



for
LOVE
on
MONEY?

FC, cartella 1/20

MORE MONEY FOR WOMEN WORKERS!

We are going through with the struggle in spite of parliamentary enquiries and in spite of the RCN. In spite of the fact that because most of us are women, the government never thought we would do anything except complain to each other.

As nurses we are constantly reminded that we must behave in a professional way. But conducting ourselves in a professional way hasn't got us anywhere in the past. What's professional about low pay?

To be a professional nurse is to be a professional mother. That's why we don't get paid anything. They expect mothers and nurses to do it all for love. The only way we'll ever get anything is to recognise that all of us - nurses, ancillaries, domestics and mothers - are WORKERS. We have to organise to fight for what we need, like every other worker.

They have used the blackmail against us that patients will suffer if we strike. But patients are suffering BECAUSE WE GET LOW WAGES. Because of low wages we are understaffed and overworked. Many of us have to go home and do another job for our families after a day's work or a 12-hour nightshift on the wards. And in that job at home, we face the same blackmail: don't let anyone else suffer, suffer yourself, in silence.

We are trained as women to accept hardship and to take orders. We are trained as nurses to fit into the hospital system, not to question anything. We are trained to accept no pay as housewives and low pay when we work out of the home. We are trained to let all decisions be taken by the person one step above. But now we are not prepared to leave decisions about our pay and conditions to anybody. We are the only ones QUALIFIED to decide.

In the past we have been divided against each other and against ourselves. They use race and nationality to divide us. They use rank and status to divide us. They

use uniforms to divide us. And they use wages to divide us. Those who get a pittance more are afraid of losing it by joining with those who get less. But we have nothing to lose by joining together and everything to gain.

We refuse to be divided any longer, by the administration of hospitals or unions or so-called professional bodies. All of us need more money, less work and more time for ourselves. No hospital can run without all its workers. If the kitchen stops, everything stops. Therefore we are all entitled to equal pay. Those of us with the lowest wages must get the biggest rise.

And all of us must get a big rise! No one counts the work that women do, in our homes, in travelling to work, especially for weekend duty, as well as the hours we spend in hospitals, factories offices, schools ... Whether we are serving people or serving machines, it's not so different, it's a job. WE NEED TO BE PAID FOR ALL THE WORK WE DO. WE NEED THE MONEY AND THE TIME TO DO MORE THAN JUST KEEP OURSELVES ALIVE TO WORK ANOTHER DAY.

No hospital worker must be threatened with loss of job, loss of training, or with deportation - as is happening with hospital workers from other countries. Black nurses face this threat as well as the extra degradation and insults they normally are forced to undergo. THERE MUST BE NO VICTIMISATION FOR STRUGGLING FOR WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY OURS.

Although we have been forbidden to use our voice and our power, now that we have begun to act, every day more becomes possible. WE WANT WAGES FOR ALL THE WORK WE WOMEN DO, FREE TIME AWAY FROM THAT WORK. The days of blackmail and "professional" submission are over. We're going to look after our own health now!

Nurses from the POWER OF WOMEN COLLECTIVE -
WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

Telephone: 263-2622 or 459-1150

signposts for working peoples' movements/ No. 4
April 1976

BENCHMARK

periodic report from the Political Economy Program Center of the Institute for Policy Studies

Benchmark is pleased to announce the publication of its first pamphlet, Culture and Politics: Notes from a Conference, by PEPC member Barbara Bick. To order, send \$1.25 for each copy to:
PEPC/IPS, 1901 Que St., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Culture and Politics: Notes from a Conference

This is a report on a unique gathering of Marxist cultural theorists, creative workers and radical activists who met for a two-day conference at the Institute for Policy Studies in October 1974. Included are summaries of four commissioned papers: "Culture and Politics", by Stanley Aronowitz; "Constituents of a Theory of the Media", by Hans Magnus Enzensberger; "If There Were a Radical Ethnomusicology - What Might a Radical Ethnomusicologist Contribute?" by Charles Kiel; and "Feminism and Culture", by Marianne Debouzy. The four sessions at which these papers were argued are recapitulated to bring into focus the major ideas discussed. The principal political arguments that underlay the continuing debate are sharply projected. The final session, "Where Do We Go From Here?", and the "Afterword" by Evan Stark, place cultural activity in its political framework. We hope that the wider dissemination of the material debated at this conference, through the publication of this pamphlet, will help advance the cultural project in U.S.' radical/socialist theory and praxis.

In the past, the "cultural struggle" has been regarded as an obligatory, but marginal, concern by serious left organizations. Recently, however, questions of culture have occupied activists in a more profound way. During the 1960's the civil rights, anti-war, university reform, and women's movements brought a recognition of the role of consciousness in the process of historical change. These

struggles were largely generated by a rejection of the values transmitted through the culture and institutions of patriarchy and capitalism. External developments also contributed to these new insights. The Chinese cultural revolution, the controversy over the right of intellectuals in the socialist world to produce art, literature and social criticism that was not consonant with official ideology, and the rise of cultural nationalism by Third World peoples, both in and out of this country, were important. Concurrently, a growing volume of theoretical studies have developed which understood culture as embracing all the forms of consciousness. In this view, consciousness has a determinant role in the political and social process, as well as being a reflection of that process.

A social order requires legitimation, as well as the wherewithal to reproduce itself. Its people must internalize its values, accept its institutions, and participate in the patterns and structures of daily life and work. This authority is given only if the social order has found a way to meet its people's needs. This is where the role of culture is seen as crucial, at times even transcending the impact of regular economic crises and material scarcity.

Stanley Aronowitz's paper was key to the conference. It provided an historical background and a critique of Marxist cultural theory and practice. The paper also discussed the interpretation of mass culture developed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer of the "Frankfurt School". These new Marxist critics examined the traditionalist theory that late capitalism would see cultural disintegration and chaos, which would be another requisite objective condition for revolution. They argue instead that culture has been turned into a uniform mass culture industry which totally penetrates all social existence. It is the chief ideological method for the control of individual consciousness and an enormously important prop for the system.

Aronowitz argued that the crucial point of a revolutionary art is to break through the chains of illusion which bind people to accept and submit to authoritarian control. Revolutionary art must help people to assert their reason and to appropriate the world. Aronowitz insisted that art forms are required that will lead first to alienation and then to transcendence. Therefore, problems of art and culture can not be addressed in a "reductionist" way.

Hans Magnus Enzensberger, in his paper, speaks about the irresistible power of the spectacle as a form of mass consumption which, along with the packaging and display of goods, advertising, archi-

ture and media, form permanent theater in which the fetishistic nature of commodities triumphs over their use value. He suggests that a socialist movement ought not to denounce the needs met by these bourgeois forms. Rather, they should take them seriously and make them politically productive. Consumption as spectacle contains the promise that want will disappear. The movement becomes the accomplice of the system when it declares these needs to be false. The point, Enzensberger says, is to show that they can be met only through a cultural revolution.

To recognize the importance of culture to politics is, of course, merely the first step. The conference was organized to enable the exchange of ideas between some of those who have been struggling with such questions as the relation between culture, politics and the socio-economic base; the relation between mass culture, popular culture and high culture; and the relation of mass culture to social reality and to new modes of communication.

The pamphlet brings the conference vividly alive through numerous direct quotations of such participants as Evan Stark, Elizabeth Martinez, Isaac Bulbus, Patty Lee Parmalee, Ronnie Davis and Lee Baxandall. Concerning practice, Parmalee proposed that

We incorporate art more into our political life because that makes it less abstract and more meaningful . . . we need to think of art, regardless of its content, as a form whereby people can relate to each other in a human way with the goal of working in the movement.

Comments on the conference--

Bruce Brown, author of Marx, Freud and the Critique of Everyday Life:
"It was a terrific conference. Best of its kind I've ever been at...immensely stimulating."

Michelle Russell, Detroit Legal Defense Committee; editor, Feminist Press:
"It has been one of the most humane exchanges I've participated in for a long time. I'm just very, very pleased that everybody here has been taking the risks they have."

PEPC was an initiator of the Culture and Politics Conference. We urge Benchmark recipients, to whom we are offering the pamphlet at the discount price of \$1.25, to order it now from: PEPC/IPS, 1901 Q St., NW Washington, DC 20009.

