

24 May 1981. Meeting of Bread and Roses. At Britannia.

PRESENT: Helen, Adrienne, Wendy, Anne, Maggie, Annabelle, Marion, Drena, Sara, Frances, Gay, Jane, Jackie, Susan C., Linda G., Marcie, Anne, Dara, Maureen.

AGENDA: 1. History  
2. Public Meeting 40 mins  
3. Mahila Association 20 mins  
4. Report on workshop on Lesbians and the Right 10 mins  
5. Basis of Unity 25 mins  
6. How to organize the meetings of this group 15 mins  
7. Telephone tree 5 mins  
8. Other business 10 mins

CHAIR: Helen  
MINUTES: Frances

MAGGIE suggested changing 4. to before 2. and wanted to get to the basis of unity tonight. DRENA suggested adjusting the agenda to do the organizational work (6) if that's very necessary since the agenda is long and we might not have time.

HELEN said it's not a big discussion, which might take 10 minutes. Concerned that I've been making up the agendas so far, it's not very democratic.

SARA presented a history of the group so far. (fw-I have typed up Sara's notes for this presentation - they follow). Group began with a workshop at BCFW convention. Workshop was on Feminism and Vanguard Politics. Focus of discussion became the need for women's movement to take on external focus, organizing unorganized women, instead of infighting, provide leadership, and to fight back against the right. We continued to meet over a 7 month period it became clearer. We moved from general discussions on how to organize ourselves, and the women's movement to the type of organizing needed to produce a task-oriented focus. In the organizing discussions we discussed what is the women's movement? Women discussed the need for clarity on what feminism is, the need for large-scale organizing. But also need for clearer programme for women's movement/women struggling for change. Recognition of how we have organized networks, the need for strategy, learn ability to mobilize, structured ways of providing leadership, importance of taking on the state, recognition of frustration of many years experiences of organizing. We also discussed the BCFW as a vehicle. Problem came down to BCFW as either a mass organization and action based, or a socialist-feminist organization with a high basis of unity. Tried to be 2 things at once, need for a more clearly political group emerged. We then discussed the forms of organization and leadership. IWDC Toronto, feminist organizations in B.C., IS! and a good discussion of the questions of leadership. Differences within the far left where leninist group functions as a collective, with the women's movement seen as a mass movement, less differentiated; need to clarify who we are, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, or socialist=feminist. ISDC as a place for women who are socialist feminists and need collective overview provided by the left. We decided to look at a basis of unity, to examine concrete areas of work. There were two reports; one on trade union movement, and one on anti-right wing work. Discussion ended up being more who are we to have this discussion, what do we want to do? Decided to be task-oriented, socialist-feminists, women who as individuals, and to have discussion, put out information, and to initiate action. In our as yet unagreed upon basis of unity it is written, that we are agreed to do work against the right and to build the women's movement. To make connections between issues, to make analysis from our work, not to lose touch with radical feminism, to ~~not~~ to duplicate work already being done, but to pull in groups with whom we will work together or who's work we can support. The name of the group will be Bread and Roses. We have discussed having a public meeting to put out information on the right, we have also discussed work with the BCOFR and it's importance. We are committed to being an open, broad-based group, not exclusive.

SARA (notes on report from Lesbian Conference). Purpose of the workshop was to raise consciousness in the lesbian community about growing threat of organized Right, to demonstrate links between attacks on our community and other groups, to analyze reasons for rightwing developing and initiate a geographically and tactically comprehensive possibility for action. The workshop was a big success, there was a large turnout. There were three presentations made, and then divided off into discussion groups. The 1st day talked about our personal experiences and reactions to the rise of the right. Workshop continued on Sunday (Lesbians and the Left abandoned for the Right) with a discussion of fighting back.



Concrete proposals flowed out of workshops, passed by the plenary: 1) set up LARE (Lesbians Against the Right Everywhere) groups in centres, doing education, organization of unorganized lesbians, community outreach and publicity. 2) one of the goals of LARE's would be to build a DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE RIGHT, day of education and protest 27 March 1982. To be build to local actions in the fall, educational work in mass organizations, schools, door-to-door, to bring together our allies. 2) to produce a pamphlet that will be used across the country, including space for local research information. 4) to use Lesbian/Lesbienne as our correspondence network, for information and coordination of activities. Anglophone women agreed to take responsibility for translation of articles into French, and francophone women for translation of articles into English. The video tape of the workshop will be used across the country. March 27th was chosen because that gives enough time to organize, no conflict with April, May events. Campuses still on, can build events through our work on March 8th, and through March 8th events. We recognize that this means hard work, but what's new? What are differences between LARE in Vancouver and Bread and Roses. LARE is potentially a mass organization for Lesbians to fight the right, the focus is on lesbian issues, once LARE is going we can co-ordinate work, could even join B&R and become lesbian causes if in agreement,

HELEN The workshop mobilized a lot of women, focussed what they understood and experienced. Bread and Roses is basically a socialist-feminist group and LARE is not, so the group would include women who might not be anti-capitalist.

