

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK



Great Speckled Bird/cpf

*IF WOMEN WERE PAID
FOR ALL WE DO
THERE'D BE A LOT OF WAGES DUE*

ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWIVES

Why should a housewife work a 24 hour day, 7 days a week? Why, after all that work, should she get no recognition, and no money she can call her own? Why should women nowadays be forced to go out to work, on top of all we have to do at home? Why should we go home from a job to work in our kitchens for free while men doing overtime are earning extra money?



Some people will say it's because we do this work for ourselves and for our families. *We do.* But a lot of other people are making money out of our labour. If we didn't do housework and raise children, industry, government, and everything else would grind to a halt. The money for wages for housework must come from the government and from all the employers who couldn't do without our work. They may say they can't afford it, but they're holding on to the wealth that we create, which we need now more than ever.

While we're gathering the strength and numbers to win this we will fight for the time and money we're entitled to wherever we can get them.

Women are always struggling for time and money. Women have been protesting and backing up their claims in various ways. Sitting in with children at Social Security and Welfare

Offices, non-payment of rent and utility bills, demanding paid time off from outside jobs to do shopping and to look after the children are just a few examples. Women have learned to fight back.

*No woman should be forced
to depend on a man*

BEGINNINGS

Welfare mothers are women who have already won some money from the government for their work in the home. But welfare money is not nearly enough, it is hardly enough for a woman to live on. But it is money she gets independently from any man. If *all* women demand money for housework, we will have the power to refuse supervision by case workers or inspectors.

The government tries to make us believe that women should be ashamed to be on Welfare; they say these women are lazy, and that they get money for no work. But the only difference between Welfare mothers and all mothers is Welfare mothers have no husband. The money which the government gives a woman on Welfare is not just for her children, it is so she can and will do the work to raise her children. Housework is a full-time job for all of us, and whether we are married or have children, or work outside the home, or not, we *all* want to be paid for this job.



OUR WORK

Housework is a full-time job; we can't punch in or punch out. We are on call from the time we get up in the morning till we go to bed at night. Because our work is unpaid, it is stretched out to cover the entire day. Our time is not our own; we are always cooking, cleaning, fixing, babysitting, shopping, comforting, fighting to make ends meet. In 1975 women are still using a rag to dust the furniture; we are still sweeping our houses with a broom! But because we don't get paid for the work we do, since it is 'natural' to us, nobody cares how long it takes.

When we go out to work because we need money, we are forced to do a double shift. We work two jobs for half the price of one! Because women are used to working without wages, the bosses can pay us less and get away with it. We work in jobs that are extensions of housework, as secretaries, nurses, teachers, waitresses, social workers. On the job we are expected to smile, be sexy, be good listeners, make coffee for our bosses. And at night, we go home to more work, to our full-time job in the home.

OUR "NATURE"

In addition to all our home-making skills, our "natural" woman's role demands that we hold together, both materially and emotionally, the lives of the men with whom we live and work. We are told we're good managers of the *tedious* - family budgeting, day to day conflicts, maintenance of our homes. Whatever our status at the workplace, whether we are secretaries or executives, we are expected to bring with us these "womanly" skills. We bolster our bosses' egos, and keep things running smoothly. We are responsible for both the physical (is there coffee? is the office neat and cheerful?) and spiritual environment in our work both inside and outside the home.

Yes, we care about our families, our mates, our bosses. What we fight are the expectations, and guilt we feel when we put ourselves first. Our role cuts our own throats. When we are good-natured and loving, we are manipulated. When we act upon our own impulses - admit we are tired, display our dissatisfaction - we are condemned as selfish.

