

INTRODUCTION

*We are socialist feminists. We associate ourselves with women who have been meeting together for the past 5 months to form the Berkeley Women's Union. Two of us have been involved since the first meeting, Dec. 17. We hoped that Union meetings would lead to an organization where we might work with other women to develop a politics of socialist feminism.

We see this development as a long term project that has only begun to take a public form with the discussions of the past few months. Although some of what has come from this collective effort is vague or incomplete, we want to emphasize that working on the union has opened up a sense of group potential for many of us.

That is why we write this paper--we are alarmed at the possibility of losing that potential. At the April 29th mass meeting there seemed to be no more than 70 women involved. Two meetings back there were nearly 120. Even though new women are coming, we are losing more than we gain. Women are leaving and they are angry, frustrated, and disappointed. Few will return if we can't form an organization soon that makes sense.

Why are women leaving? Many are alienated from the discussions. Because other activities (ongoing projects, reading, or discussion groups) haven't gotten off the ground, being "in the union" has begun to mean very little besides attendance at the monthly meetings. In this context a discussion amongst the whole group reproduces exactly the patterns of society we want to destroy--patterns that divide and exclude women, give rise to competition, elitism, and feelings of inadequacy. We think we can begin to fight these patterns, and our general paralysis, only when we actually become a political organization. The task is urgent.

The purpose of our paper is to help accomplish this task. It will clarify what we mean by socialist feminism, the politics we think the Union must be based on; describe what has held us back from forming the union; make concrete suggestions for structure; and propose an agenda for moving ahead to form the Union.

*Three of us wrote this paper, with input from several others. We apologize for the confusing use of "we" which sometimes means the authors, sometimes socialist feminists, sometimes women in the union, and sometimes all women.

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I. WHY SOCIALIST FEMINISM?

Socialist feminism is only partly developed as a way of understanding this society and a strategy for our movement. Part of the on-going activity of the organization we propose is to work out such a perspective and strategy.

As socialist feminists our aim is the liberation of women, the liberation of ourselves. But our final aim is not women's power (as against other people's powerlessness). We don't want the upside down of this society. We want a new society in which we and all people will have control of our lives.

In order to clarify our position we have chosen to argue with a number of the positions put forth in the two papers, "Towards a Feminist Perspective" (March 25) and "Clarifications and Ramifications" (April 7). These papers tend to pose socialism against feminism as two often contradictory positions that cannot be synthesized but only mechanically linked by "the radicalism professed by both sides." (p. 1 of first paper) The authors understand sexism and capitalism as two separate systems to be overcome. In contrast, we believe that socialist feminism must address the society as one social system. We are concerned with the particular historical form of sexism we find in advanced capitalism.

The assumption of separate systems has dire consequences, both in our own thinking and in the practice of groups we have seen. Feminism is narrowed to symbolize a focus on specifically women's issues, the most immediate part of our experience, the psychological or cultural aspects of our reality, etc. Socialism is reduced to what you add to make sure you aren't forgetting all people, economics, or the long range view.

The following quote from the "Clarifications and Ramifications" paper (p.10) raises a number of problems we feel are important.

"As to how feminist struggle relates to other struggles, we have many disagreements. We all believe that our feminist practice must confront the issues of race, class, age, and heterosexual privilege. Most of us believe a socialist organization of production is necessary for achieving feminist goals. We are convinced, however, that the relationships among these struggles can only become clear as we begin to take power for women. Only after we begin to build a feminist movement of strength and solidarity can we approach the question of forming mutually advantageous coalitions."

This quote presents the oppression we experience as separable oppressions capable of being overcome by different approaches developed in isolation from each other. One of the ways we are oppressed by a specifically capitalist form of sexism is by the fragmentation of our lives. Not only are we divided from others by the fragmentation of our labor and the division between the public and private, but each of us is divided from her own self by the various roles we have. While a woman is a student in the morning she has one kind of experience. As a mother in the afternoon she is someone else. On her job it's something different again. And so on. How can we bear the women's movement if it takes only part of our lives seriously? How is it possible to suggest that the oppression of women is separable from the demand society puts on us to be heterosexual? Bourgeois society is constantly reducing all issues to the problems of separate conflicting interest groups. We must resist that.

