



ASIF

**ANARCHO SURREALIST
INSURRECTIONARY FEMINIST**

MANIFESTO

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UNTORELLI PRESS

UNTORELLI@RISEUP.NET UNTORELLIPRESS.NOBLOGS.ORG

THE HORRIFYING SPECTRE OF THE
ANARCHO SURREALIST INSURRECTIONARY FEMINIST
VISION IS HAUNTING THE WORLD
IT'S ALMOST
AS IF
IT IS

In June 1973, a number of women in Melbourne decided to create AS IF. We came together through the desire to come to accept responsibility for who we are, and as such to discover and express the totality of human experiences available to us.

We desire to constantly become more than we are; to challenge the narrow focus of emotions and thoughts implanted in us by the concepts 'man' and 'woman'; to experience the full range of limitless possibilities pulsing and flowing through our relationships with other human beings. We desire a society based on true equality, freedom and Joy.

We desire the destruction of the existing capitalist, sexist, racist, ageist, class divided society ... because we perceive it to be a ladder propped up by a fundamental denial of human equality. A 'Man' made ladder not built of wood, but human lives.

We are born into society and immediately judged according to our sex, colour and class. To be free under capitalism just means free to step on someone else's life, if you desire to climb the ladder to success and security ... (ie more money). However, if you are a woman you are trapped inside the Man/Woman hierarchy. There is no-one else to step on. If you are a woman, regardless of colour or class, the process of acceptance into the white, male dominated society involves stepping on yourself.

We demand a Sexual Revolution, to affirm our equality as human beings. We believe that this must occur for the possibility to exist for truly loving relationships between human beings. We demand a Social Revolution, to establish a balance between the form of distribution and the form of production. We believe that this must occur for the possibility to exist for human beings to be freed from a situation, where they must sell their labour power in order to survive.

We believe that all human beings carry with them the potential to live harmoniously together without imposed authority. We believe that the 'Richard Nixons' of this world have been brutalised to such a degree, that we cannot consider them to be human beings. We regard them as dangerous animals or worse ... mechanised robots bent on destruction and personal power. We believe that these so called 'people' must either be divested of any tool they may choose to use against human beings, or be exterminated. We believe that sufficient wealth and technological know how exist in the world today, to provide a happy life for all people, free from unnecessary toil.

We are faced now with the problem of how to destroy a society that not only creates misery and fear, but destroys the natural environment in an all consuming greedy struggle for power. A society that has programmed us all

from birth to become 'good citizens', 'good workers' etc who uphold the existing order; who reproduce in the accepted position (ie missionary); who perpetuate a preselected reality that we have had no share in creating. A society that reduces us all to the level of objects to be bought and sold according to our value in terms of this society.

As women we feel we must point out to our 'fellow human beings' that women suffer a double oppression. The customs and prejudices of a patriarchal society impose upon us in every area of our daily lives an essential inferiority. Every time we see advertisements that use women's breast to sell some useless product; every time we walk alone at night ... we are reminded of our sexuality. Every wolfwhistle reminds us that we are women, and that women are sex. We walk with fear in our hearts because we know that inferior beings face a constant danger of being used, and abused, regardless of their feelings or desires. As revolutionary women we are aware that every advertisement etc - reminds men that women are sex. However alone in the dark, faced with a man who sees us only as 'cunt', we cannot afford to sit down and chat with him about his conditioning. How many men have been raped? How many men spend hours every morning and every night, wiping on and off a plastic mask because they are frightened of growing old alone?

We deplore a society that considers a woman who has had the courage to lead her own life; who has refused to become another babymachine imprisoned in suburbia, as an oddity. "There must be something wrong with her if no-one ever asked her ... she must be either frigid or a whore.

The value system of capitalism dictates a situation where men are conditioned to believe that they are potentially whole (ie self determining); and women are conditioned to believe that to become whole they must have a man. Women are conditioned to distort their physical appearance, and to resort to so called 'feminine' wiles, because they must trap a man. A fear is instilled into women from early childhood that if they do not, they will end up as one of those hideous old crones ... the ones with glass arses, who bake cream sponges and knit booties for the church BAZAAR ... Female children are conditioned into believing that the only other alternatives are domesticity, the fate of the frigid masculine career women, or prostitution. Our culture glorifies femininity and thus programmes the DESIRE.

