

Men, Sexism and the Class Struggle



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The purpose of this booklet, is to positively contribute to and stimulate some genuine debate about the role that we (as working class men) perform in the oppression of working class women in this capitalist society. Because things will not change, even after 'a revolution', unless we also come to terms with the way that we (as men) have been screwed-up by this society to oppress women.

This society is dominated by men and men dominate each other, while women are treated as the inferior sex and not even allowed a look-in. The less we challenge this status quo, the more we leave 'anti-sexism' as a privileged game of the middle class and the more we are patting the backs of the bosses and the ruling class.

The views expressed in this booklet are those of the individual author and not necessarily of M.A.S.S. (Men Against Sexist Shit) (or Zabalaza Books - ed.). Please write if you want to, but keep it positive (address at the back). Anything anti-working class, sexist, racist or homophobic goes straight in the bin.



Wake Up Brother

Capitalism is a system in which a few have the power over the majority. In order to keep us from uniting and rebelling, we're divided into classes, so that we're not only kept down by the rich and powerful, but also by each other. Thus helping to prop up the capitalist system that's kicking the shit out of us.

The ruling class relies heavily on this divisiveness in maintaining its stranglehold over our lines. So ain't it time the politics of everyday life - the shit we have to go through everyday - **got talked about** - the links between sexism, racism and all the rest of the crap that capitalism means for most of us. Because all the shit in this society is linked. There are NO 'single Issues.' - Fuck the patronising liberal middle class bloody 'new man' crap.

We have to start acting in ways towards each other that benefit our existence and not our rulers - we have to start valuing each other rather than devaluing ourselves and the people around us. So that we may learn how to co-operate and share the power we can gain from working together as equals - in order to create a better society for **all of us** to live in.

As men, we must acknowledge our socially privileged position and challenge the power we hold as a sex. We must not forget that **the oppressed can be oppressors too**. Things will not be different after 'the revolution' (who's revolution?) unless we start challenging the power we have as men NOW. The struggle against capitalism, sexism, sexual violence, 'the old boy network' (as its called) and all the oppression that is directed against women begins in our own lives, because it's in us as well. Somewhere along the line, we (as men), have got to confront ourselves, learn how to support each other and stop making out that the circle of misery and pain our screwed-up negative attitudes and behaviour cause - from rape and abuse to battering and emotional cruelty has nothing to do with us. **WE HAVE GOT TO STOP PASSING THE BUCK ON TO WOMEN.**

Until we (as men) get our act together and start working together in our communities with women (as equals), we will continue to struggle against each other and play into the hands of the bosses and the ruling class.

Genuine revolutionary activity is a shared experience which includes each and everyone taking part and having a say. For as Emma Goldman said "If I can't dance to it, its not my revolution."

A Deeper Problem?

I reckon 'sexist behaviour' is a symptom of a deeper problem. Within present society we grow up knowing very little about our desires, our needs or ourselves.

The family passes on it's own sickness to us; we're forced into accepting, in some way or other, its values. Domination and submission, living in our father's shadow, listening to our 'elders' impose their views on us.

For me as a young man, one of four kids, there was never space and time to find out much more than one view. School was and is a factory, or prison, that moulds us into obedience, that teaches us passivity (for we fear punishment).

So what's this to do with sexism? Well, in one way or another we grow up lost and fucked up. This shows itself in our behaviour to others. I grew up ashamed of my sexual desires, I grew up repressed, I grew up as a working class lad without an understanding of class, or capitalism.

Through our lives the last thing we're encouraged to do is talk about our feelings. Our sexual relationships become reflections of our experience. So do our non-sexual ones.

When people are treated like mindless idiots from birth and through a good part of their lives, only a fool could expect them to be balanced or together and in touch with their feelings.

Capitalism treats us like morons; our relationships are polluted by its values. Capitalism is a system. Capitalism kneecaps us, in that our growth as humans is stunted by the force-feeding of its ideals.

Competition, repression, sexual repression, disallowed wanking, desensitising treatment through school, factory, home, life. Emotionally bullied, conditioned ideals, fear of oppression (as in saying you're not happy with its values). Feeling powerless. Feeling inadequate socially, that is to say "I'm not as good as you, you are better than me.", "I'm nothing, I can't do that.", "They're in the know, I'm not.", "You wouldn't like me if you knew such and such about me.", "I don't deserve to be loved.", "I'm a failure.", "My body isn't as beautiful as capitalism says it should be." etc.....

Men, Sexism and the Class Struggle

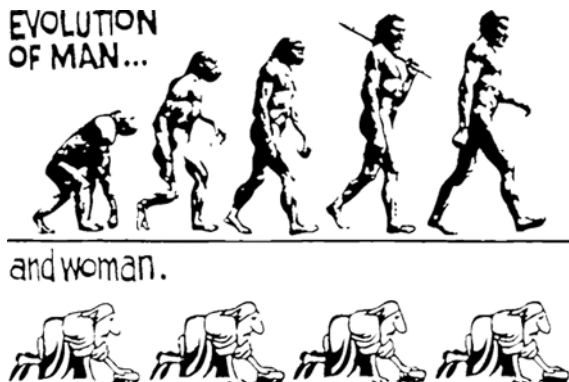
We as men living in a patriarchal society need to evaluate our position in society, need to evaluate our position as silent participants in perpetuating sexism, racism and classism. We also need to develop an understanding of gender relations; by so doing this will foster an understanding of women that is driven by sensitivity and empathy.

