

#### Leadership:

You may notice we have talked about the coordinating committee without talking about leadership. We have talked about leadership a lot amongst ourselves and remember that in the Dec. 6 meeting we were asked to give leadership on this question by presenting our own debate on it. We have decided not to do this. In our small committee of four we have different conceptions and reactions to the leadership issue but reflected the whole group in that we found that when we talked about leadership we got away from trying to decide concretely what would work and what wouldn't. This led us to thinking that debating leadership is not of top priority and that what is is to set up a structure for action. We feel that our proposal for work to be taken up, for restructuring and for a coordinating committee is far more beneficial to group unity than attempts to reach a shared theoretical definition of leadership. This became clear at the last meeting when we were talking about everyone appending a definition of leadership to the term whenever they used it. We want bread and roses to look at our concrete proposals for action and structure and to find where our active agreement is.

We propose that the structure we suggest be put into operation for a period of six months after which there would be an evaluation. We could then talk concretely about what worked and what did not and what changes we require. We also propose that the membership of bread and roses give up the use of the word leadership and rather offer concrete feedback.

#### Process Committee:

What we are offering is a sketch of how we would think things could work. Much is left out - from issues of accountability/responsibility between committees to voting procedures, membership questions and so on. If the general direction that is outlined is accepted we are willing to continue for another two weeks as a functioning committee to fill in some of the gaps.



1. Introduction:

1. This report took hours of work. Rather than trying to reach an abstract consensus on our identity crisis we intend to propose concrete steps to take around work, priorities, structure and process to try and extricate ourselves from the present mire. We urge our sisters to respond in the same vein. (For example, rather than stating, "We need more leadership" we ask that you try, "We need a coordinating committee that does this, that, etc.....") We hope that our proposals seem viable. (We are nervous.) We would like to give this report as a whole, then take discussion.

2. Bread and Roses is in a state of crisis. Our problems lie in a lack of political direction; a strong tendency to internalized abstract debate and inaction; a structure which is not based on our concrete political priorities but which polarizes the group into two two major thematic subcommittees.

3. We reiterate the value of Bread and Roses as a group. We need each other to figure out how to build a mass movement of women based on the needs of non-white women and working class women; We need B. & R. to be an instrument for doing this organizing work. We need our varying traditions and experience to form socialist-feminist alternatives to the oppression of women which we can make popular.

4. OUR SURVIVAL, USEFULNESS TO THE WORLD and SELF-RESPECT depend on us becoming an action group. This is the way we will build unity with each other and earn the ear of other activists.

5. We believe that we need to focus on work we do as Bread and Roses, both in our own name and as a group within a broader coalition. This is where we are capable of moving out into the world and reaching agreement. We also need some limited support structures for women working in other groups such as unions. We do not feel that we can concentrate at this time (i.e. this is not a "principle") on discussing and carrying positions in other groups such as Union Sisters.

We are proposing areas of work which concentrate on the needs of working women, minority women, which allow us to fight the right and to work in the unions as feminists. We are proposing that we develop our political analysis through ACTION and in relation to specific concrete areas of work rather than abstract debates. That is the kind of unity which Bread and Roses needs right now.

We need to reach agreement as a large group around these kinds of questions:

- taking on a major area of work
  - deciding which groups to work with and which not to work with
  - on a general direction we want to take in organizing an action (for example how to, if possible etc. support HEU)
  - on statements which represent the group as a whole (letters, speeches)
- Other than these areas of agreement we feel that there should be a lot of autonomy for the group taking up the work, with a good process of evaluation after events. Of course, if a working group wants to bring an issue to the larger group for assistance they should be able to.



6. There is an intense polarization between the trade union and anti-right subcommittees. After the last meeting both subcommittees went their separate ways to discuss their response to the meeting and to socialize. (With some exceptions) Yet in the actual debate in the meeting the actual agreements and disagreements "crossed committee lines". We bandtogether through our histories of working together; we too often assume political disagreements which don't exist.

