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# Wages <sup>for</sup> Housework NEWSLETTER

No. 1

November-December 1976

(216) 651-8987

1356 W. 59th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44102

## To Our Readers . . .

In the past few months, the Wages for Housework Campaign has reached thousands of women in northern Ohio. The response to the July 4th launching of our Women's Declaration of Independence and the publicity we received was tremendous. The Declaration is still being circulated throughout Ohio, putting us in contact with more and more women. During the summer and fall, we took the Campaign — and the Declaration — to shopping centers and summer festivals throughout northeastern Ohio: to Elyria, Lorain, Oberlin, and Richmond Hts., to name a few. These activities, plus a number of speaking engagements in the Cleveland area, have put us in touch with even more of you. This is our first newsletter, and it is our way to keep you all posted about the Campaign.

We need to hear from YOU! Send us your ideas for spreading the campaign. Tell us how you feel about the articles. Give us news of what you're doing in your own area. We will try to print your letters and news in upcoming issues. What else can you do? Get some of your friends together to discuss the campaign; we will be glad to meet with you. And if you would like to participate in any of our activities, if you like to work on street theater, sing, or draw, please contact us. Also, **PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON!**

On page 3 of this newsletter is a coupon. If you would like to receive future mailings please clip the coupon and send it back to us. If possible, please enclose a donation of \$1 or more to help us cover the cost of our mailings.

We'd like to keep up the communication between us. Selma James, an international spokesperson of the Wages for Housework Campaign, is speaking in Oberlin on Nov. 30 and in Cleveland on Dec. 1. Feel free to bring your lunch. We hope to see you then!

## Independence Begins At Home

*"We the women of the United States are fed up. After 200 years of American independence, we are still overworked and underpaid. We are still not independent."*

The above is from the Women's Declaration of Independence, in which we demand Wages for Housework for all women from the federal government. We want the money to come from Business's profits — not from our paychecks.

The Declaration is a way we women can let each other know that we need the money and that we intend to get it. We're not turning over the signed copies to any government agency. The Declaration is a way of pulling together our separate struggles for time and money of our own. It's a way we can show each other the strength of our campaign for the wage.

The Declaration is written both in Spanish and English. Signatures are being collected nationally.

The Declaration was first launched at the West Coast Regional Wages for Housework Conference in May. Here in Ohio, we launched it on July 4. Immediately afterwards, we were interviewed on WIXY, WGAR, and WERE radio and appeared on TV: Channel 5 Eyewitness News and Morning Exchange. Since then, wherever we go to talk about Wages for Housework, we find women eager to sign.

When all the signatures have been collected, we'll have a public event to let you know the results.

If you want to sign the Declaration, or if you'd like to help collect signatures, please fill out the coupon or call us at 651-8987. And please return the signed Declarations. We can always send you more.

COME HEAR

## SELMA JAMES

of the LONDON WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE

Two chances to hear her:

|                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>In Cleveland:</i>              | <i>In Oberlin:</i>             |
| Date: Wed., Dec. 1                | Tues., Nov. 30                 |
| Time: 12 noon                     | 12 and 7:30 (women only)       |
| Place: Cleveland State University | Wilder Hall                    |
| University Center, E. 22nd        | Main Lounge                    |
| & Euclid, Room 109                | On Rte. 10, near Woodland Ave. |
| Info & Rides: Molly 651-8987      | Miriam 775-1148                |

CHILD  
CARE  
PROVIDED



# Birth Announcement!!!

We are pleased to announce our presence as an autonomous group of Black Women for Wages for Housework within the International Wages for Housework Campaign. We came together for the first time at a conference sponsored by the New York WFH Committee on Wages for Housework and Welfare, which was held in Brooklyn on April 24, 1976. We've been meeting every week since then.

Our activities have included study of WFH literature and the struggles of Black women in the community and on the second job against housework and for the wage. We've rapped to women in our neighborhoods and distributed our own leaflets at welfare offices, daycare centers, shopping areas, and wherever women meet, including a Black women's conference held at Hunter College, City U. of N.Y. We participated with the N.Y. WFH Committee in planning a day of action against welfare cuts and for Wages for Housework, and held our own public meeting (1) to establish further contact with other Black women and (2) to mobilize for the day of action and demonstration.