The Institute for Policy Studies has announced the publication of:

Common Sense for Hard Times

by Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello

"Faced with deteriorating conditions, threatened by the destruction of their established way of life, millions of people over the past 2 years have begun questioning aspects of their society they have long taken for granted and turning to actions they have never before considered....this book will examine the problems of daily life as they are experienced, uncover their roots in the way our society is organized, report on the ways people are already getting together to cope with them, and show how these actions can be made the starting point for a challenge to the power of those who control the life of our society." (from the introduction)

To order this book, send \$4.50 (incl. postage) for each copy to: Common Sense/IPS, 1901 Que St. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

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AIRMAIL

The Wages for Housework Campaign Presents:

ALL WORK AND NO PAY



We can't afford to work
"for love" at home and for
"pin money" outside.

We want
WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK
from the state for **ALL WOMEN**.

Until we get wages for housework
we'll never have time of our own,
and we'll never see "equal pay".

Watch **BBC2**

Sat. 7th Feb 10.55 pm

Sat. 14th Feb 6.30 pm

Wages for Housework Women's Centre, 129 Drummond St, London NW1
387 3550 or 459 1150. Bristol 422116 Cambridge 57142

Published jointly by Falling Wall Press and New York Wages for Housework Committee

COUNTER-PLANNING FROM THE KITCHEN

COUNTER-PLANNING FROM THE KITCHEN:

Wages for Housework—A Perspective on Capital and the Left

by Nicole Cox and Silvia Federici

"Moreover, our struggle for the wage opens for the waged and the unwaged alike the question of the real length of the working day. Up to now the working class, male and female, had its working day defined by capital—from punching in to punching out. That defined the time we belonged to capital and the time we belonged to ourselves. But we have never belonged to ourselves, we have always belonged to capital every moment of our lives. And it is time that we make capital pay for every moment of it."

"Today the left is more cautious but not less determined to tie us to the kitchen, whether in its present form or in a more rationalized, productive one. They do not want to abolish housework, because they do not want to abolish factory work. In our case they would like us to do both kinds of work . . . With this pamphlet we want finally to differentiate ourselves from the left by a class line. The knife that draws that line is feminist, but what it divides are not men from women, but the technocracy from the working class it aims to supervise."

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HOUSEWORK :

“ A FULL-TIME BLOOMING JOB.”

Women Talking -

**the other
Cambridge**

This pamphlet was put together by some members of the Romsey Town Women's group - Cambridge

Published by the Cambridge Wages for Housework Group
The Cambridge Wages for Housework Group meets on Wednesdays at 8pm. For further details ring 0223 - 57142

Obtainable from:

Wages for Housework Group, 19 City Road, Cambridge
Falling Wall Press Ltd., 79 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol



On Saturday, May 3rd, 1975, passers-by were surprised to see several women from the Romsey Women's Group walking around with tape-recorders outside the Co-op on Mill Rd. Broadway. They were asking women who were shopping there about the work they do. This was a new idea for many, who thought of themselves as "just housewives" whose work was not worth talk-

ing about. But we thought it was very interesting indeed, and so we have printed some of the recorded interviews here.

What made us think of interviewing women about housework? Well, we are a women's group and housework is something all women do. At an early age, we learn with toy irons and brooms that this is part of our "natural" function, and when we are old we are pensioned off five years earlier than men so we can look after our men when they retire. All around us - on TV, in books, magazines, papers, in adverts - we see what we are supposed to live up to: the immaculately dressed, smiling, self-sacrificing figure who *always* uses the right brand of washing powder and keeps her hands soft as well. But we know that that glossy image is not really us. We know housework is a job with long hours and no pay. We know we often get tired, bored and lonely, though we are not supposed to complain.

Some of us go out to work, mainly to make ends meet, but also for a bit of company and change of scene. When we do, we often find ourselves doing the same sort of jobs we do at home - cleaning, nursing, catering, looking after children, etc. (see Table on p.19). No

wonder the pay is low; there are so many of us, and we are so used to work for nothing that we are obliged to take any sum of money however small.

Our group has been discussing housework for some time - why is it supposed to be the God-given role of women? Why isn't it even counted as work? Why are we paid no wages for the work we do at home and low wages for the so-called "women's jobs" we can get outside?

We decided somebody is making money out of our work:- not our husbands, maybe not any one individual employer, but certainly all employers as a whole - the people who run the country. In exchange for one man's wage they, the employers and the government, get a package deal. They get the labour of the man, which they also make a profit out of, and the labour of the woman who services the man, provides his meals, washes his clothes and manages his home so that he is free to spend all his waking life working for them. In addition the woman produces and maintains the workers of the future. So it is obviously in the interests of the ruling class that women should be unpaid housewives and they try to keep it that way.

What can we do about it? We talked for a long time about the need for better nurseries so that women are not tied to their young children all day long. We thought about things like communal laundries or kitchens to share our work and make it more efficient and less isolated. These things are obviously very necessary and desirable, but they aren't enough. Besides we stand no chance of getting them while we are still doing the same work for free.

We think what women really need is money of their own, so they won't be in the powerless position of always depending on someone else's wages. In other words what we need is wages for the work we already do - wages for housework.

A million questions come to mind immediately - where is the

4

money coming from, how are we going to get this wage, etc. We can't really go into all these things here except to say there's plenty of money around and we think women should get some of it. (Just think of all the millions that go down the drain on things like propping up a dying car industry, defence, top people's salaries, building endless blocks of huge, ugly offices, etc. etc.) The fact that our housework is essential to keep society running is our strength: it means that we have some bargaining power. We can use our work to demand a wage for it, for example by refusing to work, by depositing our children outside government offices, by refusing to pay rent, etc. All of which, if done by sufficient numbers of women, is no mean thing. And we must fight for the wage on our own terms, not somebody else's.

This is not just our idea - all over the world women are getting together and organising to demand wages from the state: in Germany, 3000 women factory workers went on strike for a paid day off work to do housework and shopping; in Canada, on May Day, women held demonstrations and rallies; in Northern Italy women took over public squares to demonstrate for a wage. The International Wages-for-Housework movement is steadily gaining numbers.



Cambridge, 3rd May 1975.
Talking to women about
their work.

5

Just a housewife

- I. You said you don't do any work - you're just a housewife?
- W. Well, I do work but I am a housewife.
- I. Can you tell us how much work you do?
- W. Well all the house, all the time really.
- I. Do you have children?
- W. Yes, two children, 7 and 5.
- I. When do you have to get up in the morning?
- W. Half past seven. It's not too early.
- I. And you work all day?
- W. Well, on and off. They come home to dinner so I'm...well, if you call it work, well I...I suppose you do call it work in a way, cooking and sewing.
- I. Don't you call it work?
- W. Oh yes. It's quite enjoyable, I suppose.
- I. Does your husband work long hours?
- W. From 8 till 5.
- I. Does he help any?
- W. He does the garden and the decorating.
- I. Do you have any interest in taking a job, or is that something you don't feel like doing?
- W. If the children didn't come home to dinner I expect I would. But it tires you a lot, and then there's the holidays.
- I. Do you find that you've got enough money to make ends meet?
- W. I just have so much every week for housekeeping to buy the food. I could do with a bit more for clothes and things.
- I. Do you think the work you do should be paid?
- W. Oh yes.
- I. You'd like to see a wage for housework?
- W. Yes, of course.

It's a full-time blooming job.....

