

THE PATRIARCHAL WELFARE STATE: WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY

By Carole Pateman  
Professor of Government  
The University of Sydney

This paper was presented to a joint seminar sponsored by the State and Capitalism Since 1800 and Equality and the Welfare State study groups at the Center for European Studies on March 13, 1987. It will appear as a chapter in Democracy and the Welfare State, edited by Amy Gutman (Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

Carole Pateman

Chapter for Democracy and the Welfare State, (ed.) Amy Gutmann

According to Raymond Williams' Keywords "the Welfare State, in distinction from the Warfare State, was first named in 1939."<sup>1</sup> The welfare state was set apart from the fascist, warfare state, defeated in the Second World War, and so the identification of democracy with the welfare state was established at the christening. In the 1980s, most western welfare states are also warfare states but this is not usually seen as compromising their democratic character. Rather, the extent of democracy is usually taken to hinge on the class structure. Welfare provisions form a social wage for the working class, and the positive, social democratic view is that the welfare state gives social meaning and equal worth to the formal juridical and political rights of all citizens. A less positive view of the welfare state is that it provides governments with new means of exercising power over and controlling working class citizens. But proponents of both views usually fail to acknowledge the sexually divided way in which the welfare state has been constructed. That is to say, the patriarchal structure of the welfare state is rarely named, nor is the very different way that women and men have been incorporated as citizens seen to be of significance for democracy.<sup>2</sup> Even the fact that the earliest

---

\* I am grateful to Amy Gutmann and Michael Walzer, and especially to Joan Scott and Theda Skocpol, for their comments on and criticisms of a draft of this paper. I was also helped in thinking about this subject by conversations with Nancy Fraser, Wendy Sarvasy and Birte Siim at Stanford, 1984-85.

developments of the welfare state took place when women were still denied, or had only just won, citizenship in the national state is usually overlooked.<sup>3</sup>

I do not want to dispute the crucial importance of class in understanding the welfare state and democracy. To write about the welfare state is, in large part, to write about the working class. However, my discussion treats class in a manner unfamiliar to most democratic theorists who usually assume that the welfare state, democracy and class can be discussed theoretically without any attention to the character of the relation between the sexes. I shall suggest some reasons why and how the patriarchal structure of the welfare state has been repressed from theoretical consciousness. I shall also consider the connection between employment and citizenship in the patriarchal welfare state, the manner in which "women" have been opposed to the "worker" and the "citizen," and a central paradox surrounding women, welfare and citizenship. By "the welfare state" here I refer to the states of Britain (from which I shall draw a number of my empirical and historical examples), Australia and the USA. In the more developed welfare states of Scandinavia, women have moved nearer to, but have not yet achieved, full citizenship.<sup>4</sup>

For the past century, many welfare policies have been concerned with what are now called "women's issues." Moreover, much of the controversy about the welfare state has revolved and continues to revolve around the question of the respective social places and tasks of women and men, the structure of marriage, and the power relationship between husband and wife. So it is not surprising that the Reagan administration's attack on the welfare state has been seen as prompted by a desire to shore up the

patriarchal structure of the state; the Reagan budgets "in essence, . . . try to restabilize patriarchy . . . as much as they try to fight inflation and stabilize capitalism."<sup>5</sup> The difficulties of understanding the welfare state and citizenship today without taking the position of women into account is not hard to illustrate, because contemporary feminists have produced a large body of evidence and argument that reveals the importance of women in the welfare state and the importance of the welfare state for women.

Women are now the majority of recipients of many welfare benefits; for example, in the USA, in 1980 64.8 percent of the recipients of Medicare were women, 70 percent of housing subsidies went to women, either living alone or heading households,<sup>6</sup> and, by 1979, 80 percent of the families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children were headed by women (the number of such families grew fourfold between 1961 and 1979).<sup>7</sup> A major reason why women are so prominent as welfare recipients is that women are more likely than men to be poor ("the feminization of poverty"). In the USA, between 1969 and 1979, the proportion of families headed by men that fell below the official poverty line declined and the proportion headed by women grew rapidly.<sup>8</sup> By 1982 about one-fifth of families with minor children were headed by women, but they were 53 percent of all poor families,<sup>9</sup> and female heads were over three times as likely as male heads to have incomes below the poverty line.<sup>10</sup> By 1980 two out of every three adults whose income was below the poverty line was a woman. The National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity reported in 1980 that if these trends continued the entire population of the poor in the USA would be composed of women and children by the year 2000.<sup>11</sup> In Australia, women are

also likely to be poor. A survey for the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in 1973 found that of the groups with "disabilities," fatherless families were poorest; 30 percent of such families were below the poverty line, and another 20 percent only marginally above it.<sup>12</sup> Nor had the situation improved by 1978-9; 41 percent of women who were single parents were then below the poverty line.<sup>13</sup>

The welfare state is now a major source of employment for women. For instance, in Britain the National Health Service is the biggest single employer of women in the country; about three-quarters of NHS employees are women and 90 percent of NHS nurses are women.<sup>14</sup> In 1981 there were more than 5 million jobs in the public health, education and welfare sector in Britain (an increase of 2 million from 1961) and three-fifths of these jobs were held by women.<sup>15</sup> In the USA in 1980, 70 percent of the jobs at all levels of government concerned with social services were occupied by women; these jobs comprise a quarter of all female employment, and about half of all professional jobs occupied by women. Employment is provided largely at state and local level in the USA. The federal government subsidizes the welfare state where there are few jobs for women; only 0.5 percent of the female workforce is employed on military contracts. One estimate is that for each billion dollar increase in the military budget, 9500 jobs are lost to women in social welfare or the private sector.<sup>16</sup>

Women are also involved in the welfare state in less obvious ways. Negotiations (and confrontations) with welfare state officials on a day-to-day basis are usually conducted by women, and it is mothers, not fathers, who usually deal with the rent, social workers, take children to welfare clinics and so forth. Women are also frequently in the forefront

of political campaigns and actions to improve welfare services or the treatment of welfare claimants. The services and benefits provided by the welfare state are far from comprehensive and, in the absence of public provision, much of the work involved in, for example, caring for the aged in all three countries is undertaken by women in their homes (something to which I shall return). Finally, to put the previous points into perspective, there is one area of the welfare state from which women have been largely excluded. The legislation, policy-making and higher-level administration of the welfare state has been and remains predominantly in men's hands. Some progress has been made; in Australia the Office of the Status of Women within the (Commonwealth) Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet monitors cabinet submissions, and the Women's Budget Program requires all Departments to make a detailed assessment of the impact of their policies on women.

## I

To gain some insight into why the welfare state can still be discussed without taking account of these factors, it is useful to begin by looking at Donald Moon's account (chapter in this volume) of the welfare state as a response to "Hegel's dilemma." Hegel was the first political theorist to set out the moral dilemma that arises when citizenship is undermined by the operation of the capitalist market. The market leaves some citizens bereft of the resources for social participation and so, as Moon states, as "undeserved exiles from society." Citizens thrown into poverty lack both the means for self-respect and the means to be recognized

---

by fellow citizens as of equal worth to themselves, a recognition basic to democracy. Poverty-stricken individuals are not, and, unless the outcome of participation in the market is offset in some way, cannot be, full citizens. The moral basis of the welfare state lies in the fact that it can provide the resources for what T. H. Marshall called the "social rights" of democratic citizenship. For Moon, then, Hegel's dilemma is concerned with the manner in which the participation of some individuals as workers in the capitalist economy (or, in Hegel's terminology, in the sphere of civil society) can make a mockery of their formal status as equal citizens. In contemporary terms, it is a problem of class, or, more exactly, now that mass unemployment could well be a permanent feature of capitalist economies, a problem of an underclass of unemployed social exiles. There is no doubt that this is an important problem, but Moon's reading of Hegel focuses on only part of the dilemma with which Hegel was faced.

In addition to the category of citizens who become social exiles through the accident that they can find no one to buy their labor power at a living wage, Hegel also has to deal with a category of beings who are exiles because they are incapable of being incorporated into civil society and citizenship. According to Hegel--and to almost all the modern theorists who are admitted to the "tradition of Western political philosophy"--women naturally lack the attributes and capacities of the "individuals" who can enter civil society, sell their labor power and become citizens.<sup>17</sup> Women, Hegel holds, are natural social exiles. Hegel therefore had to find an answer to two dilemmas, and his theory gives a moral basis to class division and sexual division. The welfare state could

---

not provide a solution to the problem of women. Hegel's response was simultaneously to reaffirm the necessity of women's exile and to incorporate them into the state. Women are not incorporated as citizens like men, but as members of the family, a sphere separate from (or in social exile from) civil society and the state. The family is essential to civil society and the state, but it is constituted on a different basis from the rest of conventional social life, having its own ascriptive principles of association.