Our public meeting at the end of June was a tremendous success in bringing together Black women to share our experiences of struggle in the community against all the ways in which the budget crisis affects women's lives. The meeting lasted a full day with a panel beginning with a presentation about our work in the home (our first job) and how much all of the jobs we do as housewives would be worth if we were paid: for example, doctor, bookkeeper, teacher, etc. Other women spoke on cutbacks in welfare, daycare, the city university, and the overall crisis in New York City. There was also a presentation on the struggles of Black welfare mothers against sterilization. The panel ended with a report on the struggles and victories of women in the International Wages for Housework Campaign. There was also a speakout in which Black women spoke about the need for WFH and how we can plan our struggle to get it. In addition to the panel and speakout, we had songs, dancing, a dramatic skit, disco and food.

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## View From The Kitchen

### The Welfare Cutbacks

The government is cracking down on welfare, cutting back Medicaid, food stamps and AFDC. They are blaming women for their crisis, trying to make us pay for what money and power we have won.

On election day, Cuyahoga County voters passed a health and welfare levy, providing \$27 million for hospitals, welfare and social services in the county. We passed the levy because we had no other choice: we need the money and the services. The very politicians who griped about the high cost of welfare and the "welfare mess" supported the levy — this time the money would come directly from *our* pockets, and not from theirs. The levy comes out of the property taxes which we have to pay, either directly to the government or through an increase in rent. The money is taken out of *our* property taxes because business and the rich have the power to stop the government from taxing *their* property.

A cutback in welfare would mean less power for us all. It would mean less power in relation to our husbands, because they know we are dependent on their paychecks and cannot afford to leave.

With the economic crisis, many of us know that we are just a husband away from welfare. If we are laid off from our jobs (or if our husband loses his) we, too, might be on AFDC.

Welfare isn't much, but it is the first money we women have won directly from the government for all the work we do in the home. It has enabled thousands of women to scrape by without starving, to refuse the second job, and to keep the children we want. It has meant we can leave an unwanted relationship, come out as a lesbian mother, or walk out on the man who beats us up.

But welfare isn't enough. We need Wages for Housework from the government for all the work we do. Because housework isn't paid for and is not seen as work, welfare mothers can be treated like criminals and divided from other women. The attack on welfare is an attack on all of us: to keep us in line, and to keep us working for free and in low-paying jobs, feeling guilty or afraid to demand too much — either from our men or from the government. When we are divided against each other — welfare mothers against "working" women against women supported by a man — our struggles are turned against each other.

The struggle for welfare is a power for all of us: it has opened the way for us to demand that our housework be paid. We *all* need less work, more independent money, and more time for ourselves.

And we won't be divided any longer! We are saying no to budget cuts and higher taxes. There is enough money, only we haven't got it. We need Wages for Housework and we want government and business to pay. And with the power of our numbers, we can win.





# Birth Announcement!!!

(continued from page 2)

The public meeting was followed by a day of action where women from Black Women for WFH participated with the New York WFH Committee at a rally across from the Dept. of Health, Education, & Welfare in downtown Manhattan, and then picketed using posters, songs, mops, brooms, pots, spoons, and a speakout with bullhorns.

July was also a busy and exciting month highlighted by our participation in a conference for all women called Toward a Strategy for the Lesbian Movement which was sponsored by Wages Due Lesbians of the Toronto WFH Committee. While in Toronto we had our first newspaper and videotaped interviews for a Black newspaper and a cable TV station.

In August we had a chance to rap with Selma James of the London WFH Committee, an international mover in the WFH Campaign.

We had our first fundraiser in early September and are now preparing our own documents for publication so that we can increase our contact with as many Black women as possible. We are looking forward to hearing from Black women everywhere who are moving to organize for WFH.

We can be contacted at Black Women for Wages for Housework, c/o Brown, 100 Boerum Pl., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

I am enclosing:

\$1.00     \$3.00    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I can't send a donation now but would like to remain on your mailing list.

Please send me a literature list.

Please send me a copy of the Women's Declaration of Independence.

Please take me off your mailing list.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



Please return this coupon to:  
WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK  
1356 W. 59th ST.  
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44102

## Money Makes The World Go 'Round

Women are organizing to get Wages for Housework in many parts of the world. When we say that Wages for Housework is an international perspective, we mean not only that women from all different situations are making a struggle for the wage, but also that we need each other to win. The campaign for Wages for Housework made in New York City or Naples or New Zealand brings power to us here in Ohio. We want to keep you posted on what women are doing throughout the world to win the wage.

