfare office.
- 3** Get your union local and community group to endorse it.
- 4** Write a letter to the Editor of the newspaper and your MP protesting the freeze in the Family Allowance and demanding wages for housework for all women.
- 5** Send a donation-- even a couple of dollars helps.

The Wages For Housework Campaign Office

TORONTO. Suite 301, 745 Danforth Avenue (near Pape). Phone 416-466-7457. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.

WINDSOR. Contact R. Jackman at Apt. 3, 1376 Elsmere Avenue.

Contact us for Family Allowance petitions, wages for housework literature, T-shirts, tea-towels, videotapes, and speakers.

Money...

The Wages for Housework Committee is poor -- like most women. We were able to put out this Bulletin with the help of women who sent in donations for it. Please send us whatever you can afford for the next issue.

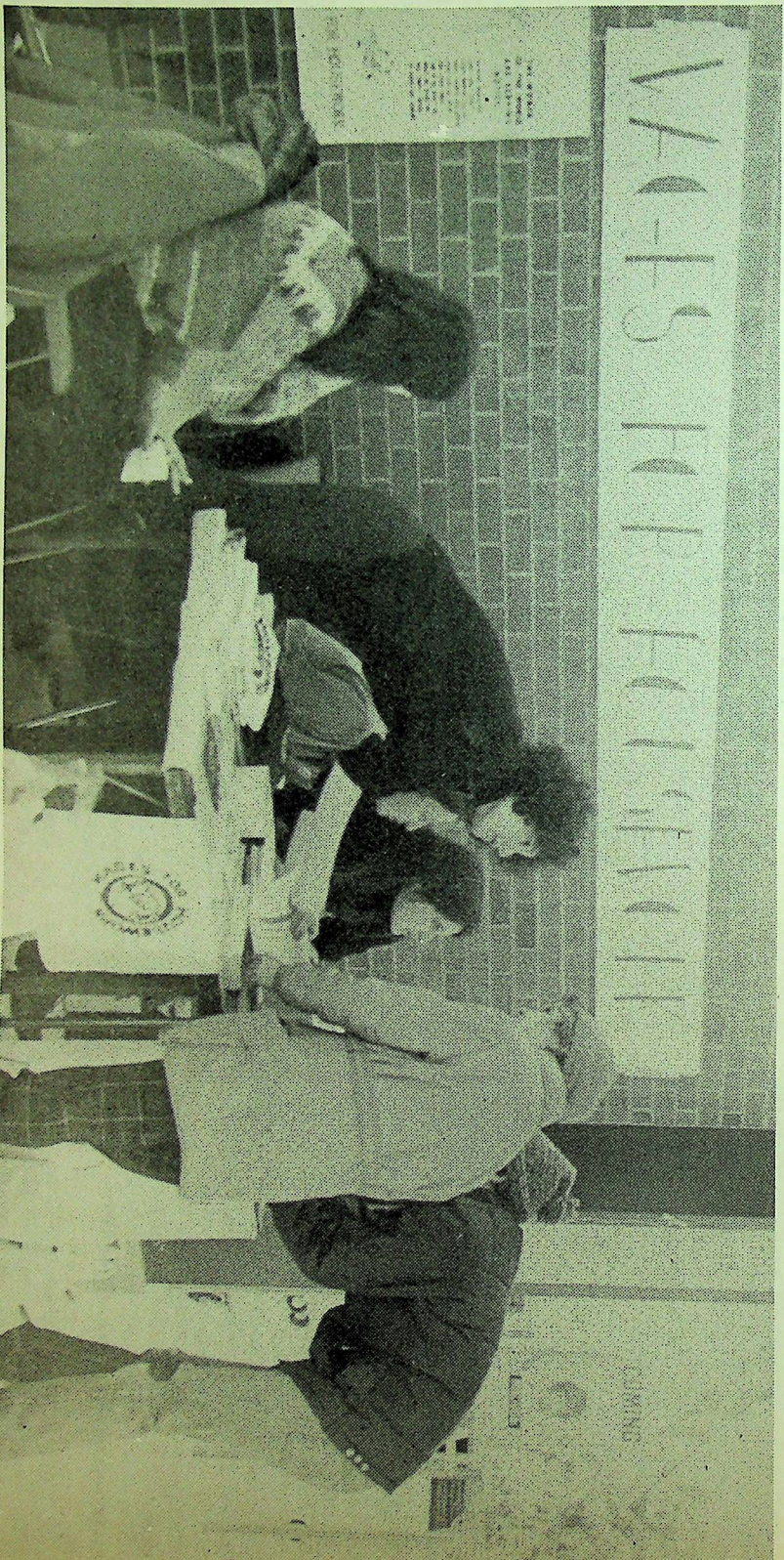
Petitions...

Are available in English, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish

WAGES. DUE LESBIANS IS SPONSORING A CONFERENCE: "TOWARD A STRATEGY FOR THE LESBIAN MOVEMENT"

July 23 - 25
Don Vale Community Centre
80 Winchester Street, Toronto
Contact 416-466-7457 or 416-465-6822

The Wages for Housework Campaign Bulletin is put out periodically by the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee. Please do not reprint any portion of the bulletin without our permission.



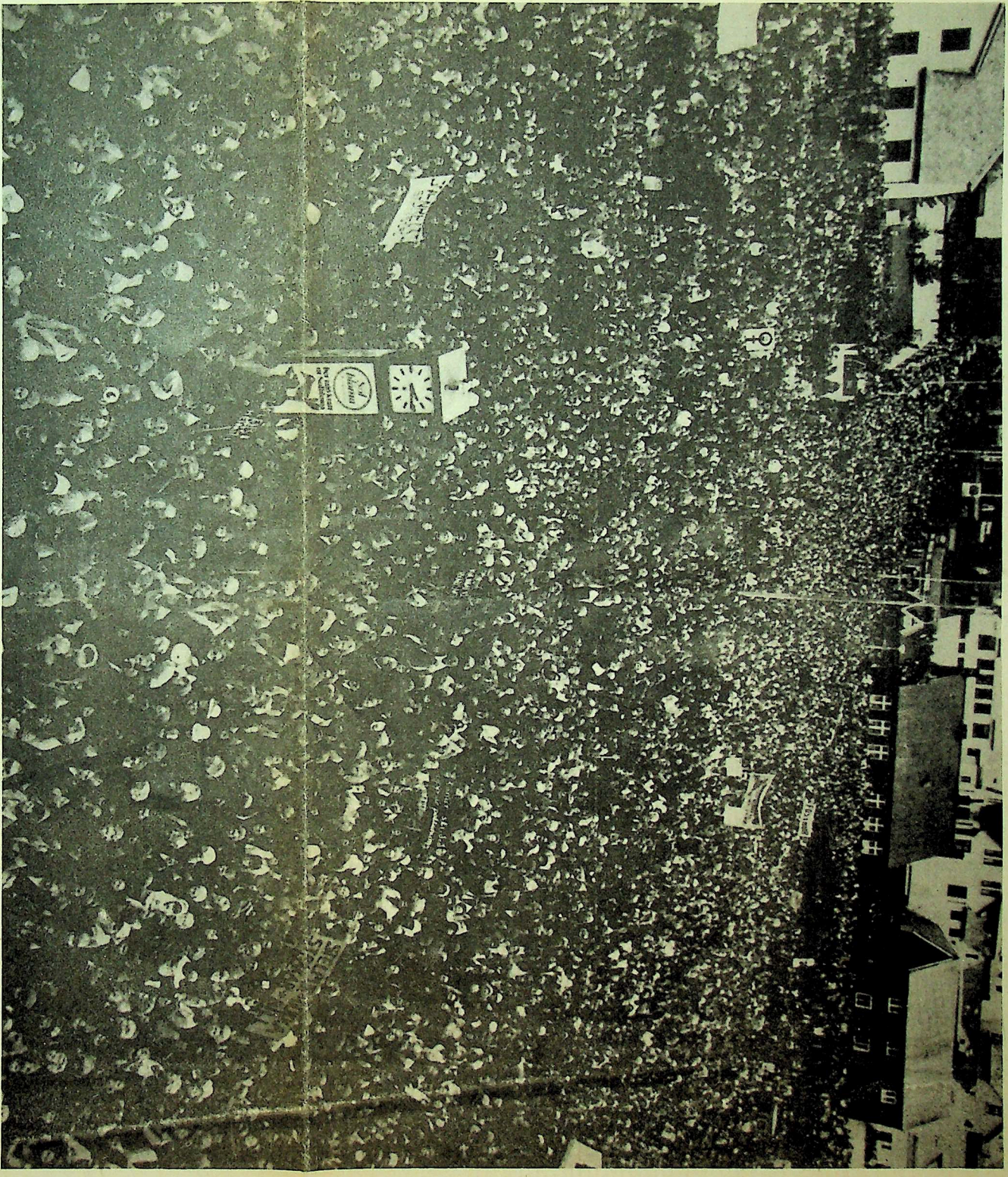
Don't forget to send in your signed petitions!

Photo by F. Myland

The Wages for Housework

Campaign Bulletin

fall 1976 vol.1 no.2



GENERAL STRIKE OF WOMEN. REYKJAVIK, ICELAND. OCTOBER 24, 1975.

When Women Stop, Everything Stops!

A general strike of women? Yes. One year ago the women pulled the rug out from under Iceland.

In a massive show of strength, women all over the country banded together to stop work for one day. Full-time housewives led the way by walking out on unwashed dishes and unmade beds. With inflation running close to 50% last year, it's no wonder. How far can you stretch a man's paycheck to keep ahead of the game without putting your nerves on the line?

School children got a holiday because 65% of teachers in Iceland are women. All nursery schools were shut. Restaurants were empty and laundromats lay idle. Women in industry walked out.

Communications stopped dead because, as we all know, telephone operators are women. The only news that got typeset that day was news of the strike. The female typesetters went in early to do it and left immediately afterwards!

The strike was called as part of International Women's Year to show that without women's work, society can't function: industry, government, schools etc. only hang together be-

cause women work for nothing in the home and next to nothing outside.

What about the men? Well, someone had to look after the kids, and you can't really run an assembly line while you're changing diapers, so many were at home. And it wasn't exactly business as usual with no secretaries in the offices or tellers in the banks either. Even theatres were closed because actresses were on strike!

In Reykjavik alone, over 25,000 women demonstrated in the heart of the city, causing the biggest traffic jam on record. Everywhere women spoke out against the poverty and dependence to which "women's work" condemns us. The wage gap between men and women in Iceland is high, as in Canada, and most women are trapped in the revolving door of unpaid work in the home and low-paid, dead-end jobs outside.

The strike was declared a total success. It dramatized just how dependent society is on women's work. We are everywhere. Without women, no one else can work and the whole economy stops dead. That day, for 24 hours, all the work that women do ground to a halt. And so did Iceland.

Editorial : What Joe Morris could learn from his mother

Did you know that there are more full-time housewives in Canada than unionized workers? 3.9 million as compared to 2.7 million to be exact. And that 2/3 of all waged workers don't belong to unions? Rather glaring gaps in any union-led "general" strike -- which might explain why Joe Morris, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, prefers to call October 14 a "Day of Protest".

Trudeau, of course, made a general attack on all workers, waged and unwaged, in unions or not. He knows his business. While wage controls take aim at more powerful workers in government and large industry, the heart of the austerity program is the cutbacks in spending which hit the wageless hardest -- students, the elderly, and women in the home.

Together, these form a single strategy to lower our standard of living and "...accomplish nothing less than a wrenching adjustment of expectations". They call it fighting inflation, but what the hell is inflation if not a lowered standard of living?

Because wage controls are only half the government's attack, the CLC has -- at best -- only half a strategy to fight the government. The unions are calling on the "unorganized" to support October 14. No wonder.

But what do non-union workers, old age pensioners, and welfare mothers have to gain from a strategy that excludes them?

When have the unions even recognized that wage controls are also an attack on male workers' wives? With inflation still over 7%, a wage rollback means, first and foremost, more unpaid housework -- longer hours shopping for bargains, cooking tougher meat, and soothing family tensions.

We heard but a whimper from the unions when Trudeau cut \$221 million from the Family Allowance, the only money that many women can call their own. It was the largest federal cutback and it picked the pockets of 3 1/2 million mothers, many of whom can't afford a new jacket or new boots for their kids this year. Unlike the unions, many of their members have supported a petition which demands

the scheduled Baby Bonus increase and money for all our work in the home. They know that by taking money away from their wives, Trudeau is also getting at them.

Have women in the paid labour force fared any better? Hardly. Over the past decade, the number of women in the Canadian labour force grew by 88% and the number of women in unions grew by 150%. In spite of this, waged women are going backwards. The concentration of women in clerical, sales, and service jobs has increased by 10%. They now account for 2/3 of all waged women and these jobs, of course, are at the bottom of the wage scale.

The fact that 4/5 of all women in the paid labour force still remain outside unions and that most unions won't go near them because their wages are too low explains a lot. The way most unions negotiate settlements explains the rest. By going after percentage increases rather than the same raise for all, those who "have" get more, and those who "have not" get less.

Not surprisingly, the wage gap between men and women is growing. In 1971, men earned 44% more than women, and by 1973, it rose to 45%. This in spite of the fact that women workers are, on the average, better educated than male workers! In Ontario alone, waged women earn \$1 billion less per year than men and, even though the Anti-Inflation Board exempts wage increases that rectify sex discrimination from the 12% ceiling, there isn't a single union settlement that takes advantage of this!

The unions have always provided those with more money from those with less, and both of these from people with no money at all. They themselves are to blame for the fact that many waged workers are not in unions and that most workers, like housewives, are wageless altogether. The CLC is in no position to call a general strike because they can't stop the economy without the "unorganized".

In fact, Iceland demonstrates that we women are the only workers who can really pull off a general strike. That means everyone else will have to support us to win anything for themselves.

The Family Allowance Protest Continues!

The Wages for Housework Campaign is nearing the goal of 10,000 signatures on the petition which protests Trudeau's freeze in the Baby Bonus and demands wages for housework for all women from the government. Women -- and men! -- are circulating the petition in factories, supermarkets, welfare offices, bingo halls, and fall fairs! Women are using it to tell one another how much we need the Baby Bonus -- little as it is -- and that we are defending what is ours and fighting for more.

A delegation of women will go to Ottawa to present it to government officials. If you want to take part, just let us know -- no delegation is too large!

Letters...

"I'm also interested in the (Wages for Housework) Committee as I'm on Mothers Allowance raising two small children alone and am concerned about recent statements which would send us out of the home, undermining the importance of motherhood, the fact that we do work at home...."

- Orillia

Write in for your copy of the petition & don't forget to send it back

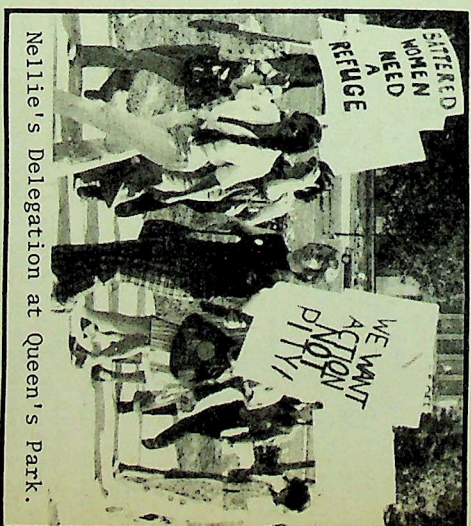
"Wages for Housework sounds like my kind of movement. All the 'Women's Liberation Movement' has done is add more exploitation onto women by telling them to join the labour force."

- Thunder Bay

Protest News...

ONTARIO -- Wages Due Lesbians has been speaking to groups of lesbian women about the Family Allowance Protest in Ottawa, Kingston, Kitchener, Hamilton, and Toronto. The group also held a very successful conference on Lesbians and the Wages for Housework Campaign on July 24-25 in Toronto, attended by 80 women from Canada, the U.S., and England.

QUEBEC -- Dozens of petitions in French keep coming in from all over. In a Gallup Poll taken last year, 61% of Quebec respondents favoured a government-paid wage for housewives compared to 49% nationally! Many French petitions are coming in from New Brunswick too.



Nellie's Delegation at Queen's Park.

TORONTO -- Staff and residents at Nellie's Women's Hostel have endorsed the Family Allowance petition as have other community based services fighting for survival, like Hassle-Free Clinic.

The Campaign Bulletin is put out periodically by the

TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE
SUITE 301, 745 DANFORTH AVENUE
TORONTO, ONTARIO

(416)466-7457

OFFICE HOURS:

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY
12:00 NOON TO 4:00 PM

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Photo by M. Thornton

Born a housewife

Besides the Queen of England and Jackie Onassis, how many women do you know who don't do any housework? Like it or not, most of us are trained from birth to cook, clean, and look after others. We're even told it's our "natural destiny" -- so we don't get any ideas about not doing it.

Why? Because industry and government need the home as a re-fueling station for workers, children, the sick and the elderly. Housework forms an invisible layer of work on which our whole society rests. And who pays for this comfortable cushion? Women do.

We pay in the home with isolation and long hours. Even women who have a second (paid) job do an average of four hours housework per day! And we pay outside the home with low wages and dead-end jobs because our time is considered to be worth nothing in the home. Those very jobs are invariably extensions of unpaid housework: nursing, teaching, service work, waitressing etc. And what do secretaries do but "keep house" for the boss at the office?

Because we aren't paid for it, housework runs our lives. We carry it around everywhere, like a second skin. Housework is so much a part of "being female" that even when we refuse to do it everyone around us expects us to! It stamps our personalities and it keeps us poor and dependent.

In a society where money is power, being poor means being weak. We hear a lot about women being powerless

Welfare Council said that women on welfare "fall victims to one of the cruelest and most senseless myths of our society: that the person who stays in the home to raise the family is not working."

FRANCE (June 1975) -- The government is paying pensions to women who have been full-time housewives all their lives in recognition of the fact that they have made an "economic contribution" to society. (If they can pay pensions, why not wages?) Canada is considering a scheme where the wife 'shares her husband's pension -- no extra money, just a bit of recognition so we can fight for more!

CHICAGO (September 1976) -- The FBI arrested three women who were part of a \$100 a night call girl operation. Many of the women involved were 'housewives supplementing family income and college students earning money to return to school.'" Enough said.

CHINA (1975) -- The People's Republic of China has a system of "work points" which determine each worker's benefits and holidays. Women have demanded that housework (unwaged also in China) be included in the point system.

ITALY (January 1976) -- Over 100,000 women demonstrated in Rome for abortion on demand. Their main slogan was "we want the right to abortion, but we don't only want to abort". A strong movement for Wages for Housework in Italy has stressed that without money, no woman can really choose to have or not have children.

CANADA/USA (August 1975) -- Crime is increasing among women at a much faster rate than among men, especially crimes involving money. In Canada, between 1963 and 1972, the number of men guilty of fraud was up 5% compared to 240% for women. For possessing stolen goods it was up 81% for men and 233% for women. In Toronto, the highest rate of shoplifting is among old age pensioners and housewives. With or without wages, we need to feed ourselves and our children!

OTTAWA (May 1975) -- Wives of diplomats and MPs called for public recognition of their tasks as hostesses, secretaries, and managers for their husbands. They said the government is get-

ting "two for the price of one" and that the time has come to put wives on the government payroll.

REGINA (June 1976) -- The Saskatchewan Court of Appeal overturned a controversial 1974 ruling that denied a farm wife any interest in the farm she and her husband worked for 21 years. Helen Rathwell was awarded half interest of the farm because she had contributed to a joint account to buy the land. In December 1975 the National Farmers Union went on record supporting the bid farmwives are making to be paid a wage for their work from farm revenue.

THE PHILIPPINES (June 1975) Anthropologist Margaret Mead told a seminar that "wives are the cheapest form of labour ... if a man earned \$100,000, it would take all the money he earns to find enough women to do what his wife does for nothing. It takes the work of five men to equal the work of one wife", which is why we want the money from the government -- they are the only ones who can afford to pay the bill! Most men don't have enough for themselves, and besides, some of us don't have husbands.

CANADA/USA (1976) -- Several child custody cases involving lesbian women have been reported in the press recently. One woman in Alberta and another in Maine won unconditional custody. Still, thousands of lesbian women are losing their children, inside and outside the courtroom because, like other women, they don't have the money to fight it out or to support them in the unlikely event that they win.

TORONTO (January 1976) -- The Ontario Ministry of Labour "revealed" that most women in the paid labour force are working out of necessity. About 37% are single, widowed, or divorced. The others are with men who do not earn enough to support another adult and two or three children. So much for those who say that women work "to be full-filled". We have to beg for a second job because we aren't paid for our first one-- housework.

POLAND (June 1976) -- Housewives and other workers went on strike all over Poland when the government announced it was planning to increase prices. It was forced to back down immediately. In 1970 a similar strike over food prices toppled the government! Housewives were central in that struggle too.

Turning the tables...

The fight to refuse unpaid housework takes almost as many forms as there are women, but the message is the same: pay us for the work we do because we need and deserve the money!

An international Wages for Housework Campaign is underway in many countries including Canada, the U.S., England, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and New Zealand. The campaign is demanding wages for housework for all women from the government. Evidence that women need that money and are fighting for it daily is everywhere:

TORONTO (1974-1976) -- The Mother Led Union, a group of welfare mothers, has been organizing to demand parity with foster mothers who make three times as much as natural mothers for looking after the same children! The National

Many support occupation of women's hostel Women at Nellie's fight for survival

On August 26, 1976, the residents and staff of Nellie's Women's Hostel declared an "emergency occupation". They are refusing to turn women away for lack of space or to ask them to leave after their limited (subsidized) stay has expired.

The central demand of the occupation is more money from the Metro and Provincial Governments to run their desperately-needed housing facility, and money for a long-term residence for women.

For 1976, the skeleton budget for Nellie's was \$186,000, of which they received only \$85,000 from Metro, and nothing at all from the Provincial Government directly. The rest is supposed to come from fund-raising.

In Toronto there are presently 1,184 emergency beds for men, and only 77 for women! With government cut-backs reducing hospital beds, discharging more psychiatric patients, freezing building costs for old age homes, and cutting back welfare, more and more women are being thrown into crisis.

Thirty residents is the legal maximum for Nellie's 13 bedroom, run-down old house, but since the occupation started there have been between 40 and 60 women per night -- "wall to wall mattresses", as one staff member put it! In their initial press release they say, "Overcrowding contravenes health and fire regulations, but we refuse to allow lack of housing and lack of money to force women to return to intolerable home situations or to streets and park benches."

Negotiations are presently underway with the Metro Government, and extra emergency funding is expected to help carry Nellie's through to the end of the year.

But the issue is, fundamentally, long-term funding. Nellie's is one of many crisis-ridden community-based services which sprang up to meet specific needs for which there was no adequate service available: housing, welfare, daycare, legal problems, family planning, rape and suicide prevention, and wife battering.

Most are run by and for women and survive with only partial and temporary funding from various levels of government. The cancellation of the federal OPI program and curtailment of LIP has forced many such services into a fight for survival. Little alternative money is available through private funding agencies, who prefer to fund more "established" services. Nellie's case is typical -- it has operated with constant short-staffing and unstable funding since opening its doors in June 1974, and is threatened with closure because of the government "austerity" program.

In a statement which Nellie's sent out to potential supporters they said "...we are facing a financial crisis, but our situation is only the tip of the iceberg of how the government is making its cuts on the backs of women."

The description they gave of their work and their crisis was bound to strike a responsive chord. "...At Nellie's the staff is basically doing housework for other women. We keep a house open (24 hours a day)

where women can find food, shelter, and a sympathetic ear... But housework comes cheap ... and we feel it with our long shifts; we feel it when we are exhausted at the end of a shift because the hostel is understaffed, but we can't afford to hire anyone else."

Supporters rallied immediately. Many letters to the Editor appeared in the three daily papers. Every afternoon a "special program", organized by the Wages for Housework Committee was held at Nellie's during the first two weeks of the occupation. There was live entertainment, movies, comedy. Dozens of women came as individuals and from other community services in crisis: Hassle Free Clinic, the Immigrant Women's Centre, Rape Crisis Centre, Interval House, Christian Resource Centre, Anduhyann House, Birth Control and VD Centre, the Mother-Led Union, Wages Due Lesbians among them.

At a supporters' meeting held on September 1, over 30 groups were present. A lively discussion about how to show support for Nellie's took place. The result was a statement, "In Supporting Nellie's, We Support Ourselves", which was directed at all three levels of government which routinely shunt such groups from one level to another. It said in part, "...The situation at Nellie's is a mirror image of women's lives, and of the crisis that many community-based services run by and for women are facing... No level of government presently accepts responsibility for funding these services... The consistent refusal to recognize (them) as a social necessity which deserve adequate funding

betrays the fact that they are seen as mere 'women's work' and run unceremoniously on a pool of cheap female labour -- the same labour that works for nothing in the home."

This statement, which concluded by demanding new government policies for long-term funding of community-based services, was signed by 53 groups. The following week it was delivered by a delegation of over 60 women, children, and some men, to the Mayor of Toronto and to the office of the Premier of Ontario. Outside the Provincial Legislature, the delegation held a "Speak-Out" to express publicly the demands to the government. The event was covered widely by radio and TV and, along with ongoing media coverage, has helped keep the crisis at Nellie's before the public.

The following week, Hassle-Free Clinic, a much-used community health service, held a similar event on their premises to appeal for emergency funding from the government so they can stay open. Many of the same women were present because the "emergency occupation" at Nellie's has exposed how "women's work" in community-based services is lowest in the government's priorities and how women are beginning to fight back.

All levels of government continue to plead "poverty", but already the emergency occupation at Nellie's has forced the Metro politicians to sit down and review the financing of Nellie's. Otherwise, they would never have budged.

WOMEN'S NOON HOUR CONCERT

RITA MACNEIL, pioneer of women's songs

BOO WATSON original country rock

SPEAKOUT: women from Nellie's, the wages for housework campaign and others.

**TO PROTEST unpaid work in the home
Noon October 14 City Hall**

Wages for Housework Campaign Bulletin



Toronto, Canada

vol.2 no.1

Fall 1977

Hookers fight back

By JUDY RAMIREZ

TORONTO — In 1975 the Ontario Appeal Court acquitted Ottawa prostitute Louise Rolland on the grounds that her work to a prospective customer did not constitute "soliciting". The police were forced to stop harassing anyone they suspected, and charge only women who "made a nuisance of themselves". Arrests dropped dramatically. Hookers got a real boost in their working conditions, along with the possibility of making more and paying out less in fines. It didn't last long.

In Toronto, City Hall recently pushed the panic button and launched a heavy-handed campaign to "clean up Yonge St.". Since it began, roughly six months ago, Toronto police have been making one sweep arrest after another. The scene of 6 or 7 women being dragged out of body rub parlours to waiting paddy-wagons has

become a familiar one on the 6 o'clock news. The Courts have also cracked down as never before: they are keeping hookers awaiting sentence in custody, and imposing stiff fines and jail terms which are completely without precedent.

Central to this campaign of intimidation is the crackdown on sex shop operators. City Council recently approved 100 recommendations which would provide much stricter licensing regulations. The aim is to force sex shops to come under the "body rub parlour" category which most have managed to dodge so far. The yearly fee for body rub parlours is \$3,300 as opposed to the \$55 fee most nude amusements are presently paying! In addition to getting its cut from the sex industry (the moralists are obviously not above pimping!), City Hall wants greater control over the "product". There is pressure on Ottawa to bring back the "vagrancy" laws which would

allow any woman to be arrested for standing around on the corner. This street harassment would drive many women into the newly licensed body rub parlours, where regular Government inspection would be awaiting them. Also, changes in the zoning laws are being sought by City Hall, which could banish the whole "sex strip" to a deserted industrial area near the docks, thus bringing it "under control".

But whatever measures City Hall finally chooses, the politicians' primary aim is clearly to bring hookers back in line because prostitution is losing its stigma. Hookers have become too visible, too upfront, and too numerous. Housewives are doing it for extra spending money. Students are doing it to put themselves through school. And young girls are getting into it because it beats being a cashier or a file clerk. Politicians everywhere have tol-

erated "the world's oldest profession" as long as prostitutes remained isolated from other women. They have always been held up as the symbol of female degradation, precisely to keep the rest of us "coming across" for free. And not only in bed. For many of us it's a package deal which includes cooking, cleaning, shopping, and raising children.

But all that is changing. Women have been demanding their wages in many ways, and "alarming" increases in the rate of prostitution have become common in large cities everywhere. So have struggles for welfare, daycare, unemployment insurance, family allowances, etc. And the politicians are worried.

When thousands of immigrant parents and children recently held a noisy protest march in Toronto, after the slain body of Manuel Jacques was found on Yonge St., City Hall and Queen's Park had a heyday. The fact that those accused of Manuel's murder are four gay men, added more passion to the promises of cleaning up "the filth".

The issue for most of the immigrants marching, however, was the right of any immigrant boy to earn his money on the streets of Toronto. When you come halfway across the world in order to feed your family, and even young children must help earn the family's wage, the right to safety on the streets is the right to economic survival. And nobody knows what that's all about better than the women of all races and nationalities who are earning their living on the Yonge Streets of Canada.

City Hall used the march to appoint a special prosecutor to deal with all the charges being laid in the Yonge St. crackdown, and to make solemn vows about speeding up the whole process. This from the very same politicians who are in no hurry to raise the wages of immigrant mothers who fill Toronto's sweat shops, so that our children won't be forced out on the streets to make up the difference!

Less money for women, in fact, is what the Yonge St. crackdown is

all about, and similar crackdowns have been underway in New York, London, Vancouver, Detroit, San Francisco, Washington, Boston. ... But prostitutes everywhere are fighting back publicly, and winning unprecedented support. In recent months, mock street trials were held in S.F., Los Angeles, and Boston, which accused Government and business of pimping off prostitutes and off the work of all women.

The events were attended by hundreds of women, many of whom "testified" from the crowd about their struggle for money. In the Boston trial, Ms. Anonymous Prostitute, speaking for PUMA (Prostitutes' Union of Massachusetts) told the large crowd in the Boston Commons, "My crime is not actually having sex — work which all women are supposed to do for free — but, rather, demanding money for it." Wilmette Brown, of Black Women for Wages for Housework, said "They punish welfare mothers and prostitutes for getting money for the work all women do — they make it a crime for women to refuse to be poor."

In Canada, prostitutes from Toronto to Vancouver are speaking out more openly than ever. Recently, one told the "Toronto Star" that she considers herself a social worker: "We perform a service for these men", she said. "We help them with their problems and stop them taking their frustrations out on other people." In Quebec, a 19-year old stripper who earns \$425 a week told the "Montreal Star", "I'm into stripping and I don't feel degraded by it." If Government continues to cut back and unemployment continues to rise, many more women will be saying the same, because nothing is more degrading than having no money.

The Wages for Housework Campaign fully supports these demands and announces the upcoming visit of Margo St. James, of COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) to Toronto! Housewives and hookers will be making a common cause Nov. 25-30 in a series of public events. Watch your local newspapers for more information.



"Every little girl learns by the time she's five how to put the hustle on her Daddy for a new toy."

Margo St. James, founder of COYOTE (a loose woman's organization)

Women 'try' rape judges

By HEATHER STIRLING

LONDON, ENG. — It was front page news all over Britain, and, in Canada, we read about it in "The Globe and Mail". On July 16, 1977 five hundred women held a public tribunal in Trafalgar Square, in London, to indict the "Queen's Justices" who had set free a convicted rapist.

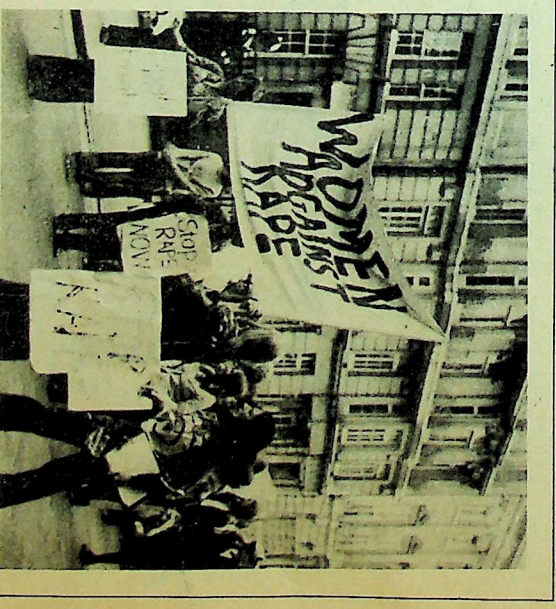
Guardsman Tom Holdsworth brutally raped 18-year old Carol Maggs and was sentenced to three years in prison for it. On appeal, three judges freed him so as not to "interfere with his military career". Carol Maggs came forward publicly to denounce the decision and hundreds of women came forward with her.

On June 26, Women Against Rape, a London-based group connected with the Wages for Housework Campaign, invaded the High Court where one of the Holdsworth judges was hearing a case. They demanded the immediate dismissal of all three judges, the disqualification of judges known to be biased against women from hearing rape cases, the recognition of rape in marriage as a crime, automatic financial

compensation for all rape victims, and financial independence for every woman so we can leave any situation where we feel the danger of rape exists. The judge was forced to leave the court, and days later, several Labour MP's tabled a motion calling for the dismissal of the three judges!