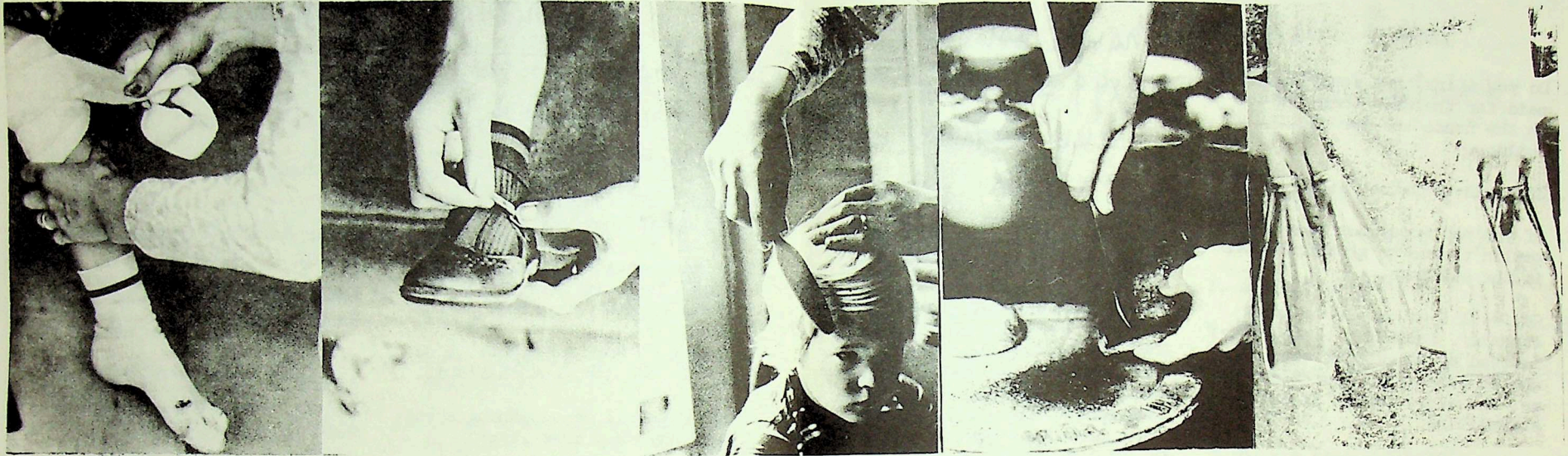
- I. Would you like to talk to us for a few minutes about the work that you do?
- W. Oh, I'm a housewife.
- I. Does that mean that you don't work?
- W. Oh I don't go out to work, love, no.
- I. You don't do anything?
- W. I'm just a housewife, well I suppose that is work really. It's a full-time blooming job, girl, it is that.
- I. Do you have to get up early?
- W. Well, I get up at about 7am, get my son off to work, then my husband, then I start the day's chores. Shopping and washing, back to the beginning again. I could do it with me eyes closed, I could! I've done it for that many years, I have, yes.
- I. Why do you think people say they don't work when they do all this in the home?
- W. Well, I don't know. It comes so natural to them and all that. They don't take no notice of it they don't. That's what it is, you see.
- I. You have children?
- W. Oh just the one boy. 19 he is.
- I. Have you ever wanted to take a job?
- W. Oh yes, I used to work at the laundry.
- I. When your son was young?
- W. Yes, yes. It was terrible, real hard work. Then you had to come home and do all your housework. Time I'd finished with that, I was ready for bed.
- I. Do you think that it would have been good if you could have been paid for the work you did in the house?
- W. Oh I would, that I would. With the money we get today, well, it's not worth my husband handing it over to me. Not today, no, no.
- I. But today you don't think of working outside the house?
- W. Oh no, I've got enough to do inside. To keep that going, to keep the work down.
- I. Does your husband help you?
- W. Now and again, now and again. Depends what mood he's in. Otherwise...oh, he helps a bit, he's a good old boy, I wouldn't be without him.

It'll have to be very quickly

- I. Can you talk to us about the work you do? W. No.
- W. It'll have to be very quickly. I. None at all? Have you ever asked him to?
- I. Do you work outside your home? W. Well I've tried but I think it's more, well I can get it done easier myself, let's put it that way, it's quicker.
- W. Yes, I've got a part-time job in one of the colleges, servery side. I. Do you work outside your home because you like to or from necessity?
- I. And you've got two children? W. Yes, these two are mine.
- W. Yes, these two are mine. I. How much work would you say you do in the home? W. Both. Financial gain and I enjoy working.
- I. How much work would you say you do in the home? W. Well, sufficient. Depends how I feel and what needs doing. I. Do you think that women should be paid for the housework that they're doing in their homes?
- I. Can you give me a rough idea of how your day goes? W. In a way, yes. I think your housekeeping allowance should cover it. I don't believe many people's do.
- W. Up around seven, breakfast, and at the moment I have to wash the kiddy as one has a broken arm, so he can't do it himself. I usually do my beds and things before I go to work, wash up breakfast things, I drop these at school, then off to work. I don't have to be there until half-past nine, then I'm back again around half-past two, do a few more odd things that need doing, go and pick them up from school, get tea ready. Occasional evenings are spent ironing or washing, depends how I feel. I. What do you do in the half-terms and holidays?
- I. Does your husband do any housework? W. Well, I have a very good neighbour and friend who has them for me. She has younger children so of course she can't do anything other than be at home.
- I. How did you manage when they were smaller, pre-school? W. I didn't work them. I used to help my brother occasionally, but that wasn't work as such. That was evening time.

I don't do anything

- I. What kind of work do you do? W. Me? I don't do anything.
- I. Nothing at all? I. How long do you go out to work for?
- W. Just look after him. (Young child with her) W. It depends on how long the dinner I'm doing is.
- I. Do you consider that you don't work, or is it that you don't work outside your home? I. What time do you usually get back?
- W. Well I do work at nights, I do a waitress job, but that's it. W. It varies, on the length of the dinner, sometimes twelve, it may be nine-thirty, it may be eight-thirty. It depends.
- I. Can you tell me something about your day? How does it go? I. When you first started talking to me you said you didn't do anything!
- W. Starts about five in the morning, when he gets up. From there I get up, do all the washing, get it out by about six, my husband gets up, I get him off to work, get this one off to school, the other child comes with us, do the shopping. Then I have two or three friends in for coffee and then prepare lunch. My father comes to lunch as well. Then I wash up, go out again in the afternoon till three. Get ready to meet the child from school, pick him up at half-past, come home, get tea, get evening meal. About six my husband comes in so we eat, the kids go to bed, wash up again and then go out to work. That's it. W. Well, it's not like someone who goes out to work all the time.
- I. What about your husband, does he help you with any of it? W. No, no.
- I. What sort of hours does he work? W. He works eight till six.
- I. What does he do in the evenings? W. Goes to sleep most of the time! Or he'll watch television or something, he's so whacked.



And then I really should scrub the floor, and the washing-up's piling up in the sink, and little Janie's upset because

she can't do her homework, and somewhere I've got to find time to do the shopping....



I. Do you think that you should be paid for the work that you do in the house and for the children?

W. It would be rather nice.

I. If you had money for that you wouldn't have to go out to work in the evenings.

W. Oh, well I go out for a break actually. You know, to get away. Instead of being just someone's mum or someone's wife, I can be me. The conversation is more stimulating.

I. Do you find that you get very tired?

W. You do get tired, but not unduly. It's a pace that you set, it's all fast living now, isn't it.

I. You seem incredibly cheerful for someone who gets up at 5 in the morning.

W. I've just got used to it.

I. Well, thank you.....

No Time

W. I'm a housewife - I haven't got the time to stop.

I. Can you give me a picture of what your working day is like?

W. Yes, I get up about 7, give the children their breakfast, get them off to school, wash up, come shopping, go back and do the washing, if I can I put them both to bed for a rest, which isn't always possible. Then there is lunch to make, oh and I finish up somewhere along the line.

In the meantime I'm usually getting stopped to do something for one of them, or both of them. I get on with lunch, and then the children lunch and my husband's, he has his whenever he comes in.

After lunch, I wash up, if I can, if it's nice I take the children out and play with them. Sometimes I have odd jobs to do, you know, ironing or polishing, bit more cleaning up or something. Then I do tea, feed them and put them to bed, then in the evening I cook the evening meal and collapse into a chair at about half past 8.

I. Quite a full working day. What work does your husband do?

I haven't got the energy left to do any reading

W. He's post office counter clerk.

I. Does he work long hours?

W. Sometimes. He does a lot of overtime yes.

I. Do you think that, as you work very hard, you should be paid for the work you do?

W. I don't know really. It would be nice to have another bit of independence really, moneywise, but apart from that..... The only times I really mind is coming up to birthdays, when I have to go and say, "can I have some money for your present?", which is a bit silly really.

