

See end of minutes for time place & agenda of next meeting.
See you there!

Strategies Group, March 1, 1981, CRS Warehouse

Present; Nina R. Rachel E. Jackie I. Susan K. Marion P. Sara D.
Maureen F. Nancy J. Drena M. Sharon S. Anne M. Paulette R.
Helen M. Sandy O. Maggie T. Daphne M.

Chaired Susan K. and Maureen F.
Minutes Maureen F. and Helen M.

Report from Sara and Marion re possible task for this group in union support work

A. Present Struggles of working women

Currently there are 1,000 women workers on strike in Vancouver
(VMREU, CUPE, OTU, TWU, TEAMSTERS, MUCKAMUCK)

Reasons why this is different from the past.

1. The big unions have been forced to fight the bosses after a period of wage control and the defeat of labour at that time; there is an effort at rebuilding.
2. the decline in the standard of living necessitates a fight for workers
3. the employers are on the offensive.
4. Tri-partism on the level of negotiations has broken down. In general the PC Fed's strategy of waiting for the return of the NDP and working through the IRE has not worked.
5. The gap between men's and women's wages is growing plus there is a growing consciousness against this.

The present strike issues are

CUPE/ VMREU These two unions are working together for the first time. VMREU initially rejected the issue of equal pay but have taken it up because it was a CUPE demand.

CUPE is running an ad for equal pay, it is opposed to contracting out work, trying to get better sick leave benefits, trying to maintain job classifications so that there is no downgrading in the face of technological change, against a clause that the GVRD wants to include which would mean employees would not be able to respect some other picket lines.

TWU They are not going for equal pay but the increase in salary would make a sizable difference to closing the gap between men and women
ICFC/OTU the issue is equal pay; also if they go out it will undermine the historic leadership of Troller.

In general, the PC Fed is beginning to understand struggles in terms of women's issues and labour leadership is being shaken by the struggle.

This sets the stage for the WIM in Vancouver to build credibility with large numbers of women

B. Autonomous Womens Movement in Vancouver and the tie-in with Labour
This tie-in has been limited by the stormy past
labour bureaucracy has seen the womens movement as a threat that would diminish the base of its power, they have been unwilling to endorse

events and even the NDPwomen's committee has had trouble getting support.

In B.C. the industrial unions are powerful and they have very few women in their membership

There has been little movement of women in the PCFed

Feminists in Vancouver have seen the issue as building independent feminist unions. There has been no broad debate on this and a presence of feminists inside the other unions has not been created.

Many women are getting jobs that bring them into these unions. There have not been adequate actions to link the womens movement with the rank and file although CCCA has received some support and the Health Collective and Rape Relief have made attempts to get union support.

It has been hard to make contact with women inside the unions given the level of women inside the PCFed.

Why it is important to make those links?

1. We should do everything to help women to win these struggles give our concrete support .
2. We need to popularize the issues especially equal pay
3. As we explain why we support their struggles the women's movement will add a feminist dimension to their struggles

Ways in which we can make the links

1. public meetings on the issues and struggles
2. womens groups invite reps of unions to meetings and pass motions of support.
3. solidarity pickets
4. create networks that can quickly pull together pickets of support.
5. engage in on-going education of ourselves. people in unions for example could write for Kinesis.
6. Create a feminist presence at initiatives labour takes for example if the PCFed organized another rally
7. Take time to work out material that we could leaflet with
8. Develop our own perspectives as to where we work

Immediate actions that could be taken

1. CUPE/VMREU : a press conference of users of services such as womens groups that use Britannia and Carnegie centres could be held in which there is a statement^{made} that we understand that the problem is management.
2. IWDC: demonstration march could be arranged so that the route goes past BC Tel
3. Support pickets could be organized for the TWU at Seymour St. and also for City Hall
4. We could get in touch with unions as to whether they wanted womens contingents for rallies or actions that they are taking.

Forms in which we could work

1. Work in a coalition but maintain our own identity. i.e. users of services coalition.
2. Initiate an open meeting from which a committee would be formed

Susan mentioned in relationship to the information given about TWU that they are not strictly speaking going for equal pay although they are bargaining for an across the board increase. The strong points

contract and job classification are the strong points

Daphne and Helen Proposal around action against the rise of the right, as anti-capitalist feminists we need to be on the offensive against the rise of the right and the more overt violence that is aimed at women gays and racial minorities.

1. Need to analyse the rise of the right, we need information on what is going on and we need to make that public. (writing and public meetings)
2. We need to work in on-going groups .
3. We need to initiate our own fight backs
for example we suggest an open public meeting on racism and feminism which would bring a feminist consciousness to racism, this would look at what is going on with immigrant women.