The public outcry against the Holdsworth case culminated with the Trafalgar Square tribunal. Carol Maggs was the star-witness and she spoke out against the "rape of justice" in the courts. Also testifying were Helen Buckingham of PLAN (Prostitution Laws Are Nonsense), and an Asian woman from strikebound Grunwick's who told the crowd that the older immigrant women had to make their native dishes for the bosses and the younger ones had to sleep with them in order to keep their jobs!

The powerful two-hour trial found Government and industry guilty of "conspiracy to rape and perpetrate violence against women in all its forms". Canadian women salute our sisters in Britain with a National Day of Protest Against Rape on Nov. 5!



Hundreds of women join march led by Women Against Rape, London, England, July 16, 1977.

Family law reform: equality or more poverty?

By DOROTHY KIDD

The Ontario Legislature is debating the Family Law Reform Bill. Similar bills are being passed across Canada, and the ERA in the United States is cut from the same cloth. They all come at a time when women's rebellion has thrown the family into crisis. Not content to work for nothing in the home, "economic independence" has become women's rallying cry. In our millions, we are divorcing, choosing to live common-law, and coming out as lesbians.

Our rebellion has caused an international crisis. All the family law reforms speak loudly of "recognizing the economic contribution of the home-maker". The Ontario bill intends to do so by awarding 50% of the family assets to each spouse on the dissolution of a marriage. However, the wife's slice isn't anywhere near half the pie, because the award doesn't include pensions, business assets, or other investments belonging to the husband, even though they were made possible by her work at home. Spouses will also be able to contract out of any obligation. For women with little bargaining power at the time the contract is written, this provision rules out any redress afterwards.

In any case, this widely touted gain of shared assets is irrelevant for the majority of families who are lucky to even own their own home. It is the support provisions which concern most of us. The bill gives women "equal rights" with men by giving us "equal responsibility" for our own support. In a marriage where the woman has been the "dependent", one the Government intends for her to be "rehabilitated" to take a second job. In this way women will no longer be "stigmatized" by not having money in their own right. In the few cases where the woman

has more money than her husband (in marriage or common-law) she will be expected to pay support for him and the children!

This is the long-awaited recognition of our work in the home! The Family Law Reform Bill is unequivocally based on the premise that housewives are parasites. Ed Ryan, one of the original drafters of the bill put it this way: "Mr. McMurry's (the Attorney-General) bill doesn't contemplate a society in which men support women. In the long run you won't have the woman who can't do anything except be wives dumped onto the welfare rolls... When a marriage breaks down you will have a woman at least a lot better prepared than today to go to work." Just what does he think we've been doing in our homes all these years?

Already, one Ontario judge has refused to award support to a mother with two children under twelve. She was told to go back to her former occupation, teaching. This pressure to take a second job comes at a time when women are finding it increasingly difficult to get wages which are high enough to save us and our children from bare subsistence. And the gap between women's wages and men's is steadily widening.

Mr. McMurry is attacking mothers on welfare who have fought this pressure by demanding pay for their work in the home. His principal argument for the bill is that it cuts down on welfare costs and puts the responsibility "back in the family's hands". We've heard that argument before. Every time they've made cutbacks in social services, the "family" has had to pick up the slack. Which means we women have worked harder in our homes caring for the children, and the elderly. Margaret Birch (Ontario Cabinet Minister) gets paid \$42,700 a year to tell us "love is all the pay a mother needs".

and McMurry manoeuvres to take away the first wage we've won for our housework. That's exactly what these "equality reforms" are all about.

For many women, welfare has been the one option which allowed us to turn down the "opportunity" to work for peanuts outside the home. It has cut down competition among women for the same few jobs in the female job ghettoes. With welfare less available and the job market deteriorating, it will be next to impossible for us to leave intolerable home situations. When we do, more and more of us will have to leave the kids behind because we can't afford to keep them. Lesbian women will find it impossible to "come out". And the pressures for women living common-law to marry will increase as the benefits of marital tax-breaks force many of us to trade whatever independence we've won for badly needed cash.

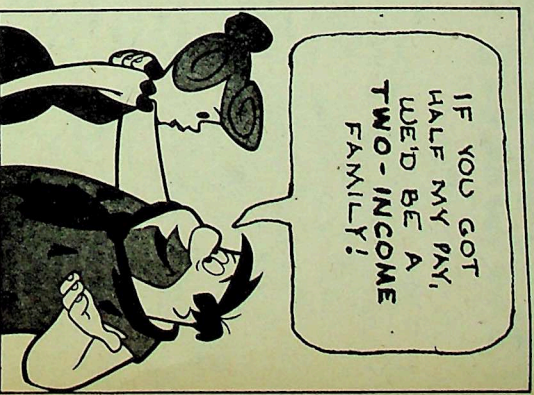
When we do leave, the Government is saying that whatever money we are demanding will have to come from the men. Until we are "self-sufficient", the courts and the welfare department will be given more power to go after the men. We know that most men don't have enough for themselves, and many are defending their wages from controls, cutbacks, rising unemployment, etc. We want to be paid in our own right, so that we're free to enter into relationships with men that aren't warped by economic dependence on them. We absolutely oppose any schemes which force men and women to share the poverty.

But the Government and many "feminists" are telling us that "equality" and "economic independence" means either a second job or shared poverty with men. With victories like this, who needs defeat? A

group of women in Winnipeg said it all in their recent Brief to the provincial legislature about the proposed Family Law Reform in that province!

"We are certainly not against a woman obtaining a job outside the home... But we are against the assumption that a woman's work in the home is not worth any financial remuneration, and that going into the work-force is the only mechanism toward financial independence... The work of a spouse maintaining the home should be recognized as wage-labour."

Group in Support of Wages for Housework



Lesbians on the move

By WAGES DUE LESBIANS

"No lesbian or any other woman should face the blackmail of losing custody of her children. In court, through social pressure or through poverty. We demand the money we need to keep our children without being forced to depend on a man."

This was one of the resolutions passed by the majority of women — most of them from the Prairies — who attended this summer's 5th Annual National Gay Rights Conference in Saskatoon. The resolution went on to be defeated by a vote of the several hundred men present at the final plenary session. But throughout the weekend what electrified the atmosphere was the growing strength of lesbian women in the gay movement, and our determination to make these conferences occasions where we can organize for our own needs.

Francie Wyland, from Wages Due Lesbians in Toronto, opened the conference with an inspiring speech about the fight of lesbian women from all the different life situations in which we find ourselves. She voiced the women's demand to lead the gay rights march later that day, and there was no argument from the men; many, in fact, supported us enthusiastically.

The march was a high point of lesbian power. When we were interviewed by the media we said we were marching for all the lesbians who couldn't afford to "come out" in Saskatoon and every other town in Canada, and we said we knew we could march only because millions of women — both lesbian and "straight" — are fighting for sexual choices and independence in every part of our lives.

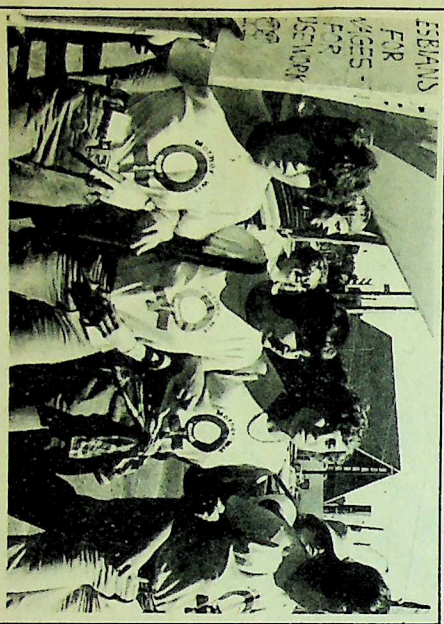
Three important resolutions that women proposed were passed by the whole conference. One was that the gay movement in Canada actively support the growing struggle of lesbian mothers for child custody. The second was our demand that, however many lesbians are actually present at gay conferences, the women must be allotted at least 50% of the voting power. And the third called for the conference's support of the July 13 picket of the Ontario Supreme Court organized by Wages Due Lesbians to protest the laws that allow lesbian mothers to lose custody of our children. These victories in Saskatoon are an index of the increasing visibility of lesbian women everywhere.

Another example was the strong presence of lesbians at the California State International Women's

Year Conference in June. Five thousand women gathered in Los Angeles to formulate proposals to be taken to the National LWV Conference in Houston, Texas on November 18-21. Wages Due Lesbians was there and this is one of the resolutions passed almost unanimously:

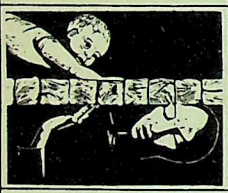
"Whereas our poverty and social pressure force too many lesbian women to choose between coming out as lesbians, and having and keeping our children, be it resolved that we demand wages for housework from the government for all women so that we have the power to freely choose whether or not to be lesbian, and whether or not to have children; and be it resolved that we support our children's fight for their own right to sexual choices."

Francie Wyland spoke at the Los Angeles Gay Pride Rally on June 26, to a crowd of 10-15,000. Her speech was reprinted in "The Los Angeles Sunday Times" (circulation 1.3 million) with the headline "Wages for Housework a Lesbian Issue, Too". The more visible lesbians are the clearer it is to all women that our strength is vital to everyone. When lesbians are strong, no woman will have to dread being called "unnatural" or "dyke". If she says "no" too often. And all of our power depends on having the money to make our "no's" stick.



Lesbians lead gay rights march in Saskatoon, July 1, 1977.

MOTHERHOOD LESBIANISM and CHILD CUSTODY



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One of the most violent punishments lesbian women face for stepping out of line is the loss of the custody of our children. Like prostitutes, welfare women, immigrants, disabled women, prisoners and mental patients — we have our children taken away every day. Almost anyone who comes along can label us "unfit". And that risk more and more faces any woman who refuses to raise her children in a nuclear family situation.

Fifty people, who knew that our fight is also theirs, joined Wages Due's picket of the Supreme Court in Toronto on July 13, when we took over the sidewalk for an hour at lunchtime with placards, banners and bullforns. They came from the Women's Counseling Referral and Education Centre, the Law Union of Ontario, the Community Homophile Association of Toronto, Prisoners' Rights, and many other groups. Local radio and TV coverage brought the news to many who could not be there.

Among the speakers were Florence Sims of Black Women for Wages for Housework, Anne Walker of Wages Due Lesbians in London, England, and Judy Ramirez for the Immigrant Women's Centre. All were protesting the use of sexual preference and financial status as criteria in deciding custody cases.

Mrs. X, the local lesbian mother whose case Wages Due has been involved with, was also at the pic-

ket. Her ex-husband recently dropped his fight and she was awarded unconditional custody of both her children, with no future supervision from Children's Aid!

Because of the tremendous support from many groups of women, the picket succeeded in focusing public attention on the invisible fight being waged by thousands of lesbians, against being forced to choose between our sexuality and our children.

Good news!

The Wages for Housework Campaign is moving westward! Two new groups, in Regina and Winnipeg, have recently formed and many women are getting together with a lot of energy and ideas. To find out what is happening and to join Campaign activities, contact: IN REGINA: Wages for Housework Group c/o Mallory Neuman, Box 326, Balgonie, Saskatchewan Tel. (306) 637-2381 IN WINNIPEG: Wages for Housework Group c/o The Woman's Place, 143 Walnut St., Winnipeg, Manitoba Tel. (204) 453-0311 Also, for more information in KITCHENER, Ontario, contact: Linda Lounsberry, 83 Water St. S., Kitchener, Ontario Tel. (519) 576-0796

Campaign Goodies



- Tea towels \$1.00
- Pot holders \$.75
- Cotton t-shirts \$4.50
- Sizes: S M L
- Colours: Blue, Beige, Green, Cranberry

To order, see address on P. 4



Buttons \$.50

WELFARE: Every mother is a working mother

"Chateleine" magazine recently ran an article about a deserted mother of two who went on welfare. "Living a dead-end existence" was their description of her life. Until she remarried and went back to school, that is. Then her "climb to self-respect" began, with "everything coming up roses"! The message is less than subtle: welfare mothers lead meaningless lives and contribute nothing to society. They should find a man and/or go out to earn a living.

For those of us who do, of course, there are "rewards". Such as the federal Government's witch hunt against housewives on UIC. After we take on a "real job and claim the benefits we are legally entitled to, we are weeded out as "freeloaders" just the same! The new reason for not giving us our money is that we are only "secondary wage earners". The truth is that we are just plain SECONDARY, because our first job in the home does not rate hard cash like other jobs.

Our weakness as women is that the overwhelming majority of us still work 16-hour days in the home and never see a pay-cheque. That pegs the value of our time, generally, to the lowest level of any workers in society. And nowhere is this clearer than when we go outside the home for a second job. We get palmed off with wages so low that we earn only 50% of what men earn — and the gap is increasing! Waitresses in Ontario are currently fighting to keep up with the minimum wage! The paltry wages of immigrant women working as domestics have no legal protection whatsoever. Women teachers and social service workers, who have "made it" into

professions, are getting hit with enormous speedups, and many are losing their jobs altogether.

Women lack the leverage to get a better deal not because we aren't in unions — two thirds of Canada's workers aren't, and the wages here are among the highest for any industrialized country! Nor because we aren't better qualified — on the average, women workers in Canada are slightly better educated than male workers! We lack leverage because our unpaid housework stamps CHEAP all over us.

Our biggest source of power as women is precisely the welfare mother who put a price tag on raising a family and won us our first wage for housework. The very fact that some women have a wage for that work automatically puts more leverage in the hands of all women. That can be seen clearly in Ontario where between 1961-1973 there was a 300% increase in the number of sole-support mothers on welfare! This at the very same time the divorce rate rose by 295%! Welfare money has clearly been our ticket out of marriages we would otherwise be trapped in. It has also been our ticket to greater sexual autonomy, with the possibility of lesbian women having children because we no longer have to depend on a man's wage to afford them.

Welfare has also raised women's bargaining power in the paid labour force because, for the first time, we have an alternative to the low wages the female job ghetto offer us. The power to say "no" has always gotten workers more money, and we women are no exception. Without welfare those wages would be even lower. Between 1969-75, with the increasing num-

bers of women demanding welfare, the minimum wages rates throughout Canada doubled, substantially closing the gap between low and average income workers. Men gained from our struggle because many of their wages rose and immigrants, who are at the bottom of the wage scale, gained enormously.

This is precisely why the Government keeps the welfare wage so low, and why women on welfare are held up for public scorn as being "dependent", "parasitic", etc. Poverty and humiliation will prevent more women from demanding welfare, the Government hopes, which in turn will prevent wages, generally, from "skyrocketing". The 46,000 FBA mothers in Ontario presently receive only 60% of what they need to live "adequately", according to a recent study done by the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto. And they are losing ground, despite a recent increase. Many a welfare mother is forced to use her benefits as a basic wage and pick up other money "on the side". The Government calls it "fraud", we call it survival.

In the USA, where the welfare rights movement was so massive that the number of families on welfare rose from 1.5 million in 1969 to 2.5 million in 1970, the gains we made are under systematic attack. As in Canada, more and more women have claimed welfare as their RIGHT, in spite of the poverty and the put-downs. Breaking the power this money has given women and all other workers is the No. 1 priority of Carter's new "Program for Better Jobs and Income".

The program is designed to cut off 1 in 3 welfare recipients in the USA, 90% of

in Canada). For us, the "right to choose" can never be only the right to abortion, but must also be the right to have all the children we might want.

We, therefore, demand of the Canadian Government:

1. FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND — Until contraception is fully safe and we don't run the risk of damage to our health, we need to abort freely without harassment about "multiple abortions", without having to beg a handful of "therapeutic committees" throughout Canada and Quebec to take our "exceptional case" into consideration; and with free access to abortion counselling in our own languages.
 2. Because as immigrant and as women we have always been poor, we want abortion to be fully covered by OHIP (with no doctor's fees added) and fully available to women who can't afford OHIP.
 3. FUNDING FOR CLINICS AND RELATED BIRTH CONTROL SERVICES IN ALL IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE IMMIGRANT WOMEN WHO USE THEM
 4. We want the money to control the programs ourselves because the lack of it has always meant government programs which force us either to have more children than we want or to not have those we do want.
 5. We want services which recognize that immigrant women often refuse contraception because our experience has taught us to be suspicious of the methods available, and not because we are "backward".
 6. We want contraception to be free of charge and available to women of all ages in their own languages.
- Finally, to ensure that we are in a better position to choose freely, we demand of the Canadian Government:
1. LIVING WAGES WITH FULL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW FOR ALL OUR WORK BOTH IN THE HOME AND OUTSIDE
 2. FULLY PAID MATERNITY LEAVE WITHOUT LOSS OF SENIORITY OR BENEFITS
 3. FUNDING FOR 24-HOUR CHILD-CARE CONTROLLED BY US WITH PAID STAFF, BODYS AND OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND IN EVERY SWEATSHOP

WHERE WE ARE FORCED TO WORK



The statement was endorsed by many immigrant organizations such as Black Education Project, Harriet Tubman Centre, Working Women, Centre for Spanish-speaking Peoples, East Indian Employment Development Centre, Women Working with Immigrant Women, etc. The Wages for Housework Campaign also supported it and stayed away from the Coalition meetings and the march. Other women's groups such as Nellie's Women's Hostel endorsed the immigrant women's statement, reflecting the growing financial pressure on women who are native born and educated, many of whom are also being forced to give up the idea of ever having children.

Is abortion the "right to choose"?

By JUDY RAMIREZ

TORONTO — In 1973 the US Supreme Court made abortion legal after years of organizing by the women's movement. The new law was immediately used by Chicago's Mayor Daley to round up pregnant welfare women and force them to "accept" abortions in order to stay on benefits. What the women's movement called "the right to choose" was precisely the opposite for thousands of Black, Chicana, Latin, and poor white women.

In 1977, Medicaid funds for sterilization are being increased at the very same time that the US Supreme Court has ruled that individual states are not legally required to provide Medicaid for "elective abortions" for the poor. The women's movement is again organizing to protect "abortion rights" and with the same slogan which equates the right to not have children with the "right to choose".

In Toronto, the May 28 Coalition for Abortion Rights formed last spring to protest the growing cuts in abortion services in Canada. The Badgley Report (1976) documented the widespread unavailability of abortions throughout the country. Hospitals are not required by law to set up the "therapeutic abortion committees" which legally decide who "needs" an abortion. Only 1 in 5 hospitals have such committees and many began cutting back the number of abortions they perform, or attaching conditions to it such as "consenting" to be sterilized.

The May 28 Coalition's main slogan "Abortion — a woman's right to choose" was meant to mobilize all women in self-defence. It did no such thing.

At the organizing meeting where the slogan was chosen, a West Indian woman, Erica Mercer, said she could not circulate leaflets with such a slogan to Black women. Too many Black women, she said, have been forced to abort because they can't afford the children they want.

Many others have been forcibly sterilized.

Other women present — some from the Wages for Housework Campaign — supported the inclusion of "the right of all women to bear the children they want" to the slogans. Defending only the right to not have children, won't give us the right to have those we want, and without that, how can abortion be the "right to choose"? But in the long-hour debate which followed, Coalition leaders insisted that abortion was "the main issue" and that "you can't demand everything at once". The proposed change was voted down.

Shocked, Erica immediately called a meeting of immigrant women (and some men) who work together on health-related issues. The group, which emerged from the conference "A Multicultural Approach to Family Planning and Contraception" last February, was shaken. How could the interests of Black and immigrant women be so callously ignored? To add insult to injury, the Coalition leaflet which appeared called for the defence of abortion rights only "for all Canadian women". This in a city of over half a million immigrants.

Despite the mediation attempts of some women in the Coalition (who managed to force changes in the second leaflet, but not the main slogans), the immigrant women decided to oppose the Coalition publicly. A statement was drafted by the Immigrant Women's Centre which said:

The May 28 Coalition for Abortion Rights equates the "right to choose" with ABORTION, when many of us, both immigrant and native-born, are forced to have abortions because we cannot afford to have the children we want. Immigrant women have always experienced coercion either by being forced to have children because birth control information and abortion services were denied us, or by being prevented from having children (through genocidal birth control practices in the Third World, as well as against Black women in the USA and Native Peoples

whom are mothers. They will be forced to accept specially created "public sector" jobs at the minimum wage. Even mothers with school-age children will be forced to work outside the home at least part-time, and "strong incentives" are being built in which are intended to drive women back to men in order to survive. "We must make a complete and clean break with the past", said President Carter, in announcing the new welfare reform recently.

He also called the present welfare system "anti-work", because women get benefits for being at home. And this is really the whole crux of the matter. If raising a family is work, then we deserve to be paid for it without having to take on more work outside the home. "Who is working?" has become the million-dollar question. Literally, Carter and his pals Trudeau, Davis, Schreyer, etc. are trying to tell us that only if we go out to work are we really working. But we know that EVERY MOTHER IS A WORKING MOTHER, because welfare women have the cash in their hands to prove it.

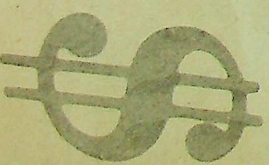
The following resolution was passed by the overwhelming majority of delegates — many of them welfare women — at the annual conference of the Ontario Anti-Poverty Organization, held in June, 1977 in Toronto.

"Whereas women consider raising children a job and welfare a recognition of that job be it resolved that the government end its harassment of welfare mothers and grant an immediate increase in benefits."

The media covered both the Coalition march and the immigrant opposition to it. Because of the strength of the opposition, many in the Coalition accused the immigrant women of hurting the abortion cause by the "display of disunity". The Coalition itself had, in fact, voted in that disunity by excluding the interests of the immigrant women from the start.

The message to the women's movement in all of this was loud and clear: there can be no fight for abortion which isn't also at the same time a fight to have all the children we want. The power to refuse to have children we do not want is increasingly dependent on being able to afford those we do want. The impossibility of isolating abortion as "the main issue" was made frighteningly clear in a recent interview with Dr. R. T. Ravenholt, director of the US Office of Population, an agency of the State Department. He told the British "Evening Standard" that seventy foreign doctors are currently being trained at Washington University in "advanced fertility management". The \$2.8 million program is creating the medical technology necessary to protect "the normal operation of US commercial interests around the world". The goal? To sterilize 100,000,000 women in developing countries in the next decade.

Is the women's movement planning to tell these women that abortion is the priority because it is the "right to choose"?



No cuts just bucks!

By JUDY RAMIREZ

NY — On May 1, 1977 an article appeared on the front page of the "New York Times" announcing that the City of New York University was "reamping" its SEEBK (Search for Education, Evaluation and Knowledge!) program and introducing "new guidelines" for eligibility. The \$20 million program aids 10,000 Third World students with a stipend of \$1,000 per year, and has been effect for ten years.

The Women's Action Group, a campus organization connected with the Wages for Housework Campaign, organized an emergency meeting to confront the administrators with what was obviously a plan to cut SEEBK funds. The "Times" article contained numerous distortions which gave the impression that SEEBK students are "poorly motivated" and that they receive \$10,000 a year!

Three hundred students crowded into the Student Union for the emergency meeting chaired by Margaret Prescott-Roberts of Black Women for Wages for Housework. The City University Chancellor was on hand, as were the Acting President and the SEEBK Central Budget Officer. They all pleaded innocent to angry charges that SEEBK was being slowly dismantled, even though the students were armed with facts which proved the contrary. The university had already withheld over \$2.5 million in SEEBK funds from needy students and plans to increase that by at least another \$1.5 million this year!

The shaken administrators agreed to hold a press conference the following week to set the record straight and to answer publicly the charges which SEEBK students had made against the university. But the planned press conference never really got off the ground. Leaflets by the Women's Action Group informing students of the event were confiscated from the university print shop—an order later traced to the President's office!

The Women's Action Group has continued to gather hundreds of signatures on their petition 'No Cuts Just Bucks' which began circulating prior to the uproar with the administration. It demands "an im-

mediate end to the dismantling of the SEEBK program which attacks everyone in the university and first of all women... no proficiency exams which are designed to eliminate students... no cutbacks in courses which limit students' access to future jobs... and no non-credit courses which increase the work and raise the cost of getting a degree..."

It also demands an end to the witchhunt against "welfare fraud" among women SEEBK students because "both fundings together are not adequate for subsistence". The Women's Action Group made public a new paternity affidavit which the NY City Social Services Department is forcing all mothers applying for welfare to sign. In it she must reveal whether or not she had sexual relations with other men at the time of conception! The new procedure also gives the welfare department the right to verify that the father is not living in the home, by writing or calling landlords, friends, family, employers, etc.

In taking the offensive against both the cuts in their student stipends and the intimidation of the welfare department, SEEBK women are telling the government loud and clear that their figures are way off.

They end their petition by saying: "Women students are doing double work. When a woman takes on the additional work of being a student, her first job — housework — does not disappear. Recent figures by economists estimate the value of housework to industry and government at more than \$21,000 a year, but we women are in crisis with no money we can call our own. Therefore, we demand wages for housework from the government for all women."

The new school year has just begun, and the SEEBK struggle at NY City University continues.

For more information contact:

Black Women for Wages for Housework
c/o Brown
100 Boerum Place
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Tel. (212) 834-0992

"When's pay day?"

By FRANCES GREGORY

OTTAWA — That's the question we asked representatives of Prime Minister Trudeau and the Minister of National Health and Welfare when a delegation of 15 women from the Toronto, Kitchener, and Ottawa Wages for Housework Campaign met with them for Mother's Day, last May.

We arrived in Ottawa with a gift-wrapped box containing 10,000 signatures on the Family Allowance Petition the Campaign had been circulating across Canada and Quebec (in five languages) since Trudeau froze the Family Allowance in 1976.

The petition, demanding the promised increase in the baby bonus as well as wages for housework for all women, had already played a crucial role in forcing the government to give back the cost of living raise in 1977. We had also prepared a Brief, "In Defence of the Family Allowance", which outlines how the baby bonus freeze was only a part of the state's plans to force women back into dependency on men, by attacking all the sources of money and power we have gained. (See editorial)

We held a large press conference on the steps of Parliament before going in to meet the brass. The story went out on the wire service and newspapers all over the coun-

try carried it. Radio and television interviews were aired in many provinces, and women from all over who had signed and circulated the petition, contacted Campaign offices to tell us that had made their Mother's Day!

We began the meeting (which lasted two hours) by outlining the points in the Brief and by saying that women everywhere are fighting back against the Government's plans. A Black woman on welfare said the Government's proposed Guaranteed Annual Income amounts to nothing more than a work incentive program to make mothers take on a 2nd job in order to qualify for assistance. Wages for housework would solve the crisis of poverty in the country, she said. A lesbian woman spoke about how Government cutbacks are making it harder than ever for lesbians to have children, and harder to "come out" of the closet at all. Finally a single woman spoke, saying that she wanted to have children without being forced to depend on a man's wage, and that without wages for housework that choice was effectively denied her. The Government officials were clearly amazed that so many women from different life situations could be in one room saying the same thing — we want more money and less work, not the other way around.

Everything we had written in the Brief about the Government's plans to attack our money and our power was then confirmed by what the government officials said in the meeting. But the thousands of signatures on the petition, and the struggles women everywhere are making to win more money showed the HAS ONLY BEGUN.

From a letter to the Hon. Marc Lalonde, Minister of National Health and Welfare, by a Missis-sauga housewife:

"I agree with what the delegation from the Wages for Housework Committee with their Brief and petitions are trying to say to the Government, and the people of Canada, that women are entitled to be paid for their work in the home... The same way as men, women deserve to be recognized with a good living wage, that is the way society is set up today... Women do not expect men to work for nothing, that is we do not expect him to hold down a job or position and not be paid, well paid, for it... Housework is a full-time job, especially with child bearing and child raising thrown in, and should be paid for, well paid. Why not? No one should be expected to work for nothing."

(Mrs) Catherine O. Lindsay
May 26, 1977

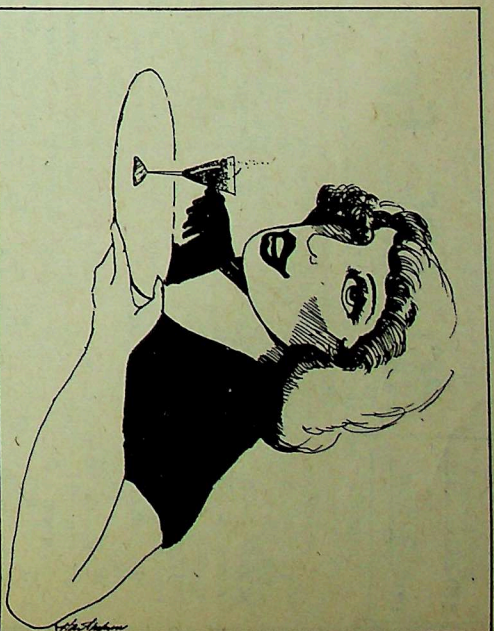
CAMPAIGN TROUPERS

We now have a roving comedienne LORNA BOSCHMAN who is booking dates for her 2nd North American tour! Hear the continued adventures of Mary "O" Normal. And learn of shocking "hidden violence" in tin cans. She's hilarious and you'll love her! Send for her free publicity packet.

We also have a singer-songwriter BOO WATSON (original country rock) whose performance will make any event you are planning! With songs like: 'State's in the Bedroom Blues, In My Own Backyard, & Daddy — she turns every day people and places into melodic magic. Sample tapes are available (free to reel or cassette). And we have books, pamphlets, video tapes and speakers. For more information write to us at:

Wages for Housework Committee

Box 38, Station E
Toronto, Ontario
Or telephone (416) 466-7457 or 921-9091



(Branching Out July-August 1977)

Tipping the wage scale

By ELLEN AGGER

The fight against a lower minimum wage for tipped workers is steadily building momentum. The Waitresses' Action Committee, which formed last winter to oppose such a move by the Ontario Government, has been actively organizing among waitresses, who make up 80 percent of workers in the industry.

Our aim has been to put pressure on the Government through a letter-writing campaign, media coverage, and the widespread circulation of our brief. "The Minimum Wage and a Tip Differential" We are also circulating a petition which demands no cuts in the minimum wage for waitresses/waiters, a higher minimum wage for waiters, wages for all the unpaid work waitressing involves, and the removal of tips from taxable income.

Support has come from many organizations including the Status of Women Committee of C. U. P. E. Local 79, the Ontario Status of Women Council, and the Law Union of Ontario. Hundreds of individuals are signing our petition, particularly as unemployment and inflation rise. Ontario now has the second lowest minimum wage in Canada and many women are stuck at the bottom of the pay scale. Women who are not presently working as waitresses but who feel the pinch in their own lives have distributed the petition widely through their own organizations. The Waitresses' Action Committee has met with groups of women in Milton and London, where a successful informational picket through the downtown area was held in May. There has also been a steady stream of articles in women's newspapers and magazines, as well as national press and television coverage. Thousands of women have learned of our struggle in this way.

Changes in the minimum wage are made at the provincial level by the Cabinet, upon recommendation by the Ministry of Labour and, in this case, also with pressure from the Ministry of Industry and Tourism. Because such an important decision is made behind closed doors, those to be affected have little chance to protest and put for-

ward their needs. The Waitresses' Action Committee's brief began to force open those doors.

The demand for a public forum on the minimum wage was the major focus of a meeting held with representatives of the Ministry of Labour in late June. A delegation made up of members of the Waitresses' Action Committee, the Immigrant Women's Centre and Opportunity for Advancement (a welfare mother's group), spoke about the disastrous effects on all women of a lower minimum wage for one category of women workers. We emphasized how the position of women in the paid labour market is being eroded, and that such a move against one group would lower the bargaining power of all of us. Marlene Clark, Director of the Women's Bureau, who was present at the meeting, went on record as supporting our call for a government forum.

When the Waitresses' Action Committee formed last December, the question of the tip differential was not considered an issue by anyone except waitresses. The tourism industry had expected it to go through without a fight. Only because we have organized widely and loudly, has the Government been forced to listen. You can help us stop this move by writing letters of protest to the Minister of Labour and Premier Davis calling for a public forum and demanding an immediate raise in the minimum wage across the board. You can circulate petitions to waitresses and other supporters; hold informational picnics; contact your local media about this issue, and spread information to as many women as possible.

For copies of the brief, petition, or to make a donation, write:
Waitresses' Action Committee
112 Spruce Street
Toronto, Ontario
Tel. (416) 921-9091

Send your letters of protest to:

Bette Stephenson
Minister of Labour
400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario

Premier William Davis, Q.C.
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario

Wages for Housework Campaign Bulletin

Toronto

vol.1 no.3 Spring 1977



This Bulletin is put out periodically by the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee. Please do not reprint any portion of the Bulletin without our permission. Mailing address: Box 38, Stn. E, Toronto, Ontario. Office: 745 Danforth Ave., Suite 301, Toronto, Ont. Phone (416) 466-7457 for office hours. Thanks to all those friends and cohorts who did our housework while we produced this Bulletin. Special thanks to Linda Lounsberry and Ellen Agger for typesetting, design, and lay-out.

FIRST CLASS

Return to:
WHH
Box 38, Stn. E,
Toronto, Ont.

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

CAMPAIGN BULLETIN

Spring / Summer 1979

THANK US WITH MONEY ♀



'D LIKE TO SEE HOUSEWIVES GIVEN SOME KIND OF THANKS, LIKE A WAGE FROM THE GOVERNMENT', says Ivy Searle, mother of three. She was quoted in *The Mirror* which chose her an 'Unsung Heroine'.

