

WOMEN AND WORK

TERESA BRENNAN

This union [the Moulders Federation] has always fought for the principle of equal wages for workers, and will continue to fight...However, we disagree with the tactics used by certain women's organisations who recently have been raising an immediate demand that women workers should receive the same basic wage as men.

This demand would imply that the male basic wage is satisfactory, and open the door for employers to argue that if the woman receives the same basic wage as a man, the male basic wage should be reduced...unless combatted with the utmost vigor, we will have men and women on an equal basic wage, and to that extent equality of the sexes, but a lower total income for the working class as a whole. (Labor News, January 1944)

INTRODUCTION

Marxist-feminist accounts of the political economy of women in capitalist production and reproduction diverge, but they are critically united in certain theoretical assumptions, some of which seem wrong. I will argue this, and suggest alternatives on the basis of problems posed by the CURA study of migrant women in Melbourne industry, 'But I Wouldn't Want My Wife to Work Here...'¹ Essentially the CURA booklet is a survey. As such it is invaluable: there is practically no information on the situation of factory workers on Australian shop floors in general; there has been none on one of the two most exploited groups in the Australian work force, southern European migrant women.² The study is doubly significant, however, precisely because of the questions it raises for Marxist-feminist theory.

In short, the actual situation of migrant women in Australian industry is this: they work out of economic necessity, for their husbands do not earn enough to maintain a family. They are in the lowest paid sections of the labour market, work in the worst conditions and are badly, if at all, unionised. Because they and their husbands both work, they are forced to spend on childcare, fares, pre-packaged food, and the like. Further, their bosses in certain sections of manufacturing industry employ migrant women in active preference to men, migrant or otherwise.

Against this situation we have a Marxist account of the political economy of women which focuses on women as full-time domestic workers, in that its chief con-

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cern to date has been the nature of housework under capitalism; whether it was productive or unproductive labour, or neither.³ The main significance of this debate is that it attempts to connect the benefits derived from housework by men to the use made of housework by capital. While the debate's contributors are contrary in most respects, they all explicitly assume that full-time domestic work by women is one of the requirements of and is intrinsic to capitalism. Another related development in the political economy of women is the notion that because of their imputed primary responsibility as wives and mothers, women form a reserve army of labour to be shuttled in and out of the work force at the whim of capital: in recessions they can be told to breed and look after babies; in boom periods they can be exhorted to serve the nation, or productivity and the common good. A side effect of this thesis is that it assumes effective class collaboration on the part of the unions. That is, because the unions have frequently opposed the entry of women into the work force, and equal pay for that matter, it is assumed that they are cooperating with capital in manipulating a compliant work force.⁴

I have set out some key Marxist-feminist ideas here in order to show that they are not only underdeveloped in terms of an explanation of the position of migrant women, but also that an explanation of this position suggests that the theoretical assumptions involved are seriously inadequate. I will argue that the political economy of women needs to give analytical primacy to class differences between women, and take account of intra-working class divisions. From this perspective the family-wage-and-the-wife-at-home appear as a gain for the working class. It is a reformist gain, as in some sense is the welfare state, in that it does not challenge capitalist social relations overall. Further, it is a gain made by exploiting the contradictory implications for capitalism of an inherently sexist division of labour, a division which affects women of all classes. But it is still a short-term gain. It may have enabled the working class to improve its living standard, for production within the home cuts expenditure outside it. It has certainly been a means for controlling the labour supply. The reserve army thesis points out that more women go into the work force in times of boom, and that this clearly benefits capital. It fails to note that this happens at a time when it is not to the detriment of labour.⁵

Of course capital fights back. The working class gain of a family wage and many other gains of organised labour are systematically undermined by labour market segmentation. It is crucial to remember here that the working class is not homogeneous. It is distinctly segmented, according to jobs, wages and conditions: white Australian males are in the top segment; southern European migrant women and black women are in the bottom segments.⁶ Those in the bottom segments of the labour market, if married, are members of the families where both wife and husband are working. Both men and women here are the most exploited, the least effectively unionised and the most vulnerable in times of crisis, like now. As well, the women here have a double workload: we will see later that while capital may need domestic labour, there is no reason why this should be a full-time activity, when working class women can do it afterhours, or when they can either pay for childcare, or shove it on to relatives. This perhaps explains the resistance of many married working class women to the way certain feminist demands are presented, e.g. 'the right to work' when it is presented as an issue of personal fulfilment. In other words their general interests as women are subsumed by their perceived class interest: the family wage benefits their class, and hence their families economically; their husbands and children benefit directly, and they benefit in that they do not have to do two shit jobs. In making this point I stress that an analysis is not a prescription: to see the family wage as a gain for working class women and men does not entail endorsing it. Rather, this recognition is essential in formulating ways and means to go beyond it. Here the picture is not entirely black. I will show later that while labour market segmentation divides the working class, it may also provide the material basis for women and men uniting on non-sexist strategic demands.

This article is organised as follows. The next section gives some background on Marxist-feminist theory. After that, I give a brief outline of the labour theory of value and the domestic labour debate, and then expand on the theoretical reformulations indicated above. This means discussing labour market segmentation in relation to the family as the basic unit of class analysis. Here, I use the example of southern European migrant women. Some strategic implications are sketched in the conclusion.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Recently Marxist-feminist theory has developed at a very abstract level, largely unrelated to the study of concrete circumstances in Australia or elsewhere. This lack of concrete application has meant that many of our theoretical directions have been misconceived, for the kind of theoretical work one does is shaped by the kind of questions one asks. We have been overemphasising certain questions at the expense of others and in some instances asking the wrong questions.

Historically this is understandable and perhaps was essential: recent Marxist-feminism, as a relatively coherent body of theory, developed in response to the concerns of the second women's movement.⁷ Thus it developed while responding to the inadequacies of radical-feminist theory but was also strongly influenced by it. This is evident in two factors that have distorted much of the literature: analytical primacy has been given to the common form of oppression experienced by all women, irrespective of class; also there has been a relative neglect of the historical dynamic of class struggle, as a force delimiting capital's attempts to transform the inherited and existing social structures. These factors are forced into account when looking at the position of working class women, particularly migrant women. To make these points clearer, I will outline some key themes in radical feminism and related developments in Marxist-feminism.