But how can we do that? Doesn't the pledge to confront "issues of class, race, age, and heterosexual privilege" mean this? To see oppression in terms of "privilege", or to see it in terms of "what divides women," often results in moralistic politics that further divide and immobilize us. It suggests that individuals within the movement just have to change their thinking or give up "privileges". Though there is no implication that racism or "class" differences will end through this effort, no other course of action is projected. Furthermore there is a danger of seeing racism as bad^{er} because it divides women. The problem becomes an attitude within the movement instead of an external systematic enemy that our movement can aim to overcome.

The attempt to understand differences has often been distorted by an unexamined acceptance of bourgeois sociological explanations. We reject the ideology that tells us that class struggle is the conflict between the "working class" and the "middle class." This view disguises the fact that our society is controlled by a ruling class and that both those who are called "middle class" and those who are "working class" have relatively no control over the general direction of society, or of their lives.

Still there are serious differences in access to resources or social recognition, in self conception, etc. We identify with the impulse that has led the women's movement to examine these and other differences amongst us. It reflects an attempt to understand why our movement is still so isolated from the lives of most women, and to confront the tensions we feel working together. It also reflects the fact that a narrow focus on sexism does not help us come to terms with the full reality of our lives.

We think the opening up of each woman's particular experience is part of the necessary process of developing mutual understanding and solidarity within our movement. It is also part of our effort to understand the origins of our differences in the social system we live in. But we can't afford to concentrate on our differences without an analysis that explains their sources and the way they function to divert us from the question of who has real power in this society.

Our strategy must challenge those who control the system. Part of challenging the ruling class is challenging the ideology that supports their continuing control. Our thinking reflects the ideology of this society until we challenge it directly. The challenge is a long term process; replacing a part with our own ideas doesn't necessarily mean we've challenged

the whole. This ideology is not just a matter of censorship or lies; it is a set of concepts, categories, values, and habits that sustain a certain form of society. As such it reflects reality but also distorts it in the interest of keeping things as they are. Our need for theory is the need to challenge this ideology as a whole.

In the "Feminist Perspective" papers socialism is seen only as a method for organizing production. This is not a coincidence. Because it reflects the same narrowly economic conception of socialism, the feminist paper's strategy of "women now, socialism later," just reverses the strategy of the sects' "socialism now, women later." The huge popular upsurges of the 60's --the third world movements, student struggles, and women's liberation--demonstrated the uselessness of a socialism concerned only with economic exploitation. The limitations of a feminism which sees female oppression only apart from the context of capitalist production and reproduction is beginning to be visible--in the distortions of "free yourself" feminism in Ms. Magazine, in the call for an "amazon nation" as a solution to our oppression, even in the failure of the women's liberation movement to expand beyond its initial social composition.

The implication of this separation is a role division among different revolutionary movements. The "Clarifications and Refinements" quote above accepts the separateness of different aspects of life, for example, economics as separate from personal life. Economic problems are to be solved by a socialist movement it would seem. And the oppression of women is to be solved by a feminist movement. We don't accept the division of labor this implies. We don't see a socialist movement taking care of our economic oppression and us taking care of women's oppression. We want to assert our humanity against a society that limits our scope of self-realization. We want to take control of all aspects of our lives. Of course, no one will fight women's oppression for us if we don't. But we must fight it in all of its aspects.

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II OUR HISTORY--WE HAVE NOT CREATED AN ORGANIZATION

For the purposes of our argument it makes sense to say that there is no such thing as the Berkeley Women's Union--we are in the process of forming the Union but haven't done so yet. This unformed state has been responsible for a number of the problems that have arisen in the Union.

One of the most important aspects of the in-between state of the Union is that it is neither private nor public. We haven't been sufficiently conscious of ourselves as a group of individuals trying to set up an organization. We have confused standards of openness, democracy, flexibility, etc. that are essential for the organization we want to create with the procedures that are necessary to get the Union started. This confusion has led to many problems in the integration of women who were not involved in Union discussions from the start. We did not want to exclude women but we have had no structure or procedures for welcoming women, informing them of the history of the group, and bringing them into the process. Instead women have had to sit listening anonymously. Those women who spoke frequently addressed one another by name and discussed ideas that were often dependent on past discussions and decisions.