Women have now won the formal status of citizens, and their contemporary social position may seem a long way removed from that prescribed by Hegel. But Hegel's theory is still very relevant to the problem of patriarchy and the welfare state, although most contemporary political theorists usually look only at the relation between civil society and the state, or the intervention that the public power (state) may make in the private sphere (economy or class system). This view of "public" and "private" assumes that two of Hegel's categories (civil society and state) can be understood in the absence of the third (family). Yet Hegel's theory presupposes that family/civil society/state are comprehensible only in relation to each other--and then civil society and the state become "public" in contrast to the "private" family.

Hegel's social order contains a double separation of the private and public: the class division between civil society and the state (between economic man and citizen, between private enterprise and the public power); and the patriarchal separation between the private family and the public world of civil society/state. Moreover, the public character of the sphere of civil society/state is constructed and gains its meaning through



what it excludes--the private association of the family. The patriarchal division between public and private is also a sexual division. Women, naturally lacking the capacities for public participation remain within an association constituted by love, ties of blood, natural subjection and particularity, and in which they are governed by men. The public world of universal citizenship is an association of free and equal individuals, of property, rights and contract--and of men, who interact as formally equal citizens.

The widely held belief that the basic structure of our society rests on the separation of the private, familial sphere from the public world of the state and its policies is both true and false. It is true that the private sphere has been seen as women's proper place. Women have never in reality been completely excluded from the public world, but the policies of the welfare state have helped ensure that women's day-to-day experience confirms the separation of private and public existence. The belief is false in that, since the early twentieth century, welfare policies have reached across from public to private and helped uphold a patriarchal structure of familial life. Moreover, the two spheres are linked because men have always had a legitimate place in both. Men have been seen both as heads of families--and as husbands and fathers they have had socially and legally sanctioned power over their wives and children--and as participants in public life. Indeed, the "natural" masculine capacities that enable them, but not their wives, to be heads of families are the same capacities that enable them, but not their wives, to take their place in civil life.

Moon's interpretation of Hegel illustrates the continuing strength of Hegel's patriarchal construction of citizenship, which is assumed to be

universal or democratic citizenship. The exiles from society who need the welfare state to give moral worth to their citizenship are male workers. Hegel showed deep insight here. Paid employment has become the key to citizenship, and the recognition of an individual as a citizen of equal worth to other citizens is lacking when a worker is unemployed. The history of the welfare state and citizenship (and the manner in which they have been theorized) is bound up with the history of the development of "employment societies."<sup>18</sup> In the early part of the nineteenth century, most workers were still not fully incorporated into the labor market; they typically worked at a variety of occupations, worked on a seasonal basis, gained part of their subsistence outside the capitalist market, and enjoyed "Saint Monday." By the 1880s, full employment had become an ideal, unemployment a major social issue, and loud demands were heard for state-supported social reform (and arguments made against state action to promote welfare).<sup>19</sup> But who was included under the banner of "full employment"? What was the status of those "natural" social exiles seen as properly having no part in the employment society? Despite the many changes in the social standing of women, we are not so far as we might like to think from Hegel's statement that the husband, as head, "has the prerogative to go out and work for [the family's] living, to attend to its needs, and to control and administer its capital."<sup>20</sup>

The political significance of the sexual division of labor is ignored by most democratic theorists. They treat the public world of paid employment and citizenship as if it can be divorced from its connection to the private sphere, and so the masculine character of the public sphere has been repressed. For example, T. H. Marshall first presented his

influential account of citizenship in 1949, at the height of the optimism in Britain about the contribution of the new welfare state policies to social change--but also at the time (as I shall show) when women were being confirmed as lesser citizens in the welfare state. Marshall states that "citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community,"<sup>21</sup> and most contemporary academic discussions of citizenship accept the validity of this statement for women. But, as shown graphically and brutally by the history of blacks in the USA, this is not the case. The formal status of citizen can be bestowed on, or won by, a category of people who are still denied full social membership.

Marshall noted that the Factory Acts in the nineteenth century "protected" women workers, and he ascribes the protection to their lack of citizenship. But he does not consider "protection"--the polite way to refer to subordination--of women in the private sphere or ask how this is related to the sexual division of labor in the capitalist economy and citizenship. Nor does the "in some important respects peculiar" civil status of married women in the nineteenth century inhibit his confidence in maintaining, despite the limited franchise, "that in the nineteenth century citizenship in the form of civil rights was universal," and that, in economic life, "the basic civil right is the right to work." Marshall sees the aim of the "social rights" of the welfare state as "class-abatement"; this is "no longer merely an attempt to abate the obvious nuisance of destitution in the lowest ranks of society. . . . It is no longer content to raise the floor-level in the basement of the social edifice, . . . it has begun to remodel the whole building. . . ." <sup>22</sup> But the question that has to be asked is whether women are in the building or in a separate annex?

## II

Theoretically and historically, the central criterion for citizenship has been "independence," and the elements encompassed under the heading of independence have been based on masculine attributes and abilities. Men, but not women, have been seen as possessing the capacities required of "individuals," "workers" and "citizens." As a corollary, the meaning of "dependence" is associated with all that is womanly--and women's citizenship in the welfare state is full of paradoxes and contradictions. To use Marshall's metaphor, women are identified as trespassers into the public edifice of civil society and the state. Three elements of "independence" are particularly important for present purposes, all related to the masculine capacity for self-protection; the capacity to bear arms, the capacity to own property and the capacity for self-government.

First, women are held to lack the capacity for self-protection; they have been "unilaterally disarmed."<sup>23</sup> The protection of women is undertaken by men, but physical safety is a fundamental aspect of women's welfare that has been sadly neglected in the welfare state. From the nineteenth century, feminists (including J. S. Mill) have drawn attention to the impunity with which husbands could use physical force against their wives,<sup>24</sup> but women/wives still find it hard to obtain proper social and legal protection against violence from their male "protectors." Defense of the state (or the ability to protect your protection, as Hobbes put it), the ultimate test of citizenship, is also a masculine prerogative. The anti-suffragists in both America and Britain made a great deal of the alleged inability and unwillingness of women to use armed force, and the

---

issue of women and combat duties in the military forces of the warfare state was also prominent in the recent campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States. Although women are now admitted into the armed forces and so into training useful for later civilian employment, they are prohibited from combat duties in Britain, Australia and the USA. Moreover, past exclusion of women from the warfare state has meant that welfare provision for veterans has also benefited men. In Australia and the USA, veterans, because of their special "contribution" as citizens, have had their own, separately administered welfare state, which has ranged from preference in university education (the G.I. Bills in the USA) to their own medical benefits and hospital services, and (in Australia), preferential employment in the public service.

In the "democratic" welfare state, however, employment rather than military service is the key to citizenship. The masculine "protective" capacity now enters into citizenship primarily through the second and third dimensions of independence. Men, but not women, have also been seen as property owners. Only some men own material property, but as "individuals," all men own (and can protect) the property they possess in their persons. Their status as "workers" depends on their capacity to contract out the property they own in their labor power. Women are still not fully socially recognized as such property owners. To be sure, our position has improved dramatically from the mid-nineteenth century when women as wives had a very "peculiar" position as the legal property of their husbands, and feminists compared wives to slaves. But, today, a wife's person is still the property of her husband in one vital respect. Despite recent legal reform, in Britain and in some of the states of the

USA and Australia, rape is still deemed legally impossible within marriage, and thus a wife's consent has no meaning. Yet women are now formally citizens in states held to be based on the necessary consent of self-governing individuals.<sup>25</sup> The profound contradiction about women's consent is rarely if ever noticed and so is not seen as detracting from the claim of the welfare state to be democratic, or as related to a sexually divided citizenship.

The third dimension of "independence" is self-government. Men have been constituted as the beings who can govern (or protect) themselves, and if a man can govern himself, then he also has the requisite capacity to govern others. Only a few men govern others in public life--but all men govern in private as husbands and heads of households. As the governor of a family, a man is also a "breadwinner." He has the capacity to sell his labor power as a worker, or to buy labor power with his capital, and provide for his wife and family. His wife is thus "protected." The category of "breadwinner" presupposes that wives are constituted as economic dependents or "housewives," which places them in a subordinate position. The dichotomy breadwinner/housewife, and the masculine meaning of independence, was established in Britain by the middle of the last century; in the earlier period of capitalist development women (and children) were wage-laborers. A "worker" became a man who has an economically dependent wife to take care of his daily needs and look after his home and children. Moreover, "class," too, is constructed as a patriarchal category. "The working class" is the class of working men, who are also full citizens in the welfare state.