Radical-feminism had rejected Marxism as an analytical and political approach on the grounds that sexism predated capitalism, that Marxism denied the importance of the personal, and because of the dismal record of theoretical and practical socialism on the question of women's oppression.⁸ Its own arguments and politics centred on the individual personal level, on the 'private world' of the family and familial style relationships. This theory assumed that all women shared a common form of oppression, in that all women were subject to male dominion and sexism. This was seen as both a product and a perpetuation of women's position in the familial division of labour.⁹ But while the concentration on the personal was and is crucial, the fact that men oppress women is not sufficient to explain why men oppress women. Also, it is insufficient to explain this oppression by reference to the family without asking the further question: why the family? It was argued by Marxists that a materialist analysis was necessary to explain both women's position and the nature and function of the family. In other words, it was argued that women's position needs to be understood in terms of the way production and reproduction are organised. The Marxist-feminist attempts to relate the personal experience of oppression to the wider social structure went off in two directions. One is the attempt to relate psychoanalysis to the Marxist theory of ideology.¹⁰ The other is the area that concerns me here, 'the political economy of women'.

Now in both areas it was notionally accepted that class and women's oppression were interrelated, insofar as both were essential to the maintenance of capitalist social relations. However, the idea that all women shared a common form of oppression by virtue of their position in the family was not really challenged. To this extent Marxist-feminism was firmly in the theoretical tradition of the second women's movement. One consequence of this in the political economy literature is the frequent assumption that women are typically full-time housewives. The debate over the nature of housework is particularly intricate (and I discuss some of the details later). Suffice it to note at this point that its main limitations are the

notions that housewives do the same kind of work and make the same kind of contribution to capital whatever their class and whatever their position regarding the work force. While this reflects the original feminist emphasis it has been fostered by the lack of concrete study of the Australian situation.¹¹ Obviously feminists and Marxist-feminists are aware that a significant and rising proportion of married women are in the work force, and perhaps are aware that the percentage of migrant married women who work is much higher than that of Australian married women. However, the analyses of domestic labour have only taken women's wage labour into account at a superficial level, usually stopping short at the observation that the weakness of women's position in the work force depends on and is reinforced by their role in the house. The fact that has not been considered is that some married working class women do wage labour of necessity, and others do not. Explaining this means asking and answering the question: what are the relations between domestic labour, women's wage labour, and class position? This question is excluded at the outset in the recent literature on the political economy of women, in that no distinction is made between full-time domestic labour's significance for capital, and its significance for the working class. While all the analyses are situated in relation to the Marxist theory of value, they neglect the fact that class struggle is necessarily a two-way affair. In so doing they ascribe the existence of full-time domestic labour to the functional requirements of capital. I use the word 'functional' advisedly. The accounts of women's domestic labour have a point of departure that is basically static: because full-time domestic labour exists in advanced capitalism, the explanation of it is sought in and reduced to its apparent function for the capitalist system. The fact that the form of domestic labour (for instance, whether or not it is full-time work) is also shaped in the dynamic context of class struggle is minimised, and usually ignored. The one-sided use of value-theory involved here is consistent with and devolves from the notion that women of all classes share a common form of oppression. I will expand on these points by (1) stating the main premises of value-theory; (2) discussing the accounts of the political economy of domestic labour; and (3) suggesting reformulations.

THE MARXIST THEORY OF VALUE¹²

Marxism's central tenet is that an understanding of any society must proceed from the way production is organised. The capitalist mode of production is distinguished by the concentration of the ownership and control of the means of production in a single class, the bourgeoisie, and the existence of a class which has no means of subsistence other than the sale of its labour-power, the working class. The basis of the exploitation of the working class consists in the fact that the profits made by the bourgeoisie have only one source — the extraction of surplus-value from the working class.

The concept of surplus-value cannot be understood without a concept of value. Marx used the latter concept to explain the exchange value of commodities (the ratio in which they are exchanged for each other at the market). The value of a commodity is the amount of socially necessary labour time required for its production, and this determines its exchange-value. The concept of surplus-value depends on the recognition that labour-power, under capitalism, is a commodity like any other commodity. Labour-power, too, is bought and sold at its value, which is equivalent to the value of the commodities needed to produce and reproduce it — approximately, the historically given level of subsistence. Surplus-value is the difference between the value of labour-power, roughly expressed in the worker's wage, and the value of the commodities produced by labour in the production process. This difference then is the gain made by capital in the production process. It is possible because capital purchases labour-power for a definite time. How that labour-power is deployed within that time varies, but it is certainly longer than the time taken to produce the value equivalent of the worker's wage in the form of commodities. In other words, the wage paid to a worker (the value of labour-power)

is less than the value of the commodities produced in the production process (labour as such). This difference between labour and labour-power is clarified by Marx's distinction between necessary and surplus labour. Necessary labour is so described because it is the amount of labour necessary to return to capital the value advanced as wages. Surplus labour is that which is expended over and above this amount. Given that capital purchases labour-power at its value, and the means of production at their value, it is the only possible source of added value. Hence it is the only means whereby capital makes a profit.

Thus the relation between capital and labour is fundamentally antagonistic: capital will attempt to enhance its profit by shortening that portion of the working day when workers labour for their own subsistence in the form of wages, and lengthen correspondingly that portion of the working day when workers are producing surplus-value for their employers. Basically, the rate of surplus-value extraction can be increased in three ways. First, the length of the working day as such can be increased, thereby prolonging the period in which surplus-value is produced. Second, if the length of the working day is fixed, capital can increase surplus-value by reducing the time devoted to necessary labour. This can be done by either increasing the intensity of labour, or by cheapening the components of necessary labour by increasing the productiveness of labour. Thirdly, the wage paid can be below the value of labour-power.

Labour-power is not a uniform commodity; its value varies according to the amount of time and expenditure required to produce a particular type of labour-power (e.g. at the simplest level, skilled and unskilled). Capital will inevitably seek out the cheapest possible labour-power available to perform a certain task. We will see later that the search is systematised by the development of labour market segmentation. For the moment it is important to note that the value of labour-power is also influenced by two other interrelated factors. It is influenced by class struggle over wages and conditions, and, as with any other commodity, the price of labour-power is influenced by supply and demand. A shortage of labour-power increases its price; an oversupply brings it down. These factors are interrelated because the respective powers of the organised working class and capital depend to a very large extent on the size and availability of the industrial reserve army at any given time: basically, the industrial reserve army consists of those who are either needing to be employed and/or are potentially employable. A substantial pool of unemployed certainly dampens down class struggle over wages and conditions.

These last points have been excluded from the domestic labour discussion, which concentrates on the value of labour-power solely in terms of its reproduction.

