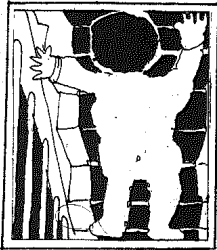


ANTI-SEXIST PRACTICE!

A thing I like about Big Flame politics is our commitment to feminist/socialist politics. Feminism is not just about 'women's issues', rather a way in which we are all struggling for liberation. That's the theory.

Now, I went to a BF daystchool in January where, after separate women's and men's meetings, the men came back with a list of titles for articles that we were going to write for the paper about anti-sexism and how we brought it into our politics. One woman said she was really pleased to hear that but she'd believe it when she read the articles in print and not before. Other women laughed but the men were quiet, to be honest I was a bit peeved at first, but then I realized I'd heard it all before as well.



'BUT IT'S ALL SO DIFFICULT, ISN'T IT?'

Most people are involved mainly around one particular area of politics which takes up most of their time. Do any BF men have anti-sexism as a priority for political work?

One good reason why not is that feminism isn't just another area in which we fight oppression, but that feminism and socialism go hand in hand, that we'll get nowhere unless the demands of women about society - feminist demands - are accepted as the demands of us all. This means putting a feminist perspective into all our work on Ireland, tenants groups, anti-racism, the struggle to be able to define our own sexuality, etc.

But men are not doing it! I know I don't challenge sexism in myself and other men the way I challenge racism against Irish people (I'm Irish so that comes a lot easier). The one thing all

BF men agree on is how hard it all is.

I still remember my embarrassment at trying to explain why I thought shared childcare and other anti-sexist practices were revolutionary to a man who thought anything other than 'building the party' was a waste of time. I was embarrassed because his whole attitude seemed to call my manhood into question, talking about kids when I should be fighting the state. The threat of getting a kicking or putting our lives at risk from fascists and the state does not stop us practically campaigning in solidarity with the Irish struggle. But the damage to our pride and the threat to our masculinity is enough to assure that practical campaigning around 'feminist solidarity' never gets off the ground.

Our anti-sexist politics are right and crucial, we need to learn how to apply them to our lives. There's only one way, practice!



A FOCUS FOR ANTI-SEXIST PRACTICE

I'm suggesting that some men choose anti-sexism as a priority for political work. I am not saying that feminism has now become 'just another issue', I am not saying that most men can now take it easy because some men are 'doing' anti-sexist work. Feminism is and must be at the centre of our politics.

Anti-sexist men need to find ways of sharing our ideas and

experience of anti-sexist practice. How?

* Male violence against women or the threat of it is one of the most obvious ways in which men maintain their oppression of women. We can publicly oppose men's violence with our friends, our workmates, in our unions and elsewhere. But that's still talking.

* We can consistently graffiti on walls with feminist demands in line with the political work women are doing.

* We can print stickers against pornography, take them to our local W.H. Smith (etc) and stick them on the inside of porn magazines there. A man who opens 'Penthouse' and finds 'Rapists read porn', 'Keep your sperm to yourself', and 'Women will fight back', will feel uncomfortable and is unlikely to buy porn from that shop again.



* We can help to fund Rape Crisis Centres and women's refuges, continually asking men to contribute financially to the work they do.

* If we haven't children of our own, there's always the other people on our branch/workplace/street. Minding kids is just as political as writing a leaflet. We can do it alone, or even better, with other men.

* We must be prepared to give practical support to women's groups such as WAVAW. At all times we should be accountable to the women's organisations involved.

'HITTING THE HEADLINES'

One thing we don't do is march from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square with a placard

saying 'sexism out now'. Men are too keen on political work which is seen as being 'up front', activities where women can actually see us doing a fine job and we can feel pious about it. At the moment, I'm not sure about picketing films such as 'Dressed to Kill' and occupying porn shops, partly for this reason.



THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

When women look after children, we in BF believe that they are doing an unpaid full-time job and that this is political. When men look after children, we (men) see it as giving women the time to organise politically and do other things than changing nappies. We have not yet accepted that childcare is as politically important as going on a demo. Anti-sexism involves supporting feminist demands on us as men. It will not bring reflected glory.

Right, what about these short articles on anti-sexism we promised to write? I'm going to do one for next month's paper on why men shouldn't use porn. I'm going to try to write it in a way that it can be cut out and stuck up for men to read in work, the laundrette and the back of bus seats. It's important to spread our ideas by using written pieces over and over again.

Meanwhile, if you're reading this, Nye, I liked what you were trying to say in your letters to this paper, please keep writing and struggling.