I. Do you find much time for yourself, to do the things you are interested in?

W. Sometimes in the evenings I can. I get time to play the piano, or listen to some records. I find I haven't got the energy left to do any reading, I haven't the mental capacity left after I've finished humping them around all day.

I. Thank you.

I come home
To the hard work

I. Do you work?

W. Yes, I have a job.

I. are you married?

W. Yes.

I. You also work in your home?

W. Yes.

I. Do you have children?

W. Yes, five.

I. What is your job?

W. Hand stitching, outside the house.

I. Where do your children go while you work?

W. They are still at school.

I. Do you have any small children?

W. The son is nearly 17, the daughter is 15, another son about 14, another daughter 11 and a son nearly 10.

I. Do you do very much work in your home?

W. Yes, I do - with five children there's a lot to do, cook, clean, wash, iron.

I. Yes, do you get up early in the morning?

W. About 6.15 am.

I. And when do you go out to work?

W. I leave home about 8.

I. Before you go to work you must do many things in the house, what do you do?

W. Make breakfast - oh, first make the beds, come downstairs and make the children's breakfast, and after that get the children ready for school. I go to work at 8 and then the children go to school.

I. Is your job far away?

W. In the city centre.

I. How many hours work do you do in the city centre?

W. Before, I used to work full-time, now I only do 8.45 am to 4 pm.

I. Then what do you do?

W. I come home to the hard work! Cook, clean for the children and go to bed in the evening at 11,30 pm.

I. Really? You work all evening? What about your husband?

W. My husband isn't living here - he's living in Colchester.

I. So he's not here at all. Do your children help?

W. My daughters, yes they help me.

I. And your sons, what do they do?

W. Yes, they help, sometimes.

I. Sometimes. What do they do?

W. They Hoover.

I. And your daughters?

W. Oh she makes a cup of tea, whatever there is to be done, cleaning, ironing - lots of things.

I. She does many things. Do you find it difficult finding money for the things you need?

W. Well, I manage.

I. Do you think it would be good if you could get paid for the work you do in your house?

W. Yes, that would be fine.

I. If you could get paid for the work you do in your house, would you want to work outside?

W. Oh, no, no.

I. When your children were small, did you work then?

W. No.

I Think the State should Keep Them

I. Do you feel that the work you do in the house is quite a lot of work - quite hard work?

W. No, no, not nowadays.

I. Have you had children?

W. Yes, I've got one boy, he's married.

I. When he was small, what did you do?

W. Didn't go out to work, no. I didn't believe in that. My son was 14 before I went out. I don't believe in mothers going out to work, leaving their young children.

I. Why is that?

W. Because I don't. I mean look at the accidents and what can happen to a child in the home. For instance, I know someone, a relation of my husband, her little girl nearly got burnt to death because she was in while her mother was out to work. I don't believe in leaving children.

I. But if there were -

W. - I think the state should keep them, we pay enough to keep them. I mean what's wrong with the government keeping us anyway?

I. What do you mean, in the government keeping us?

W. Keeping mothers. Give them more money. I think that mothers should have money of their own. I mean look what they pay in housekeeping. You get your housekeeping money but what has she got for herself? And I think that the government should give us a grant, each week, to keep us, to keep the mothers at home, I do really.

Too much work

- I. Could you talk to us about the work that women do?
- M. Too much work. (husband)
- W. Well, I do plenty.



- M. Tell them what you're always telling me.
- W. Oh, well I spend three hours in the morning -
- M. No, tell them how you used to work for pin money.
- W. Well, yes I did. But now I have to do it to help the housekeeping.
- I. So you've got an outside job too?
- W. Yes.
- I. So it's a pretty full day?
- W. Oh it's more than that. You could do 24 hours if they let you. Well, it used to be a case of put your feet up after dinner, but not any more.
- I. Perhaps you could give me a rough list of the jobs that you do in the week.
- W. Well, it's easier now. But up to two months ago I had a full house. My father for instance. I had him and all my kids at home. That made seven of us. I went to work three hours in the mornings, I came home, did the lunch, you spend your afternoons cleaning and you've got to teatime. And you spend your evenings ironing. I used to make a few soft toys in the evenings to stretch the money but I've packed that up now. I reckon if you sit

down by 9.30 at night you're lucky. That's a full day. You go to bed at 10.30 or 11 pm and what have you had? About 1½ hours to yourself. But we have a very busy life. Very busy. Until recently I had my father at home. Fortunately he's just died a few days ago so I can relax a bit.

- I. That's a bit bad though, isn't it, when you -
- W. Oh, I miss him. I'd rather have him but they mean a lot of work. At 80, they take a bit of looking after. But I suppose it applies to most women, all the work. I used to use my job for pin money but now I come straight home and put it in the housekeeping. Just spent it on this week-end's shopping, cost me £12.
- I. And it's always the woman who has to shop around.
- W. Oh yes. There's three males in my house but it all hinges on the woman. You see I'm a bed-maker so I do the same things at work, washing up, making beds, cleaning rooms - I come home and do it all again.
- I. Yes. A lot of women's jobs are like that.
- W. Yes. A complete bore. You do it because you can't get anything else, the hours to fit a family.

- I. It's so useless too, because once you've cleaned up it gets dirty again.
- W. Very much. It's all useless.

You get so bored at home all week

- I. Excuse me, would you like to talk to us about the work that you do? We feel that people don't take a lot of notice of women's work generally. Do you work?
- W. Yes but only part time. I've got two young children but I go out because I enjoy work.
- I. Do you work in your house as well?
- W. Yes. I enjoy going out though because you get so bored at home all week.
- I. Yes. How many hours would you say you worked in a week including your housework?

No Time to relax

W. Well, 20 hours at work but you're working 24 hours a day at home. You go to bed about 11pm, 12pm, then you get up early in the morning.

I. Do you think that you could describe a typical day in your life?

W. Well, you start about 6.30am, get breakfast ready, get them up, get the family up, give them breakfast and get them ready for school. And there's your clearing up to do, washing and then prepare dinner. Once I've got that clear I go out to work, come home and do tea and start all over again. Then there's the ironing, wash the children and get them off to bed. You've just about had it by then. Then if you're lucky you might go out one night.

I. Do you have any help with the children or are they completely your responsibility?

W. They're my responsibility.

I. Excuse me, would you like to talk to us about the work that women do.

W. Oh, I work all day and go to the hospital in the evenings.

I. You work there, do you?

W. Yes.

I. Do you have to -

W. - to make ends meet, yes dear. So your day's took up really, whole of the day. No time to relax.

I. We're talking to women about the work that they do because a lot of people don't realise how much women do. They just accept that the housework's done, the meals are cooked, the kids are looked after and they say "Oh it's all right for them, they just stop at home." So it only gets called work if they go out and get paid for it.

W. Well I don't know what to say. We're overworked, there's no time to do anything.

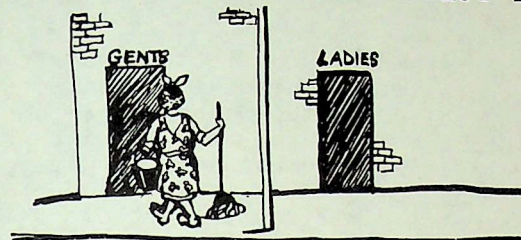
I. Do you find rising prices make it harder for you?

W. Yes, it means you have to shop around a lot more...are you taping all that?

I. Yes.

W. Oh dear!

WHO DOES THE DIRTY WORK ?



occupation	gents	ladies
Apprenticeships:--	42% of boys at work	7% girls at work
Day Release for further education :-	40 % of boys at work	10% of girls at work
M.P's:-	604	26
T.U.C. General Council:-	37	2
Trade Union Officials:-	1,375	25
Managers	400,000	3,000
Draughtsmen:-	99%	1%
Directors of Social Services:-	147	14
Boards of Nationalised Industries:-	422	5
Barristers:-	96%	4%
Doctors:-	85%	15% (quota operated by medical schools)
Engineers and Scientists:-	93%	7%
Jurors:-	89%	11%
Magistrates:- (Lay- unpaid)	66%	33%
(Stipendiaries :-)	49	2)
Professors:-	3,281	44
Education:-		
% which go on to university of those who have 2 or more 'A' levels	70%	40%
Housework	1%	99%

This booklet consists mainly of interviews with women workers, both in and out of the home. It was compiled and edited by the Cambridge Wages for Housework Group who, at the time the interviews were recorded, were members of the Romsey Town Women's Group. Romsey Town is the oldest working class area of Cambridge, a part of Cambridge that is rarely mentioned, concealed behind glossy images of a luxurious spacious university town with rich idle young students floating on punts down the River Cam. Romsey consists of grey terraces of small Victorian houses with pre-war council estates behind them. Here the men workers service the university as porters, waiters, etc. and work for the two main industries, Marshalls heavy goods vehicles and aeroplanes and Pye's electronics. The women workers also service the university, as bed-makers, cooks, waitresses, cleaners, etc., and also, of course, service the men and children and work in the home.