This brings me back to Marshall's statement about the universal, civil right to "work," i.e., to paid employment. The democratic

implications of the right to work cannot be understood without attention to the connections between the public world of "work" and citizenship, and the private world of conjugal relations. What it means to be a "worker" depends in part on men's status and power as husbands, and their standing as citizens in the welfare state. The construction of the male worker as "breadwinner" and his wife as his "dependent" was expressed officially in the classifications of the Census in Britain and Australia. In the Census of 1851 in Britain, women employed in unpaid domestic work were "placed . . . in one of the productive classes along with paid work of a similar kind."<sup>26</sup> This classification changed after 1871, and by 1911 unpaid housewives had been completely removed from the economically active population. In Australia, an initial conflict over the categories of classification was resolved in 1890 when the scheme devised in New South Wales was adopted. The Australians divided up the population more decisively than the British, and the 1891 (NSW) Census was based on the two categories of "breadwinner" and "dependent." Unless explicitly stated otherwise, women's occupation was classed as domestic, and domestic workers were put in the dependent category.

The position of men as breadwinner-workers has been built into the welfare state. The sexual divisions in the welfare state have received much less attention than the persistence of the old dichotomy between the deserving and undeserving poor, which pre-dates the welfare state. This is particularly clear in the USA, where a sharp separation is maintained between "social security," or welfare state policies directed at "deserving workers who have paid for them through 'contributions' over their working lifetimes," and "welfare"--seen as public "handouts" to "barely deserving

poor people."<sup>27</sup> Although "welfare" does not have this stark meaning in Britain or Australia, where the welfare state encompasses much more than most Americans seem able to envisage, the old distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor is still alive and kicking, illustrated by the popular bogey-figures of the "scrounger" (Britain) and the "dole-bludger" (Australia). However, although the deserving/undeserving poor dichotomy overlaps with the divisions between husband/wife and worker/housewife to some extent, it also obscures the patriarchal structure of the welfare state.

Feminist analyses have shown how many welfare provisions have been established within a two-tier system. First, there are the benefits available to individuals as "public" persons by virtue of their participation in, and accidents of fortune in, the capitalist market. Benefits in this tier of the system are usually claimed by men. Second, benefits are available to the "dependents" of individuals in the first category, or to "private" persons, usually women. In the USA, for example, men are the majority of "deserving" workers who receive benefits through the insurance system to which they have "contributed" out of their earnings. On the other hand, the majority of claimants in means-tested programs are women--and women who are usually making their claims as wives or mothers. This is clearly the case with AFDC, where women are aided because they are mothers supporting children on their own, but the same is also true in other programs: "46 percent of the women receiving Social Security benefits make their claims as wives." In contrast, "men, even poor men, rarely make claims for benefits solely as husbands or fathers."<sup>28</sup> In Australia the division is perhaps even more sharply defined. In



1980-81, in the primary tier of the system, in which benefits are employment-related and claimed by those expected to be economically independent but who are not earning an income because of unemployment or illness, women form only 31.3 percent of claimants. In contrast, in the "dependents group," 73.3 percent of claimants were women, who were eligible for benefits because "they are dependent on a man who could not support them, . . . [or] should have had a man support them if he had not died, divorced or deserted them."<sup>29</sup>

Such evidence of lack of "protection" raises an important question about women's standard of living in the welfare state. As dependents, married women should derive their subsistence from their husbands, so that wives are placed in the position of all dependent people before the establishment of the welfare state; they are reliant on the benevolence of another for their livelihood. The assumption is generally made that all husbands are benevolent. Wives are assumed to share equally in the standard of life of their husbands. The distribution of income within households has not usually been a subject of interest to economists, political theorists or protagonists in arguments about class and the welfare state--even though William Thompson drew attention to its importance as long ago as 1825<sup>30</sup>--but past and present evidence indicates that the belief that all husbands are benevolent is mistaken.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, women are likely to be better off married than if their marriage fails. One reason why women figure so prominently among the poor is that after divorce, as recent evidence from the USA reveals, a woman's standard of living can fall by nearly 75 percent, whereas a man's can rise by nearly half.<sup>32</sup>

---

The investigation of women's standard of living independently from men's also seems unnecessary given the conventional understanding of the "wage." The concept of the wage has expressed and encapsulated the patriarchal separation and integration of the public world of employment and the private sphere of conjugal relations. Once the opposition breadwinner/housewife was consolidated, a "wage" had to provide subsistence for several people. However, in arguments about the welfare state and the social wage, the wage is usually treated as a return for sale of individuals' labor power. Instead, the struggle between capital and labor and the controversy about the welfare state has been about the family wage. A "living wage" has been defined as what is required for a worker as breadwinner to support a wife and family, rather than what is needed to support himself; the wage is not what is sufficient to reproduce the worker's own labor power, but what is sufficient, in combination with the unpaid work of the housewife, to reproduce the labor power of the present and future labor force.

The designer of the Australian Census classification system, T. A. Coghlan, discussed women's employment in his Report on the 1891 (NSW) Census, and he argued that married women in the paid labor market depressed men's wages and thus lowered the general standard of living.<sup>33</sup> His line of argument about women's employment has been used by the trade union movement for the past century in support of bargaining to secure a family wage. In 1909 motions were put to the conferences of Labour Party and Trades Union Congress in Britain to ban the employment of wives altogether, and as recently as 1982 a defense of the family wage was published arguing that it strengthens unions in wage negotiation.<sup>34</sup> In 1907 the family wage was

---

enshrined in law in Australia in the famous Harvester Judgment in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. Justice Higgins ruled in favor of a legally guaranteed minimum wage--and laid down that a living wage should be sufficient to keep an unskilled worker, his (dependent) wife and three children in reasonable comfort.

Of course, a great deal has changed since 1907. Structural changes in capitalism have made it possible for large numbers of married women to enter paid employment, and equal pay legislation in the 1970s, which, in principle, recognizes the wage as payment to an individual, may make it seem that the family wage has had its day. And it was always a myth for many, perhaps most, working class families.<sup>35</sup> Despite the strength of the social ideal of the dependent wife, many working class wives have always been engaged in paid work out of necessity. The family could not survive on the husband's wage, and the wife had to earn money too, whether as a wage-worker or at home doing outwork, or taking in laundry or lodgers or participating in other ways in the "informal" economy. In 1976 in Britain, the wages and salaries of "heads of household" (not all of whom are men) formed only 51 percent of household income.<sup>36</sup> The decline of manufacturing and the expansion of the service sector of capitalist economies since the Second World War has created jobs seen as "suitable" for women. Between 1970 and 1980 in the USA over 13 million women entered the paid labor force.<sup>37</sup> In Britain, if present trends in male and female employment continue, women employees will outnumber men in less than ten years.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, even these dramatic shifts have not been sufficient to make women full members of the employment society. The civil right to "work" is still only half-heartedly acknowledged for women. Women in the workplace

---

are still perceived primarily as wives and mothers, not workers.<sup>39</sup> The view is also widespread that women's wages are a "supplement" to those of the breadwinner. Women, it is held, do not need wages in the same way that men do--so they may legitimately be paid less than men.