When new women have stayed past this alienating introduction to the Union they have often raised questions that required reopening earlier decisions. This has caused other problems. Some women who had been involved in the prior decisions have wanted questions reopened because they wanted to include the new women or they themselves were just beginning to see the conflicts. Others have wanted to avoid a continual reopening of decisions because of their sense of urgency to move ahead to form the Union. The first side has appeared disruptive and non-serious; the second side has appeared elitist, undemocratic, impatient, and arbitrary. These unnecessary conflicts have led to suspicion of individuals or pessimism about the future of the Union.

What was not clear was that these conflicts stemmed from our not being a formed organization with a structure, but rather a haphazard grouping neither public nor private.* We need to move as quickly as possible to a public organization with a structure that makes these conflicts unnecessary. We can't go back and establish ourselves as a closed private group so we must move rapidly ahead to being public and democratic.

In fact, we inherited a difficult situation from the very beginning. Our need to build an organization was first expressed in reaction to the politics of the women who called together the December 2 "Beyond Anger" conference. Their goal was an alliance of all women who were "politically active" in Berkeley. When confronted with their version of feminism, many of us felt the necessity of defining ourselves and our organization as socialist feminist. We knew we had to articulate a shared political perspective, an appropriate structure and a

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program almost simultaneously. But we divided the task into three steps and then tried to tackle each independently. When the principles of unity were finally in written form we were so exhilarated by that achievement that we failed to consider the process of discussing and adopting them.

*Of course, not all the problems we have experienced can be explained by this and the following explanations.

* The principles were written in a context of a women's movement that has been hostile to any mention of socialism. Women have been hostile either because of all the socialist who could only regard our movement as a recruiting ground or as a frivolous addition to the "real revolution," or because they see socialism as irrelevant. Some women have refused to allow the male-dominated left to have the only say in defining socialism; we understand ourselves as feminists to be working towards the only kind of socialist revolution that could ever involve most of the people in this country.

In the union we were amazed that our perspective could be not just visible but the basis of an organization. Presenting the principles of unity for approval after a large group discussion was not conducive to everyone's feeling connected to the contents. At the second meeting about the principles of unity (in Tan Oak, on Feb. 11), it became clear that some people did not regard the principles as a workable basis of unity. By our previous analysis, what should have happened was that

- 1) we decide to incorporate the objections, or
- 2) we decide that the principles as written did express generally the perspective of most people who had been part of the union so far. That might have meant excluding people in the room right then which our own previous shortcomings with respect to democratic procedure made us hesitant to do. We did not face this dilemma head on. The confusion about whether we were a public or private group made things worse. Somehow some of us convinced ourselves that things would work out if we could only agree on a structure and program. The confused status of the principles of unity was really not changed by the resolution at the March 3 meeting to adopt them as "working documents".

The charge of anti-conflict politics does describe the process which then led us to postpone the effort to find a structure. We were afraid that a structure would necessarily be "mechanical rather than political" if it were formed before we had a program. In fact, the structure couldn't be political until we could agree on a perspective, that is, till we resolved the status of the principles of unity. Not seeing this at the time, we were suspended.

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III MINIMAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT--THE PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

We can't begin with a structure. We need to start with politics. In our view, that politics must be socialist feminism. The continued objection to socialist feminism has been that it has not been clearly defined. The principles began the attempt at definition, and we have tried to continue that process in this paper. The principles, with all their shortcomings, are still symbolic of our commitment to develop the politics of socialist feminism. As such we think they are a sufficient basis for political agreement and the initiation of the union.

If we move to adopt the principles as a beginning statement of politics, what about women who have participated in the union who have strong objections to them? We don't know how to measure the intensity of disagreement, nor do we know the content of the disagreement in most cases. We do have the position of one grouping in the 2 papers, "Toward a Feminist Perspective," 1 and 2. We think these papers, taken as a whole, suggest that the authors share a number of basic ideas with the principles. We agree with the criticism of vagueness and hope that the ideas will continue to be made more specific through further Union work.