Here is the experience of some of these women and their views about it. The interviews were recorded outside the Co-op supermarket on Mill Road Broadway, the shopping street of Romsey Town, on a Saturday morning in May.

OUR BODIES, OUR STRUGGLE



For years we women have fought for and defended our right to FREE AND SAFE ABORTION ON DEMAND. We know every child means years of unpaid work and dependence on men. Abortion is our refusal of that work and that dependence. And we are not going back to backstreet butchers.

But abortion is only part of control of our bodies. Butchers in the NHS are operating right now, sterilising women without even telling them. If we're not married or if we're black or immigrant, the medical butchers deny us the right to have children.

Because we work for no pay at home and low pay in outside jobs, many of us have to wait years till we can 'afford' the children we want. With the crisis, mothers are giving their children away because they have no money to feed them, to house them, to look after them. Having no money denies us the right to have children.

Governments all over the world want to dictate to women which of us will bear and raise workers for them and how many. Population planners blame starvation and pollution on our having children to make us feel guilty if we get pregnant. And they are using our own struggle against us - to deny us the right to have children.

Control of our bodies begins with control of our struggle. NAC is led by parliamentarians and political parties; our needs as women have never been their concern. They are building their power on the energy of thousands of women who have been fighting for the right to choose if, when and how many children we have, and under what conditions. But NAC says abortion is 'the right to choose'. It isn't if you face sterilisation. It isn't if you can't afford children.

WE DEMAND THE RIGHT TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN

London Wages for Housework Committee
Wages for Housework Women's Centre
129 Drummond Street, London, N.W.1

tel: 387-3550
459-1150

Bristol 422116 Cambridge 57142

WOMEN TALKING—THE OTHER CAMBRIDGE

This pamphlet contains the transcribed text of interviews tape-recorded in a working class shopping area in Cambridge, England. The women interviewed talk about the work they do in the home and out of it.

There is an Introduction in which the perspective of wages for housework is presented. There are also pictures and cartoons.

The pamphlet was compiled and edited by the Cambridge Wages for Housework Group, who were at the time the interviews were recorded members of the Romsey Town Women's Group. Romsey Town is the oldest working class area of Cambridge, a part of Cambridge that is rarely mentioned, concealed behind glossy images of a luxurious, spacious university town. Romsey consists of grey terraces of small Victorian houses with pre-war council estates behind them. The men who live here service the university as porters, waiters etc., and work for the two main industries, Marshall's—heavy goods vehicles and aeroplane parts— and Pye Electronics. The women, too, service the university, as bedmakers, cooks, waitresses, cleaners etc.—and also, of course, service the men and do the work in the home. In this pamphlet, the women talk about their experience as workers.

20pp. 10p plus 8p postage

Available in Cambridge from: Cambridge Wages for Housework Group
19 City Road
Cambridge

Orders from elsewhere to: Falling Wall Book Service
79 Richmond Road
Montpelier
Bristol BS6 5EP

(Trade terms—as usual)

Increase Family Allowance Now!

Cutting our money, doubling our work

The Labour government has chosen its cuts carefully. And we women are the prime target. As always, we are expected to do without, to put our own needs last, to have no money in our pockets. Education and nursery cuts take away our wages as teachers, cooks and cleaners, and increase our work at home—DOING THE SAME WORK FOR FREE. The government wants to save two ways, ON THE WAGES THEY DON'T GIVE US and ON THE EXTRA WORK THEY MAKE US DO.

Family Allowance—the woman's right

With every price rise, Family Allowance is whittled down. And they don't even call it a freeze. But having less money, we are forced to be more dependent on money from men. Why should we be? We're entitled to money in our own right. Family Allowance is often THE ONLY MONEY WE CAN CALL OUR OWN, the only recognition that housework is WORK and that EVERY mother is a WORKING MOTHER.

We women want our increase

Three years ago, we women fought to keep Family Allowance—and won. We've led the fight for higher pensions, more Social Security, equal pay. Those of us who look after others—mothers, teachers, hospital workers—are refusing to be blackmailed into working harder for less. As the nurses said, You can't put dedication in the bank. We need the money to deal with OUR crisis.

**Our housework is worth money
like any other work**

Those of us who work full time at home have been picked to be the symbols of self-sacrifice. But ALL WOMEN are being made to pay for the present crisis. Every day we face:

- * HIGHER PRICES – More work shopping for bargains, more time cooking, and more explaining why there's less on the table.
- * REDUNDANCIES – Now when we're forced more than ever to go out to work, there are fewer jobs about. If we're laid off, many of us don't get unemployment pay—we just go home with no money.
- * GETTING LESS SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT – Unsupported mothers, widows, pensioners have to choose between heating and eating.
- * CUTS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE – We wait months and years for treatment, face induced births because of staff shortages, look after relatives and friends sent home too early from hospitals.

Because we're so used to working without pay at home and for low pay in outside jobs, they expect us to suffer in silence. But we need money as much as other workers, and we intend to get it.

FAMILY ALLOWANCE MUST INCREASE TO CATCH UP WITH PRICES AND MUST BE PAID FOR EVERY CHILD

We don't want to pay Family Allowance back in taxes, and we don't want the men to take a pay cut when we get an increase. We are all making profit for industry and corporations. Let the government get the money from them.

FAMILY ALLOWANCE MUST BE MADE TAX-FREE

Unsupported mothers never see Family Allowance. It's just deducted from Social Security.

FAMILY ALLOWANCE MUST BE PAID ON TOP OF SOCIAL SECURITY

The only way for ALL WOMEN to stop the cuts is to make the government pay for ALL the work we do. Then they'll think twice before trying to make us work harder.

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK FOR ALL WOMEN FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Lesbian Women Organise in the Family Allowance Campaign

Lesbian women are always short of money. Like all women, we are feeling the pressure of the government's attack on women's independence and standard of living. We are under attack in particular ways as lesbians.

** Many lesbians have been forced to support themselves entirely on low "women's wages". The "Equal Pay" Act may sound good, but for most of us it's made no difference. Now as jobs disappear we are threatened with losing even these low wages. As lesbians we have always faced that threat - many of us have to hide who we are because we could be sacked for being lesbian. We have fought these sackings. Now we are fighting for more money for all women, so we won't be so much at the mercy of the employers.

** Many lesbians are mothers, struggling to feed our children without a man or trying to hang on inside a marriage until the children are grown. If there is a separation and a battle in court we almost always lose our children. And even when there isn't a fight we are often forced to leave them behind. Only the men have the money to support them. We need higher Family Allowances so we aren't forced to choose between ourselves and our children, and so we don't have to bring them up deprived of what they need.

** Every time money is taken away from women it's harder to be lesbian. We don't see why women should be forced to depend on men. But as the value of our money shrinks it is harder to get by without them. Most of us can't hope for a mortgage or even a decent flat. Many women who would like to come out as lesbian can't afford to abandon what little security marriage offers.

** When so many women are forced to depend on men, it looks like lesbians are only a small minority. As soon as it is known that we are lesbian we are separated off from other women and expected to keep to ourselves. But there are many more lesbian women than men would like to admit. And most women who are not lesbian are closer to other women than to anyone else. As women all win more money we will be able to decide more how we want to live, and to break down the barriers between those of us who are called "lesbian and those who are not.

We urge all women to sign and circulate this petition.