In fact, all women are **unsung heroines**—battling against inflation, shortages, school closures, social service cuts, disabilities, racism—battling against too much work for too little money.

It's not enough to recognise, as The Mirror did, that everything depends on women's work. That no wheel would turn without the services we provide. It's not enough to recognise we're heroines. The recognition women need is financial.

To support her claim for financial thanks, Ms. Searle added, 'After all, what would happen if we went on strike?'

Women are talking about striking against work at home because so many women have been on strike against housework at paid jobs.

The majority of council and hospital employees on strike this winter were women. The jobs they

walked out on were serving dinners, cleaning hospitals, laundry work, caring for the sick, the old, the very young. All of them jobs that women are expected to do at home for love. Mothers are trapped into fitting paid work in around their children, and are often part-timers on shift work—an excuse to pay mothers even less than other women.

Strikes

The strikes of the low paid were about money for women, about women refusing to be poor, financially dependent and under-



Picket outside Local Authority Employers headquarters, 41 Belgrave Sq., London, Dec. 20, a month before the strike. While Wandsworth Council employees sat in, workmates, and women from the Trades Council and the Wages for Housework Campaign let the press and public know what was going on inside. Wandsworth's banner read, *Low Pay is Robbery*, and their letter to employers ended with a poem: *Don't tell us the money's not there. It drips from all round Belgrave Square.*

Photo by Lorna Arnott

valued. We wanted—and fought for—council housing—single or married, free child care whether or not we're in paid jobs, a living wage if we're pensioners and our own pension money. If we haven't paid stamps it's because nobody paid us!

Social Security

Refusing the lowest paying jobs is another way of striking, and SS has made these strikes possible. Many women won't come off SS unless wages are higher for women.

It's a job in itself being on SS and getting your entitlements. Yet every year thousands more women are claiming it. SS is not a charity, but a wage that housewives have won. Women want money, and we haven't been ashamed to ask, in fact to demand it. That's why

- Council and hospital workers broke through the 5% wage freeze. Final pay figures depend on a 'comparability study'. What about comparing the value of their work with the £115 estimate of a housewife's worth?

- Disabled women won £10.50 a week after a battle that began in the mid-sixties. But while a man is eligible for disability pension if he can't do paid work, a married woman is only eligible if she can't do housework either.

- Child Benefit, which is the only money that's ours by right, went up in April to £4 per child, with an extra £2 for the single mother. After years of women's pressure, women now get money for the first child, a demand

Do you get £11,000 a year?

This table is the National Housewives Association estimate of how much a wife is worth. The *TV Times*, which first published it, commented: 'The figures cover only Monday to Friday but, assuming a wife charges time-and-a-half for Saturday and double time for Sunday, she could gross £215 for a seven-day week—more than £11,000 a year.'

Some jobs weren't included: sexual services, public relations expert, economist...

Basic rate Monday to Friday	N.H.A. estimate of hours for wife with three children	N.H.A. estimate for hourly rate	Total
Domestic (cleaning, etc.)	22	105.6p	£232
Laundry	8.5	77.2p	£66
Cooking	12.5	110.5p	£138
Nutritionist	7	168p	£11.6
Gardener	3.5	125p	£4.3
Psychologist	5	565p	£28.2
Nanny	10	125p	£12.5
Nurse	2	166p	£3.3
Hostess (entertaining)	4	450p	£18
Housekeeping	5	105.6p	£5.3
			£128.8

first raised in the 1973 Family Allowance Campaign, led by Wages for Housework. But not every woman gets Child Benefit yet—we're pushing for that now. (See p.3.)

- Women who try to escape poverty and dependence through going on the game won a major victory with the Protection of Prostitutes Bill in Parliament in March. (See p.4.)
- The Equal Opportunities Commission is proposing a tax payment or allowance (why not a wage?) for wives who work at home unpaid. If government agrees, who will be paid the money, husband or wife?

Compensation

- Battered women demanding to be housed in order to leave violent marriages forced the courts, with the help of the National Women's Aid Federation, to grant a common law wife and her children the right to live in the family home. Most recently the courts decided that a woman can claim compensation for crimes committed against her in marriage. The next step is to make rape in marriage a crime. (See p.2 report on Women Against Rape.)

The message is coming through strong and clear. We're heroines, not only because we can take it, but because we know how to fight for what's ours, because we can't be blackmailed into working for love. We want love and money, thank you very much.

Women Against Rape

By JUDITH KERTESTZ

W.A.R. first hit the headlines in the summer of 1977. Three Appeal Court judges, Roskill, Wren and Slynn, released Guardsman Holdsworth, a convicted rapist, to protect his army career. This was more important than a woman's suffering. W.A.R. led an invasion of the court where one of the judges was sitting and drove him out. Women all over the U.K. heard about it and said, 'About time!'

Two weeks later, on July 16th, we held the first-ever Women's Trial in Trafalgar Square, London. We wanted to expose all those responsible for rape, not only the individual rapist. We charged government and industry with rape and conspiracy to rape and perpetrate violence against women.

The trial was reported internationally and telegrams and letters of support came from all over the world.

The trial gave women the chance to speak out about all the kinds of rape that affect our lives, including those that are hidden, or not even considered rape—like rape in marriage which doesn't exist in law. Wives, mothers, daughters, Black and white, prostitutes and teachers, lesbian women and secretaries, of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities, told their story.

invasion

In answer, the Guardian, which regards itself as a 'liberal' paper, published 'The Rapist's Reply'—on the Women's Page! W.A.R., together with women and children from the Wages for Housework Campaign, who had worked

with us from the beginning, invaded the

Guardian. We asked the editor if next week they would be publishing 'The Murderer's Reply'. We demanded and won equal space to reply and payment for our half-page article—the Guardian of course thought that women should work for free.

After the Holdsworth case, we had issued a petition which called for judges biased against women to be barred from sitting in rape cases. We were told this was impossible. But soon after, when Judge McKinnon made a clearly racist judgment, people took our example and called for known racists to be disqualified from sitting in rape cases. Judge McKinnon will not sit in a race case again.

We have been working with raped women to get proper compensation for criminal injuries. When the government has to pay for rape it will be much more concerned about taking measures to stop it. Carol Maggs of the Holdsworth case was offered £250 for her injuries which involved four months in hospital. Since then W.A.R. in Bristol has won £1300 for Karen Crocker, a mother of three who was raped on her way home from work. She was working as a stripper in

order to supplement her student husband's inadequate grant. Karen tells her story and four other women tell theirs in 'Women at W.A.R.', our first pamphlet, and the first on rape to come from women in Britain. It is now selling all over the world.

every woman

We are in continuous touch with the Rape Crisis Centre, London, to exchange information and services. We have worked with the English Collective of Prostitutes when courts refused to convict rapists by accusing the women of being pros.

Organisations such as Wages Due Lesbians have ensured that lesbian women in W.A.R. were as open as they wanted to be. We have always depended for advice and support on Black Women for Wages for Housework when courts, police or media tried to use a rape case to attack the Black community.

All this has helped to ensure that every woman's interest is defended.

The more women are financially independent of men, the easier it will be for men to refuse to play the policeman and foreman, in marriage or in the street, at home or abroad.

We encourage all men to sign and circulate the [W.A.R.] Petition.

Payday—an international network of men against all unpaid work and in support of the Wages for Housework Campaign.

home office

Having invaded courts and newspapers, and even the Ministry of Defence—'The defence Budget of £6,000m. has never defended women!'—and got such great support from all kinds of women, the Home Office was ready to listen to us. Our deputations presented a brief on rape in Britain and Northern Ireland. In their reply the Home Office finally admitted that making rape in marriage a crime needed 'looking into'. In other words, they understood that they would have to do something because we women weren't going to tolerate it.



Women Against Rape 'visiting' the Athenaeum Club, London. One of the Holdsworth judges was a member of this men-only establishment.

marriage

Another breakthrough was the survey by Liberty Life Assurance Company. Fifty years after the vote, nine out of 10 wives, it said, had little or no money they could call their own. Headlines described the majority of women as 'financially battered'.

W.A.R. had always pointed out that rape, like charity, begins with the financial dependence of women in the home, and then spills out into the street, the factory and the office. The phrase, 'financially battered' at last admitted that we can be trapped in relationships with men—husbands, boyfriends, even fathers—and have to submit because we don't have the money to walk out.

While we are pressing for rape in marriage to be a crime, we are also demanding the 'financial independence to walk out of a situation where we or our children are in danger of rape.'

We can send you speakers, our petition, information about our activities, and help in forming a W.A.R. group. Please write or call us. All donations welcome.

Bristol: 150 Richmond Road, Bristol 6 (0272) 422810
Bury, Lancs: 21 New George St., Eton
Cambridge: 19 City Road, (0223) 57142
P.O. Box 287, London, N.W.6
London: (01) 221-5754, (01) 837-7509

Women at W.A.R.' 50p at bookshops.
Add 10p postage from Falling Wall Press, 79 Richmond Road, Bristol 6.

STUDENTS WIN GRANTS AND CHILDCARE IN NEW YORK

First thing I do when I wake up is to start thinking about my financial situation and how I can handle this problem, so that I can attend school in order to make a better life for myself and my son.—Woman in the SEEK Programme at Queen's College, New York.

The SEEK stipend (grant) is the money Black and Third World women won in the sixties to be able to get a degree and a decent paying job, and get off welfare.

But SEEK was being cut back in the seventies, and those claiming the stipend as well as welfare were accused of fraud.

With the help of Black Women for Wages for Housework (USA), the Women's Action Group was formed at Queen's College to defend the stipend, increase it and challenge the charge of fraud, since both fundings together still aren't enough to live on.

school is work

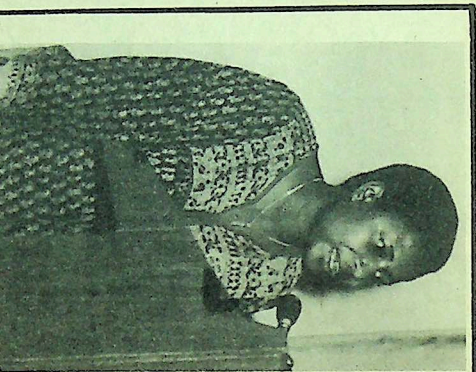
Their petition also demanded free childcare centres, and advice centres to provide information on welfare rights, housing and other social services.

In the last two years of public meetings, rallies and Women's Days at the college, and confrontations with the Chancellor as well as lobbying the N.Y. State government at Albany, the Women's Action Group has got the fraud prosecutions declared illegal, a rise in the stipend, and now childcare facilities free to students and all other workers at the college.

Women, the majority of SEEK students, took the lead and men were glad to follow. Public Forums organised by the Women's Action Group helped spread their demands to other N.Y. colleges. All agree that 'Gung' to school is work! The stipend is not a charity—it's a wage!

In TORONTO, Canada, women at Ryerson College followed the SEEK lead. Students and welfare women were often the same people. The Ryerson Women's Action Group also brought women together around the two unpaid jobs all women students face—schoolwork and housework.

In BRITAIN, university students had a massive demonstration in March for a rise in grants, with such slogans as 'All you need is money.' Sixth formers in three Local Authorities are already collecting £7 a week for staying on at school, while their mothers continue to get £4 Child Benefit. Nobody wants to work for free.



NORMA JEAN STEEBLE addressing the Mother's Money Event on Mother's Day, May, 1978 in Harlem, New York. Norma, of Black Women for Wages for Housework, received the first Mother's Money Award for her work in the Child Benefit for All Campaign (see p.3) and for organising with mothers to withdraw their children from school for a day in protest at the National Front meeting in Bristol.

Other award winners were:

BEULAH SANDERS, past president of the National Welfare Rights Organisation and still a leader of the great women's movement for welfare.

MARGUERITE DAVIS, Alliance for Displaced Homemakers—women who, after years of work in the home, are cut off from support. Now they want pensions, education grants and that housework skills count in the job market.

Another speaker at the event, organised by Black Women for Wages for Housework (U.S.A.) was SELMA JAMES, founder of the International Wages for Housework Campaign. She was in the States addressing women's conferences and community meetings as well as audiences at Stanford, Wellesley and other universities.

Lesbian Mum stays M.P.

By ANNE NEALE

Maureen Colquhoun M.P., Northampton North, talked too much sense. Money from the government, she said, not soft words, was needed to tackle the problem of race. That's why she was sacked by her local Labour Party in September 1977.

Women were furious. Maureen Colquhoun is a mother and a lesbian. She'd never made a secret of either. But now her living independently of men was an excuse to sack her.

Her sacking could have set a major precedent for lesbian women in all kinds of jobs to be sacked, for courts to take custody of our children. We couldn't let that happen. Wages Due Lesbians, Lesbian Line and individual lesbian women formed the Maureen Colquhoun Action Committee to get her reinstated. We—

WROTE to the Labour Party protesting the decision, and to the Liberals and Conservatives asking them to take a stand. CIRCULATED a Statement of Support and got endorsements from 50 organisations ranging from striking firemen to Mums and Toddlers Clubs. (The Chairman of the Liberal Party personally endorsed it.) ORGANISED a 100-strong picket

outside Transport House while her appeal against her sacking was being heard. Men

from gay organisations and from Payday (a network of men in support of the Wages for Housework Campaign), women from Northampton N., and London women, lesbian and non-lesbian, chanted 'Reinstate the Lesbian Mum!'

INVADDED the Daily Express to protest an article attacking Maureen and won PAID newspaper space to reply.

ESTABLISHED a good working relationship with Maureen. As a result, the Labour Party was forced to back down. On January 8th, 1978, Maureen's appeal was upheld. The lesbian mother was reinstated.

The support women gave Maureen Colquhoun M.P. wasn't misplaced. Two months later she chaired the Child Benefit for All meeting at the Commons, and this year made history with her Protection of Prostitutes Bill (see p.4).

Some of the party leaders in Northampton spent months trying again to get Maureen dismissed. But on 30th March Maureen was confirmed as candidate.

The Maureen Colquhoun Action Committee banner goes to party meetings with Maureen. Maybe it will remind the political parties that it's too late to publicly sack women for preferring each other to men.

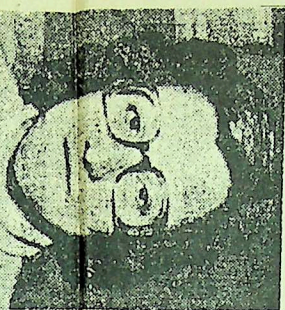
Ms Marvin & Ms Tuttle go for CASH

Michelle Triola Marvin sued Lee Marvin, superstar, for the value of the six years she furthered his career at the expense of her own. When she won \$52,000 in April, Michelle said it was 'a victory for all women,' and she was right.

It's a precedent for winning back pay for the years of hidden, unacknowledged and unpaid work. Other women are already using it who don't have million-dollar men.

In Philadelphia Herta Tuttle, 40, mother of two and ex-wife of a policeman on \$ 21,000 (£10,500) a year, is demanding increased child support. The Philadelphia Wages for Housework Committee is championing her case. The court's view is that she should 'get a job', that she has equal responsibility with their father to support her children.

But Mrs. Tuttle says she already has a job—that of being a mother. 'There is a need for the recognition of the value of the homemaker's contribution in order to get fair support,' she says. After all, she's entitled to money she worked as hard as her ex-husband to earn. Would he be making that wage if she hadn't been housekeeper, nurse, mother, companion and general servant for 13 years of marriage? Not likely.



Herta Tuttle—gave up nursing for marriage and ended up broke.

CHILD BENEFIT

FOR ALL

MOTHERS

By Carolina Begue, Housewives in Dialogue

Last year three immigrant women's organisations joined together to demand Child Benefit for All.

On the 6th of March, 1978, to celebrate International Women's Day and Mother's Day, the Bangladesh Women's Association, Black Women for Wages for Housework and the Union of Turkish Women held a protest meeting in the House of Commons. Maureen Colquhoun M.P. took the chair.

Over 100 people there were excited that Third World women had a voice in the building which had once ruled the British Empire. At the same time other women were speaking up with them.

Because of women's persistent pressure, the government decided last April not to take child tax allowance from immigrant parents, as they had planned to do. But instead of being appeased, the protest has grown, and single mothers on SS or in paid jobs, immigrant or not, have joined in, demanding Child Benefit for themselves too.

Philadelphia WFH has organised support and a picket around the court demanding that the value of housework be taken into account in deciding how much Mrs. Tuttle deserves.

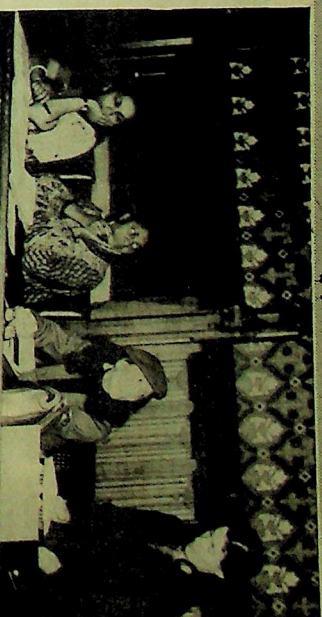
Pat Albright, spokeswoman, commented, 'More and more women are insisting that their work be recognised—and paid. A movement that began with welfare mothers today includes Hollywood superstars.' The case continues.

'When I say these politicians are racists I'm not talking about their bad attitudes.

Racism is about money. They want to keep us poor by denying what is rightfully ours and stealing what little we have. The Child Benefit legislation is institutional racism. In other words it's giving the go-ahead for the National Front or any other organisation to attack Black and immigrant parents and children.'

Norma Steele, Black Women for WFH

[Housewives in Dialogue is a Camden-based organisation which has co-ordinated the work of the three leading immigrant women's groups. In Bristol, similar work has been done by Women's Initiative, H in D, P.O. Box 287, London NW 6, (01) 837-7509 or (01) 328-7856. Women's Initiative (0272) 422116.]



At the House of Commons, L. to r.: Anowara Jahan (Bangladesh Women's Assn.), Norma Steele (Black Women for WFH), Selma James (London WFH), Tessa Squires (W.A.R.) who is speaking.

STATEMENT BY BLACK WOMEN FOR WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

Child Benefit, money paid direct to mothers, has gone up because women fought to get more. The government has called it 'in effect a wage', payment we're entitled to for the work we do as mothers.

They promised that Child Benefit would mean EVERY mother and child would be better off. But they left millions of us out.

1. Immigrant mothers—immigrants from Africa, Asia, Cyprus, Greece, Latin America, Portugal, Turkey and the West Indies, whose children are not in this country are not eligible for any Child Benefit.

Already we're deprived of having our children with us. Now we're further deprived of the money to send to feed them and those who care for them while we work here.

Child Benefit must be paid to all mothers regardless of country of origin, and whether or not the children concerned are in this country.

2. Social Security mothers—Child Benefit is completely deducted from our Supplementary Benefit. We don't see a penny of it, even when it goes up.

Child Benefit must be paid ON TOP OF Supplementary Benefit.



EVERY MOTHER IS A WORKING MOTHER!

because

Child Benefit must not limit a family's entitlement to any other benefit.

We need the money regardless of race or nationality, with men or on our own.

We're entitled to the money

MOTHER WINS HER CHILDREN BACK FROM CARE

By Rachel Smith, Wages Due Lesbians

A three-year battle over child custody ended in a victory for the mother. Joan Leslie White, raped and battered by her husband, put three of her four children into council care and left him. She thought it was temporary, until she could make a new home for them. But Camden fostered one child out and put the other two on a permanent care order.

catch 22

Joan was told that until she had housing, she couldn't have the children. But until she got the children, she couldn't qualify for the council housing they needed. All her appeals for money and housing went unheard. Her children's appeals to be allowed home went unheard.

Joan tried everything but she was on her own.

In July 1977 Joan came to the trial organised by Women Against Rape in Trafalgar Square, London. She testified about her rape and the second rape of losing custody to Camden. Through W.A.R., she met Wages Due Lesbians and Housewives in Dialogue, a Camden-based group which then co-ordinated the fight to get Joan's children back. Two lesbian women who had themselves successfully fought a custody case joined forces.

When Joan seized the three-bedroom flat after her husband left it, we pressed the Housing Department to legalise her situation.



Together again. Joan Leslie White with three of her four children.

Even then Camden would not give her the children. Joan, they said, was an 'unfit mother'. Her crime in Camden's eyes? They never said. But they implied it was Joan's fault she was raped and that she was irresponsible for walking out. Her punishment? Camden refused to give her back her children.

We put pressure on her social worker and Joan's social security began to come through. We met and questioned council officers and kept the local press informed of their replies. They now knew Joan was not on her own any more.

At a magistrates' court in March 1978, the care order by Camden was upheld, but

evidence was so much in Joan's favour that we won a moral victory. The next day, the two children were allowed home at regular periods for the first time since they'd been in care. Our pressure continued on the council. More articles in the local press. Finally in May 1978 the Appeal Court ruled in Joan's favour. Camden was told to hand the two children back to their mother. The social worker was replaced. 'My victory,' said Joan, 'means a victory for all women in the same position as myself.'

We are now pressing for the return of June, the child who was fostered out. The Tonight Programme (BBC-TV) and the Guardian have already told some of Joan's story. H in D are publishing a full account so other mothers will know their rights and how to get them.

TORONTO, Canada. Last year Wages Due Lesbians set up the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund to help lesbian women keep or win custody. The Fund provides: Pre-legal advice, and information on successful battles in Canada, the United States and England.

Referrals to sympathetic lawyers and other professionals. Financial assistance in building a strong court case.

Personal and emotional support.

'What is in "the best interests of the children" must be decided by those women and children themselves.' The Fund depends on WDL London to monitor cases here.

on the game & on the move

'Yes, we have been scrubbing floors, yes we have been nurses, cooks, domestic help, babysitters, factory workers, farm workers. And we have also worked as prostitutes. We are not ashamed of that, because that's how we have survived for generations.'

Our illegality has kept us hidden and divided from other women. Now that our campaign for all the laws against us to be abolished is gaining ground, we can speak out and say just how many women have lifted themselves out of poverty and into independence our way.

We still face arrest, jail, fines, being called 'unfit mothers' and losing custody of our children. And police make it their business to hound us once we start to organise. But that's how all movements begin.

The ECP was formed in 1976. As an independent organisation of pros and non-pros within the Wages for Housework Campaign, we have had a voice and joint action with other women—the best protection we have.

For example, last year Women Against Rape picketed with us and other pros in front of the Old Bailey where a woman who'd been raped had her name released because the rapist claimed she was a pro. If you're a pro, the courts assume you can't be raped. They think we're available to sleep with any man, any time. But we do say no, more often than some wives can.

Because the WFH Campaign is international, we made contact with groups of pros in other countries, and spread the news of actions pros have taken: the 1975 prostitutes' strike in France, or the Australian pros who refused to service sailors from a nuclear driven ship for health reasons.

Our fights and victories were as hidden as we have been. We made contact with MPs, lawyers, community workers, and found allies.

They saw that pros are women from all walks of life, but above all single mothers. Through prostitution we provide the welfare the State won't provide, for us and our children, for student husbands and elderly parents.

Women wanted to know what we had in common with them, and whether going on the game was an option for them—if the money was worth the risk, and what effect being a pro had on our sex lives.

We told them that each woman is different, but having money of your own gives any woman more power to decide, when not at work, whom she'll sleep with when and how.

There were some women, calling themselves feminists, who refused to support us and without thinking supported the laws against us. They told us we degraded women by catering to men sexually. But the law comes down on us not because we serve men sexually—most women do—but because we refuse to serve men for free.

In every field women are divided by the money they have—canteen workers from teachers, cleaners

from secretaries. We wanted to

break those divisions among women on the game. In the ECP there are Black and white streetwalkers, hostesses and call girls. Those of us on the street face the worst dangers but we are all threatened, and we all have our contribution to make to abolishing the laws. How can we join with other women if we aren't together as pros?

By the summer of 1977 Baroness Joan Vickers in the House of Lords called for all the laws against prostitutes to be abolished. One reason, she said, was that hookers have to go back on the street to pay the fines imposed on us. We call that pumping by the State.

In November 1978 she called a 'Public Debate' on the laws. Over 200 people attended, including a former suffragette, and members of the Salvation Army and the National Association of Probation Officers which is for the laws to be abolished.

On March 6th Parliament passed the first reading of Maureen Colquhoun's Protection of Prostitutes Bill, 130-50. This would abolish jail and fines for soliciting, and the term 'common prostitute' which keeps us labelled and on the game for life.

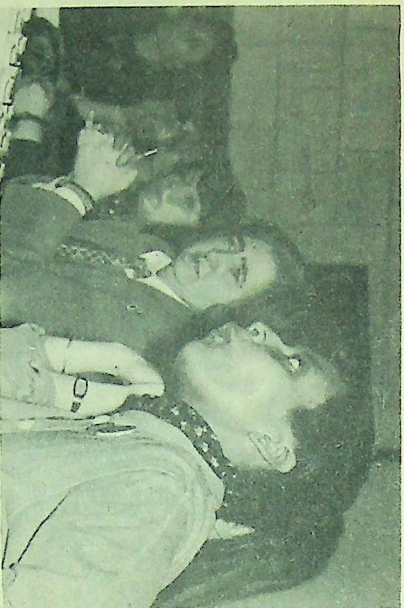
The night before the vote, we organised a meeting in the House of Commons, where a packed hall saw 'Hard Work', a film about Margot St. James, founder of Coyote (Call Off Your Old Tired Eithos), the biggest prog group in the U.S.A. Speakers from the ECP, PLAN (Prostitution Laws Are Nonsense) and PROS (Programme for the Reform of the Laws on Soliciting) were on the platform with Wilmette Brown of Black Women for Wages for Housework (USA) speaking for Coyote.

It's a long way from standing on street corners to feed your children, to a Bill in the House of Commons, from being harassed by police to being interviewed by TV, radio and the press of the world.

The 'cleansups', arrests, closed-down of massage parlours and escort agencies continue in an attempt to turn back the clock, to attack all women's right to refuse poverty. But it's too late now that women who are pros and women who aren't are joining together.

After all, who are prostitutes but housewives who go out to an evening job!

Photo by Giovanna Casarelli.



Wilmette Brown speaking at the House of Commons. To her right is Maureen Colquhoun who chaired the meeting.

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK AT THE WHITE HOUSE

At the International Women's Year National Women's Conference (Nov.18-21, 1977) in Houston, Texas, the Wages for Housework Campaign announced itself as a national and international force.

Margaret Prescod-Roberts of Black Women for Wages for Housework (USA), a delegate from New York State, led the Wages for Housework contingent among the delegates, while Wilmette Brown of the same organisation led the lobbying from the floor. We were determined that the conference should go on record against Carter's Welfare Reform, 'Programme for Better Jobs and Income', then before Congress. We were determined that welfare, the wages some women have won, would not be lost at Houston.

Many other individuals and organisations came to Houston to fight the welfare woman's cause, among them leaders of the great women's movement for welfare in the 1960s. Money for women—always one man away from welfare—was scheduled to come last on the agenda, the anti-climax after the 'feminist' issues. But welfare isn't just another feminist issue'. It's every woman's insurance policy against complete dependence and starvation.

The Wages for Housework Campaign spurred the formation of the 'Pro-Money Coalition' which included disabled women, Black, Hispanic and Native American women, lesbian women, prostitute women and homemakers. Welfare became the focus for all other issues. The power to

refuse rape, battering and low-paying jobs—and to win child care, education, custody and lesbian rights, as well as the choice to have or not to have children, depends on our access to money. As we discussed in our own groups, caucused with each other and lobbied the delegates, we demonstrated that together we had the power to change the agenda, refuse Carter's Reform, keep the money we have already won, and demand more.

Our substitute welfare resolution, which was overwhelmingly passed, states: 'The elimination of poverty must be a priority for all those working for equal rights for women. . . . And just as with other workers, homemakers

Computers which housewives will be able to operate will perform such chores as running the bath, laying the table (with robotic arms), cooking meals and dealing with domestic accounts. Daily Telegraph, 20 June '78.

Gertrude Elias

'Great cook, always smiles, costs nothing to run, but it can't replace that tender loving care!'

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS
available from Failing Wall Press, 79 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5EP, and campaign addresses:

All Work and No Pay: Women, Housework and the Wages Due, Ed. Wendy Edmund & Suzie Fleming £1.10 plus 15p p+tp

The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community by Marirosa Dalla Costa & Selma James: 90p plus 15p p+tp

Women, the Unions and Work or **What Is Not To Be Done and The Perspective of Winning** by Selma James: 50p plus 10p p+tp

Sex, Race and Class by Selma James: 35p plus 10p p+tp

Wages Against Housework by Silvia Federici: 15p plus 8p p+tp

The Family Allowance Under Attack by Suzie Fleming: 15p plus 8p p+tp

Motherhood, Lesbianism and Child Custody by Francie Wyland: 60p plus 10p p+tp

MOTHERHOOD LESBIANISM AND CHILD CUSTODY
Francie Wyland

Also available: badges, pot holders, films and LBRISH, Newsletter No.2 of Black Women for Wages for Housework. (Labrish is West Indian for gossip.)

Look out for Peggy Seeger's Different therefore Equal! Songs on rape, violence in marriage and wages for housework. On Blackthorne Records, BR 1061.

receiving payments should be afforded the dignity of having that payment called a wage, not welfare.

'The women from the bottom of America fought for a place on the agenda and won,' said Margaret Prescod-Roberts. 'We were what was happening at Houston. Other women, some of them on their way to the top of U.S. government and industry, saw that. They dropped their own resolution and backed ours.'

The battle was then on to get the resolution acted on. A conference of women exactly a year later drew women from the Campaign to Washington D.C. We called Sarah Weddington, the President's special assistant on women's affairs, and were invited to the White House to meet with her.

Not only in private but later publicly at the conference, Ms. Weddington agreed that the central issue for women was economic, and the nub was payment to housewives.

'When government economists admit the value of housework in the U.S. alone is worth 350 billion dollars, and Sarah Weddington talks publicly of working out a system to pay housewives, then welfare has got to be viewed in an entirely different light,' said Wilmette Brown after the White House meeting and conference.

The implementation of the Houston resolution and payment for all women who do housework—all women—are one issue. The White House has got the point. It also has the money.

This Bulletin is free to women, but any donations to cover its cost are welcome.

Editing and typesetting Selma James Design and layout Caroline Barker

Thanks to Suzie Fleming Solveig Francis & Failing Wall Press

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Bury Wages for Housework Campaign
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Cambridge Wages for Housework Committee
19 City Road, Cambridge 10223J 57142

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P.O. Box 287, London NW6 101J 328-7856 101J 837-7509

Contact any of the above for speakers and more information—and for Campaign addresses in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. For North American Campaign addresses, contact:

Black Women for Wages for Housework
P.O. Box 830, Bklyn, New York 11202

We are happy to announce the birth of **BLACK WOMEN FOR WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK, BERLIN.**

Wages for Housework Campaign Bulletin

Toronto, Canada

VOL.4 no.1 Summer/Fall 1979

Housework makes headlines!

by Judith Ramirez
MICHELLE TRIOLA MARVIN

From 1964 to 1970 Michelle cooked, cleaned, soothed, and gave up a singing career for actor Lee Marvin. Though they never married, she had her name legally changed to his. When it was all over the question became: how much was all her work worth? Nothing said Lee. 1.8 million dollars said Michelle in a lawsuit.

In 1976, the California Supreme Court made the historic MARVIN decision which established that a vow to share property between unmarried partners may be just as binding as that between spouses.

When Michelle was finally awarded \$104,000 last April, after seven years of litigation, she called it "a victory for all women". It comes, after all, to \$17,350 for each year of hidden unpaid work while with Marvin. And that's \$17,350 more than he was intending to pay her!

status of the housewife in today's society. "There should absolutely be some financial consideration, other than her husband's," said Betty. "He may take off and marry a young chick. It happens," she added. Asked about a study by the Social Security Office of Research and Statistics which placed a housewife's average monetary worth at about \$6,000 per year, Betty replied that a more accurate estimate would be "at least \$30,000 per year!"

"We wanted women on welfare to stand up and claim what's theirs. We're tired of being considered "charity cases", we work like everybody else", says Florence, an activist with Black Women for Wages for Housework.

Groups all over the province are buying and distributing it, "and hundreds of women have phoned or written in," added Florence. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has hailed *Taking What's Ours* as an example to be copied in other provinces throughout Canada. (more on page 3).

She took issue with the women's liberation movement for demeaning the role of the mother:

"They downgrade the work that women are doing in the home," said Margaret. "Many housewives also hold down paying jobs to earn extra money for the family, but are still expected to do all the traditional female chores," she noted. "They end up doing twice the work".

concluded Margaret to prolonged applause. Statistics Canada has since released a study on housework which estimated that every woman over the age of 16 in Canada performs approximately \$120 worth of housework per week!



BETTY FORD
While the ever-popular Betty Ford was still in the White House, she was asked by *Good Housekeeping* what could be done to upgrade the



FLORENCE SIMS
One of three co-ordinators of Ontario's popular welfare guide *Taking What's Ours*, Florence Sims considers welfare a right, not a privilege, "because it's money that mothers earn by raising society's children". Recently she told the Toronto Star, "I decided to go on Mothers' Allowance so I could stay home and raise my child during her early years. It was a difficult decision, but I thought it was better for me to be home with her".