Discussion

Nancy brought up the question of how the present strikes were being taken up for IWD and Drena and Sharon who are on the committee tried to answer this. Sharon thought that it was a problem that there was no support for the strike mentioned in the leaflet and it was therefore hard to use the leaflet at the picket line. The striking unions have been asked to the rally and "we have told them that we support the strike." There were concerns that they send women and that the rally turn into a Trade Union rally.

Drena said that the leaflet was written by one person after discussion with the committee and that it reflected the committee. People were justifiably concerned with a VMREU communication which was that they would bring thousands. This was later changed to hundreds.

Marion: we need some discussion of the relationship of us to these proposals.

Susan : It is a shame that Working Women Unite was not invited as a whole to this meeting. Is this group going to be WWU with more people? WWU-we dont have the links to the labour movemnt that we would like to. When the PSAC strike was on we didn't have enough time to act.

There was a discussion and concern expressed by Helen, Nina Nancy Paulette as to whether we were duplicating the work of WWU. Anne as a member of WWU thought that there was a lack of women power in WWU. It is six active women at the moment.

Sara suggested that we call a meeting which would include WWU and which might strengthen it. SORWUC and AUCE are not doing support work Drena and Sharon concurred that we could put some energy into WWU and help to build it up but Sharon felt that WWU couldn't offer an overall strategy and Maggie felt that she wanted a group that could take up the links between various issues such as feminism, racism and the union struggle.

Marion brought us back to the issue of who we are. Do we have an identity of our own or want one? Drena reminded us that we are a discussion groups that grew out of a workshop. She didn't consider us an on-going group.

Along with this was a discussion that assumed we were an on-going group and questioned whether we were going to do theory and action both. whether theory would come out of action and unity would come out of action.

We realized that we were trying to talk about two things at once. 1. the constitution of the group and the group identity and 2. the tasks of the group. Helen thought that we should clarify what exactly

we are., Maureen thought that the issues were the same whatever one we were talking about but Drena thought that the issues were different since she objected to being part of a group that had a basis of unity which was higher than the task that it was doing. Helen raised the question as to whether we wanted to be a group based on the tasks of anti-fascist work and work building T.U. links or do we want an anti-capitalist feminist group. Nancy could also see the group operating as an information exchange to build actions around various issues. Maureen proposed that we discuss what this group is and this was passed.

Sandy: Our goals have to be the basis of unity.

Sara: I think that we have consensus that we are anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. It would be premature to go beyond that and to do so would be ~~to~~ get into abstract discussion about the nature of capitalism and patriarchy ~~that~~. We started with the the task discussion tonight to see if we could get some basis of unity to act on. I am in favour of working together around concrete tasks out of that we will become clearer where we stand.

Helen: I assume that we think it is good to have a group that would take up the links with trade unions and which would do anti-fascist work.

Drena I want to do something that is open-ended. There should be no group that is called strategies for women's movement for example

Jackie. It is clear from the BCFW convention that there is a need for action. There is a difference from situations in Sask. and Ont. as far as link with the unions. IWDC in Ont. had the franchise on IWD. That was its task. In Sask a large number of women in unions. This group doesn't have the links with the unions and the ~~the~~ mistake of IWD this year is that it isn't building those links.

Marion: We're discussing work and decisions on behalf of ourselves - the women who are in the room. We should do work and then come back and analyse it. We can call a meeting as individuals, we can approach groups and work in committees.

There was then a beginning of a discussion about how we worked or should work whether as a group or as a number of individuals. The urgency of IWD and the possibility of building links through that was returned to. Marion had made an earlier set of suggestions

1. That the march circle 678 Seymour St.
2. That there be support of the strike at the rally.
3. That there be a sub-committee work on a press conference.

The first two proposals were to be taken to the IWD committee meeting on Wednesday. Sara pointed out that from talking she had done with TWU anything that was done would have to be quite disciplined as they are concerned about injunctions.

A sub-group of Susan, Anne, Nancy, Marion, Sara Maggie was going to meet on March 9 re action around union links

NEXT MEETING MARCH 22 7.30 C.R.S. 1239 ODLUM

Since we seem to have reached a consensus that a basis of unity will be reached through the tasks we do, we propose a brief review of the two tasks being discussed at the moment. links with the trade unions
• anti-fascist work.

- Agenda.
1. Clarify this consensus
 2. How do we work.
 - (a) as individuals i for discussion, dissemination of information
ii to initiate action
 - (b) as an identifiable on-going group based on action
 3. Concrete proposals. We hope discussion will centre around the two proposals for tasks (we)