

Be Realistic: Demand the Impossible: Taking Action Against Pornographyⁱ

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INTRO

In this short paper, I will outline a perspective on anti-pornography activism, provide a brief overview of tactics, and offer a few comments about tactics and actions. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on pornography. But as has been discussed throughout this conference, the distinctions between pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking are shallow and tenuous. There is more alike between these issues than there is different. As such, the underlying philosophical points and the tactics I discuss here are relevant to prostitution and sex trafficking as well as pornography.

WHAT IS ACTIVISM?

I believe the very nature of working to respond to and/or end pornography is activist as pornography is, at the core, a form of political violence (Dworkin, 1976, 1979). This understanding comes from my perspective, grounded the feminist analysis of human rights and social justice. Defining these acts as “political violence” is not meant to take away the personal trauma that is inherent in and surrounding pornography, any more than recognizing lynching as a political crime deters from recognizing the personal trauma therein. Understanding pornography as a political crime refers to acknowledging that there is more to these acts than the personal trauma that results from the perpetration of these acts. As Judith Herman writes, “The systematic study of psychological trauma...depends on the support of a political movement.” (Herman, p. 9). Her statement recognizes the inherent link between personal trauma in general, and particularly gendered and raced trauma, and political crimes. Pornography is a gendered crime. It is perpetrated by men against women, which is not to say that there are some men who are not also victimized. Pornography is also a racist propaganda. There are also elements of class warfare in these crimes, and other forms of institutionalized oppression. Pornography is used to maintain and uphold male supremacy, white supremacy, and heterosexism. Pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking, like rape, domestic violence, lynching, gay-bashing, and child abuse, are experiences that are simultaneously personal trauma’s and political crimes. These are violations of women’s human rights and they are utterly unjust as much as they harm people individually (Mackinnon, 2005a and 2005b, Dworkin and MacKinnon, 1988, Dworkin, 2002, Stoltenberg, 2005).

Because these are political acts, any action we take: supporting people who have been victimized, helping people escape, educating about the issues, advocating for better laws, is by nature political activism. Our best work is grounded in the feminist human rights and social justice perspective briefly touched on above, if not, our work, whatever form it may take, will likely become repressive. As we all know, there are people who do work on these, or other issues, that do their work in a way that isn’t grounded, and who do bad work – bad therapy, bad advocacy, bad education, and bad activism. What keeps our work real (effective, accountable, and meaningful to the people who are most directly affected) is our efforts to stay conscious and

true to the political nature of these acts and the work we're doing. The best forms of activism against pornography are those acts that are designed, philosophically and tactically, to not only address or confront pornography, but also to end sexism, racism, and homophobia.

TAKING ACTION

There is an endless array of possible actions we can take against pornography. We should explore all possibilities, but we should not choose any of these possibilities. We all make choices about which actions we take at any particular point of time. We make these decisions based on a number of criteria; a process that is both strategic and critical. Our principles should be one of the primary tools we use to inform our decision-making: both the process and the outcome. As feminists, I would submit, our guiding principles are actions which further the causes for human rights and social justice.

When considering organizing some sort of action against pornography, one key guiding principle, particularly when it may seem more expedient to do the first action that comes to mind, that must remain on the forefront of our minds is that the ends do *not* justify the means (see McAllister, 1982, or Meyerding 1984). By this I mean that, if our goals include expanding women's human rights and social justice generally, then *how* we organize actions that are designed to achieve those goals is as important to consider and contemplate as the action itself. Within a feminist human rights framework, organizing to expand women's human rights of personal (which includes sexual) autonomy and bodily integrity means more than the right to be free from pornography. For example, I would hope that few reading this article would support the bombing of pornography shops as a viable option. One could argue that this action would be effective, but our principles would not allow us to accept this action. This kind of action likely violates a number of our guiding principles, but it certainly violates the principles of human rights and social justice. There are actions that are against pornography that will restrict human rights or limit social justice; organizing against pornography shops in certain neighborhoods but allowing them to flourish in others, for example. As feminists, it is a grounding of human rights and social justice that guides our analysis and should guide our feet.