We propose to break down the existing subcommittee structure not through voluntary acts, <sup>but</sup> by focusing on political work which requires that we collaborate with each other. In our analysis we draw links between anti-right, anti-racist, women's and union organizing, but our structure inhibits these links in practice. The subcommittees reach out to somewhat different constituencies: many non-white women are non-unionized workers or in the home, trade union women are organized in a formal way primarily as workers. To do effective work we need to reach both constituencies and we need to address the way in which these constituencies overlap: in the domestic workers organizing, the farmworkers, garment workers; in union support for BCOR etc.

We are proposing a complete restructuring of Bread and Roses. Into a subcommittee to take up organizing for the right to choose on abortion; a subcommittee to organize outreach educationals; a short-term action committee to work out our action (if any) around the hospital workers a trade union support group and a coordinating committee.

We are suggesting that internal education be developed through work-based committees not by a committee separated from the day to day organizing experience of the group.

7. This report does not deal with: membership requirements, voting structure, the exact definitions of the jurisdiction and powers of the coordinating committee, caucusing within the group. The process committee has had initial discussions about these areas and would be pleased to present a report on them in two weeks in the instance that the group adopts the first stage of the report.

8. A big thanks to the Against the Right Subcommittee for their input on the abortion campaign. Thanks to individual women not on the process committee who told us their ideas on how to make things better.



## 2. A "UNIFYING" ACTION

This idea was initially proposed by the Against the Right Subcmtee. We borrowed it.

### PROPOSAL:

To take up the campaign for the Right to Choose on Abortion as a central, unifying area of work which we carry as a group. Our committees would be restructured to meet the concrete needs of this action, bringing together women from previous subcommittees. Working together will permit us to discuss political issues which flow from our work in the real world. It will allow us to overcome previous divisions based on our subcommittee structure.

### MOTIVATIONS

Political: Just to reiterate what we already know:

The right to choose is an issue which effects all women's fundamental right to control our bodies. Restrictions on the accessibility of abortion hit poor, minority and working women the hardest. The denial of this right has become (as we know all too well) of the far right internationally. In English Canada we have been fighting piecemeal battles to protect hospital boards against right to life, to keep anti-abortionists out of our schools etc. Abortion access is diminishing across the country, with the exception of Quebec. Women have begun to fight for repeal of the existing laws on abortion and the legislation of abortion as a decision between a woman and her doctor.

Meanwhile, as indicated in the BCFW letter, anti-choice groups are also fighting on the federal level, but to have the fetus declared a full human being under the Bill of Rights.

The right to choose is a fundamental struggle against the right. To win we will have to mobilize thousands of women, trade unionists, minority groups, we need to win support in working class communities, churches etc. If we lose, the right will be greatly strengthened (Reagan).

This is a crucial time to mobilize. Fortunately, CCCA and the BCFW have initiated an action for the mother's day weekend of this year. The February meeting will:

- democratize planning for the action and for building the action
- to get a clear commitment from every group present that they will work consistently on this organizing
- to if possible, set up province-wide coordination of the action.

CCCA has strongly asked that we send some women to participate.

This work allows us to take up major goals of Bread and Roses in strengthening the fight against the right, reaching out to trade union and minority women and building a mass women's movement.

### Process:

How to Carry the work: We think it would be just great if Bread and Roses could take on one specific aspect of the organizing, one which requires that we grapple with organizing beyond the existing women's community, to reach out to minority and working women. This would allow us to work and learn as a collective while strategizing with other groups. It could help to counter fears of other groups that we are somehow infiltrating etc. if there are a lot of us.

We suggest OUTREACH or PUBLICITY as choices

We should still do this work if such a concentrated focus on an area of work is not possible.