Before we can proceed to dismantle the chains of sexism and racism, which are both heavily ingrained in our patterns of thinking and reasoning, it is vitally important that we deconstruct our collective history of viewing women as objects of physical desire.

I feel that when we (men) arrive at the position of uncovering our personal prejudices, sexist attitudes and so forth, we will become self-empowered. Self-empowerment will develop sensitive disposition and tenderness of mind, heart and soul to relate to women, black people, gay men and women, and people with disabilities, be it mental or physical, as Individuals.

It is only then that we as men can direct our thoughts, attention, and commitment to addressing the important issue of Class Struggle; and of course the Issue of racism which is central to our understanding of the Class Struggle In contemporary British Society.

Marc Kayada



Men Playing with Fear

Men of all age, size and race are gripped by constant fear of each other. This scenario approximates as follows: white men fear white men, black men fear black men, white men fear black men, and daily confrontation of racism results in black men being 'paranoid' of white men (and white society).

The important question being: where does male fear originate? As a sociologist one would assert that fear is learnt in the home. In the form of domestic violence... daddy hitting mummy. To be followed by fighting in school playgrounds. Furthermore to be glorified in sport (on the football terraces of Millwall Football Club - to be 'hard' equates with being 'alright mate').

Men playing with fear is legitimised by the rampant, destructive, calculating violence of 'Rambo.'

Above all, male indifference, male aggression, is perfectly demonstrated in the House Of Commons in the way of shout at me - abuse me - question time.

What we find is a constant pattern, chain if you like, reflecting differing layers of male fear. On the heterosexual battlefields of London, hostility, jealousy and insensitivity reflect male conduct at it's best. Good looking, sensitive men are victims of male paranoia, emotional deprivation and least of all physical ugliness.

It is necessary to present an alternative viewpoint on the current subject. For I have up till now concentrated on heterosexual relations. To arrive at some sort of equilibrium I will briefly refer to the gay community. Gay men that I know, gay men that I have met in pubs, clubs, gay photographers that I have worked with as a model, gay casting directors that I have met auditioning for work, all have left an ever lasting impression - in the way of awareness, sensitivity, warmth, and appreciation of male beauty.

Whether this is motivated by sexual desire is not the point. The point is, that heterosexual men need to gather under a forum of some sort to discuss weaknesses, feelings of insecurity, jealousy and anxieties. Only then will heterosexual men be in the position to detach our inner most feelings with regard to jealousy and appreciation of male beauty be it the (1) fat-short chap or (2) the slim-tall individual.

The possible benefits to be derived following the above mentioned prescription are immense. For it will certainly put an end to the heated swimming pool of overzealous male competition.

Marc Kayada

How we define it

I was brought up as a catholic (though I'm not any longer) in the north of Ireland. Left home and country in my early twenties, nearly ten years ago. I've always identified myself with working class Republicanism and the universal struggle for freedom. But it is really only since moving to England that I've become aware of the women's movement and some of the issues it has raised. Now at the end of an eight year long relationship and with two small English children to look after, I feel there are a few things I'd like to say.

Firstly I hate the term "sexism". For me it's a word invented by a hierarchy to suppress the real need of ordinary people - equality. Whenever I hear it, rather than helping women and men to take on new roles in the home, at work, with kids, it is used as a weapon that divides us. For the most part "sexism" is an illness that man must do something about. He must change, with an implication that woman, as victim of man's oppression, need not. As men, we are left completely at odds with ourselves, hating our gender for all the wrongs done in our name, as women, they are consigned to wait until we get it right.

Unless we are happy to live as men; to relate to women with all its failure and success; to relate to other men, gay or straight; to parent our children for as long as they need us, we have no chance. There is a delight to be had in being a man, which capitalism since its rise around the time of the industrial revolution has put us out of touch with. Our fathers, and their fathers before them, were put off the land and had to take work in cities and jobs that were unskilled and often degrading. They worked ten to twelve hour shifts, doing meaningless jobs that pushed them towards any form of escaping their mundane lives. Women, who previously had taken an active role in the working life of the farm, were confined exclusively to the family home. The frustrated man's first victims were the women they lived with, in some cases their children - so passing the problem down the years, on to our generation. But with capitalism in crisis and not far from its final death, men and women have no need to take out our frustrated anger on each other or "innocent" victims.

