

WAGES FOR



HOUSEWORK

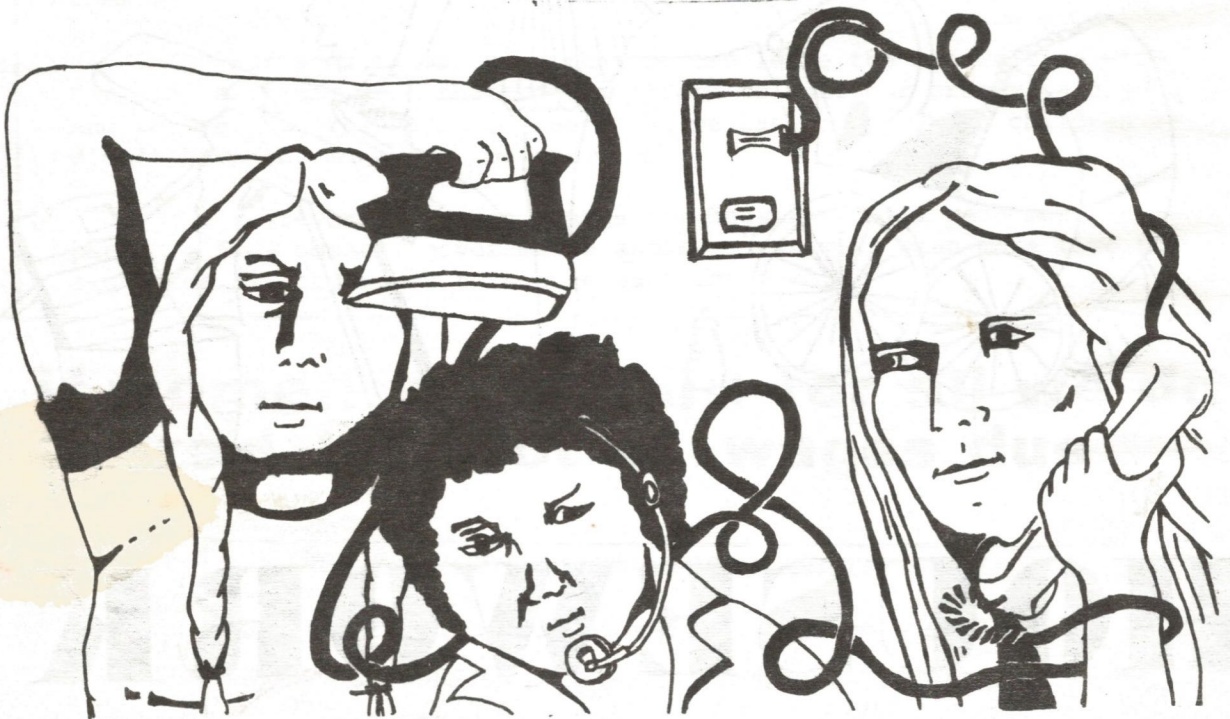
ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWORKERS

All women, whether we are self-supporting, on Family Benefits, or living with a man, are housewives. Whether we spend one hour a day or fifteen cleaning our apartments, this society expects us women to do all the housework, child-rearing, looking after and servicing others that it needs to keep functioning. In other words, to be a woman in this society is to be a housewife. And we all know that to be a housewife means to do all this work for no pay.

Men go out and work all day long and get paid for it. Nobody would dare suggest that they should do that work for free. And yet we are expected to do all this housework as an act of love. And because we aren't paid for this work, many of us are forced to get a second job outside the home. For most of us this means more "women's work" -- nursing, cleaning, waitressing, office work, prostitution, child-care work, etc. And because we aren't paid for this work in the home, it means that we get low pay when we do these same jobs outside the home.

But women are beginning to change all this. Women are coming out of their workplaces and fighting against "women's work" all over the world...

WE ARE ALWAYS CHEAP LABOUR OUTSIDE THE HOME
BECAUSE WE ARE SLAVE LABOUR IN THE HOME



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

** IN TORONTO, last year hospital workers (the majority women) and later nurses, threatened to go out on strike -- winning 30-50% wage increases.

** IN OTTAWA, secretaries in the Federal Civil Service demonstrated 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 threatening to go on strike if the government doesn't give them a "wage" increase.

** IN ENGLAND, last summer, nurses went on strike demanding paid lunch hours so they would get wages for doing their grocery shopping at noon.

** IN ENGLAND, when the government tried to take the Mother's Allowance away from women last year, 50,000 women took part in a national campaign which stopped it.

** IN GERMANY, three thousand factory workers went on strike and won their demand of one paid day off per week to do their housework.

** IN THE U.S.A., women workers in a mental health centre in Brooklyn demanded and won one paid hour off per week to organize for higher wages. When they found that wasn't enough time, they demanded and won another paid hour.

** IN ITALY, in January an abortion clinic in Florence was closed down by police and the women staff and doctors arrested. Ten thousand women marched in protest in Rome, many of them demanding wages for housework so they could also afford to have children if they wanted to.

** IN NORTHERN IRELAND, many women are waging rent strikes and refusing to pay for their utilities. When the state cuts off supplies, the women know how to reconnect them. When their welfare is cut off, they just take the kids down to the welfare office and leave them there until welfare changes its mind.

** IN CYPRUS, 20,000 Greek Cypriot women demonstrated a couple of weeks ago demanding they be allowed to return to their homes in Turkish-occupied Cyprus. They are tired of doing housework in refugee camps.

The Toronto Wages for Housework Committee is part of a network of groups of women fighting for wages for housework in other cities in Canada in Quebec, in the U.S.A., England, Germany, Australia, Italy, France, Switzerland and Mexico. Rallies are being held all over the world by these groups to celebrate May Day -- International Workers Day. We speak in many different languages, but we are all saying the same thing. Women are workers too. We work for no pay in our homes and for low pay in offices, shops and factories. But we're not going to for much longer.

We are demanding wages for housework from the State. We want the money from the State because it is the one to benefit the most from women's labour. It is the State that for too long has gotten "two workers for the price of one" -- the man who goes out to work, and the woman whose housework makes it possible for him to go out to work. It is the State that has the money to pay us wages for housework -- our money that it has robbed from us by not paying us for so long -- not the men we live with who never have enough themselves.

We are demanding that the State pay us wages for housework-- not so that we can do more housework, but so that we can do less. Because to have money of our own means that we can make some choices of our own. It means that we can "buy" time for ourselves. Steak instead of hamburger casseroles. A babysitter so that we can have an afternoon to ourselves. Ready-made clothes rather than having to make them.

For some it may mean that we can leave the man we live with. For others it may mean that we can afford to quit our crummy paid job. And for yet others, it could mean that we can now have the children we didn't have the money for before.

Whatever we choose, wages for housework will mean more independence from bosses, governments and men. It will mean more time to fight for all the other things we want and need.

**if women were paid for all we do
there'd be a lot of wages due**

TORONTO WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK COMMITTEE

922-2084 Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

*WE HAVE DISCUSSION GROUPS, VIDEO TAPES, LITERATURE,
SPEAKERS AVAILABLE TO TALK WITH YOUR GROUP.*