

Saturday

Some thoughts on the current basis of unity.....

In general I think thti it is a big improvement in language

I like the prologue but think that it overstresses how flexible we are going to be in constantly updating our basis pf unity.

some problems

1. the first is to build the women's movement that is to on crease the number of women of all races who are feminists (without subtzacting from the number of feminists)

In practice who is or is not a feminist becomes a matter of debate and definition similar to one tht we have had on socialism. I would be content to say that anyone who says they are a feminist be regarded as such. This is important because you need to know who is and who is not in order to know whether you have added or subtracted the number of faminists.

For me the womens movement can be distinguished from the womens's liberation movement. It is a shame that we have ~~we~~ stopped talking about the WLM although it is a term that is still used in England. I think that I am more interested in building the WLM than I am in building the womens movement. I guess in practical terms and the present current situation I would be much more interested in the future of an organization like BCFW (which I see as a WLM organization) than I would be in the building of NAC. So I would like to see that read THE FIRST IS TO BUILD THE WOMENS LIBERATION MOVEMENT.

In general I think that the statement should mention the term anti-capitalist feminists or socialist feminists I think that the WLM has two currents (at least) While running into the dangers of typologising I think they are the radical feminist and socialist feminist currents. In the last few years I think that there has been some healthy hybridization of the two and that no one person need to be terribly consistent in terms of how you place them. (I mean that there are days when I feel like a radical feminist) I guess that I see part of the task of Bread and Roses is to build a socialist feminist current in the WLM and would prefer if that ware somehow stated but I feelfine about an anti-4 epitalist feminist current as well.

So I would suggest a wording that is
THE FIRST IS TO BUILD A WOMENS LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND WITH
IN THT A SOCIALIST FEMINIST CURRENT OR ANTI CAPITALIST
CURRENT.

The next part is a bit puzzling. If any issue has threatened to lose feminists I would have thought that it was the issue of sexual orientation. I suspect that Bread and Roses will attract women for whom the lesbian issue is a difficult one and I think tht it is true to say that women have temporarily been lost from the WLM because they were not yet ready to take up the struggle

around sexual orientation or to see it as central to what Womens's liberation is about. I wouldn't want us to have anything in our basis of unity which set up a situation where we had to take a stand that capitulated to that lack of understanding because we were going to lose women from the movement.

I think that section should read ~~WOMEN OF ALL RACES CLASSES AND SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS~~ WOMEN OF ALL RACES CLASSES AND SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS. It is equally important to include classes as I think that one of our goals is to build a WLM that is working class..

I don't think that action is enough I think that we need analysis. Indeed I think that we have come to the two arenas of action through analysis. By analysis I do not mean theory around the sources of womens oppression although that is an important starting point for analysis. But it is important to consider that we have chosen these areas not because they are what is moving at the moment but because they are consistent with our strategy for the liberation of women.

I therefore think that this should read THE WAY TO BUILD THE WOMENS MOVEMENT IS THROUGH ACTION BASED ON ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. AND A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE. This gives a rationale for the following paragraphs which are the theory of how we got in this mess and how we are going to get out of it.

In relation to this I think that there should also be some amendment to the first sentence of the last paragraph. Maybe it could read in view of where we have come from and our strategy for where we want to go and in view of the present circumstance for women and the WLM in Vancouver.....

Also.. WE THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO BASE OUR UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE WORLD AND HOW IT OPERATES ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN. WE ARE FEMINISTS AND WE ARE SOCIALISTS. TO ANALYSE THE ACTIONS AND IDEAS OF SOCIETY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN IS TO BEGIN TO MAKE A NEW WORLD..

@. This society is divided by.....

This paragraph jumps from patriarchal ideas to patriarchy. It may be a bit of nit-picking at this point but I think it important to recognize the difference in potency of ideas and institutions. It is true that the divisions are based on ideas but it is important to realize that the division in labour is more than ideological. The paragraph implied but does not state that we as women are hemmed in by both ideas and social structures.

The statement that the patriarchy is at least 2,000 years old seems to me arbitrary. It begs the question of what happened 2,000 years ago that resulted in the occurrence of the patriarchy. I guess it is the appearance of state like formations which are only slightly more than 2,000 years old I would quibble with that in that I think the control of womens reproductive capacities starts with

the development of competitive horticultural societies but that is really beside the point which is that PATRIARCHAL TYPES OF SOCIETY PREDATE CAPITALISM BY A LONG SHOT. THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

In this vein I have no trouble with capitalist patriarchy but I know that it does cause some problems for some who prefer ~~the~~ patriarchal capitalism.

3. The divisions between men and women.....

I think that it is important to recognize that not only are women paid less for their work but that they have a lot of work that is totally unpaid and which contributes substantially to the capitalist system and to the profits reaped from capitalist enterprise. It is important not to recognize that among other things housework is the production and reproduction of the labour force.

I can't think of another way to say that. Also something to the effect that since women's first task is the work that she does in the home, when her labour enters the domain of waged labour it is always regarded as secondary and in addition to her work (unpaid) in the home. This is expressed in low wages and lack of security once women enter the paid work force.

4. RE THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT CLEAR ENOUGH IN THIS DRAFT POINT # 3.

IN this country and in North America it is my understanding that the union movement since the ousting of the communist unions have essentially been pro-capitalist. I think we have to build our case for the seeking of the unions as allies. In my opinion it is more the potential than the actual that we are interested in allies. I mean don't we intend feminism to transform the union movement as well as the society? I hope so but this is something that we need to get clearer on.

Maureen