From past experience, I know the struggle for change is something that you can ignore but never avoid. However we don't do ourselves or women in general any favours by condemning men as a bunch of childish shits, completely responsible for every wrong in the world. That song is the same as the old one, only in reverse. We are all in this mess together - Margaret Thatcher is an example of a women struggling to get free of a role made for her by a man - her father, who ended up using the patriarchy to stop any women coming up behind her. The struggle has to be to find a way of working together that is truly egalitarian, that dumps the

idea of a boss (male or female) whose life is somehow worth more than the rest of us. To create a co-operative of equals, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race etc., where the needs of every individual have to be satisfied before the whole can be seen as successful. This means much more than simply trying not to be "sexist" nor using words that women may find offensive - it means tackling it all at once. What is it to be a man in the positive? - What is the struggle beneath class struggle? - How do we work our way beyond the situation we're in?

If there is a future for men besides paying for the collected sins of patriarchy, we should begin by ditching words like "sexism", and "racism". Then we might begin to see the humanity that we share with one another, instead of letting the differences that we feel, rule our thinking. I believe women want to be treated as individuals, want to be dealt with in their own right, want their share of the "action" and not to be spoken down or up to. But while the hierarchy rubs its hands with glee, men and women are fighting over who is oppressing who, races sit apart from one another, getting more and more paranoid as to what the other's real intentions are! It's the old colonial maxim - 'divide and rule' - still alive and well in the 1990's. To me none of these "isms" make any sense unless you see them in the context of a hierarchy. The only way to combat the injustices they represent is to turn our backs on the symbols of hierarchical capitalism and get down to make our own futures free from the control of the state, from the values that our 'head' 'masters' at school tried to batter into us. To stand half a chance of doing that, we need to positively contribute to that future as men, however we choose to define that.

Mick



‘Sex’

‘We are all racist and sexist in some way, but what the fuck!’

**from a 1985 issue of the
paper *Class War***

Well, so much for ancient history. Sure, we think that sexual politics are relevant only if realised and talked about on our terms. This means kicking out the specialised language along with the middle class trendies, who drone on, boring us with it. We’ve got to make revolutionary and sexual politics the property of the working class, ourselves. Why, in our anarchist circles is there so much animated discussion about the subject of sexual politics? It’s a reflection of the society that we line in. Working class people aren’t usually motivated in a revolutionary direction because of a handy ready-made ideology available like a packet of Daz, or the sufferings of the third world peasantry. No, the primary motivating factor for many of us is our own individual experiences of oppression and that includes the intimate personal desires, feelings and repression that affect us in every conceivable manner. This is part of sexual politics.

One of the reasons the working class don’t automatically rebel against this society, except on a gut level, is that they, and all of us, are trapped in a web of conflicting emotions and ideas. As individuals we internalise our violence, turning it against those close to us, such as people we have relationships with and others in our class. We can’t ignore sexual politics for ‘real’ revolutionary politics, as they are deeply interrelated on all levels.

Unlike what we think of as theoretical politics (knowing the differences between Marx and Bakunin, or what happened at Kronstadt in 1921), sexual politics is something that directly effects us all immediately and can be talked about without the rudiments of ‘prior knowledge’ by anyone. In fact, the liveliest debates and arguments at our meetings revolve around the sexual politics issue, as they do in every pub and factory in strange, convoluted terms, offensive to the ears of the sensitive trendies.

We say its Impossible to predict how an anarchist society or even a decent sized anarchist movement would evolve as regards personal and sexual relationships. We have no wish to reflect today’s conformity based on monogamy only to create an alternative conformity. We can’t put value judgments on peoples sexual expressions, varied as they are, but that doesn’t stop us in our present situation from examining the prevailing mores and even the alternatives. Especially the alternatives as many comrades delude themselves that they’ve reached a state of ‘non-sexism’ mostly for internal consumption or even to dazzle the gullible amongst us.

Within the anarchist movement, or anywhere else for that matter, we can't and must not tolerate sexism and general anti-social behaviour. It's no good merely talking about sexual politics; it's got to be backed by real change and practice, regardless of the established norms or our own illusions. This can only be achieved, first of all by genuine debate, something that's sadly lacking in our movement and elsewhere. Hiding behind slogans or entrenched so-called alternatives that are nothing of the kind just isn't good enough. Genuine debate, not the parroting of ready made platitudes but something involving real thinking about real issues would help end the alienation that reigns in the majority or our gatherings. Maybe those people who sit there and say nothing won't have to be cajoled into participation - it will develop as a matter of course. After all, if we can't speak or give meaning to our individual feelings and experiences, how far will we progress as a movement?

There is no doubt that personal change is required from all of us. If we can't challenge certain aspects of our own individual sexuality and selves, how can we possibly threaten, yet alone defeat the state and capitalist system? Within our own groups and collectives, ideas should manifest themselves as practical activity. For example, assistance for those of us who require space and support to escape from an oppressive relationship (yes, self-styled anarchist men have been known to beat up their lovers, or subject them to psychological violence - not such a rare event). If we can't handle these situations it's no good pontificating about page three of *The Sun*. Besides why don't we ever come to grips with such things as images, and the way we relate to them? Things such as gay and lesbian experience, desire, fantasies, what attracts us to other people - and what repels us. It's about time we stopped criticising others without looking at the terms of our own relationships. If we talked about some of these things it might invigorate the terms of the on-going discussion about sexual politics.