The image of femininity screams out from the media. An image that is totally unobtainable. The serene glamour puss with two lovely kiddies, a spotless home, and a husband that brings flowers and chocolates home ... just does not exist. By sanctifying these elements of femininity, society conveniently excludes women from effective and meaningful participation. How can she possibly find

time while she's fluttering around trying desperately to become what she thinks he wants her to be.

We reject the existing definitions of 'masculine' and 'feminine', because they have both been defined in hierarchical terms, and perpetuate the mind-fuck of role polarities. We believe that the concept of freedom presupposes the realisation of the androgynous inherent in both women and men.

We look to a society based on human values other than buying and selling. We demand the destruction of a social reality that denies sensitivity, and encourages aggression, competition and mistrust. A social reality that demands human beings sacrifice the totality of their possibilities for an image of themselves, and to sell that image in exchange for acceptance. A social reality that casts women into the role of slave to the slaves.

We are constantly being asked by male revolutionaries to explain why the 'woman question' is so important. We believe that the Sexual Revolution challenges the basic psychic oppression of submission to authority, common to all people. We believe that political consciousness is consciousness of all oppression. Just because it is we as women who suffer the sexual oppression so directly, we must not fall into the trap of regarding all men as the enemy, but instead recognise our responsibility as revolutionary women to raise their consciousness, as well as the consciousness of our sisters. If we do not do this they will never understand the true meaning of freedom either. We believe that the Revolution must be fought by women and men side by side.

We feel that many radical feminist, women's liberationists do not offer a sufficient analysis of the oppression of women. Through their experiences in consciousness raising groups, they tend to see the oppression of women as a primary oppression, and fail to understand fully where their specific oppression fits into the complexity of relations of oppression within this system. The radical socialist, women's liberationists, see the complexity of relations of oppression, but ignore the experience of radical feminism. They posit Socialism as a solution to women's oppression. The historical lesson we must learn from the Russian Revolution in particular, is that this is just not necessarily true. However it is important to understand that the oppression of women is INTRINSIC to capitalism, but not to Socialism. As radical women's liberationists we feel we must adopt a position that is a synthesis of the two, for we believe that the Sexual and the Social Revolution must go hand in hand for the social reality to change in a really meaningful way. We believe that taking this position is the only way to create a political consciousness truly linked with life. Thus we feel it is imperative to raise the consciousness of both women and men regarding their sexual, economic and cultural oppression.

We believe the bourgeois culture reflects and reproduces bourgeois reality, and that bourgeois reality not only includes the physical world, but the mental world. We call ourselves Surrealists because as revolutionaries we believe it is imperative to develop a revolutionary culture that expands the vision of the future, and sabotages the reality of the present. We believe that unless the economic, sexual and cultural patterns are changed, we will remain trapped inside an oppressive social structure. We believe that by accepting the logic structure of the present as the only mental process within our range of possibilities, WE PERPETUATE 'BOURGEOIS MENTALITY'. The reality around us tells us that 'bourgeois mentality' is intimately linked with submission to authority, and that submission to authority perpetuates alienation and exploitation.

"Being and the conditions of being are reflected, anchored, and reproduced in the psychical structure of men and women at the same time as they form that structure". As cultural terrorists we must constantly challenge this trap for it limits the vision of the future. The conditioning process we all go through makes us desperately frightened of social and mental freedom, simply because it conditions us to accept 'this reality' as the only one available to us.

"WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH"

We must also constantly attack mysticism, for mystics impose an individual's vision upon other people. They believe that 'the master' is in some way different to ordinary human beings. 'The master' discovers a path to self knowledge and perceives this knowledge as GOD. He or she believes that they are a 'link' with 'god', and this makes them a very special person. They set about trying to save everyone else by telling them that they too can tread the same path. We believe that we are all exactly the same except for the purely biological differences that make some of us women and some of us men; and the 'tip of the iceberg' that makes us all individuals. We believe this 'tip' to be extremely important, because it means that everybody is special: it also means that we must all find our own individual path to knowledge (ie self awareness) ... with a little help from our friends. Mystics do not believe that freedom (ie heaven etc) is possible here on earth, and have thus for centuries been a tool in the service of the State. They believe that it is the individual not the social structure that is guilty ... "You have sinned brother/sister etc ... " The essential weapon is FEAR ... "Dig my trip, and catch my boat to heaven Man, or be damned forever in the fires of hell". They thus place this terrible weapon in the service of the State and not only perpetuate a basically static social reality (eg in India) thus inhibiting the free will of the masses; but they preserve their own personal power. We view

all religion as a powerful and dangerous weapon against radical social change, and as such must be constantly attacked and demystified.

As revolutionary women we must constantly fight the ghastly weight of self doubt lurking just inside us. “Do you really respect me?” “Was I good?”. The problem of feeling individually guilty, and thus doubting ourselves. Self doubt not only means that we allow ourselves to be oppressed, but that we inhibit the process of establishing a true basis of solidarity with men, and we perpetuate the situation where it is impossible to reach out because our individual fear is still so great. By not understanding this fear in its social context, we deny ourselves the opportunity to reach out and discover new ways of relating to each other.

“One must come to realize that the principal of self denial is harmful, lifeless and downright reactionary.”

- Reich

This is why we must constantly challenge the demands made upon us by men to prove ourselves in their terms. We must not wait for men to take sexual initiatives, but rather face the fear of humiliation with the knowledge that we are beautiful, and that we are potentially whole human beings. We must learn to explain our feelings to men in such a way that they can relate to our oppression. We must be prepared to give our energy, our support and our love to our sisters at any time. We must reject focusing on fucking as product and learn to explore sensuality and orgasm as an expression of affection and love. We must explore our bisexuality, realizing that as we do this we assume a freedom that inside the present social situation does not exist.

“Some people seem to think that the most revolutionary thing to be is bisexual, actually the most revolutionary thing to be is yourself.”

We must challenge the family structure, for it is the patriarchal nuclear family that constitutes one of the ruling class's most effective weapons against radical change. As long as authoritarian behavioural patterns are instilled into our children from birth, a fundamentally oppressive social system will continue to perpetuate itself. As long as this psychological warfare continues our children will be robbed, as we were, of the opportunity to develop as creative, loving free human beings.

It is against the ignorance and fear that alienates and thus isolates us from each other, that we must wage a terrible war for survival. But we are not

just interested in survival, we are interested in our potential for life.

“The real meaning of revolution is not a change in management but a change in Man. This change we must make in our own lifetime and not for our children’s sake, for the revolution must be born of joy and not sacrifice.

- D. Cohn Bendit

We believe that by destroying the mentality of submission to authority in ourselves and others, we will not only be creating new weapons to destroy the State, but we will be sabotaging the self-perpetuating process of capitalism.

The formation of AS IF constitutes a declaration of war against bourgeois reality. We intend to utilise every weapon available to us to destroy every barrier men and women have built in a horrifyingly effective attempt to stunt the imagination.

Without imagination, how in the face of the material and spiritual poverty we see around us, and the psychological suffering we all share can we possibly conceive of a society based on joy?

Without imagination where do we find enough HOPE to surmount our fear and guide our fists to smash once and for all the walls in our minds that ultimately imprison us?

*as I wrote this my clenched fist shattered the window I had
been given to look through my fear
I saw the purple vine explode from the earth
its flame focused the music reflected in my hand
as the smoke solidified the silence began
in the stillness of my body I plucked its strings
and sang my pain
when the song was over I noticed that I had
evaporated the edge of my pillow
I have forgotten the words of the song ...
but they are still with me*

I AM A BED OF DESIRE SUSPENDED IN A GLASS HOUSE OF FEAR

THIS IS JUST A REMINDER

that when you put your fist through a glass window

IT BREAKS

We shall build our barricades with reinforced steel, and reinforced dreams

We shall fight with poetry and guns

*ALL
POWER
TO
THE
IMAGINATION*

who are you?

**THEY CALL ME
NAMELESS WILDERNESS!**

where does your insight lead you?

**INTO UNTRAMMELLED
FREEDOM!**

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