Patriarchy of the Wage
Notes on Marx, Gender, and Feminism

Silvia Federici

At a time when socialism is entering a historic crisis and we are witnessing a worldwide expansion of capitalist relations, a feminist rethinking of Marx’s work is vitally important. In Patriarchy of the Wage, Silvia Federici, best-selling author and the most important Marxist feminist of our time, asks why Marx and the Marxist tradition were so crucial in their denunciation of capitalism’s exploitation of human labor and blind to women’s work and struggle on the terrain of social reproduction. Why was Marx unable to anticipate the profound transformations in the proletarian family that took place at the turn of the nineteenth century creating a new patriarchal regime?

In this fiery collection of penetrating essays published here for the first time, Federici carefully examines these questions and in the process has provided an expansive redefinition of work, class, and class-gender relations. Seeking to delineate the specific character of capitalist “patriarchalism,” this magnificently original approach also highlights Marx’s and the Marxist tradition’s problematic view of industrial production and the State in the struggle for human liberation. Federici’s lucid argument that most reproductive work is irreducible to automation is a powerful reminder of the poverty of the revolutionary imagination that consigns to the world of machines the creation of the material conditions for a communist society.

Patriarchy of the Wage does more than just redefine classical Marxism; it is an explosive call for a new kind of communism. Read this book and realize the power and importance of reproductive labor!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Silvia Federici is a feminist writer, teacher, and militant. In 1972 she was cofounder of the International Feminist Collective that launched the Wages for Housework campaign. Her books include Caliban and the Witch; Re-enchanting the World; and Witches, Witch Hunting, and Women. She is a professor emerita at Hofstra University, where she taught in the social sciences. She worked as a teacher in Nigeria for many years and was also the cofounder of the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa.

ACCOLADES
“Silvia Federici’s work embodies an energy that urges us to rejuvenate struggles against all types of exploitation and, precisely for that reason, her work produces a common: a common sense of the dissidence that creates a community in struggle.”
—Maria Mies, coauthor of Ecofeminism

“Federici has become a crucial figure for young Marxists, political theorists, and a new generation of feminists.”
—Rachel Kushner author of The Flamethrowers

“Federici’s attempt to draw together the work of feminists and activist from different parts of the world and place them in historical context is brave, thought-provoking and timely. Federici’s writing is lucid and her fury palpable.”
—Red Pepper