We must be able to reach the state where all members and supporters are capable and confident of expressing themselves and be understood. This requires as much effort as bringing out a paper. Maybe more. But it will have to become a reality if we are to break out of our ghetto.

We ultimately regard a diversity of sexual expression as desirable; preferably with as much experimentation and pleasure as possible.

Nobody is 'non-sexist' - male, female, straight, bisexual or gay - and we all have to struggle, develop and change ourselves continuously. Sexual politics isn't something to hide behind or from; it's an integral part of our politics in general. We say there can't be a revolution without sexual liberation and there can't be sexual liberation without revolution.

Feminism vs. Gay Rights

The game is up. For too long we have seen the spectre of Equal Opportunities, the idea that various 'oppressed' groups can somehow join hands in a grand dance of joy, find some common cause. History teaches us that one person's happiness is another's sadness. The overall aim of the Equal Opportunities industry is to perpetuate the myth that people can evolve to a wonderful point of equilibrium where everyone's interests are protected and respected, no one oppressed.

There is an intense conflict of interest between Gay Men and Feminists. 1970's Women's Libbers loathed Gay Men, and denounced us as being the most patriarchal of all men - taking sexism to such an extent that we want to exclude women from all our social, emotional and sexual relationships. The classic feminist '70's novel, Maralyn Fench's *The Women's Room* mentions Gay Men once, and in very negative terms.

Two years ago I did some voluntary work at a left wing advice centre in Sheffield. I was the only Gay person and I used to bring in the Pink Paper, a free lesbian and gay information paper. Soon the feminists were trying to get the Pink Paper banned from the centre; the main reason was that it took the 0898 advertising. The feminists and their desperate 'anti-sexist' men allies insisted that the Pink Paper was sexist as these adverts turned men into 'sex objects.'

I was further criticised for refusing to condemn porn. I felt at the time that many Gay Men I knew (not all) had benefited from seeing gay porn, had learnt to appreciate other men's bodies and to express their desires and fantasies with the help of porn. I argued that lesbians and gay men would also bear the brunt of any tightening of anti-obscenity laws.

I was further denounced by the self-styled anti-sexist crew for admitting that I visited a gay pub that had male strippers performing. Again, I was accused of 'exploiting' and 'using' these men as objects - chance would be a fine thing! In fact most male strippers are straight and their teasing of gay men makes me wonder who is really getting the last laugh.

I began to suss that feminists and gay men didn't have a common interest at all. I am not interested in speaking for all gay men, and won't even try to speak for lesbians. All I would say is that I know that I am not the only person who finds the feminist habit of 'political lesbianism' a put down of genuine same sex relationships: Some Straight Feminists will at times make it clear that they are so appalled by the way men behave towards women that they will settle for 'Second Best' until a man who proves his non-sexist worth appears on the scene.

I soon realised that the fragile support left and assorted radicals and revolutionaries give Gay Liberation is very conditional. I feel that gay men are not accept-

ed as being good at times, bad at times, like any other section of the populace but somehow expected to live up to a high standard of idealism that our supposed left allies cannot live up to themselves.

It is somehow considered worse for a gay man to be 'Racist' or 'Sexist' or to be 'Capitalist.' Somehow we should know better, know that we should be linking up to all the other minority groups in some common cause. I realised that the opposition I faced from the feminists was so harsh because I was somehow a renegade in terms of the struggle for Equal Opportunities, and I had broken too obviously.

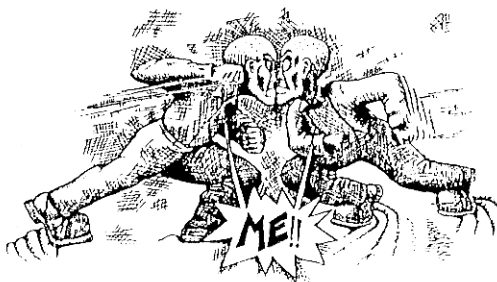
I personally think that the Men's Movement is for straight men, some who want to excise their guilt towards women by denouncing what they think is the 'unacceptable' aspects of gay culture. Once again, homosexuals are under attack by straight people who cannot work out their own sexual relationships.

I will end by quoting from Claudia, an ex-feminist on the subject:

"The virulently homophobic New Man takes care to warn women of the menace they face from homosexual men. The American anti-sexist John Stolenberg wrote 'the gay male subculture now abounds with Neo-Nazi uniforms, torture toys, orgy bars, piss and shit shows, films and periodicals portraying torture and mutilation - all of which is spitting in the faces of women who are struggling to be free.' Like all moralists Stolenberg is patently obsessed by that which he condemns. According to him virtually all men, gay or straight oppress women... He implies that only 'aware' men like himself are safe prospects for women."