What we can learn:

- 1) The coalition will give us an opportunity to work with unionists, minority women, students, women's movement women, lesbian groups, the NDP women's committee etc.
- 2) This work requires reaching out beyond the converted, something we need to learn.
- 3) To make a real contribution to the campaign as socialist-feminists requires not just our organizing efforts but also figuring out clear positions which are needed in the organizing, such as:
  - how to link the fight for abortion with the struggle against the forced sterilization of Native and non-white women
  - how to link up with the struggle against racism and the general struggle against the right
  - how to link issues such as freedom of sexual preference with controlling our bodies around abortion
  - how to counter resistance by union leaderships to take up this campaign, how to get it to the ranks of the unions
  - how to link control of our bodies with women's workplace struggles
  - how to work with mixed organizations
  - how to work in coalitions

Internal Structure:

We will create a new subcommittee which will incorporate women from the anti-right, anti-racist, trade union and education subcommittees. This committee is diagramed by Maggi Z. It would have general discussions on the work area, divided into working groups to deal with specific aspects of the organizing. Some of its members would attend coalition meetings. It would have a coordinating committee liaison person.

This unifying action will only work if there are a large number of women in Bread and Roses committed to working on it.



## II. Outreach

Proposal : To set up an Action Outreach Cttee, which would design and organize a series of public meetings and/or forums and/or workshops, on (tentative title) Issues facing Working Women: working women defined as unpaid homemakers as well as women in paid workforce.

For instance, issues such as equal pay, tech change, domestic workers, farmworkers, health and safety, sexual harassment, racism/sexism in the schools, etc.

Focus would be on reaching audience outside women's community; we would be trying to reach the women directly affected by these issues. That means taking the actions where the women are: e.g. conduct meetings at YWCA, at Carnegie, possibly hold o lunchtime meetings for women working downtown, etc.

We see these meetings both as presenting our own perspective on the issues and as providing a forum for women with expertise on these issues to share their knowledge and experience.

So: we would be organizing these meetings in conjunction with other groups working these areas. Possibly for some we would want to co-sponsor an event.

Motivation: 1. We need to take up other work as well as the abortion campaign. We see this proposal as providing some continuity with the work we've done thus far and with our stated aims-- to work on issues affecting working class women and minority women. But also it provides a context in which we can draw these issues together, rather than working on in isolation, as we have been doing, i.e. in the separate subcttees. Rather than talk about dissolving the subcttees, we've looked at it as integrating the work.

2. We talk about working on issues facing working-class women and women of colour, and about drawing more of both into B&R. To do this, we're going to have to move outside the traditional women's community, make links with other groups who are working around these concerns and take up concrete issues that are affecting these women. We see this proposed series as having an educational function for us too: in learning how to work with other groups, in gaining information and perspective from woman whose experience is different from ours. As socialist feminists, we have an analysis to offer; we also have a lot to learn. We haven't had much to offer working class women or minority women up to now; hopefully, we see focusing on concrete issues changing this.

Operation: 1. Internal.

A new subcttee would form, drawing on women from the existing subcttees (which would, upon the creation of this new structure, cease to exist in their present form). We would then have women with a variety of backgrounds, contacts, skills, and experience, e.g. in trade union work, in anti-racist work, working together on outreach, on providing concrete information from a socialist feminist perspective to working women and women of colour, around concrete issues that are facing them.

There would be cross-fertilization of skills and experience among the women planning and organizing these events. This would function both 1) to overcome the internal divisions we've been experiencing and help bring us together as a group, and 2) to build a structure



reflects our analysis: we've talked about how these issues are linked; this structure would enable us actively to make those links.

We don't envision, for example, women in the subcommittee with trade union experience organizing the equal pay and tech change events while women from the A/R subcommittee organized events around, say, domestic workers and farmworkers--we would see the subcommittee as a whole designing and organizing this series.

But, we would all act as resource people for internal education; (i.e. not just everyone in the subcommittee but everyone in B&R); women with expertise or experience on particular issues could be asked to do education for the large group, prior to events, so the large group could have input on developing B&R analysis on issues.

