For over sixty years, Selma James has been organizing from the perspective of unwaged women who, with their biological and caring work, reproduce the whole human race—whatever else they do. This work goes on almost unnoticed everywhere, in every culture. It is not prioritized economically, politically, or socially, and women are discriminated against and impoverished for doing it.

This much-anticipated follow-up to her first anthology, Sex, Race, and Class, compiles several decades of James’s work with a focus on more recent writings, including a groundbreaking analysis of two of CLR James’s masterpieces, The Black Jacobins and Beyond a Boundary, and an account of her formative partnership with him. Her experience in the movement for Caribbean federation and independence is reflected in her introduction to Ujamaa, the socialism that Tanzanian villagers built, and in her work with Guyana, Haiti, and Venezuela.

Steeped in the tradition of Marx urging the need for a “practical movement,” James recounts the unusual history of how autonomous organizations formed within the International Wages for Housework Campaign and reshaped it. Women of colour, queer women, sex workers, women with disabilities … each independent but mutually accountable (including to the men’s network with whom they work) as they confront sexism, racism, deportation, rape, and other violence.

James makes the powerful argument that the struggle for climate justice can draw on all the movements people have formed to refuse exploitation and to end the capitalist hierarchy that is destroying the world.

There is one continuum between the care and protection of people and of the planet. The care income she campaigns for prioritizes both. Our time is now.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Selma James is a women’s rights and antiracist campaigner and author. From 1958 to 1962 she worked with C.L.R. James in the movement for West Indian federation and independence. In 1972 she cofounded the International Wages for Housework Campaign, and in 2000 helped launch the Global Women’s Strike whose strategy for change is “Invest in Caring, Not Killing.” She coined the word “unwaged,” which has since entered the English language. In the 1970s she was the first spokeswoman of the English Collective of Prostitutes. She is a founding member of the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network. She coauthored the classic The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community, which launched the “domestic labour debate.

Margaret Prescod, author of Black Women Bringing It All Back Home, is coordinator of Women of Color in the Global Women’s Strike and an award-winning, nationally syndicated journalist on Pacifica Radio. She is the founder of the Black Coalition Fighting Back Serial Murders and cofounder of Every Mother Is a Working Mother Network. She is originally from Barbados.

Nina López is the joint coordinator of the Global Women’s Strike. Her writings and edited volumes include: Prostitute Women and AIDS: Resisting the Virus of Repression; Some Mother’s Daughter: The Hidden Movement of Prostitutes Women against Violence; The Milk of Human Kindness; and Creating a Caring Economy: Nora Castañeda and the Women’s Development Bank of Venezuela.

ACCOLADES

“One of the most important figures in the new way of thinking in the 1970s and 1980s was Selma James. James’s Marx and Feminism deserves to be considered one of the great feminist contributions to Marxist thought.”

—Monthly Review