Funded by PLURA, a coalition of churches, *Taking What's Ours* is full of helpful hints on how to collect everything you're entitled to.



HERTA TUTTLE
A Philadelphia housewife, Herta Tuttle, is fighting a Family Court order which requires her to seek employment in order to "contribute equally" to the support of her two children, ages nine and ten.

Deserted by her policeman husband two years ago, Mrs. Tuttle receives \$100.00 weekly from him in child support, or \$5,200 of his \$22,000 yearly salary. She is demanding that the court recognize the dollar value of her work in the home and claims that unless it does it is impossible to "equally divide" the responsibility of support between the two spouses, as the court has tried to do, citing the state's Equal Rights Amendment.

"I want my work valued and put in dollars and cents, just like his support is put in dollars and cents," Mrs. Tuttle told an interviewer recently. Says Mary Hawryshkiw, of the Philadelphia Wages for Housework Campaign, which is organizing public support for the case, "We feel Mrs. Tuttle's case bridges the gap between the Lee Marvin case and the fights of welfare mothers. What all these women are fighting for is recognition — and compensation — for their housework". Herta Tuttle plans to take her fight to the state Supreme Court if necessary.

MAGGIE TRUDEAU
Representing Canada at a seminar of Commonwealth leaders' wives in Jamaica, in 1975, Margaret Trudeau brought the audience to its feet when she issued "a universal plea for the housewife".



Francie Wyland

Winnipeg Women for Welfare

A new welfare group in Winnipeg has made national news with two important victories for women across the country. Led by a large number of Indian women, Women for Welfare was formed in February of this year to fight for immediate increases in welfare benefits and an end to harassment of welfare mothers. They hailed their birth as "the first time in Manitoba, Indian women, white women, welfare mothers, social workers and single women have come together."

Their first move was to demand that the province and other agencies keep their hands off the Child Tax Credit. (The new tax refund of \$200.00 maximum per child for parents with combined incomes of less than \$18,000.00.) The local Housing Authority had already tried to seize this money from mothers in rent arrears. Other government authorities had not yet decided whether they would follow suit and deduct the amount of the tax credit from welfare payments.

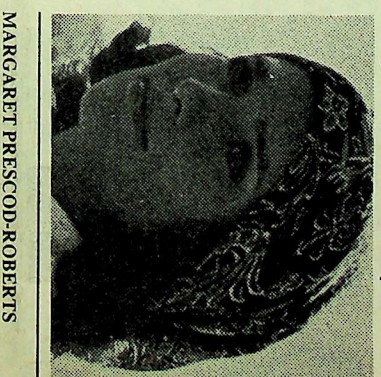
Within less than a week the group's protest was taken up in Ottawa, by no less than Federal Minister of Welfare, Monique Bégin. Mme. Bégin came out strongly against the Housing Authority's plan, echoing Women for Welfare that it was "a form of blackmail" and "illegal".

The group had won the first round in keeping the tax credit in mothers' hands, as one of the only universal wages for raising children. By the middle of March, within one month of their birth, the group had won commitments from both the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba to exclude the child tax credit as income in calculating social assistance benefits. The other provinces have also done the same. Women for Welfare had given notice that women will not allow the government to undervalue our work, and will fight for all the money owing us for that work.

—Dorothy Kidd

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730 Alexander Street
Winnipeg Manitoba R3E 1H9

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Box 38, Stn. E.,
Toronto, Ont. M6H 4E1



Francie Wyland

MARGARET PRESCOTT-ROBERTS
Margaret Prescott-Roberts, of Black Women for Wages for Housework (USA), recently told a Toronto audience of a meeting with Sarah Weddington, President Carter's special assistant on women's affairs. On the agenda for discussion were government estimates on the value of housework and increases in welfare payments. Weddington agreed that the issue of wages for housework is a bread and butter one and indicated that she is studying various approaches to the problem. Margaret described the meeting as "very productive" and added that, "When government economists admit the value of housework in the US is worth 350 billion dollars and Sarah Weddington talks publicly of formulating a system to pay housewives, then welfare has got to be viewed in an entirely different light."

Margaret was a delegate from New York to the National Women's Conference, in Houston, Texas. She led the large Wages for Housework delegation which helped re-formulate the official resolution on welfare calling on the Carter Administration to recognize welfare "as a wage and not a charity".

AS THE WORLD TURNS...

Women are not for burning

INDIA — Women in India are taking to the streets again. The last time was to help bring down Indira Gandhi's regime that was forcing women and men with more than two children to be sterilized or face up to two years' imprisonment.

Now they are fighting against the new government's lack of enforcement of the Anti-Dowry Law. The law states that it is illegal for a man and his family to demand a dowry from his future wife, but imposes only a small fine and sentence as punishment. The protesters say that the law is so weak, that *hundreds* of women are murdered each year by their husbands or husbands' families when they aren't satisfied with what the wife has to offer.

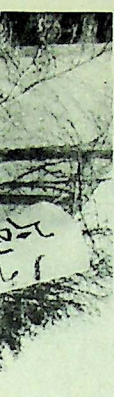
A woman who was burned to death recently in such an incident told police shortly before she died that her family had already given a dowry worth thousands, and more was being demanded.

The government says it has been "considering" making the penalty for breaking the law tougher, but with women once again in the streets, and memories of Gandhi's downfall fresh in their minds, they will doubtless have to move more quickly to abolish this modern-day slave trade.



HOUSEWIVES PROTEST. April 17, 1979. Some 800 New Delhi housewives, including slum dwellers and spouses of two cabinet ministers, got together to stage a street protest of a proposed national budget which would raise taxes on such household staples as soap, processed food, cooking gas, and kerosene. Many of the women carried signs. Other flourished their rolling pins.

Up against the veil



CP Laserphoto

"Death to despotism under any cover."

"*No man — not the Shah, not Khomeini, and not anyone else — will ever make me dress as I please.*"

IRAN — What would make 20,000 women take over the streets of Tehran for a week in March, braving the bullets of army troops and the stones and knives of pro-government thugs?

When the Shah of Iran was deposed and the Moslem leader Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to lead the government, it was supposed to spell an end to dictatorship. But the Ayatollah's plan, to take the country back to the traditional practices of Islam, involved returning the woman to the family with virtually no rights, and no money of her own.

She would not be allowed to travel or take a job outside her home without her husband's permission (who would now be able to take a second wife without agreement from the first). She

Wages for Schoolwork

To make up for the poverty of Mother's Allowance, some youth in Regent Park, Toronto, have begun to organize in their own right. They are publicizing the little-known "attendance bursary", available for high school students from the Toronto Board of Education. One student per low-income family is eligible for \$20 per month, while the other students in the family receive car fare and school supplies. In their leaflet, the teens urge, "This is your money! You've earned it! Go get it! Right on!"

The Regent Park Teens Association has been circulating a petition in several inner-city schools in Toronto. Among the demands are that:

1. The bursary be raised to \$50 per month. It's been fixed at \$20 a month since 1958, while the cost of living has risen about 150%.
2. The bursary not be restricted to one student per family because this creates divisions between brothers and sisters.
3. All students in Toronto high schools should be eligible.

Using the incomes of parents as a guideline means that students are not independent. Also, a recent study by the Board of Education reported that 51% of students in inner-city schools are living below the poverty line.

would have no right to begin divorce proceedings, while her husband could divorce her simply by saying he wanted to. Upon her husband's death she would inherit merely 1/8 of his estate, while daughters inherit only half of what the sons would. The government was also insisting that women go back to wearing the chador, the traditional Muslim long black cloak. (It must be hoping that by forcing women to go back to the traditional forms of dress they'll go back to the "traditional" way of thinking too).

The Iranian women haven't won yet, but like women everywhere who have tasted power, they aren't about to give up the fight.

(Information taken from *Kinesis*, April 1979).

Salario al lavoro domestico

ITALY — The Wages for Housework campaign has become very popular in Italy, where it is known as *Salario Al Lavoro Domestico*. Italy has the worst economy in Western Europe, and women have little choice but to get married in order to survive. Only one in five women (nineteen per cent) are in the regular work force, and one in fifteen (about seven per cent) work as prostitutes. Italy has neither unemployment insurance nor welfare, a contributing factor in the high percentage of women involved in prostitution.

Thousands of women took part in demonstrations organized by Wages, supporting prostitutes and asking for money for themselves. Future demonstrations are planned to support abortions for poor women, and to protest the actions of the Pope, who has been guttural-rapping Catholic doctors into refusing to perform the newly legalized procedure. As a result of papal pressure, Catholic doctors have been refusing to perform abortions in hospitals, where they are legal and relatively inexpensive, and performing them illegally in their private practice for inflated prices.

Excerpts from Coyote Howls, Vol. 6 No. 1

For more information contact:
Comitato per il salario al lavoro domestico
c/o Centro delle Donne
Piazza Eremitani, 26
Padova 35100, Italy

Cash in the streets

TORONTO — Remember BEAVER, the women's group lobbying for the decriminalization of prostitution? We still exist but our name has changed to the Committee Against Street Harassment or CASH.

Late '77 and '78 were prime times for prostitute news and discussions. Emmanuel Jacques was murdered, body rub parlors were closed, Reform Metro was giving Toronto a facelift. The Supreme Court of Canada defined soliciting as a specific action; pressing and persistent importuning. For the first time the street hookers had a guideline. "You can ask once; better yet let him approach you."

Unfortunately, if the man does his approaching in Toronto he may find himself in the arms of a policewoman. The Ontario Supreme Court ruled that the client may be guilty of soliciting by pressing his money on a disinterested woman. (If the government would commit this crime, fewer women would need to prostitute themselves!). The high court in British Columbia came to the opposite conclusion; they defined the solicitor as the one who receives the money.

The use of undercover policewomen to entrap men scates away the jobs, and pushes the scene into seedier neighbourhoods. It doesn't protect the average woman, as only the police lay charges, and only when money has been offered. Because they spend so much time on the street, prostitutes need protection from male harassment even more than other women. Legislation should be aimed at the real public nuisance: pests, who can't take no for an answer.

At their annual meeting last March, the National Action Committee on the status of women (NAC) endorsed decriminalization and the need for special legislation to protect all women from male harassment.

Currently, in Toronto, loitering is a popular but vague charge. The circumstantial evidence makes the case: unscouted, unemployed and unwilling to move along. CASH would like to see a hundred women stage a lotter-in one evening on Yonge Street. How about Labour Day weekend? If you are interested in this event or in the decriminalization of prostitution, call the CASH hotline, 823-0740. We offer legal aid and crisis counselling and friendship.

— Baba Yaga

Speech by Amer Mullen, Regent Park Teens Association, at a meeting to launch the publication of Taking What's Ours, held at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in December, 1978.

"First, I'd like to tell everyone that I have been working with students from Contact High School and other areas to help them get their \$20 a month education fee for low-income students. We went through a great difficulty organizing students and teens as to their rights in obtaining this fee. After a long struggle, I am happy to announce that because of my hard work and the support of Housewives Initiative and Payday, there were 20% more students this year. (Applause)

In England, students receive a wage to attend school, and 81,000 students are on strike in Quebec, striking for a living wage. (Applause)

Because I am from a low-income family and have ambition and drive, I feel that I should have as much rights as anyone to a decent education, and not treated like a second class citizen. (Applause)

For more information contact Regent Park Teens, c/o PAYDAY, Box 515, Station C, Toronto M6J 3P6 (366-5002 evenings).

Welfare demonstrations

TORONTO — With songs, skits, speeches and placards, a lively crowd of 150 welfare mothers and supporters demonstrated in front of Queen's Park in Toronto in June. They met to demand a 36% increase for mothers on Family Benefits, more support for those returning to work or school, and other changes. Marchers came from as far away as Montreal and Kingston.

The protest was organized by the Family Benefits Work Group, a coalition of Family Benefits mothers, social service workers and supporters to strengthen their recent meetings with the Ontario government.

The most important victory was a commitment by the government to allow mothers who are not legally separated to get Family Benefits. Previously, they were only eligible for the smaller welfare assistance. The Work Group is continuing to pressure for immediate increases in all welfare payments.

For more information, call Pat Davies at 537-1196 or Brenda Parris at 924-4646.

— Dorothy Kidd

OTTAWA — Community and Social Services Minister Keith Norton tried to sneak in through the back door to a banquet he was attending in order to avoid the demonstration organized in support of the FBWG by the Ottawa Tenants Council in May. The demonstrators succeeded in catching him, and presented him with the same demands as those in Toronto.

Irene Saave, Vice-President of the OTC told him, "Women on government support have always been low-rated and told that the job we do is useless. We do not agree. We do an important job, for we are raising tomorrow's adults, besides providing work for all the services which depend on our existence. We are not abusers of the system, but a vital part of it."

Contact the Ottawa Tenants Council at 346 Frank Street, Ottawa K2P 0Y1 232-2677.

Kiss and tell

USA — Kiss and tell. That's the new name of "the game", according to the National Task Force on Prostitution. According to Margot St. James, the Task Force is asking all prostitutes to expose the names of any politicians who leave a prostitute's bed to go to the legislators to vote against decriminalization of prostitution, the Equal Rights Amendment, and other laws of importance to women.

BRITAIN — Using the threat of "Kissing and Telling", prostitutes wrote a new page in women's history in March when the Protection of Prostitutes Bill passed First Reading in Parliament by 130 to 50 votes.

The Bill would abolish jail terms and fines for soliciting as well as the term "common prostitute", which police have used indiscriminately to charge women with soliciting.

The evening before the Bill was passed, the English Collective of Prostitutes, Prostitutes Laws are Nonsense (PLAN), and Black Women for Wages for Housework (USA) representing the San Francisco-based COYOTE, held a meeting in none other than the House of Commons! They spoke to a packed hall about how prostitution "is the welfare the State does not provide, which is why so many single mothers are forced to go on the game." At the same time as prostitutes are under the gun for being paid for sex, they said, welfare women suspected of having a man around the house are being cut off because the State expects their boyfriends to pay for "services rendered".

Read Zara Silverwoman's "Helpful notes on prostitution for the worker and the wanderer". Available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore and Androgyny Bookstore in Montreal.



THE PAINTED LADIES THEATRE COMPANY

The Painted Ladies Theatre Group performed at the opening of the 15th National Women's Building in Winnipeg Feb. 21, 1979. The play was also a smash hit at the Bi-National Lesbian Conference in Toronto in June.

Maid on the march

Ontario's first domestic rights group has been set up and is already marching in the streets. Mirijana Tenenbaum, founder of Labour Rights for Domestic Servants, marched with co-workers and many supporters, including the Wages for Housework Campaign, outside the home of her former employer to protest her firing. The demonstrators called for a \$3,000 minimum wage, a 44-hour work week, overtime and vacation pay, and pay for statutory holidays.

Domestic work is not covered by provincial labour standards legislation, and only Newfoundland includes domestic workers in its minimum wage legislation. Montreal's Housework Workers Association, the first organization for domestics in Canada or Quebec, says that current rates of pay average about \$50 a week plus room and board for 60 hours work. The federal government asks employers of women coming from other countries to sign forms saying they will pay \$75 plus room and board for a 45-hour week. However, this "contract" is not legally enforceable, and the only recourse a woman has is to quit, then face deportation.

According to a report released recently by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Employment and Immigration Commission has changed their policy over the last 5 years to meet the demand for live-in domestics. An increasing number of Third World women are being allowed into Canada to work temporarily as domestics. The women are given specific work permits which do not allow them to change their type of employment. In fact, they cannot even switch jobs without government permission, and can never become permanent residents. Therefore they are not eligible for U.I.C. or welfare.

Speaking for immigrant women in Toronto, Judith Ramirez recently told the Toronto Star, "Immigrant domestics are modern day slaves... They have no protection under the law... (and) because domestic work is invisible to the public eye the employer can make any kind of arbitrary demands he wants."

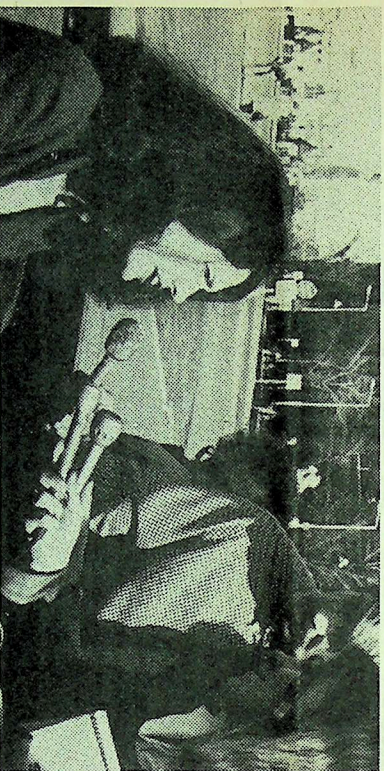
Sheila Armapoulos, author of *Problems of Immigrant Women in the Canadian Labour Force*, told a CBC interviewer, "The pay for domestics is so low because housework is a low-status job in our society. There are millions of housewives doing it for nothing, so the women who do it for pay get practically nothing for it."

Labour Rights for Domestic Servants is circulating a petition among immigrants, women's and labour groups calling for the inclusion of domestic work in minimum wage law.

More demonstrations are planned in the future and the organization is eager to hear from other domestics, to give or receive support. To contact them, phone 961-0386 (evenings) or Anna Menozzi, Employment Services for Immigrant Women at 922-8017 (days).

—Paula Fainstai

FLASH!! The Household Workers Association just announced that the Quebec government has passed legislation establishing a minimum wage for domestics, as well as working hours, statutory holidays, and vacations. A major victory!



Judith Ramirez, Toronto Wages for Housework Committee, on Parliament Hill.

Maggie Trudeau: Housewife of the Year

The following is the Press Release sent out by the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee in March that released a storm of media coverage from across North America to as far away as Australia!

When Mrs. Margaret Trudeau left 24 Sussex Drive with the words, "I don't want to be a rose in my husband's lapel", millions of housewives throughout the country silently applauded her courage.

"Spilled brat", "neurotic", "selfish", "were only some of the labels the public conferred on Margaret for standing up and saying that women want independence, respect, and lives of our own.

The ultimate blackmail of "unfit mother" was not spared her either. No woman should have to suffer the agony of choosing between herself and her children. But as long as our work in the home is considered worthless, many mothers will be thrown into that crisis.

With the publication of her book *Beyond Reason*, a new storm of criticism has erupted around Margaret. But we women are always being told that our expectations and demands are

Psst! Here's facts on welfare

If you were applying for welfare, would you know enough to hit the office early in the morning? Would you be ready to wait three months to a year before seeing any money, whether from municipal welfare or provincial family benefits?

Are you aware of your right to privacy when fielding questions from the welfare or social worker?

Would you know most supermarkets will cash your welfare cheque before the due date — if you agree to spend 15 per cent there?

Would you know enough to ask for winter blankets (available under special circumstances) during the summer, to beat the winter rush?

These are facts of life about the welfare system, included in a new 36-page handbook released yesterday by a grassroots coalition of Toronto women's groups.

There are tips for the welfare mother who wants to upgrade her marketability by going back to school but can't cut through the red tape of applying for a student loan.

"The handbook is a collection of information you wouldn't normally find in one place," said one of the handbook co-ordinators, Dorothy Kidd.

—By Louise Brown
Toronto Star, Dec. 8, 1978

TAKing WHAT'S OURS everywoman's guide to welfare and student aid

"Thanks. The booklet has really been well written and put together." — M. B., Scarborough.

"We thought your pamphlet was fantastic!" — B. E., New York

"It is most informative, and interesting, bringing to light many of the many very important unknown facts. It is easy to read and understand, no matter what your educational background." — J. N., Toronto

"May you continue until you are no longer needed, and that day will come!" — P. B., Don Mills

Published by:
Housewives' Initiative & Women's Action Group
Box 38, Station E
Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E1
(\$1 each. Orders of 5 or more 75 cents each)

Beyond Reason

BOOK REVIEW

"Frankly, I just wasn't interested in dental hospitals, or zoos, or centres for adult education. They bored me almost to tears. They bored all the other wives too. I cannot see a picture of a prime minister's wife opening a new hospital or civic centre today without conjuring up for myself the murderous thoughts that must be going through her head under the wide-brimmed hat."

In 1975, a group of Canadian diplomats' wives held a meeting in Ottawa to discuss their demand for a wage from the Canadian government for all the responsibilities they were expected to take on in the line of (their husbands') duty. Moving every year or two, entertaining continually, being expected to put aside all their own interests for the sake of their husbands' careers...

Many women across Canada may have wondered how those women could find cause for complaint. After all, weren't they married to important men? Didn't they have lots of money, get the chance to travel all over the world, and never have to touch a dirty dish? Anybody with such questions should read Margaret Trudeau's autobiography *Beyond Reason*.

It is obvious from her book that Margaret was certainly not your average housewife. No woman with eight servants and a charge account at Creed's could be called "average". But she was a housewife nonetheless. Not only to Pierre, but even more so to Canada.

The amount of work involved in being wife to the state is mindboggling to read about. It was "an ivory tower that wasn't an ivory tower at all... just an awful load of responsibilities". First, there was all the protocol to be learned which, according to the Governor-General's wife who tried to teach her, "... is learning all the things that you have to do, however much you find them unnatural and unhygienic."



Robin Tyler in concert.

Gay moms' update

* Winnipeg-born Robin Tyler, favourite comic of women across Canada and the USA, gave a fantastic benefit performance for the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund and the Winnipeg Women's Building on May 18th in Toronto! As she wove her deep concern for gay pride and custody rights for lesbian mothers into her act, the audience of 250 understood why Robin Tyler has become a leading spokeswoman for the gay movement and the ERA in the US. Her new solo album "Always a Bridemaid, Never a Groom" (Olivia Records) is now available at most women's bookstores.

* The LMDF (united out in force for the May 18-21 National Lesbian Conference, organized by the Lesbian Organization of Toronto. Women there rallied around our request for more space in *The Body Politic* for lesbians. On the final day of the conference *TBP* responded by offering to give women the entire October issue, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of women in Canada being declared "persons". A Special Issue Committee is collecting articles, poems, graphics and news before the August 15th final deadline. Please send your contributions on any subject — sports, health, jobs, etc. — to the LMDF or to the Special Issue Committee, c/o The Body Politic, P.O. Box 7289, Station A, Toronto M5W 1X9.

* Francie Wyland, LMDF co-ordinator, addressed this year's conference of the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada on June 30th. She was part of a panel made up of spokespersons from all the gay defence committees now active in the country, and was later interviewed by the *Ottawa Citizen*. And on July 8th, Francie was the featured speaker at a public meeting in Boston sponsored by the Gay Parents Project there. The visibility of lesbian mothers is growing every day! Write to us for copies of our new newsletter "The Grapevine" at LMDF, P.O. Box 38, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E1.

Then the state visits and receptions for important people, with no help from the Prime Minister's Office who thought of her as a pretty fixture and never bothered to brief her before official events. Not to mention the constant police protection (which Margaret called "surveillance"), so that the minute she walked out of her bedroom she literally could not be alone.

And then there was Pierre, who Margaret found increasingly distant. Queen Alia of Jordan graciously gave Margaret her recipe for saving a marriage. "Don't overload him, try to control yourself and when he is away, rage, break, scream and cry and get everything out."

But the most striking aspect of the book, and one which almost every housewife can identify with at one time or another, is the sense of imprisonment.

"The moment I became Mrs. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a glass panel was gently lowered into place around me, like a patient in a mental hospital who is no longer considered able to make decisions and who cannot be exposed to harsh light. For five years I lived in cotton wool, struggling to grow up, to shape my own life, uncertain about whom exactly I was fighting against, but increasingly convinced that this artificial life was slowly crushing me to death. With so much civility around, whom to attack? With so much comfort, how dare I complain?"

Margaret eventually did dare to complain, and made a break to regain her independence. She is only one of thousands of women who have done that. The difference is that she was living in a fishbowl. And perhaps the only way to get out of one is to shatter the glass.

—Frances Gregory

"Let them eat cake!"

The limits to sisterhood were clearly spelled out at the National Action Committee (NAC) annual conference in Ottawa last month when some 20 representatives of lower income women's groups were prevented from registering as observers. The objective was to exclude them from the entire proceedings and the message came wrapped in a not unfamiliar package of tokenism and elitism. The difference was that this time it wasn't men doing it to women but women doing it to women.

At the NAC conference the main target of NAC's displeasure was a Toronto group known as Wages for Housework composed mainly of single mothers on welfare. The other groups seem to have got caught in the cross-fire but this didn't seem to have bothered NAC. Some of the reasons for NAC's aversion to this group were explained to the Ottawa Tenants' Council and to members of the Ottawa Women's Lobby (OWL) before the conference. These were that Wages for Housework women were being manipulated by international left-wing elements, that their objective of ensuring an income for women who stay at home was contrary to NAC policy, and that they could not be relied on to behave with the decorum usually observed at NAC meetings and might disrupt the proceedings.

The main questions that all this seems to raise are whether NAC has the moral right to say it represents several million Canadian women and be so exclusive, whether it can say that there is only one true feminist political philosophy and that it has been carved in stone and is called The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (an admirable document in its time, but the women's movement has developed and changed a great deal in the past 10 years since that report was written), whether NAC can exclude women on the basis that they use non-ladylike tactics (would they have admitted Nellie McClung or the Panhursts?), whether they are not seeking to impose rigid middle-class values and behaviours on an organization which at this time seems to have the potential for acting as a catalyst which could unify all Canadian women in a widespread movement for social change.

Wages for Housework will speak for itself but we should be aware that it is part of a developing cross-Canada network of lower income women's groups. Consequently, the Ottawa Tenants Council, also part of that network, were not very



Cori Everright (l.) with fellow Winnipegger Anne Marie Gray, said: "Everywhere we go, Indian women have to bang the door down..."

impressed with NAC's arguments. Neither for that matter were some members of OWL nor the representatives of the Immigrant Women's Centre from Toronto nor the representatives of Women Against Violence from Winnipeg. All of these NAC suddenly found they could not accommodate or register as observers on the Friday morning preceding the conference.

Louis the XVI and Marie Antoinette confronted by the mob were not more indignant than the NAC executive when these women had the sheer effrontery to turn up at the opening session the following day.

The lower income women's groups, however, had a few good reasons for being there and for thinking that the NAC conference had something to offer them and vice-versa. They pointed out that the worsening economic situation has hit them more severely than anyone else and that many low income women and their children are now having to do without food and that they are desperate to make their plight known.

Besides, Judith Ramirez, the president of Wages for Housework, had been invited to be a resource person regar-

"You can't mow us down!"

The Grassroots at NAC:

Sharon Barkley



Preparing the welfare resolution. From l. to r.: Claire Beland, Dorothy O'Connell, Lynn Murlie of Ottawa Tenants Council; Renate Flor, Centro Dome — Mil.; Judith Ramirez, WFH — Tor.

"We call on NAC to make it a priority to pressure all levels of government for improvements in the welfare system by a major increase in welfare payments, and quarterly raises indexed to the cost of living, bringing payments at least to the level of the poverty line as determined by the Senate Committee on poverty."

The above resolution was passed unanimously by the several hundred delegates to the annual conference of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, after the NAC executive put every possible obstacle in the path of the grass-roots women who came to promote it (see "Let Them Eat Cake").

The welfare-identified groups, brought together through their networking with the Wages for Housework Campaign, included the Ottawa Tenants Council, the Employment Services for Immigrant Women (Toronto), the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund (Toronto), the Committee Against Violence Towards Women (Winn.), The Immigrant Women's Centre (Tor.), Winnipeg Women for Welfare, and Centro Dome (Montreal).

Angry with the constant glorification of work outside the home, these groups were determined to put NAC, as the only national women's organization, on record as supporting an immediate substantial increase in the pay welfare mothers receive for raising their families. The official resolution calls for an increase of \$5,000 per year for a mother with

three children — from the present \$6,789 to the Senate Committee's figure of \$12,000. This is a real victory for all the women and children whose survival depends on welfare, and for the growing number of women who are "only a man or a job from welfare". It strengthens local campaigns to raise welfare rates and gives the grass-roots another tool with which to confront government.

Following Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar's plea for sisterhood at the opening plenary, the "income maintenance" workshop was opened to all the grass-roots women who had not been allowed to register. It was known by then that the Mayor had offered us City Hall as alternative meeting space and that our main interest in this conference on "economic realities for women" was not verbal battles on wages for housework (contrary to the NAC executive's hysteria) but the passage of a strong resolution for higher welfare.

Judith Ramirez was on the "income maintenance" panel, speaking about immigrant women and poverty, and she put forward the case for welfare as "the only economic insurance policy for all women". In the debate that followed, the resolution was re-worked several times. At one point, Dorothy O'Connell, from the Ottawa Tenants Council, prevented a watered down version, which tied welfare increases to the much lower Statistics Canada figures, from passing. However, two additional clauses which called for an end to the harassment of Indian women in welfare offices, and the recognition of welfare as a wage, and not a charity, were ruled "out of order" by the chair.

In her speech at the opening plenary, Dorothy O'Connell had put her finger on the underlying political tension which riddled the entire conference:

"It is really too bad that all women don't share a common philosophy. There are very few feminists among poor women, and the reason for that is that is the feminist movement, by playing up the right to work, and the right to leave the home, have downgraded even more those who don't choose to work or who can't, and the contempt for women in the home has grown, even among other women. Poor women have always had to work, but it

is not a choice. The kinds of jobs they get are strictly no-status jobs, with long hours, low pay, and terrible working conditions...

And what about those women who stay at home on welfare? Living in the lap of luxury on someone else's money... The assumption is that the woman on welfare is getting "something for nothing."

Prior to the conference, the NAC executive had adamantly refused membership status to Wages for Housework on the grounds that it is "contrary to stated NAC policy" to promote payment for housework. When pressed about which policy, in a two-hour meeting, the NAC executive had no clear-cut answer. Since the conference, they have issued a statement on wages for housework which is a classic of the "something for nothing" prejudice against work in the home which plagues so many "feminist" organizations cut off from the grass-roots.

NAC's actions, before, during, and after the conference, have prompted many letters of protest from feminist lawyers, women in government, and community activists who feel strongly that NAC's role, as the only national women's organization in Canada, is to be a vehicle for all groups promoting women's rights, not a tribunal deciding who is "in" and who is "out". UPSTREAM, Canada's national women's magazine, has come out editorially against NAC and called for a "discussion on the direction of the women's movement in Canada" in its pages.

It is a sad commentary on NAC that it should go to such lengths to block discussion on wages for housework at the very moment that it is becoming a key issue for the courts, government economists, and women's groups, internationally. In the past year alone, the United Nations has called on all countries to include housework in their Gross National Products, the Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women has issued Canada's first comprehensive report on the value of housework, and welfare mothers across the country have stepped up their demands to be recognized as legitimate workers.

And what an irony, that NAC has become a focal point for the very discussion it wants to prevent!

EDITORIAL

senting the Immigrant Women's Centre (of which she is also a board member). In addition, Dorothy O'Connell, the president of the Ottawa Tenants' Council, had been invited to speak on women and poverty in the opening panel. Dorothy O'Connell's friends were not, however, to be allowed to hear her speak. By a strange coincidence the two members of OWL who had raised awkward questions earlier in the week were also kept out.

At the opening session of the conference tight-flipped NAC representatives guarded the main doors. Folding doors cutting off a third of the conference hall were being kept firmly and forcibly shut by male hotel employees while a few of the excluded women were trying to open them. Presumably this reducing of the space available by screening it off was meant to give credence to the claim that there was no room for these extra women who wanted to enter.

It was an unedifying spectacle to say the least and the situation might have deteriorated had it not been for the intervention of Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar, who made a plea from the floor for some evidence of sisterhood and for the doors dividing the room to be opened so that there would be room for all. Several votes were taken and eventually common sense prevailed. The doors were opened. There was plenty of room and all those who wished heard most of the morning panel.

So was this event a storm in a teacup? A combination of misunderstanding, mismanagement and sheer bad luck, or does it have greater significance?

The NAC executive will probably prefer to forget the whole incident and pretend it never happened.

For some of us, however, it was a sad lesson that tokenism is not the prerogative of men and a sharp reminder of the deep differences in the economic situations of Canadian women and the basic lack of understanding of those who have not by those who have.

This incident should not be swept under the carpet. It's time there was a little fresh air and open debate into the way that the women's movement is evolving in Canada and particularly into why there is so little grass roots involvement.

— Kathleen Macleod Jamieson

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SPECIAL
ISSUE
ON DOMESTICS

Agges for Housework



Campaign Bulletin

Toronto, Canada

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THE NUMBERS MAZE

Gwen Morgan, University of Toronto Student

Isolated in private homes, hidden from the public view, domestic workers are the phantom of the Canadian workforce. We felt it was important to pull this skeleton from the closet. Just how many women choose, or are forced to choose, domestic work to make a living? This relatively straight-forward question became more and more complicated as we dove deeper through the levels of bureaucratic redtape searching for the relevant statistics. As is often the case with bureaucracies, we met with a stone wall. The statistics for domestics are not compiled because the recent census tracts are taken from only a sample of the population and therefore do not reflect such details with accuracy.

