

## #1 Fucking as Work

On Wednesday 10 May, the group met to discuss a selection of texts from the 1970s compiled by Laura Guy: Silvia Federici's early writing found meaning within a constellation of work emerging internationally from a group connected with the Wages for Housework movement. Alongside Federici's short essay 'Sexuality is Work' (1975), we will read 'Fucking is Work' (c. 1975) by the Wages Due Collective Toronto/ Ellen Agger et al and a selection of manifestos reflecting on sex work in the 1970s, including statements by San Francisco Wages for Housework; The English Collective of Prostitutes; Wages Due Lesbians, London and Toronto and an anonymous group of sex workers in Brooklyn, New York.

'Sexuality as Work' or 'Why Sexuality Is Work' (1975) was originally written by Federici as a presentation made to the second international Wages for Housework conference held in Toronto in January 1975. Wages Due Lesbians Toronto formed out of the Wages for Housework Campaign in Canada in the early 1970s. Concerned with connecting the material struggles surrounding lesbian and heterosexual women's lives, the group organised around a range of connected issues including housework, wage, the family and child custody, and sexuality. Wages Due Lesbians had close links with sex workers aligned with the Wages for Housework struggle, linking experiences of lesbian-identity and prostitution through harassment, the necessity of financial independence and the way in which both revealed fucking as work.

### Texts

Federici, Silvia. 'On Sexuality as Work (1975)'. *The Commoner* 15, no. Winter (2012): 88–94.

The Wages Due Collective, Toronto. 'Fucking Is Work', c 1975.

Selection of manifestos relating to sex work, c. 1970s

### Additional background on Wages Due Lesbians

Rousseau, Christina. 'Wages Due Lesbians: Visibility and Feminist Organizing in 1970s Canada'. *Gender, Work & Organization* 22, no. 4 (2015): 364–74.

## #2 Reform and Revolution

Harry Weeks selected texts that address the question of 'reform or revolution', which was raised during the group Fucking as Work in relation to the dual discourse of rights and structural critique occurring in the work of Wages Due Lesbians.

In Rosa Luxemburg's 1908 book *Social Reform or Revolution* she states: "At first view the title of this work may be found surprising. Can the Social-Democracy be against reforms? Can we contrapose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers to the Social-Democracy an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim."

Whilst Luxemburg was speaking very specifically about the Marxism of the Social Democratic Party in Germany around the turn of the 19th/20th centuries, the question is equally significant to feminism, and particularly the issue of social reproduction. Wages for Housework, for instance, was a reformist demand with a revolutionary underpinning. Rather than set Luxemburg's text, however, Harry Weeks elected two texts which raise the question of reform and revolution in feminist contexts.

## Texts

Federici, Silvia. 'The Unfinished Feminist Revolution'. *The Commoner* 15 (2012): 185–197.

hooks, bell. 'Feminist Revolution: Development Through Struggle'. In *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, 157–63. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1984.

## Additional Reading

Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg: Reform or Revolution & The Mass Strike*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2008

## #3 Black Macho

Michelle Wallace's book *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* selected by James Bell to be read alongside Audre Lorde's 'Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference'.

From the 1990 introduction by Michelle Wallace says: "When I first re-read the book in preparation for writing this, my immediate gut response was to destroy the book so that no one would ever read it again. How many black women writers, in the twentieth, nineteenth, or even eighteenth centuries have thought and done precisely this?"

I wanted to destroy the book because my desire for something more from life than my marginal status as a black woman writer could ever offer was so palpable in its pages. In obsessively repeating the stereotypes of black women and black men, I wanted to burst free of them forever. However, this has only been slightly more possible for me than it was for Harriet Wilson, Harriet Jacobs, and Charlotte Forten. But perhaps if we can begin to claim our own words and our own feelings within the public sphere, we will seize the means of reproducing our own history, and freedom will become a possibility in a sense that it never has been before."

## Texts

Wallace, Michele. *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. London: Verso, 2015.

Lorde, Audre. 'Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference'. In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 2007.