This call to action is particularly timely, in mid 2005, as we experience a "massive mainstreaming, expansion, and public acceptance of what is euphemistically called the 'sex industry,' an extreme right-wing, indeed quasi-fascist turn in recent U.S. political culture," (Whisnant, 2005), and a disconnected, indifferent, and often openly hostile left wing. Pornography is perpetrated by men against women (and some men) in a context in which women's lives are systematically devalued while men's lives are systematically over-valued. These differences in valuation are institutionalized through sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic practices and policies. The work against pornography is working against sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia. Staying true to these guiding principles means making difficult decisions but also means that the end result is ultimately more effective and meaningful. By definition, experiencing the fullest expanse of human rights and social justice means that there is no pornography, prostitution, or sex trafficking.

CREATING A VISION

"Be Realistic:

Demand the Impossible”

This was the theme for a War Resister League conference several years ago. It seems to me that this saying brilliantly captures the efforts to end pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking. It is only by *envisioning* what now seems impossible that it becomes possible. *Demanding* what is now considered impossible forces us to begin laying the foundation for how to make this happen. A part of “being realistic” requires getting specific enough about what we’re demanding that it could become realistic; this is what distinguishes creating a vision from dreaming. Ending racism, sexism, and homophobia becomes much more realistic if we break that down into concrete and specific notions. Eliminating pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking becomes real when we envision, and demand, that it be real.

Part of “being realistic” means defining what we are *for* as much as what we are *against*. Focusing on what we are against places us, by definition, into the defensive and as such, inhibits our ability to set the agenda proactively. Being “against pornography” doesn’t say much of anything about what we are *for*; and being *against* can lead us into directions we don’t want to go. Consider pushing against a force. We push, we gather our source, we organize and create resources to push against this thing, but we’ve got our head and shoulders and arms pushing against the thing and are legs and feet dug in. The thing we’re pushing against continues to move ultimately, determining the speed and direction that we move. If we decide what we’re working *for*, expanded and fully realized human rights and social justice for women, children, and men, it by definition, states what we’re against while allowing us to set the direction and pace. Clearly, working against pornography is much different than pushing against a wall, but the principle is the same.

Focusing on what we’re against also keeps us in the negative, which is not a good place from which to inspire. Inspiration is a core component of any form of activism. Finally, focusing on what we are against makes recruitment much more difficult. It is much easier to draw other folks into our efforts if we have a clear and hopeful vision of what we’re marching towards. It is *this* vision, a vision of women’s opportunities to express and experience the full range of human rights and the full capacity of social justice, that is the foundation of our work. By definition, expanding women’s human rights, sexual rights, and social justice requires eliminating pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking.

So, take a moment from reading and ask yourself this: What is your vision? Take a moment, or an hour or a day, and envision as fully as possible, as concretely as possible, your vision of a world free of pornography. What would that look like? How do people treat each other? How do we interact? What resources are available? What kinds of entertainment are promoted and available? What kinds of sexuality are expressed? How are they expressed? What does this world look like for all women; for women and men of color; for all children; for the poor; for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered persons? If we create a world where women, children, and men have access to the full range of human rights and experience the whole of social justice, what does that mean? Individually and collectively, we need to create this kind of vision, as concretely as possible. This then, becomes what we work towards, and it becomes the guide for choosing the forms of activism in which we choose to engage. Our actions become

those that simultaneously offers a glimpse of what we're striving towards, and take us one more step on that path.

The vision that I hold, and towards which I'm striving, is fully realized human rights. In the original conceptualization of "human rights" there were five areas of rights: political, civil, economic, social, and cultural. (UN Convention for Human Rights, See also, "Something Inside So Strong" USHR Network). To that, three additional areas of human rights have begun to develop and are considered "emerging" human rights. These include sexual, environmental, and developmental human rights. Within this framework, organizing against pornography becomes organizing for women, children, and men to have the right to fully express themselves within each of these areas. My goal of ending pornography becomes embedded in my efforts to expand everybody's (but focusing on women's) ability to enjoy and express fully these human rights. As such, ending pornography becomes a part of the agenda for women's right to a livable wage, to decent and affordable housing, to fully participate in all levels of politics, to adequate and affordable child care, to adequate and available health care, including reproductive health care, to live and work in environments that don't jeopardize her health, to be free from racism, homophobia and other expressions of oppression, and to have the right to fully express her sexuality, including the full benefits, privileges, and responsibilities of marriage, etc.