Failing there, we turned to another area. Many domestics come into Canada on work permits, so we tried to find out exactly how many women are on work permits for domestic work. Of course -- you may well guess -- these statistics are not available either. Freely given are statistics on the number of landed immigrants, the number of foreign students, the number of visitors. But the number of work permits is not available to the public. Despite these obstacles, we did manage to find out a few interesting facts. Since 1975, when the work permit system was first instituted, while immigration has been consistently falling, the number of work permits issued has remained at a fairly high level. Immigration dropped from 184,200 in 1974 to 114,914 in 1977 and to 72,475 in 1978. The number of work permits, on the other hand, was 87,353 in 1974 and 88,696 in 1977 and 83,497 in 1978. Of this number, 14,370 permits in 1977 were given to those classified as "servants". More than half of these "servants" came to Ontario: 8,279 in total. Imagine! Over eight thousand women in Ontario not even afforded the minimal protection of the Employment Standards Act.

These statistics are not official, but in a recent Canadian magazine article by Rosie Dinanno, "To Serve & Protest", the author says there were 12,520 domestics in Ontario in 1978. Given the tendency for the number of work permits issued to increase, Dinanno's statistics lend credibility to the stats we obtained unofficially. These statistics suggest that the work permit system is being substituted for landed immigration. It would seem that Canada is on the way to creating a ghetto of marginalized, super-exploited labour. Of course this is only a hypothesis. But the veil of secrecy surrounding the statistics on work permits and on domestics can only make one wonder. Hey Ottawa, what skeleton lies in your closet!

Introduction

IMMIGRANT DOMESTICS: MODERN-DAY SLAVES

by Judith Ramirez

Unpaid housework is the single largest industry in Canada. An army of five million women work as full-time housewives in the nation's homes for no pay, no benefits, no holidays, and no pensions. Most housewives never retire, they just tire.

Calculated in economic terms, all the free housework Canadian women perform equals roughly 1/3 of the Gross National Product. The failure to recognize this work is every woman's handicap. Riveted to bedpans, mops, and menus, we earn only 60¢ for every dollar a man earns. The "female job ghettoes" are the all-too-natural offspring of the free work we do in the home.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of immigrant women who work as live-in domestic servants. With no legal protection whatsoever in Ontario, each woman is at the mercy of the employer whose toilet she cleans, 60 to 80 hour work-weeks are rampant in this "ghetto within a ghetto", and the recommended pay of \$275/month (plus room and board) amounts to the miserable sum of \$1.00 an hour, or one third of the minimum wage.

Fueled by recent changes in Canada's immigration policy, this slave-like exploitation of immigrant women is on

the increase. Under the present system of "temporary work permits", women are imported from the Third World for up to three years to work solely as live-in domestics. They cannot change to higher paying jobs. They cannot apply for permanent residence. They cannot bring their children to Canada.

On October 11, the Davis government blocked a bill that would have covered domestic workers under the province's minimum wage law. The following week, one of his cabinet ministers was publicly denounced by an illegal Jamaican immigrant who had worked in his home for fourteen hours a day, at less than the minimum wage!

Because the same men who write the laws write the paycheques, only the strongest public protest can end the discrimination against immigrant domestics. This special issue of the Campaign Bulletin, prepared jointly with the Employment Services for Immigrant Women, was written not only by immigrant domestics themselves, but also by grass-roots organizers, full-time housewives, researchers, and students, who see in the fight of the immigrant domestics their own fight for more money and more freedom of choice.



Pamela Harris

Why Do Women Come?

Lois de Shield, West Indian Community Worker, E.S.I.W.

Many West Indian women come to Canada as domestic workers because the unemployment rate in the Caribbean is very bad. It's about 40%, and the women don't have the opportunity to find jobs. They come to Canada because they have been told by friends and immigration officers that it is a land of milk and honey.

I first became involved with domestic workers in the 1950's. At that time, there was not a supply, but a demand for domestic workers. The Canadian government didn't have a quota with the Caribbean governments to bring in West Indian immigrants, and a decision was made to bring the women in as domestics. There were large Canadian interests in Jamaica -- in bauxite (Alcan), and the banks. Until very recently these companies paid little tax, and nearly all profits were returned to Canada.

Many West Indian women feel that they have a right to be here, and a right to a better life. One of the few ways they could get here, then and now, was to come in as domestics. Unlike today, when they first arrived years ago there was no representation at all -- no agencies or social services -- to help them when difficulties arose.

I remember my first involvement with a domestic worker. I was on a bus going from Hamilton to Toronto and met a woman who was a domestic from Grenada. She began to talk about the bad treatment she was getting. At the time I had a lot of friends who were hiring domestics, and consequently a small group of interested people was formed to investigate some of the complaints made by these women. The success of our efforts became very well known in the West Indian and Black Canadian community.

Immigration tries to cover itself by saying that a domestic has the right to change employers if she is being underpaid and overworked. But as long as the contract signed between Immigration and the employer is not legally enforceable (see the Minimum Wage vs. Manpower Domestic Contract) a change of employer doesn't guarantee a better working situation. That, plus the fear of deportation, keeps many women on work permits from speaking out against employer abuse.

As Annpoulos says, domestic work is becoming "the preserve of Third World women who will accept low pay and below-standard working conditions here simply because jobs are unavailable in their home countries."



Sub 1621
Page 1

Maria, Portuguese, 21 Year Old Domestic Worker



Maria Feliciano

How long have you been in Canada? Since 1975. I came with my sister. Now my whole family is here.

Do you have any children? I have a boy 10 months old.

How did you get into domestic work? Why not factory work or in a restaurant? Because everywhere you go you have to have experience. At the time I needed a job, so I had to take it.

When you apply for domestic work, do they ask for experience? Well, they do ask. I have experience because I have a husband and a son. And since I was small, I was cleaning my mother's house.

When you go to a job, do you tell them how much you charge, or do you have to take what they offer? I have to take what they offer. They never ask what I charge. Some will pay car fare, and some don't.

So do they say, 'I'll give you \$3.50 an hour for six hours, and in that time I expect you to clean the whole house? Yes, they say, "I want this done, I want that done and that done." A big long list.

And they can ask you to do any kind of work? Yes. My head is stuck for hours inside dirty ovens. And they don't give me gloves. I always have to buy my own. Sometimes 5 or 6 pairs a week. I got a bad rash because of the detergents and had to go to the doctor. Nobody gave me the money for that.

One time a lady gave me just steel wool to clean a filthy oven. How did she expect me to clean that filth with no oven cleaner? I did the best I could, but she made me do it over. I finally told her if she wanted it cleaner, she'd have to do it herself. They make me wash walls. And those huge windows. I have to climb up on a big ladder, and I'm scared of falling. No Monkmen's Compensation, but they don't care.

And washing floors. But they don't give you a mop. So you're on your hands and knees the whole time. Even for very big floors, they just give me some SOS pads. Sometimes when I stand up, my knees are so sore that I can barely stand. And then you have the lady watching, so she comes and says, "Maria, see over here, see over there." But they give me so much to do, I have to work fast. You're supposed to do the basement, first, second and third floor in six hours, and everything has to be perfect.

What happens if you don't have it all done in six hours? They say, "What happened? The other girl that I had used to do everything."

So I say, "If you want the other girl, you can have her back." After all, I'm not a horse.

Do they always give you your lunch? Sometimes. Sometimes they go out and tell me to take something out of the fridge. But I don't like to touch their food, because maybe it's something special and I don't want to have problems. Sometimes I go the whole day without food. I just drink lots of cold water. For me to work hard all day, I really need to eat.

Can you collect Unemployment Insurance? So if I have to take time off, I don't get any money. No money for holidays. They'll phone me up and say, "Sorry Maria, don't come today, I have an appointment." So no money that day. Some weeks I make \$60, some weeks \$80. Sometimes they say to come once a week. Then when I've got everything all clean, they tell me to come once a month.

Have you ever worked for a Domestic Employment Agency? Yes. I couldn't get enough work on my own so I went to one. They told me they would pay \$4 an hour. I was supposed to clean two houses in six hours -- three hours for each house. I would make \$44 -- \$22 for them, \$22 for me. Plus I had to pay my own car fares and lunch. They'd take off income tax and pension, so when I got my cheque it was nothing.

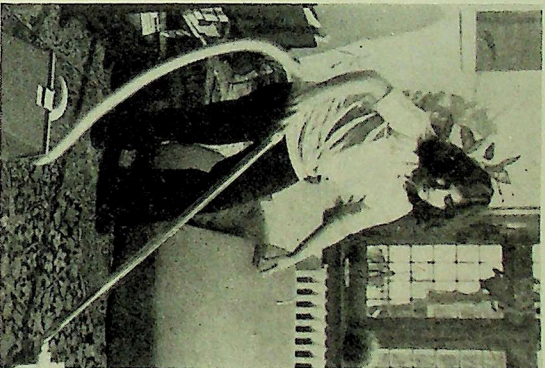
I'd go to the agency at 7.30 a.m. and get the schedule for the houses I had to clean. Then I had to travel to the first house, clean it (big houses too) in three hours, travel to the next house and clean it in three hours. I thought they were going to pay me by the hour, not by the day. The first house I went to through the agency, I didn't know how it worked. So whatever the lady told me to do I had to do it. I started cleaning the walls of mirrors, washing the walls, the lights, cleaning out the cupboards, the oven. She never gave me lunch. When she saw me sweating so much she gave me a Coke. I started at 1.00 p.m., and by 8.00 still had not finished everything. I didn't know you were only supposed to work for three hours! She had a letter from the agency telling her how long I was supposed to work, but I didn't know. She kept giving me more and more work. Finally I phoned home to find out how my baby was, because he'd been sick that day, and there was no answer. I got so scared I said I had to go. She told me to just finish the carpet and then I could go. I finished at 10.00. They gave me a cheque for \$22 -- so for 9 hours work I got \$11!! And a glass of coke.

It was better when the women weren't home. When they were, they always wanted something extra, like silver polished. But I never got paid extra if I took more than three hours. Even if I took 9 or 10 hours. I finally quit. It drove me nuts. What's the most you've ever made on a job? Once a woman told me she'd pay me \$27 for six hours, but she never let me go home after six hours. She'd always ask me to just polish this or that. If I finished on time I was working too fast. Otherwise I was too slow. I couldn't understand her. Four floors in six hours. One day she told me to clean the piano. Whenever I touched the keys she'd run in and say, "Maria, are you playing or working? Don't play it, just clean it." Finally she complained so much that one day after she'd put foam cleaner all over the stairs for me to vacuum I just got dressed to leave. She asked me where I was going, that there was still work to be done. I said, "Thank you very much, but do it yourself. It's time you knew what it's like cleaning. Bye bye." I was upset because I'd spent two TTC tickets and had lost the job. But you work so hard, and then to get all those complaints.

When I couldn't understand English it was all right, they could insult me all they wanted. But now that I understand, they can't do it. What are the advantages of domestic work? Sometimes, when I'm in a nice place, I feel like I am home. Some people I feel very comfortable working for. They give me their key, and they trust me. That makes me feel good. And if my baby's sick I can phone them and say that I can't come but I'll come another day instead. Most people I'm working for now understand. It's not like a factory or office where you have to be right on time every day or lose your job. Do you think domestic work should be

covered by Labour Legislation? Oh yes. Now when they go on holiday, I get a holiday too -- unpaid. If you lose your job you can't get UIC. Now we just get the money for cleaning houses and that's all. And the pay is so low for no benefits.

So many times I hurt myself on the job, but with no Monkmen's Compensation, I just have to keep on working. And then go to the doctor on my own time and pay everything out of my own money. And the money I make just isn't enough. I get paid \$20 a day,



and go to the grocery store and spend \$25. You can wear whatever clothes you own, or wash the same thing every night, but food -- you have to eat.

Why do you think domestic work is paid so low? Because cleaning is considered so low status, and everybody thinks you don't have the experience to do anything else.

Do you think it could also be that women usually do it in their own homes for free? Oh yes. Women stay at home and do it for nothing, so they don't think it's worth much for someone else to do it. What do you do after work? I'm very tired after work. I go pick up my baby from the babysitter, take him home, do all my own cooking, cleaning, shopping, look after my baby and my husband. I never go out, dancing or anything like that. I don't think I enjoy much. All I do is work.

Joyce, Aged 43, Caribbean Domestic on a Work Permit

Why did you decide to leave your home to come to Canada? Because I wanted to work, and there is no work at home.

Was it easy to get a work permit to come?

Some people that I knew sponsored me to come to Canada as a domestic worker in their home. Canadian immigration wrote to tell me to come in for an interview. I went, took the medical, and got the documents to come. Do you have children back home? I do -- seven.

When the Immigration Department gave you the documents to come, did they tell you what your wages would be, and the hours you would be working?

When I arrived in Canada, they gave me a contract that my employer had signed -- my wages, the hours, the kind of work I would be doing.

Do you remember what it said? \$225/month for 40 hours a week, taking care of two children and night housekeeping. But you see, I found all that out later. When I left the Immigration office at the airport, my employers took the contract. I trusted them, because it was the first time I'd travelled, and they were the only people I knew. They didn't give me a chance to read it before they took it away from me. When I got off the plane I was in a different world -- I was looking around trying to take in everything. I didn't have time to read it.

So what in fact did your job involve? Everything! I had to take care of the children, clean the house, do the cooking. I even had to mow the lawn. When they came home from work, they would only eat and watch TV till bedtime. I worked every day, all the time till my bedtime, except Sunday.

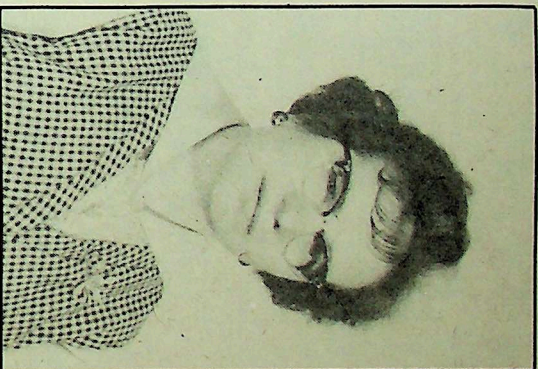
And how much did you get paid? Only \$100 a month. A week after I started working, the missus said that she would give me \$125 a month, and out of that she'd take off \$25 for my plane fare. I agreed because back home, that's a lot of money.

What did you do on your day off? I went to church. I found a church that wasn't very far, and the people were very nice. They started picking me up every Sunday to take me to Church. When the people where I was

IMMIGRANTS DOMESTICS SPEAK OUT

by Frances Gregory

Marietta, Aged 59, Italian, Domestic Worker for 23 Years



Marietta, Ita. Simonetti

I'ming realized that I was going out with them every Sunday, they weren't happy at all.

Why not?

I don't know, but they started finding different faults. The grass was too long, things like that. Then they decided to send me back home. They told me on a Saturday, and said the plane was for Monday. So I told the Church minister that I was leaving, but he said my employer didn't have the right to send me back -- my work permit still had six months on it, and I had the right to stay. So Immigration with me and got me another work permit.

Why do you think your employer treated you like that?

I feel he thought he was doing me a favour by bringing me up here. He gave me my documents back when I left, and then I saw how much I was supposed to have been paid all along.

So what happened then?

A man in the Church agreed to employ me. But it only lasted a few months, because they had already sent for someone else, so when she came, I had to leave.

What about your next job?

The people I was living with thought I was lonely and needed a man. They invited the man's brother over all the time. Once he invited me out and I said no. The people asked me why I wouldn't go -- they said, after all, you can't make babies anymore! So then I realized what they really wanted, which was for me to move in with him, and come in the day to clean for them. I told them I couldn't do that because I go to church, and back home that would be considered adultery.

Then they told me he'd done some big favour for them, so they owed him one. They fired me. The official reason they gave was that they needed the room I was sleeping in for the baby. But I know that was a way of sending me away because I didn't agree to go out with the brother. Then I got another job.

What was it like?

The family wasn't very nice. But I had to bear it, because knowing the conditions back home, I didn't have a choice if I wanted to have a better living for me and my family. But it started getting worse. They were supposed to pay me \$250 a month, plus NHP, but they took the NHP from my pay. They also took out Unemployment Insurance and Canada Pension (IIC and CPP are deducted on any wage higher than \$21 a week). I don't know if they were really paying it for me. But I had to agree because I wanted the job.

I worked 16 hours a day, and the food was very bad. Often I was alone in the house for dinner, but they never gave me anything to cook. Sometimes they would bring a hamburger for me, and sometimes I never saw them until bedtime, so I would eat some bread. I wasn't allowed to take anything from the freezer. They were really strict people.

Did they expect you to go out and buy your own groceries?

Maybe. But the contract said they were to give me my meals. One day I told her I wasn't used to hamburgers, and if I don't have one good meal a day I'm afraid I will get sick. She told me I couldn't tell her what the contract said. I talked to her on the Sunday morning. She never gave me a reply, so I went to church. When I got back at 9 p.m. from the day with my church friends, the husband told me that when he got home from work on Monday he didn't want to see me there. I called the people in the church, and they took me home for a week until I got the job I have now.

How is it going?

Well, not bad, but I have to work more than 40 hours a week, because the people both have part-time jobs as well as full-time ones. Like tomorrow is Sunday, which is supposed to be my day off, but she told me to have to go to work. And last week I couldn't have my Saturday off. I don't get paid anything extra for that. It really upsets me, but I can't say anything, because I want my job. They can just come and go as they please, because they know I'm always there.

So you have the feeling now that you can't ever say anything for fear that you're going to lose your job?

Well, I learned that from experience.

Have you ever gotten sick?

Once I had to stay in bed for two days. But they were Christian people I was working for then, and they didn't mind. But now I'm scared to get sick. I don't think they would keep me anymore.

Do you get time off to go to the doctor?

I've had to miss two appointments. I tell the woman I have an appointment and she says she'll come home, and when the time comes for me to leave and she's not there, so I have to cancel it. After I had to cancel this week, she told me she'd try to give me time to go next week.

So your health isn't of very great importance to them.

Oh, they don't care about me. They don't care about me at all.

Do you have time off in the afternoon? Not in this job. I stay in the house like a mother. The man told me to do in the house like I would do in my own house. But he meant cleaning, not relaxing.

Can't you take the children out of the house, go for walks?

No I can't. I'm not allowed to take them further than the backyard. I don't know why they don't trust me. I have enough experience, with seven of my own. I feel bad about that.

Do the people check your cleaning like they do with day workers?

No. Well, maybe they do. But I've never had any complaints. I'm a very hard worker. They don't have any complaints, but the minute I complain I'm out.

How much do you get paid now?

\$70 a week, for about 80 hours work. But it's still better than the other jobs.

In the evenings when your work is done, can you watch TV or play records?

I'm not allowed to use the record player. But I can watch TV as long as they're not watching it.

Have any of your employers mentioned to you the possibility of sponsoring you for landed immigrant status? No, I didn't know they could do that until you told me.

Would you like to stay in Canada?

Oh yes. As long as Immigration allows me. But I don't know if they will keep renewing my work permit.

If you went to Immigration and told them your employer was violating the contract he signed with Immigration, do you think they would do anything about it? I don't know. But I would never do it. I don't like to cause trouble.

How do you get treated when you go to Immigration? Usually they're alright. But one time I moved, and I went to Immigration two days later to tell them and they were really mad. They said I had to report my change of address the same day. On the work permit it says to report it right away, but I didn't realize it meant the same day. I was really scared they were going to send me back for that.

Have you had a chance to make many friends? The people in the church are really good friends. Without them I wouldn't know my way around the subway, how to get to Immigration, any of those things. And Employment Services for Immigrant Women has really done a lot for me.

Do you think domestic workers are exploited? Oh yes. We're really powerless.

Is there anything else you'd like to say? Well, I really love Canada. I would like my teenage daughter to see it -- not to stay or work, but just to see it, because it's a different world.

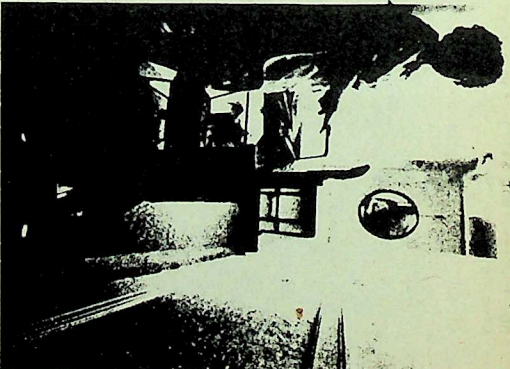
How long have you been in Canada, and why did you come? I came 24 years ago, because in Italy it was so difficult. I had a big family, and my brother who was here told me to come.

Did you get a job immediately?

It was hard in 1955, not very many jobs. I got a job in a restaurant as a dishwasher. I couldn't speak any English, but you don't need English to wash dishes. I stayed there about a year, then I began to work in a hotel at nighttime and in the day I did housecleaning.

Why did you work at two jobs?

Because I had five kids. And no one gave me my house to live in! Then I had my sixth child and I took two years off. After that I began cleaning in a bank from 4.00 to 8.00 a.m., and then at 9.00 I'd go housecleaning, till maybe 6.00 p.m. Every day for 10 years.



I worked very hard for years, but now I own two houses, all paid for, and I have money in the bank. People ask me how I have done so well, with six children and all, and I say, "Easy ... lots of hard work."

I don't have to work anymore. I work because I enjoy it -- as a cleaner in a textile factory. Now nobody can push me around. If I don't feel like going in one day I just don't go.

Why did you stop cleaning houses?

Because sometimes people were too pushy. Do this, do that. The owner really controls you. Sometimes you go and you don't feel well, but you have to work just as hard all the same, or else she'll tell you you should have stayed at home. But when you stay at home, you don't get paid. In a factory, you just have your work to do, and you do it. Nobody really bothers you.

How much did you get paid for cleaning houses?

When I started, \$5 a day. When I finished, \$25 a day for about 8 hours work. When they asked me how much I charged I'd say, as much as

you feel. That way, they'd pay me more.

I always worked very hard. I made the houses look like my own. One house I went to was so dirty, I didn't know where to begin. I went every day for three hours, and in two months I had it clean. The lady had five kids, and I said to her that when I came back the next day I didn't want to see anything dirtied up.

That's probably why I didn't have such a bad time housecleaning. I would just tell them that once I cleaned something, it had to stay that way.

When I worked in the bank cleaning, all the other cleaners did the same thing -- clean offices at night and do domestic work during the day.

Have you ever seen Canadian women do domestic work?

No. Canadians don't seem to be interested in paying mortgages and putting money in the bank. They want a good time. Like my daughter now, when immigrants come to Canada, they want the best.

What are the advantages of doing domestic work?

You see the results of your work. Something is dirty, you clean it, and you can see it. I went one time to a woman's house that was so clean it made me nervous. After I dusted, she wanted to see the dirty rag -- but there was no dirt. What could I do? I just left.

If one of your children was sick, could you phone up and tell the lady that you couldn't come? I never once did that. If one of my children was sick, the older ones would have to look after him or her. Even when I was sick, I never missed a day of work -- no matter how sick I was.

Why not?

Six children and a mortgage. ... what else do I have to say? I wanted my children to go to school in the worst way. When I got on the bus and saw students with their books, I was so jealous. I wanted my children to be able to go. And now they've had the chance.

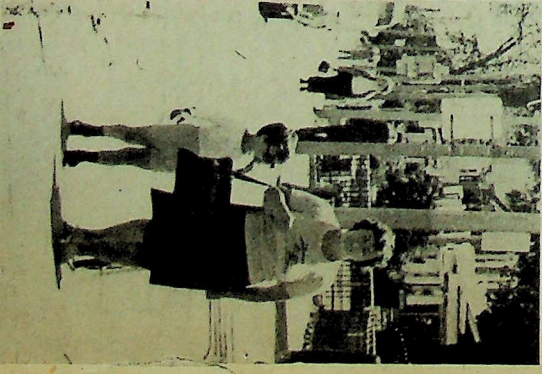
When you came home from work, you must have had a lot of your own housework to do with so many children.

Well, I had my daughters who did all the housework. They did the grocery shopping, and even paid the bills.

Howadays, housecleaning isn't so bad because of all the machines they have. But I have permanent marks on my legs from scrubbing so many floors on my hands and knees. I wish I'd known about factory work a long time ago, because it's so much easier. But for 20 years I was working so hard I didn't have the time to talk to people to find these things out!

When I came to Canada, I didn't know anything, and nobody told me, about the laws or whatever rights I had.

If you knew 24 years ago the things you know now, what would be different? Oh boy! I would have found a nice job in a factory, and made a regular wage. I'd be able to come home at night, and look after my children.



Pay for Housework

By Maria Barracco, University of Toronto Student

Domestic workers are badly treated. Housework isn't supposed to be work -- whether it's done by a woman in her own house or, by extension, in someone else's.

— *Lois De Stiehl, ESIV*

Why does a domestic worker get paid such low wages when she goes to work in someone else's home? Why, when she goes home, does she get paid nothing for doing the same work for her own family? The first question can't be answered without answering the second.

As long as women aren't paid for their labour in their own home, their labour will be undervalued in the paid labour force. Traditionally, women have been a labour force in reserve -- brought out of their homes (or brought to Canada) when the need arises. But there are so many housewives, and as the cost of living

rises, more and more are competing for the same jobs. So before a woman bargains for a higher wage, she re-members there are a hundred women willing to take the job at whatever wage. Her only alternative is working full-time in the home for free. If women got wages for housework, they would have the power to refuse those jobs at the minimum wage or less, and force wages and working conditions to improve.

Pressure from women across the country has forced the government to study the question of wages for housework more seriously. Statistics Canada has estimated the value of housework to be \$6,000 per year for every Canadian household, or 35-40% of the Gross National Product. And the following, more recent table, prepared by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, estimates the value at close to \$10,000 per year.

APPROXIMATE VALUE OF THE HOUSEWORK OF THE MOTHER OF A FAMILY OF TWO CHILDREN, THE YOUNGER OF WHOM IS BETWEEN 7 AND 12 YEARS OF AGE.

Functions	S/hr	hr/wk	\$/wk
Food preparation	3.57	18.13	71.97
Cleaning	2.86	8.58	24.53
Child care	2.94	6.12	17.99
Repairs & maintenance	3.98	2.30	9.15
Marketing & household management	5.08	6.96	35.35
Physical child care	3.07	4.36	13.38
Tutorial child care	6.57	1.57	10.31
Other child care	.58	4.64	4.64
	49.00	187.32	
Annual value			\$187.32 x 52 wks = \$9,742.64
Average hourly value			\$9,742.64 / 49 hrs x 52 wks = \$2548 hrs = \$3.82

The Minimum Wage vs the Manpower Domestic Contract

Most domestics are in Canada on work permits issued by the Canada Employment and Immigration Centre (CEIC). CEIC has a form titled, "Offer of Employment", which lists the details of the employment offered (ie, number of hours duties, pay rate etc.) This form is signed only by the employer and the Immigration officer. As such it is called a "pseudo-legal" document by CEIC, since to be "legal" it would have to be signed by the employer and the prospective employee. Often the domestic mistakenly thinks she is covered by a legal contract, only to discover that she is at the mercy of her employer.

A comparison between the average wage received by a domestic worker in Ontario as suggested by CEIC, and the wage she is entitled to under the Employment Standards Act demonstrates the super-exploitation of domestic workers. In the CEIC contract a domestic worker is paid an average of \$270 per month for a total of 192 hours of work. That is 2 hours a day, 6 days a week. This includes room and board.

Under the Employment Standards Act a worker is entitled to a minimum of \$3.00 an hour. The working week is presently 44 hours up to a maximum of

48 hours, but those 4 extra hours must be paid time and a half. No such time and a half exists in the Manpower contract for domestics.

If, then, an individual works 8 hours a day, 6 days a week his/her monthly wage would be \$624.00. The Employment Standards Act also allows a maximum rate for room and board of \$35.00/week for a monthly total of \$140.00. If the room and board were subtracted from the monthly rate of \$624.00, the total monthly rate for a domestic, if included under the Employment Standards Act, would be \$484.00.

In comparing the wage of a domestic worker to that of a worker covered by the Employment Standards Act there is a difference of \$214.00. This is a difference practically equal to the monthly wage itself! It is incredible that the Employment and Immigration Centre would encourage employers to pay a wage so far below the standards of ESA. It is even more incredible that they would deceive immigrant women workers by using this "pseudo-legal" contract. Since the contract is not binding, an employer is free to pay even less -- and usually does.

Employment Standards Act _ minimum wage CEIC "pseudo-legal" contract	Monthly Wage + Room & Board	Net Wages per Month	Difference in Salaries
\$624.00	\$484.00	\$214.00	
\$470.00 + \$140 for room and board	\$624.00	\$770.00	

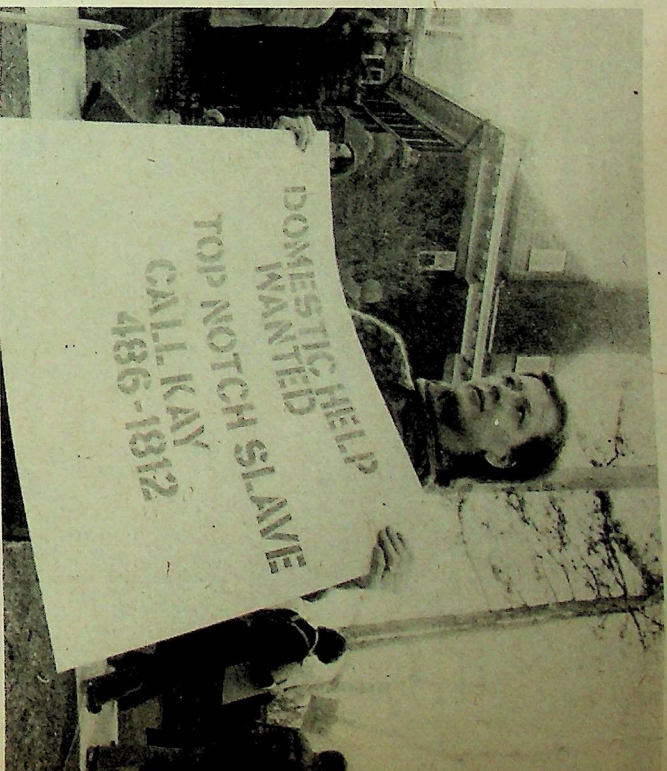
A Word From Bob Mackenzie, MPP

What is the government doing about the domestic labour problem? A concerned MPP, Mr. Bob Mackenzie for Hamilton East is doing all he can as the Labour Critic for his NDP party. Mr. Mackenzie admits that new issues move slowly in the House, especially if it is not considered an important one. To make the government and the public aware of the problem is the first step which must be taken. He is very much aware and concerned with the problem which he believes thousands share in Ontario alone.

"Domestics are in an unenviable position as they are usually not Canadian citizens, but immigrants on work visas and are dependent totally on the fam-

ily they're living with. As immigrants, the lowest on scale of labour, they tend to have no political clout."

Mr. Brian Charlton an NDP minister for Hamilton Mountain introduced a Private Member's Bill on the 11th of October. It was not passed, domestics were not put under the Employment Standards Act which would have entitled them to minimum labour rights. Mr. Mackenzie's greatest concern now is to make the public and government aware of the existing problems which domesticalabourers share, and to continue to work inside the Legislature in order to include the domestic under the Employment Standards Act as soon as possible.



Mariana Tenenbaum, founder of Ontario's Labour Rights for Domestic Servants, leads demonstration in front of the home of her former Forest Hill employer. The group is circulating a petition demanding that domestics be covered by the Ontario Employment Standards Act. For more information, contact Labour Rights for Domestic Servants, 82 Warren Road, Apt. 704, Toronto M4W 2R7. Telephone (416) 961-0386.

YOUR SUPPORT SAVES E.S.I.W.

By Anna Menozzi, co-ordinator of Employment Services for Immigrant Women

Employment Services for Immigrant Women is a non-profit organization designed to meet the needs of immigrant women of the Chinese, Italian, Spanish, and West Indian origins in the Canadian job market.

We offer the following services on an individual basis: job placement and referral, job orientation counselling, job search counselling and referral services. We also provide information and translation, escorting, advocacy, and interpreter services connected with employment, UIC and Welfare matters.

We opened our doors in Feb. 1978 with a federal grant from Canada Works which was renewed after our first year of operation.

Last July, however, ESIM faced a major funding crisis: we were scheduled to close down at the end of the month if no new grant came through. We had appealed to over 20 public and private funding agencies with no success. We were left with no choice but to appeal directly to the community, politicians and the media for support.

And the support came! We received dozens of letters; many community leaders lobbied Ottawa on our behalf, and the Toronto Star came out editorially for our survival. After three weeks we received interim funding from the "Grant to Voluntary Organization Program", Employment and Immigration, Canada. This funding will last until the end of March 1980, but we have more good news:

On Friday September 28th, we met with the Minister Ron Atkey to discuss permanent funding by the Outreach Program of Employment and Immigration, Canada. The Minister congratulated us on the efficiency of our service saying that he had heard many good reports on ESIM. He acknowledged that we fit the Outreach criteria and that is the logical source of funding for us. He assured us he personally will do everything in his power to see that permanent funding is arranged for us. We consider the meeting with Ron Atkey very productive and a product of the enormous public support we received last summer.

A heartfelt thank you to all those who supported us! With your continued backing we are certain that we will remain open to serve immigrant women in Toronto.

For further information call (416) 922-8017.