JACKIE workshop was the key political focus of the conference. Things are different here from Toronto, the organizing will not be the same here.

HELEN if women have questions, please ask them.

MAUREEN LARE Doesn't yet exist in Vancouver. We should be careful not to talk about it as constituted already in any particular way. So if we call a LARE organization meeting other women might see it as a socialist-feminist group.

ANNABELLE that's my concern too, I want LARE group as a separate one.

HELEN the meeting has already been called, not by B&R, it's on 3 June at 7:30, at VSW.

SARA the mailing/contact list from the conference is being typed up, and sent across Canada.

MAUREEN. There is also a BCFW meeting that night. Some were angry about the time and date.

HELEN We are over the agenda time, on to the public meeting.

FRANCES (summary of minutes discussions on public meetings) There were several clear positions while there was some opposition a couple of meetings ago, that seems to have gone. Some women wanted to have a meeting sooner, as opposed to later, and focus the meeting on the major activities of the right wing. Some women wanted to draw in women in the women's movement, and other women into a discussion of the activities of the right and the state. Some women want to build a coalition for the meeting. We discussed the BCOFR, women isolated in the organization who need support, and the fact that the women's movement needs information on women and organizations fight back. Bread and Roses would call the meeting to build the women's movement. The major discussion is in the 3.05.81 minutes.

HELEN is there a proposal to focus the discussion.

SARA - want a meeting with the character of both a meeting and a rally, to organize and to inform. Approach organizations working against the right, ask for speakers, give 15 minutes each, and then have a general discussion. The model would be the meeting held in T.O., 400 people, 4 speakers. Some speakers would be B&R, CCCA, BCOFR (woman), Lesbians against the right group, India Mahila, BCTF. B&R could chair the meeting and moderate, with a 10 minute introduction to the topic. Cover racism, sex education, anti-abortion, etc.. Build through unions for attendance. 2-3 month organizing period, come out with a splash.

HELEN let's not talk about the details of the meeting, but speak generally first.

SUSAN My impression we'd have a meeting with a socialist-feminist analysis, why it's important for women to organize and why the right wants to get us. Bread and Roses should give the overall political analysis. CCCA, not just Vancouver but what's going on in the States too. It is a big issue now.

MARION The attack from the right on the trade union movement, the refusal to recognize equal pay for work of equal value as an important issue, union busting campaigns, not just the right-to-work people, but attack changing now to a focus on the legislation governing collective bargaining.



JACKIE Sara's proposal is good. Important for this group to have a task to focus on. X Agree with Susan's comments. Important not to turn <sup>to</sup> a conception of the right as every one who is against us. There's a toughening up of the bosses, but they're not the right. Could come up in other contexts. We should build through the unions, but don't think the B.C.Fed will endorse, and we'll spend too much energy on something which doesn't pay if we try to get them to.

DRENA Looks like people are in agreement, why don't we take a decision. and could we reconsider the smoking ~~xxx~~ rule? (There then ensued a discussion about this - and upshot was that women could smoke near the door and only one at a time).

SARA will ~~w~~ raise what the opposition to a public meeting was since noone has done so. The ~~xxxx~~ character of the meeting was questioned, to be a public meeting, or one for the women's movement; to be a mixed meeting, or women only, to look for BCFed endorsement; what kind of speakers to have.

HELEN I will summarize the discussion:

1. Public meeting, not only for women's movement
2. invite people to speak who have been effected by the right
3. build through the unions for attendance if not support
4. Bread and Roses to put forward a socialist-feminist analysis

)There was noone who disagreed with this proposal.)

There are four minutes left, propose that people ~~x~~ volunteer to come up with a proposal for a meeting; time, date, etc..

DRENA I pushed for a decision because where there's unity a decision should be made. I want the meeting open to men and women. New to bring up in Vancouver how ~~x~~ women are specifically attacked. We have had lots of abstract discussion at other meetings about who to ally with, now clearer because we have a task and it's more grounded.

MAGGIE I have questions about specifics.

HELEN Want people to volunteer and discuss details later.

SUSAN I want to amend proposal, volunteers must ~~bring~~ bring back details to this group as a whole.

MAGGIE feels a little wierd to have moved so quickly and heard from so few.

