Finding Aid to the Union WAGE (Women's Alliance To Gain Equality) Records, 1971-1982

Finding aid prepared by Suzanne Forsyth, revised by Labor Archives and Research Center staff in 2014.
Labor Archives and Research Center
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Title: Union WAGE (Women's Alliance To Gain Equality) records
Collection number: larc.ms.0004
Accession number: 1986/022
Extent: 4.89 cubic ft. (18 manuscript boxes)
Creator: Union WAGE (Organization)
Date (inclusive): 1971-1982
Repository: Labor Archives and Research Center
J. Paul Leonard Library, Room 460
San Francisco State University
1630 Holloway Ave
San Francisco, CA 94132-1722
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Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English.
Abstract: The Union WAGE collection contains the office files of the organization. Types of materials include the minutes and correspondence of the Executive Board, the organization's constitutions, convention documents, administrative records, membership documentation, general correspondence, information on other feminist groups and the women's movement internationally, ephemera from Union WAGE events, financial records, newspaper correspondence, membership opinion surveys, newscclippings, interchapter newsletters, minutes and correspondence of local chapters, the records and ephemera from Union WAGE involvement with the Industrial Welfare Commission, and a complete set of Union WAGE newspaper, 1971-1982.
Location: Collection is available onsite.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Union WAGE (Women's Alliance To Gain Equality) Records, larc.ms.0004, Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.
Acquisition
The office files of the organization Union WAGE (Women's Alliance to Gain Equality) were donated by the Data Center, Oakland, California, with the assistance of Leon Sompolinsky, Data Center Archivist, on 4 April 1986; accession number 1986/022.
Processing Information
The collection was processed by Suzanne Forsyth, October 1986.
History
Union WAGE (Women's Alliance to Gain Equality) was founded on International Women's Day, March 8, 1971, at an educational conference sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), at the University of California, Berkeley. Union WAGE was a politically non-partisan, non-profit organization for "working women" which included housewives, unemployed, retired, and welfare women. The organization's purpose was to achieve "equal rights, equal pay, and equal opportunity" for working women.
Union WAGE was created at a workshop during the NOW conference entitled "Extending Protective Legislation to All Workers." The panelists included future Union WAGE leaders Jean Maddox, president of the Office and Professional Employees Union, AFL-CIO, Local 29, and Ann Draper, West Coast Union Label Director for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, AFL-CIO. By the end of the panel discussion the participants all agreed on the necessity of a working women's feminist organization and voted to reconstitute themselves as that organization.
Maxine Wolpinsky (now Maxine Jenkins), then an American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, field organizer for Local 1695, was also a part of the NOW conference. She joined Union WAGE and served as newspaper...
editor for the next three years.
The main groups which first made up Union WAGE were the Committee to Extend Protective Legislation to Men, a caucus of the International Socialists; San Francisco State's Independent Campus Women; U.C. Berkeley's Graduate Sociology Women's Caucus; and many members of the Office and Professional Employees Union Local 29. Although Union WAGE considered itself a national organization, the bulk of its membership, as well as its headquarters was located in the San Francisco Bay Area.

One of the organization's main activities was publishing a bi-monthly newspaper, Union WAGE, which focused on working women's issues from a feminist and labor movement perspective. Another focal point of Union WAGE activity was the California Industrial Welfare Commission. Through the members' testimony, lobbying efforts and serving on I.W.C. wage boards Union WAGE sought to represent the interests of working women. Issues they brought before the I.W.C. included the need to preserve and extend protective legislation threatened by the Equal Rights Amendment, and raising the minimum wage requirements. Union WAGE also sponsored educational conferences and events, and published literature for women workers. Topics the organization covered included: organizing non-union workplaces; fighting sexism on the job and in the unions; preventing job-related health hazards for women workers; fighting for rank-and-file control and democracy within the unions; and promoting women's labor history.

Arrangement
The Union WAGE collection is divided into ten series. Within each series, material is separated by subject and, within each subject, material is arranged chronologically. The only exception is Series IV, in which folders are arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Content
The Union WAGE collection contains the office files of the organization. Types of materials include the minutes and correspondence of the Executive Board, the organization's constitutions, convention documents, administrative records, membership documentation, general correspondence, information on other feminist groups and the women's movement internationally, ephemera from Union WAGE events, financial records, newspaper correspondence, membership opinion surveys, newscippings, interchapter newsletters, minutes and correspondence of local chapters, the records and ephemera from Union WAGE involvement with the Industrial Welfare Commission, and a complete set of Union WAGE newspaper, 1971-1982.

The earliest materials contained in the collection are attendance sheets, newscippings, Union WAGE Newsletters, and the program of the conference where Union WAGE was founded, all dated 1971. The most recent materials are ephemera from benefits and conferences, correspondence, and newscippings, dating 1981-82. The bulk of the material spans the years 1972-1980.

Researchers will value the collection for documenting the attempts of feminists to address and deal with working class women's issues and needs. The Union WAGE subject files give insight into issues of importance for feminists and working women of the 1970s and feminist organizing techniques of the 1970s. Of note in particular are the informal character of the organization and its leadership, and the openness and self-criticism of the inter-chapter newsletters.

Material Cataloged Separately
The Union WAGE pamphlet collection, which includes both Union WAGE pamphlets and pamphlets published by other organizations, has been transferred to the Labor Archives central print file. Union WAGE pamphlets contained in the print file:

Maupin, Joyce, Working Women and Their Organizations-- 150 Years of Struggle, 1974.