GETTING TOGETHER

As housewives we are separated from each other in our many individual homes. Even if we work outside the home we have no time for meetings or just socializing with other workers because we have to rush home to fix dinner or pick up the kids. But as women, we all share the same frustrations because *we all work as housewives*. By finding the time to get together and talk we can explore our common experiences and our differences. We can discover strengths in our various situations; whether we are at home, at an outside job, married or single, mothers or childless, we can use our power in these various *situations - together* - to make changes for all of us. We may have to begin by demanding time off from home or office or free daycare for our children just so we can all meet together. *Each step is a struggle* but each struggle builds our power to refuse that work we have been doing all our lives for free. When we demand Wages for Housework, *every step we take together* will make us stronger!

IF WE HAD A WAGE:

-we could spend more on food; high prices means more work for us--we have to search for the cheapest supermarket and then find a hundred ways to make hamburger interesting.

-we could send the drapes to the dry cleaners.

-we could go *out* to dinner when we're tired of cooking.

-we could take a course, or get the education we never got before.

-we could send our children to camp for the summer.

-we could buy a washing machine instead of going to the laundromat.

-our husbands could take a day off to be with the family.

-we would have the choice whether or not to work outside the home.

-we would have the money to take a bus and leave for a while (and take a *real* vacation) or leave for good.

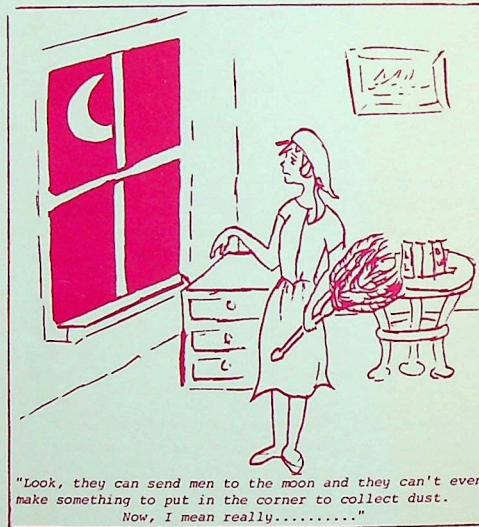
-we would have the choice *not* to have children or to be able to afford *to have* children.

-men would realize that even though we love them, doing their housework is work and *we don't love it!*

MONEY IS POWER



MONEY IS CHOICE



ALL OVER THE WORLD WOMEN ARE FIGHTING AGAINST THE WORK WE DO

In England: Women are refusing to pay rent on the houses they have kept clean for years. When the government tried to take the family allowance away from women, a national campaign was mounted which stopped them.

In Germany: Three thousand women went out on strike to win one paid day a week to do their shopping and laundry, etc.

In the U.S.A.: Women in a psychiatric hospital in New York demanded and won one hour off a week to organize for better wages. When that wasn't enough they demanded and won another hour.

In Canada: In Ottawa secretaries went out demanding to be paid for the amount of work they do rather than by the status of their bosses. In Toronto the Mother-Led Union, an organization of welfare mothers, is demanding parity with foster mothers who get a lot more money for the same work.

In Northern Ireland: Women are waging rent strikes and are self-reducing utility rates. They are daily facing the violence of British troops and although hundreds of women have been jailed, resistance is growing.

In Spain: Women are in the forefront in the resistance against fascism. They face torture and death. Two feminists have recently been accused of assassinating the prime minister.

In Italy: Some women in Trento are on trial for announcing that they have had abortions. An abortion clinic was closed in Florence and the women and doctors arrested. Ten-thousand women marched in protest in Rome.

In India: The State is bribing women with transistor radios to submit to sterilization and birth control. Internationally women want the right to choose whether or not to have children.



We Are All Teachers, Secretaries, Nurses, Social Workers, Cleaners, Prostitutes, Waitresses, Cooks, Child Care Workers.

Oberlin Wages for Housework Collective

775-0846 or 774-8149

If you would like some more literature, if you would like to discuss Wages for Housework - Call us.



WOMEN ARE WORKERS TOO!

May 3 all day
in Wilder Bowl

literature table
guerilla theater
Come talk with us!