Wages Due Lesbians
Wages for Housework Women's Centre
129 Drummond St, London NW1
tel (01) 387 3550 or 961 3709

Wages for Housework Women's Centre, 129 Drummond Street, London N W 1.

FACTS ----- FACTS ----- FACTS ----- FACTS ----- FACTS ----- FACTS -----

"... we are still not earning the standard of life we are enjoying."

James Callaghan, 6 April 1976

Mr. Callaghan may be speaking for himself. But for the rest of us, we are still not enjoying the standard of life we are earning.

The government's major attack on living standards is on two fronts: on what we get in wages and on what we get in services. Since the young, the old and women have the least power, the axe is falling heaviest on us.

*WHOSE MONEY IS BEING CUT?

Wages

The £6 wage freeze is now to become a 3% - the government plan - or a 5% - the union plan - freeze. Even with tax concessions, the freeze is a wage cut since inflation has already taken what wage rises we win. No statistics available on how much housekeeping money is not given to women when men's wages drop.

Women who work in paid jobs get 57.4% of what men get - now that we have equal pay! And now that there is no sex discrimination, over half of all women in the paid labour force work in services such as catering, laundry, hairdressing - housework. These are the lower paid jobs, even for men. A wage freeze is all we need.

Women at home can get wages too - with homework on top of housework. Average pay: fulltime in 1974: £5.61 a week. Highest: £18.00; lowest: under £1. At least 250,000 women live or supplement their income this way. They never appear in wage statistics.

Family Allowance

Begun in 1946 (with 25p. for every child after the first), it is now £1.50 for every child after the first. Since 1968, fathers' earnings have been taxed on the Family Allowance their wives get. Even so, by 1974, despite rises, it bought less than half what it did in 1948. The government has hinted that it will raise Family Allowance, but men's wages will go down if they do - and mothers will be blamed and get less housekeeping. This policy was invented by the TUC in 1973: divide and conquer by sharing the poverty.

Single Parent Families

There are 485,000 women who head families with 879,000 children. 30% have jobs outside the home at women's wages - worse: at mothers' wages. (Woman's Own estimates that "having children makes a woman three times as likely to be stuck in a badly paid job.") 50% are on Social Security which is now, for a mother with two children under 10 years old, £18.10 plus rent and rates. SS don't want to pay fuel bills. To heat or eat, that is the question.

One parent families have just been given Family Allowance for the first child. All parents on Social Security have Family Allowance completely deducted from S.S. Unsupported mothers who work for a wage large enough to be taxed have it "clawed back" in taxes or, by losing other benefits, they lose more than they gain. The government sent them a letter hinting that it might not be in their interest to claim the "increase".

Men bringing up children alone are entitled to a housekeeping allowance if they go out to work, but not women alone. A man is paid for loss of a wife's work, but the woman is not paid for working!

Pensions

From November

When we're old, even if we run, we can't catch up. / Pensioners, promised a rise, will get it. A 15% rise to deal with a 22% rise in cost of living.

Since summer '74, fuel is up about 50% and food up more than 40% - the two biggest items besides rent in a pensioner's budget. Married women get pensions through the husband - even if they live separately - and while a couple gets £21.20, a married woman's share is less than £8 a week. Single pensioners (mostly women) get £13.30. Pensioners were refused help on fuel bills but their gas and electric are not to be cut off - until June.

* HOW TO MAKE PRICES GO UP

To keep prices up, food is stockpiled making "mountains" and "lakes" all over Europe. For example: 600,000-ton mountain of skim milk, and an expected 400,000-ton mountain of butter. Subsidies are being removed to raise prices to the level of the rest of the Common Market (where wages are also higher). VAT was to be a tax on luxuries but includes almost everything. But, to be fair, jewels and furs are taxed at the "luxury" rate - like washing machines!

The government itself sells us gas (up 25%), electricity (up 100%), transport (British Rail fares up 50%; in London buses up 53%, tubes 73%); telephone and postal services (up 86%). These rises in the last 18 months.

Decimalisation in 1970 and continued devaluation of the pound also raised prices. A 1962 pound is now worth 39p - according to official statistics which are not checked by housewives!

* "THE STANDARD OF LIVING WE'RE ENJOYING"

Babies - Babies are more of a luxury than ever. We have one-third fewer than in the early sixties, not only because we can't afford the work, but because we can't even afford to feed them. Parents are giving their children for adoption either because there is not enough money or not enough housing cheap enough. 100 babies under a year die in a summer week, and 200 in a January week. Could cost of clothing and heating have anything to do with it?

Medical services - £145m. cut for the next year. Half million people in hospital waiting lists while beds are empty because of staff cuts. Supplies run out, hospitals are closed, agency nurses are eliminated. Births are induced, up to 50% in some hospitals, nearly all in others, to fit the shifts of remaining staff - torture for women and for babies, 80% of whom end up in special care units separated from the mother.

One medical service expanded: by 1971 one woman in five on tranquillisers.

Childcare - One nursery place for every 100 children under five. Cut of £9m. this year, a little more than half last year's budget. But more money to go to play groups which are "more informal and less expensive" - run by voluntary (unpaid) female labour.

Schools - Planned spending cut £331m next year, £618m, year after. 7,000 teachers lost their wage this winter, and 15,000 expected by year end. Where have all the children gone? Home to mother and into overcrowded classes.

Housing - Rents unfrozen, 100,000 homeless, string moves to make squatting illegal. Housing programme cut by £365m. over the next three years.

* THE UNEMPLOYED WHO WORK HARDER

About 9m women go out to work, 40% of the paid labour force. Between Jan. and Sept. '75, number of men who lost jobs said to be 48%, number of women, 121%. But many women don't register since they don't get unemployment pay. And they won't be employed - they'll work twice as hard at home and take tranquillisers. Of 976,000 increase of women in paid employment (1959-1969), 1,146,000 were married. That is, more women have two jobs despite unemployment. How come we're not made redundant at home?

* WHERE IS THE MONEY SPENT?

Concorde: at 1974 prices - £700m. British Leyland: £1,000m. Chrysler: £162.5m. Defence: £4,566m. Army in N. Ireland: £45m. per year. And to police Britain: £1,444m. Finally, gifts to banks (it's called interest): Local authorities in 1974-75 - £1,126m. WHAT A LOT OF FAMILY ALLOWANCE.

We, the undersigned, support the following demands:

Family Allowance

To be increased to catch up with prices

To be paid for every child

To be tax free

To be paid on top of Social Security

and

Wages for Housework for all women from the government

Name	Address	Occupation

--- cut along fold ---

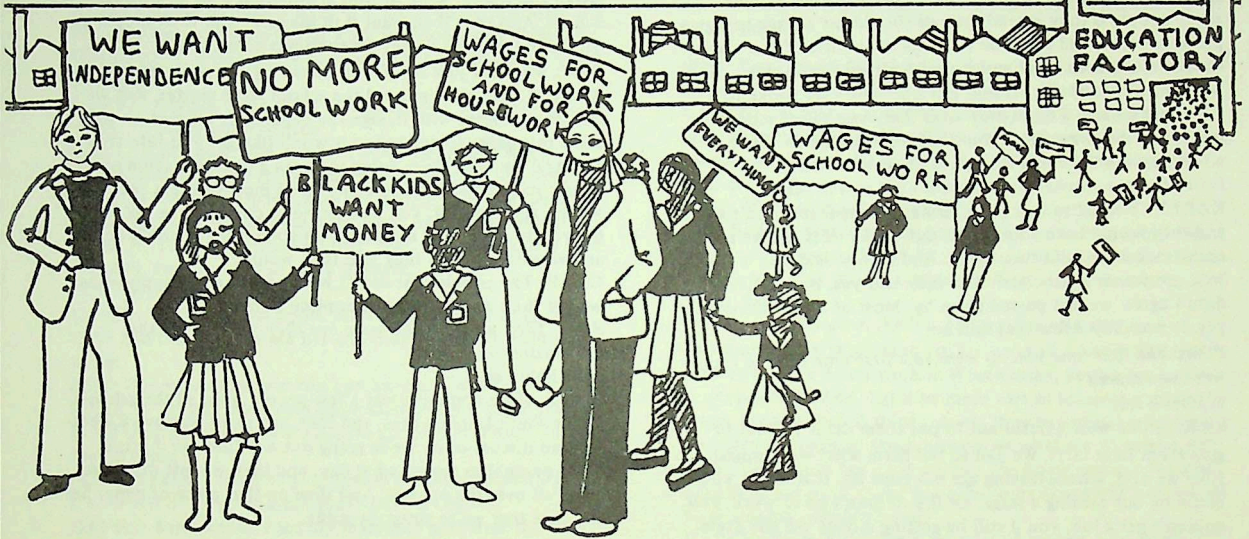
If I had the money,
I'd resign too!



