

We call what follows a 'basis of unity' because these words about ideas are a sort of digest of our current agreements with each other in Bread and Roses. We will change our basis of unity as our group changes, as we learn more about our agreement with each other through trying to do things together and learning from our successes and our mistakes. We think it is important to keep a record of our agreement with each other for two reasons: first, because it is helpful in making decisions about the work we will do together, and second, because we can look at the development of our 'basis of unity' over a period of time, and see that our work together really has changed our ideas about the world. Our accounts of the work we have done will enable us to see how that work has changed the world around us. It is important to us that we learn from our experience and that we make our learning accessible to others.

The basis of unity of Bread and Roses is not intended to be a test. If you are thinking about joining this group, and want to know more about it, the basis of unity will tell you the things we have agreed upon: both tasks and ideas.

This is not a static document. It represents agreement to ___ July 1981.

Bread and Roses is a group of individual women, ^{classes} who generally agree with the basis of unity. The group has two purposes: the first is to build the women's movement that is, to increase the number of women of all races who are feminists (without subtracting from the number of feminists); and to win women to the perspective on the world that Bread and Roses has. The way we want to build the women's movement is through action. Secondly, Bread and Roses is intended to be a support group to women who are working in other groups and who want to talk with women with a similar perspective about what is happening in their workplaces, trade unions, women's groups, mixed groups, etc.. By support we mean, for example, problem-solving, help with analysis of actions and decisions about tasks to be taken up, difficulties dealing with sexism, racism, homophobia.

We think it is important to base our understandings of the world and how it operates on the perspective of women. We are feminists. To analyze the actions and ideas about society that we have from the point of view of women is to begin to make a new world.

This society is divided by ideas ^{We are socialists & structures which confer} about the inequality of women and men. The division between women and men has developed through history. It is based on ideas about the capabilities of women and men. These capabilities are seen to be different, and the differences are described as 'natural,' or 'biologically determined' (in other words, they are a part of human nature, and cannot be changed). Women are described as being the nurturers, the emotional ones, the bearers and raisers of children, the foundations of the family. Men are described as the actors in the public world, the ones with the ability to make decisions about how the society will be run, whatever society that is. These divisions make it possible for men to make the decisions about how women will control their reproductive ability, about the public practice of women's sexuality, about what kinds of work women can do. These divisions are the patriarchal base of power in this society. The patriarchy is at least 2000 years old. ^{beginning of control of ♀'s reproductive power predates capitalism}

There is also an unequal division of resources in this society. The unequal ownership of the wealth of the world is based on the exploitation of the labour of working women and men for the profit of the few who own the majority of the wealth (that is, land, factories, money). Imperialist corporations, which have offices in Europe and North America, own land and factories in other countries. Workers in these factories are paid less for their labour than workers in Canada. These workers (many of them women) produce goods which are sold at high profits in other countries. This is capitalism. This economic system began to develop at the end of the 16th century.

^{imperialism}

...cont'd

sexual orientation

①?

Jump from patriarchal ideas to patriarchy

The divisions between men and women that have historically existed because of the patriarchy also support the capitalist economic system. For example, women are paid less for their work (even though it is essential to the production of profit) than men are paid. This results in even greater profits for the owners of wealth.

We call this social system capitalist patriarchy. We see that it is possible to make some gains for women in this system, by organizing ourselves in great numbers and bringing pressure on the government and the corporations. But we also recognize that there will be no real liberation of women under this system. The capitalist patriarchy and all the divisions which support it, must be destroyed. The relations between women and men, and between those who produce wealth and those who own wealth must be changed and made equal.

In order to begin to change the world, to bring about the end of capitalist patriarchy, we think that there must be a strong self-organized, and self-defined women's movement. We think that this movement of women must include women of all races both heterosexual and lesbian, women who work in homes, in factories, in offices, women of all ages. We think that the way to build such a women's movement is to take up tasks that are grounded in women's experience, to press women's issues at every opportunity, and to build alliances with those individuals and groups which support the idea that the capitalist patriarchy must be destroyed. The movement will be built by increasing the number of feminists and by increasing the strength of our alliances with others. Bread and Roses sees that our potential allies are to be found among those individuals and groups who challenge the capitalist patriarchal organization of this society. For example, the trade union movement, movements against the Right and racism, anti-imperialist movements, the gay and lesbian liberation movement. Building this movement means that we will have to undertake to change the ideas of others, and ourselves, about sexism, and racism, and that we will have to change the ideas of others about how the capitalist patriarchal economic system exploits working people.

In view of the present circumstances for women and the women's movement in Canada, in Vancouver, Bread and Roses has decided to take up two particular kinds of tasks. We will work to educate ourselves and our potential allies about the connections between the attacks from the Right on racial minorities, on homosexuals, on working people and the attacks on the gains that women have made in the last two decades. We will also work to provide feminist support work for the struggles of working people in trade unions; during strikes, during organizing drives, and in the day-to-day work of the labour movement.

Also the T.U. movement in N.A. has supported capitalism.

We see Br. & Roses as a ^{s/f} current.

Much of
women's work
is unpaid
production &
labour power

THINGS WHICH ARE NOT CLEAR ENOUGH IN THIS DRAFT:

1. Last paragraph, page 1. There needs to be a slightly clearer statement about how it is that capitalism exploits the labour of working men and women. Perhaps it would be sufficient to say that working people have only their labour to sell, and that profits are made on the basis of, in part, capitalists having the lowest possible costs for labour.
2. It has been pointed out, rightly so, that the trade union movement, and the anti-imperialist movement are not too interested in a challenge to the patriarchal side of capitalist patriarchy. We need then, a clearer statement of the basis for alliances. I guess there have to be ways written down that we see that there is a common basis for struggle having to do with the political and economic question and that there is much education needed for those two movements in particular to see that there is a need for the destruction of patriarchal relations, and that even though there will be a lot lost in that destruction in terms of privilege and power (mostly for men) that there is much to be gained in building a movement that stands on a powerful and undivided base.
3. In the last paragraph, one woman pointed out to me that it might be a good idea to say something clearer about how it is that working people are influenced and won over by the rhetoric of the Right; that is, that we must work to educate working people that we only add to our own oppression by taking up the ideas of the Right, and that nothing is solved that way. That the ruling class benefits from the organizations of the right working among working people - how that happens comes from the increasingly intense divisions among working people, instead of building common bases.
4. I also liked the statement of the purpose of Bread and Roses that was in the letter sent to CUPW about the solidarity meeting.

Frances