Dear Readers:

As you may have noticed, we're out late and we're twelve pages long. That's because Kronstadt Books was in the process of purchasing a typesetter and we needed to save the money we would have spent on renting a typesetter so we waited till they got theirs. And so here we are. Salud!

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our ideals and principles with others through the dispersal of information and implementation of actions.

I've never been hot about the idea of isolation as an end objective, either for an individual or for a group. It seems good and healthy to me to have time and space to oneself--to collect energy, rejuvenating the spirit as a means to function better within one's community. But let's imagine that 100 anarchists were to go off to the country and develop a "perfect anarchist village". That might be wonderful for the 100 people involved, but it really wouldn't do much to directly change or improve society. Having anarchy in an isolated microcosm does little if anything to create a situation where the tyranny of authority gets lost in the shuffle.

In a similar vein, I feel we should avoid the mistake of separatism on the basis of gender, using the tactic as an end rather than the means to an end. We could be benefiting as a people by sharing and learning the experiences and thoughts of others. For whatever reason, many feminist separatists choose not to do this but rather develop their awareness and potential alone. I ask, is their objective the division or the sharing of a healthier society?

For me, any efforts to make a better common good have to be processes in which both women and men are involved. If not, then mutual aid is not an objective and divisions are created by gender. In the past, I have experienced situations where some women have come into a group with an oppressive attitude of superiority, as if they had some grand enlightenment, and with the assumption that none of the men in the group shared that knowledge. Taking that setting, let's say there is a man present who makes a sexist remark or holds some sexist attitude. Now, since he is in this (shamelessly leftist, anti-authoritarian) group in the first place, would it not be fair to assume that he would be receptive to being made aware of his behavior and subsequently, to changing? Remember, we're not talking about the Ronald Reagans and Phyllis Schlaflys out there. Everyone has their shortcomings, and I believe that in order to bring about a mutually agreeable good (i.e., progress), we must help each other out of such traps and not condemn each other because of them. In this example, assuming the man is receptive and that the pursuant conversation is constructive, friendship and respect, rather than resentment and mistrust, would result from the incident.

On the other hand, many feminists have gone through one too many dominating group encounters, and have used these experiences as justification for being with women only. In "Anarcho-Feminism", Marian Leighton writes of the anarchist movement as "having become havens of arrogant and isolated men prattling their rhetoric for their own dubious benefit." Then she concludes that "anarcho-feminists belong right where they are, which is with other women." Again, this is isolation being used as an end, rather than means to an end. Also, this defensive behavior seems to exhibit a sexist exclusion-by-generalization, with an unwillingness to look at the more basic anarchist intent of each individual person. Not to mention the assumption that only women are anarcha-feminists.

One aspect of anarcha-feminism addresses the issue of working inside/outside the existing authoritarian structure. Changing from a patriarchy to a matriarchy is not the answer. Female bank presidents who pay poor wages to their tellers do not change the inherent inequity and dominance in our society. A woman who is in a traditionally male role of authority, let's say a police officer, is equally oppressive as the man in that same position. Taking the toys away from the boys and giving them to the girls just guarantees the perpetuation of the same old game. So, to me it seems that developing self-reliant work opportunities apart from the abusive systems is the direction in which to go. I believe doing this most directly and successfully accomplishes the task of bringing about equity in increasingly greater spheres of our personal and political lives.

Establishing economic independence from the exploitative market is one very effective method of realizing the principles of workplace democracy, as well as getting the hell out of the oppressive financial structure out there in the business world. Some groups in Washington, D.C., have chosen to provide bakery, graphic, and health services to their communities, and they are succeeding with the support of all the people in their neighborhoods. As alternative facilities, they control the organization of responsibilities and methods of work.

Earlier in these notes I quoted someone who said that liberation is experienced in conjunction with other human beings. So, how come so many feminists say that feminism is an "ism" for women only? The fear-creating arrogance which states that only women can write about or participate in feminism has its roots in the same elitist factionalism which I criticize in much of the radical feminist literature and practice I have seen. PLEASE ASK YOURSELF, do we as a people desire each other to: grow with equal opportunities, live with open camaraderie, and work with equitable remuneration, or instead, is the objective of our efforts: the division, separation, and judgment of the individual by gender? If the former desires are the goals, then as anarcha-feminists the means we use to realize them must be of the same timbre. When the latter notions dominate, some strange things start to happen: you see buttons pop up on which the word MEN becomes MENACE; you hear talk and read articles about wanting to kill all men, about giving away male babies. This smacks of the same misguided desire to create a perfect race, except a few decades ago they preferred blond, blue-eyed Aryans. If they're joking, why isn't everyone laughing?

The process that will help us to change society is one in which all people, or as many people as we can get involved, will participate. Only by women and men involved working together, will we make the changes that I believe to be the root objectives of feminism and anarchism. We should work towards building a community of people mutually supportive, where improved communication is developed among individuals. ALL individuals.

E. Luca Reiner