In addition the collection includes 36 cassette tapes transferred to the Archives cassette tape collection:

"Dual Unionism," 1975 September 8
Maddox, Jean, "The Lucky Strike," KPFA, 1970 November 10
Maddox, Jean, "The Story of the OPEU Local 29 Caucus," Union WAGE meeting, 1973 November
Maddox, Jean, "Trusteeship,"
Maupin, Joyce, "An Historical View of Unemployment," Union WAGE meeting, East Bay Chapter
Maupin, Joyce, "Interview with Elizabeth Nicolas, 1930s Cannery Organizer," 1978
Maupin, Joyce, "Women on the Move," KSFX
"Organize" Conference, 1975 November
Skotnes, Pearl, "California Union Maids," Los Angeles, Calif., 1979 February
Working Women's Conference, 1973, KPFA edited version; all conference speakers and clerical workshop, unedited

The collection also contains approximately 400 photographs transferred to the Labor Archives Photograph Collection:

Women's conference, 1973 [19 photographs]
"How To Be A Troublemaker At Work" conference, 1980 [19 photographs]
Mime Troupe benefit, 1976 [11 photographs]
Coalition of Labor Union Women (C.L.U.W.) founding conference, 1974 [10 photographs]
Bank of America demonstration, 1972-1973 [9 photographs]
Demonstrations at Industrial Welfare Commission hearings, 1979, undated. [32 photographs]
Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) workers' strike, undated [6 photographs]
Clerical workers conference, 1974 [6 photographs]
"With Babies and Banners" stills, 1978 [2 photographs]
"Silkwood" play, 1980 [1 photograph]
Gay rights demonstrations (including blue collar women's contingent) and gay strike support, 1982 [11 photographs]
San Francisco hotel workers' strike, 1980, undated [13 photographs and negatives]
Shell strike, women workers and families picket, 1973 [7 photographs]
Jung Sai strike (Asian women workers), 1974 [6 photographs]
Nurses' strikes, 1974, 1982 [13 photographs]
Anti-intervention demonstrations, undated, [33 photographs]
"Justice vs. J.P. Stevens," undated [5 photographs]
Union caucuses, undated [8 photographs]
Protests against union busting, 1975 [12 photographs]
City workers' strike (including Gloria Steinem and Diane Feinstein), 1974 [16 photographs]
Runaway shops, undated, [11 photographs]
Yellow Cab lockout, undated, [14 photographs]
Disabled people, 1977, undated, [12 photographs]
Strikes and organizing drives, 1971-1977, 1979 [125 photographs]
Unidentified photographs, undated [circa 90 photographs]
Unidentified negatives

Duplicate materials, ballots, routine financial records, and Industrial Welfare Commission materials not related to Union WAGE have been disposed of.

Indexing Terms
Maupin, Joyce.
Series I: **Executive Minutes and Correspondence, 1974-1981**

Scope and Contents

Union WAGE constitutions 1974-1979; constitutional referendum, 1979; Executive Board minutes, 1972-81; Executive Board correspondence, 1974-1981; Executive Board election results, 1980.

Box-folder 1/2: Constitutions 1974-1979
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Box-folder 1/4: Constitutional Referendum 1979
Box-folder 1/5: Executive Board Minutes 1972-1973
Box-folder 1/6: Executive Board Minutes 1975
Box-folder 1/7: Executive Board Minutes 1976
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Box-folder 2/9: Executive Board Correspondence 1978
Box-folder 3/1: Executive Board Correspondence 1979
Box-folder 3/2: Executive Board Correspondence 1980
Box-folder 3/3: Executive Board Correspondence 1981
Box-folder 3/4: Executive Board Election Results 1980

Series II: **Conventions and Conferences, 1976-1981**

Scope and Contents


Box-folder 3/3: Convention 1976
Box-folder 3/4: Convention 1977
Box-folder 3/5: Convention 1979
Box-folder 3/6: Convention 1981
Box-folder 3/9: "Organize" Conference 1975
Box-folder 3/10: "Troublemaker" Conference 1980

Series III: **Membership Minutes and General Correspondence, 1971-1980**

Scope and Contents


Box-folder 4/1: General Membership Meeting 1974
Box-folder 4/2: General Membership Meeting 1978
Box-folder 4/3: Attendance Sheets 1971-1975
### Series III: Membership Minutes and General Correspondence, 1971-1980

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**Series V: Office Files for Newspaper and Fund Appeals, 1974-1981**

**Scope and Contents**


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Scope and Contents
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Box-folder 17/3  Industrial Welfare Commission 1979-1980
Box-folder 17/4  Industrial Welfare Commission 1981
Box-folder 17/5  Canning, Freezing, Preserving (I.W.C. Order 3) 1976
Box-folder 17/6  Public Housekeeping (I.W.C. Order 5) 1976
Box-folder 17/7  Trucking/transportation Industry (I.W.C. Order 9) 1976
Box-folder 17/8  Household Workers (I.W.C.Order 15) 1976
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Box-folder 17/11 Pamphlet Layout undated
Box-folder 17/12 Testimony Before I.W.C. 1976
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Box-folder 18/1  I.W.C. Legislative Hearings 1980
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Finding Aid to the Union WAGE
(Women's Alliance To Gain Equality) Records, 1971...
Series X: Union WAGE Newspaper, 1971-1982

Scope and Content

A complete set of the Union WAGE newspaper, including the organization's first newsletters.