

THE EFFEMINIST MANIFESTO

principles of revolutionary effeminism

ON THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

1. SEXISM. All women are oppressed by all men, including ourselves. This systematic oppression is called sexism.
2. MALE SUPREMECY. Sexism itself is the product of male supremacy, which produces all the other forms of oppression that patriarchal societies exhibit; racism, classism, ageism, economic exploitation, ecological imbalance.
3. GYNARCHISM. Only that revolution that strikes at the root of all oppression can end any and all of its forms. That is why we are among those who believe that women will seize power from the patriarchy and, thereby, totally change life on this planet as we know it.
4. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP. Exactly how women will go about seizing power is no business of ours, being men. But as effeminate men oppressed by masculinist standards, we ourselves have a stake in the destruction of the patriarchy, and thus we must struggle with the dilemma of being partisans - as effeminists - of a revolution opposed to us - as men. To conceal our partisanship and remain inactive for fear of offending would be despicable; to act independently of women's leadership or to tamper with questions which women will decide would be no less despicable. Therefore, we have a duty to take sides, to struggle to change ourselves, but also, necessarily to act.

ON THE OPPRESSION OF EFFEMINATE MEN

5. MASCULINISM. Faggots and all effeminate men are oppressed by the patriarchy's systematic enforcement of masculinist standards, whether these standards are expressed as physical, mental, emotional, or sexual stereotypes of what is desirable in a man.
6. EFFEMINISM. Our purpose is to urge all such men as ourselves (whether celibate, homosexual, or heterosexual) to become traitors to the class of men by uniting in a movement of Revolutionary Effeminism so that collectively we can struggle to change ourselves from non-masculinists into anti-masculinists and begin attacking those aspects of the patriarchal system that most directly oppress us.
7. PREVIOUS MALE IDEOLOGIES. Three previous attempts by men to create a politics for fighting oppression have failed because of their incomplete analysis: the Male Left, Male Liberation, and Gay Liberation. These and other formulations, such as sexual libertarianism and the counter-culture, are all tactics for preserving power in men's hands by pretending to struggle for change. We specifically reject a carry-over from one or more of these earlier ideologies - the damaging combination of ultra-egalitarianism, anti-leadership, anti-technology, and downward mobility. All are based on a politics of guilt and a hypocritical attitude towards power which prevents us from developing skills urgently needed in our struggle and which confuses the competence needed for revolutionary work with the careerism of those who seek accommodation within the patriarchal system.
8. COLLABORATORS AND CAMP-FOLLOWERS. Even we effeminate men are given an option by the patriarchy: to become collaborators in the task of keeping women in their place. Faggots, especially, are offered a sub-culture by the patriarchy which is designed to keep us oppressed and also increase the oppression of women. This sub-culture includes a combination of anti-women mimicry and self-mockery known as camp which, with its trivializing effect, would deny us any chance of awakening to our own suffering, the expression of which is called madness by the patriarchy, but which can be recognised as revolutionary sanity by the oppressed.

9. SADO-MASCULINITY: ROLE-PLAYING AND OBJECTIFICATION. The male principle, as exhibited in the last ten thousand years, is chiefly characterized by an appetite for objectification, role-playing, and sadism. First, the masculine preference for thinking as opposed to feeling encourages men to regard other people as things, and to use them accordingly. Second, inflicting pain upon people and animals has come to be deemed a mark of manhood, thereby explaining the well-known tendency for rape and torture. Finally, a lust for power - dominance is rewarded in the playing out of that ultimate role. The man, whose capacity is amply displayed in witch-hunts, lynchings, programs, and episodes of genocide, not to mention the day-to-day (often life-long) subservience that he exacts from those closest to him.