DOMESTIC LABOUR

While the writers on this topic agree that full-time domestic labour exists because it benefits capitalism, they disagree as to why this is so. The early literature argues that housework as such contributes to capitalist accumulation, in that the housewife contributes to the creation and realization of surplus-value.¹³ She does this through producing new workers, and/or through producing use-values (such as meals) for consumption by members of her family, which are then embodied in the labour-power sold on the market. It is generally claimed that the labour embodied in housework exceeds any return that a woman might get from her husband's paypacket. Hence she is performing surplus labour like any other worker.¹⁴

These assumptions were held in common and the early 'debate' over domestic labour focused on two points: whether or not housework is productive labour in the strict Marxist sense, i.e. whether or not it produces surplus-value for capitalism; and whether or not domestic labour can be understood as a mode of production separate from the capitalist mode of production.¹⁵ The irrelevance of the debate over these points has been commented on and criticised elsewhere.¹⁶ For my purposes it

is enough to draw out the common line of reasoning behind these arguments, which goes something like the following. The value of labour-power is determined by the historically given level of subsistence, in turn determined by the value of the commodities that enter into that subsistence at any given time. Although Marx did not take domestic labour into account in his presentation of value-theory in Capital, it is apparent that unpaid housework produces use-values which enter into the workers' subsistence. Capital benefits from this in that it is able to purchase labour-power at a cheaper price than it would if the subsistence level was determined entirely by the purchased commodities necessary to produce and reproduce labour-power. Consequently profits are enhanced.

This understanding is rejected in two of the most recent, and I think the best contributions to the discussion so far; Gardiner, Himmelweit and MacKintosh, 'Women's Domestic Labour', and Adamson, Brown, Harrison and Price, 'Women's Oppression under Capitalism'.¹⁷ Both papers reject the idea that domestic labour as such contributes to capitalist accumulation, but argue that it is necessary for the process of capitalist accumulation to take place. Domestic labour, as privatised individual toil, is carried on outside the capitalist production process and therefore cannot produce value or surplus-value. Adamson et al. make the point that while domestic labour does not contribute to capitalist accumulation, it is still vitally necessary to the reproduction of capitalism because there 'is no imminent tendency within capital to take over direct responsibility for the individual consumption of the working class after the process of production has ended'.¹⁸ What they are saying is that while capital may set up commercial laundries, restaurants and so on, workers are still obliged to do their own domestic work as there is no way that capitalist production could set up 'a never-ending chain of workers employed in restoring the labour-power of other workers...'¹⁹ Consequently there must be a period outside the working day when domestic work is performed by the working class as a whole. 'Even assuming the unlikely possibility of the full incorporation of women into social production, domestic work would still need to be performed after the working day had ended. Capital itself sets an absolute limit on the extent to which domestic work can be socialised.'²⁰

Two points are established in these accounts: firstly, that domestic labour does not produce value or surplus-value; secondly, that there has to be a period, outside the working day, when domestic labour is done. Neither point explains the existence of full-time domestic labour. Gardiner et al. suggest two things here. They say that while their account has rejected analyses which calculate transfers of labour from domestic labour into profits, they have not rejected the idea 'that husbands may benefit from the work of their wives'.²¹ This is certainly true, but it is not very helpful in explaining the political economy of domestic labour. Their other point concerns the difficulties involved in socialising pre-school childcare. They note that domestic labour has been 'socialised' to some extent, in that the introduction of certain commodities (e.g. prepared food, disposable nappies, washing machines) means that less time 'has to be spent in the house for the production of an acceptable standard of living for the family'.²² Also, they see this as a process of freeing women for wage labour, and one that has gone on to some extent. 'But it remains true that in a considerable number of working class families at any one time, the women are full-time housewives. Up to now, capital has been unable to overcome the obstacles to complete socialisation of domestic labour.'²³

They claim that the most likely reason for this is that the expense involved for capital in socialising pre-school childcare is prohibitive.²⁴ So the implicit conclusion for political economy is not only that capital would prefer women to be available for wage labour but also that full-time domestic labour exists because it is too expensive to socialise pre-school childcare. Hence their explanation depends on the idea that women who do full-time domestic work have children under five. The exceptions to this situation break any potential rule.

Adamson et al. do not attempt to explain the existence of full-time domestic labour, assuming that it flows from capital's inability to completely socialise domestic labour as such. Insofar as they do take it into account, they make the conventional observation that women, 'given their role as domestic slaves, exactly comply with capital's need for a fluctuating reserve army of labour. They are available at home to be drawn into production when necessary and can be thrown back into the home when accumulation stagnates.'²⁵ This account, in that it operates on a women in/women out basis, can only explain full-time domestic labour by seeing capitalist economies in near-permanent recession.

Both these explanations of full-time domestic labour are inadequate. Furthermore, they do not even begin to come to terms with the fact that some married working class women work out of economic necessity.²⁶ Overall, the attempt to use value-theory to explain full-time domestic labour in terms of its function for capital has failed. I doubt if it could go forward, given that any discussion of value-theory, particularly of the value of labour-power, cannot neglect the fact that it is only working class labour-power which creates surplus-value. Nor can it exclude at the outset any consideration of how the value of labour-power is influenced by class struggle. These factors have been excluded in much of the discussion so far because they threaten the underlying assumption that it is the common form of oppression women experience that is crucial for capitalist political economy.

The early debate, in trying to explain full-time domestic labour as an activity which contributes to capitalist accumulation, ignored the fact that the working class is the only class whose subsistence and labour-power is at issue. In other words, they assumed either that all housewives did the same kind of work and made the same 'contribution' to capital whatever their class, or that all housewives were working class people. The thing to note about the later contributions is that while they are talking about the working class family, they are still talking about the oppression of women, irrespective of class. They rightly assume that the oppression of women devolves from their position in the familial division of labour, and that this is necessary to the reproduction of capitalist social relations. But they then assume that full-time domestic labour must exist because capital needs it. They do not look at its significance for the working class.

DOMESTIC LABOUR AND THE WORKING CLASS

In understanding the significance of full-time domestic labour for the working class, and hence the significance of working class women's wage labour, class position must be given analytical priority over the common form of oppression all women experience. Curthoys and Barbalet signalled a beginning here in arguing against the notion that the political economy of women can be explained in terms of a common experience of oppression, and for the idea that one should seek to understand women's political economy principally in relation to their class.²⁷ At first reading this sounds like the old line that feminism and recent Marxist-feminism has rejected. But there are crucial differences. The family, rather than the individual wage labourer, is taken as the basic unit of class analysis. Marxist political economy has concentrated on the individual (usually male) labourer, and neglected the family's role in capitalism. In addition, the notion that women's position needs to be understood principally in relation to their class does not deny that women experience some form of oppression in common; in a real sense we are all subject to male dominion, and to the associated cultural practices and theories of sexist ideology. Nor does it deny that sexism has a material base: the subjection of women of all classes stabilises class relations of domination and subordination in both capitalist and pre-capitalist societies.²⁸ Once priority is given to class it is evident that the full-time domestic labour of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women has a different significance than that of working class women. While the former are certainly personally oppressed, their familial role cannot benefit capital-

ist accumulation in an economic sense, other than by maintaining inheritance patterns. And although this role is probably ideologically necessary for capitalism, this is not the area that concerns me here. However, when we focus on the working class family it is evident that full-time domestic labour has potential advantages for the working class overall. Or, to put it another way, it is apparent that full-time domestic labour by working class women involves a loss for capital.

