

RADEQUALS

We are all born equal.
Society tells us that we are not,
But that's because
The people at the top forgot.
They say that we are different,
Then tell us that it is
These very differences
We must try to circumvent,
And then prevent.
Prevent what?
Prevent language?
Prevent religion?
Prevent opening our minds by just a smidgeon?
Prevent the celebration of a multitude of cultures?
Each one a glorious addition
To this city that we call home.

Who are we?
We are Arabs, Africans, Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis, and British.
But we are also Mancunians.
We walk down Market Street on Saturday afternoons,
Avoiding buskers, clowns and over-priced balloons.
We are black and brown and white.
But we are also red or blue.

Our city has been torn apart by bombs and riots;
We have been victims of social attack
But we refused to lie down and die -
We always fought back.
And do you know why?
Because we are a city of radicals.

Radicals?
But isn't being a radical...
Wrong?

It's what drives society on.
You see
Without Mancunian radicals, we would not have had the computer,
X-rays or the principles of atomic structure
Manchester has 25 scientists who won a Nobel Prize:

Rutherford and Bohr split atoms from lies.
De Hevesy helped tracers take shape.
Geim and Novoselov made Graphene from tape
A Kiwi, A Dane, a Hungarian and two Russians.
These are the intellectual architects within our ranks
None of them are 'British', all of them are Mancs.

But these are just academics
In glass houses;
What about the other
Mancunians who want to throw stones?

What about Emmeline Pankhurst?
She radically campaigned to give women the vote,
Shaking society and more than rocking the boat;
Creating a new dawn from which to take heart,
But let's not pretend this was more than a start.

What about Ahmed Iqbal Ullah, Chris Ofili, DJ Semtex?

What about you?

Is it wrong to be a radical?
Let me rephrase that:
Is it wrong to sit idly by and let atrocities be committed in your name?
Homelessness, racism, social exclusion
These are the extremes for which we're all to blame.

Challenge stereotypes
Pay attention to the plural and
Connect with communities.
But most importantly of all
Champion who you are.
Champion who we are.
We are all radicals,
We ARE all equals.
And we should all give thanks
Because no matter what –
All of us are Mancs.

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