



NEWS NOUVELLES

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FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA PARTI FEMINISTE DU CANADA
BOX 5717, STATION 'A', TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5W 1A0

With the understanding that the Feminist Party of Canada has in hand the formulation of a set of articles and an analysis in its own voice and with precise reference to its own surroundings, the Strategy Committee of the Party has collectively read and discussed documents drawn up by the Partis Féministes Unifiés of France and Belgium. It is useful to see these essential concepts expressed under the rubric of feminism by a party that has preceded us and been constituted on the strength of a definitive written platform. Excerpts from their Presentation and their 19 article Definition follow, in French and in translation.

PRESENTATION

Le PARTI FEMINISTE UNIFIE, né d'une scission du PARTI FEMINISTE en Octobre 1975, vient de définir dans une plate-forme politique une option féministe commune au P.F.U. belge et au P.F.U. français dont les principaux points sont:

- Autonomie du mouvement - refus d'une direction politique masculine.
- Remise en question tant des structures économiques que des mentalité.
- Rejet d'un capitalisme privé sous le masque d'un "libéralisme", et d'un capitalisme d'Etat sous le masque d'un "socialisme" - mutation de la société actuelle vers une société autogestionnaire.

Les trois grands problèmes du travail professionnel, du travail domestique et de la prostitution sont inscrits au nombre des urgences.

Thèmes permanents d'action et de réflexion:

- La contradiction hommes-femmes et son rapport avec les antagonismes sociaux.
- La place des femmes dans le mode de production.
- La famille.

Les Partis Féministes Unifiés ont procédé à une analyse du contenu politique du féminisme qui seule peut décider - et non des excommunications faciles - de la validité d'une stratégie.

DEFINITION DU P.F.U.

ARTICLE I: FONDEMENT

Le Parti Féministe Unifié est constitué. Il est né de la volonté commune de femmes ayant appartenu à des mouvements féministes divers.

Il se fonde:

I. 1. Sur la volonté des femmes de se regrouper en vue d'accéder à la vie politique; elles constatent le quota dérisoire de représentativité des femmes, à tous niveaux et au sein des Partis Politiques existants.

I. 2. Sur la nécessité de définir le féminisme, de le promouvoir concrètement, contenu de facteurs économiques, sociaux et politiques nouveaux. Seules les femmes sont suffisamment motivées pour impulser cette action qui implique une option politique spécifique.

ARTICLE III: OBJECTIFS:

III. I. En premier lieu, approfondir le concept d'un féminisme nouveau, qui présente au moins 3 aspects:

1./ La revendication des droits de la femme, exploitation et oppression tant sur le plan économique que sur le plan idéologique.

En conséquence, une remise en question des structures autant que des mentalités s'impose.

2./ La prise de conscience que les problèmes dits "féminins" ou "spécifiques" de la condition féminine, sont en réalité des problèmes politiques, des problèmes de civilisation, dont la résolution implique un changement de société.

3./ Le P.F.U. ne se limite pas à un féminisme électoraliste mais débouche sur un féminisme critique (de la société, des Partis traditionnels, des idéologies et surtout de l'économie politique) et sur un féminisme créatif.

ARTICLE V: STRUCTURES.

5. 1. Le P.F.U. veut expérimenter une conception radicalement nouvelle d'un Parti: structures différentes des structures patriarcales, fonction de direction qui ne soit pas domination mais coordination et synthèse.

Le pouvoir de décision est démocratiquement partagé entre tous les organes de fonction.

Toute fonction est assortie d'une responsabilité et non d'un pouvoir. Toute décision importante doit faire l'objet d'un débat et d'un vote à tous les niveaux avant d'être soumise aux membres du Parti réunies en Assemblée Générale.

5. 2. Par ordre d'importance, les organes essentiels du P.F.U. sont:

- les Groupes de secteurs (ou groupes de base).
- les Groupes de travail (dont un permanent: le groupe formation-informantion).
- La Commission d'Analyse Politique.
- le Group des Urgences.
- La Commission Statutaire.
- Le Collectif de Coordination entre tous ces organes.
- Le Secrétariat administratif.

PRESENTATION

The United Feminist Party was born after a split in the Parti Féministe in October 1975. It has now defined, in its political platform, a feminist option - which is common to the Belgian and French U.F.P. Its main principles are the following:

- Autonomy of the movement - Refusal of a male political direction.
- Questioning of actual economical structures as well as people's attitudes.
- Refusal of private capitalism, so-called liberalism, and of state capitalism, so-called socialism. We strive for a transformation of present society towards a society of "autogestion" (self-direction).

Three major problems: work outside the home, in the home, and prostitution are considered the most urgent issues.