Marx, in Capital, explicitly assumed a family where neither wife nor children worked. However, he also stressed that the development of capitalism tended to force women and children into wage labour.²⁹

Machinery, by throwing every member of that family onto the labour market spreads the value of the man's labour-power over the whole of his family. It thus depreciates his labour-power. To purchase the labour-power of a family of four workers costs more than it formerly did to purchase the labour-power of the head of the family, but in return four days labour takes the place of one and their price falls in proportion to the excess of surplus-labour of the four over the surplus-labour of the one. In order that the family may live, four people must now, not only labour, but expand surplus-value for the capitalist.³⁰

The advantages of this situation for capital are clear. Firstly, more workers are exploited in production. Secondly, the rate of exploitation (the ratio of surplus-value to the value of labour-power) is increased; the necessary labour-time is less to sustain one worker than it is to sustain a worker and his family. Thirdly, the value of labour-power is depreciated overall: the more people who need to work, the greater the supply of labour-power; and the greater the supply of labour-power, the less its price. Finally, capital benefits in that it not only needs to produce; it needs to sell. As Marx noted in another context, 'Domestic work, such as sewing and mending, must be replaced by the purchase of readymade articles. Hence the diminished expenditure of labour in the house is accompanied by an increased expenditure of money. The cost of keeping the family increases and balances the greater income.'³¹

One can deduce from these points that there are potential advantages for the working class in full-time domestic labour, necessarily premised on a family wage. The production of use-values within the home cuts expenditure outside it, which at least raises the possibility that the family's living standard could be raised above that implied by the value of labour-power, although this would depend on the intensity of the domestic labour and the value of labour-power at a particular time. More definitely, the family wage means that the working class has some control of the labour supply: if less working class people are needing to work, then competition for jobs is less, and therefore the price of labour-power is higher.

In fact, Marx's predicted mass proletarianisation of women never occurred; the tendency towards it was strongly resisted when labour began to organise. Given the loss involved for capital, I think that the family wage must be seen as a gain for the working class in that period. The extent to which it has been an actual gain could only be gauged by a full historical class analysis, taking account of countervailing tendencies (e.g. how far capitalist accumulation depends on increases in the productivity of labour, rather than a growth in population; the force of the contradictory implications for sexism of women working; the advent of 'consumerism', and particularly, the development of 'part-time' work for women). However, the possibility that it is a gain is enforced by the fact that in over a century of class struggle organised labour has persistently fought for a family wage. It has also fought for the restricted entry of women into certain sectors of the work force; except in boom periods, when presumably the increase in the supply of labour-power would not have the same effects on its price. In Australia, the

unions have been particularly effective in this regard. Ryan and Rowse point out that

One of the economic circumstances in which the [Australian] Labour movement's power had developed was the chronic shortage of labour during the 'long boom'. Subsequent philosophy had been to continue this shortage as much as possible by the exclusion of cheap labour, and control over entry into the work force. Although the labour shortages of the long boom have been matched only by post-1945 conditions, the effort to control the labour supply has been a matter for the movement's unceasing vigilance. The most notable measures have been the White Australia policy (and subsequent variations on the Act), apprenticeship rules, support for tariffs on cheaply produced goods, and the sexual demarcation of jobs.³²

And, of course, the family wage. Ryan and Rowse do not appreciate the full significance of their points, for this 'subsequent philosophy', however racist and sexist, had a sound material base in class struggle. What I am saying is that the unions' approach here cannot be dismissed simply as class collaborationism, and/or a sexist aberration. Unfortunately this attitude permeates the literature on the political economy of women. It is based on the idea that women's role in the familial division of labour must benefit capital, no matter how much time it takes. It also reflects a functionalist tendency prevalent in contemporary Marxism whereby reformist gains in the class struggle are reduced to their long-term advantages in terms of system stabilisation.³³ For instance, the family wage has been decried because it takes over capital's 'responsibility' for domestic labour and childcare. Such condemnation rests on the extraordinary assumption that capital has a sense of responsibility!

But since a thorough historical analysis of the family wage in relation to the value of labour-power is well outside my scope, the foregoing points about organised labour can only be indicative. There are other reasons why political economy's priority should be women's class position; why the family, not the individual should be the basic unit of class analysis; and why, from this perspective, the family-wage-and-wife-at-home appear as a gain for the working class. The first is by default: as we have seen, the approach at base of previous attempts to explain the political economy of full-time domestic labour has rendered them unworkable. It is worth noting that the use of value-theory in these accounts is also characteristic of much contemporary Marxism, in that the categorical is emphasised at the expense of the concrete and historical. The extent to which the value of labour-power, and value-theory generally can still be understood in terms of the framework of Capital is surely limited by the fact that class struggle is an ongoing process, which may alter the original terms of debate. Full-time domestic labour cannot and should not be explained by an ahistorical application of the categories applying to productive and unproductive labour. It can be explained by taking the working class family as the unit of class analysis, for contrary to the tendency evident in the nineteenth century, the economic interdependence of working class men, women and children has increased.

The second ground for preferring this approach is that it means that the relation of working class women's full-time domestic labour to their wage labour can be specified, at least in economic terms. The reason is that this approach to the political economy of women question can be reconciled with another major recent development in Marxist theory; the theory of labour market segmentation. As I said in the introduction, this paper was prompted by the CURA study, 'But I Wouldn't Want My Wife to Work Here...' It is here that I return to my starting point, for labour market segmentation is the only theory adequate to explaining the situation of working class migrant men and women. In the next section I will outline what labour market segmentation is in Australia. In the section following that I will discuss its relation to the points made in this section, using the example of migrant women.

LABOUR MARKET SEGMENTATION

As Collins points out, 'one of the great weaknesses of the study of the political economy of Australian capitalism, and of the political practice of the Australian left, has been in treating the working class as more or less homogeneous'.³⁴ It is only recently that Marxists in Australia and the U.S. have begun to develop a theory of labour market segmentation. It is a development that has relied on and responded to concrete studies of changes in the working class.³⁵

Labour market segmentation differentiates the working class horizontally, by allocating different groups of working class people to different economic sectors; and it differentiates them vertically, by assigning different groups of workers to various levels of the occupational hierarchy. Collins, following Reich et al., argues that this situation is produced by four segmentation processes: segmentation into primary and secondary markets, segmentation within the primary sector, segmentation by race or ethnicity, and segmentation by sex.³⁶ The distinction between primary and secondary segments refers mainly to the degree of stability of employment in each sector: the primary sector often requires skilled workers and 'stable working habits'. It is characterised by high wages, and status and promotion ladders.³⁷ Segmentation based on race, ethnicity and sex has been documented by both Collins and Power.³⁸ It has been dramatically affected by the post-war immigration program and its significance cannot be underestimated, given that Australian manufacturing industry now depends crucially on immigrant labour.³⁹

