

# THE INTERNATIONAL WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK CAMPAIGN



## AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

### Women Against Rape

Women Against Rape (Britain) takes as its starting point women's poverty and financial dependence on men, which leaves us vulnerable to violence of all kinds: rape/battering in the family, racist sexual assault, sexual harassment, and rape/sexual assault by doctors, teachers, police and others in authority who can take advantage of women's social and economic vulnerability. We hold accountable not only individual rapists but the State, which supports and encourages them by keeping rape in marriage legal, and putting the woman on trial in rape cases.

WAR was the first anti-rape group in Britain to campaign for rape in marriage to be a crime, and also campaigns for compensation for rape survivors;

rape prevention by central and local government through better lighting, public transport, etc.; the rights of immigrant women who face deportation for leaving violent husbands; secure housing for women with disabilities; and increases in benefits and services for women. WAR lent support to the successful Philadelphia-based initiative to revoke the license of a doctor who sexually assaulted female patients.



## TIME OFF FOR WOMEN

At the 1985 UN Decade for Women Conference, the International Wages for Housework Campaign issued the call for the first TIME OFF FOR WOMEN on October 24th (UN Day and the anniversary of the 1975 Iceland women's 'day off') and have been holding it every year since to get governments to implement the UN decision to count all women's work, waged and unwaged, in every country's GNP.

TIME OFF is the first internationally-coordinated action by grassroots women, and so far, women in at least 24 countries have participated by organizing women's fairs, peace camps, speakouts and social events, petitioning with the 'Women Count - Count Women's Work' petition, or just by insisting on having a break. TIME OFF has won paid time off for women employees from some local governments, schools and universities. It is the spearhead of the growing women's movement to get women's work

counted. In the spring of 1989, we won a bill in the British Parliament to count women's work. In Britain women have also visited Yellow Gate Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp to exchange experiences and to make visible their work of 24-hour-a-day resistance to nuclear madness.

TIME OFF FOR WOMEN is jointly co-ordinated by the autonomous organizations in the International Wages for Housework Campaign, and is always a high point in all our efforts to make all our work visible at last. This unseen work is inseparable from, and increases with, the crises of our time, from apartheid and imperialism to the nuclear power/weapons cycle and ecological devastation. The experience of Black women — from the unwaged work of slavery and empire to the crisis of Third World debt, famine and the four hours a day spent fetching water and fuel — helps shape all TIME OFF actions.

## ADDRESSES

### Britain:

London Wages for Housework Committee,  
International Black Women for Wages for Housework,  
English Collective of Prostitutes,  
Wages Due Lesbians,  
WinVisible, and  
Women Against Rape  
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### Trinidad and Tobago:

International Black Women for Wages for Housework, and  
Wages for Housework Campaign  
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## INTERNATIONAL WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK CAMPAIGN

Since 1972, the International Wages for Housework Campaign (IWFHC), a network of Third World and metropolitan women, has been organizing to get recognition and compensation by governments for the unwaged work women do in the home, on the land and in the community, to be paid by dismantling the military-industrial complex.

In 1985, at the UN Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, we succeeded in getting the governments of the world to agree to Para. 120, calling on governments to count all women's waged and unwaged work — in the home, on the land and in the community — in every country's GNP.\* We are working on getting implementation of that UN decision. We recently got a bill to count women's unwaged work introduced in the British Parliament. Within the Wages for Housework Campaign are autonomous organizations of Black/Third World

women, lesbian women, prostitute women and women with visible and invisible disabilities.

Women do the work of producing and reproducing the entire workforce at home, on the land and in the community, in churches, schools and community groups, through voluntary labor and unwaged subsistence farming. Most health care worldwide is provided by women without a wage.

Because women's unwaged work is not counted, women are institutionalized in the 'double day' — to take on a second (usually low-waged) job because the first job at home is unwaged.

In making the case that women's contribution is the basic ingredient of all industry and all profit, we establish our entitlement to benefits, higher wages, social services, childcare, grants, unpolluted land, information, technology. Welfare and child benefit

are not charities but wages we are owed.

Since 1984, we have been circulating the 'Women Count - Count Women's Work' petition, available in 22 languages and English braille/tape.