CAMPAGN ADDRESSSES

- In Canada
- Toronto: WFH Committee P.O. Box 38, Str. E M6H 4E1
- Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund (same)
- Winnipeg: WFH Committee c/o Women's Building 730 Alexander Avenue R3E 1H9
- Montreal: c/o Patrice Simister Degardeas 4111 Lavall Avenue H2M 2L4
- In the USA
- New York: Black Women for WFH P.O. Box 830 Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
- Philadelphia: WFH Action Group 4736 Hazel Avenue, Apt. 28 Philadelphia, Pa. 19143
- San Francisco: WFH Group Box 14512 San Francisco 94114
- Boston: WFH Committee P.O. Box 94 Brighton, Ma. 01235
- Chicago: c/o Linda Mack 333 N. Humphrey Chicago 60302
- In England
- London: WFH Committee c/o 74 Princess Road London NW6
- Bristol: Black Women for WFH 94 Richmond Road Montpellier, Bristol BS6 5EP
- In Jamaica
- c/o Joan French 17 Thant Crescent Bridgetown P.O. St. Catherine, Jamaica

This Bulletin is put out periodically by the Toronto Mages for Housework Committee. Please do not reprint any portion of the Bulletin without our permission. Mailing address: Box 38, Str. E., Toronto, Ont. Phone (416) 465-6822

Layout: Francie Wyland

Return to WFH
Box 38, Str. E.
Toronto, Ont. M6H 4E1

Wages for Housework and Welfare

OPEN TO ALL WOMEN

Panels
Speak out
Movies and songs
Food and child care provided

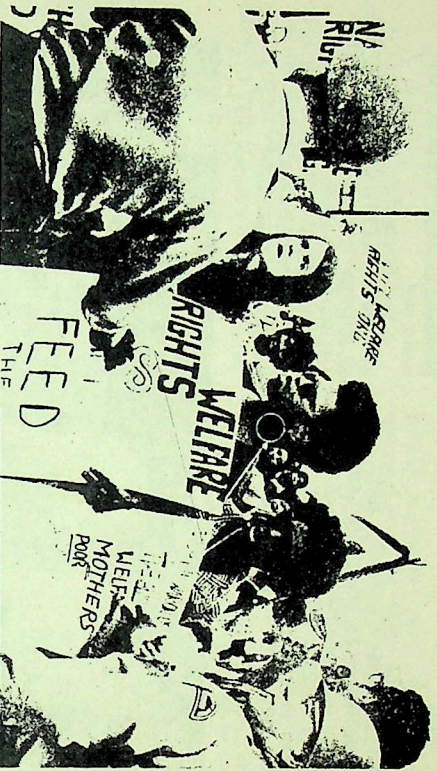
The Conference will be held at:
THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
50 Monroe Place (corner of Pierrepont)
Brooklyn, New York

Near Boro Hall Subways:

7th Ave. IRT to Clark St. stop
turn left on Clark to Monroe
then right to end of block

Lex. IRT to Boro Hall stop
walk north three short blocks to Pierrepont and left to Monroe Pl. 1 1/2 blocks

IND to Jay St. stop
turn left on Jay St. to Tillary
turn left on Tillary to Cadman Plaza West
turn right on Cadman Plaza West to Monroe Pl. and walk left to end of block



WELFARE IS THE FIRST MONEY WE WOMEN HAVE WON DIRECTLY FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE WORK WE DO IN OUR HOMES.

IT IS NOT MUCH AND IT HARDLY PAYS FOR ALL OUR WORK. BUT IT IS A START AND IT IS OUR MONEY.

MONEY WE DON'T HAVE TO ASK ANY MAN FOR.

To thousands of us it makes the difference between being able to keep our children or having to give them up for adoption, being able to walk out on an unwanted relationship or being forced to stay with a man, even if he beats us up, because we depend on his money; being able to spend time with our children, or go crazy trying to handle the housework and a second job; being able to get by or see our children and ourselves starve.

This is what the "welfare mess" is really about!

BUT WELFARE ISN'T ENOUGH! WE MUST MAKE THE GOVERNMENT PAY ALL OF US FOR ALL THE HOUSEWORK WE DO.

Married or not, native or immigrant, with or without children, lesbian or straight, young or old, with or without a second job.

The unpaid work we all do in our homes, every day of the year, is the source of our weakness at every stage of our lives, wherever we are: at home and on the second job, in the hospitals and at the supermarkets, in the courts and at the welfare office.

AS LONG AS HOUSEWORK IS NOT CONSIDERED WORK:

We pay a heavy price for the little we get from welfare
Our lives are investigated as if we had committed a crime
They call us "bums" and "parasites" to divide us from other women
We women are pitted against one another as if our problems and our work were not the same



BUT WE REFUSE TO BE DIVIDED ANY LONGER
The attack on welfare women is an attack on all women:
To keep us in line
To keep us all working for nothing
To convince us that housework is not work, that we should not be paid for it, that we should do it for "love."
BUT LOVE DOESN'T PAY OUR BILLS
This is why we fought so hard for welfare and THIS IS WHY WE ARE CALLING THIS CONFERENCE, to break our isolation, to unite the power of our struggles and organize
TO RESIST THE WELFARE CUTS TO RESIST THE CRISIS TO WIN WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR ALL WOMEN

UNITED WE CAN WIN WHAT IS OURS BECAUSE THERE ARE MILLIONS OF US WHO ARE SAYING NO MORE WORK FOR NOTHING!

We have been divided in the past, welfare women versus women, "supported" by a man versus "working" women. But we know we can't afford these divisions because it means scabbing on ourselves. The struggle of welfare mothers has given power to all women because it has opened the way for all of us to demand that housework be paid. And this time, WITH THE POWER OF OUR NUMBERS, WE WILL WIN A WAGE and not a pittance that can always be taken away from us as if it were a charity.



WE ARE ALL WELFARE MOTHERS
Not only because thousands of us ARE A HUSBAND AWAY FROM WELFARE but because:

We are all made to feel guilty for the money we receive whether we get it from a man or from the government. We must be "grateful." Keep busting around to show "we deserve it," and there is always somebody controlling how we spend it, in case we should "waste it" on ourselves. In the meantime the government makes billions off our work because we raise all the workers of the world for them—so many for their factories and armies, so many for their typing pools and kitchens, and so many who will never get a paying job because having unpaid workers around keeps everybody else in line.

We are all forced into low paying jobs where we end up doing more housework—nursing, cleaning hotel rooms and hospital wards, waitressing and mothering everybody—and we are forced to accept low wages because the alternative is working at home for nothing at all.

We all face sterilization because even if our tubes are not cut, none of us can afford to have the children we want and pay the price in work, isolation and dependence that comes with them.

And we all want LESS WORK, MORE MONEY AND MORE TIME FOR OURSELVES TO DECIDE WHAT WE WANT TO DO WITH OUR LIVES.

FOR EVERY WOMAN WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK MEANS

LESS DEPENDENCE

MORE POWER

MORE CHOICES IN OUR LIVES.

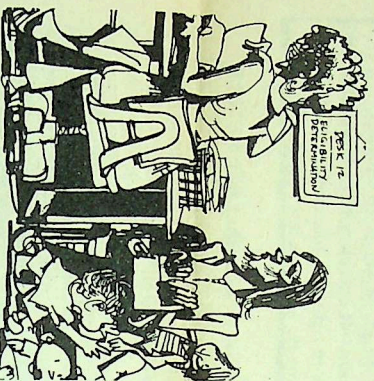
Come to discuss how to organize to resist the welfare cuts and demand WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR ALL WOMEN.

Some Facts about

WELFARE

The biggest lie is that welfare provides "income" to people who do not work. In reality 85% of welfare recipients are unsupported mothers, who have a *full-time job at home* raising the kids, keeping the house running, and trying to make ends meet on a welfare budget.

To get on welfare is itself an endless job. We wait long hours in welfare offices, wait for letters that never arrive, go back and forth because we "don't have the right documents." We are screened in "face to face" interviews with social workers. They want to discourage us from getting what we are entitled to. They figure that if they keep us waiting long enough we will die before we can collect.

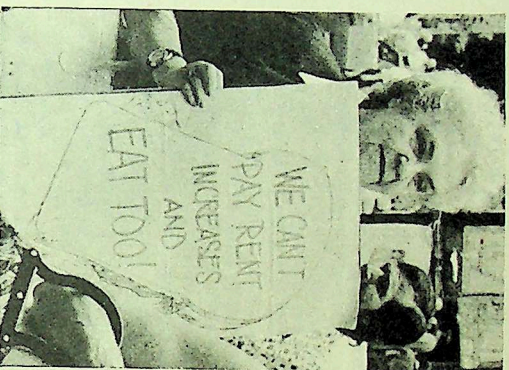


In case we women might have it too easy, when our children are six, they put us on WIN "to work our way off the rolls." But this is just another way of punishing us, because housework does not disappear when our children grow up, and at best we are channeled in to the *hardest, most unsafe and lowest paid jobs* around—jobs everybody else has refused.

Since January, '75, the disabled and the senior citizens who don't have Social Security qualify for SSI, which is still welfare, but with a different name and LESS MONEY (eg, you don't get Food Stamps). The majority of SSI recipients are once again women, who don't get Social Security because they "never worked," they "just did housework" all their lives and "keep doing it until they die."

There is no national standard for Welfare. The excuse is that it is adjusted to the cost of living in every state. This actually means that it must be lower than the minimum wage, as a *discipline on any worker who wants to leave a low-paying job, and as a discipline on welfare recipients who have to accept any job*, under the threat of being cut from the rolls.

In New York City—which has the highest national standards—a woman with three children gets a *maximum* of \$394.00 a month for every need the family has: food, rent, clothing, transportation. A woman on SSI is expected to survive on \$216.00 a month.



Both Welfare and SSI recipients qualify for Medicaid and for Community Services. Both of these programs are further ways of controlling us and making profits even on the pittance they give us. MEDICAID HAS MADE BILLIONS FOR DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS, while we had to fight to fill out mountains of paperwork to get a pair of glasses or a blood test. As for Community Services, the key one is FAMILY PLANNING, that is, PLANNED STERILIZATION OF WELFARE MOTHERS who are not supposed to bring undesirable children into the world. MOTHERHOOD IN THIS SOCIETY IS SACRED ONLY WHEN THERE IS A MAN'S PAY-CHECK BEHIND IT.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO USE WELFARE TO DISCIPLINE EVERY WORKER AND PUT US ALL AGAINST EACH OTHER. They have labelled us "chiselers" and "cheats" to convince other workers that any job at any wage is better than a welfare check. Being on welfare, we are told, means living off other people's work.

The truth is that they have used welfare recipients to keep wages down by forcing us women to take any jobs other workers are refusing, and by keeping the man on the run so they would be "free" to go to any place where cheap labor was needed. This is what the "no man in the house" rule was really about. But their plans have backfired. Now the government is afraid that without a male authority in the house we are becoming too undisciplined and they are offering "bonuses" to turn the men in.

They want us to be ashamed for getting this money, as if it were charity, and they have tried to control, check and investigate how we spend it. But our struggle has forced them to loosen the purse strings and repeal their regulations. WITH MORE MONEY IN OUR HANDS WE HAVE REFUSED THE BLACKMAIL OF THE SECOND JOB THAT DOESN'T EVEN PAY ENOUGH TO GET US TO WORK. WE HAVE SHOWN TO EVERY WORKER THAT ONLY THE STRUGGLE PAYS!

They've tried to divide us from other women, picturing us as lazy and immoral. Instead, our struggle has made it visible to millions of women that HOUSEWORK, UNPAID WORK, IS OUR COMMON PROBLEM. It has opened the way for all of us to DEMAND WAGES FROM THE GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY FOR RAISING OUR CHILDREN BUT FOR ALL THE HOUSEWORK WE DO AND FOR ALL OF US.

We women are not fooled any longer. We know they praise our virtues only to control our slavery, and we are all rebelling against our work.

IT IS BECAUSE WE WOMEN ARE FIGHTING BACK THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CRACKING DOWN ON US. THE PRESENT ATTACK ON WELFARE WOMEN IS ONLY PART OF A GENERAL ATTACK ON ALL WOMEN TO PUT US BACK IN LINE.

What are we guilty of? We have cut down on the number of children we have because every child is more work for us.

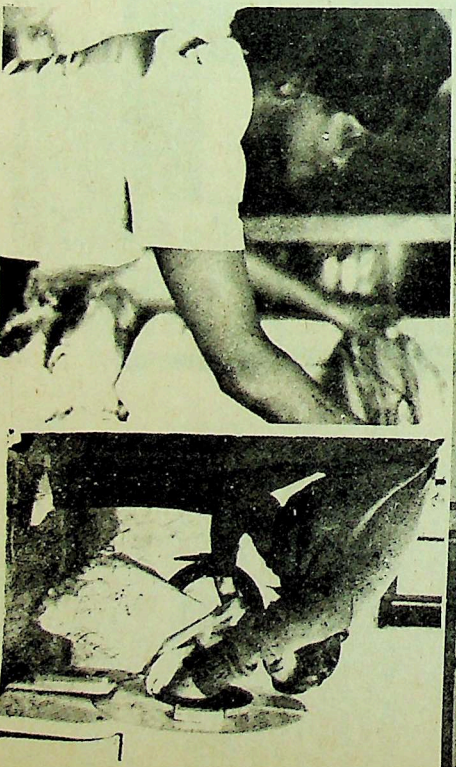
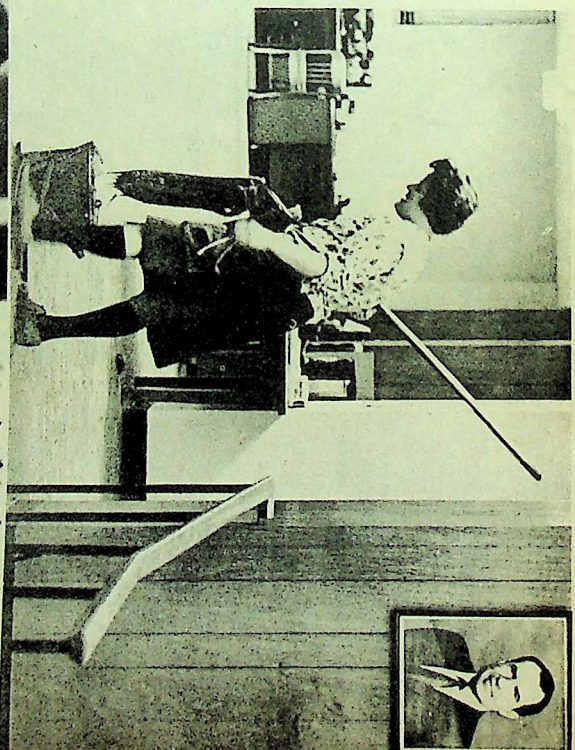
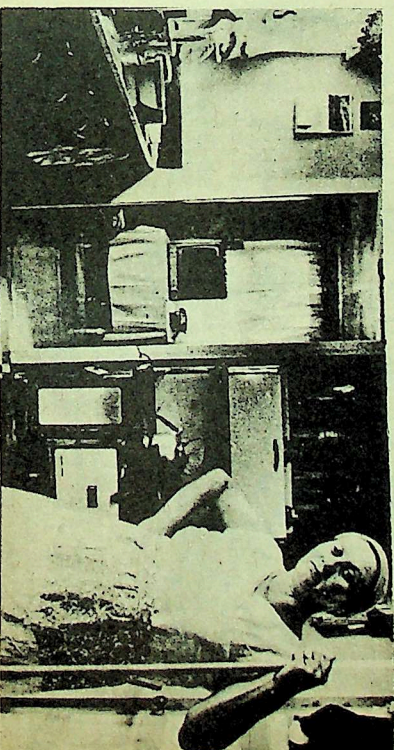
We have run away from our homes because our isolation and dependency in the family was choking us.

We have taught our children to fight back and expect more from life than an assembly line or a kitchen sink.

We have pushed for higher wages on the second job and refused the jobs they were forcing on us.

We have refused the blackmail of "Love." Nurses have walked off of hospital wards; Secretaries have refused to make coffee for their bosses and smile on command; Teachers have fought for shorter hours; Prostitutes are organizing all over the world; but

Worst of all crimes WE HAVE STARTED DEMANDING TO BE PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE WORK WE DO IN THE HOME. WE HAVE SAID: LOVE DOESN'T PAY THE BILLS. WE WANT WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK; AND IF WE DON'T GET IT WE WILL REFUSE TO WORK ANY LONGER.



THIS IS WHAT THEIR CRISIS IS ALL ABOUT

TO MAKE US WOMEN PAY FOR WHAT WE HAVE GAINED. BUT WE ARE SAYING NO!

NO TO THE WELFARE CUTS. NO TO THE CUTS IN MEDICAID AND FOOD STAMPS. NO TO THE LAY-OFFS AND CUTS IN SOCIAL SERVICES WHICH MEAN LESS MONEY AND MORE WORK FOR US. WE ALL NEED MORE MONEY NOT MORE WORK!

As usual in an election year, what they call "the welfare mess" is a political football, with politicians competing to show how tough they can be in cracking down on welfare "cheats." Reagan claims there's a "welfare queen" in Chicago who makes \$150,000 a year tax-free; so Ford proposes to cut 5 million people off of food stamps.

THEY BLAME WELFARE MOTHERS FOR USING UP THE MONEY. But when city services, daycare centers, hospitals are shut down, TODAY'S "WORKING" MOTHER, being the last hired and the first fired, IS TOMORROW'S WELFARE MOTHER.

THE CITY, THE STATE AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT KEEP PASSING THE BUCK BACK AND FORTH TO EACH OTHER. BUT THEY NEVER PASS THE BUCK TO US. The state audits the city's books and the federal government audits both. They charge each other with inefficiency and making overpayments, and each threatens to withhold its share of the welfare payments from the others, while they all withhold them from us.

THEY RECOMMEND THAT MORE MILLIONS BE SPENT TO DETECT FRAUD, WHILE MORE MILLIONS ARE TAKEN OUT OF OUR HANDS. They want to computerize the whole welfare system so that we will be up against the machine with less of a chance of getting what we need. That would also save them the cost of paying social workers, who like us will find themselves on welfare.

CUTS IN THE FUNDS FOR DAYCARE PROGRAMS ARE FORCING MORE AND MORE WOMEN OUT OF PAYING JOBS AND ONTO WELFARE. This saves the companies the trouble of laying women off. The closing of daycare centers guarantees that we women will be forced to go back home and stay there. In the daycare centers themselves our children are being tested and screened for "criminal tendencies," and the government is starting to keep files on them from childhood.

CUTS IN PROGRAMS FOR THE DISABLED AND ELDERLY MEAN NOT ONLY THAT DISABLED AND ELDERLY WOMEN ARE WITHOUT PROPER MEDICAL CARE AND LIVING EXPENSES, BUT THAT THEIR WOMEN RELATIVES HAVE MORE WORK TO DO TO CARE FOR THEM AT HOME. When Governor Carey calls for "local care of the retarded and unruled" he means not only that women are expected to take care of their disabled relatives at home, but that we must volunteer our time to work in community centers that will otherwise be closed down due to budget cuts.

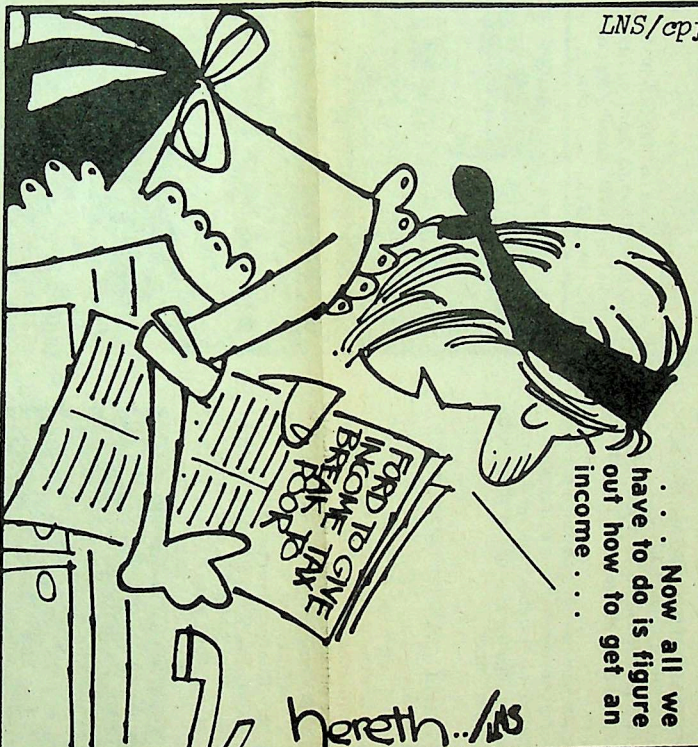
Ford's proposed cuts in the Food Stamp program would go into effect by June—just in time for the presidential conventions—cutting more than 5 million people out of the program.

THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS ALREADY TAKEN AWAY OVER \$100 MILLION THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE USED TO PROVIDE MILK AND HIGH PROTEIN FOOD FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, NURSING MOTHERS, AND INFANTS. THIS MEANS STARVATION FOR MANY OF US, WHO WITHOUT FOOD STAMPS CANNOT EAT AT ALL. AND FOR ALL OF US IN TRYING TO FEED OUR CHILDREN AND OURSELVES. Already in North Carolina a child has been reported to have kwa shiorkor, a malnutrition disease commonly found in underdeveloped countries! But North Carolina is in the USA, supposedly the richest country in the world.

They are cutting Medicaid funds to us when they know it's the labs and the doctors who are ripping off millions of dollars from the government for medical care they don't even provide. Again, with less money for medical care mothers must double as nurses and doctors at home.

ALL THESE CUTS WILL DRIVE MORE OF US TO SELLING OUR BODIES ON THE STREETS IN ORDER TO GET MONEY TO FEED AND CLOTHE OUR CHILDREN AND OURSELVES AND TO PAY THE RENT. BECAUSE IN SOME WAYS IT'S LESS PAINFUL TO TURN A FEW TRICKS AT NIGHT THAN TO HASSLE AT THE WELFARE OFFICE ALL DAY, OR RUN ALL OVER THE PLACE TRYING TO MAKE ENDS MEET THAT WILL NEVER MEET. We know that the slots they divide welfare money into are phoney—like taking money out of one pocket and putting it in the other. ADC, FOOD STAMPS, MEDICAID, AND SSI ARE ALL ABOUT THE SAME THING: THE LITTLE GIRL WHO GROWS UP ON ADC EATING FOOD BOUGHT WITH FOOD STAMPS AND SEEING DOCTORS THROUGH MEDICAID EVENTUALLY BECOMES THE ADC MOTHER WITH HER OWN CHILDREN TO TAKE CARE OF AND EVENTUALLY BECOMES THE OLD WOMAN LIVING ON SSI.

Now all we have to do is figure out how to get an income . . .



The government already recognizes that children don't live on love alone. It gives money to Foster Parents (from a minimum of \$150 to \$204 a month per child depending on age + medical bills and clothing). But when it comes to our own children we are expected to do the same work for nothing. Do they want to force us to swap our children so that we can afford to live?

"... while one of every three mothers with preschool children holds down a job, there is room for only 900,000 of their six million children in licensed child care centers." NYT—Tues., 1/13/76, p. 22

"Are we to be penalized for living? Eva King of New Brunswick, a 77-year-old nurse, asked as the committee began public hearings on the proposed state budget cuts." NYT—Wed., 2/18/76, p. 41

"According to the dictionary, the word 'welfare' means a condition of 'health, happiness and prosperity.'" NYT—Sun., 1/18/76, p. 35

Recently in the USA, the courts have assigned large sums of money to husbands whose wives were severely injured to pay for "lack of services." But do we have to be run over by a car to see our work recognized or paid? And why does this money go to the man and never to us anyway?

"The subcommittee staff found that . . . any medical testing laboratory which is so inclined can bill Medicaid for a patient a doctor has never seen, for blood never drawn, for tests never performed, at a rate exceeding four times cost and twice the prevailing charge for private paying patients, with a nearly absolute assurance that they will not be caught and prosecuted." NYT—Thurs., 2/19/76, p. 31

We know that all her life she never has enough, because all our lives we never have enough. We know that the welfare mother in the WIN program, no matter what kind of training she gets—if she gets any—never really gets a paying job because there is no daycare center that she can trust to take care of her children, and because finally there is no paying job for her. So when they talk about cutting back ADC, SSI, and all the other programs they are really talking about cutting our lives and the lives of our families into little pieces.

WE REFUSE. THEY HAVE THE MONEY, AND WE WANT IT. We won't accept their taking from our old parents on SSI to give to our children on ADC. We won't accept their taking away our food stamps while giving us money on Medicaid to be sterilized.

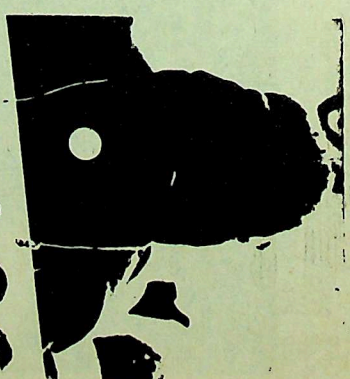
We refuse to "go back home" without some money in our hands. And we won't be forced to compete with thousands of other women—our sisters, daughters and mothers—for the few low-paying jobs around, when all of us have already a full-time job at home we are not being paid for.

WE WANT BACK WHAT IS OURS.

AND FIRST OF ALL WE WANT WAGES FOR ALL THE WORK WE ALREADY DO.

WE WANT WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK FROM THE GOVERNMENT NOW FOR ALL WOMEN

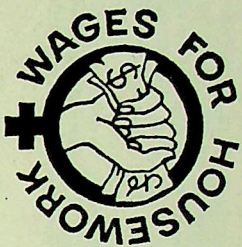
BACK PAY FOR OLDER WOMEN WHO HAVE WORKED ALL THEIR LIVES FOR NOTHING SO THAT THEY CAN LIVE OUT THEIR DAYS IN DIGNITY.



WAGES



HOUSEWORK



Salario por el Trabajo del Hogar y Welfare

EL WELFARE ES EL PRIMER DINERO QUE NOSOTRAS LAS MUJERES HE-MOS GANADO DIRECTAMENTE DEL GOBIERNO POR EL TRABAJO QUE HACEMOS EN LA CASA. NO ES MU-CHO DINERO Y APENAS NOS PAGA TODO NUESTRO TRABAJO. PERO ES UN COMIENZO Y ES NUESTRO DI-NERO - DINERO QUE NO NECESI-TAMOS PEDIRLE A NINGUN HOMBRE.

Para miles de nosotras es la diferencia entre tener nuestros hijos con nosotras en vez de tener que dejarlos que sean adoptados:

—el poder de dejar una relacion con un hombre que no podemos tolerar más en vez de ser forzada estar con el hasta cu-ando nos abusa, porque dependemos de 'su' dinero;

—es el poder de pasar un poco de tiempo con nuestros hijos gozándolos en lugar de volver loca tratando de hacer el traba-jo domestico y un segundo trabajo tambie-n; —es el poder de "sobrevivir" en lugar de ver a nosotras y a nuestros hijos morirse del hambre.

De esto es que trata el llamado "escanda-lo del Welfare":

PERO WELFARE NO ES SUFICIENTE!

TENEMOS QUE HACER QUE EL GO-BIERNO NOS PAGUE POR TODO EL TRABAJO QUE HACEMOS EN EL HO-GAR: Casadas o solteras, nativas o inmi-grantes, con o sin hijos, lesbiana o no, con o sin un segundo trabajo.

El trabajo sin pago que hacemos todos los días del año es la raíz de nuestra de-bilidad durante todas las etapas de nues-tra vida, dondequiera estemos: en el ho-gar, en el hospital y en el mercado, en la corte y en la oficina del Welfare.

MIENTRAS EL TRABAJO DOMESTICO NO SE CONSIDERE TRABAJO: Pagamos caro por lo poco que recibimos del Welfare.

Investigan nuestras vidas como si hubie-ramos cometido un delito. Nos llaman "mendigas" y "parásitas" para dividirnos de otras mujeres, como si nuestro problema y nuestro trabajo no fuera el mismo.

PERO NOSOTRAS NEGAMOS A SE-GUIR SIENDO DIVIDIDAS.

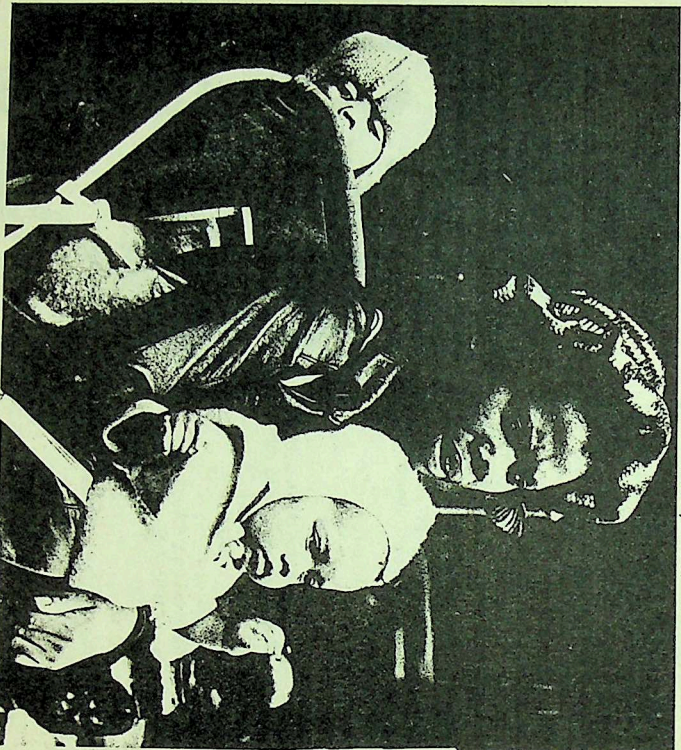
El ataque hacia las mujeres que reciben Welfare es un ataque hacia todas las mu- jeres:

—para mantenernos trabajando por nada —para convencernos que el trabajo do-mestico no es trabajo, que no debemos recibir pago por el, y que lo debemos ha-cer por "amor".

PERO EL AMOR NO PAGA LAS DE-UDAS.

Por eso es que peleamos tanto por la a-sistencia publica y *por eso estamos llamando esta conferencia*, para unir el poder de nuestra lucha y organizamo.

PARA RESISTIR LOS CORTES EN WELFARE PARA GANAR UN SALARIO POR EL TRABAJO DEL HOGAR DEL GOBIERNO PARA TODAS LAS MUJERES.



THE NEW YORK WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE

We have opened OUR CAMPAIGN OFFICE in a storefront located at

288-B 8th STREET (off 5th AVENUE) IN BROOKLYN

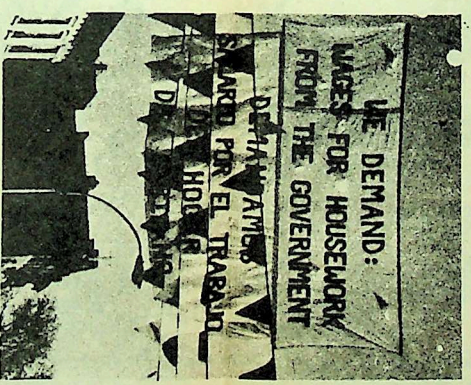
Open WEDNESDAYS and SATURDAYS 11am. to 4pm. Phone us at: 965 - 4112 We have discussion groups, video tapes, cassettes, literature, speakers available to talk with your group. (Non-office hours call: 788 - 2822)

First Unitarian Church
50 Monroe Pl. (esquina de "Pierrepont St.")
Brooklyn, New York

Boro Hall Subterraneo:
7th Ave. IRT a la parada "Clark St."
Haga una izquierda en "Clark St." hasta "Monroe Pl.", entonces haga una derecha hasta el final de la cuadra.

Lex. IRT a la parada "Boro Hall"
Camine hacia el norte tres cortas cuadas a "Pierrepont St.", donde hara una izquierda hasta "Monroe Pl." 1½ cuadas.

IND a la parada "Jay St."
Haga una izquierda en "Jay St." hasta "Tillary St." Haga una izquierda hasta "Cadman Plaza West" donde hara otra izquierda hasta el final de la cuadra.



UNIDAS PODEMOS GANAR LO QUE ES NUESTRO. PORQUE SOMOS MIL-LONES DE NOSOTRAS QUE ESTAMOS DICRIENDO QUE NO TRABAJAREMOS POR NADA.

Hemos sido divididas en el pasado—mu-jeres que reciben Welfare en contra de las mujeres que son "mantenidas" por un hombre; en contra de las mujeres "que trabajan". Pero sabemos que no podemos permitir que se continúe esta división por-que significa una tracción hacia nosotras mismas.

La lucha de las madres que reciben Wel-fare nos has dado poder a todas las mu- jeres porque nos ha abierto el camino a todas para poder demandar salario por el trabajo domestico.

ESTA VEZ CON EL PODER QUE HE-MOS ADQUIRIDO POR NUESTRA CANTIDAD, POREMOS EXIGIR UN SALARIO Y NO UNA MISERIA QUE EN CUALQUIER MOMENTO NOS PU- EDEN QUITAR COMO SI FUERA CA-RIDAD.

ABIERTO A TODAS LAS MUJERES

Vengan a hablar de como nos podemos organizar para resistir los cortes del Welfare y EXIGIR DEL GOBIERNO SALARIO POR EL TRABAJO DOMESTICO PARA TODAS LAS MUJERES.