**'Feminism Unveiled',
Claudia**

In many ways middle and upper class so-called feminists and 'new men' conspire to make their supposed women's liberation or so-called 'new way of thinking' exclusive. We say that is shit. Men must change and stop oppressing women but we must take it further - much further. We cannot be 'non-sexist' while we still suffer from capitalism. Capitalism will only be destroyed by a mass working class movement - and that means revolution. That is the only way we will be able to free ourselves.



'All Women are Equal!'
'Only Some are more Equal than Others!!'



"Women are a Sisterhood..."



*"...not divided, by Class
or Race..."*



*"...but united by what we
suffer at the hands of Man!"*

(After the meeting...)



"Hello darling, nice evening at the lodge?"

(Back at home)



*"Haven't you finished yet? Lazy cow!!
Plenty of people would give their right
arm for this job!!"*

Road to Nowhere

Ireland, El Salvador, Battles to win, But the real revolution starts within.

Chumbawamba

We have a history of struggle and resistance. But we also have a history of following the rules and the laws that they have laid down for us. Even though these rules nearly always run against our own interests. In the First World War, millions of working class people slaughtered each other over a squabble between different ruling classes. On the football terraces, working class kids beat each other to a pulp, while the cops look on and smile. Everyday, at work, at home, in the streets, we somehow accept their orders and our exploitation. We seem to have got used to slavery...

*CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS - KNOWING WHICH SIDE YOU'RE ON.
CLASS ANALYSIS - KNOWING WHO'S THERE WITH YOU.*

Some people blame it all on 'betrayals by the leadership', or on the power of the media, schools and churches. As if we are brainwashed by those in power. But this doesn't explain anything. It doesn't explain why we listen to those leaders, or why we accept the lies of the journalists, teachers and priests. It doesn't explain why we continue to accept, most of the time, our exploitation and the domination of our lines. Or why we still believe that things like 'hierarchy' and 'inequality' are natural and rational.

INEQUALITY IS NOT NATURAL. WE ARE ALL BORN EQUAL. AS HUMAN BEINGS WE ARE ALL OF EQUAL VALUE. WE HAVE DIFFERENT ABILITIES, NEEDS AND DESIRES - BUT WE ARE STILL HUMAN BEINGS. 'INEQUALITY' IS THE LIE THEY USE TO EXPLAIN THEIR WEALTH AND OUR POVERTY.

So why do most of us, when we're starving, refuse to steal food? When we're ripped off at work, why don't we usually go on strike? And when we're pushed around, why don't we usually fight back? From a very early age there are powerful patterns that shape our lives. In learning to obey our parents, we learn obedience in general. In our childhood, duty is the password and any idea of pleasure is ruthlessly stamped on. Many parents are horrified when they discover sexual play by children. And how many kids have been scolded and punished for masturbating? For most parents, the child-rearing years are one long

struggle against sex and pleasure.

As children, we normally react to all this authority by repressing our sexuality, and by associating sexuality/pleasure with punishment. Every time we do something nice and fun, we expect to get told off for it. These internal obstacles are strengthened by external authorities like school and tv.

"The suppression of the natural sexuality of the child... makes the child apprehensive, shy, obedient, afraid of authority, 'good' and 'adjusted' in the authoritarian sense; it paralyses the rebellious forces because any rebellion is laden with anxiety... The result is fear of freedom, and a conservative, reactionary morality."

Wilhelm Reich

In this way, the dominant cultural patterns (acceptance of slavery - the shitty lives we are forced to lead) are carried on from generation to generation through the family. Parents bring up their kids as they themselves were brought up. The shit is handed down. We internalise our own oppression, obeying their orders without thinking of the harm it is really doing to us, accepting our position as natural. It's the biggest con trick in history. A class society, built on hierarchy and power, can only function as long as those it exploits accept their exploitation - as long as enough of us play the part - accept our slavery.

Sexual repression is as much part of the family as Granddad with his slippers. And it's all tied up with patriarchy (male dominance) which gave us the monogamous marriage and repressive morality. It has been developed and perfected over many centuries. An ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, hit the nail on the head when he said that 'the most holy marriages are those which are of most benefit to the state'. Tying the knot has come to mean tightening the noose around our own necks.

THERE CAN BE NO SOCIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN. MEN ARE NOT STRONGER, MORE INTELLIGENT OR DOMINANT. NOR ARE WOMEN. SOME MEN ARE STRONGER THAN SOME WOMEN. SOME WOMEN ARE MORE INTELLIGENT THAN SOME MEN...

The end result of it all is mass neurosis, and the mass misery of sexual repression. Free sexual play is replaced by the demands of a morality based on denying our needs and our desires. If we are to really change this society, our sexualities, and the way we see them, have got to be revolutionised. Revolution is a total transformation of our everyday lives, in work, at home, in play and in bed. It has got to be total, or it will simply mean the replacement of one authority by another. Our bodies, our minds, our feelings, desires and needs belong to no one except ourselves.