But we don't think a re-write is essential for adopting the principles and establishing the Union. We propose that the Union immediately print copies of the statement in its present form (explicitly as a temporary document) and schedule a time (say 6 months from now) to write and adopt a new draft. We think the statement "socialism is a process not a product" should guide our understanding of the statement itself. The process of writing and discussing the statement is as important as the product, the statement. No matter how perfect the document might be, in itself it won't achieve our liberation.

Only the process of building a movement, and its overthrow of the present society, will.

Only the process of building a movement and overthrowing the present society will. And the nature of the movement will define what we get, not the document we wrote. The document can only be a guide, a record, and something we can build on. The principles of unity paper does seem to us to be something we can build on. It is even a statement we can be proud of, in spite of its limitations. We think anyone who can agree with its basic orientation even though she doesn't agree with it in every point should push forward now to forming an organization.

The principles (not people's other affiliation or their personalities) should be the measure of minimal political unity. Each woman must decide if she can accept the principles as a basis for working in the Union. If the principles do not represent her politics, she should choose not to be a member.

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After one mass meeting on program (in Pauley, March 3), the feminist paper emerged to underline exactly what was wrong; why we were unable to move. The paper challenged the union to clarify exactly who we were, why we needed an organization and what our strategy was.

PART-II

Another major problem that has arisen from our not technically being an organization is the appearance of an either/or choice between continuing political discussion and getting involved in program. There should not have to be such a choice. We should be able to establish ourselves and carry on both. Many of us have experienced the failure of our movement to develop politically. We have seen too many ineffectual apolitical projects. We resist any attempts to rush into projects without a coherent strategy and an idea of what the political implications of the projects are. Others, for a variety of reasons, want to begin programmatic work. Still others would like to do both. Everyone has been forced to wait because of the unformed state we are in. Only an organization and a structure devised to accomplish both political discussion and political activity can settle the impasse and end the veto power of one group of women over the other.

Of course, political discussion will have to continue in a variety of forms, one of which should be as a part of on-going political projects. Women interested in these projects need not participate in all forms of political discussion. Nor do all women need to participate in projects--the organization should link these efforts.

The unformed state of the Union has also meant that we have had no structure that ensured democratic decisions, provided for clear lines of responsibility, or gave us a shared and accurate knowledge of our membership. The problems we have had with undemocratic and irresponsible procedures are obvious.

Because we lack any real idea of who our membership is and what their views are we have had to rely on a conflicting variety of guesses about who we are and what positions we hold as a group. We are committed to a process that won't railroad positions onto the organization. We hope for a broad consensus behind every decision. But not knowing who we are has frequently doomed us to inaction or the raising of suspicions of forced and unfair decision making. If we are to become an organization that includes a large number of women (eventually in the thousands in Berkeley, for example), methods of registering commitment and political views that rely only on individual interaction cannot work. We need methods that systematically include all of our members not just those who are friends of the most active. This is another argument for forming a structured organization soon.

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WHY WE NEED AN ORGANIZATION AND THE KIND OF ORGANIZATION WE NEED

Over the past several years there has been a huge spontaneous women's movement. Thousands of women have come into and gone out of it. The absence of an organization has meant that this enormous spontaneous movement has had little continuity and little sustained growth. At the mass meeting of April 25th, reports were given which described how past women's movement projects tended to evolve into ineffective work because they were not a part of any political and organized whole. In addition there has been the tyranny of structurelessness. We need an organization to establish continuity, systematically develop our socialist feminist politics, and move in a coordinated way to control our society and our lives.

In order for our organization to challenge all aspects of women's lives, we need a membership (A), public (B), personal (C), political (D), mass (E), democratic (F) organization that is autonomous (G), and ultimately national (H).