Basic themes for action and reflection:

- Conflicts between men and women, and their relationship to other societal antagonisms.
- Women's place in the work force.
- Family.

The United Feminist Parties have initiated an analysis of the political content of feminism, which alone will determine the validity of a strategy (and not facile exclusivity).

DEFINITION OF THE P.F.U.

ARTICLE 1. Foundation

The P.F.U. has been constituted. It was born out of the common determination of women belonging to various feminist movements. It bases itself on:

I. 1. The will of women to group themselves so that they can have access to political life. They noted the ridiculous quota of women represented at all levels of the existing political parties.

I. 2. The necessity of a definition of feminism, and of its concrete advancement, taking into account new economic, social and political factors.

Only women are sufficiently motivated to inspire action which implies a specific political alternative.

ARTICLE III. Objectives.

III. 1. First - to study further and deepen the concept of a new feminism, which presents at least three aspects:

1./ The claiming of rights for women - as against exploitation and oppression, on the economic as well as on the ideological plane.

Therefore, it is of prime importance to question structures as well as attitudes.

2./ An awareness that so-called women's problems, or problems termed specific to women, are in fact political problems, civilization's problems, the resolution of which implies a change in society at large.

3./ The P.F.U. is not limited to an electoral feminism, but strives for a feminist critique (of society, of traditional parties, of ideologies, and specifically political economy) and towards a creative feminism.

ARTICLE V: Structures

P.F.U. wants to introduce a radically new concept of Party with structures differing from patriarchal ones, and with directive offices based on coordination and synthesis and not domination.

Decision-making powers are democratically shared between all functioning organs.

All functions are determined by responsibility and not by control.

Each important decision must be presented as an item for debate and vote at all levels before being submitted to members of the Party gathered in a General Assembly.

V. 2. In order of importance, P.F.U.'s essential organs are:

- Regional groups (or fundamental groups).
- Work groups (of which the educational-information group is a permanent one).
- the Political analysis commission
- the Emergency group
- the Statutory Commission
- the Coordinating collective between these organs
- the administrative secretariat

Committee Contacts

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Education/Outreach -- Angela Miles 537-6820
Study Group -- Helen Lenskyj 463-5100
Newsletter -- Caorann Sowton 485-2413
Media Committee -- Ann Pappert 921-5318

Le Parti Féministe du Canada: Pourquoi maintenant

1. Le féminisme a été reconnu par des théoriciens politiques prudents comme un mouvement politique de grande importance, sinon le mouvement politique le plus important du monde actuel.
2. La phase actuelle du féminisme, en rappelant le travail des premières féministes et en élaborant une analyse et une vision qui lui est propre a oeuvré pour des changements fondamentaux dans nos vies personnelles et subjectives, ainsi que dans nos vies d'agents historiques. Le défi politique qui se pose maintenant est celui de développer de nombreuses formes d'auto-organisation collective qui puissent traduire cette nouvelle prise conscience dans une société et existence transformées.
3. Jusqu'ici, le Mouvement des Femmes au Canada, au moyen de comités électoraux ou divers, de coalitions, au moyen de mémoires, présentations, manifestations, grâce enfin à l'élection de quelques femmes, a agi comme aiguillon et comme irritant dans ses rapports avec le gouvernement. Tout ceci dans un contexte dominé et défini par le pouvoir masculin.
4. Grâce à certaines de ces activités politiques, nous sommes sorties de l'obscurité et avons fait une percée relative. Mais si nous sommes maintenant visibles, c'est plutôt en tant que bénéficiaires--non en tant qu'agents déterminants et actifs de notre réalité publique--et notre sensibilité, notre langage, nos priorités propres ne sont jamais pris en considération.
5. Certaines de nos réticences sont venues du fait que nous espérions que notre voix pourrait être entendue par les partis politiques et qu'ils tiendraient compte de nos préoccupations. Mais force est maintenant de constater que les politiques de pression et de "lobbying" n'ont produit que très peu de changements significatifs dans la vie de la plupart des femmes. Les femmes forment encore la majorité des pauvres, la majorité des sans-emplois, la majorité des personnes sans retraite, la majorité de la force de travail non-syndiquée, et au Canada, les femmes sont encore maltraitées physiquement et mentalement.
6. Il est vrai que certains partis établis reconnaissent parfois la situation de la femme et ses besoins, mais alors ceux-ci le font dans leurs termes, avec leur discours, leurs catégories, dans leur propre temps et selon leur propre logique.
7. Il faut se rappeler que c'est grâce aux efforts, à l'énergie et à l'esprit du Mouvement des Femmes au Canada que nous avons acquis quelque peu de considération auprès des gouvernements et des partis dominés par le pouvoir masculin. C'est encore le Mouvement des Femmes, qui, grâce aux services vendues aux femmes individuelles et aux collectifs, centres, coalitions et groupes de femmes, maintient notre visibilité, et qui fait pression sur le gouvernement pour que celui-ci continue l'aide mesquine qu'il accorde aux programmes

... continué...

de femmes ou à leurs problèmes. C'est grâce au travail incessant et au dévouement allant parfois près qu'à l'épuisement de nos soeurs que sont conservées les quelques avancées que nous avons faites au Canada.