The bulk of our lives is occupied by our relationships with other people. Most people don't devote themselves to 'party politics' or even 'class struggle politics'.

But is this ever considered in the pages of 'Militant', 'Socialist Worker' or 'The Northern Star'? We are all so damaged by sexual repression that we are usually too scared to talk openly about our needs and desires. So we talk about industry and government and struggle instead, getting bogged down in our own crap, because it's less threatening, than talking about our own real lives.

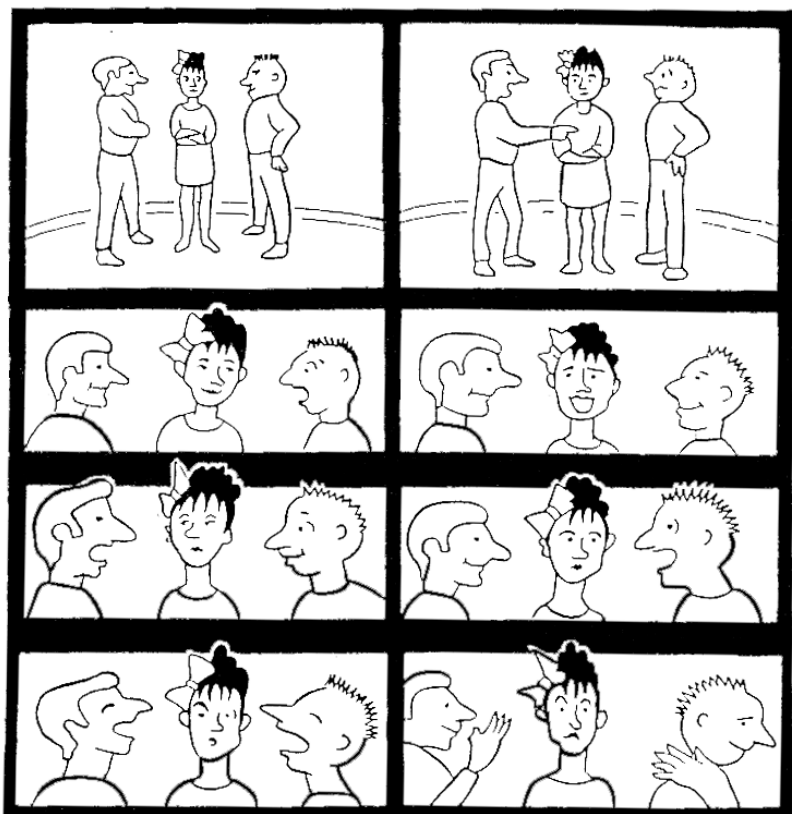
Struggle and sexuality aren't separate things. What's the point in struggling against the bosses if we're not struggling against the boss in our own head? It's only due to years of struggle that abortion has become more acceptable, that 'illegitimacy' has stopped being an absolute crime, that gay men and lesbians have been more able to support each other in coming out, that women have become more independent and that men have begun to realise that No does mean No. The struggle has only just begun. Our 'rulers' are fighting back - creating a 'new' morality, based on 'old' values (that should have died years ago). And if the Mary Whitehouse approach won't work, they'll try to package sex up as a commodity and sell it back to us. Pornography, advertising, the 'pink economy' of the gay scene and the rest, are just as alienating and repressive as all the more blatant forms of exploitation. We want to seize back our bodies and take control of our lives. And we want to stop believing that all this shit is the 'natural' order of things.

**Taken from *Attack, Attack, Attack*
(a one-off newspaper given
out free some years ago)**



Man to Man

Men have all the power in society. We dominate women in relationships, at work, in the street and in everyday life. We oppress women by treating them as objects, by not listening to them, by not taking them seriously, and by excluding them. The list is endless. And it doesn't just happen 'out there'. It happens **right here among us** and its not O.K.



Sexist Conditioning and Capitalism

As women we're treated as though we don't really exist - we are not treated as significant beings, neither by men nor by ourselves. And so our suffering becomes invisible too. The only time we're noticed is when we attach ourselves to men. They treat us as though we're empty dolls, put on this earth for mans pleasure; we're here for him to fuck, and to spew out his sons. Our position as his servant gives him a feeling of power, it makes him feel like he's a real MAN. When he gets tired of looking at us or listening to what he considers our empty talk (not because it is, but because it must be since we're women), then we're ordered back into the kitchen. When we walk down the street men touch us up, whistle at us or rape us, because they think of our bodies as being there for their pleasure. Porn, tv, books, ads all encourage them, telling them what they want to hear - that there's nothing that a woman enjoys more than being seen as a sex object - when she says no, she really means yes. Their conceit blinds them - it's unthinkable that she should not want them. Once she rejects them, she becomes a threat to their whole idea of their masculinity - therefore the line that what lesbians need is a good fuck.

Capitalism will not go away if we just attack the state and the bosses out there, whilst forgetting all the roles and attitudes that have been imposed upon us by society's conditioning - too often we forget that we have grown up in this society.