Paneles de discusión
"Speak-Out"
Películas, canciones
Bocadillos y Cuido de los niños gratis

SOMOS TODAS MADRES DE WEL-FARE—no solamente porque miles de no-sotras tenemos solo "un esposo" entre nosotras y Welfare pero porque:

Todas nos sentimos culpables por e dinero que recibimos, sea del hombre o del go-bierno. Tenemos que ser "agradecidas" mantenernos ocupadas para demostrar que lo "merecemos" y siempre hay alguien controlando como lo gastamos, en caso que lo vayamos a "mal gastar" en nosotras mismas.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno hace millones de dolares derivado de nuestro trabajo, *porque nosotras criamos y levantamos todos los trabajadores del mundo para ellos*—tantos para sus factorias y ejercitos, tantos para sus minas, hospitales, grupos de mecanografías, y cocinas; tantos que nunca tendrán trabajos pagados porque teniendo trabajadores sin pago mantiene a los otros "en línea".

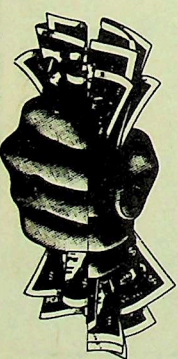
Estamos obligadas a aceptar trabajos de poca paga donde tenemos que hacer más trabajo domestico—enfermería, limpiando cuartos de hoteles y hospital, mecano-grafía, trabajo de meseras y tutelando a todos—y nos obligan a aceptar poca paga porque la alternativa es quedarse en casa trabajando por nada.

Todas confrontamos la esterilización por-que aunque no nos amarraren los tubos, ninguna puede, por problemas económi-cos, tener los hijos que quiere y pagar el precio en trabajo, soltedad, y la depende-ncia que lo acompaña.

TODAS QUEREMOS MENOS TRABA- JO, MAS DINERO, Y MAS TIEMPO PA- RA NOSOTRAS PODER DECIDIR LO QUE QUEREMOS HACER CON NUE- STRAS VIDAS.

PARA TODAS LAS MUJERES, EL SA-LARIO POR EL TRABAJO DOMESTICO QUIERE DECIR:

- MENOS DEPENDENCIA
- MAS PODER
- MAS POSIBILIDADES EN NUE-STRAS VIDAS



SPECIAL
INSERT
ON DOMESTICS

Leges for Housework

Campaign Bulletin



Toronto, Canada

vol. 5 no. 1 Spring 1981

DIVORCE CANADA~STYLE

"We're not going to change the status of women in Canada until we transfer the wealth, and one of the best ways of transferring property now is through divorce."

— Deborah Acheson,
B.C. Lawyer

Last year in Ontario there were 20,000 divorces. One in every four Canadian marriages now ends in separation, and the rate is climbing. An event that was once an isolated scandal is today a mass phenomenon. What happens to women in divorce courts is therefore a more and more reliable indicator of our status everywhere in Canadian society. And on balance, the news from court is very good.

Women in Quebec have had equal property rights for many years. Until 1978, however, women elsewhere in Canada were at the mercy of laws that protected men as the "breadwinners" and penalized women as dependent "non-contributors." When it came to the division of property and money, Assets which piled up under the man's name during a marriage -- real estate, company shares, retirement savings plans, etc. -- were almost always considered his alone. Out of this stockpile he would usually be ordered to pay alimony and child support, while it was an open secret that between 70 and 80% of men defaulted on these payments. (By 1980 divorced men owed their ex-wives \$32 million in Ontario alone, and the figure grows daily.) In short, as one judge described the pre-1978 state of affairs, "the view was that on marriage man and woman are one and that one is the man."

The case of an Alberta farm wife named Irene Murdoch was at once a prime example of the immense injustice of these laws and the spur to women's groups and progressive lawyers to win an overhaul of family law legislation from coast to coast. Mrs. Murdoch worked with her husband on their ranch for 25 years, helping him save the money that he spent on accumulating and improving more land. When she left -- after he broke her jaw in three places -- she started an eight-year legal battle for her rightful share of the ranch. The culmination was a Supreme Court of Canada decision in 1973 denying Mrs. Murdoch any claim to the property, because she had made no direct contribution to its purchase. Instead, she was awarded a \$65,000 lump sum, almost all of which she owed already in legal costs. Mrs. Murdoch is now living close to the poverty line while her ex-husband negotiates the sale of a one-quarter portion of "his" land for \$95,000.

On April 1, 1978 Judy Lamarch called Ontario's brand new family law Reform Act (FLRA) "the dawn of a bright new day." And although there have been some setbacks since then, we know now that she was right. The FLRA's guidelines for the division of property are based on the idea that marriage is an "economic partnership" to which women often make their contribution in unpaid labor rather than in money. The two jobs of earning family income and running the house are seen as the joint responsibility of both husband and wife. So, if the woman takes on the role of full-time housewife and mother she is understood to be freeing her husband from *his* home responsibilities, allowing him to concentrate on making money. The new law aims to ensure that no financial disadvantage is attached to either role; the wife who stays at home is entitled to share in the property that her work has enabled her husband to acquire.

Every province but New Brunswick and Nova Scotia has since enacted a similar new regime, putting us far ahead of the United States and most other parts of the world. The principle of "economic partnership" sounds almost too good to be true, however, and indeed Ontario law-makers went on to muddy the waters with an arbitrary division of total family property into two categories:

"Family" assets are defined as any property used for family purposes -- house, cars, furniture, cottage, and housekeeping and bill-paying bank accounts. They will be divided fifty-fifty, unless the judge feels that it's not fair.

"Non-family" assets are any money (eg. registered retirement savings plans), businesses or property (including houses intended for family use after retirement in the future) that has not been used by the family. In order to win a share of

her husband's "non-family" assets, a woman must show that her work or money contributed to their accumulation. Or, a judge may award her a cut if he feels the "family" assets she's been awarded aren't sufficient.

The problem for women, of course, is that in cases where there is money to fight for, it's almost always a "non-family" asset and therefore more or less out of reach -- particularly for full-time housewives -- unless a judge leans toward enforcing the intention of the FLRA instead of its letter.



Rosa Becker

Harold Rosenberg, Macleans

Let's look at recent decisions:

In August 1978 the Ontario Supreme Court awarded Mildred Bregman, 54, half of both the "family" and "non-family" assets in recognition of her household work during the 30-year marriage. Justice David Henry said:

"I am in no doubt that her work left her husband physically, intellectually and mentally free to concentrate as much as he required on earning money and acquiring and managing his non-family assets.... In my opinion the Family Law Reform Act imparts a new concept into family law that recognizes the importance of the traditional role of a wife and mother in the financial success that her husband achieves."

Mrs. Bregman added, "I think this recognition is long overdue."

One year later the same court made the first unequal division of "family" assets, in favor of Muriel O'Reilly. The judge awarded her more than half because while running the household she also worked as a legal secretary for 16 of the 28 years she was married. Afterward, her lawyer commented, "A fifty-fifty split would not have been equitable because Mrs. O'Reilly had two full-time jobs."

1981 is the year of Rosa Becker, whose fighting spirit took her all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. She lived in a common-law relationship with Luther Petkus for 19 years, paying their expenses out of her wages while Mr. Petkus invested his in land and a bookkeeping business. Rosa worked shoulder to shoulder with him, until his ill-treatment drove her to leave. He packed her off with \$3000, a 1966 Volkswagon, 40 beehives and bees, and told her to "get lost". Nine years later Supreme Court Justice Brian Dickson said:

"Mr. Petkus and Miss Becker lived as man and wife for almost twenty years.... There is no basis for any distinction in dividing property and assets, between marital relationships and those more informal relationships which endure for a lengthy period."

The court applied a special discretionary power in this case which had only been used before in disputes involving collapsed business partnerships. This principle is known as "constructive trust" and is applied to offset an enrichment by one at the expense of another. The Supreme Court underlined the "economic partnership" intent of the FLRA in extending fair business rules to Rosa Becker's case. Justice Dickson recognized that

"Mr. Petkus had the benefit of 19 years of unpaid labor, while Miss Becker has received little or nothing in return." She was awarded half the total accumulated assets, approximately \$150,000.

The new guarantee that "family" assets will be fairly divided is an enormous step forward for women. And the stated aim of family law reform to recognize the economic value of housework is a triumph. The distinction between "family" and "non-family" assets, however, and the vagueness in the law that allows judges to apply sections of the Act as they see fit have led to some very old-fashioned injustices:

* Last year the Ontario Supreme Court awarded Barbara Leatherdale half of the \$40,000 in Bell Canada shares held by her husband. She had managed the household, raised their son and pooled her earnings when she'd had a paying job. Although the stocks were in his name, the court awarded her half because "his financial ability to acquire them was assisted by his wife's efforts inside and outside the home." Eight months later the Court of Appeal decided to restore Mr. Leatherdale's "nestegg" because his wife's work did not have a "clear and direct connection" to the "non-family" assets. He winds up now with a \$33,000 salary, \$76,000 in assets and a \$21,000-a-year pension to look forward to. Mrs. Leatherdale has \$51,000 in assets (minus legal costs), a \$6350-a-year job, \$350-a-month in support and no pension at all.

* One BC judge decided that a marriage "should" last twenty-five years, so in the case of a 12-year marriage he only gave the wife a quarter of the "family" assets.

All of the women mentioned here were living with wealthy men. In most families there isn't enough money to finance a drawn-out court battle; 90% of marital property divisions are settled long before the final divorce hearing (which lasts an average seven minutes).

Because the largest asset at stake in most separations is the husband's salary or pension, most ex-wives can only fight for generous support payments. As we've seen, men already find it easy to move to another province or "forget" to write a monthly cheque -- and a progressive-sounding passage in the FLRA does not help. It directs the courts to order support in line with the obligation of both spouses to try to become self-supporting after divorce.

Consequently, support payments are becoming smaller and are of fixed, usually shorter duration. A man may be ordered to pay for only 3 months, or for five years -- however long the judge decides it will take for the wife to get on her feet. In the real world, however, the best job a woman can get will usually pay about half of what her husband makes. She will be supporting children on a wage that would fit into his shirt pocket.

Healthy women have begun to win legal recognition of the economic value of work in the home. That same recognition must now be brought to bear in the allocation of resources in the sub-millionaire divorce. Having written a new bill of divorce rights for ourselves, women from now

Continued on page 2

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About This Issue...

Last July the United Nations held its Decade for Women Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, to review the situation of women worldwide. One of its stated objectives was to measure the impact of "women's unpaid work in the home" and its many extensions in the subsistence economy and the world labor market. In its 1979 "State of the World's Women Report", the U.N. had underlined the fact that "the long busy hours spent in the home where the new generation of workers is produced, fed, clothed, and cared for are not quantified as work whether in the developed or developing countries." The results are measurable in dollars and cents though: "women receive one tenth of the world's income for two third of the world's work".

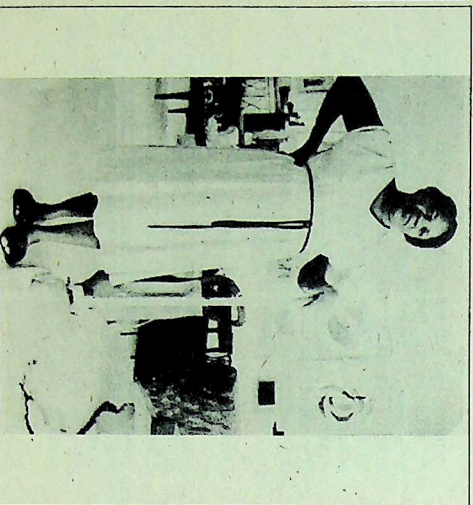
In this issue of the Bulletin we highlight two areas where women are struggling for the recognition of housework. Firstly we look at how the low status of housework affects women who do it for pay in other people's homes. We worked closely with members of INTERGE (International Coalition to End Domestic Exploitation) to prepare an international news roundup on domestic workers' struggles. And secondly we look at family law in Canada, a key area where the beneficial effects of recognizing women's work in the home are increasingly evident. These two fronts of women's struggle are especially significant because the former is the preserve of poor women, both in Canada and in Third World countries, while the latter concerns primarily women married to men of means. Both groups of women suffer economic discrimination to the degree that housework is still seen as a "private" and therefore "valueless" activity.

Judith Ramirez, a Canadian delegate to the U.N. Forum in Copenhagen summed it up on her return: "Unpaid housework was widely recognized as the single most important factor in keeping women poor and disenfranchised. I am more convinced than ever that the value of housework will be the issue of the 1980's".

Immigration: Reclaiming the Wealth

Many people fail to see the link between immigration and exploitation. Some who mean well get carried away by a nationalistic view which sees immigration as a purely negative factor. They feel that if immigrants stayed home, our poor Third World societies would explode all the sooner, forcing political solutions at home. The working-class women in the Third World has never been able to afford the luxury of such a theory. For her, immigration is often a matter of survival.

The majority of female immigrants are poor women from the Third World who have families to support. At home most of them have no jobs. Their only hope is to hustle on the street if they are lucky enough to find something to sell. The few who have jobs work in the homes of better-off women, or in garment factories, restaurants, etc. under slave conditions and for wages that can scarcely keep body and mind together.



There is, of course, another type of immigration where women figure prominently. They come to study or to work as teachers, nurses, etc. for better salaries than they would get at home. Numerically they represent a small part of total immigration. But they are here for the same reason as the poor working-class woman who comes to Canada to scrub floors, cook, look after children, or work in the sweat-shops and offices -- they are here because they too want a better deal.

The working-class women have as much right to be here as their better-off sisters. If anything, their needs are greater and their situation more crucial. They are the ones who in our home countries have suffered most from exploitation and underdevelopment. They are also the ones who are hardest hit by cutbacks in immigration. Figures indicate that the rate of decline for immigration from this sector is twice as high as it is for English-speaking Caribbean.

Divorce

Continued from page 1

on will be fighting to fill in the blanks in the Family Law Reform Act:

- * Now-empty support orders should be automatic orders to employers to deduct payments directly from husbands' paycheques. And these orders must not self-deduct at women's expense. Realistic assessments of women's financial prospects should be the basis of support conditions, not gift prescriptions for self-support that send most single mothers to the poverty line.

- * The distinction between "family" and "non-family" assets must be abolished. Louise Dulude, lawyer and consultant to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women has said:

"The exclusion of savings, investments, retirement savings plans, etc from the fifty-fifty sharing principle is a flagrant denial of the equality of the spouses in the marriage partnership."

And beyond the Family Law Reform Act:

- * Inheritance laws, which are still based on the husband's sole possession of assets, must be upgraded to match divorce legislation. In Ontario a man's property is divided according to his will, as long as the widow is not left "desitute". A Wisconsin farm wife who is working for inheritance law reform asks, "Why should I inherit what is already mine?"

Under laws governing private pension plans, divorced women are not now entitled to normal widows' benefits. The legislation should be changed to allow them to collect direct payments.

- * Women lawyers (including Linda Silver-Drangoff, Chantaline Colman) are proposing reform of the FLRA to make women full economic partners upon marriage. Since our labor in the home is of value,

In spite of these facts, there are a few people -- one or two immigrant women among them -- who suggest that the immigration of women to work as domestics should be stopped. The rationale is that the work is too degrading. But the fact is that most immigrants, especially black immigrants, work and live in degrading circumstances in countries like Canada, to a greater or lesser degree. So why are our poorer sisters who have to work as domestics being singled out for "reparation"? And those who hold this opinion, do they think that those who come to study should also be denied access to Canada and to Canadian education? We ought to ask ourselves some serious questions when we find ourselves defending the same policies as the fascists and racists in Britain, Canada and the USA who have fought for and got significant cutbacks in immigration in recent years -- cutbacks which mainly affect poor Third World people, especially blacks.

Domestic labour is the only labour in the world whose problems some ideologues suggest should be solved by its elimination. In every other sector of the work-force the approach is to fight to change the conditions. That is the logical approach to take to domestic labour. We need to change the conditions to provide alternatives, enabling women to break out of this sector of labour if they so desire. And to improve the conditions so that it too becomes a non-degrading job possibility.

Canadian women have a stake in this struggle because many of them are also being ghettoized in the home. Immigrant women have an additional stake because domestic labour is for many of them the only door through which they can get access to the goods and services which have been built on the exploitation of their home countries. Black women have a further stake because a significant number of immigrant domestics are also black, and need the support of their black sisters in confronting the problems which face all blacks in white Canadian society.

Campaigns to defend poor immigrants, such as the campaign to improve the conditions of immigrant domestics, have a sound theoretical base, and are not a matter of mere emotion. Third World societies are exploited by multinational companies based in the very countries to which we emigrate -- Canada, Britain and the USA. The profits are then sent back to these "developed" countries to provide goods, services, jobs and other benefits. Immigration is a way of chasing those benefits which have been denied us in our own countries, and for which our people have sweated and suffered. Immigrants do more than reclaim the benefits on the spot -- they also repatriate a significant amount of money. In one Caribbean island they sent home \$47 million in 1978.

Immigration is part of the overall struggle to get back what is rightfully ours.

- Joan French

Joan French is past President of the National Union of Democratic Teachers of Jamaica. She is presently teaching at the University of the West Indies, Mona.

We shouldn't have to wait for our share until divorce or death.

- * Marriage contracts, which are now legally binding, must become far more common. Doris Anderson points out that since we cannot rely on the fairness of the courts, our best protection is an agreement written before a divorce is in sight.

- * For the same reason, more women judges should be appointed. British and American studies of court statistics seem to show that most men can't be impartial or impersonal in sex equality cases. If, despite law reform, they insist on identifying with husbands, we need to balance the bench with more first-hand experience of the importance of housework and childcare.

- * Finally, if law-makers now understand the contribution of housewives to the enrichment of husbands, it should be equally clear that husbands' employers are profiting from our work. Taxing Exxon and Inco to pay wages for housework is the logical long-range solution to the injustice of female impoverishment.

For all its shortcomings, Canadian family law reform represents a revolution in the status of wives and mothers. Women's work in the home, for centuries invisible and unrewarded, is surfacing as the acknowledged foundation of all the wealth of our society.

-Francie Myland,
with thanks to
Ellen Murray, LL.B.
for consultation

Francie Myland is a founding member of the Committee to Advance the Status of Housework (C.A.S.H.), and the Coordinator of the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund.

Greek Women Protest Family Law



In preparation for Greece's recent entry into the EEC (European Economic Community), the Greek government endeavored to show the western world that it is a modern democratic nation. It planted trees down a major avenue and built a multi-tiered highway (two kilometres long) in Athens and appointed the gazi Committee to work on updating the Family Law.

The trees are growing and the highway is fine but the state of the Family Law is atrocious. It institutionalizes patriarchy, oppression and inequality not only within the family, but in the lives of all Greek women.

The law (section 1387 of the Civil Code) recognizes the man as the exclusive head of the family with the right to make all family decisions without consulting his wife or children. The woman's only "right" is managing the household (section 1389). The woman's father is obliged to provide her husband with a dowry when she marries; the husband then has full control over the marriage; the husband and income from it. She must give up her family name and take her husband's. If she marries a non-Greek she loses her nationality. She needs her husband's permission to start a business in her name. He also has the right to forbid her to work outside the home if he decides it "interferes with her duties there."

The Gazi Committee compiled a draft of very conservative proposals, calling for the abolition of only the grossest inequalities. It has been shelved. The Minister of "Justice" explained that he cannot allow "the family to be endangered."

The government has since appointed a new and more conservative committee to draft another proposal under-represented and two have already resigned in protest. The government seems determined to keep the status quo.

Women's groups across Greece have responded with great activity, courage and resolve. They have -- often in the face of violent police brutality -- to force the changes they want in the Family Law.

- Shazka Beyrle

Shazka Beyrle, whose mother is Greek, lived in Greece for five years. She is a feminist majoring in Psychology and Women's Studies at the University of Toronto.

Special Insert on Domestic Workers

Groups Meet With Elgie

On a sunny but bitterly cold day in December, a delegation representing over 60 organizations in Ontario paid a visit to Dr. Robert Elgie, Ontario's Minister of Labour, to present him with our brief and to discuss what his plans are for improving domestic workers' working conditions.

The delegation was made up of representatives from INTERCEDE, OCISD (Ontario-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization), OCAJI (the 20-member Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants), the Metro YMCA, the Toronto Conference of the United Church, a domestic worker and an immigration lawyer. Dr. Elgie came well-fortified too, with his Deputy Minister, Executive Assistant, Acting Director of the Women's Bureau and an Administrator of the Employment Standards Branch.

Before Dr. Elgie had a chance to say more than hello, we set the tone of the meeting. Each one of us spoke about why domestics need full legislative protection, covering every angle. The domestic worker talked about the wages and conditions of work she and her friends have had to put up with. One of the representatives from INTERCEDE who also works at the Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre spoke about how without any laws to fall back on, their hands are almost tied when domestics come to them with complaints of mistreatment.

Finally it was Dr. Elgie's turn. He told us that he wants to see improvements for domestic workers, but im-

plied that the problem lay with some of his cronies in Cabinet who aren't so keen. Changes were being made in the Employment Standards Act that week however. He also said he supports Women's Compensation coverage being extended to domestics, and that he was hoping his amendments to the Human Rights Code to include domestics would be passed before the spring election. At the end of the hour-long meeting, he invited us back to discuss the upcoming changes in the ESA, and as soon as they came out we wrote to set our next date.

The following day we met with Michael Assidy, leader of the NDP and two other NDP MPP's, and later with Margaret Campbell of the Liberal party, and got both parties' full support for INTERCEDE's demands.

When we walked into the conference room at 9 p.m. to make a statement to the media, it was so packed it was standing room only. We figure the reason why our delegation got such good coverage on almost every radio and TV station in Toronto -- as well as on the CBC National News -- and why the phone lines were jammed during the two hour-long phone-in shows we did later on the Toronto multi-cultural radio station, is that although the government may not know it quite yet, the people of Ontario aren't going to wait much longer for domestic workers to win their rights.

Francesa Gregory is the Coordinator of INTERCEDE and a member of C.A.S.H.



Francesa Gregory
Hyland

Introducing INTERCEDE

In October 1979, 75 women came together in Toronto at a Forum sponsored by C.A.S.H. (formerly known as Housewives' Initiative) entitled: "A View from the Kitchen: Immigrant Women Speak Out on the Value of Housework." They zeroed in on immigrant women with the least power: domestic workers -- the only workers in Ontario unprotected by the Employment Standards Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Labour Relations Act and the Human Rights Code. The discussion uncovered an urgent need for a group committed to building bread-based support for domestic workers' rights.

Thus INTERCEDE was formed in November, 1979 -- the International Coalition to End Domesticity's Exploitation. Beginning originally with C.A.S.H., the Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre and Labour Rights for Domestic Servants, it has since grown to 39 immigrants, women's, community and church groups, in Ontario and internationally. All joined in the struggle to improve the situation of domestics (housekeepers, cooks, nannies, etc.).

Because 80% of domestics are immigrants, subject to the laws of Employment and Immigration Canada, changes in legislation are needed at both the provincial and federal level. Thus INTERCEDE's struggle centers around these 5 objectives, which were passed at the C.A.S.H. Forum -- 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 Employment Commission and employers of domestics on work permits must be signed by the domestic worker concerned as well, and this contract must be legally binding on the employer.
3. Independent community agencies must be funded by the government to ensure that the minimum wage legislation and the terms of the domes-

Judith Ramirez, longtime advocate of wages for housework and founder of Toronto's Immigrant Women's Centre, helped launch INTERCEDE and is currently a member of its steering committee.

4. All women who are presently in Canada on work permits must be allowed to apply for landed immigrant status immediately.
5. Welfare rates must be raised immediately to a living wage and immigrant women must be allowed to apply for welfare with no threat of deportation.

Any organization that endorses these resolutions, which aim at protecting all domestics -- whether landed immigrants, on temporary work permits or Canadian citizens, becomes a part of the coalition.

To lobby the government at the provincial level, INTERCEDE presented a brief to the Minister of Labour recommending domestics' protection under Ontario labour laws (see article above). A federal brief concerning

Continued on page 6

Brief To The Ontario Government

"There is no government more committed to the rights of women than this one. The government has always been in the forefront of any activity in this country with regard to women's rights, and will continue to be."

Dr. Robert Elgie
Ontario Minister of Labour
April 1980

In the brief to the Minister of Labour written by INTERCEDE, co-signed by OCISD (Ontario-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization), and supported by a number of other organizations, Dr. Elgie is asked how he can give himself such pats on the back as long as approximately 80,000 domestic workers in Ontario (98% women, of course) are denied such basic rights as the minimum wage, overtime pay, regulation of hours of work, paid vacations, Workmen's Compensation, and the right to unionize.

Why don't domestic workers have the same rights as other workers in Ontario anyway? It's true that a lot of working mothers in the paid labour force hire domestics because it's cheaper than buying high-cost daycare. With the government wanting to cut back rather than increase subsidized daycare these days, it probably doesn't want to face still more women demanding daycare if their domestics' wages go up and they can't afford to pay. And we know for sure that a lot of Ontario Cabinet Ministers would have to fork over a lot higher wages to their domestics than they do now! Not that they can't well afford to.)

We also know that at least some men in the government think that giving domestics legal rights would destroy the "...close and often personal relationships which provide employment and the means of earning a living for many thousands of people in a very satisfying way." (A quote from a Conservative MPP before he voted against

the NDP bill to include domestics under the Employment Standards Act, in October 1979.)

But as the brief says, the reasons probably go deeper still. The first is that "housework has been seen by society in general and governments in particular as having no economic value. The lack of recognition of the value of housework done by women for their own families is extended in the government's eyes to the housework done by a domestic worker in somebody else's home." And as the Women's Bureau said in a paper on domestics a couple of years ago, "the fact that a d.w. does work which is considered of low value, requiring little skill, and which in fact, could be done by the family members for no pay, means that such workers are often considered not to be 'real workers'."

The other reason the brief suggests for not including domestics under protective labour laws is the simple fact that they are women, and an estimated 80% were not born in Canada.

The brief finishes by challenging the government to prove its "commitment to the rights of women" by changing the Employment Standards Act, the Labour Relations Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the Human Rights Code to specifically include domestic workers.*

For a copy of the brief to the Ontario government write to INTERCEDE, 348 College St., Toronto M5T 1S4.

* Shortly after the brief was written the government introduced legislation to include domestics in the Human Rights Code. When it gets passed in the Legislature, it means that employers can no longer refuse to hire a domestic because they don't like her nationality, skin color or religion.

Endorsers Of INTERCEDE

- Arab Community Centre of Toronto
 - Asianadan Resources Workshop
 - Birth Control and VD Information Centre
 - Black Women's Sisterhood
 - Blow-Bathurst Information Centre
 - Canadian Women's Studies Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
 - Committee to Advance the Status of Housework (formerly known as Housewives' Initiative)
 - Division of Mission in Canada - United Church of Canada
 - East York Women's Centre
 - Feminist Party of Canada
 - Immigrant Women's Centre
 - Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre
 - Indian People's Association in North America
 - International Students Society - Ryerson Polytechnical Institute
 - Jamaica Democratic Association
 - Metro Toronto Women's Credit Union
 - Neighborhood Information Post
 - Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre
 - Osgoode Hall Women's Caucus
 - OXFAM Canada
 - Parkdale Community Legal Services
 - Student Christian Movement - University of Toronto
 - Support Services for Assaulted Women
 - Toronto Chinese Community Services Association
 - Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa
 - Toronto Community for Solidarity with a Democratic Chile
 - Toronto Immigrant Legal Assistance Services
 - Wages for Housework Committee
 - Waterloo Public Interest Research Group
 - Women Healthsharing
 - Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre
 - Women's Press
 - Working Women Community Centre
 - World Conference on Religion and Peace
- International Endorsers
- Gansave - Jamaica
 - Committee of Women for Progress - Jamaica
 - National Union of Democratic Teachers - Jamaica
 - National Union of Domestic Employees - Trinidad

DOMESTICS SWEEEP

CANADA

It's hard to believe there are thousands of women still slaving away in Canada today for as little as 75¢ or \$1 an hour. But domestic workers in 8 out of 10 provinces aren't covered by provincial minimum wage and hours of work laws, and so many find themselves in precisely this situation.

Only domestics in Quebec have full coverage under a law which was brought into effect last spring, largely through the efforts of the Montreal Household Workers' Association (see box on following page). Domestics in Newfoundland are guaranteed \$1.58 an hour -- half the minimum wage all other workers are entitled to. Ontario domestics have just won the right to vacations with pay and paid public holidays, but are still excluded from the hours of work and overtime pay provisions of the Employment Standards Act; the Labour Relations Act, which recognizes workers' right to unionize; and the Workmen's Compensation Act.

While Canadian census figures don't show the number of domestic workers, the Ontario Women's Bureau estimates there are up to 75,000 in Ontario alone. Most of them do day-work for anywhere from \$20 to \$30 a day. But hours and conditions of work vary from household to household. Domestics are usually required to clean the whole house for a set price. Whether it takes her five hours, or 10, she gets the same wage. Often it boils down to a case of employers seeing how much work they can get out of their domestics for the least cost.

If conditions are bad for day-workers, they're even worse for live-in domestics. Canada Manpower has always had a hard time finding enough domestic workers to meet the demand. Only about 20% of domestic workers are native-born Canadians. The rest are immigrant women who have no other choice. Up until a few years ago, the government allowed women to immigrate to Canada as domestic workers. But when that proved unsatisfactory -- because no one would work for such low wages a day longer than it took to find a better job -- the government changed the rules of the game. Now they "import" temporary workers (about 60,000 since 1973) who can work only as domestics, for up to three years or so before they're sent home again, with no right to stay in Canada permanently.

When told about the exploitative conditions these women work in, the federal government says it can't do anything about it -- it's up to the provincial governments. But the provinces are afraid to increase domestics' wages because they know that a lot of working mothers hire domestics because it's so much cheaper than paying for daycare. And of course, if women couldn't afford domestics any more, there'd be an even greater demand for affordable childcare than there is now. The obvious answer is to increase subsidized childcare facilities and also to allow employers to deduct the full cost of their domestic worker's wages from their income tax.

HONG KONG

The history of domestic work in Hong Kong has undergone many changes leading to the existence today of three distinct groups of domestics.

Women who make up the first group, traditional domestics, are mostly post-1945 refugees who came to Hong Kong without families and chose domestic work for security. Traditional domestic work in Chinese society was a master-servant relationship: the domestic worked long and hard, yet was expected to show the devotion and affection of a close relative. In return, she would not get much money but was granted room and board, care in sickness and old age and a certain amount of respect.

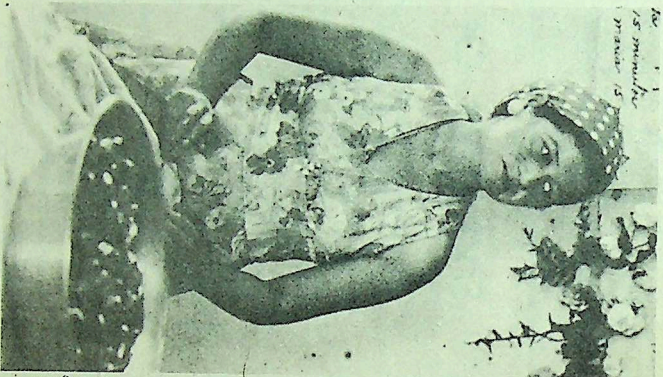
However, the employer in Hong Kong does not always fill his part of the bargain. Today, many claim they can no longer meet their traditional responsibilities -- one government official was embarrassed to admit he put his elderly domestic, who had served him well, in an old age home. "But," he added quickly, "it cost her nothing because she had no savings." (!)

The second group are modern domestics who are born in Hong Kong and are well-established in the community. They are not dependent on the goodwill of the "master" and thus will not exchange salary or benefits for favors. Domestic work is treated like any other job; they demand days off, regular raises and considerate treatment. Their salaries are higher than most industries. In 1975, garment workers made \$89 per month while domestics made \$148 per month.

As light industry expands, however, young single women are taking factory jobs because they dislike the isolation of domestic work. The vacant domestic jobs are being filled by a third group, immigrant women from Southeast Asia, especially from the Philippines. They come with the hope of travel, adventure and learning "Western ways" from their European employers in Hong Kong. Their expectations are not met: they are exploited at \$40-80 per month (plus room and board and airfare to Hong Kong) and the isolation from home causes many Filipinos great loneliness. They soon realize that living Western-style is not always living in a "superior culture."

Of the three existing groups of domestics in Hong Kong today, clearly the modern native domestic is the least exploited. In a colony where labour unions are very weak and no enforceable minimum wage exists, domestic work offers a fairly stable wage -- but it is a wage that excludes immigrant women. The three groups need to come together so that all domestics earn a good wage and are treated equally.

— Martha Smith



COLUMBIA

In Columbia since 1950, many people have been forced into the cities to look for work, either because their farmhands were seized or their labour has been replaced by tractors. But jobs aren't much easier to find in town. Most of the men are unemployed, and about the only jobs their wives and daughters can find are as domestic servants. The desperation that drives these women into domestic work makes them sitting ducks for abuse.

In 1976, the average wage for domestics was a full 60% below the average wage of the total population. According to Columbian law, the domestic worker's working time "does not have a limit." Her employer has the right to tell her to work on weekends and

holidays, and is obliged only to give her one day off a week.

Although they get 15 days holiday pay, they aren't entitled to old age pensions, unemployment insurance, or medical coverage. In fact, domestics get only 1/3 the social security provided by the government to the rest of the working population.

Two years ago, a small group of domestics started a union to defend their rights. Their demands were: a 10-hour day, \$42/month, health insurance coverage, and living quarters away from their workplaces.