8. Cette vigilance constante se solde parfois par la perte d'une vision clairement articulée. Tant d'énergie et d'efforts vont à la seule conservation et à la résistance à l'érosion, qu'il nous est arrivé, dans le Mouvement des Femmes, de perdre de vue notre vision féministe autant que principe de direction pour notre vie et pour notre travail dans le mouvement.
9. Jusqu'ici, nous avons été releguées aux chambres de bonnes de la vie politique. Lorsque nous nous installerons dans la maison des maîtres, ce ne sera pas seulement pour s'asseoir aux mêmes placés mais pour réarranger et transformer la maison tout entière.
10. Le Parti Féministe étant partie intégrante du Mouvement des Femmes, notre direction politique, notre démarche et notre structure sera une expression de ce mouvement. En termes politiques traditionnels, nos "conseillers politiques" viendront du Mouvement des Femmes, et nos politiques seront enracinées dans cette expérience et cette recherche. Les membres du PFC continueront à être membres des divers groupes de femmes déjà existants, et ce faisant, elles enrichiront le parti et permettront d'étendre son champ d'action. Puisque nous représentons un mouvement social profond et étendu, nous serons (au contraire des partis existants qui font surface seulement en temps de campagne électorale) une réalité toujours présente. L'éducation des femmes sera au centre de notre travail: à travers des groupes d'études, des groupes de conscientisation, des groupes de discussion sur des questions d'actualité. Notre action éducative aura pour base géographique le quartier et pour but d'approfondir et de renforcer notre développement politique. En tant que parti, nous pouvons continuer la lutte, tout en élaborant de nouvelles lignes politiques, de nouvelles structures. Nous pouvons, ainsi qu'on l'a déjà dit du Mouvement: " changer la soiciété et réinventer la vie".

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA PARTI FEMINISTE DU CANADA
P.O. BOX 5717, STATION 'A', TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5W 1A0

NOM _____

ADRESSE _____ TELEPHONE _____

CODE POSTALE _____

1. Je désire que l'on continue à m'envoyer NEWS/NOUVELLES _____
2. Mon nom peut être employé dans NEWS/NOUVELLES comme contact pour le parti féministe du Canada, dans ma région _____
3. J'aimerais devenir membre du parti féministe du Canada pour \$5.00 _____
personnes âgées, étudiants, parents seuls, personnes à l'assistance sociale
pour \$1.00 _____
4. Ci-inclus ma contribution _____

FPC encourages local branch News 23 1979

Representatives of the Feminist Party of Canada (FPC) met with cautious optimism last night when they encouraged a group of 20 local women to organize a Peterborough branch of the party.

Barbara Wilson, co-ordinator of the women's resource centre where the meeting took place, did not know how many signed up last night.

Margaret Evans, a vice-principal with the Toronto Board of Education, Helen Marie Reid, a Toronto teacher, and Moira Armour, a film-maker and archivist at the Toronto Board of Education, were the three FPC representatives.

Ms. Evans says she does not want to wait 842 years to have equal representation for women in the House of Commons.

That is how long she estimates it will take at the present rate or progress: "There was one woman M.P. in 1921. There are 10 women M.P.s in 1979," she said.

Ms. Evans emphasized however that although the FPC would ultimately like to choose candidates and win elections, "what we're really talking about is changing the world. And we don't for a minute think that's easy."

The Feminist Party has a few hundred paid-up members in Toronto, and scattered members elsewhere in Canada. The Party accepts and invites male members.

Members of the FPC's strategy committee are working towards a founding conference sometime in the next 12 to 18 months. Right now, said Ms. Evans, members are "doing a lot of head work" rather than active politicking.

"We want to control our production and our reproduction. We are opposed to violence in any form. And we will not discriminate," Ms. Evans said.

Following the meeting, Kim Naish, a local member of the

party, said she would be phoning women to have meetings to discuss forming a local chapter of the FPC.

"People are cautious mainly because of the political climate of this community. Some were hesitant to commit themselves while the FPC is still working on its basic principles. The platform is still wide-open, and this is unnerving for anyone used to the old political parties," she said.