We have to challenge and heal all the accumulated rubbish in our heads, and be aware of how this affects our personal ways of relating. That these attitudes are inside our heads and are a major barrier to the transformation of our lives cannot be denied. Our desires for a 'better life' are desires for living together as equals, living in harmony, living for pleasure, controlling our lives.

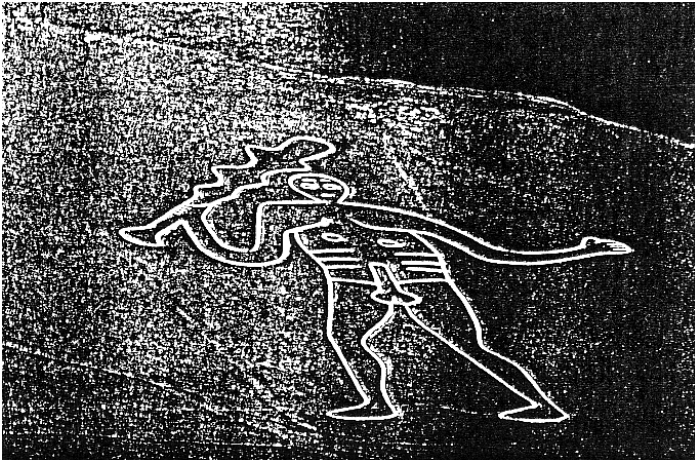


'Real' Men Crap

For men, to lose one's "reputation as a man among men" means to be identified as a coward, a 'queer', or more explicitly as a woman. To be a 'real' man (the established ideal image) or to enter into manhood as it's called, involves being hard, tough, unemotional, ruthless, competitive and **dominant**. These traits have been further promoted by the rich and powerful, as they serve the interest of the ruling class. Working class men have (often unwillingly) learned to do the boss man's dirty work - to sweat their guts out on the factory floor and to give their lives fighting his wars. Men have sacrificed other traits - gentleness, openness, softness - because they are considered an undesirable part of the 'real' male character. We have left them to women.

Men have emotions - feelings that are often denied with maturity, but these are locked away. As a consequence, 'real' men find it difficult reaching out to touch someone they love - because of walls built on masculine pride and fury. Whilst women seem more open to intuitive emotional language - being more able to tune into or understand each other's needs, men are aggressive and violent. We have learned the care and management of fear.

MEN HAVE BEEN THINKING



WITH THEIR DICKS FOR TOO LONG

Pornography for an Equal Society

In recent history pornography has been aimed almost exclusively at men. Certainly some erotic material has been aimed at women; the works of Anals Nin, Susie Bright, Kathy Acker, Lydia Lunch and Annie Sprinkle are examples of this. It is so rare though as to be almost non-existent. Instead, the male dominated sex Industry produces sex aids for women. This implies that women need a mechanical aid to masturbate. While such toys may aid some women in achieving orgasm, it cannot be assumed that there is no place for pornography in a female's erotic life. It is simply that up until now the men who make pornographic material have done so entirely to satisfy male tastes. It could be argued that men have pornography while women have sex aids and that there is a certain equality in this, until one considers that women are exploited in the manufacture of pornographic material. Nobody argues that the manufacture of vibrators and dildo's exploits men!

So the main arguments used by feminists against pornography are that it encourages men to view women as passive sex objects, and that women are exploited by having to work in the sex industry supplying pornography for men. Whilst these points are true in 99% of cases, the situation could be changed. Rather than ban pornography though, would it not be better, and more equal to create **new** sources of erotic images that cater to the tastes of both men and women? Lydia Lunch who has worked in the sex industry in the past, but who now concentrates on poetry, music and performance aimed at educating women in ways of becoming stronger, says this;

"Men have these concepts of female submission in the first place, and pornography caters to that. Pornography is a symptom of the problem, which is sexual inequality. Eliminating one of the symptoms doesn't solve the problem. You've got to go to the root cause and redress the imbalance."

She recommends that rather than the negative move of trying to ban pornography It would be better to re-educate. Obviously the main aim would be to create an equal world, but that is separate to the subject of this particular article. There are also areas in which women need to be re-educated to remove the programming that has accumulated over the years of male domination.

Firstly women should have an equal view regarding masturbation. Men are almost encouraged to masturbate. Our society caters to male tastes wherever you look. It seems though that most women are taught that masturbation is dirty.

It Isn't! As well as being an act of sexual fulfilment, it is also a great way for an individual to learn about their body and personal sensual tastes. An open understanding of one's sexual desires is a great help when making love, and aids equality in any sexual relationship. People should be open to one another about their bodies and sensual desires. Secondly, more women should make their own pornography. This doesn't mean lots of pictures of naked men; in fact research has shown that male nudity is not the main thing women want from pornography. (Unlike men it seems, who's pornography consists of pictures of naked women.)

