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We in the women's movement in England do not know much because we are only now in the process of translating humiliation into articulation, both in action and in ideas. In Britain in particular the WM is backward because the political articulation of the working class movement is backward. The working class, particularly the black working class, is now disrupting that calm. Nevertheless the fact of a movement, however vague its general orientations, already clarifies certain fundamental issues.

The movement which began in the US I believe had its origins in the Black movement which, when it burnt down the centres of the cities, shook loose the daughters of the middle class from the apparent stability and social necessity of that class's position and functions. First they learnt how they oppressed others; only then did they learn how they were oppressed themselves.

But the importation of the movement to Britain was not accompanied with the importation of the burning down of cities. Therefore the task of building an entirely new political framework fell to people who were a) women and therefore unused to creating a framework of their own but always acted (when they acted) within the framework others had created; b) middle class in a country more racist towards the working class than most.

If new politics were to emerge; then a new kind of organisational procedure must be invented. It was the group which was never to go beyond 10 or 15 in number, which was

to be autonomous although hopefully co-ordinated; The women were to speak about themselves and their experience as women, that is, how the uterus had shaped them; From this was to be and to some degree has been uncovered the power structures of the society as they related to women, and how to destroy them. The first dichotomy was between the "political" women and the "non-political" women, and took the following form. The political women wanted to orientate to working class women because, they said, they were the most exploited. But in practice this meant that the women's movement was only for the purpose of "politicising" the women in the movement so they could raise themselves to the political level of the men of the Left; that here was an arena for recruitment. The non-political women saw their own activity as having independent validity, that their own activity could be revolutionary whether their orientation was working class or not. In practice it meant that they were destroying the definition which had said that a) the working class was white, male and over 30; b) that the working class and therefore the struggle was only in production.

Always in these discussions the political women (and the men who gave them their line) would claim that the working class struggle was the "wider issue". By this definition we in the women's movement should once again be and can only be appendages, auxiliary, to men, i.e: the "working class". Here was most clearly expressed the capitalist view of "the working class" as mere units of production. So that to

restrict the struggle to the point of production was in essence to restrict the worker to capital's definition of his or her needs; not to see a total struggle ^{from class} ~~was~~ to be blind to a total individual whose sexual life; whose relation to the generations, older and younger, were irrelevant. This is clearly the plan of capital to fragment the struggle.

The alternative to this view, however, though dangerous, has the possibility of breaking through to a new and revolutionary position. It begins by refusing to discuss class, and unifying the general degradation and subordination to men which all women suffer. Then, concretely, working class women demonstrate how in the struggle they have an infinite capacity to know at any particular moment when the struggle can only be carried forward independently (and this means against) men and when the struggle against capital can be unified with men. The premise finds itself to be that the women, not the men, widen the struggle; give it direction, leadership, a deeper and more profound violence. That is, the women are not to join the men but in acting independently can make clear in the situation that the men must join with them for the success of the struggle. In the factory and in the working class community this is always acted out. The women's movement clarifies; defines and gives confidence to the women to follow their own political impulses; that is; the base of the struggle is so narrow as to exclude them and they must cut themselves away; that this is not divisive - it is narrowness

the narrowness of the base, that is, the trade union base, which is objectively and subjectively divisive. (?)

All this is becoming clearer in England first through the logic of the movement's development and second, more directly, through the activity of the working class which is straining every limb to find a way to burst out of the trade union straitjacket. Having gone some way to destroying the old concept of class which excluded women, blacks and youth, capital expresses itself in another tendency in the movement, those who could not rise from the destruction of one definition to a redefinition with women; blacks and youth as the pivot and spearhead of the reorganisation of the class. (I think you call it class recomposition). This tendency is the civil rights wing of the movement. Birth control; abortion, nursery schools, equal pay.

5(The last demand, equal pay, is either reformist or revolutionary depending on who, when and how: whose activity, what kind of activity and equal with whom.) But all these demands, while vital, may only succeed in making capital less backward rather than destroying it. 5(We must add that in the Catholic countries such as Ireland and Italy, their significance and impact must be wider.)

If, however, the birth of capital has meant the total cleavage between production and community, production and consumption, men and women, production and education, parents and children, the sick and the well; the directly productive and the indirectly productive, if capital is based on these cleavages,

then it is precisely these cleavages which the women's movement must seek to destroy. If women are to be relieved of the burden of home and children, it is not a more efficient machine in the home or a nursery school, or preventing children from being born at all that will liberate them but the return of men to the community, and the destruction of the four walls of the home, not so that we can be equally exploited with men but through new communal political action. We must demand the 20 hour week. If the community, i. e. women and children are subordinated to production, and the wage of the man is the instrument of that subordination, then everyone must have a wage. The unpaid labour of women in the home we must demand be paid for.

It is the black woman in England more than any other in Western Europe who demonstrates the beauties and charms of equality. Because of the special exploitation of black men in production and in consumption, most black women must take jobs, must abandon their children for 9 or 10 hours a day. As a result, many have succeeded in incorporating men into child care and cooking - sharing "equally" the massive burden. Capital will pay the price that the children in the streets will demand; that the exhausted but newly confident women will demand and that the men, deprived of the privileges capital has traditionally allocated to their male slaves; will demand.

Here one can see most clearly, by the way, the relation of the penis to power. The first statement of the black movement was for a return of its own masculinity: Black men demanded from white society the control of black women (as a consequence of achieving economic and political power). As a first step it was a liberation for both the men and the women. But only as a first step. The black movement is dependent on cleansing itself of this pernicious form of "black capitalism": This the women are in process of doing:

Through all this the movement has evolved a concept of "sisterhood". It is based on the recognition that the exploited and oppressed are maintained in exploitation and oppression by self-hatred. To put it another way, they hate each other. A movement is not an organisation and thus there must be many political tendencies. In the United States has arisen a wing of political lesbians who acknowledge that any relationship with a man is a compromise which they are unwilling any longer to make. This is not the revolution but it is vital that the whole of the movement have before it continuously this example for women no compromise with capital is possible. The civil rights wing too; which can be so exasperating for those who attack capital because it exists; and not because it is backward, is a vital part of the movement. We do need birth control and free abortion; and it is possible also to mobilise working class women on these demands. The complexity of the relationships in practice of various tendencies within the movement and the particular forms it can take is another discussion for which no generalisations can be provided. But it is just as well that women who have come from the cutthroat world of "revolutionary politics" understand that in the women's movement their first loyalty is to the

women; that we are not to ~~xxx~~ permit so-called militant men who have permitted, if not insisted, that women do their typing and their dishes and that they do the talking if not the leading, to permit these ~~xxxxx~~ arrogant judgments of these men on women who have for the first time fathomed that their whole personality, activity and relationship to the world is shaped by the uterus. The first words of the mute cannot be dictated. It has been apparent, moreover, that "political" women are if anything even more dominated by men than "non-political" ones; since the politicians are more likely to have refused the manipulation of men with which women have traditionally protected themselves rather than refusing women's work. Thus they are relatively defenceless against men in the movement while collaborating in reproducing capitalist power relations: the men write the articles and the women type them. Whatever the limitations of feminism, the feminist sees this and rejects this, and too often men who attack her are in reality defending their own privileges "for the sake of the revolution".