When the Commonwealth Arbitration Court legislated for the family wage, 45 percent of the male workforce in Australia were single.<sup>40</sup> Yet in 1912 (in a case involving fruit pickers) Justice Higgins ruled that a job normally done by women could be paid at less than a man's rate because women were not responsible for dependents. On the contrary, while many men received a family wage and had no families, and breadwinners were given the power to determine whether their dependents should share in their standard of living, many women were struggling to provide for dependents on a "dependent's" wage. Eleanor Rathbone estimated that before and just after the Great War in Britain a third of women in paid employment were wholly or partially responsible for supporting dependents.<sup>41</sup> About the same proportion of women breadwinners was found in a survey of Victorian manufacturing industries in Australia in 1928.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the classification of women as men's dependents was the basis for a living wage for women, granted in New South Wales in 1918; lower wages for women were enshrined in law and (until a national minimum wage for both sexes was granted in 1974) were set at 50-54 percent of the male rate. Again in Britain, in the late 1960s and 1970s, the National Board for Prices and Incomes investigated low pay, and argued that, as part-time workers, women did not depend on their own wage to support themselves.<sup>43</sup> In the USA, as recently as 1985, it was stated that "women have generally been paid less [than men] because they would work for lower wages, since they had no

---

urgent need for more money. Either they were married, or single and living at home, or doubling up with friends."<sup>44</sup>

I noted above that women are prominent as welfare claimants because, today, it is usually women who are poor--and perhaps the major reason why women are poor is that it is very hard for most women to find a job that will pay a living wage. Equal pay legislation cannot overcome the barrier of a sexually segregated occupational structure. Capitalist economies are patriarchal, divided into men's and women's occupations; the sexes do not usually work together, nor are they paid at the same rates for similar work. For example, in the USA, 80 percent of women's jobs are located in only 20 of the 420 occupations listed by the Department of Labor.<sup>45</sup> More than half of employed women work in occupations that are 75 percent female, and over 20 percent work in occupations that are 95 percent female.<sup>46</sup> In Australia in 1986, 59.5 percent of women employees worked in the occupational categories "clerical, sales and services." In only 69 out of 267 occupational categories did the proportion of women reach a third or more.<sup>47</sup> The segregation is very stable; in Britain, for example, 84 percent of women worked in occupations dominated by women in 1971, the same percentage as in 1951, and in 1901 the figure was 88 percent.<sup>48</sup>

The economy is also vertically segregated. Most women's jobs are unskilled<sup>49</sup> and of low status; even in the professions women are clustered at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy. The British National Health Service provides a useful illustration. About one-third of employees are at the lowest level as ancillary workers, of whom around three-quarters are women. Their work is sex-segregated, so that the women workers perform catering and domestic tasks. ~~As I noted above,~~ 90 percent

of NHS nurses are female but about one quarter of senior nursing posts are held by men. At the prestigious levels, only about 10 percent of consultants are female and they are segregated into certain specialities, notably those relating to children (in 1977, 32.7 percent women).<sup>50</sup>

Many women also work part-time, either because of the requirements of their other (unpaid) work, or because they cannot find a full-time job. In Australia in 1986, 57.4 percent of all part-time employees were married women.<sup>51</sup> In Britain, two out of every five women in the workforce works 30 hours or less. However, the hourly rate for full-time women workers was only 75.1 percent of men's in 1982 (and it is men who are likely to work overtime).<sup>52</sup> In 1980, women comprised 64 percent of the employees in the six lowest paid occupations.<sup>53</sup> During the 1970s, women's earnings edged slightly upward compared to men's in most countries, but not in the USA. In 1984, the median earnings of women full-time workers over a full year was \$14,479, while men earned \$23,218.<sup>54</sup> The growth in the service sector in the USA has largely been growth in part-time work; in 1980 almost a quarter of all jobs in the private sector were part-time. Almost all the new jobs appearing between 1970 and 1980 were in areas that paid less than average wages; in 1980 "51 percent [of women] held jobs paying less than 66 percent of a craft worker's wages."<sup>55</sup>

### III

Although so many women, including married women, are now in paid employment, women's standing as "workers" is still of precarious legitimacy. So, therefore, is their standing as democratic citizens. If

---

an individual can gain recognition from other citizens as an equally worthy citizen only through participation in the capitalist market, if self-respect and respect as a citizen are "achieved" in the public world of the employment society, then women still lack the means to be recognized as worthy citizens. Nor have the policies of the welfare state gone far to provide women with the resources to gain respect as citizens. Marshall's social rights of citizenship in the welfare state could be extended to men without difficulty. As participants in the market, men could be seen as making a public contribution, and were in a position to be levied by the state to make a contribution more directly, that entitled them to the benefits of the welfare state. But how could women, dependents of men, whose legitimate "work" is held to be located in the private sphere, be citizens of the welfare state? What could, or did, women contribute? The paradoxical answer is that women contributed--welfare.

The development of the welfare state has presupposed that certain aspects of welfare could and should continue to be provided by women (wives) in the home, and not primarily through public provision. The "work" of a housewife can include the care of invalid husbands and elderly, perhaps infirm, relatives. Welfare state policies have ensured in various ways that wives/women provide welfare services gratis, disguised as part of their responsibility for the private sphere. A good deal has been written about the fiscal crisis of the welfare state, but it would have been more acute if certain areas of welfare had not been seen as a private, women's matter. It is not surprising that the attack on public spending in the welfare state by the Thatcher and Reagan governments goes hand-in-hand with praise for loving care within families, i.e., with an attempt to obtain

ever more unpaid welfare from (house)wives. The Invalid Care Allowance in Britain is a particularly blatant example of the way in which the welfare state ensures that wives provide private welfare. The allowance was introduced in 1975--when the Sex Discrimination Act was also passed--and it is paid to men or to single women who relinquish paid employment to look after a sick, disabled or elderly person (not necessarily a relative). Married women (or those cohabiting) are ineligible for the allowance.

The evidence indicates that it is likely to be married women who provide such care. In 1976 in Britain it was estimated that two million women were caring for adult relatives, and one survey in the north of England found that there were more people caring for adult relatives than mothers looking after children under sixteen.<sup>56</sup> A corollary of the assumption that women, but not men, care for others is that women must also care for themselves. Investigations show that women living by themselves in Britain have to be more infirm than men to obtain the welfare services of home helps, and a study of an old people's home found that frail, elderly women admitted with their husbands faced hostility from the staff because they had failed in their job.<sup>57</sup> Again, women's citizenship is full of contradictions and paradoxes. Women must provide welfare, and care for themselves, and so must be assumed to have the capacities necessary for these tasks. Yet the development of the welfare state has also presupposed that women necessarily are in need of protection by and are dependent on men.

The welfare state has reinforced women's identity as men's dependents both directly and indirectly, and so confirmed rather than ameliorated our social exile. For example, in Britain and Australia the



cohabitation rule explicitly expresses the presumption that women necessarily must be economically dependent on men if they live with them as sexual partners. If cohabitation is ruled to take place, the woman loses her entitlement to welfare benefits. The consequence of the cohabitation rule is not only sexually divided control of citizens, but an exacerbation of the poverty and other problems that the welfare state is designed to ameliorate. In Britain today,

When a man lives in, a woman's independence--her own name on the weekly giro [welfare check]--is automatically surrendered. The men become the claimants and the women their dependents. They lose control over both the revenue and the expenditure, often with catastrophic results: rent not paid, fuel bills missed, arrears mounting.<sup>58</sup>

It is important to ask what counts as part of the welfare state. In Australia and Britain, the taxation system and transfer payments together form a tax-transfer system in the welfare state. In Australia a tax rebate is available for a dependent spouse (usually, of course, a wife), and in Britain the taxation system has always treated a wife's income as her husband's for taxation purposes. It is only relatively recently that it ceased to be the husbands's prerogative to correspond with the Inland Revenue about his wife's earnings, or that he ceased to receive rebates due on her tax payments. Married men can still claim a tax allowance, based on the assumption that they support a dependent wife. Women's dependence is also enforced through the extremely limited public provision of child-care facilities in Australia, Britain and the USA, which creates a severe

obstacle to women's full participation in the employment society. In all three countries, unlike Scandinavia, child-care outside the home is a very controversial issue.