Currently, it appears that there are six broad segments in the Australian labour market, hierarchically ranked as follows: males born in Australia, Britain and Ireland, as well as those born in northern Europe, the United States, Canada and New Zealand; southern European males, including those born in Turkey and Yugoslavia; black males; and then the three corresponding groups of women workers.⁴⁰ For example, southern European migrant women are concentrated in the tradesperson, production process workers and labourers categories in the manufacturing sector. Southern European men, who are generally unskilled or semi-skilled, are also concentrated in the categories of tradesperson, production and process workers, and are employed in the manufacturing and construction sectors of the economy. Australian-born and U.K. migrant women are concentrated in the clerical workers and professional, technical and related workers categories. Australian/Anglo-Saxon men are at the top of the labour market hierarchy in all respects.⁴²

Collins sums up labour market segmentation's economic significance for capital as follows:

Economically, the existence of segmented labour markets enhances the extraction of surplus-value, and is a central means of reproducing capitalist social relations. By utilising job hierarchies and job organisation, capitalists can create 'low-wage' jobs, with what would otherwise be unacceptable conditions of work and intensity of work. This is particularly the case as foreign and women workers increasingly dominate manual, production line work in the secondary sector of almost every major capitalist nation.⁴³

So labour market segments are differentiated by wage levels, as well as by the intensity of labour and the degree of skill required within a particular segment. One can draw out the implications of this by remembering that capital will inevitably seek out the cheapest possible labour-power available to perform a certain task.

Labour market segmentation helps the search in three ways. Firstly, it entails rough approximations of workers into the categories skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. These distinctions are rigidly enforced by the unions, who maintain and patrol the relevant job arrangements. Secondly, labour market segmentation means that there is no such thing as an homogeneous reserve army anymore than there is an

homogeneous working class. Rather, there are 'reserve armies' corresponding to the labour market segments. An oversupply in any one segment means that the price of labour-power can be forced down without it having automatically dramatic effects on other segments. Thirdly, it appears that southern European migrant workers are frequently forced to labour for wages in conditions that Anglo-Saxon workers would not accept.⁴⁴ This is because of their own cultural background, and also because of the nature of Australian unions. Over 80% of Greek and Italian migrants and 70% of Yugoslavs were born in small towns or rural villages.⁴⁵ They come from a rural background, without a trade union tradition, to the production lines in Sydney and Melbourne. The effects of this are compounded by the fact that many Australian unions, and Australian-born workers are racist and ethnocentric.⁴⁶ As with sexism, this racism and ethnocentrism is partly a product of the attempts to control the labour supply. (As noted above, the early labour movement fought for the White Australia policy, as a means of stopping an inflow of cheap, ununionised labour. The racism involved in this tradition lingers on.) The end result of all these processes is that the Australian/Anglo-Saxon male segment dominates working class politics in the trade unions and on the shop floor. The other segments are almost totally absent.⁴⁷ Given that the value of labour-power is also influenced by class struggle over wages and conditions, it is evident that those who are least effectively unionised will have the least chance of making gains, or resisting inroads in these areas.

Returning to the question of the relation of full-time domestic labour to working class women's wage labour: it should be clear that labour market segmentation means that certain groups of women are channelled into certain jobs. They are the preferred labour supply for these jobs, for they are the cheapest and most exploitable available. This totally undermines the idea that capital's preferred activity for working class women is 'full-time domestic labour'. And it further undermines the women in/women out 'reserve army thesis' as an explanation of women's role in relation to the home and work force. Booms and recessions influence the various economic sectors differently. Because women are slotted into certain sectors, no generalisation can be made about women as such being forced out of the work force in times of recession.⁴⁸ What this 'reserve army thesis' does account for is the way in which the unions relax the sexual demarcation of male segments in times of boom.

However, the relations between working class women's full-time domestic labour, wage labour and labour market segmentation can be explained in the following way.

WAGE LABOUR AND DOMESTIC LABOUR: A REFORMULATION

Once we focus on the working class family, thereby stressing the economic interdependence of wives and husbands, it seems likely that:

(1) Men in the upper segments of the labour market will be those whose wage is sufficient to support a family, in that their wives do not have to work. Consequently these families are in a position to net the potential gains of full-time labour as a means of raising the family's living standard above that implied by the value of labour-power. Also the existence of segmentation is completely consistent with, and in part a product of, union attempts to control the labour supply. I return to the latter point below. For the moment, it is enough to note that these segments are dominated by Anglo-Saxon males, and that this is enforced by employer preference and union protection. Workers here get the best wages, work in the best conditions and are the most effectively unionised. Their control of the labour supply is likely to be efficient, in terms of effective unionisation based on skill requirements and (implicit or explicit) sexual, racial and ethnocentric demarcation.

(2) Men in the lower segments of the labour market are far less likely to be paid a wage sufficient to support a family. Consequently, their wives are far

more likely to have to work, and their families would lose any potential benefits of full-time domestic labour. The men in these segments have less say in their jobs, wages and conditions, in that their segmentation is also negatively enforced by unionisation. In other words, they have little access to the upper segments of the labour market; any control they have of the labour supply is not at the expense of other men. Generally, they would be in a worse position to wage class struggle over wages and conditions.

(3) Women who have to work are most likely to be married to men in the lower segments of the labour market. They are in the worst position of the lot. Their control of the labour supply is nil, for they are the victims of that control at other levels. Their wage would be most unlikely to support a family. Their industrial weakness means that they are in no effective position to fight over wages and conditions.

Plainly the preceding points are very broad. There would be many exceptions: e.g. single people; single parents; women working for a specific period for a specific purchase, and women who are working because they want to. The points I have outlined are intended as guides for understanding the role of women's and men's wages, and full-time domestic labour in relation to the family unit as a whole. Also, the relatively weak position of many of the exceptional cases is clearly due to their lack of familial status.

Whether or not this broad understanding is correct depends on further work on concrete historical changes. If it is right, then it is necessarily the result of and implies subsequent developments in a dynamic historical process; class struggle. So far, it seems that the pertinent outlines of that process in Australia have been as follows. Organised labour's successful fight for a basic family wage was a gain for the working class, in terms of controlling the labour supply, and because of the potential benefits of full-time domestic labour. But it was a gain made by exploiting the contradictory implications of sexist ideology, in particular the notion that a woman's primary responsibility is wife-and-motherdom. As with another major attempt to control the labour supply — the White Australia policy — it reinforced ideologies dividing the working class. However, it was also a gain that capital resisted, by attempting to keep the family wage at low levels, and more recently by successfully opposing it altogether. That opposition based its case on the increase of married women in the work force. In 1933, only 5% of married women worked. This situation changed dramatically with the 1939-1945 war and the long post-war boom.

