

Ironically, despite our critiques – and sometimes hatred – of identity politics, we find ourselves coming together around a (somewhat loose) identity: We are some people who no longer want to be victims of gender tyranny and misogyny. Within this grouping we are hoping to circumvent, to a certain extent, our gender and what that means for us when we are living our lives in this Man's World so we might gain some insight as to what it might look like to not have gender dynamics influence every interaction. We come together to fight for a reality where identities such as “man,” “woman,” and “trans” are logical impossibilities. We know that together we can tend to our misgivings that these desires are irrational and get down to business. We will not, in fact, be throwing out identity politics all together. If nothing else because we refuse to let liberals and non-profits have our radical politics. But also because we do find it useful to identify and analyze our miserable conditions in order to have a point of a departure, in order to know very clearly what we do not want to be.

We do not want a feminism that looks like a social worker behind a desk with concerned eyebrows. We want a feminism that stays up late at the kitchen table convincing us that we deserve better. We do not want a feminism that will put us up in a run down state shelter for a short while until we're “back on our feet.” We want a feminism that will break back into our house we were just kicked out of and tell the landlord he'll have hell to pay from a mob of angry bitches if he attempts eviction again. And when one of us is raped and murdered for our gender we definitely do not want more empty calls for “justice” and quiet candle-lit vigils. We want a feminism that acts from a much wider range of emotion and expectation. We want a visible expression of exasperation, anger, and frustration that makes obvious that we are finished with these routines: the routines of violence against women and queer people, the routines of quietly shaking our heads at these tragedies, the routines of asking for change. We want a feminism that is not afraid to try new things, that is dynamic enough to know that at times healing comes in the form of vengeance and change comes in the form of destroying what destroys you.

This MayDay anarcha-feminism may just look like a riotous street party with a contingent that is strikingly dudeless, but that rumbling you hear is what lies right beneath the surface. Great ruptures and new worlds are in store, but we can not be passive spectators in creating our new selves. Kill the liberal in your head. There are no excuses now for not exchanging numbers, saying hello on the street and building relationships where we plan, scheme, and push each other out of victim-hood by being the toughest comrades possible in our common struggles and, perhaps more importantly, in our uncommon struggles. We're in this together.

Some words, ideas, and inspirations were taken from the following:
Sex, Race, and Class by Selma James; the editorial in Upping the Anti #9; Gramsci is Dead, Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements, by Richard Day; We'll Show You Crazy Bitches, communiqué from Take Back the Night Brooklyn Style; and countless difficult conversations.

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Anarcha-Feminists Take to the Streets

...Because We Don't Need Anyone's Permission



by Anarcha Feminists

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This was the communique distributed before today's Reclaim the Streets. A call for an Anarcha-Feminist Bloc had been made and many anarchist women and queer people of all sorts took to the streets.

This is only a beginning. We come together today as anarcha-feminists excited because of this new beginning. Anarcha-feminism has barely been flushed out, put into action, or recognized as a politic by even ourselves. And many of us have never known of each other's existence, therefore never knowing what we are capable of. We find it fitting to meet in the streets, where strong social bonds are created and great turns in history unfold. Make friends and comrades this May Day and expect great things to come.

There's a new anarchism on the tips of all of our tongues. But there is also a legacy of radical and powerful movements that we may find enlightening if we are aware enough to not get caught in the trappings that brought them to an end. In order to determine what we wish to be we must see where we began...

The New Left movements pushed us forward light years in their declarations that struggle is to be found on many, many more fronts than class alone. Movements that we are the most proud of in our left histories – Black Power, Queer Liberation, Women's Liberation, etc. – were quite literally crafting a future reality that looked very promising. As these movements crumbled or weakened we can see how aspects of these struggles that lacked a critique of authoritarian (and especially State) power fell into the arms of liberalism. Liberalism assumes and maintains the delusion that a government or any kind of higher power is necessary and responsible for looking after us, to ensure that all is peaceful and equal. We are kept in a state of perpetual childhood, where all of our daily actions and disputes are subject to judgment by the guiding hand of authoritarian father figures from God to government, governor, mayor, banker, husband, to daddy dearest.

And so identity politics entered the scene, stage Left. Post-colonial, feminist, and especially queer politics that once fought for autonomous power distinct from normative society became a sad shadow of its formal self as they became a politic about recognition within society, which made these movements dependent on the structures responsible for their unique tribulations.

Some of our comrades have suggested we throw out identity politics all together. And this feels like a tempting idea. We are tired of the trend of tokenization. Every political event we attend someone is tokenizing their self, their mom, or some abstract group of people. Sometimes this happens even in the name of "not tokenizing!" We see this as a depressing attempt to establish legitimacy as a victim (as if that is a cool thing to be!) Within this context the activist's job has become that of making diagnosis after diagnosis of who is and is not oppressed. Each individual carries with them all sorts of unique atrocities that have been imposed on their bodies and psyches as well as hor-



rors they've done to others. It's dishonest to sum up our lived experiences as that of a "woman," an "immigrant," a "gender queer," or even a combination of any number of recognizable marginal identities.

But this isn't even the bigger problem. Identity politic-obsessed activism looks to make us feel safe within systems that are not designed to be safe or freeing and does not take action to dismantle the system completely. The Left has built an army of Gandhis. Gandhi, mind you, so loved and romanticized the oppressed of his country that he could not bring himself to endorse a social order which might end the existence of their oppression. Even though he was seen as very radical at the time, he proved to be a liberal at heart. Ending caste discrimination is quite different from abolishing a caste system completely. We must make the decision whether it is more in our interests to demand equal rights or to fight for a future (or maybe a present) where demanding anything from anyone other than ourselves is senseless. There is nothing powerful in being valorized, recognized, and romanticized as victims. Who cares if men know that some huge statistic of us is raped by them? Does that stop rape? Who cares if everyone remembers to get your preferred pronoun right? Does that help you when you're in custody and the cops are discussing what's between your legs so they can determine which cell block you "belong" in? And who cares if your neighbor is so outraged by your boyfriend's violent outbursts that she calls the police? You do, because you are the one with a police gun in your face and you are the one later bailing out your boyfriend despite the fact that the 1st of the month is quickly approaching. That which establishes our horrible positions in society will never abolish those positions. And we want out. We no longer want to be victims, but we know that we can not count on the State, men, white people, straight people, the cops – whoever it is for you – to do this for us.