PLEASE RETURN TO:

LONDON WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE
WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK WOMEN'S CENTRE
129 DRUMMOND STREET
LONDON, N.W.1

WAGES FOR SCHOOLWORK



In 1974, two girls, Gaye and Karen, from a comprehensive in South London -- Archbishop Michael Ramsey School-- began circulating a petition for wages for Schoolwork. The raising of the school-leaving age has prevented many young people from getting a job, so that we could have money of our own. Instead we are being forced to depend on parents for another year, and to do another year of work-- schoolwork --without getting paid. Schoolwork is work, learning how to submit to discipline and to do more work, when we leave. It isn't seen as work because we don't receive a wage for it -- yet. These students said, as other workers have said, that rich people and companies should be taxed, to meet their demands.

On 10th October, that year, many more students at that school joined together and occupied it. They wanted to shut down their school-building which was a "pigsty" with leaking roofs, broken windows and mouldy toilet seats. They won: the building was closed and the students moved to a new building.

"Power of Women", the magazine of the Wages for Housework Campaign, interviewed Gaye and Karen, in issue no. 2 (August 1974), and published Gaye's account of the occupation in issue no. 3 (January 1975). These two articles are reprinted here.



POW: We understand that you've been circulating a petition on wages for schoolwork. What gave you the idea?

GAYE: Well at school. Our teacher wrote an article for a magazine telling people that there should be wages for schoolchildren and he gave us one to read, and we thought it was a good idea.

POW: Did you then just discuss it among yourselves?

KAREN: No. First of all we was talking about it to the whole class. And then me and Gaye, we set up petitions, and we asked people if they agreed that we should get a wage to sign a piece of paper, and it has on it: 'This is a petition for a wage for schoolchildren', and anyone who agreed would sign. And we went all round our school. For one lesson we spoke to a class, and we had a discussion with that class about school wages and did they agree. And they were asking us where would the money come from, questions like this.

POW: Did the teachers just let you walk in like that?

KAREN: We had to be careful. Like some teachers don't agree and they would have chucked us out of the class. So we asked each teacher first did they agree. And if they said yes, we said, well can we see your class? And they said yes. But if they didn't agree, we just passed them by. Most of the teachers said yes. It was only a few that said no.

POW: The first time you all went to a first year class to speak were you scared?

BOTH: Yeah.

KAREN: We were careful not to put them off it but not to give them false facts. We had to tell them what we thought. Like we said, school-leaving age has gone up. If it never, you could be out earning a wage. Or if you didn't go to work, you couldn't get a job, you'd still be getting money off the State, wouldn't you, like the dole. So you're staying at school and you're not getting paid. And if you was a fifth year, what was your idea, would you like to get paid for coming to school? And they said, yeah.

POW: What did they say was wrong with the idea?

GAYE: Where is the money coming from was the main one.

KAREN: And would the government tax their parents more. And we weren't really sure but we said we thought like Ford, the one who makes a lot of profit, like the rich people, they would get taxed more.

POW: Was the teacher there during this discussion?

KAREN: Yes. He was asking us questions, asking them questions, asking them to ask us questions, like involving us all. And like one child said, why not pay our parents that wage? But then the government would tax them, whereas the government can't tax us.

GAYE: And like, if we was naughty, they'd say, oh you're not getting your money today, and all things like these. Like if we had our own wage, we'd be independent.

POW: So how did you feel after this first session?

GAYE: Great.

KAREN: Yeah, you know, we thought, we put our feelings over and now we're getting moving. It's not just like our own opinions. Lots of people do agree and lots of people are prepared to come on strike or a demonstration, you know.

POW: Did you discuss that in the classroom, about strike or demonstration?

GAYE: We didn't say it was a strike. We said, it isn't just for skipping school or just for laughs; it's for those people who believe in what we're doing.

KAREN: It's not for kids who want to have a half-day off or something, just to go home and have a muck-about or just a lark. It's got to be dead serious. If they believe in it, then the

best thing is to stay at school.

POW: So then you went to other classes. What did they ask you?

GAYE: The pupils in the first year, they said, how much do we get paid?

KAREN: 'We want £10 a day' or something like that. But we said we don't know.

GAYE: Fifty pence a day to start off, and we thought, when the fifth and sixth years get it, then the fourth years will go on strike and they'll want it. And gradually it'll go all through the school. And they'll all want it in the end. And then they'll go on strike for more money when things go up.

POW: What did you tell people about signing the petition?

KAREN: Like we discussed the school wage matter, and we said, if you agree with it, sign the paper. But we said we won't show this paper to anyone so it won't like get you into trouble. And we said, we're going to go on a demonstration soon; would you be prepared to come? And most of them said, they would. And we said, you don't have to come; we're not pushing you to come, but it would be a good thing if you'd come and support us. And they said they would.

GAYE: The people that didn't want to come and support us, we got their names on another piece of paper.

POW: They were for the wage but they weren't for the demonstration?

KAREN: Yes.

GAYE: If we could get just a few people from all the schools in the south London area, and then one night we have a meeting and discuss when we're going out and then we'd print some pamphlets saying what day, and then we just distribute them all over the schools. And then on that piece of paper has the date that we're going on strike.

POW: What do your parents think about this?

KAREN: Well my dad said he agreed in some ways but he's not so sure because he thinks it'll come like he'll get taxed more and that. And my mum, she agrees except that she doesn't know where the money's coming from either.

GAYE: Well my mum agrees with it. She signed her name and she said that if we had the march she would even come along with us. And my dad agrees. My mum said she would take off work that day and so would my dad.

POW: Do you think that your parents, Karen, who are not so much in favour of it, would try to prevent you from going on your demonstration?

KAREN: No. My dad said if ever I agreed with anything I should do it. If I knew all the facts, the proper facts, you know, and if I really agreed with it, I should do it. Like there was a strike for the Brockwell Three and I went on that. And I told my mum and my dad and they said, well if I really did agree, then I should go on strike.

POW: One of the problems that we've had in explaining wages for housework is that sometimes people ask us the same questions they ask you about school wages. And sometimes we can't give them an answer. But it still doesn't change our minds. What do you do when you can't answer?

KAREN: Well we've just set ourselves up. It's not an organisation or nothing like that, you know. And so I say, well we'll open the discussion soon, we'll raise that question, I say, because I've got no answer for that question just yet.

GAYE: On Friday we was gonna go out and interview people in the park, men and women, to ask them what they thought of it. But we broke up early and so we didn't get the chance. But with a bit of luck we'll do it this Friday.

KAREN: We can go round the streets with a tape recorder and just stop a passerby and say, we believe in a school wage, and we'll say why we believe this, and that. And if they agree, you know, ask them their views on it.

GAYE: And if they don't, we'll still ask them their views on it and why they don't.

KAREN: We'll play it back in school and maybe it'll give us some rough ideas what to do.

POW: *I noticed that you say 'wages for schoolchildren' sometimes. Are you a child?*

KAREN: No. For school pupils.

GAYE: Because we put it this way. If you're on a bus if you're over 14 you have to pay full fare. If you're over 14 and go to the pictures you have to pay full to get in. Well how come if we can't go out earning a wage or if we're going to school and don't get no money for doing work in school, why should we have to pay full fare in the pictures to get in and on the buses and trains?

KAREN: I typed out a thing and on it I put 'students' or 'pupils'. I never put 'children'.

GAYE: You know, like our fifth year, they don't stay at school. Although the school-leaving age has gone up, they try and get a job somewhere where the people will take them because they want to get paid, they want to be independent.

KAREN: There's a girl in our fifth year, there was a cafe over the road, and she used to work in there.

POW: *After school.*

KAREN: No, in school hours. And teachers used to go over there and they used to see her and they didn't say nothing to her.