The 2/3 of the world's work women do for 5% of the world's income (UN figures) is the core of our social weakness. The Wages for Housework Campaign organizes independently of men so women can discover our own needs and invent appropriate ways to pursue them. As autonomous women we work with Payday, a network of men who accept with the Campaign that the military-industrial complex 'upholds men's power over women in order to uphold its own power over everyone,' and who therefore support and take the leadership of the Campaign in their own interest.

\* The Gross National Product — GNP — is the total value of goods/services exchanged for money. Women's unwaged work, estimated to produce as much as 50% of the GNP, is omitted.

## AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS

*Within the Wages for Housework Campaign are autonomous organizations of Black/Third World women, lesbian women, prostitute women and women with visible and invisible disabilities. Women with the least economic and social power organize autonomously within the Campaign to keep it focussed, the best protection that all the issues of everyone's survival will emerge.*

### International Black Women for Wages for Housework

From Soweto to New York, London to Nicaragua, Bhopal to Trinidad — Black/Third World women internationally, the majority of the majority of the world's people, carry the major burden of the world's work and get the least wealth in return.

We are a network of Black/Third World women claiming reparations for all our unwaged work including slavery, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Our work is to ensure that the issues and concerns of Black/Third World women are a priority in shaping the work of the entire Wages for Housework Campaign; to see to it that challenging racism and challenging sexism, which reinforce each other, are

prioritized equally; to make sure that the redistribution of the world's resources proceeds from the bottom up and on this basis to build power and unity among the full diversity of Black/Third World peoples; to find ways of working together with white people who share our aims, thereby helping to free the whole planet and win liberation for all working people, waged and unwaged.

Our campaigning on welfare, immigration controls, police illegality, health, rape and domestic violence, nuclear power/weapons and ecological devastation integrates Black/Third World, women's and green issues.

### WinVisible

We are Black and white women with visible and invisible disabilities campaigning for economic independence, autonomy and mobility, housing and other resources for independent living, and against cuts in welfare and services, racism, rape and military-industrial pollution.

We define disability as an unnecessary physical and emotional workload, and campaign to make governments count all the work of disability and health women with disabilities do looking after ourselves and others; to demonstrate our entitlement to the money and resources we want and need; to strengthen all our demands for an accessible and safe environment; to end our poverty and powerlessness and thereby undermine and end disability racism in every sphere.

### Wages Due Lesbians

Founded in 1975, we are lesbian women of different races, nationalities, backgrounds, ages and dis/abilities. At least one in three households worldwide is headed by a woman, according to the UN. We campaign for wages for housework because we want the unwaged work lesbian women have in common with other women, and the additional physical and emotional housework of surviving in a hostile and prejudiced society, recognized as work and paid for so all women have the economic power to afford sexual choices. We organize as lesbian women to prevent money and resources going to 'normal' women only — reinforcing the power of the family against all women.

WDL has made visible lesbian women's contribution to the Black/women's/peace/welfare movements, and has defended lesbian mothers' rights to child custody.

### English Collective of Prostitutes & US PROstitutes Collective

The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) and the U.S. PROstitutes Collective (US PROS) together form the International Prostitutes Collective. We are a network of Black and white women working in different levels of the sex industry. We campaign for abolition of the prostitution laws; for human, legal and civil rights for prostitute women; and for higher benefits, student grants, wages and other resources so that no woman is forced by poverty into sex with anyone.

By attacking the sexism which dooms most women to poverty and a 24-hour work day, wages for housework strengthens us against the prostitution laws, which punish women for refusing to be poor, and lays the basis for prostitute and non-prostitute women to act together. We oppose police/government control of prostitution — we, not the State, must control our bodies and our money. In 1982 the ECP occupied a church in King's Cross, London, taking sanctuary from police illegality and racism — the first modern sanctuary in Britain. US PROS began in New York as the New York Prostitutes Collective, a group of Black women who worked in different aspects of the sex industry and their supporters; in 1980 NYP grew to become US PROS, a national multi-racial network. In addition to other organizing, the ECP and US PROS initiated Legal Action for Women, LAW, a free legal service for all women based in London and San Francisco.