Some events we might want simply to invite women from other organizations to speak, some we would doubtless want to present our own perspective, which we would see being developed through input from large group, taking direction and information from subcommittee, who would be actively doing the work and making contact with other groups involved in these issues.

For purposes of our own education and developing both our analysis and our organizing skills, we propose evaluations, in the large group, after each event.

#### Operation: 2) External

We propose planning these events in conjunction with other groups who are doing work around these issues--ranging from inviting them to speak to co-sponsoring an event. As we said above, we want to take these events out of the traditional women's community--focus on outreach. We also propose that each event should have some focus on ongoing action--not simply perform an educational function and then disappear.

#### III. k HEU Strike

Given that an HEU strike seems likely, we need to start discussing what, if any, action we can take in support of it. We propose setting up a new subcommittee now to take this on. This subcommittee would have a finite existence, i.e. it would be concerned only with this immediate issue. In general terms, we see a space in our structure for taking up such immediate short term actions. Our general recommendation would be that B&R take up only one such issue at a time, and that when such issues arise, it will be the responsibility of the Co-ord. cttee to look at our commitments and make a recommendation to the main group as to whether we take up such work or not based on a realistic assessment of our available time, and energy, on whether some of our work could be de-prioritized, etc.



### Coordinating committee:

We support the concept of a coordinating committee. What follows is an outline of what the function of this committee would be.

The committee would serve a coordinating function. This would include administrative functions such as setting agendas, making sure reports are ready on time, getting minutes duplicated, dealing with new members (orientation meetings, buddy system, written material), bookkeeping, etc. The coordinating committee itself does not have to do all of these but rather would take the responsibility of delegating the work to individuals and making sure it got done. The treasurer, for example, could continue to be separate from the coordinating committee as she already is from the steering committee. (Delegation is crucial as otherwise we are creating a committee that could not possibly fulfill its stated function.

The committee would focus and clarify debate. Reports and reporters from other committees would meet with the coordination committee prior to presentation of debate. The coordinating committee would look for ways to streamline debate, make suggestions as to how the report could be presented to reduce conflict, would point out where issues or questions were unclear, whether there was adequate information, whether alternative views were adequately represented. The committee would check to see that the report is action oriented, that it, it is structured in a way that leads to further action and therefore unity rather than abstract and divisive debate.

The committee would help resolve conflict. Conflict would be brought out into the open rather than buried. The committee would help in pointing out internal conflicts in committees (as presented in reports), between committees and between individuals. It would work to point out areas of agreement, areas of difference, and make proposals as how to deal with these.

Functions of process would have to be taken up. There needs to be a commitment to discovering ways of improving our process and dealing more honestly with our feelings. In a sense the coordinating committee would take up the work of the process committee as presented in our first report when we talked about the ways we become competitive, frustrated, the ways in which some of us feel powerless, invisible and so on. (See your minutes for the Dec. 6 meeting for a refresher on this.) We are hopeful that many of our process problems would decrease with the implementation of a new and action oriented structure. This new structure would act to decrease tension and conflict but we are also aware and we bring old tensions with us that will not mysteriously disappear and that problems of power, visibility etc. within the group are ongoing and connected to our patterns of relating and communicating as well as to our political differences. Again, we are not suggesting that the ~~xxx~~ coordinating committee resolve all process problems but that it develop an awareness of them, an awareness of potential solutions and then find ways (using the entire group as a resource) to resolve problems.

A simple part of process is social needs. For example, the coordinating committee could point out to the group how long it had been since a social activity had been organized and ask for a couple of people to take this on.

Another note on process is that if we implement the suggested new committee structure it provides an opportunity to look at the internal workings of committees and to look at changes in how we work together.

We would see the coordinating committee as having a varied composition and drawn from women with a variety of skills and experiences. We have not detailed out what this would be (that is, what mix of skills/experiences we would think useful.) We would think that the committee be chosen by a ratification procedure.

We have also not dealt adequately with the question of how new work would get taken up and the role of the coordinating committee in this.