So what do women want from pornography? A survey has shown that when asked what they would like to see most in a pornographic film, most women said they wanted to see the women reaching orgasm. The second answer was for more of a storyline. If you have ever seen any of the vast array of films currently available, one thing soon becomes apparent. After a short while they become intensely boring. The image of two (or more) people fucking only turns you on for a certain period of time. So one ingredient of good pornography would be more plot and shorter sex scenes.

To go back to the first point, the main problem with pornography as it stands today is that women are portrayed purely as sperm receptacles, there only for the man's pleasure. In every bad pornographic film, the man is shown withdrawing and ejaculating over the women, as if to prove that this is real sex, and once again degrading the women. Meanwhile the women's feelings are completely ignored. She may be moaning as if to urge the man on, but is rarely shown to be actively enjoying what is going on. While it is difficult to physically prove that a woman is orgasming on film, it would be similarly unnecessary to do so. If the situation seems real, and it looks as if she is being satisfied, then surely people will believe in the orgasm.

Other Ingredients for successfully equal erotica are tenderness and understanding between the partners. The best way to achieve the correct style of film would obviously be to encourage more women to make the films. This is possibly the most difficult aspect of creating equality in this area; the sex industry at the moment is run almost entirely by men. There is no easy way around this problem except perseverance. Once it is seen that a market for erotic material that caters to both sexes exists, then others will catch on. Creating a new demand for a new style is the only way to create equality in this area.

In the meantime, we should try to get pornography removed from the shelves of newsagents. Every time a woman goes to buy a newspaper or whatever, she is confronted with a display of degrading pictures of naked women. If pornography was confined to specialist sex shops or mail order outlets, who would suffer? OK, men would maybe have to walk further for their monthly supply of wanking material, but it would save women from being forced to see these pictures. This is not censorship! Pornography would still be legal; it just would not be on public display.

Interest in 'alternative' forms of sensuality, such as bondage, fetishism and S+M seems to be on the increase these days. As well as being safer forms of sex than traditional penetrative sex, they seem to offer more equality. Partners need to be

open with each other in order to realise their dreams, and as often as not the woman is controlling the action. Perhaps it is no coincidence that films of these subjects are more interesting than 'typical' pornography. Remember that even if a woman is portrayed as being dominated in a film of this sort, she is probably in control of the action. Convention dictates that the masochist is the one who is actually in control of a situation. Hopefully this genre will encourage more women to make films, and open up the possibilities for more equality.

Susie Bright, another feminist activist who has worked in the sex industry says, *"Gay men place a higher esteem on porn, both as sex and cinema."*

This is true. The gay movement create their own pornography which is not viewed with the same disgust as 'straight' porn. Rather they view it as a positive aid to sexual expression and freedom. The world needs this. The 'moralistic' banning of all pornography can only create more repression in a society that needs freedom and the opening up of barriers to sexual expression. Good sex is a shared experience, and good films about sex can be as well. Guilt and repression are what 'society' wants us to feel. They are the biggest forms of mass control available to those in command of our countries, and therefore we have a responsibility if we care about freedom to break these barriers down.



Pictures of Oppression

On billboards, in adverts, in the papers, the magazines, pictures of women surround us. These pictures keep up a world where women are watched and watch themselves.

They create a visual reminder that women are always being looked at. That women are always being seen as powerless. As lifeless.



They remind men of their power over women. They remind women of their relationship to that power.

From Looks Can Kill

“The Revolution should be built on the Model of Friendships.”

I can't recall the number of 'political' meetings in which the words above were drowned out by someone or other (usually a bloke) playing the loud-mouthed git or intellectual know-it-all. Meetings when I came away thinking that we were all playing a 'political role' (trying to get it all right), rather than being our real selves - being a bit more down to earth. Because 'being real' meant admitting that we didn't have all the answers.

So... nowadays, I make a point of spending more time working on myself - giving friends and the everyday people I meet a bit more understanding and consideration. Not that I consider myself to be 'perfect' or any of that bullshit. Like everyone else, I am pretty fucked up about my attitudes to women (and men) because of the craphead role that this society has imposed on me. Because of the shit way in which men are encouraged (and often encourage each other) to use and hurt our sisters - helping to maintain the hierarchy - keeping the ruling class happy.

How can we hope for anything better while we are oppressing other people in our very own lives? I wrote this in the hope that others also feel that the "revolution" should, indeed, "be built on the model of friendships." Cheers for reading these words, I hope its easy to understand what I'm trying to say.

See you around,
Robin Flood



Text scanned in from the original M.A.S.S. (*Men Against Sexist Shit*) edition (no date - probably late '80's) along with most of the graphics (hence the crap quality!)

Address for M.A.S.S. given in the
original pamphlet:

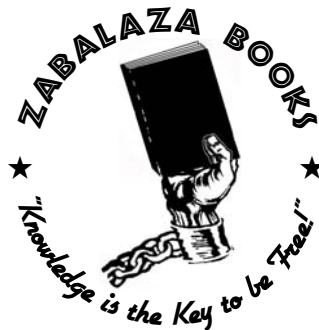
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