Masculine bias, thus, appears in our behaviour whenever we act out the following categories, regardless of which element in each pair we are most drawn to at any given moment: subject/object; dominant/submissive; master/slave; butch/femme. All of these false dichotomies are inherently sexist, since they express the desire to be masculine or to possess the masculine in someone else. The racism of white faggots often reveals the same set of polarities regardless of whether they choose to act out the dominant or submissive role with black or third-world men. In all cases, only by rejecting the very terms of these categories can we become effeminists. This means explicitly rejecting, as well, the objectification of people based on such things as age; body build; colour, size, or shape of facial features, eyes, hair, genitals, ethnicity or race; physical or mental handicap; life-style; sex. We must therefore strive to detect and expose every embodiment of the Male Principle, no matter how and where it may be enshrined and glorified, including those arenas of faggot objectification (baths, bars, docks, parks) where power-dominance, as it operates in the selecting of roles and objects, is known as "cruising".

10. MASOCHISM AND TRANSVESTITISM. Among those aspects of our oppression which the man has foisted upon us, two male heterosexual perversions, in particular, are popularly thought of as being "acceptable" behaviour for effeminate men: male transvestitism and masochism. Just as sadism and masculinism, by merging into one identity, tend to become indistinguishable one from the other, so masochism and transvestitism are born of an identical impulse towards mock subservience in men, as a way to project intense anti-woman feelings and also to pressure women into conformity by providing those stereotypes most appealing to the sado-masculinist. Certainly, sado-masoch-transvestitism in all its forms is the very opposite of effeminism. Both the masochist and the transvestite are particularly an insult to women since they overtly parody female oppression and pose as object lessons in servility.

11. LIFE-STYLE; APPEARANCE AND REALITY We must learn to discover and value the female principle in men as something inherent, beyond roles or superficial decoration, and thus, beyond definition by any one particular lifestyle (such as the recent androgyny fad, transsexuality or other purely personal solutions). Therefore, we do not automatically support or condemn faggots or effeminists who live alone, who live together as couples, who live together in all-male collectives, who live with women, or who live in any other way - since all of these modes of living in and of themselves can be sexist but can also conceivably come to function as bases for anti-sexist struggle. Even as we learn to affirm in ourselves the co-operative impulse and to admire in each other what is tender and gentle, what is aesthetic, considerate, affectionate, lyrical, sweet, we should not confuse our own time with that post-revolutionary world when our effeminate natures will be free to express themselves openly without fear of punishment or danger or oppressing others. Above all, we must remember that it is not merely a change of appearance that we seek, but a change in reality.

12. TACTICS. We mean to support, defend, and promote effeminism in all men everywhere by any means except those inherently male supremacist or those in conflict with the goals of feminists intent on seizing power. We hope to find militant ways for fighting our oppression that will meet these requirements. Obviously, we do not seek the legalization of faggotry, quotas or civil rights for faggots, or other measures designed to reform the patriarchy. Practically, we see three phases of activity: naming our enemies to start with, next confronting them, and ultimately diverting them from their power. This means both Cock Rocker and the Drag Rocker among counter-cultist heroes, both the Radical Therapist, and the Faggot-Torturer among effeminate-fearing psychiatrists, both the creators of beefcake pornography and transvestite mockeries. It also means all branches of the patriarchy that institutionalize the persecution of faggots (school, church, army, prison, asylum, old-age home).

But whatever the immediate target, we would be wise to prepare for all forms of sabotage and rebellion which women might ask of us, since it is not as pacifists that we can expect to serve in the emerging world-wide anti-gender revolution. We must also constantly ask ourselves and each other for a greater measure of risk and commitment than we may have dreamt was possible yesterday. Above all, our joining in this struggle must discover in us a new aspect for women, a new ability to love each other as effeminists, both of which have previously been denied us by our own misogyny and fear of feminine qualities, so that our bonding until now has been the traditional male solidarity that is always against the best interests of women and pernicious to our own sense of effeminist selfhood, as well.

13. DRUDGERY AND CHILDCARE: REDEFINING GENDER. Our first and most important step, however, must be to take upon ourselves at least our own share of the day-to-day life-sustaining drudgery that is usually consigned to women alone. To be useful in this way can release women to do other work of their own choosing and can also begin to redefine gender for the next generation. Of paramount concern here, we ask to be included in the time consuming work of raising and caring for children, as a duty, a right, and a privilege.

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Authorised by M.U. Gay Liberation.