The point of this discussion is this: ending pornography is part of a larger political agenda. The choice is *which* larger political agenda do we as feminists align our anti-pornography efforts? The questions become 1) which actions do we organize 2) how do we organize this activism in ways that further not only the immediate agenda of speaking out against pornography, but also that takes us the next necessary steps towards our other political goals? 3) how do we organize our actions? and 4) how do we choose which partners with whom to align that propels us forward on a variety of the elements of our broader political agenda? This conscious decision-making becomes especially crucial, and particularly difficult, in a time when the socio-political environment is created that is not only anti-pornography, but which also has a very different broader political agenda. Do we join in these efforts to achieve the short-term goals of ending pornography, and if so how do we join these efforts in ways that don't undermine the rest of our political agenda?

MULTI-ISSUES ORGANIZING AND ACTIVISM

Pornography occurs at the intersection of various forms of oppression: racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and age-ism, among others. (See MacKinnon, 2005, Kendall, 2004, Kendall and Funk, 2003, Forna, 1992, Funk, 1993, I Spy Productions, 1992, Carter, 2005, Dines, 2005). As such, organizing and activism addressing pornography, prostitution and sex trafficking needs to be multi-issues organizing and activism. Working against pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking is, by definition, working to address issues of homelessness and advocating for more just housing. It means working against racism, it means pressuring for living wage ordinances and policies, it means working for adequate and affordable child care, it means working to expand reproductive rights and freedoms, it means pushing for the rights of GLBT folks to live and work free from discrimination and without violence, it means working to reduce the military budget and against militarism. And, dare I say it, working against pornography is by definition, working to expand freedom of speech and expression. Working against pornography is also pro-

sex. Working to expand human rights and promote social justice by working against pornography means all of these things and more. Part of the work of feminists is to continue making these connections, and making these connections ever clearer in our organizing, activism, and advocacy.

This is not to say that feminists we have to “do it all.” It *is* to say that to end to pornography our work must also be consciously and strategically driven to put an end to sexism, racism, class disparities (and the accompanying disparities in the valuing of people from different class backgrounds) militarism, homophobia, etc. As feminists continue to develop an analysis of how these forms of oppression and abuse are all interconnected, and thus how the solutions are interconnected, we position ourselves to do more effective organizing, while simultaneously positioning ourselves to be better able to network and build partnerships with folks who are also doing multi-issue organizing towards the same goals but focused on different areas. What I am suggesting is that we explore ways to put feet onto the analysis, while also growing the analysis, that has been offered to us from folks like Catherine MacKinnon, De Clark, Robert Jensen, Gail Dines, and others.

DEVELOPING AN ACTIVIST AGENDA

Once we clarify our feminist vision(s), it is time to turn to developing a plan of how to get there. “Getting there” requires an agenda. Crafting an agenda, in addition to putting the agenda into action, requires a certain degree of skills: engaging community, identifying partners, and creating the agenda itself. All of these are skills that need to be engaged in order to develop an agenda successfully and effectively.

An activist agenda is the product of strategic decision-making about the specific actions that we engage in to achieve specified goals (Alinski, 1971, Blee, 1998, Coover et al, 1985, Delecoste and Newman, 1981, Tracy, 1996, McAllister, 1988, War Resisters League, 1986). Every action to counter or oppose pornography requires and deserves a clear and defined agenda: What are the goals of this particular action? Why choose this action as opposed to any of a number of others? What are the benefits to be realized as a result of the action? What are the possible negative outcomes of this particular action? What needs to be done to increase the likelihood of a successful action? Every action that feminists engage in to protest pornography, prostitution, or sex trafficking, deserves careful attention and planning. The planning of direct action efforts to combat pornography should include a foundation of three main principles:

- 1) Win real, immediate, concrete improvements in people’s lives
- 2) Give people a sense of their own power
- 3) Alter relations to power (Bobo et al, 1991).