LINDA will speak because not intending to participate in the organization of the meeting. Tuesday will be a meeting of BCOFR to begin a women's committee, the point of raising this is to ask about the possibility of being able to announce the planning of this meeting at that one. Would like the planning committee to work closely with BCOFR women's committee.

JACKIE Don't worry about moving too quickly, just has been a long <sup>buildup</sup>. Also Lesbian Conference cleared out a lot. Concerned that BCFed endorsement <sup>debate</sup> not be substituted for a debate on another question, this debate should be held at another time. B&R should not go ~~mk~~ ~~xxxx~~ ahead with such a public meeting without first writing an article for Kinesis.

HELEN It's fine to tell the BCOFR women's committee we're planning a meeting. Not prepared to say I'd work with them until I know more about who they are. Important because we could end up allied with a group we know nothing about.

Volunteers to come up with a proposal: XX SARA, MAGGIE, MARION, ADRIENNE, HELEN.

3 Mahila Assn.

FRANCES I have left 3 messages for Raminder and she hasn't returned calls.

HELEN I phoned Raminder to see why they weren't in the BCOFR. At the time ~~we~~ she suggested that Mahila might want support from us, writing, editing, driving, etc.. She said she'd talk to Mahila. We thought a joint meeting soon would be important. They've put forward ADRIENNE I would want more information on the basis of unity of Mahila before making a decision.

MAGGIE Fairly broad based organization. Raminder is active in the organization. Broad political spectrum. Not allied with any particular political group. Went to their IWD public meeting, educational. Raminder was concerned to make some connection to the women's movement. She also proposed ~~an~~ meeting with the editor of MANUSHI. They have monthly meetings, discussions.

HELEN They do a lot of support work too, with problems of the women in their community.

FRANCES They also have columns in the english and punjabi ~~xx~~ papers.

ADRIENNE They publish in the Link regularly. They're active in working with immigrant women.

HELEN The decision is whether or not to meet ~~x~~ with ~~them~~, not form an alliance.



SARA Important to ~~make~~ meet with them. Essential to B&R work to make alliances with East Indian women, in Mahila or the BCOFR.

LINDA It is not clear what they want from us.

HELEN no, it isn't clear, support work is what's requested

LINDA propose we ask for a joint meeting, they tell us ~~kw~~ what they do, we tell them. Do they know we're socialist-feminists?

DRENA do you mean all of them, and all of us (Yes) since we don't have a steering committee that's probably the only way. The India Mahila meeting had 75-100 people (IWD)

MARION Obvious that we have to meet with them. They are a broad-based group, we talk with people first, then work with them. Branching out is important, especially important in sectors where the women's movement has been inactive.

MAGGIE Crucial to meet, not just to hear what they want us to do, but also what we want from them.

HELEN Is there opposition to this meeting: No. Now we have to decide how to have the meeting.

MARION There's the question of language, if we meet with the whole group could be 20 of us going, we're a pretty verbal lot.

FRANCES Propose that three of us go and meet with them in the interests of the division of labour.

MAGGIE that seem's sensible. Also want us to talk about how ~~x~~ we see working on forming links with them.

SARA both groups betting together could be a kind of bonding, could maybe be the 2nd step. Agree with Maggie, important to talk about what we're doing, meeting should be information gathering from both sides. Decisions about working together ~~xxxx~~ should be based on each groups needs.

(Then Helen said something, and so did I but I don't know what it was)

JACKIE Agree with Sara and Frances. Should leave open the possibility of a larger meeting. We want to build the women's movement. Also there was a workshop at the conference on Lesbians of Colour, they may be forming a study group. They might also be approached.

DRENA Agree with Maggie, think about what we'd like to say to them. Need to be not global, but concrete. Could we ask them to come and speak at our ~~xxxxxx~~ meeting, easier than working out master plan for next five years.

LINDA why not first find out what they want.

FRANCES this is hard to imagine doing since they haven't returned phone calls.

SARA Contact them about wanting a meeting, a B&R committee of women should ~~xxx~~ discuss how to present selves to them, and discuss at the next meeting of B&R, then have the public meeting discussion with them, then we meet with them.

JACKIE propose that the same people meet with them as are working on the anti right meeting.

HELEN suggest we adopt proposal, keeping in ~~x~~ mind the problem of the basis of unity.

Then propose we deal with other business first, have rest of time of meeting for b/u.

Suggest we have committee to organize meetings. The agendas have been done by ~~me~~ when I thought it was necessary. Propose that 4 women form an interim steering committee, with a mandate to the end of August. Duties:

1. to prepare agendas
2. record keeping
3. co-ordination of activities
4. co-ordination of liaison activities (not doing
5. do chairing and/or get women to do it.

the ~~x~~ liaison, but being aware of it, and who is doing it.