POW: *But a lot of people don't go to school at all.*

KAREN: They prefer to get some kind of a job to be paid. But if they knew they was going to get paid at school, then they'd come.

POW: *But aren't there a lot of young people who don't go to school and don't go to a job that's paying either?*

GAYE: I don't know. Like my mate, she goes over the Oval House and that's like a place where young people go and they have drama over there, of a night time and of a daytime sometimes. And there's a free school and once it's legalised sort of thing, she wants to go there. She prefers to go there, because you can go in when you want and you can have what lesson you want when you want it.

POW: *What do you think is the difference in the need for a wage between women and men of your age?*

GAYE: I've not actually thought of that question. The boys, they get paid more anyway. From their parents. If they get a job, right, they'd get paid more anyway. And also their parents always give them more because they are boys like. It's the natural thing, boys can stay out later than girls.

POW: *It's not a natural thing.*

GAYE: Well it may not be natural but that's what happens. My brother is younger than me. And his last birthday he was 12 and I'm near 15. I had a big argument with my mum because in the weekdays I've got to be in at 10 o'clock. And they said that my brother's got to be in at 10 o'clock too. And I made a big argument about it. It's not fair at all.

POW: *What about the amount of money that a woman spends? I notice, Gaye, you have eye makeup, and I know it's expensive.*

GAYE: It's not fair though, really, because men get paid more. Yet they don't have to pay out for the little things like we have to.

KAREN: They don't wear tights either.

POW: *Are you going to raise this in your campaign?*

KAREN: Well I don't know, really. This really isn't a fight against men; it's just for the wage for all of us. The main point is they're fifth years and they've had to stay on.

GAYE: But there again the boys work the same hours as us and do the same amount of work, and if they say boys should get 10 bob extra, and the teachers agree, we'll fight against it.

POW: *How much housework do you do?*

GAYE: I have to make me bed every morning and change the sheets on a Sunday and dust me own bedroom. And then we

take turns: it's either me mum does the washing up teatime or me do the washing up and she does the wiping.

POW: *And what does your brother do?*

GAYE: Go in the living room and watch telly

POW: *So it's all thrown on your mother.*

KAREN: Yes, but there again, certain people say, what's a mum for? She's supposed to do the beds and the washing.

POW: *Are you going to do it when you get married?*

GAYE: If I have children, one does the washing up, one does the drying, one does the cleaning. But the point is that if my mum went in hospital my brother would know what's hit him, know what I mean?

POW: *You're now fourth years. But you're fighting for a wage for when you're fifth years. Why not for all school students?*

KAREN: Because in about the fourth or fifth year, you need more than what you really did in the third year and the second, because you really like more clothes if your mates have got clothes

POW: *What do you have for spending money now?*

GAYE: I got two jobs. I'm partly employed in a doctor's surgery some evenings for about a fiver a week. And then I work Friday night for the tenants' association selling tickets for blind children.

The government in the last ballot, they said that in September they're going to try and stop all jobs for children under 16. Like if you work in Woolworths, you've got to have a work permit. And that'll be more sort of towards a school wage, because they'll think, oh no, they've not got a job now, and they ain't got so much money, so what are we gonna do?

POW: *Your mum has a job outside the home and she has a bit of cash of her own. If she was a full-time housewife you would be in trouble, wouldn't you?*

KAREN: Yeah. But I don't get a lot of money, you know. I only get however much I need to go out, like a couple of bob a night. But my mum can't always do this. Sometimes she say 'You know, money don't grow on trees', and 'I only got a part-time job, you can't expect me to give you this, go and scrounge off your dad,' something like that.

GAYE: Yes, but if your dad only went to work it would have been worse still, because you only get that much money because they're both at work.

KAREN: Yes. And they give me the money because I need it. I'm not old enough so I can't get a wage from a job. So really, you know, it would be good if I had a school wage. It would make me more independent instead of having to say, oh mum, can I have some money, or dad, can I have some money?

On the 9th of October last year, two fifth years at our school got together and printed a sheet saying "we don't have to put up with the bad conditions in our school building" and that we should do something about it. So we did. We passed the word around the school early next day on the 10th. All the fifth years got to the school early and we locked the gates to our building, back and front.

On the way to school a friend and myself got a couple of telephone numbers of daily newspapers and rang them.

That morning we got into the Art room and made banners saying WE ARE KIDS NOT PIGS. At about 10.30 I rang up a couple more papers from the staffroom. We called radio and Thames and BBC TV. Then at 11.00 a couple of reporters came and we showed them around. They took pictures and interviewed some of us. Then we rang the police and told them where we were going on a march from Lambeth High Street to Camberwell. At 12.00 we got ready to march and when we got out there were about 10 policemen and two cars.

We were going to the new buildings of our school, which were only half completed. When we got there, we went up to the fifth form room and waited because Mr. Aggett, the headmaster, wanted to talk to us about the reasons for the sit-in and the march. We were talking until 1.30 and then Mr. Aggett said that we could all have a FREE dinner. After that we returned to the fifth year room and talked until 2.30. Then Mr. Aggett sent the fifth year home, all except for the committee that had sprung up, because he wanted to discuss the situation with them.

The committee got together afterwards and decided to go back to the fifth year building and decide between ourselves what to do next. By this time I really felt that we were getting somewhere. When we got back we decided that we would have an all night sit-in. One fifth former knew where Mr. Bell (the Head of the fifth year) kept his keys. So we borrowed them and got one printed. Then we put his keys back. There were now a few reporters there so we gave interviews.

We went home and decided to meet at 7.00 p.m. That night the story was in the evening papers and on Thames TV Today programme. At 7.00 we were all in the building. We'd brought coffee, other drinks, and some food. As soon as

we got there we got to work. We made more banners and hung slogans out of the windows. Then a fifth form boy, Robert Britton, made up a poem and we printed that and a few slogans on a sheet. We duplicated them on a duplicating machine, about 400 copies. We slept at about 3.00 a.m. It was very cold in the building and we didn't have much heating.

At 7.00 in the morning we heard someone banging on the gate. A couple of boys looked out of the windows and it was the caretaker. After a couple of minutes he went away. Then the phone rang and it was the caretaker. He started shouting and swearing down the phone so we just put it down. At about 8.00 the fifth year started arriving and we were letting them in through the window. Then after a while Mr. Bell and the caretaker tried to get in and they couldn't so they went round the back and got through a window. Then Steve, the caretaker, chased us up the stairs and one fifth former put his elbow through a window and it hit another fifth former on the head. She was not hurt bad.

The caretaker had by now kicked the door down and punched and kicked some of us down the stairs. He made us

unlock the gate and Mr. Aggett came in and was shouting at us. By this time I really felt sick, sick of school and everything. The teachers sent the fifth formers home, but had a meeting with the committee. We were in the new school discussing the matter for about two hours. We didn't solve much. The committee made arrangements to go to the other fifth formers' houses and discuss what we were going to do on Monday. We decided to go in on Sunday night and lock the gates again.

On Sunday evening we got in again and on Monday morning nobody we didn't want could get in. The fifth years came but instead of staying, they drifted away home. So Peter Redman and myself went to the fourth year building and got them to come out with us, so they all came over to the fifth year building. Then we told them to go over to the new building and go to the fifth year room. Half an hour after getting there, Mr. Aggett came up and said that he asked would we send the fourth years back. So we did. We were all very pleased that we started something we believed in and carried out to the end. What helped us a lot more was that most teachers were on our side.

Gaye Hill



Quick thoughts in action:

Even bacteria couldn't live here

Today they were giving away free dinners

Tomorrow they'll be giving away free O levels.

They give you ten pounds when you leave prison.

Nothing from school.

This ain't school, this is **STUDENTCIDE**
OUR PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Fifth year to be moved into Archbishop Michael Ramsay [the new school building] straight away.
2. To have more power in the matters of the new school for all years.
3. To have voluntary lessons above 4th year. But students must be on the school premises during school hours.
4. For the students in 5th and 6th year to be given a basic allowance each month to make them more independent of our parents.

N.B. These proposals are made not for the selfishness of the present fifth form, but for the students in the forms below us and for future students of this school.

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