These principles are important guide posts. Not all direct actions that we organize are going to fulfill all three of these principles, though ideally, we will strive to. These principles also encourage us to ensure that the women and men for whom we are being active (those victimized in and by pornography) are involved in the process itself, including the planning. The goals of the actions that we plan should be to affect change around pornography in a direction that benefits those who are harmed by it. This is not to say that there isn’t a roll for symbolic actions,

but these should be kept to a minimum, with the focus of our efforts to organize actions that have “real, immediate and concrete” benefits for those victimized by pornography, women in general, or the cause for sexual, gender and racial justice.

The development of actions, like the development of an agenda, requires certain skills. Skills such as organizing a protest, a media campaign, a press conference, a letter-writing campaign, visits to local politicians, a fundraising event, a speaker’s bureau, a march, a speak-out, a community forum, or a dance each requires some skills, some of which overlap. In addition to organizing these actions, feminists need to also develop the means to identify and share these skills from person to person, community to community, and generation to generation.

The second aspect of an activist agenda relates to setting agendas for campaigns. Ending pornography, and expanding human rights for women, children, and men, and social justice generally, requires more than one action, or even one action at a time. In order to achieve our ultimate goals, feminists need to develop and launch a long-term campaign. A campaign is a long-term strategy to achieve a specific set of goals. The clearest and most common example is an electoral campaign, spending two to four years, and sometimes longer, to get a particular person elected. This is a similar position that feminists working to against pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking need to take: In 15 years, what will we have achieved? What do we need to do to get there? What actions make the most sense to propel us towards those goals? From a campaign perspective, each action needs not only to stand on its own, but should also both build from the previous event, and build towards the next one. While there is certainly continued need to organize individual events, the value of these, relative to the value of sustained campaigns for making social change, is somewhat limited. Regardless of the kind of perspective feminists take, be it in planning individual actions or developing a long-term campaign, clarifying and defining a goal is a necessary first step.

Defining the Goals

Goal setting is more complicated than it initially appears. It includes more than simply what it is that we want or hope to achieve. Goal setting includes:

- Defining the Goal
 - The degree to which the goal is achievable.
 - An assessment of the resources (time, knowledge and skills, person-power, money, access to media, etc.).
 - What resources are required
 - What resources are available
 - How do we define “success?”
 - If part of a campaign, how does this event build from the last one, and build towards the next?
- Exploring Tactics
 - Which tactics will best reach these goals?
 - What tactics are possible, given our resources?
 - Which tactics are more likely to invite people to the action, the message, an the cause?
- Negative outcomes
 - What are the possible negative effects of the action?

- How likely are those negative effects?
- Who will pay for those negative effects?

None of these questions, in and of themselves, determine whether or not to engage in a particular action, but each of these do inform our decisions. Sometimes, for example, we organize an action knowing full well we won't be successful in the most obvious goal(s). But there are other goals that are just as important for our purposes and for movement building. These goals need to be articulated so that they're understood and the action isn't experienced as a failure, regardless of how it may be presented. For example, a local community is considering a local ordinance to restrict the hours that strip clubs are open. From all the research that you've done, you know very well that the ordinance doesn't have a chance of passing. In spite of this lack of "success," there is a clear need and there are achievable goals, such as:

- To demonstrate community support.
- To frame the issues as human rights and social justice issue.
- To create a means by which activists can gather, support each other, and express their rage.
- To support the women who are exploited.
- To remember the harm caused to people who are exploited.
- Etc.

The specific goals we have will influence the kind of action we plan, but each of these are very valid reasons to consider organizing an action of some kind even though there is little chance to effect the vote.

EDUCATION AS ACTIVISM

Education is a form of political and social activism. It seems to me that education is perhaps the most radical form of activism we can engage in. In many ways, all forms of activism are education. There is an element of educating that is present in any activist effort in which we engage. There is both formal education, such as in a classroom, church, synagogue, or mosque; and informal or "street" education. The points I want to make have relevance to both.