Anyone interested in further information is asked to call 742-5395 or 748-2768.

As of December 21
the FPC will have a new
telephone number. People
wanting to reach us can
request the number from
Directory Assistance.

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA PARTI FEMINISTE DU CANADA
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NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE _____

_____ POSTAL CODE _____

1. I am interested in continuing to receive NEWS/NOUVELLES _____
2. My name may be printed in NEWS/NOUVELLES as a contact for the Feminist Party of Canada organization in my area _____
3. I would like to purchase membership in the Feminist Party of Canada at
\$5.00 _____ seniors, students, single parents, welfare, disability at
\$1.00 _____
4. I enclose a donation _____
5. I would like to participate. Please contact me _____. I am interested in the following committee(s):
 Constitution _____ Fund Raising _____
 Media & Communication _____ Study Groups _____ Membership _____
 Policy Development _____ Education _____ Outreach _____
 Office Management _____ Other (please specify) _____

The Feminist Party's second educational for members and friends will be held on Saturday, February 2, from 10-4 pm, at Trinity United Church, Bloor and Robert Streets, one block west of Spadina. At this meeting we will be discussing the principles and priorities of the FPC: the results of countless strategy meetings. We will be seeking endorsement from members of various points of policy, to enable us to make public statements around the upcoming election.

Please come - we need your voice

STATEMENT FROM THE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Strategy Committee of the Toronto FPC is the central co-ordinating committee of the party locally and its meetings are open to all interested members. Meetings are held every second Sunday at 2 pm, at 121 Avenue Rd. The next meeting will be on January 13. The Committee's major focus of activity at this time is the development of a document presenting as clearly as possible the general political principles that have guided the formation of the Party so far. This document will provide an important framework for our ongoing activity and will also be a contribution to the wider political discussions within the Party as we move toward a founding convention.

The Education and Outreach Committee is meanwhile involved in building a major outreach programme. The process of outreach and the growth of Feminist Party membership cannot be separated from the Party's political activity. For it is largely through active involvement in specific areas of concern (such as health, education, culture, poverty) that the Feminist Party and Feminist Party members will develop the network of political relationships that is crucial to a powerful political presence. Nevertheless, it is important to develop also a programme of activity specifically designed to make feminism and the Feminist Party of Canada accessible to as wide a variety of women as possible. We have decided that, at least at this stage of the Party's development, mass publicity and membership drives are not desirable, and that our focus should be to support women's self-organization as fully and as creatively as possible, whenever we are asked.

When the Strategy Committee's statement of principles is ready, it will be a great help to us in this. Our Committee is currently developing still other resources to help in this outreach:

A document with suggestions on how to start your own FPC branch group will be printed and made available for party members' use in the near future.

We are drawing up a speakers list of Party members.

We are developing a training program for people who would like to develop speaking skills and/or gain the necessary background knowledge of feminism and the FPC to go on speaking engagements.

To help Party speakers and members we have made accessible in the FPC office a series of files containing clear and current information on the following topics: The FPC, its published statements; housework; women's role in the paid labour force; poverty; human rights; rape/violence against women; daycare; abortion; education; aging; environment/nuclear power; women's image in the media; health/sexuality; immigrant women; feminist political perspectives.

We will organize periodic Party educationals on aspects of feminist politics and areas of special concern as well as social and cultural gatherings and celebrations.

We will hold regular Orientation Sessions for new Party members on the last Sunday of every month. The next such will be held on Sunday, January 27, from 2-5 pm, at 121 Avenue Rd.

The overall structure of the FPC is developing in such a way as to allow and reflect as wide a variety of types of input and involvement as possible. Therefore the Education-Outreach Committee is doing everything it can to support women who wish to start FPC groups of widely different focus: consciousness-raising groups,

study groups, work place groups, neighbourhood groups, groups based on some shared characteristic of the members, such as occupation, ethnicity, age, etc.; groups active in specific policy areas.

We expect our Outreach Programme eventually to include such activity as:

- mass canvassing in the city
- frequent public speaking engagements in locations of all sorts
- public educationals on the FPC, feminist politics and political issues
- FPC courses on aspects of feminist theory

However, while we are developing the resources to undertake this wider programme, we are focussing our activity on supporting women who wish to start local FPC groups or organize FPC meetings in their neighbourhood, place of work, etc.

We need your support in order to be able to support you. This is the essence of sisterhood and the key to any power we build.