A. MEMBERSHIP

As we stated earlier, we think women should decide to be part of the Union on the basis of their agreement with its politics (which means acceptance of the Principles of Unity). Each woman's decision should be her own. Non-members should be encouraged to participate in all activities open to members except major decisions of the organization.

Some women will argue that the Union must make some provisions for excluding members who engage in practice or debate that is clearly in violation of the politics of the Union. We think we can proceed without such a provision. We can think of no way of establishing such a process without being undemocratic.

Members should be required to give some regular financial support to the organization. In the past within the women's movement it has been possible for any group with the time or the money to take up a project in the name of the movement without being responsible to anyone. Within the Union, activities should be responsible to the members. Public statements can then represent a concrete group of people.

B. PUBLIC

Our purpose is to expand as far as possible the number of women who share our politics and our commitment to ending women's oppression. That means that our organization has to be accessible to all women. In principle, all meetings of the Union should be open to the public. The time and place should be regular and announced in advance. Part of being democratic is to demystify and make available to all the procedures and decisions of the organization through regular publication of the results of meetings, etc.

But project groups must be able to expand themselves or be responsible for developing a way for similar projects to start --so any woman can easily move into the same kind of work benefiting from the knowledge and experience of the prior work. We need to structure ourselves so that new women will be welcomed rather than seen as disruptions.

But being public is not just a matter of procedures. Above all we must make our existence a public fact so that all women are aware of us, even though they may not presently choose to join us. We must make our politics the subject of public discussion. We can attempt to use the media of this society for our own purposes, but we must also develop and expand our own media. If we are to succeed in destroying the public/private split, we as women must begin going public.

C PERSONAL

But how can we maintain what has been so important to our experience in the women's movement, the non-alienating (relatively) structures and procedures that have worked? Doesn't a mass public organization have to end that? We don't think so. We think conscious procedures for mass meetings must be developed--ways of welcoming new women and explaining the meeting and the organization; use of random groups for discussion, etc. We also think there needs to be a structural means for promoting such activities as sports, dances, etc. And we must fairly soon have a physical place for a social and political center.

D POLITICAL

Part of what it means to be political means to be public and part of what it means is to be a structured organization that is capable of challenging the present political reality. But most importantly it means that the membership must be self-consciously and actively attempting to shape the direction of the organization and the course of history based on the shared ideas of the members. We think it is very hard to take ourselves seriously in this way. Our organization must promote this. There must be a regular procedure that puts before us the questions of what is our purpose and how are we doing. It must be possible for all women to participate in this procedure in a variety of ways.

E MASS

We understand a mass organization to be one that is open, capable of becoming large, allows individuals to declare themselves members, and is structured for different levels of involvement depending on the choice of each member.

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It is often assumed that an organization with a clear politics, especially if they are socialist politics, can't be a mass organization. This assumption derives from the mutilated, popularized versions of Leninism that suggest that mass organizations by some law can have no politics, only small cadre groups (usually hiding their politics) can. But in fact the character of a revolutionary organization depends on the historical conditions and possibilities facing a movement. In the United States in the 1970s we believe that it is possible to build a mass socialist feminist organization. Just as we don't want to depend on others to struggle for our liberation so we don't want to be in a position where we, as a small vanguard, are presuming to be struggling for others.

F DEMOCRATIC

To achieve a democratic society, as part of our vision of socialist feminism, we need to promote democratic procedures in our organization now. We oppose a rigid application of majority rule, but we favor some kind of voting procedure in important decisions. Too strong a demand for full consensus can result in forced agreement--minorities should be able to register their disagreement. To be democratic, major decisions will take time. For people to make decisions with a clear idea of their significance, we will have to promote discussion and debate and the airing of all points of view within the organization. Conflict is not an end in itself. But we need full political discussion if we are to be democratic.

G AUTONOMOUS

Our autonomy from male domination should be accomplished through the collective development of our politics and our organization, rather than through the exclusion of individual women who belong to mixed organizations or who in other ways associate with men. The need to build a mass, public, democratic and political organization precludes any exclusion that is not political. We should not fear having all of our procedures and decisions public to everyone. We can resist ways that we might be manipulated by outsiders if we ourselves have our own explicit politics.