There are two main points to consider when thinking about education as a form of activism. Firstly is the content: *What* we want to educate. The second point, and perhaps more important than the content, is *how* we educate. These two focus areas need to both be part of our educational activism and planning. This connection between the what and the how is also a continuation of the theme discussed above that the means and the ends are interconnected.

Before a more detailed discussion about the what and the how, I want to make a couple of points about to whom a campaign should be targeted.

Defining the Audience

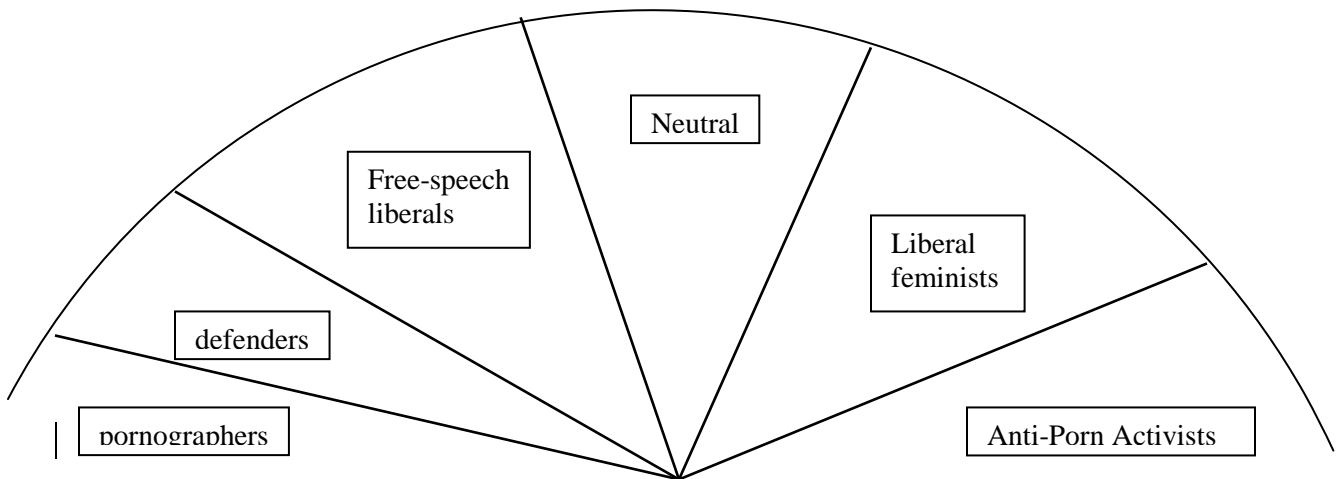
Defining the goals and developing a presentation requires knowing a bit about the audience to whom we speak. Using education as a form of activism means that we need to find way to use

education to move people to act. It is not enough to simply relay a story, that we want and need people to take action, to join our efforts. We must first consider:

- To whom are we speaking?
- What is the racial, age, gender, class and orientation make-up of the audience?
- What is the knowledge/myth base of the people we're educating?
- Why are they present?
- What do they want to get out of the educational opportunity?
- What do we want them to get out of the opportunity?

These questions help us to focus our efforts and define our goals. The more we know about the audience the better we are able to craft a presentation that will be effective and the more likely we are to think more thoroughly about the goals we have for the presentation, thus limiting the goals and thereby increasing our effectiveness.

We are most effective when we educate people from where they are and challenge them to move their next step, not move them to where we want them to be. The diagram below graphically depicts this notion. We are most effective, in terms of moving people towards an anti-pornography perspective, if we educate them from where they are and educate them to the next step. We are unlikely to move free speech liberals, for example, to become anti-pornography activists. We *may* provide an educational program that moves them towards being neutral.



Recognizing where people are and challenging them to take their next step also means, in part recognizing that people have different relationships to sexism, male privilege and entitlement and men's violence depending on their gender, sexual orientation, racial background, and class. As such, when developing and implementing educational programs, these factors need to be recognized and addressed. While the content may be the same for various audiences, as a man, the way that I present the information to an audience of women is going to be somewhat different than to an audience of men.