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THE FPC STUDY GROUP

The FPC Study Group has been meeting on Wednesday evenings since early in October. As an introduction, we studied the three articles on feminist political perspectives which were distributed at the Party's September educational day. Then we began to examine the collection of feminist writings, "Woman in Sexist Society", edited by V. Gornick and B. Moran, beginning with those related to the socialization of women and proceeding to such topics as consumerism, "the mask of beauty", and lesbianism. Throughout our discussions, we have attempted to share personal experiences and views, and thus to link the personal to the political in a way that enhances our feminist consciousness.

Plans to form a second study group were not successful because of lack of numbers. However, it seems likely that, in the new year, another attempt will be made. As well, new people are always welcome at the Wednesday night group. Since the location is likely to change soon, please phone Helen Lenskyj (463-5100) for further information.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The Membership Committee meets on a regular basis to process the requests for membership and information which arrive at our Post Office Box in Toronto. It is of great interest to note that approximately 35% of the current mail comes from Quebec. Applications for membership come from the other provinces as well, and many of them result from FPC ads placed in feminist publications such as Branching Out, Broadside, Upstream, and Canadian Women's Studies Journal.

Currently the FPC has 350 members, with a mailing list of close to 1000 names of interested individuals and groups across the country. All of these receive regular FPC mailings.

If you care to continue to receive this newsletter, donations to help cover mailing charges would be appreciated.

Moira Armour, Membership Committee

Doreen Hamilton, a Toronto Maternal and Child Health Consultant, recently addressed the FPC, giving her critique of the Health Ministry's proposed scheme of perinatal regionalization. This projected rearrangement of Metro's obstetrical services involves the computerization of pregnancy records on a massive scale. Should it be approved, many smaller community maternity centres would close, in favour of a few large, centralized units, hierarchically run and much more rigidly systematized. Hamilton sees this measure as tending to carry birthing methods and options still farther out of women's control, at a vast and wasted cost, while diverting funds from primary prevention programmes. And we see this kind of counter-human development in health care, pursued without community consultation, as an issue belonging very pointedly to feminists, close to the heart of the feminist concern with the quality of life and human care.

Following is a letter by Doreen Hamilton:

We are trying to reverse the increasing trend toward more and more technology and medical-surgical intervention applied to childbirth by doctors and hospitals. This is your chance to speak up, to state to our politicians how you feel pregnancy and birth should be handled in Metro Toronto.

The media campaign will continue in the newspapers and on television so that our preventive point of view can be heard. We need, in addition, about 500 letters of support to be received by Dennis Timbrell in the next 2-3 weeks. If this issue means something to you, please send a letter to Timbrell and a copy to your M.P.P., stating why you support any or all of the following positions:

1. Primary prevention is a more cost-effective way of improving our health services for childbirth than American "regionalization". By primary prevention I mean:
 - government subsidies to prenatal classes.
 - education in high schools on healthful practices and healthy attitudes leading to optimal outcomes in pregnancy.
 - genetic counselling.
 - programmes to ensure adequate nutrition for all pregnant mothers.
 - legalization of midwives.

- controlled studies to determine the benefits and hazards of present inter-ventive, surgical and technological obstetrical practices.
 - demonstration projects to study the benefits and hazards of out-of-hospital alternatives such as childbearing centres.
 - needs assessment of how many neonatal intensive care beds already exist in Metro, and how many are required.
 - education of family physicians and obstetricians regarding the importance of nutrition, lifestyle factors, and avoidance of prescription drugs to the outcome of pregnancy, and the positive values of prenatal classes and midwifery skills.
2. More and more technology applied to childbirth is not the answer. If doctors and businessmen want to use computers and vast expenditures for hospital equipment, let them bring forward convincing scientific evidence to back their costly schemes.
 3. We need multi-disciplinary teams of health professionals and consumers to plan improvements in health care for pregnancy and childbirth.

Thanks a million! Good luck to all of us! Please pass this on to your friends.

-Doreen Hamilton

Please mail your letters to:

The Hon. Dennis Timbrell
Minister of Health
Queen's Park
Toronto.

A Metro Task Force on the Prevention of Prematurity, composed of public health people and including Doreen Hamilton, has recently been convened, in consequence of Hamilton's activity. An ad hoc committee of women, the Committee for Preventive Health in Obstetrics, is presently working towards a public forum on this issue, with several sponsoring agents, to be held in late March or early April, in the St. Lawrence Centre's Town Hall.

FEDERAL ELECTION 1980

Anyone who would like to get campaign experience by working on a feminist campaign would be very welcome in Kay Macpherson's NDP campaign in York East.

Call Kay 922-7490
or Vi Thompson 699-7619

At the present time, when the FPC is not a properly constituted party and as yet not able to run candidates, this provides us with a chance to get practical campaign experience, working with a feminist candidate.

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA
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