Between June 1947 and February 1973, the proportion of married women in the work force increased from 22.4% to 33.3%. By November 1974, 42.2% of all women were employed, compared with 26.3% in 1954. Amongst these the proportion of married women increased from less than a fifth to well over half. These women were not working for pin money, but rather were making an essential contribution to family income and the purchase of housing and consumer durables. Consequently, the ideal of a single breadwinner earning a family wage became increasingly irrelevant. This was crystallised in 1966 when the government agreed to the employers' request for a total wage, replacing the basic wage with its family component.⁴⁹

The question remains as to what extent this increase of married women in the work force resulted from a wearing down of the family wage in real wage terms, and the answer partly depends on the class position of the women concerned. However, the increase in labour market segmentation is undoubtedly a relevant factor in forcing down the real wages of the lower segments of the working class. In this context it is worth noting that while married migrant women form a third of the female work force, they make up less than a quarter of all married women in Australia.⁵⁰

I cannot comment further on the general class dynamics involved here, or on the class position of the married women in the work force in relation to that of their husbands. This is an area for future work, in that much of the relevant information is currently unavailable. What I can do is show how the situation of southern European migrant women tallies with the reformulations outlined in this section. I will mainly rely on the CURA report, which is based on a survey of 2680 women in thirty Melbourne factories. However, other recent information studies, particularly the Jackson Report⁵¹, indicate that the situation of these women is similar to that of southern European migrant women in Australian industry overall. I will show why the CURA report can be seen as representative, and then discuss its new material on that basis. This new material concerns the women's reasons for working, their husbands' occupations, the age of their children and their childcare arrangements, their relations with their unions, and their remarkable militancy.

The CURA team surveyed migrant women in manufacturing and this is the sector where immigrant labour is crucial. Of the 25% of the total work force employed in manufacturing, four out of every ten were born overseas; a much higher proportion than for any other sector of the economy. In some manufacturing industries migrants comprise more than 50% of the labour force. The proportion of migrant workers to those born in Australia is even higher relative to women; of the women employed in manufacture, 40% are migrants.⁵² Southern European migrant women are especially dominant in the industries represented in the factories CURA surveyed, viz. clothing, meatworks, food processing, metalworks and electrical trades, and bootworks.⁵³ In addition, the jobs these women do are also representative of southern European migrant women in general. Approximately half of all working Italian, Greek and Yugoslav women are labourers and production process workers.⁵⁴ The third factor relating the CURA study to the known general position of southern European migrant women in industry is money. The women surveyed (in 1975) averaged \$86 to \$100 take-home pay.⁵⁵ This is commensurate with the average wage for all Italian, Greek and Yugoslav women for February 1976.⁵⁶ It is an average wage that is lower than that of Australian-born or Anglo-Saxon migrant women, although it is significant that the average wage of any group of women is lower than that of southern European migrant men.⁵⁷

The low wages paid to these women, and their concentration in a low wage area suggests that southern European migrant women will take any job they can get at any price. There is only one possible explanation for this; namely, economic survival. Of the women surveyed, 82.6% gave this as their reason for working. And for them, survival means survival. Typical responses were: 'I work so we won't go hungry' and 'If you don't work in Australia you don't eat'. A recurring theme was 'We always need extra money because my husband never earns enough'. In fact, nearly all the women's husbands were unskilled workers.⁵⁸ In this context it is worth noting that both Henderson reports showed that southern European women are over-represented among the poor, and that it is their concentration in low-paid unskilled jobs that is the main factor in their economic poverty.⁵⁹ As Boughton and Collins note, 'this poverty must be seen as a systematic result of the position of southern European migrant labour in the labour market and the subsequent low wages of these migrants'.⁶⁰ At this point it is necessary to state the obvious: very few of the migrant women working in factories have any 'choice' in the matter. As Power argues, 'the income of working wives is essential to keep the families of Greeks and of recently arrived Yugoslavs above even the most austere poverty line'.⁶¹ She goes on to say that it is clear that these women are driven into the Australian labour force; because of their exceedingly high participation rates as compared to Australian women, and also because of their low participation in paid jobs before coming to Australia.⁶² Further, many of these women have young children; 25% have children under five. Importantly, 67% of these women have paid for childcare at some time. Often small children are left at home alone because both parents have to work.⁶³ In other words, these women cannot afford to be full-time domestic labourers, even if they have children under five.

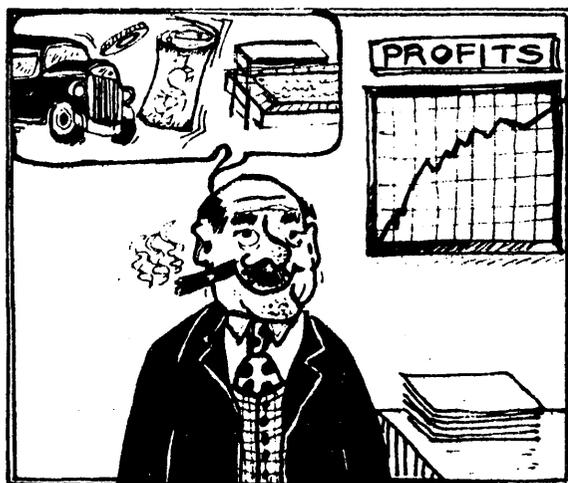
In sum, southern European migrant women work for low wages, in labour intensive jobs and in conditions that are correctly described as 'Dickensian'.⁶⁴ The difficulties involved in struggle over wages and conditions are the greater because of union attitudes to the women. Many women could not tell the difference between unions and management, for the reason that they had little information about the former. Although 87% belonged to their union, 64% of the women stated that they had never had discussions with their union representatives.⁶⁵ In fact, the unions mainly address them, and distribute material in a language the women cannot speak (English). Further, their shop stewards are usually Australian-born. Like other Australian-born or English migrants in these factories they are frequently hostile to the women, for racist and ethnocentric reasons. Because southern European migrant women are effectively ruled out of union and shop floor participation, and because of their language difficulties, they have no way of initiating struggle over wages and conditions. But they are certainly prepared to fight. Up to 50% of the women consistently stated that they were prepared to strike over issues such as obtaining better conditions; increased pay, more flexible working hours and child-care. They are also prepared to strike to stop abuse and 'pushiness' from management.⁶⁶ But, for want of an effective industrial outlet they are unable to act.

In general, the key thing to note about the situation of southern European migrant women is that they work because they have to, because their husbands' wages cannot support a family. Where necessary, they pay for childcare. In short, this means that capital benefits from an increased exploitation of both the women and their husbands. That is, capital is able to purchase the labour-power of two workers at the cheapest possible price, and have two workers expanding surplus-value. This situation is more advantageous to capital than that implied by the family wage, where only one worker is engaged in producing surplus-value for capital, and where the labour-power of that worker is purchased at a higher price because of its family component.