Understanding education as a form of activism means recognizing that the actions we organize are also in part efforts to educate. Although our actions are likely designed to target a particular person or group, that person or group may not be the audience for the purpose of educating. For example, when I've crashed workshops offered by pornography defenders, and I enter into a dialogue with them, I am there to *target* the presenters and the organizer, but my *audience* is the people in the room. Or when doing a presentation at city hall for a bill that I know isn't going to pass, the *target* is my city representatives, but the *audience* is the general public. This is important to keep in mind in terms of organizing and activism because it has implications for *how* we think about organizing, activism and developing educational efforts and materials.

Once we've thought about the audience, we can begin thinking about the *what* and the *how*...

What's the What? Examining the Content

In terms of the content, two key questions need to be addressed: what is going to be covered, and what do we want to accomplish as a result of the presentation? More often than not, educators are far too ambitious for the time that is available and for what the audience can handle. For example, it's not uncommon for people who do a presentation on prostitution to want to:

- Increase awareness about prostitution
- Increase awareness about the laws of prostitution
- Increase awareness about how the laws impact more harshly on the women prostituted than on johns
- Increase empathy for prostituted women
- Increase sensitivity about the lives of prostituted women.
- Change attitudes about prostituted women
- Change attitudes about prostitution
- Shift responsibility onto johns and society
- Link prostitution to sexism and racism
- Encourage people to take action.
- Motivate people to take action ...today
- And more...

This list of goals is pretty hefty for a one-hour presentation.

Therefore, when planing for a presentation, begin by brainstorming the goals for that presentation and then prioritize and limit those goals. If we don't, we run the risk of coming into a presentation overwhelmed by how much we want to cover and our own goals, which will, by definition, overwhelm the audience.

Two other questions that flow from an examination of the audience: Which topics are the focus? How is the most effective means to frame the issues for the particular audience that we're speaking to? For example, I prepared this presentation for you all in a very different way than I would if this were a college class or a room full of judges and lawyers. While this may be obvious, it is important for activists to do this level of thinking and planning before each and every presentation.

What's the How?

The *how* is just as important as the *what*. By this I mean that thinking strategically about *how* to present the materials is as important as what is covered by the presentation. Our work is grounded in a human rights and social justice framework, and a feminist and empowering perspective. Accordingly, *how* we educate needs to be in a manner that is empowering for the participants and which recognizes their human rights and puts social justice into practice in terms of how we interact with and treat the people we're educating. This is informed largely by Paulo Friere who sees education as a form of political activism and knowledge as something that is generated *between* an educator and the educated (Freire, 1990, 1998, & 1999). Rather than educating from the standpoint of an "expert" who is prepared to "give them what they need," in terms of information, knowledge, the "correct" perspective, etc., it can be much more empowering and effective to educate from a standpoint of collaborator. By "collaborator," I mean engaging in a real dialogue with the audience in which the educator has as much, potentially, to learn as the audience. We don't lose our knowledge, expertise, or perspective by shifting our standpoint. What this shift does accomplish is to shift the experience of the audience or participants. They are much more likely to become engaged in the process of creating the knowledge and, as such, take more ownership in the knowledge that is created. Once the knowledge becomes theirs, they are more likely to feel compelled and empowered to act (Freire, 1990, Freire, 1998, Freire, 1999, see also, Giroux, 1997, hooks, 1994, hooks, 2003).

Far too often, activists create outlines, modules, and presentations sitting in our offices or on the living room couch, then find ways to go present whatever it is that we've created. This process does not create any co-ownership of the knowledge, the issues and certainly not the solutions. If I create a presentation and then look for audiences to present it to, the ownership stays with me; the audience comes and listens politely, or not so politely, and then leaves. They may be moved, they may be inspired, they may be informed, but they are not given the opportunity to claim ownership. If they don't claim ownership, people are less likely to carry that knowledge home and much less likely to affect change. Since the goal is to affect change, activists need to create educational processes that encourage people to make change. Now granted, in some situations, like presenting at a national conference, there are few options, or at least it is much more complicated and difficult to do. But in most cases, we can and should create educational programs that engage participants, as opposed to talking to audiences, to leave with some ownership of what has been discussed. This discussion about education as activism and how to be an effective educator deserves greater attention, but time and space limitations require that I move on.