Dave (Coventry BF)

On Malvinas

A HOME THOUGHT FROM ABROAD

3 repudiations

The dramatic turn taken in the old dispute between Argentina and Britain over the Malvinas is likely to have tragic consequences for the peoples of both countries.

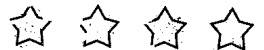
In the face of these events and the sometimes hasty interpretation given to the different currents of Argentinian opinion, we, the undersigned, Argentinian exiles and residents in France, repudiate:

- 1) The sending of the British fleet to the South Atlantic which we consider to be an act of colonialist aggression;
- 2) The use by the military power of the just claim of the Argentinian people - their indisputable sovereignty over the Malvinas archipelago - in order to make them forget the permanent violation of human rights and the economic, political, cultural and trade union dismantling which it has pursued for the last six years. The law at present being drafted by the junta which allows for the handing over of Argentinian underground resources to private capital - i.e. foreign capital - demonstrates, if it is necessary, the little credit that should be accorded to the 'nationalist' motivations of the Argentinian military.
- 3) The support given in various forms by the superpowers to the criminal regime of the Argentinian generals.

In the present case, they are trying to give the regime a false 'anti-colonialist' image which will allow it to continue exporting oppression to Central America, as it has done up to now in the other countries of the Southern Cone of Latin America.

Only a democratically-elected government will be able to legitimately achieve the national aspirations of the Argentinian people.

Letter sent to 'Le Monde' by a group of Argentinian exiles living in France



WHAT IS BIG FLAME?



BIG FLAME is a socialist organisation that believes that the end of war, unemployment, poverty, sexual and racial oppression and the creation of a free, equal and classless society, involves the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society. This can only be brought about by the mass involvement of the working class. Nobody can give people freedom, they must fight for it themselves.

PREFIGURING STRUGGLES

Whilst revolution is a necessity, we involve ourselves in struggles for immediate reforms, both because they improve people's lives now and because winning gains through struggle can build people's power, self-confidence, and understanding. Further we must get some glimpse, right now, of

the socialist alternative, the new forms of all social relations that we are struggling for.

AGAINST ALL OPPRESSIONS

In particular we'd emphasise that women's and gay liberation are an essential part of the struggle for a classless society. The patriarchal organisation of society not only bolsters capitalism but leads to the oppression of all women by all men, and to the repression of gay sexuality. Women and gays have to lead the struggle against their oppression. Similarly Black people and other racially oppressed groups must lead their own struggles. This requires that they have the right to organise independently / autonomously whenever they see it as necessary. Only through autonomous struggle can the genuine unity of equals be built. At the same time there is the great need to build rank and file organisation in workplaces, and amongst the unemployed. We see as a key priority developing grass-roots unity between workplaces and activists in the women's and black movements.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Capitalism organises itself on a world scale (imperialism). Ultimately it can only be overthrown worldwide. The attempts to achieve socialism in one country (Russia, China, etc) have led to a new form of class society - State

Collectivism - which needs to be overthrown by revolution. But the struggles of the oppressed worldwide - for national liberation, against exploitation at work, against racial/sexual oppression etc - are steps on the road to socialism and we seek to make international links with them. In particular we are in solidarity with the struggle of anti-imperialist forces in Ireland and demand British troops out of Ireland now, and self determination for the Irish people as a whole.

ORGANISATION NEEDED

BIG FLAME believes that the overthrow of capitalism requires the existence of collectively organised revolutionary socialist party(s) working alongside and within mass organisations of the class and of the autonomous movements. No organisation in Britain yet has the roots in the class to call itself such a party. It has to be built out of activity in struggle and thousands of independent socialist and feminist militants have to be won to the recognition of its necessity.

BIG FLAME members are active in:

- trades union and workplace struggles;
- the struggles of tenants and in the community.
- the women's movement.
- the movement against racism and fascism.

- international solidarity work;
- the Troops Out movement;
- the anti-nuclear movement/

CND

and many other areas. Within these we seek to build the maximum unity in action around particular demands but also to relate each campaign to the overall struggle against capitalist/patriarchal society. Within BF, oppressed groups have the right to organise independently. BIG FLAME has branches in Birmingham, Cambridge, Coventry, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, St. Albans, and Sheffield, and members throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Most branches have regular separate women's meetings as well as mixed ones.

If you are interested in joining Big Flame or simply want more information about the organisation, please fill in the form below and return it to Big Flame, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT. (Please write clearly)

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Tel.....

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