

NEWSLETTER, Vol. 3, No. 5, September 1981.

MAKING IT REAL IS MAKING IT WORK

Politicians who don't know what they're doing - and there are plenty of those - talk about non-activity as "retrenchment" or "consolidation" or "new directions". Feminists prefer to face facts fearlessly, and the truth is that for a while there the party was suffering through a real period of confusion and uncertainty. The news which the newsletter brings with joy and pride this month is that this period is NOW OVER. It is clear now that it was nothing more than a time in which the yeast was working and the roses renewing: now the bread is baking and the flowers breaking into bud all over the place. What has become clear is that we perhaps worried too much about what the party should do than whether the party lived and breathed. The first priority of the party must be party building, recruiting the people and putting in place the organization which can systematically come to grips with the whys and hows and whens of our clear commitment to destroy patriarchy, not only because it is evil and corrupt, not only because it is radically incompetent, but because we have a BETTER WAY of organizing social and political life. That better way must include a wide range of policies: on, for example, a truer expression of democracy and political participation, a non-exploitive economic organization, new modes of child-rearing and education, and the protection of the environment from the greed and stupidity which are the mark of the relationship of men with their world. We cannot, we know do this simply in terms of seeking equality with men:

WOMEN WHO WANT TO BE EQUAL WITH MEN LACK AMBITION

The problems are big problems, but women are large and contain multitudes. We are the most progressive force around, but we cannot turn that force into a political reality without organizing ourselves to do it, bringing together the multitude of women who want this to happen, hammering out strategies, educating ourselves in how the enemy functions. At the same time, we have never to forget the real sufferings which the systematic exploitation of women brings to individual women. We must strive to bring together women of all classes, and make a special effort to work with poor women whose demanding lives leave so little strength or time for political action. We have been much encouraged by our still fragile but important contacts with MAG - Mothers Against Government - and look forward to working with organized and unorganized women wage-workers.

We won't do any of these things without a flexible, democratic, sharing structure, without priorities, without a battle to the death of the forces of the New Right. BUT WE WILL DO IT. Those of you who have shared the sense of exhilaration and commitment of recent meetings, who have seen the new faces and the tenacity of purpose, know we shall. There is now MOMENTUM, momentous momentum.

Get into that torrent wherever you can - we are organizing classes and work groups over a wide range - consciousness raising and policy, fund raising and education. Above all we are teaching ourselves sisterhood, with its disagreements, to be sure, and its personal incompatibilities, but these understood as simply the nuts and bolts of woman power, woman promise, woman politics.

Wanna make history? Need to be understood? Want to know what feminism is? Want to walk tall and never, never alone? Want to know, and knowing, change things? The first step is active participation in the FPC. It doesn't matter if you have little time and less energy and no money - these are exactly the lived conditions of women that we are going to change, and everyone can be part of this. So come down to 175 Carlton Street if you live in Metro Toronto. Start your own group if you live elsewhere. FPC doesn't want to be monolithic - it wants women everywhere to do what they can do where they are. We'll worry about national organization when we have created our local groups everywhere in Canada.

FPC Space

Members flocked to the official opening of our new premises at 175 Carleton Street on August 29, and it was a lovely bit of sisterhood in action: relaxed but serious, social but political. The Space is a great stride forward - not one but two rooms of our own, and congenial neighbours (Voice of Women and OXFAM). Like so many women, we have a struggle to pay the rent, and members able to pledge \$5 or more a month are urged to do so. We also need staffing: contact Jeri Wine (416-533-6137) or Joan Blackwood (416-444-6725). There is now a telephone answering machine in the office - call in with questions and offers of help.

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Lynne Buchan has left us: she is back in Australia studying law and we expect to see an FPA very soon! Also gone, but not quite so far away is Angela Miles, who has been appointed to the faculty of St. Francis Xavier University to teach Women's Studies. A Toronto feminist occasion without Angie is an event with a painful gap in it, and we shall miss her sorely. We expect to see the FPC (Antigonish Group) rise soon. We miss Angie and Lynne, and wish them well.

Back from summer on the West Coast is that indefatigable feminist, Moira Armour. She'll be delighted with all our new faces and vitality. Glad to have you back, Moira.

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The YWCA appear to have achieved their policy goal of excluding low income women and feminists from their funded activities. BOYCOTT THE Y until it makes itself available again to these groups.

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At its founding meeting, FPC decided that men could be members. This issue has been raised again. It is a difficult one, and will be debated at the meeting on Oct. 25. What do YOU think? Come and join this discussion.

* General Meeting, held Sept. 20th, and very *
* well attended with welcome numbers of new *
* members. There will be a GENERAL MEETING *
* on Sunday, Oct. 25 at 2 p.m. at the SPACE.*

This is a preliminary report - the next newsletter will be devoted to a complete report on the meeting and the October one.

Highlights

The Co-ordinating Committee will replace two members every three months. Members can stand for a second term only if there are no volunteers.

GOT A SMALL FRIDGE OR TYPEWRITER? The Space needs these.

Volunteers are needed for staffing: 9 a.m. - 12:30; 1 p.m. - 4:30; 7 p.m. - 10:30. Call in if you can help, 960-3427. Pat Hughes and Terry Flower want to expand the policy committee. Call Terry 925-6486.

THERE WILL BE A DROP-IN EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT at 175 Carlton. We need these womaned. Specific policies on major issues could be subjects for these discussions. We need a special events group to deal with breaking issues in the news. A writers committee will replace the Media committee, and will start a feminist issues clipping collection.

IF YOU CAN HELP WITH ANY OF THESE THINGS CALL IN AND TALK TO THE MACHINE - IF WE GET VOLUNTEERS, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TALK WITH PEOPLE, WHICH WE WOULD ALL MUCH PREFER.

No-one is especially pleased with the Toronto concentration of the Party, but we must get this group in order then start organizing. Meanwhile, NEWSLETTER would love to have regional correspondents, in the province and across Canada in English and French.

We have about 4,000 signatures towards the campaign for party status in Ontario. KEEP AT IT. We have loads of extra forms.

EVENTS

NAC Historical Walk, Sunday, Oct. 18, 2:30 p.m. - for further info. call National Action Committee, 922-3246.

Women, Power and Consciousness, a conference, Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 1981. Speakers include Sheila Rowbotham, Mary O'Brien, Angela Miles. Call 978-5404 for info.

INFO UPDATE

Regular FPC-PFC membership is \$5.00; seniors, students, single parents and disabled, \$1.00. Please check where applicable:

I wish to renew my 1979 or 1980 membership _____. I have renewed my membership _____.
I wish to become a member _____. I have a new address _____
I wish to be an active committee member, _____
now ____; future ____; please call me _____.
I am not a member, but wish to be on the Mailing List. Payment of \$2 is enclosed. _____

Name: _____ Tel. home _____ Work _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Please send me ____ FPC/PFC Commemorative Poster(s) printed in 4 colours at \$3.00 each.

Donation _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Feminist Party of Canada/Parti Feministe du Canada, Box 5717, Station A, Toronto M5W 1A0.