COALITION BUILDING

Building coalitions is a crucial aspect of effective organizing and activism. When considering building coalitions, many activists think of those already known and who are "on our side." While this is an important aspect of coalition building, it is also important to think outside the box and try to identify new partners that could be brought in. Here again, the social justice/human rights framework becomes a crucial foundation for our efforts. When looking at building coalitions, one question to examine is what other social justice/human rights activists or

organizations are there in our communities that we can connect and partner with for these efforts? Coalition building also means being willing to coalesce with them on additional issues that are on both agendas. This is the heart of coalition work, and that is what will ultimately make our efforts, our activism, and our movement more effective. This is not to say that activists should develop some kind of litmus test on the underlying philosophy before entering into a coalition with other people or groups. This is to say that activists need to consider the underlying core values of the people and organizations with whom we engage in order to best understand *how* to coalesce, and to make some strategic decisions about which organizations to coalesce with and for what purposes.

Out-reach

A first step on building coalitions is doing out-reach: working *out* of our comfort zones. True outreach means much more than developing brochures and other materials in more than one language, or putting posters up that reflect people of other cultures, or attending a meeting of an organization that we're only peripherally familiar with. True outreach means exactly that: getting *out*. Before asking any organization or group to join in coalition with our efforts, or wondering why they're not, true outreach means we first ask how can we join their efforts, and ask why we're not there.

Mapping Allies

One notion that is particularly helpful in outreach efforts as well as in coalition building is "mapping allies" (From the Praxis Project, at PraxicProject.org). Mapping allies is a process by which we explore various aspects of a working relationship and what resources, skills, experience, and strengths each group has to offer in such an alliance. Part of "mapping allies" explores both what we have to offer to these prospective allies, as well as what they have to offer us. One way to identify potential allies is to ask who:

- 1) Shares in the problem of pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking?
- 2) What would they get out of joining?
- 3) Who else would they bring?
- 4) Who would be alienated by their presence?

and then relate these questions to the following:

- 1) Why is it in their self-interest to coalesce?
- 2) What is their depth of concern?
- 3) What are the risks to them in joining you and your efforts?
- 4) What is the degree of difficulty to reach or organize them?

Using a framework such as mapping allies provides a means for us to identify and create relationships and partnerships thereby more effectively reaching new audiences.

Smart Recruitment

Smart recruitment grows out of the process of mapping allies. It means recruiting people and organizations in a way that increases our likelihood to be effective in these efforts. Recruitment takes enormous amount of time and energy. It is crucially important, but it can be a major undertaking. So being smart about it is really important.

First of all, never set someone up to be isolated. When recruiting, it is important to keep in mind the person or group you're recruiting and who you are recruiting them to join. I have seen far too many all or mostly white organizations who, in an attempt to become more multi-cultural, recruit one person of color; or organize an event while recruiting one organization of color. Identifying one contact, or having one voice at the table is not representational, and sets people of color (in this example) up unfairly. True outreach means establishing the relationships with people and organizations so that our organizations that are mostly white become truly multi-cultural. Secondly, smart recruitment means thinking through the questions, concerns and opportunities for developing partners before beginning the recruitment process. Know what you want and what you have to offer before walking in the door.

Levels of Coalition

I want to offer a framework or way of thinking about different kinds of relationships within a broad spectrum of coalitions. The term "coalition" is used over-broadly to mean any kind of working relationship. I submit that there are different levels of coalitions with increasing degrees of commitment and organizational cross-development.