Migrant women are more easily exploited because of their industrial weakness. This weakness cannot be reduced to the trade unions' racism and sexism, but I think it can be seen as part product of the earlier attempts to control the labour supply, viz. the family wage, and the sexual and effective racial demarcation of jobs.

CONCLUSION

I hesitate to draw out any strategic implications in this argument, mainly because I have not touched on the effects of the current economic crisis. For instance, the manufacturing sector is the worst hit by the crisis, and southern European migrant men and women are the more vulnerable because of it. This restricts anything that can be said about ways in which the militancy of migrant women might



be explored. However, there are some general points that can be made, both about the unions' attitudes to women, and the women's movement approach to working class women.

The family wage once implied benefits for the whole working class, but this no longer holds. While the upper segments of the labour market may still earn an effective family wage, the basis for a family wage for all working class males has been undermined. Now the family wage was the rationale for the sexual demarcation of jobs as a class strategy. Without a family wage, it has no credibility in any terms. It reinforces labour market segmentation, and makes it easier for capitalists to increase the exploitation of the lower segments of the labour market.

Various groups within the women's movement have persistently advocated an end to the implicit or explicit sexual demarcation of jobs. It is plain that this is a necessary first step, and it should be accompanied by an increased challenge to the effective ethnic or racial demarcation of jobs. But if working class living standards are not to suffer further in the short term, then such challenges should also be accompanied by support for alternative means for increasing the price of labour-power, and for securing the benefits previously guaranteed by full-time domestic labour. On the first point: there are two ways of affecting the supply and demand of labour-power; one is by a decrease in the supply of labour-power; the other is by an increase in jobs. The family wage can no longer secure the former, nor can discrimination based on race. Aside from their inherent objectionability, capital has effectively undermined both tactics. The alternative is fighting for an increase in jobs, and this means supporting the demand for a shorter working day. On the second point: the most time-consuming activity in full-time domestic labour is childcare. It is also the most expensive single service to replace when full-time domestic labour is no longer viable. Free twenty-four hour childcare is one of the major demands of the women's movement. If working class living standards are not going to suffer further, it should also be a basic demand of organised industrial labour.

The implication of this analysis for the women's movement is that the demands for free childcare and an end to the effective sexual demarcation of jobs should be accompanied by a demand to end the effective ethnic or racial demarcation of jobs, and a demand for a shorter working day. At any rate, these should be the demands if we are addressing ourselves to all women, and not only bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women. In other words, if, as feminists, we assume that women's role in the familial division of labour is crucial in maintaining women's oppression, and if we also assume that the sexual division of labour is essential to the reproduction of class relations, then clearly the increase in married women's work force participation is a potentially good thing. However, support for this process must take account of class position. This means taking account of the benefits lost with the family wage, and fighting for alternatives. Otherwise, the position of working class women in social production will remain weak; their double exploitation will continue.

The obvious and most likely objection to this proposal is that the demand for a shorter working day is not a women's demand, in the sense that it does not relate to the interests of women as women. But one of the main points of this article has been to show that the interests of 'women', as an undifferentiated group, need not be the main interests of working class women. Certainly the emphasis on personal politics, on childcare, on control of our own bodies, and on educational and job opportunities are relevant to all women. However, economic survival is even more relevant. In short, the means for extending 'job opportunities' for working class women differ from those appropriate to bourgeois women. For the former, job opportunities are necessarily a class issue, in the sense that any gains in this area must be based on class struggle.

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

- ¹'But I Wouldn't Want My Wife to Work Here...', research report for International Women's Year by the Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA), Melbourne, 1976.
- ²Power and Collins have both shown how southern European migrant women, together with black women, are the most exploited groups in the Australian work force. See Margaret Power, 'Cast-off Jobs: Women, Migrants, Blacks May Apply', Refractory Girl, June 1976, and Jock Collins, 'A Divided Working Class', Intervention, No. 8.
- ³The recent literature on domestic labour is very extensive. I do not attempt to cover it all, and only refer to those articles which I think represent the main trends, viz. Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community, Falling Wall Press Ltd., 1972; John Harrison, 'Political Economy of Housework', Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists, Spring 1974; Jean Gardiner, 'Women's Domestic Labour', New Left Review, January-February 1975; Jean Gardiner, Susan Himmelweit and Maureen Mackintosh, 'Women's Domestic Labour', The Political Economy of Women C.S.E. Pamphlet No. 2; Wally Seccombe, 'The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism', New Left Review, January-February 1974; and Olivia Adamson, Carol Brown, Judith Harrison and Judy Price, 'Women's Oppression Under Capitalism', Revolutionary Communist, No. 5, November 1976.
- ⁴See, for example, Penny Ryan and Tim Rowse, 'Women, Arbitration and the Family', in Curthoys, Eade and Spearritt (eds.), Women at Work, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Canberra, 1975. While disagreeing with their conclusions, I later use the authors' excellent historical documentation to support the argument put here.
- ⁵The argument about control of the labour supply derives in part from Jane Humphries' forthcoming paper, 'Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working Class Family'.
- ⁶On labour market segmentation, see Collins, op. cit.
- ⁷Of course, Marxist-feminists and Marxist-feminist theory in a broad sense have been around for a long time. I am writing here of the relevant literature which has appeared from the late '60's onwards; Juliet Mitchell and Sheila Rowbotham are good exemplars.
- ⁸One of the most persuasively argued statements of this point of view is Robin Morgan's introduction to the anthology Sisterhood is Powerful.
- ⁹For one of the extreme statements of this perspective, see Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex.
- ¹⁰The attempt to relate psychoanalysis to the Marxist theory of ideology in an explanation of women's oppression started with Juliet Mitchell's Psychoanalysis and Feminism, Allen Lane, 1974. For more recent and more Marxist contributions, see Working Papers in Sex, Science and Culture, Nos. 1 and 2.
- ¹¹The same criticism applies to the U.K. accounts I draw on. The deficiency is acknowledged in Gardiner's second article, and pinpointed as an area for future work. See Gardiner et al., op. cit., pp. 10ff.
- ¹²This account is very abbreviated; for instance, I prescind from any discussion of productive and unproductive labour, for the reason that it is not immediately relevant to the argument put here. It is, however, an area that would need to be investigated in working out the usefulness of this argument in broader terms. For more information on value theory in general, see Karl Marx, Capital, especially Vol. I.
- ¹³See Dallacosta and James, op. cit., for the strongest statement on this, and Harrison, op. cit., and Gardiner, op. cit., for modifications.
- ¹⁴Except for Wally Seccombe, who argues that the housewife 'creates value embodied

in the labour-power sold to capital, equal to the value she consumes in her own upkeep. Note that the equation balances as before — value is neither created nor destroyed overall, but merely transferred'. Seccombe, op. cit., p. 89. He nevertheless concurs with the general assumption that full-time housework exists because it is convenient for capital.