The question of autonomy as a part of a long range strategy is far more difficult to understand. We are sure that in the near future, only organized women can and will work for socialist feminism. For this period we can see nothing beyond principled and mutually advantageous coalitions. We do not know on what basis and at what point in the future, if ever, we might find it necessary to unite with other organizations.

H NATIONAL

Our society is organized nationally and internationally. A local organization will not be capable of abolishing this society and establishing a new one. The Union must encourage the formation of local socialist feminist organizations with the view towards co-ordinating regional efforts and organizing ourselves as a political force on the national level.

STRUCTURE

We propose the following structure. Our proposal is very detailed and exploratory. It may not be satisfactory in all of its parts but hopefully the concreteness of this proposal will bring out others and carry us forward to choosing some definite structure soon. The parts are:

1. Mass Meeting
2. Political Committee
3. Random Groups
4. Project Groups
5. Small Groups
6. Newspaper
7. Speakers Bureau
8. Internal Political Education Groups
9. New Women Committee

1. Mass Meeting

The mass meeting would be the highest decision making unit of the organization. The Political Committee, all projects, activities, public spokeswomen, etc. would be responsible to this group. The mass meeting should primarily be concerned with the political direction of the organization, as it has been up to now. With the formation of the Union, this should expand to include review of reports by on-going projects and the planning and analysis of actions of the whole Union. We don't know to what extent business matters will increase with the establishment of an on-going organization. It might be necessary to choose to delegate that kind of work to a smaller group.

We think some kind of experimentation will be needed to find the best ways to ensure wide participation and non-alienating social relations in mass meetings. Random discussion groups is one way to do this, but we need additional experimentation.

2. Political Committee

We see the Political Committee as a group of nine elected women serving for six months. The number of times a member could succeed herself on the committee should be specified. This group would resemble the current planning committee but it would have more responsibility. Specifically these women would be responsible for:

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1. Setting agendas of mass meetings, providing the physical arrangements, publicizing the meetings, reporting on them afterward, and guaranteeing the availability of child care for all Union events.

2. The Political Committee would be expected to take political initiative. It should attempt to determine which are the pressing political questions of the Union, and bring them to the attention of the members. Other groups should be expected to do this as well. For example, study groups might put out papers for discussion. A project on health might want to discuss its ideas and its work. An ad hoc grouping might want to raise for wide discussion a serious problem in the Union's politics. (This would be a temporary caucus perhaps.) These different sources would go through the Political Committee to arrange for part of an agenda of a Mass Meeting or for a special forum oriented toward the public, depending on the content and extent of the question.

3. The Political Committee should initiate one-shot actions or co-ordinate their initiation by other groupings in the organization. This might require calling mass meetings not regularly scheduled.

4. The Political Committee would also delegate from its members one woman each to the Newspaper, the Speakers Bureau, and the New Women Committee.

The members of the Political Committee should be elected on the basis of their politics. Each candidate should be expected to give a brief presentation of her perspective, especially the political direction she thinks the Union should take. Because we do not have a complex caucus structure, we can see no way for women on the Political Committee to represent groups of women: they can only represent a politics.

3. Random Groups

From time to time, small groups might be randomly selected from mass meetings or the mailing list to consider on-going political questions that can't be handled in a single mass meeting.

4. Project Groups

Socialist feminist strategy is not so well developed that it is possible to elaborate on the kinds of projects we might have. It has been common in the past to look for the perfect revolutionary demand that capitalism, or "the system," cannot co-opt by adopting. The idea has been that a demand or a struggle is either reformist or revolutionary. We think no particular social reform is inherently revolutionary. In the absence of a coherent socialist feminist movement, all reforms will be co-opted. A reform is only revolutionary if the movement is capable of showing that more than the particular reform is necessary to solve the problems people face in their lives.

We see a period of flexible experimentation and analysis with the initiative for projects coming both from the political discussions of the Mass meeting and from small groupings.

All projects would be politically responsible to the mass meeting. This would require that they make a presentation of their plans and regular reports of their work, perhaps every four months.