Welfare state legislation has also been framed on the assumption that women make their "contribution" by providing private welfare, and, from the beginning, women were denied full citizenship in the welfare state. In America, "originally the purpose of ADC (now AFDC) was to keep mothers out of the paid labor force, . . . . In contrast, the Social Security retirement program was consciously structured to respond to the needs of white male workers."<sup>59</sup> In Britain the first national insurance, or contributory, scheme was set up in 1911, and one of its chief architects wrote later that women should have been completely excluded because "they want insurance for others, not themselves." Two years before the scheme was introduced, William Beveridge, the father of the contemporary British welfare state, stated in a book on unemployment that the "ideal [social] unit is the household of man, wife and children maintained by the earnings of the first alone. . . . Reasonable security of employment for the breadwinner is the basis of all private duties and all sound social action."<sup>60</sup> Nor had Beveridge changed his mind on this matter by the Second World War when his Report, Social Insurance and Allied Services, appeared in 1942 and laid a major part of the foundation for the great reforms of the 1940s. In a passage now (in)famous among feminists, Beveridge wrote that "the great majority of married women must be regarded as occupied on work which is vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue."<sup>61</sup> In the National Insurance Act of 1946 wives were separated from their husbands

---

for insurance purposes--the significance of this procedure, along with Beveridge's statement, clearly was lost on T. H. Marshall when he was writing his essay on citizenship and the welfare state. Under the Act, married women paid lesser contributions for reduced benefits, but they could also opt out of the scheme, and so from sickness, unemployment and maternity benefits, and they also lost entitlement to an old age pension in their own right, being eligible only as their husband's dependent. By the time that the legislation was amended in 1975, about three-quarters of married women workers had opted out.<sup>62</sup>

A different standard for men and women has also been applied in the operation of the insurance scheme. In 1911 some married women were insured in their own right. The scheme provided benefits in case of "incapacity to work," but, given that wives had already been identified as "incapacitated" for the "work" in question, for paid employment, problems over the criterion for entitlement to sickness benefits were almost inevitable. In 1913 an inquiry was held to discover why married women were claiming benefits at a much greater rate than expected. One obvious reason was that the health of many working class women was extremely poor. The extent of their ill health was revealed in 1915 when letters written by working women in 1913-14 to the Women's Cooperative Guild were published.<sup>63</sup> The national insurance scheme meant that for the first time women could afford to take time off work when ill--but from which "work"? Could they take time off from housework? What were the implications for the embryonic welfare state if they ceased to provide free welfare? From 1913 a dual standard of eligibility for benefits was established. For men the criterion was fitness for work. But the committee of inquiry decided that if a woman

could do her housework she was not ill. So the criterion for eligibility for women was also fitness for work--but unpaid work in the private home, not paid work in the public market which was the basis for the contributory scheme under which the women were insured! This criterion for women was still being laid down in instructions issued by the Department of Health and Social Security in the 1970s.<sup>64</sup> The dual standard was further reinforced in 1975 when a non-contributory invalidity pension was introduced for those incapable of work, but not qualified for the contributory scheme. Men and single women are entitled to the pension if they cannot engage in paid employment; the criterion for married women is ability to perform "normal household duties."<sup>65</sup>

#### IV

So far, I have looked at the patriarchal structure of the welfare state. Although this is necessary, it is only part of the picture; the development of the welfare state has also brought challenges to patriarchal power and helped provide a basis for women's autonomous citizenship. Women have seen the welfare state as one of their major means of support. Well before women won formal citizenship, they campaigned for the state to make provision for welfare, especially for the welfare of women and their children, and women's organizations and women activists have continued their political activities around welfare issues, not least in opposition to their status as "dependents." In 1953, the British feminist Vera Brittain wrote of the welfare state established through the legislation of the 1940s, that "in it women have become ends in themselves and not merely

means to the ends of men," and their "unique value as women" was recognised."<sup>66</sup> With hindsight, Brittain was clearly over-optimistic in her assessment, but perhaps the opportunity now exists to begin to dismantle the patriarchal structure of the welfare state. In the 1980s, the large changes in women's social position, technological and structural changes within capitalism, and mass unemployment mean that much of the basis for the breadwinner/dependent dichotomy and for the employment society itself is being eroded (although both are still widely seen as social ideals). The social context of Hegel's two dilemmas is disappearing. As the current concern about the "feminization of poverty" reveals, there is now a very visible underclass of women who are directly connected to the state as claimants, rather than indirectly as men's dependents. Their social exile is as apparent as that of poor male workers was to Hegel. Social change has now made it much harder to gloss over the paradoxes and contradictions of women's status as citizens.

However, the question of how women might become full citizens of a democratic welfare state is more complex than may appear at first sight, because it is only in the current wave of the organized feminist movement that the division between the private and public spheres of social life has become seen as a major political problem. From the 1860s to the 1960s women were active in the public sphere; women fought not only for welfare measures and for measures to secure the private and public safety of women and girls, but for the vote and civil equality; middle class women fought for entry into higher education and the professions and women trade unionists fought for decent working condition and wages and maternity leave. But the contemporary liberal feminist view, particularly prominent

---

in the USA, that what is required above all is "gender-neutral" laws and policies, was not widely shared.<sup>67</sup> In general, until the 1960s the focus of attention in the welfare state was on measures to ensure that women had proper social support, and hence proper social respect, in carrying out their responsibilities in the private sphere. The problem is whether and how such measures could assist women in their fight for full citizenship. In 1942 in Britain, for example, many women welcomed the passage in the Beveridge Report that I cited above because, it was argued, it gave official recognition to the value of women's unpaid work. However, although the work was called "vital" to "the nation," the Report and the development of the postwar welfare state, as I have shown, helped reinforce the patriarchal structure of citizenship. An official nod of recognition to the "value" of women's work is easily given; in practice, the value of the work in bringing women into full membership in the welfare state was negligible. The equal worth of citizenship and the respect of fellow citizens still depended on participation as paid employees. "Citizenship" and "work" stood then and still stand opposed to "women."

The extremely difficult problem faced by women in their attempt to win full citizenship I shall call "Wollstonecraft's dilemma." The dilemma is that the two routes toward citizenship that women have pursued are mutually incompatible within the confines of the patriarchal welfare state, and, within that context, they are impossible to achieve. For three centuries, since universal citizenship first appeared as a political ideal, women have continued to challenge their alleged natural subordination within private life. From at least the 1790s, they have also struggled with the task of trying to become citizens within an ideal and practice

---

that has gained its universal meaning through their exclusion. Women's response has been complex. On the one hand, they have demanded that the ideal of citizenship be extended to them,<sup>68</sup> and the liberal feminist agenda for a "gender-neutral" social world is the logical conclusion of one form of this demand. On the other hand, women have also insisted, often simultaneously, as did Mary Wollstonecraft, that as women they have specific capacities, talents, needs and concerns, so that the expression of their citizenship will be differentiated from that of men. Their unpaid work providing welfare could be seen, as Wollstonecraft saw women's tasks as mothers, as women's work as citizens, just as their husbands' paid work is central to men's citizenship.<sup>69</sup>

The patriarchal understanding of citizenship means that the two demands are incompatible because it allows two alternatives only: either women become (like) men, and so full citizens; or they continue at women's work which is of no value for citizenship. Moreover, within a patriarchal welfare state neither demand can be met. To demand that citizenship, as it presently exists, be extended to women, accepts the patriarchal meaning of "citizen," which is constructed from men's attributes, capacities and activities. Women cannot be full citizens in the present meaning of the term; at best, citizenship can be extended to women only as lesser men. At the same time, within the patriarchal welfare state, to demand proper social recognition and support for women's responsibilities is to condemn women to less than full citizenship, and continued incorporation into public life as "women," i.e., members of another sphere who cannot, therefore, earn the respect of fellow (i.e., male) citizens.

The example of child endowments or family allowances in Australia and Britain is instructive as a practical illustration of Wollstonecraft's

dilemma. It reveals the great difficulties in trying to implement a policy that both aids women in their work, and challenges patriarchal power and enhances women's citizenship. In both countries there was opposition from the Right and from laissez-faire economists on the ground that family allowances would undermine the father's obligation to support his children and undermine his "incentive" to sell his labor power in the market. The feminist advocates of family allowances in the 1920s, most notably Eleanor Rathbone in Britain, saw the alleviation of poverty in families where the breadwinner's wage was inadequate to meet the family's basic needs as only one argument for this form of state provision. They were also greatly concerned with the questions of the wife's economic dependence and equal pay for men and women workers. If the upkeep of children (or a substantial contribution towards it) was met by the state outside of wage bargaining in the market, then there was no reason why men and women doing the same work should not receive the same pay. Rathbone wrote in 1924 that "nothing can justify the subordination of one group of producers--the mothers--to the rest and their deprivation of a share of their own in the wealth of a community."<sup>70</sup> She argued that family allowances would "once and for all, cut away the maintenance of children and the reproduction of the race from the question of wages."<sup>71</sup>

But not all the advocates of child endowment were feminists--so that the policy could very easily be divorced from the public issue of wages and dependence and be seen only as a return for and recognition of women's private contribution. Supporters included the eugenicists and pronatalists, and family allowances appealed to capital and the state as a means of keeping wages down. Fearful that this would be the consequence



were the measure introduced, and that the power of unions in wage bargaining would suffer, family allowances had many opponents in the British union movement, including women trade unionists who were suspicious of a policy which could be used to try to persuade women to leave paid employment. Some unionists also argued that social services, such as housing, education and health should be developed first, and the TUC adopted this view in 1930. But were the men concerned too with their private, patriarchal privileges? Rathbone claimed that "the leaders of working men are themselves subconsciously biased by prejudice of sex. . . . Are they not influenced by a secret reluctance to see their wives and children recognized as separate personalities."<sup>72</sup>

By 1941, the supporters of family allowances in the union movement had won the day, and family allowances were introduced in 1946, as part of the government's wartime economic policies and plans for post-war reconstruction. The legislation proposed that the allowance would be paid to the father as "normal household head" but after lobbying by women's organizations, this was overturned in a free vote, and the allowance was paid directly to mothers. In Australia the union movement accepted child endowment in the 1920s (child endowment was introduced in New South Wales in 1927, and at the Federal level in 1941). But union support there was based on wider redistributive policies and the endowment was seen as a supplement to, not a way of breaking down, the family wage.<sup>73</sup> In the 1970s in both countries, women's organizations again had to defend family allowances and the principle of redistribution from "the wallet to the purse."