~~xxxx~~

SARA 6. that they could be recalled at anytime.

JACKIE It is important, since we acknowledge that there are informal networks of communication, that we need a formal body to make sure informal networks don't have all the power.

HELEN How can we ~~xxxx~~ decide who's on the committee.

SARA might talk about what other committees are going to be necessary before women take on responsibility.

DRENA I ask for nominations rather than volunteers. Women would be sure of mandate, then .I nominate Helen.

JACKIE It is important to have other committee discussion too. Should we have two working committees in the group. We'd all be active, it's important to have women on the steering committee who are on the working committees.



HELEN We could each indicate what our focus will be by a show of hands,

Work on the Right '7' On Trade Unions '3' + one who couldn't make up her mind  
Also there are women who aren't here who may continue to come to other meetings.

MARION We should go ahead and nominate women, and not put off because women aren't here.  
SUSAN Steering committee is based on practical needs, not deciding questions without the consent of Bread and Roses. Should be based on practical needs. Should be split between Trade Union and Right working committees.

MAUREEN Are you saying not to have nominations and elections. [No] I don't see why shouldn't be a volunteer committee. I assume when women take on responsibility they will be accountable.

SARA Agree with Susan and Maureen. Before we codify a way of choosing the leadership we need to have a discussion about leadership.

DRENA Proposed voting because steering committee is different from other committees, not a question of accountability to members, but of unease with no mandate from members. We are looking at 3 months, not 4 years, women should feel comfortable that they have the support of the group. Nominate Helen in support of her work. Elections are important it is a question of democracy.

HELEN We speaking to the question of elected versus volunteer committee. I have no position. But given the work, committee isn't political leadership, much responsibility is taken and decisions made which affect the day-to-day work of the group. Committee would have more information, it is important how this gets passed out. In response to Susan, the leadership you describe seems idealistic.

MAUREEN I'd be delighted if there are three women among us. Time to see who'd take on the task. We should look at that.

LINDA People with political experience are nominated when nominations are taken. Some women would never have a chance to volunteer. Part of the process should be to train in political skills.

SARA I propose that we take volunteers and then ratify.

HELEN calls for volunteers. None raise their hands. Then SARA, HELEN & MAGGIE volunteer. It seems essential that someone from the TU committee be on the steering committee.

JACKIE There's only four women who expressed interest.

HELEN Perhaps we could add someone over time.

MAGGIE I'd like to withdraw my name.

DRENA Should see that if the objectives of group are to be carried out, could be a great deal of work, a snowball, like the lesbian conference. So women considering being on the steering committee, should consider their work, some said they were doing their main political work in this group.

HELEN Two women have volunteered. Consider ratifying those two names and then moving on. Take other women on later. Ratification: Sara - all in favour  
Helen - all in favour

LINDA When we run out of time on an agenda item we should take a straw vote on whether or not to move on ... [this discussion was stopped so we could finish agenda]

FRANCES describes the phoen tree Nancy put together.

MAUREEN Proposed that women at the meeting add their name to the tree, and that women not interested take their names off.

DRENA I will update phoen tree, and make copies and bring to the next meeting.

HELEN Could we have \$2 from each woman at the meeting, for copying costs, etc..  
How shall we proceed with the time remaining.

JACKIE We don't have time for the b/u discussion. Propose that on the 31st we meet at seven, begin with a round on the basis of unity to get women's impressions; and that we use the next 15 meinutes to get clear on the agenda for the next meeting.

MAUREEN I have extra copies of the b/u. I want two minutes to say something. I realized when I showed someone the two b/us [IWDC TO and the proposed B&R] she asked what relevance there was to having the IWDC one. I showed it because I wrote the IWDC one too, and wanted people to see both together first, not afterwards if women noticed similarity. Took out the paragraph on lobbying from the IWDC b/u. Excludes us from some activities, an area about which I'm confused and we need to talk about it.

HELEN Who's in favour of Jackie's proposal. - Everybody - room booked.  
MAGGIE seven could be a problem for women with children -  
JACKIE Problem with getting a meeting of the women interested in the trade unions work.  
Lou, Susan, Jackie, Marion and Susan C, want to get the report together and get going on it.

We then figured out when the next meeting would be after the 31st. 14 JUNE 1981 7:30

We should let women know there's money available for childcare costs.

THE AGENDA FOR 31 May meeting:

1. b/u round
2. meeting against the right proposal discussion
3. mahila association

On the 14th June the discussion will be about trade unions.