Project group meetings should be open to non-members, regularly announced, etc. Projects should be designed so that either the group can expand easily or it can set up new groups to do the same work with the benefit of past experience.

5 Small Groups

We anticipate the continuing usefulness of Consciousness Raising Groups, both for women new to women's liberation and for those who have been in the movement for awhile. There may be a need for special groups--one for divorced women with children for example; or a combination study-consciousness raising group. A random group formed out of a mass meeting might decide to constitute itself as a permanent group.

6. Newspaper

It will eventually be necessary to have both an internal and an external newspaper, one to carry information only of interest to members and one that would report and analyze current events using our politics. The outward-directed newspaper would be a part of our effort to make our organization visible and our politics a part of public discussion. As a local organization this would mean much of our news should be local.

We propose beginning with a newspaper that is partly internal and partly external, keeping most of our internal material in a newsletter, mimeographed papers, etc.

The newspaper should be responsible to the Political Committee and ultimately to the mass meeting. One member of the Political Committee should work on the paper.

7. Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau should coordinate Union speakers at non-Union events. The Bureau should recruit speakers from the members. It is important that the Bureau develop a procedure for competent speakers to give their skills and confidence to other women who then would also become Union speakers.

As with the Newspaper, the Speakers Bureau is responsible to the Political Committee and the mass meeting with one member of the Political Committee working in the Speakers Bureau.

8. Internal Political Education Groups

The purpose of these study groups would be to advance the political understanding of the Union. Non-members might be in them if they wished. These groups are also for the political development of the individual women.

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These study groups would include groups with varying duration. There could be one-day study groups on a specific topic. There could be ones lasting a few weeks and there could be on-going ones. Short-term and long-term groups should be expected to setup repeat sessions if there is interest. Long-term study groups would be expected to share their growing experience and knowledge in a regular way.

Study groups and classes not related to the political development of the Union would be viewed as projects. A school might eventually absorb the internal political education groups within its structure.

9. New Women Committee

This committee would be responsible for developing a way to integrate new women into the Union. Because this is a politically very important task, this committee should include one member of the Political Committee delegated by that group to be responsible for new women. The committee would coordinate the formation of small groups for new members and also develop a series of study groups that new members might follow. No woman would be required to follow any course. The point would be to make it possible for any woman to learn about the history of the Union, the movement, etc., and to develop herself politically and to become a fully active member of the Union.

VI AGENDA

We suggest the following agenda for forming an organization.

1. May 19

- a) discuss the socialist feminist paper as a whole, with particular attention to the agenda for forming an organization, in random small groups.
- b) after reports from the small groups and some discussion, take a vote on the agenda for forming an organization (the last section of the socialist feminist paper).
- c) elect a planning committee to serve until the date when we adopt principles of unity and a structure (projected June 16)
- d) set up a committee (from volunteers) to work on developing a draft of bylaws for the Union for the next mass meeting (we mean a description of structure and procedures)
- e) set up a committee (from volunteers) to assemble all the revisions accepted in past meetings, and print up the Principles of Unity for the next mass meeting

2. between May 19 - June 3

- a) the random groups from May 19 will continue discussing the socialist feminist paper.
- b) the planning committee will set up temporary voting procedures
- c) new drafts, if any, of the Principles of Unity should be written

3. June 3

- a) the mass meeting as a whole will hear the following:
 - 1. planning committee report on voting procedures
 - 2. reports from random small groups
 - 3. first draft of the bylaws committee
 - 4. presentation of the principles of unity
- b) break into random groups to discuss the four reports
- c) reassemble to hear reports from the random groups

4. between June 3 - June 16

- a) random groups would continue their discussions of the Principles, the proposed structure
- b) the bylaws committee should revise its proposal on the basis of the June 3 discussion
- c) more revising of the Principles of Unity by the Principles Committee

June 16

- a) hear reports from small groups and have discussions from the floor
- b) break into random groups to discuss the adoption of the Principles of Unity and a structure
- c) reassemble and hear reports from the random groups
- d) break while the principles and bylaws committees do final revisions
- e) vote on Principles of Unity and a structure
- f) elect a new planning committee!!