The hope of Eleanor Rathbone and other feminists that family allowances would form part of a democratic restructuring of the wage system

was not realized. Nevertheless, family allowances are paid to women as a benefit in their own right; in that sense they are an important (albeit financially very small) mark of recognition of married women as independent members of the welfare state. Yet the allowance is paid to women as mothers, and the key question is thus whether the payment to a mother--a private person--negates her standing as an independent member of the welfare state. More generally, the question is whether there can be a welfare policy that gives substantial assistance to women in their daily lives and helps create the conditions for a genuine democracy in which women are autonomous citizens, in which we can act as women and not as "woman" (protected/dependent/subordinate) constructed as the opposite to all that is meant by "man." That is to say, a resolution of Wollstonecraft's dilemma is necessary, and, perhaps, is possible.

The structure of the welfare state presupposes that women are men's dependents, but the benefits help make it possible for women to be economically independent of men. In the countries with which I am concerned, women reliant on state benefits live poorly, but it is no longer so essential as it once was to marry or to cohabit with a man. A considerable moral panic has developed in recent years around "welfare mothers," which obscures significant features of their position, not least the extent to which the social basis for the ideal of breadwinner/dependent has crumbled. Large numbers of young working class women have little or no hope of finding employment (or of finding a young man who is employed). But there is a source of social identity available to them that is out of the reach of their male counterparts. The socially secure and acknowledged identity for women is still that of a mother, and for many young women,

motherhood, supported by state benefits, provides "an alternative to aimless adolescence on the dole," and "gives the appearance of self-determination." The price of independence and "a rebellious motherhood that is not an uncritical retreat into femininity"<sup>74</sup> is high, however; the welfare state provides a minimal income and perhaps housing (often sub-standard), but child-care services and other support are lacking, so that the young women are often isolated, with no way out of their social exile. Moreover, even if welfare state policies in Britain, Australia and the USA were reformed so that generous benefits, appropriate housing, health care, child care and other services were available to mothers, reliance on the state could reinforce women's lesser citizenship in a new way.

Some feminists have enthusiastically endorsed the welfare state as "the main recourse of women" and as the generator of "political resources which, it seems fair to say, are mainly women's resources."<sup>75</sup> They can point, in Australia for example, to "the creation over the decade [1975-85] of a range of women's policy machinery and government subsidized women's services (delivered by women for women) which is unrivalled elsewhere."<sup>76</sup> However, the enthusiasm is met with the rejoinder from other feminists that for women to look to the welfare state is merely to exchange dependence on individual men for dependence on the state. The power and capriciousness of husbands is being replaced by the arbitrariness, bureaucracy and power of the state, the very state that has upheld patriarchal power. The objection is cogent; to make women directly dependent on the state will not in itself do anything to challenge patriarchal power relations. The direct dependence of male workers on the welfare state and their indirect

dependence when their standard of living is derived from the vast system of state regulation of and subsidy to capitalism, and national Arbitration Courts, has done little to undermine class power. However the objection also misses an important point. There is one crucial difference between the construction of women as men's dependents and dependence on the welfare state. In the former case each woman lives with the man on whose benevolence she depends; each woman is (in J. S. Mill's extraordinarily apt phrase) in a "chronic state of bribery and intimidation combined."<sup>77</sup> In the welfare state each woman receives what is hers by right, and she can, potentially, combine with other citizens to enforce her rightful claim. The state has enormous powers of intimidation, but political action takes place collectively in the public terrain and not behind the closed door of the home, where each woman has to rely on her own strength and resources.

Another new factor is that women are now involved in the welfare state on a large scale as employees. The possibilities for political action by women now look rather different from the past. Women have been criticizing the welfare state in recent years not just as academics, activists, or as beneficiaries and users of welfare services, but as the people on whom the daily operation of the welfare state to a large extent depends. The criticisms range from its patriarchal structure (and, on occasions, especially in health care, misogynist practices), to its bureaucratic and undemocratic policy-making processes and administration, to social work practices and education policy. Small beginnings have been made on changing the welfare state from within; for example, women have succeeded in establishing Well Women Clinics within the NHS in Britain and special units to deal with rape victims in public hospitals in Australia.

---

Furthermore, the potential is now there for united action by women employees, women claimants and women citizens already politically active in the welfare state--not just to protect services against government cuts and efforts at "privatization" (which has absorbed much energy recently), but to transform the welfare state. Still, it is hard to see how women could succeed in the attempt alone. One necessary condition for the creation of a genuine democracy in which the welfare of all citizens was served, is an alliance between a labor movement that acknowledges the problem of patriarchal power and an autonomous women's movement that recognizes the problem of class power. Whether such an alliance can be forged is an open question.

Despite the debates and the rethinking brought about by mass unemployment and the attack on the union movement and welfare state by the Reagan and Thatcher governments, there are many barriers to be overcome. In Britain and Australia, with stronger welfare states, the women's movement has had a much closer relationship with working-class movements than in the USA, where the individualism of the predominant liberal-feminism is an inhibiting factor, and where only about 17 percent of the workforce is now unionized. The major locus of criticism of authoritarian, hierarchical, undemocratic forms of organization for the last twenty years has been the women's movement. The practical example of democratic, decentralized organization provided by the women's movement has been largely ignored by the labor movement (as well as in academic discussions of democracy). After Marx defeated Bakunin in the First International, the prevailing form of organization in the labor movement, the nationalized industries in Britain, and in the left sects, has mimicked the hierarchy of

the state--both the welfare and the warfare state. To be sure, there is a movement for industrial democracy and workers' control, but it has, by and large, accepted that the "worker" is a masculine figure and failed to question the separation of (public) industry and economic production from private life. The women's movement has rescued and put into practice the long-submerged idea that movements for, and experiments in, social change must "prefigure" the future form of social organization.<sup>78</sup>

If prefigurative forms of organization, such as the "alternative" women's welfare services set up by the women's movement, are not to remain isolated examples, or if attempts to set them up on a wider scale are not to be defeated, as in the past, very many accepted conceptions and practices have to be questioned. Recent debates over left alternatives to Thatcherite economic policies in Britain, and over the "Accord" between the state, capital and labor in Australia, suggest that the arguments and demands of the women's movement are still often unrecognized by labor's political spokesmen. For instance, one response to unemployment from male workers is to argue for a shorter working week and more leisure, or more time but the same money. However in women's lives, time and money are not interchangeable in the same way.<sup>79</sup> Women do not have leisure after "work" like men, but do unpaid work. Many women are arguing, rather, for a shorter working day. The point of the argument is to challenge the separation of part- and full-time paid employment and paid and unpaid "work." But the conception of citizenship needs thorough questioning too, if Wollstonecraft's dilemma is to be resolved; neither the labor movement nor the women's movement (nor democratic theorists) have paid much attention to this. The patriarchal opposition between the private and

public, women and citizen, dependent and breadwinner, is less firmly based than it once was, and feminists have named it as a political problem. The ideal of full employment so central to the welfare state, is also crumbling, so that some of the main props of the patriarchal understanding of citizenship are being undermined. The ideal of full employment appeared to have been achieved in the 1960s only because half the citizen body (and black men?) was denied legitimate membership in the employment society. Now that millions of men are excluded from the ideal (and the exclusion seems permanent), one possibility is that the ideal of universal citizenship will be abandoned too, and full citizenship become the prerogative of capitalist, employed and armed men. Or can a genuine democracy be created?

