

Tentative Outline for the StatementWages for Housework as a feminist and therefore working class perspective

1. Wages for Housework as a political perspective opens a new ground for understanding the way capital functions and the forms our struggle against it must take. Analysing our relation to capital has led us to a redefinition of capital and the working class, that is what are the mechanisms of capitalist production and who internationally has the power to destroy it. This analysis and the strategy that follows are not our creation but an expression of the direction in which working class struggle is moving internationally.

2. Because we are women and overwhelmingly wageless workers in the home, we know that capitalist production does not only take place in the factory and is not necessarily accompanied by a pay-check. At the present level of capitalist development the creation of capital is dependent not only on direct commodity production in the factories but on a network of social services - schools, hospitals, training programmes, and above all, kitchens and bedrooms - where the creation of labour power, the human capital, takes place. Until now, only one part of the capitalist circuit, factory production, has been seen. But starting from our position as women we have discovered the hidden part of this circuit - the social factory. In the factory, labour power is consumed and commodities produced; in the community (the social factory), commodities are consumed and labour power produced and reproduced. The whole of society is an immense assembly line that runs from the factory to the community and back again. Capital is created by the working class, those of us who are shut inside the factory and waged, and those of us who are shut outside the factory and therefore wageless.

3. The main centre for the production and reproduction of labour power is the nuclear family. To describe this production and reproduction is to describe our work, our specific exploitation as women, our function for capital and therefore our main ground of power and struggle.

4. The nuclear family is our factory. It is the institution that regulates our wageless work and that embodies the power relation between the unwaged and the waged. We are wageless workers in the home to the degree that this is the most profitable way for capital to exploit us. Regardless of our situation, whether we work only in the home or also outside it, whether we are married or single, whether we have children or not, our social role as women is to be the housewives of the male workers. We are the producers and reproducers of the present and future generations of workers, whom we must train and discipline, as well as service physically, emotionally and sexually.

5. Capital has transformed our sexuality into an instrument of production. It has distorted our emotions, and transformed our personal relations into forced labour. This labour because it is unwaged, appears not as a social imposition, but as a personal service, an attribute of our female personality, a biological destiny. In the sexual division of labour being female is synonymous with being housewife.

6. Our wageless condition has hidden our work, the social character of our production and the nature of our product. Our work appears as a personal service, an act of love; our production seems private; our slavery in the family an individual choice.

7. Our wageless condition has hidden the ultimate beneficiary of our work for it hides our real enemy. ~~As~~ As we produce and reproduce labour power for every moment of the capitalist circuit the ultimate beneficiary of our work is collective capital. Our work is immediately controlled and regulated by the State. Internationally, through demographic planning, population control, family policies, etc., the State is the main agent that organises the supply and the price of labour power and therefore the intensity and the conditions of our production.

8. Our wageless condition is the material basis of our dependence on men within the family. In the family men act as the agents of capital and the State. The power they have over us is the power of the wage. But their power over us is ultimately their weakness with respect to capital, or our dependence on them is a discipline for them, it is the chain that ties them to their jobs.

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9. Power not class divides us from waged workers. Because we are wageless it has been assumed that we are outside of the wage relation, outside of the working class and therefore outside struggle. /But the lack of a wage does not imply the lack of social power, the inability to struggle.

10. The relation of wageless workers to waged workers is the same as the relation of the Third World to the metropolis. Wagelessness and underdevelopment are essential moments and functions of development. In the same way as the waged labour depends on unwaged labour so capital depends on underdevelopment.

11. Capital has extended its rule over every corner of the world, over every corner of society. Wagelessness and underdevelopment are not lack of capital. If wagelessness and underdevelopment exist it is because capital needs them. Capital uses wageless labour 1) to extract an immense amount of services for a very cheap price (let us remember that in Europe and the USA capital was built on slavery); 2) to maintain a vast reserve of cheap labour; 3) to keep wages down on the national and international labour markets. The introduction of women and third world immigrants into the factories - as well as moving the factories to the third world - has been a traditional means capital has used to attack the power obtained by waged workers in the factories.

12. Capital has used the wage relation - the wage and lack of it - to organize the international division of labour, which is primarily a division of power within the working class. Internationally, through the wage relation capital has organized different labour markets - waged and unwaged. They have created a labour market for women, for blacks and for white male workers, to which correspond different wage scales, different levels of social power. The social power of different sectors of the working class determines the wage scale which in turn determines the power relations within the class. White supremacy and the patriarchy of

not only has the wage been used to divide wageless from waged workers, it has also been used to divide the factory from the community, social labour from personal service, worktime from leisure time, economy from sexuality, public from private, personal from political.