¹⁵For instance, Dallacosta and James claim that housewives not only produce use-values but labour-power as a commodity, and therefore produce surplus-value. Subsequent contributions from Harrison and Gardiner argued against the notion that housework as such was productive labour, but still argued for the idea that it indirectly contributes to capitalist accumulation. For example, Harrison argues that housework is a non-capitalist mode of production in which the housewife carries out unpaid surplus labour. He says that housework as such does not produce the commodity labour-power, but that it does produce use-values which contribute to the workers' subsistence. Thus housework is not directly value-creating, but it still enters into the value of labour-power. Harrison concludes that surplus-labour is appropriated in housework, and that it is transferred to capital in that the capitalist is able to pay wages below the actual value of labour-power. Similarly, Gardiner argues that 'domestic labour does not create value, on the definition of value that Marx adopted, but does nonetheless contribute to surplus-value by keeping down necessary labour, or the value of labour-power to a level that is lower than the actual subsistence level of the working class'. Gardiner, op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁶See Jean Curthoys and Jack Barbalet, The Domestic Labour Debate, paper presented to the First Australian Political Economy Conference, Sydney, June 1976. Also Adamson et al., op. cit., pp. 9-14.

¹⁷Gardiner et al., op. cit.; Adamson, et al., op. cit.

¹⁸Adamson et al., op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁹ibid.

²⁰ibid.

²¹Gardiner et al., op. cit., p. 11. This emphasis on 'benefits to men' means that they miss the significance of a point they make towards the end of their paper, when they note that the family wage was an achievement of organised labour in the nineteenth century. That is, they reduce the family wage to its individual benefits for men (and women when domestic labour was 'arduous') rather than seeing it in class terms.

²²ibid., p. 13.

²³ibid.

²⁴ibid., p. 14.

²⁵Adamson et al., op. cit., pp. 17-18.

²⁶As noted earlier, Gardiner et al. do stress that they see the relation of domestic labour to women's wage labour as an important area for future work. op. cit., p. 11.

²⁷Barbalet and Curthoys, op. cit.

²⁸Understanding this is where the work on psychoanalysis and ideology is crucial. The particular argument I mention is developed in Mia Campioni's paper, 'Psychoanalysis and Marxist-feminism', Working Papers in Sex, Science and Culture, No. 2.

²⁹Which could be one good reason why Marx gave full-time domestic labour such cursory treatment in his general analysis.

³⁰Marx, op. cit., p. 373.

³¹ibid., p. 373, n. 1.

³²Ryan and Rowse, op. cit., p. 18.

³³For example, Elizabeth Wilson in her generally excellent Women and the Welfare State, Red Rag Pamphlet No. 2, writes that the nineteenth century factory acts and benevolent legislation restricting the work of women and children were passed 'because the employers recognised that future generations of workers must be bred up and preserved'. (p. 5)

³⁴Collins, op. cit., p. 78.

³⁵For example, Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, Monthly Review Press, 1974; Michael Reich, David M. Gordon and R.C. Edwards, 'A Theory of Labor Market Segmentation', American Economic Review, Papers and Proceedings, Vol. LXIII, No. 2, May 1973; Stephen Marglin, 'What Do Bosses Do?', Review of Radical Political Economy, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1974; Katherine Stone, 'The Origins of Job Structures in the Steel Industry', Radical America, November-December 1973; Power, op. cit.; and Collins, op. cit.

³⁶Collins, op. cit., pp. 70-74. The theory here is based on Reich, et al., op. cit.

³⁷ibid., p. 70.

³⁸Collins, op. cit.; Power, op. cit.

³⁹As is made very clear in the report 'Policies for Development of the Manufacturing Industry', the Jackson Report, Vol. I (Green Paper).

⁴⁰Collins, op. cit., p. 74. These six divisions are the minimum possible. Margaret Power thinks that the minimum should be eight, viz. Australian women and migrant women from Britain, migrant women from north and western Europe, migrant women from southern Europe (roughly, including Turkey and Egypt), black women and the four corresponding groups of men; Power, op. cit., p. 27. It should be noted that the category 'southern European' does not refer to an homogeneous ethnic group. For instance, in the CURA report it covers women from Turkey, Yugoslavia and South America, as well as women from the Mediterranean countries.

⁴¹However, as Power stresses, segmentation is a dynamic, not a static process. Jobs and their labour markets are in a state of flux, and at some stage a particular group of workers may leave an occupation and be replaced by a new group. (p. 28)

⁴²Collins, op. cit., p. 74.

⁴³ibid., p. 72.

⁴⁴ibid., p. 77.

⁴⁵ibid.

⁴⁶See the Jackson Report.

⁴⁷Collins, op. cit., p. 77.

⁴⁸In fact, recent work on the Great Depression in the U.S. shows that it did not affect working women as badly as men, precisely because of the areas in which the former worked. See Ruth Milkman, Review of Radical Political Economy, Vol. 8, No. 1. Milkman also shows that women tended to 'take up the slack' not by leaving the work force, but by increasing the intensity of their domestic labour in the house.

⁴⁹A. Game and R. Pringle, 'The Feminist Movement, the State, and the Labor Party', Intervention, No. 8, p. 52.

⁵⁰The CURA Report, pp. 1-2.

⁵¹The Jackson Report, Green Paper, p. 2 and *passim*.

⁵² ibid., pp. 72-73.

⁵³ In clothing and footwear, migrant women represent over 50% of the labour force in all sections of the industry, and over two-thirds in some sections. In the food industry, over 50% of those employed are migrant women. The same figure holds for electrical trades, and some sections of the metal industry. I am relying here on a breakdown of I.A.C. figures in Jock Collins' unpublished M.Ec. thesis, The Political Economy of Post-war Australian Immigration.

⁵⁴ ibid.

⁵⁵ The CURA report, p. 31.

⁵⁶ Bob Boughton and Jock Collins, 'The Henderson Report on Poverty: a Marxist Critique', Intervention, No. 7, p. 30, Table I.

⁵⁷ ibid.

⁵⁸ The CURA report, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁹ Boughton and Collins, op. cit., p. 42.

⁶⁰ ibid., p. 43.

⁶¹ Power, op. cit., p. 29.

⁶² Again, this corresponds with the CURA material. The vast majority of the women surveyed had been housewives or students (71%) and another 8% had worked on farms. (p. 43)

⁶³ ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 3 of the CURA report.

⁶⁵ ibid., pp. 63, 82.

⁶⁶ ibid.

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