Cooperation:

- Relationships forms around one area of information exchange
- Resources and organizations kept separate
- Usually short-term and project-oriented
- Little planning or evaluation, but there is some problem solving

It is possible, and often important, to cooperate with organizations from various political positions for specific actions. There is much cooperation that can occur between organizations or individuals for specific action or event from a wide variance of political or philosophical positions. Even people or organizations that hold diametrically opposed perspectives, and hold those perspectives very dear to themselves, can cooperate meaningfully for the purposes described above. For example, to encourage a county ordinance that would ban pornography shops from opening within 500 yards of a school, many different organizations, groups and individuals from a wide variety of political perspectives and varying depths of feelings about those beliefs could, and should, work together.

Coordination:

- Relationships are usually broader in scope
- More in-depth communications
- Resources specifically allocated by partnering organizations
- Longer in duration; Seen as a program rather than a project
- Requires some planning and evaluation

Coordinating with other organizations requires a deeper level of commitment to the relationship between both, or all, organizations than does a cooperative relationship. It also will likely require a greater agreement on the core beliefs. An activist group, for example, could coordinate with local police and prosecutors to better support prostitution survivors as they attempt to escape prostitution. There are likely many very deep and profound differences in perspective and philosophical core values between these organizations, but for the purposes of improving the support for prostitution survivors, a coordinating relationship can be established despite these differences.

Collaboration

- Relationships are inter-twined with open communication systems
- Resources are avidly shared and may be sought jointly
- Responsibilities and roles are clearly defined with leadership coming from various sources
- The venture has an articulated vision, and is planned with evaluation and redesign efforts based on performance and outcomes

True collaboration often also means collaborating across organizational structures, both formal and informal, and perhaps, creating new organizational structures. True collaboration requires that organizations examine their structures to ensure that they truly are as open as claimed. Collaboration also, by definition, requires a greater degree of mutuality in terms of core values and basic philosophical perspectives. There is still room for some degree of differences, but by and large, these should be rather limited in degree.

IN CONCLUSION

“THE MOST RADICAL STEP YOU CAN TAKE, IS YOUR NEXT ONE”

James Baldwin

It’s time to ratchet up our activism. We are living and acting in dangerous and lonely times. We need to act! And we need to act more aggressively and effectively. This short paper offers a very brief overview of some ideas about activism. There is plenty more. In addition to the ideas offered here, some other ideas for actions that need to be developed more fully within this movement include:

- Advocacy (both personal and public)
- Boycotts (strategically **not** supporting a business because of their politics)
- Girlcotts (strategically supporting a business because of their politics)
- Sit-ins
- Sing-ins
- Teach-ins
- Rallies
- Marches
- Writing and delivering sermons
- Street theatre

- Accountability sessions
- And much more

In addition to these specific action ideas, there is also a need to develop further how we support the organizational structures and the people who are involved in this kind of activism. This support is at least two-fold: fundraising (particularly creative fundraising that doesn't keep us beholden to funders who want us to do only certain things in certain ways) and personal (how do we support ourselves and each other to continue to do the work we're trying to do?). Each of these areas deserve not only further attention, but also further development within a feminist anti-pornography framework.

It's time for to create a national coalition; a means by which we can keep communicate, exchange and create resources, and a means by which we can develop more coordinated national voices. Let's have a national strategic plan! The Demand Dynamics Conferences are excellent steps. Let's create the structure to have another conference in no more than two years, with at least twice as many people in attendance. Let's create a means to organize and support regional conferences.

There is a need to create means by which we can share and develop our skills to do this work. It seems foolish and wasteful to require that new activists continue to be put in the position of learning the skills that we, as a movement, already have. Every generation does not have to relearn how to make fire. Let's make sure that the next generations of our movement have an easy means by which to develop the skills they need to do this work.

Let's have fun. Let's laugh and dance and eat good food and enjoy each other's company. Let's work together to create model curricula for Social Work, Nursing, Law, Sociology, Public Administration, and Communications.

This is something we can do. We can, in our lifetimes, end pornography, prostitution, and sex trafficking. We can create movement, and a world filled with communities that promote the fullest range of human rights and where people fully experience social justice. We can achieve the impossible!

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NOTES

ⁱ Shortly after the conference at which this paper was presented, Andrea Dworkin died. I write this in admiration of her work, in awe of her life, and in deep appreciation of her legacy. Thank-you Andrea, from the bottom of my soul, for all you were.

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