The perception of democracy as a class problem and the influence of liberal-feminism have combined to keep alive Engels' old solution to "the woman question"--to "bring the whole female sex back into public industry."<sup>80</sup> But the economy has a patriarchal structure. The Marxist hope that capitalism would create a labor force where ascriptive characteristics were irrelevant, and the liberal-feminist hope that anti-discrimination legislation will create a "gender-neutral" workforce, look utopian even without the collapse of the ideal of full employment. Engels' solution is out of reach--and so too is the generalization of masculine citizenship to women. In turn, the argument that the equal worth of citizenship, and the self-respect and mutual respect of citizens, depend upon sale of labor power in the market and the provisions of the patriarchal welfare state, is also undercut. The way is opening up for the formulation of conceptions of respect and equal worth adequate for democratic citizenship. Women could

not "earn" respect or gain the self-respect that men obtain as workers; but what kind of respect do men "achieve" by selling their labor power and becoming wage-slaves? Here, the movement for workplace democracy and the feminist movement could join hands, but only if what counts as "work" is rethought. If women as well as men are to be full citizens, the separation of the welfare state and employment from the free welfare work contributed by women has to be broken down and new meanings and practices of "independence," "work" and "welfare" created.

For example, consider the implications were a broad, popular political movement to press for welfare policy to include a guaranteed social income to all adults, that would provide adequately for subsistence and also participation in social life.<sup>81</sup> For such a demand to be made, the old dichotomies must already have started to break down--the opposition between paid and unpaid work (for the first time all individuals could have a genuine choice whether to engage in paid work), between full-and part-time work, between public and private work, between independence and dependence, between work and welfare--all of which is to say, between men and women. If implemented, such a policy would at last recognize women as equal members of the welfare state, although it would not in itself ensure women's full citizenship. If a genuine democracy is to be created, the problem of the content and value of women's contribution as citizens and the meaning of citizenship has to be confronted.

To analyze the welfare state through the lens of Hegel's dilemma is to rule out such problems. But the history of the past one hundred and fifty years and the contemporary record show that the welfare of all members of society cannot be represented by men, whether workers or

---



capitalists. Welfare is, after all, the welfare of all living generations of citizens and their children. If the welfare state is seen as a response to Hegel's dilemma, the appropriate question about women's citizenship is: "how can women become workers and citizens like men, and so members of the welfare state like men?" If, instead, the starting point is Wollstonecraft's dilemma then the question might run, "what form must democratic citizenship take if a primary task of all citizens is to ensure that the welfare of each living generation of citizens is secured?"

The welfare state has been fought for and supported by the labor movement and the women's movement because only public or collective provision can provide a proper standard of life and the means for meaningful social participation for all citizens in a democracy. The implication of this claim is that democratic citizens are both autonomous and interdependent; they are autonomous in that each enjoys the means to be an active citizen, but they are interdependent in that the welfare of each is the collective responsibility of all citizens. Critics of the class structure of the welfare state have often counterposed the fraternal interdependence (solidarity) signified by the welfare state to the bleak independence of isolated individuals in the market, but they have rarely noticed that both have been predicated upon the dependence (subordination of women. In the patriarchal welfare state independence has been constructed as a masculine prerogative. Men's "independence" as workers and citizens is their freedom from responsibility for welfare (except insofar as they "contribute" to the welfare state). Women have been seen as responsible for (private) welfare work, for relationships of dependence and interdependence. The paradox that welfare relies so largely on women,

---

on dependents and social exiles whose "contribution" is not politically relevant to their citizenship in the welfare state, is heightened now that women's paid employment is also vital to the operation of the welfare state itself.

If women's knowledge of and expertise in welfare is to become part of their contribution as citizens, as women have demanded during the twentieth century, the opposition between men's independence and women's dependence has to be broken down, and a new understanding and practice of citizenship developed. The patriarchal dichotomy between women and independence-work-citizenship is under political challenge and the social basis for the ideal of the full (male) employment society is crumbling. An opportunity has become visible to create a genuine democracy, to move from the welfare state to a welfare society without involuntary social exiles, in which women as well as men enjoy full social membership. Whether the opportunity can be realized is not easy to tell now that the warfare state is overshadowing the welfare state.

Notes and References

1. R. Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 333.

2. I will present a theoretical elaboration of a modern conception of "patriarchy" as the systematic exercise by men of power over women in The Sexual Contract (Polity Press; forthcoming). For a brief discussion of some of the issues, see C. Pateman, "The Fraternal Social Contract," in J. Keane (ed.) The Rediscovery of Civil Society (London and New York: Verso, forthcoming).

3. Women were formally enfranchised as citizens in 1902 in Australia, 1920 in the USA and 1928 in Britain (womanhood franchise in 1918 was limited to women over 30).

4. On Scandinavia see, e.g., H. Holter (ed.) Patriarchy in a Welfare Society (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1984), especially H. Hernes, "Women and the Welfare State: The Transition from Private to Public Dependence"; and E. Haavio-Mannila et al. (eds.) Unfinished Democracy: Women in Nordic Politics (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1985).

5. Z. Eisenstein, Feminism and Sexual Equality (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), p. 125.

6. B. Nelson, "Women's Poverty and Women's Citizenship: Some Political Consequences of Economic Marginality," Signs 10,2 (1984), p. 221.

7. S. Erie, M. Rein, and B. Wiget, "Women and the Reagan Revolution: Thermidor for the Social Welfare Economy," in I. Diamond (ed.) Families, Politics and Public Policy: A Feminist Dialogue on Women and the State (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 96.

8. Erie, et al., p. 100
  9. S. Kamerman, "Women, Children and Poverty: Public Policies and Female-Headed Families in Industrialized Countries," Signs 10,2 (1984), p. 250.
  10. J. Smith, "The Paradox of Women's Poverty: Wage-Earning Women and Economic Transformation," Signs 10,2 (1984), p. 291.
  11. B. Ehrenreich and F. Fox Piven, "The Feminization of Poverty," Dissent (Spring 1984), p. 162.
  12. L. Bryson, "Women as Welfare Recipients: Women, Poverty and the State," in C. Baldock and B. Cass (eds.) Women, Social Welfare and the State (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 135.
  13. B. Cass, "Rewards for Women's Work," in J. Goodnow and C. Pateman (eds.) Women, Social Science and Public Policy (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 92. Cass also notes that women and their children were over-represented among the poor making claims on colonial and post-colonial charities in Australia (p. 70). Similarly, in Britain, from 1834 during the whole period of the New Poor Law, the majority of recipients of relief were women, and they were especially prominent among the very poor;
  - D. Groves, "Members and Survivors: Women and Retirement Pensions Legislation," in J. Lewis (ed.) Women's Welfare Women's Rights (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 40.
  14. L. Doyal, "Women and the National Health Service: the Carers and the Careless," in E. Lewin and V. Olesen (eds.) Women, Health and Healing (London: Tavistock, 1985), pp. 237, 253.
  15. H. Land, "Beggars Can't Be Choosers," New Statesman (17 May 1985), p. 8.
  16. Ehrenreich and Fox Piven, p. 165; also Erie, et al., pp. 100-103.
-

17. For examples see T. Prennan and C. Pateman, "'Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth': Women and the Origins of Liberalism," Political Studies 27 (1979), pp. 183-200; and C. Pateman, "'The Disorder of Women': Women, Love and the Sense of Justice," Ethics 91 (1980), pp. 20-34.

18. I have taken the term from J. Keane and J. Owens, After Full Employment (London: Hutchinson, 1986), p. 11.

19. Keane and Owens, pp. 15-18, 89-90.

20. G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952) §. 171.

21. T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," reprinted in D. Held, et al. (eds.) States and Societies (New York: New York University Press, 1983), p. 253.

22. Marshall, pp. 250-51, 257.

23. The graphic phrase is Judith Stiehm's, in "Myths necessary to the Pursuit of War" (unpublished paper), p. 11

24. See especially F. Cobbe, "Wife Torture in England," The Contemporary Review 32 (1878), pp. 55-87. Also, for example, Mill's remarks when introducing the Amendment to enfranchise women in the House of Commons in 1867, reprinted in S. Bell and K. Offen (eds.) Women, the Family and Freedom: The Debate in Document, Vol. 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), p. 487.

25. For more detail, see my "Women and Consent," Political Theory 8,2 (1980), pp. 149-68.

26. D. Deacon, "Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth-Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman," Signs 11,1 (1985), p. 31 (my discussion draws on Deacon); also H. Land, "The Family Wage," Feminist Review 6 (1980), p. 60.

27. T. Skocpol, "The Limits of the New Deal System and the Roots of Contemporary Welfare Dilemmas," in M. Weir, A. Orloff and T. Skocpol (eds.) The politics of Social Policy in the United States (forthcoming).