The government response? Domestics couldn't form a union because their work wasn't "productive." But the Columbian government -- one of the few democratic ones in Latin America -- should know that if domestics' work is limitless, then they must be productive. And the domestics' union is campaigning to convince them.

— Marta Mendes

Marta Mendes is a graduate student from Columbia at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, doing research on domestic workers in the Third World.

INDIA

According to the government in India, domestic workers should not only consider themselves lucky -- they should consider themselves rich. Whereas the poverty line (according to the government) is Rs 20 (\$3.13 Canadian) in rural areas, and Rs 30 (\$4.70 Cdn.) in town, domestic workers make an average of Rs 60 (\$9.40 Cdn.) per month.

However, the 2000 domestics in one town who went on strike recently obviously don't agree. Despite being faced with employers' threats of dismissal, and with no labour laws to back them up, they stayed out until their demands of increased wages, two months' pay or a new sari every year, and medical leave.

One of the interesting features of the strike was that many of the employers, who are working women themselves, agreed to the strikers' demands when they were convinced by the strikers that even though their own wages aren't great, that's no reason to exploit other women.

— Francaee Gregory

JAMAICA

Since 1975, domestic workers in Jamaica have been covered by minimum wage laws and the National Insurance Scheme, (making them eligible for old age and disability pensions and workers' compensation).

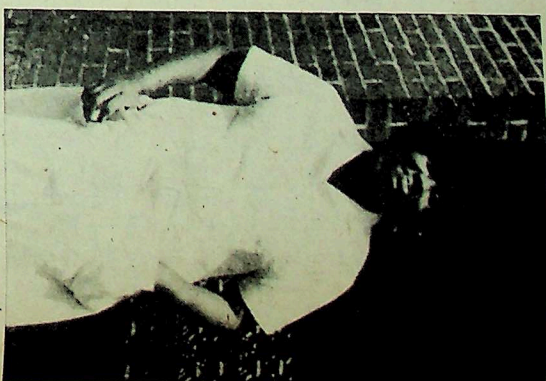
In 1980 the minimum wage for domestics went up to \$30 for a 40-hour week. But believe it or not, their employers' wages are barely higher. Only 19% of the female labour force was making more than \$50 a week as of 1978.

Most women who work outside the home need a domestic at least a day or two a week. There just aren't enough hours in the day to go out to work, hunt from store to store for basics like soap, flour and oil which are in scarce supply these days, and come home to wash the family's clothes by hand.

But when prices and unemployment skyrocket, hiring a domestic worker becomes a luxury which fewer and fewer women can afford. Domestic workers have taken the brunt of the sharp downturn in the economy of recent years -- 44% of the unemployed women in Jamaica in 1979 were domestics.

By the way, how do domestic workers do their own housework? Either they hire another woman or get their young daughters to do their washing, or else stretches from early morning to long past midnight.

— Francaee Gregory



Sueann Chang, Ms.

USA

"A commonly observed phenomenon: during the early evening hours, trains crowded predominantly by young white men carrying attache cases, pass trains headed in the opposite direction, crowded predominantly by middle-aged black women carrying brown paper bags. Neither group, it appears, glances at the other."

— Studs Terkel, *Working*

"Isn't it ironic that the people who care for people's most valuable assets -- their homes and their children -- are treated so poorly in this country."

— Carolyn Reed
National Committee on Household Employment

Domestics in the US make up the country's poorest and most powerless workers. The US Department of Labour states that there are 1.1 million women employed as household workers, and that while only 10% of the population in the US is black, black women represent over 50% of domestic workers.

You might think, on reading some reports, that domestics have made great strides at the federal legislative level. Since 1974, most workers who cross state boundaries in the course of their work have been covered under the Federal Labour Standards Act, which guarantees a minimum wage of \$3.35/hour. But why then do you also read that so many domestics across the country don't get this "guaranteed" minimum wage? Well, the hitch is that only workers engaged in interstate production and commerce are covered. And since, of course, most domestics do not cross state lines, this federal law is not binding. So, in effect, it is really only a guideline to the states, who then decide whether to set their own -- and many don't.

The National Committee on Household Employment, headed by Carolyn Reed, regards wages as only one part of domestics' problems. It's the question of the lack of benefits that hurts most. Domestics don't have a number of legal guarantees which working people in other occupations take for granted. They continue to be excluded in many states from protective labour laws such as the right to unionize and collect unemployment insurance. Most household workers don't get overtime pay, vacation pay or sick pay. A lot don't carry health and hospital insurance, and about half of all domestics don't make social security payments either. In times of ill health, not to mention when they reach retirement age.

Things may be changing though. Household help is getting harder to find these days, and employers are finding that to hire a domestic they have to pay them more, and to keep them, they have to be treated with a lot more respect.

— Billie Laekin

Billie Laekin is a graduate student in Social Work at the University of Toronto and is working with C.A.S.H. Placement Centre.

THE WORLD!



TRINIDAD

In the 1978 Review of the Economy, the government of Trinidad & Tobago made special mention of the high unemployment rate among women at the same time. "It has been found that in many cases it results from social factors which motivate persons to remain unemployed.... There is a need for a drastic change in attitude toward certain types of employment."

Perhaps the government considered the introduction in 1979 of a \$200/month (Trinidadian dollars) minimum wage for domestic workers a solution. But Clotil Malcott, head of the National Union of Domestic Employees, insists that it isn't when you compare it to the cost of living, or to the average man's wage in the oil-rich country. Malcott says that anyone who thinks it's a living wage is comparing it with the \$25 a month which domestic workers received 25 years ago. "That was inadequate then, when rice was 74 a pound, a whole cabbage cost 50¢, and a room could be rented for \$15 a month. It is just as adequate now when rice is 33¢ a pound, cabbage is being sold at \$5 a pound, and landlords are asking \$75 for an unfurnished room."



Clotil Malcott

Another problem which is common to domestic workers around the world which the Trinidad & Tobago government -- like most -- has yet to deal with, is sexual harassment on the job. As Malcott says, "There are domestic employees throughout Trinidad & Tobago who have a child, sometimes more than one, whose fathers are their employer or one of his drunken friends."

— Frances Gregory

PORTUGAL

Problems getting the minimum wage for domestics in Canada? Portugal is already way ahead of us.

About two months ago, Portuguese domestics won their fight for a legal minimum wage: \$140 per month plus room and board. Though this is considerably lower than the industrial minimum wage (\$208 per month), the fact remains that they have gained legal recognition of their work. For a country with a history of political repression, they have fought for and gained legal rights for an occupational group that is unprotected in 8 out of 10 Canadian provinces.

Domestics in Portugal were already organizing undercover before the 1974 revolution. Starting as a small group, their numbers multiplied as more and more domestics recognized the similarity of their plight. With the arrival of post-revolutionary freedoms, they were ready to form a union demanding inclusion under the national minimum wage, and paid holidays.

Their fight, however, was not destined to be easy. A religious institution, Santa Zita, also formed a union of domestics mostly because it didn't want to lose the monthly tithe (10%) many domestics donated to them. Santa Zita won the meagre salaries.

Minister of Labour's official recognition as a union for domestics because their organization was less threatening than a group demanding legal rights.

The original group was left undaunted. They raised money by forming cooperative daycare centres in Lisbon and in Porto for children of both domestics and their employers so housework could be done uninterrupted. They bought an industrial kitchen and served meals at a low price to domestics. The little money they raised from both these activities went into fighting to improve domestic workers' rights.

Today in Portugal there are still at least two unions struggling to better the situation of domestics. Despite the unions' differences, they have managed to achieve what we in Canada are still fighting to put on the government's agenda.

— Martha Smith

ENGLAND

Canadians are often told that Britain's legal system is the fairest anywhere, that its tradition of "common law" delivers equality and justice, and that everyone is assured of decent treatment. However, even a quick glance at the lives of the 40,000 foreign-born domestics working there, shows just how far-fetched this one is.

Coming, for the most part, from the Philippines, Ireland and Spain, these women have been recruited to fulfill the plans drawn up by the government's Department of Employment (DOE). As in Canada, the objective of the UK government is quite straightforward: they want housework done for the smallest wage possible. And like the government in Ottawa, the one in London is counting on the "granting of work permits" to pull it off.

On entering Britain, the prospective domestic worker gets this "work permit," which immediately denies her the right to work in any other field of employment. In addition, she, along with all others on "work permits," must "register with the police and must have a 'green book' which states conditions of stay, changes of address and employment." After getting her first job, the domestic is effectively tied to that employer, for although she is legally allowed to do any kind of domestic work, she must have the DOE's permission to change jobs. This is a difficult, time-consuming process, especially as the DOE uses the former employer as a reference.

These "work permits" are valid for only one year, and often renewal is granted only if they promise to remain a further year with the same family. Also, it is up to the employer to apply for this renewal, and even when the employer has failed to apply through ignorance and/or carelessness, it is the worker who has been found to be in breach of the law, and in some cases they have suffered deportation.

Effectively bound over to a particular boss by the Department of Employment and then held there by laws which make it illegal for them to do paid work elsewhere, domestics on work permits in Britain, are quite vulnerable to the demands of the employers. As a result, hours are much too long (60 hours/week and up), and wages are much too low (overtime pay is unheard of, and 11ve-in pay is on average \$18 a week). "Common complaints from domestic workers are about their small, cold rooms and lack of food." As well, they are subject to exhorbitant charges for this "room and board," and for the "payment of the airplane fare," often at interest rates over 50%. Domestic workers also pay premiums for Unemployment Insurance, Health Insurance, and Old Age Pensions — but only rarely, if ever, are they allowed to collect these benefits. Employment agencies take advantage by charging large sums for "information" which all too often is of little value. In numerous cases, all this leaves the domestic with less than \$1 a week for herself.

Overseeing this entire process of exploitation is, of course, the much vaunted British system of common law. And along with the UK government, the government of the country of origin also gains. First, discontent by unemployed is exported; second, foreign exchange (in this case British pounds) is gained through remittances sent back home by the domestic workers. For example, the Philippine government issues a contract which "binds the employer to assist the worker in making remittances from his/her salary to his/her bank account in the Philippines... in the amount of at least 30% of his/her salary."

Finally, women cannot get British "work permits" if they have children under 18 years of age. This regulation is particularly cruel because it is in the interests of both governments and the employment agencies to omit any reference to it until the women are "safely in Britain." After all, both governments and agencies desire to fill their quotas by handing as few people as possible. They have, however, shown themselves to be

quite willing to use the heavy responsibility which supporting a family entails to keep these women in line. Women on "work permits" are not only prevented from bringing their children with them, they are also forbidden to bring over any family member, be they parent, brother, sister, etc. By enforcing this family separation, these institutions are counting that her stay in Britain will not be permanent: either because she will inadvertently disclose the existence of her children, and thus be liable to deportation, or because she will leave the country, in the face of the pain of separation. At which point, another woman, quite likely from the same country and in the same circumstances, would be "granted a work permit" for her now-vacant job.

But where there is oppression, there is always resistance. In Toronto, in 1979, seven Jamaican mothers overcame deportation orders and won the right to live where they wanted and to have their children by their side. So too in London. Last summer, the British government issued deportation orders to 200 Filipino women who had applied to have their children join them. Despite the fact that each of them has put in several years of hard labour, and that none of them had been previously informed of the need to declare their children, British common law provides no recourse. To date, demonstrations and a union deputatation have secured an amnesty for only some of these women, and so the struggle continues. Further information, from Migrants Action Group, 68 Chalton Street, London NW1, (01) 388-0241.

Information for this article comes from Spare Rib, Issues #76 and #98, and from the Migrants Action Group.

— Peter Taylor

Peter Taylor is currently a research-er and community worker.

Organizations Fighting for Domestics' Rights

In Ontario:

INTERCODE (International Coalition to End Domestic Exploitation)
348 College Street
Toronto M5T 1S4
416-929-3240 days
416-537-3037 evenings

Labour Rights for Domestic Servants
c/o 82 Warren Road #704
Toronto M4V 2B7
416-961-0386

Association of Filipino Patriots
c/o 1221 Dundix Road Unit 14
Mississauga L4Y 3Y9
416-276-3267

OCISO (Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization)
425 Gloucester
Ottawa K1R 5E9
613-238-4256

In Quebec:
Montreal Household Workers' Association
445 St. Francois Xavier Ste.23
Montreal H2Y 2T1
514-844-6255

In British Columbia:
L.A.R.A. (Labour Advocacy and Research Association)
c/o 2520 Triumph Street
Vancouver V5K 1S8
604-251-3872

In the USA:
National Committee on Household Employment
500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10012

In Trinidad:
National Union of Domestic Employees
c/o 011 Field Workers Trade Union
House of the People
Charllotte Street
Port of Spain, Trinidad



Tessa Howland, Spare Rib

Filipino women demonstrate against deportations from England

Labor Laws for Quebec Domestics Best in Canada

Live-out domestics:

- a) Salary (minimum) - \$3.65 an hour
- b) Hours (maximum) - 44 hours a week
- c) Overtime (any hour worked after 44 hours in a week) - \$5.48 an hour
- d) Paid vacation
 - less than a year with the same employer: 1 day for each month worked up to 2 weeks (e.g. If you worked 8 months for the same employer, you are entitled to 8 days paid vacation)
 - 1-9 years with the same employer: 2 weeks
 - 10 years or more with the same employer: 3 weeks

Live-in domestics:

- a) Salary (minimum) - \$122 a week
- b) Hours (maximum) - 53 hours a week
- c) Overtime (any hour worked after 53 hours in a week) - \$4.30 an hour
- d) Paid vacation - See live-out domestics
- e) Room and board
 - The maximum which an employer could claim for room and board is \$30 a week. The law states that this should not come from your salary. It is almost like you are getting \$152 - \$30 (room & board) so you end up with \$122.

For more information, contact:
The Montreal Household Workers' Association, 445 St. Francois Xavier,
Montreal, Quebec. H2V 2T1 Tel. (514) 844-6255

NEW ONTARIO LAWS

If you're a domestic worker in Ontario, then the government's recent changes in the Employment Standards Act will be of interest to you. Effective immediately,

***You must be paid at least**
\$24/day OR
\$132/week OR
\$568/month OR
\$3/hour

(depending on how often you and your employer have agreed you are to be paid)

***Your employer cannot deduct from those wages more than \$50/week for room and board.**

***You are entitled to at least 36 hours in a row off work each week.** If you are asked to work during your time off, your employer either has to pay you \$3/hour for the hours you do work, or else give you that amount of time off later.

***You must get two weeks vacation per year with pay, or else 4% vacation pay per year.**

***You are entitled to get Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day and Thanksgiving off with pay.** Or, if you have to work, you must get another day off with pay instead.

If your employer is breaking any of these laws, call the Employment Standards Branch of the Dept. of Labour (965-5251 in Toronto). It is against the law for an employer to fire you for lodging a complaint.

Obviously these changes fall far short of full labour rights for domestics. Domestics are still excluded from the hours of work and overtime provisions of the Employment Standards Act. If a woman is supposed to be working or at least "on call" the whole time she isn't on her time off, that would mean a 132 hour work-week. And for a minimum wage of \$132, it's easy to see the government is talking about slave labour!

Babysitters and companions aren't even covered by these new laws, and there's a potential for a lot of abuse by employers who hire women as babysitters or companions, and then put them to work scrubbing everything from pots to shirts, in addition to looking after the kids or elderly.

However, this is the first step the government has made toward recognizing domestic workers as real workers, and INTERCEDE intends to keep pushing until they go all the way.

Elgie *Continued from page 3*

the status of domestic workers on temporary work permits will be presented to the Employment and Immigration Department soon.

INTERCEDE is building a solid foundation of support through public-speaking, media contacts, publication of educational materials and work with immigration lawyers. Donations (tax deductible) are urgently needed! Domestic workers still do not have the same rights and benefits as all other Canadian workers. The struggle continues!

We invite anyone interested in INTERCEDE's aims to endorse its 5 resolutions and to attend Steering Committee meetings. Contact INTERCEDE at 348 College Street, Toronto M5T 1S4, (416) 929-3240 (days), 537-3037 (evgs).

- Martha Smith

Martha Smith has worked as a researcher for INTERCEDE and now works with C.A.S.H.

New Brief Demands Landed Status

In keeping with its objectives (see article on page 3) INTERCEDE has prepared a brief to the Immigration Task Force on Policy and Procedures, which the Minister of Immigration has set up to report to him on all aspects of immigration policy.

The brief calls for immediate landed status for all domestic workers in Canada on work permits, the abolition of the work permit system, and replacement of it by the old system of allowing women to come to Canada as landed immigrants to work as domestics.

It describes how the need for domestic work is so great that the government has to "import" thousands of women every year. But because wages and working conditions are so low, and the government doesn't want to do anything about that, they have to make sure these women are "in bondage" so they

don't look for other kinds of work. As the brief says, "By establishing and maintaining the work permit system, the government has ensured that these domestic workers remain a captive labour force, thus sanctioning their extreme exploitation."

The brief is being co-signed by the Montreal Household Workers' Association, L.A.R.A. (Labour Advocacy and Research Association in BC), and the Association of Filipino Patriots and will be followed up by a background paper tracing the history of immigration policy as it relates to domestics, which will be presented to Lloyd Axworthy, the Immigration Minister, in the spring.

(For a copy of the brief to the Task Force, write to INTERCEDE at 348 College St., Toronto M5T 1S4 or call (416) 929-3240.)



Tony McGrath, Children Under Apartheid

Government Rips Off Domestic Workers

Since 1973, the federal government has collected a minimum of \$114 million in revenue from domestics on work permits and their employers who have to pay monthly UIC and CPP premiums. So what, you might ask. After all, we all have to pay them. But the rub is -- domestics on work permits are never allowed to collect.

If they should find themselves without a job for longer than two weeks, they are deported. And because work permits are seldom renewed for more than three years, there's no chance of retiring in Canada on a pension.

Here's how the money's been collected:

Year	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Wage per year*	\$3,000	3,000	3,000	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,600
CPP per year	86.40	82.80	82.80	90.00	86.40	82.80	90.00
UIC per year	72.00	100.80	100.80	130.80	118.92	118.68	116.64
CPP + UIC per year	158.40	183.60	183.60	220.80	205.32	201.48	206.64
# of work permits issued	3,330	5,716	8,959	9,057	10,519	9,482	9,664

TOTAL REVENUE \$527,472 / 1,049,458/1,644,872/1,999,786/2159,761/1910,433/ 1,996,969

Total number of work permits issued: 56,727

Total revenue generated: \$11,288,751.00

Sources: 1) Deductions -- Revenue Canada

2) Number of work permits issued -- Immigration Commission

* estimated average

N.B. These figures show only the premiums for Canada Pension (CPP) and Unemployment Insurance (UIC) deducted for the number of new work permits issued each year. It does not include the number of annual renewals of work permits, and so the revenues should be interpreted as being on the very conservative side.

Now, we bet you're wondering just what the government is doing with all that money....So are we!

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Interview

MARIAROSA DALLA COSTA

ROME, Italy — At the international conference on "Women and Employment: Perspectives for the 1980's" held at the University of Rome last December, Judith Ramirez interviewed feminist author Mariarosa Dalla Costa. She wrote the controversial essay "Women and the Subversion of the Community" which launched the rage for housework debate in the women's movement in the early 1970's.

JR: What has been the reaction in Italy to the recent call from the United Nations that all countries include housework in the gross national product?

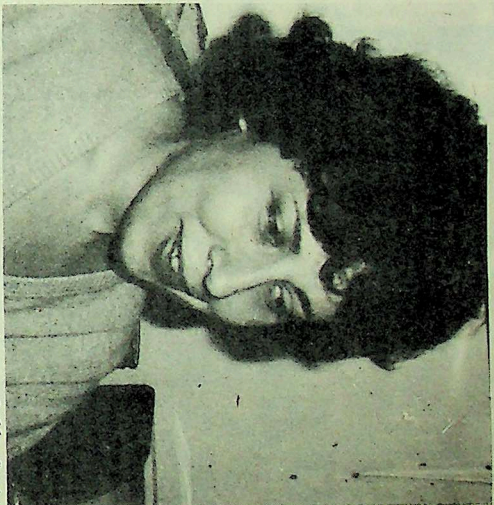
MR: The reaction has been negligible, really. The discussion among economists on the value of goods and services produced in the home began in Italy in the early 1970's with the rise of the feminist movement. Once certain methods of quantification had been devised and certain figures had been arrived at for the various components of housework the debate began to stagnate. In the late 1970's a new trend developed among the economists -- partly as a result of the economic crisis -- which consists of viewing the activity of women in the paid labor force in close relation to the accompanying transformations in the family. In other words, the study of the labor market, in the traditional sense, is now carried out in conjunction with the study of the "marriage market," even when not acknowledged as such. The interdependence of the two has become a necessary premise for any serious economist.

Feminist theoreticians in the wages for housework tendency of the women's movement have emphasized the fact that the family is not merely a social or cultural entity, but fundamentally an economic one. And economists at large -- more of whom are women now -- have come to view women in the family as part of the marriage market, understood not only as an economic entity but as the determinative one for women.

In our work we have stressed that a woman's position in the family -- the marriage market -- determines, to a great extent, her position in the paid labor market. It influences such things as her mobility, flexibility, rate of pay, etc. And the most clear-cut conclusion emerging from the recent economic studies is that once a woman marries and becomes responsible for the daily reproduction of her husband and children, her options for paid work outside the home shrink proportionately.

JR: What options do younger Italian women have today which their mothers' generation didn't have?

MR: The major trend among younger women is to side-step marriage and motherhood altogether. It is treated increasingly as an economic blind alley, and shunned accordingly. The birth rate continues to fall in Italy, as elsewhere in the industrialized world. This is largely the result of the younger women choosing to take paid employment and reproducing only themselves rather than an entire family nucleus as their mothers did. A paid job is the main goal of the young women as the only, however minimal, guarantee of a more independent lifestyle. At this point in time, avoiding marriage and the family altogether is the only way to escape the traditional lifetime of unpaid servitude in the home, or the more recent burden of two jobs -- the punishing "double work day."



Mariarosa Dalla Costa

JR: How important is the falling birth rate when measuring women's rejection of unpaid reproductive work in the family?

MR: In the past 15 years there has been a sharp drop in the birth rate not only in Italy, but in the USA, Canada and many other countries. At the same time there has been a dramatic increase in the number of separations and divorces as well as a growing trend to not marry at all. This has sparked a vigorous debate among demographers and others in the scientific community. The question is whether we are witnessing a temporary trend after which women will go back to producing 2,4 children or whatever, or whether women will continue to procreate less and, in growing numbers, not at all.

The consensus at this point is that the present trend is likely to continue. Furthermore, the fall in the birth rate is now being recognized as an expression of women's fight for autonomy and economic independence. We have left behind the era when scientists considered such matters purely "natural" phenomena and were therefore blind to their social and economic origins. Some demographers, or course, view these trends very pessimistically, precisely because they can see that they are linked to a real determination on the part of women to escape the enormous personal costs which having children presently involves. But analysts in the women's movement see it as an index of the growing struggle of women to not only cut down on the overall amount of unpaid housework we do but to have greater control over the conditions under which we do it.

JR: Has the traditional labor market been able to accommodate all the young women who are staying off the "marriage market"?

MR: In Italy, the state has responded by re-organizing women's productivity on a mass scale. The most visible trend is the deployment of large sections of the paid female labor force in the marginal and part-time sectors of the economy. Literally millions of women are now employed in the "submerged

economy" which does not figure in official labor statistics and which is part of a massive de-centralization in the productive apparatus of both goods and services.

But even offering women jobs which are insecure and badly paid has not successfully curbed their "first-ub-ordination" and driven the older women back into full-time unpaid work in the home or the younger ones into the marriage market.

In addition, that market itself has changed. Men can no longer take for granted the traditional relationships with women that their fathers were able to command. A woman will simply not take on all the work of reproducing her husband or lover -- she will accept virtually any kind of job in the paid labor force as long as it renders her independent of that kind of relationship.

JR: Finally, Mariarosa, what was the response of the women's movement to the Christian Democratic proposal, in 1978, that housewives be paid a monthly wage for housework?

MR: First of all, it was proposed by a small handful of deputies in the party and it never received wide support among the Christian Democrats themselves, much less in the other parties. The general response in Parliament can best be described as a "boycott." The proposal itself called for a salary of L200 (\$270) per month for the married full-time housewife.

There was widespread opposition in the women's movement to this proposal because it was feared that the net result would be twofold: 1) the further ghettoization of women in the home, and for a very small amount of money at that, and 2) the undercutting of demands by women in the paid labor force. I personally felt that the women's movement should use the proposal as an occasion to widen the debate on the value of women's work in the home.

We needed to stress, for example, that a woman should receive the money regardless of whether she was legally married or not, and regardless of whether she is with a man or not. The money should in no way be linked to the paycheck of a man. In other words, I felt the movement should have made a counter-proposal which would guarantee a monthly wage to any woman with children. In addition, I felt the amount proposed by the Christian Democrats was far too low and a strong case should have been made by the feminist movement to raise the figure in line with the current estimates given by leading economists. But quite apart from these specific counter-proposals, my point is simply that we should have seized the opportunity to launch the widest possible discussion on the economic worth of housework and child-rearing rather than simply allowing this legislative proposal to go down to defeat.

Judith Ramirez, co-author of a new study "Immigrant Housewives in Canada", was in Italy as part of a year-long speaking/facilitating tour which also took her to Holland, France, Germany, the Caribbean, the Far East, and the USA.



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Book Review

"The Politics of Housework"

The discussion of housework as a political and economic issue is at the core of this collection of articles edited by Ellen Malos.

The basic premise shared by the contributing authors is that housework is both economically and ideologically significant as part of the maintenance of the capitalist order. The debate emerges around the nature of the relationship between women, housework and capitalism, and the direction which women should take in their analysis and subsequent action.

Some argue, as does Margaret Benston in "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation", that women's inferior status in society is linked to their wageless housework. While stressing the importance of viewing housewives as producers rather than consumers, she concludes that freedom for women rests in removing housework from the home and socializing it.

Peggy Morton extends Benston's analysis by arguing that the structure of the family is determined by the needs of the economic system, and that the status of women in the paid labour force is thus determined both by the needs of the family and those of the economy.

The discussion of wages for housework is another aspect of the debate. Silvia Federici argues that demanding wages for housework furthers the revolutionary struggle of women because it challenges the traditional relationship between housework and women, that it is a natural female attribute.

Mariarosa Dalla Costa holds that the role of the housewife is the central role of all women. Capitalism, by destroying the integration of the family, community and production, removed market production from the home, thus placing the man in a separate position from the family as the wage labourer. The isolation of the woman in the home has made her role in social production invisible. Only the product of her labour -- the labourer -- is visible. She concludes that the underlying factor of women's oppression and exploitation is their position as wageless housewives.

Ellen Malos has brought together the dominant perspectives on the debate about housework. With articles from Canada, the USA, Britain and Italy written for the most part between 1965 and 1975, the book provides a comprehensive resource to the reader of the key issues involved in the debate.

Bilgae Laskin

The Politics of Housework, Ellen Malos, ed., Allison & Busby Ltd., London, 1980: \$14.95.
(Available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 85 Harbour Street)

BOOKS

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IMMIGRANT HOUSEWIVES IN CANADA

a report
by Roxana Ng and Judith Ramirez

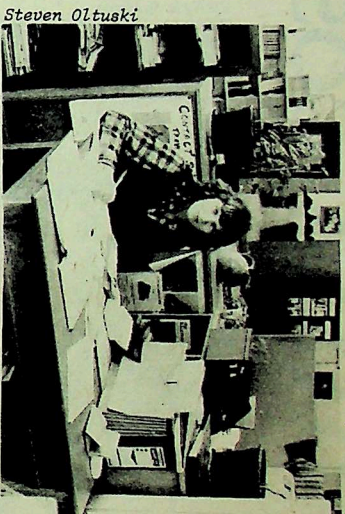
A study on working class immigrant housewives from rural backgrounds published by Toronto's Immigrant Women's Centre.

The study begins from the perspective of immigrant women and locates their experiences in the social and economic context of contemporary Canadian society. By focusing on women's daily experience the study reveals that the immigration process brings about an intensification of women's work in the home and a concomitant increase in their dependence on the family. But the same process which undermines their autonomy also creates the conditions for their emancipation. The struggle to initiate and maintain service organizations by and for immigrant women is a compelling example of the contradictory nature of immigration.

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IS THAT W.I.P. OR W.H.I.P.?



Steven Oltuski

Unable to intimidate sole-support mothers on Family Benefits into taking jobs which paid less money than they were already getting, the Ontario government decided to change tack, and in October 1979, they started the Work Incentive Program.

Edith Beck

Those eligible are sole-support mothers and others, who have received FBA or GAINS for at least three months, and then take a full-time job which pays less than the cut-off level. This cut-off level increases with family size from \$833/month (or \$10,000/year) for a mother and child, to \$1083/month (or \$13,000/year) for a family of six.

The benefits include: a lump-sum, phase-out allowance of \$225; free OHIP, basic dental care and eye glasses; and a monthly cash allowance. For those earning less than \$583/month (or \$7000/year) it ranges from \$120/month to \$250/month. Benefits last for a maximum of two years, and require that the "basic FBA eligibility" be maintained. This means there can be no change, such as marriage or the leaving of home by the last dependent child, in the family situation.

What follows is one woman's experience with the Work Incentive Program:

Well, they've done it again. This time it's a new program from the Department of Community and Social Services called Work Incentive Program. First they put an article in the papers proclaiming this great new W.I.P. program and how it's going to help women get off government assistance. Then you read the fine print and it turns out that you work two jobs, one in the home and one outside, for the same pay you get on Family Benefits Assistance.

Let me tell you the real meaning of this program -- WHILE... I have been introduced to being whipped emotionally along with the pressure of a new job.

I am earning \$100 more a month after deductions than I would be if I stayed on F.B.A. I get no daycare coverage because my child has a special problem -- too smart for the school system. He doesn't fit in the regular daycare or regular anything. So I pay \$15 a week for daycare in a private home which I didn't have to pay before. There goes the first \$60 a month. Tack on \$25 a month carfare and another \$15 for extra expenses for going to work and I'm just as poor as I was before. The only thing that's changed is that now I have two jobs -- the one I had before at home, plus 40 hours a week outside the home.

Then there's the fringe benefits. The W.I.P. program doesn't cover the two weeks I'm off without pay when the school I work in closes down for the Christmas holiday. Family Benefits Assistance won't assist me and the new W.I.P. won't be able to until the month after I need the help. My worker advised me to bank my Income Tax when it comes and use it as a "glush fund" because W.I.P. won't allow her to help me. I'm no a "real need."

But let's go back to the publicity in the paper which said that W.I.P.'s aim was to support welfare mothers. I get blamed by poor working class people who can't get the same benefits I do. Like most so-called "increased" poor people get, they get publicized so people think we are getting more when they are really cutting us down through a rent supplement, child care costs, or just more work like in W.I.P. A lot of this publicity about how much they're doing for welfare recipients is to keep us divided from the other working class people who can't apply for assistance even though they're in the same boat as we are.

And this Work Incentive Program doesn't entitle me to get a Christmas hamper like F.B.A., even though I badly need one. It took me my first 14 months on the job to fight the government's red tape so I could qualify to be whipped... a grand total of four trips to the Social Services Office! When a reporter finally called them, then I was accepted into the program. Now I get to fill out a monthly report and spend money on the stamps to mail it in.

Recently I had to send my little one to school at 7:30 A.M. so I could meet an 8:30 appointment with my W.I.P. worker. Only to be stood up! A lot of social workers handling W.I.P. are away at classes to learn how W.I.P. works while the mothers are learning how it doesn't work. I had to make up the last time from work with attendance at night meetings, because I need every penny desperately. Now that I'm on W.I.P. I feel I have a whole new workload just to keep it coming in on time. It took me 14 months to get my "phase-out allowance" which almost phased me out of my job and back onto F.B.A. Sometimes I wish I could just pay the \$53 a month W.I.P. provides for my dental plan and OHIP so I could get rid of the pressure and hassles. But my wages aren't high enough and that's why I applied for W.I.P. in the first place.

My advice to mothers is, yes, go on the W.I.P. program, but get ready to fight like hell to get what you're entitled to. The only way I console myself for the low wages and extra work is that I want to use this job experience as a stepping-stone to stop being exploited by others. I want to organize an association for better working conditions and a decent salary for women like me.

— Edith Beck

Edith Beck is the mother of four children. She has been on F.B.A. for twenty years and has been working as an unpaid community organizer for the last fifteen. She was a coordinator in the production of the widely distributed pamphlet "Making What's Ours: Every Woman's Guide to Welfare and Student Aid". She is currently working at Contact School in the Regent Park area of Toronto.

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IMMIGRANT HOUSEWIVES IN CANADA

a report

by Roxana Ng and Judith Ramirez

A study on working class immigrant housewives from rural backgrounds published by Toronto's Immigrant Women's Centre.

The study begins from the perspective of immigrant women and locates their experiences in the social and economic context of contemporary Canadian society. By focusing on women's daily experience the study reveals that the immigration process brings about an intensification of women's work in the home and a concomitant increase in their dependence on the family. But the same process which undermines their autonomy also creates the conditions for their emancipation. The struggle to initiate and maintain service organizations by and for immigrant women is a compelling example of the contradictory nature of immigration.

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