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NEWS

National

Gays join Day of Protest

Women speak out

On October 14th the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee organized the only event out of dozens across Canada where *women's* protest against the wage controls and cutbacks was publicly expressed.

Because they have never recognized women's unpaid labour in the home, the unions have been unable to defend women's interests on the second job. They could not, therefore, for women on the Day of Protest. In the past decade, the number of women in the paid labour force has grown by 88% and the number of women in unions by 150%. Meanwhile, the concentration of women in low-paid clerical, sales and service jobs has increased by 10% and the wage gap between men and women has *widened*.

The Women's Noon Hour Concert at City Hall Square was a protest against unpaid work in the home and low-paid work outside. Feminist singers and songwriters Rita McNeil and Boo Watson entertained a crowd of about 400, composed mainly of non-unionized workers from the downtown area and full-time housewives.

A welfare mother, an office worker, and one of the staff at Nellie's Women's Hostel gave short speeches.

Ellen Agger of Wages Due Lesbians explained how the economic crisis is affecting lesbian women and described the fight lesbians are waging against being forced by their growing poverty

back into the closet, into dependent relationships with men, or into giving up their children in order to live as lesbians.

The banner of Wages Due — "Lesbians for Wages for Housework" — was prominent throughout the events and became a rallying point for lesbian women there. Many came forward from the crowd to stand beside it and identify themselves with the lesbian face of the protest.

The women at City Hall Square had chosen to take part because they were tired of being inside the huge closet that the trade union movement is for women. They, and women who watched coverage of the Concert on the news that night, could be sure that here *their* needs and struggles would come first.

from Wages Due Lesbians □