28. Nelson, "Women's Poverty and Women's Citizenship," pp. 222-23.

29. M. Owen, "Women--A Wastefully Exploited Resource," Search 15 (1984), pp. 271-72.

30. Thompson was a utilitarian, but also a feminist, cooperative socialist, so that he took his individualism more seriously than most utilitarians. In Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and then in Civil and Domestic Slavery (New York: Source Book Press, 1970 [first published in 1825]), Thompson, writing of the importance of looking at the distribution of interests, or "the means of happiness," argues that the "division of interests" must proceed "until it is brought home to every individual of every family." Instead, under the despotism of husbands and fathers, "the interest of each of them is promoted, in as far only as it is coincident with, or subservient to, the master's interest" (pp. 46-47, 49).

31. As Beatrix Campbell has reminded us, "we protect men from the shame of their participation in women's poverty by keeping the secret. Family budgets are seen to be a private settlement of accounts between men and women, men's unequal distribution of working-class incomes within their households is a right they fought for within the working-class movement and it is not yet susceptible to public political pressure within the movement" (Wigan Pier Revisited: Poverty and Politics in the 80s [London: Virago Press, 1984], p. 57). Wives are usually responsible for making sure that the children are fed, the rent paid and so on, but this does not mean that they always decide how much money is allocated to take care of these basic

needs. Moreover, in times of economic hardship women are often short of food as well as money; wives will make sure that the "breadwinner" and the children are fed before they are.

32. L. J. Weitzman, The Divorce Revolution (New York: The Free Press, 1985), ch. 10, especially pp. 337-340.

33. Deacon, p. 39.

34. Cited in A. Phillips, Hidden Hands: Women and Economic Policies (London: Pluto Press, 1983), p. 76.

35. See M. Barrett and M. McIntosh, "The 'Family Wage': Some Problems for Socialists and Feminists," Capital and Class 11 (1980), pp. 56-59.

36. Barrett and McIntosh, p. 58.

37. Smith, "The Paradox of Women's Poverty," p. 300.

38. A. Phillips, Hidden Hands, p. 21.

39. The perception is common to both women and men. (I would argue that women's perception of themselves is not, as is often suggested, a consequence of "socialization," but a realistic appraisal of their structural position at home and in the workplace). For empirical evidence on this view of women workers see, e.g., A. Pollert, Girls, Wives, Factory Lives (London: Macmillan, 1981); J. Wacjman, Women in Control: Dilemmas of a Workers' Cooperative (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

40. C. Baldock, "Public Policies and the Paid Work of Women," in Baldock and Cass, Women, Social Welfare and the State, pp. 34, 40.

41. Land, "The Family Wage," p. 62.

42. B. Cass, "Redistribution to Children and to Mothers," in Baldock and Cass, Women, Social Welfare and the State, p. 62.

43. Campbell, Wigan Pier Revisited, pp. 130-31.

44. A Hacker, "'Welfare': The Future of an Illusion," New York Review of Books (28 February 1985), p. 41.
45. Ehrenreich and Fox Piven, "The Feminization of Poverty," p. 163.
46. S. Hewlett, A Lesser life: The Myth of Women's Liberation in America (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 76.
47. Women's Bureau, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Women At Work (April 1986).
48. I. Bruegel, "Women's Employment, Legislation and the Labour Market," in Lewis, Women's Welfare, p. 133 and table 7.4.
49. "Skill" is another patriarchal category; it is men's work that counts as "skilled." See the discussion in C. Cockburn, Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change (London: Pluto Press, 1983), pp. 112-22.
50. Doyle, "Women and the National Health Service," pp. 250-54; and A. Oakley, "Women and Health Policy," in Lewis, Women's Welfare, p. 120 and table 6.3.
51. Women at Work, April, 1986.
52. Phillips, Hidden Hands, p. 15.
53. Bruegel, p. 135.
54. Hewlett, A Lesser Life, p. 72.
55. Smith, "The Paradox of Women's Poverty," pp. 304, 307; the quotation, p. 306.
56. J. Dale and P. Foster, Feminists and the Welfare State (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 112.
57. H. Land, "Who Cares for the Family?" Journal of Social Policy 7,3 (1978), pp. 268-69. Even under the old Poor Law twice as many women as men received outdoor relief, and there were many more old men than women in the workhouse wards for the ill or infirm; the women were deemed fit for the wards for the able-bodied.



58. Campbell, Wigan Pier Revisited, p. 76.
59. Nelson, "Women's Poverty and Women's Citizenship," pp. 229-30.
60. Both quotations are taken from Land, "The Family Wage," p. 72.
61. Cited in Dale and Foster, p. 17.
62. H. Land, "Who Still cares for the Family," in Lewis, Women's Welfare Women's Rights, p. 70.
63. M. Davis, Maternity: Letters from Working Women (New York: Norton, 1978 [first published 1915]).
64. Information taken from Land, "Who Cares for the Family?" pp. 263-64.
65. Land, "Who Still Cares for the Family?" p. 73.
66. Cited in Dale and Foster, Feminists and the Welfare State p. 3.
67. There was considerable controversy within the women's movement between the wars over the question of protective legislation for women in industry. Did equal citizenship require the removal of such protection, so that women worked under the same conditions as men; or did the legislation benefit women, and the real issue become proper health and safety protection for both men and women workers?
68. I have discussed the earlier arguments in more detail in "Women and Democratic Citizenship," The Jefferson Memorial Lectures, University of California, Berkeley, 1985, Lecture I.
69. For example, Wollstonecraft writes, "speaking of women at large, their first duty is to themselves as rational creatures, and the next, in point of importance, as citizens, is that, which includes so many, of a mother." She hopes that a time will come when a "man must necessarily fulfill the duties of a citizen, or be despised, and that while he was employed in any of the departments of civil life, his wife, also an active

citizen, should be equally intent to manage her family, educate her children, and assist her neighbours."; A Vindication of the Rights of Women (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 145, 146.

70. Cited in Land, "The Family Wage," p. 63.

71. Cited in B. Cass, "Redistribution to Children and Mothers: A History of Child Endowment and Family Allowances," p. 57. My discussion draws on Land and Cass. In the USA during the same period, feminists supported the movement for mothers' pensions. Unlike family allowances, mothers eligible for pensions were without male breadwinners. The complexities of mothers' pensions are discussed by W. Sarvesy, "The Contradictory Legacy of the Feminist Welfare State Founders," paper presented to the Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 1986.

72. Cited in Cass, p. 59.

73. Cass, pp. 60-61.

74. Campbell, Wigan Pier Revisited, p. 66, p. 78, p. 71.

75. F. Fox Piven, "Women and the State: Ideology, Power, and the Welfare State," Socialist Review 14,2 (1984), pp. 14, 17.

76. M. Sawyer, "The Long March through the Institutions: Women's Affairs under Fraser and Hawke," paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Australasian Political Studies Association, Brisbane, 1986, p. 1.

77. J. S. Mill, "The Subjection of Women," in Essays on Sex Equality, ed. A. Rossi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 137.

78. See S. Rowbotham, L. Segal, and H. Wainright, Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism (London: Merlin Press, 1979), a book that was instrumental in opening debate on the Left and in the labor movement in Britain on this question.

79. I am grateful to Helga Hernes for supplying me with a copy of her paper, "The Impact of Public Policy on Individual Lives: The Case of Chrono-Politics" (presented to the meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Amsterdam, 1986), which discusses the political implications of different time-frames of men's and women's lives.

80. F. Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 66.

81. See also the discussion in Keane and Owens, After Full Employment, pp. 175-77.

## **The Center for European Studies**

The Center for European Studies is an interdisciplinary program organized within the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences and designed to promote the study of Europe. The Center's governing committees represent the major social science departments at Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Since its establishment in 1969, the Center has tried to orient students towards questions that have been neglected both about past developments in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European societies and about the present. The Center's approach is comparative and interdisciplinary, with a strong emphasis on the historical and cultural sources which shape a country's political and economic policies and social structures. Major interests of Center members include elements common to industrial societies: the role of the state in the political economy of each country, political behavior, social movements, parties and elections, trade unions, intellectuals, labor markets and the crisis of industrialization, science policy, and the interconnections between a country's culture and politics.

For a complete list of the Center for European Studies Working Papers, please contact the Publications Department, 27 Kirkland St, Cambridge MA 02138. Additional copies can be purchased for \$3.50.

---