

Against nuclearisation, and beyond

(If it is possible to think beyond, we do want to)

We have asked ourselves whether there is a specific, feminine way to look at war and peace. Looking back to the last ten years, to our present and to our future, the answer we have given is yes.

In our struggle for divorce, equality, social services, for a sexuality thoughtful of our sensibility, we have met with a new image of ourselves which is certainly different from the one reflected by male demands. These are some of the stages of our struggle for emancipation and liberation, which during the past years has proceeded by goals that might have been partial but were nonetheless unified by a sole aim: to pose and impose, and not only for ourselves, the question of the quality of life.

WHAT DOES QUALITY OF LIFE MEAN?

It does certainly not consist in the growth of consumption or in the mere multiplication of social services.

Quality of life is rather respect for the Nature, therefore struggle against pollution and against the private ownership of natural resources, it is clean energy, the right to good health and the medical prevention, housing for all, dignified working conditions, social reintegration of the aged, it also is respect for childhood, solidarity among the exploited, tolerance for physical and mental diversities, abolition of sex discrimination in the Law and in social behaviours, and many other things.

FOR ALL OF THIS, PEACE IS NECESSARY

Yet, let us make it clear that although we oppose war, we also fight against a false peace that ignores starvation and exploitation. We cannot accept a peace that benumbs consciences and builds up empires over women's labour. Women know that, being women, they are subjected in every society and in every social class to a specific exploitation: sexual work, mother work, housework, unprotected work, underpaid work. We also fight against that hypocritical peace, which creates the myth of the « Angel of the Home » when there is a need that women stay at home to raise husbands and children for the Country, and which boosts the myth of emancipation when women are needed in factories and offices as cheap labour, or when, as it is nowadays, unemployment and militarisation open to women the shining doors of military careers.

Our NO TO WAR concides with the struggle for our liberation. Never have we seen so clearly as now the connection between nuclear escalation and the Culture of Muscleman, between the violence of war and the violence of rape. Such is in fact the historical memory that women have about all wars, always and everywhere. But this is our daily experience in peacetime as well, and under this respect women are always at war. It is not by chance that the gruesome game of war — in which a greater part of the masculine sex seems to find delight — goes through the same stages as the traditional sex relationship: Aggression, Conquest, Possession, Control, of a woman or of a land makes little difference.

We have reflected at lenght on this coincidence and we remember our loneliness when we have to face the pain of an abortion. We also remember being accused of murder by the very same front which today finds nuclear rearmament « natural » and which is preparing the most absurd of deaths for all of us. In all that we see an idea of life which indeed is a planned death. This idea unifies the Great Powers and those States that passively support them, both in the East and in the West, in « real Socialism » and in advanced Capitalism.

When faced with such choices, women feel no wish of being either sweet, nor patient, nor resigned, nor Godmothers of Ships and Guns, nor nurses, and, least of all, female soldiers.

WE RATHER FEEL THAT WE START A MOVEMENT WHICH FIGHTS FOR PEACE AND FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND REJECTS OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION OF ONE NATION UPON ANOTHER, OF ONE CLASS UPON ANOTHER, OF ONE SEX UPON ANOTHER.

Whereas the behaviour of States is apparently dominated by the logic of the balance of weapons, when States inflate fears of aggression in order to justify their nuclear rearmament, we feel that a space, until now compressed, is growing all around us: the space of women and children. And it is with pride and hope that we use this expression which has been often hypocritical and discriminatory. This is to us, the only ethical and political ground from which today a courageous proposal of life can spring anew so as to break the vicious game of « who is the strongest ».

We ask for unilateral disarmament now, because we firmly believe in the utopy of common sense, in courage without banners, in the fruitfulness of giving before receiving, and we do believe in the extreme attention to the uniqueness and beauty of human life: THIS IS WOMEN'S CULTURE.

We realize how difficult it is to say such things and listen to them, cornered as we are between a false war-monger's pacifism and an abstract leftwing one.

The nuclear option has been slowly inoculated into people as the only possible answer to the rise of energy needs, which in turn has been grossly exaggerated in order to prop up both capitalistic profits and the myth and the habits of the opulent society. Many have believed in all that, fearing long freezing winters and mass unemployment. But we now see it was just the dress rehearsal to impose the missiles as a matter of ordinary business, to accustom our minds to the N-Bomb, the « clean » bomb that kills people but leaves the roman Coliseum standing for the delight of American tourists.

We have to shake off the habit of accepting war: it is the first step to avoid death.

WAR IS NEITHER NATURAL NOR UNAVOIDABLE

If it were not so, we wouldn't understand any more the sense of motherhood, which still is for many of us the only source of identity and the only creative experience.

Before such unnatural options, why should we still believe in the natural meaning of motherhood? Women's answer to nuclear death, as paradoxical as it might seem, could be a conscious refusal to give life.

FOR ALL OF THIS WE SAY:

NO to the balance of Terror

NO to NATO and to the Warsaw Pact

NO to missiles in Comiso (Sicily)

YES to the immediate unilateral disarmament in Italy

YES to talks for nuclear disarmament

MANY unilateral disarmaments for a denuclearized Europe

CONVERT MILITARY BUDGETS IN INVESTMENTS FOR A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF WOMEN

If it should not be heeded,

WE STOP MOTHERHOOD !

Catania, October 1981



**WOMEN OF SICILY FOR NUCLEAR
DISARMAMENT**

Catania Committee