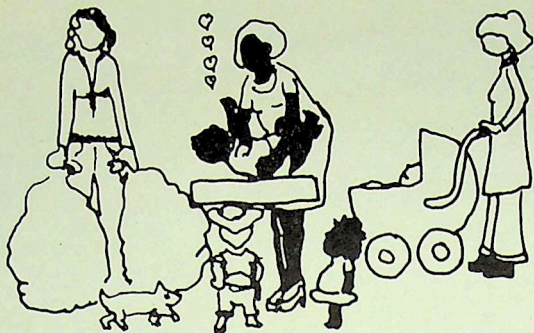
- We are happy to announce the formation of a WFH group in San Francisco.



- The Toronto WFH Committee is leading a protest by Canadian women against cutbacks in the family allowance. The government is trying to cut social services, including a family allowance of \$22 per month per child paid to every mother. The Toronto Committee is circulating petitions saying "Hands Off the Family Allowance" and demanding Wages for Housework. (Our next issue of the newsletter will include an article from Toronto.)
- In New York City women are organizing to fight cutbacks in our welfare checks. The New York WFH Committee held a conference on Welfare and Wages for Housework last spring. Out of the conference grew a demonstration; on June 29th about 100 women picketed outside NY's HEW offices protesting "Hands Off Our Money" and "We want Wages for Housework for every woman from the government."
- The WFH Campaign is now being organized in New Zealand. Their concentration is on the question of abortion, demanding the right to free, safe, voluntary abortion but also demanding Wages for Housework so that women can have the children they want.
- Selma James of London's WFH committee spoke in Jamaica to women there as the country celebrated the anniversary of its independence. Jamaican women received Selma warmly and were interested in the Campaign.

In our next issue, we will bring more news of the Campaign, including news from England and Italy.





**SAVE YOURSELF A SHOPPING TRIP!**

*Wages for Housework potholders, dishtowels, & T-shirts . . . They make wonderful Christmas gifts.*

- Please send me:  dishtowels (\$1.00 @)  
 potholders (\$ .50 @)  
 T-shirts - S M L  
                                   blue green red brown  
                                   black (\$4.50 @)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Pass This Newsletter  
Along!**

*Lesbians Organize  
For Wages For Housework*

On July 22-23 Wages Due Lesbians (an autonomous organization of lesbians within the Wages for Housework network) sponsored a conference entitled "Toward a Strategy for the Lesbian Movement" in Toronto, Canada. About 75 women from England, Canada and all over the U.S. attended.

Lesbians, like all other women, are housewives: short of time and money of their own. By refusing to serve men, they are saying no to some of the work we all do as women. That gives the rest of us more power to refuse it too. But they continue washing, cleaning and raising children at home for no pay, and doing the same work outside the home for low pay.

Many women have been prevented from "coming out" - openly being lesbian - because they need a man's money. They are afraid they might get fired from their paid job or lose custody of their children in case of divorce or separation.

As long as women are unpaid for our first job, housework, we don't have the power to choose the kinds of sexual relations we want. Without independent money, our financial dependence on them distorts those relationships as well.

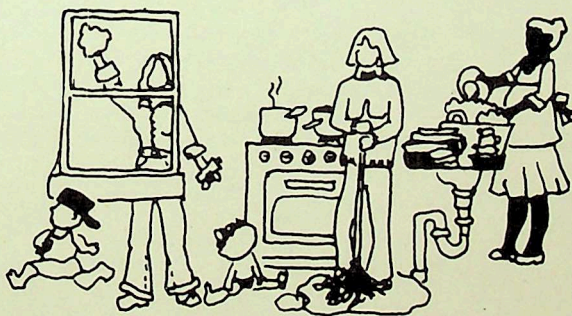
All women, lesbian or straight, need Wages for Housework. But there are differences among us. Be-

cause lesbians have less access to a man's money or a waged job, they have less power than straight women. Lesbians have, therefore, organized autonomously within the Wages for Housework Campaign so that they can make sure their needs are always expressed.

Women from Black Women for Wages for Housework also spoke on the need for autonomy for black women, especially for black lesbians.

Though the conference confronted the divisions among women, perhaps the strategy could be summed up as: Wages for Housework makes it possible for lesbians to organize with the prospect of getting something - money and power to come out. But only a movement of all women can win the wages due.

Anyone interested in more information on Wages Due Lesbians should contact us or Wages Due Lesbians/Wages for Housework Campaign, Suite 301, 745 Danforth, Toronto, Canada.



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