14. Our weakness in the community is ultimately our weakness in the factory. Capital takes away from us in the community (supermarkets, transport, rents, etc.) what we have gained through our power in the factory. Today through the crisis and the organization of inflation, capital is waging a massive attack on the community, which intensifies our work as women - those who are supposed to absorb the crisis, absorb the fall in the price of labour power by extra work. At the same time, capital is organizing a massive extension of wagelessness through lay-offs and unemployment, to restore the work discipline and to break the power the working class has reached internationally.

Wages for Housework as a Strategy

1. A demand expresses a stage of antagonism in the relation between capital and the working class. (The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community) WH is not a blueprint for the future society but a weapon to change the power relations within the working class and therefore between the working class and capital.

2. Our conditions of work and our social power vary internationally, but internationally our needs are the same. All over the world the working class wants more money and less work. Revolution for us is not a new model of development, not a new rationalisation of production but the abolition of our wageless and waged slavery to work, the end of the sacrifice of our labour, our time and our life to the needs of capital.

3. Today only two alternative strategies are open - the capitalist and the working class strategies. The capitalist strategy in all its leftist variations aims at a reorganization of production and reorganization of the workforce in view of higher productivity and more efficient control over the working class. (Workers' participation, self-management are all variations on a theme). The strategy expressed by working class struggle is internationally not more work, but more power and the reappropriation of the wealth we have produced.

4. As women and wageless workers we refuse the leftist strategy of using capitalist development as a moment and a condition for our struggle. When the left says we must enter the factories in order to organize and struggle, first, it ignores that capital has already organized us and we are already in struggle. Second, it assumes that we cannot organize if capital does not reorganize us first. But to struggle for a capitalist reorganization of our work, to struggle for development, whether in the metropolis or in the third world is already to assume our defeat. For every new level of the capitalist organization will only entrench us and control us even more efficiently within capitalist production.
5. We refuse to exchange our present exploitation for a different and more intensified one - a second job has never liberated us from the first, and has left us even less time to organize and struggle. As we are working already in the home we do not ask for the "right to work". We don't want work but to be liberated from work, both in the kitchens and in the factories. This is the only working class meaning of "workers' control of production": the end of our enslavement to production.
6. Against the struggle for the "right to work", Wages for Housework offers a struggle for the reappropriation of our labour, and of the wealth we have produced. All the wealth that exists is our creation and we want it back.
7. To the degree that we refuse to be wageless houseworkers we subvert capital's plan for us in the international social factory. We undermine our function in the capitalist division of labour which is all premised on wageless labour. Most important, we undermine the hierarchies of power within the working class which are built through the wage relation. And by altering the power relations within the working class we alter the power relation between the working class and capital.
8. Our struggle for wages for housework challenges the division of labour along sexual lines and along wage lines. This would be the end of sexuality as a power relation.
9. To demand wages for housework is to refuse to accept housework as a biological destiny, a female vocation. We refuse to pay the price of reproduction, the naturalness of our work, the blackmail of love; we refuse our work as a labour of love and the identity that capital has imposed on us (femininity).
10. To demand wages for housework is to demand control over our bodies, to demand the possibility of choosing whether to have or not to have children, to demand to have children when, how and with whom we wish. It is to make capital pay for our work instead of making our children pay through emotional blackmail.
11. It is to guarantee that the struggle in the factory will not be undermined in the community and viceversa.
12. It is to determine the conditions of our work, inside and outside the house.
13. It is to struggle on that front where we all are.

Organisational questions

1. Our perspective must be international: capital plans internationally our work. See the mistakes the women's movement has made by failing to have an international strategy, e.g. the campaign for abortion when capital was sterilising women in the third world.
2. Our struggle must be autonomous. We refuse the separatism of the Radical feminists based on their refusal of class and the "women and men unite and fight" of the left, based on our subordination to the interests of the most productive workers which is based on their conception of the working class as agents of production - the future managers of production.
We must be autonomous because we have specific class interests, we have a specific history of exploitation and above all, because of the relations of power within the working class. Our organisational unification with male, waged workers at this point would be a subordination

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3. We refuse vanguardism not leadership. Vanguardism based on a specific political program: the vanguard is external to the working class to the extent that it is the carrier of a political program that is external - antagonistic - to the interests of the working class. Libertarianism (democracy) is the other face of vanguardism.
4. Since production occurs at every moment of our life every moment is a potential moment of struggle. There are many ways of demanding wages for housework.
5. A political campaign around wages for housework is important. It is itself a struggle. It is the only condition to prevent struggles from remaining local and being divided. Revolution cannot be waged just in one factory, in one kitchen, in one community. This is not to deny the importance of local struggles, but to point to their limitations if they are not connected. To establish connections between different struggles nationally and internationally is to know our power, and to increase that power by the circulation of our experiences.
6. Our strategy must continuously be shaped by the possibilities and needs posed by the political context in which we operate. E.G. the new dimensions of struggle posed by the crisis - the extension of wagelessness. Consider what is capital's plan for us and for the working class as a whole.