



# INTERNAL BULLETIN

**VOL NO**

**PRICE**

40

## CONTENTS

### Gay Liberation and Revolutionary Marxism

1. Amended to Tasks and Perspectives Document
2. Introduction
3. Positions of the Revolutionary Left in Canada
4. Far Left Practice in the Gay Milieu
5. The Nature of Gay Oppression
6. Our Orientation
7. Demands
8. Trends in European and North American Gay Movement
9. Gays in the RMG
10. Our Orientation in Toronto
11. Appendix... Comrade Mandel's Meeting in Leeds, On Gay Work (excerpts from an IMG document), Gay Liberation Front Paper to the Manchester Conference on Fascism, references from Reich and Lenin

# Revolutionary Marxist Group





## REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM AND GAY LIBERATION

The following document is the motivation for the following amendment to the tasks and perspectives document. We do not feel that gay liberation should be separated from general questions of sexual oppression and specifically the womens liberation section of the tasks and perspectives. Therefore, we propose that the following be entered (perhaps as point 20b) after the womens section.

Amendment: *adopted*

The radicalization of the late 60s left behind a small layer of militants in the gay milieu. At the present time most of these activists are involved in GATE (Gay Alliance Towards Equality)-type organizations which focus on law reform to achieve civil rights. There are possibilities for the consolidation of a reformist current in the milieu led by ex-LSAers and David Thorstad, formerly of the SWP. However, if the perspectives and lessons of the left-wing of the gay movements in Europe, which have taken on a class perspective, can be transmitted to North America, this possibility could be headed off.

The question of gay liberation in particular and sexual liberation in general is a question that has not adequately been dealt with by revolutionary Marxists. It has much importance, however, imposing an attack on the nuclear family and bourgeois morality, sexism and sexual-role playing as a whole and a scientific as opposed to a religious or moralistic approach. For these reasons, we must initiate a propagandistic orientation in the gay activists milieu and secondly take up sexual liberation in all our work, in particular introducing the questions into the working class.

### NOTE ON PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL BULLETINS FOR PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION:

As you may have noted, this is not the document originally scheduled for this number in the convention series. Rather than holding up the publication of other documents while the Political Committee overcomes the present disarray in preparation of the main documentation, the authors of this document have been allowed to put this document out before the others from the PC.

This should not be assumed to mean that all documentation will now be taken in order of its appearance in the national office. When the main resolutions of the PC and of the Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency have been submitted, the priority for publication will be on those documents.

Meanwhile, the authors of this document have assembled this bulletin themselves and point to its relevance given the present discussion of the RMG in several gay publications across Canada and Quebec.



## GAY LIBERATION AND REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

Anti-homosexual prejudice is inextricably bound up with the factors surrounding the origins and development of capitalism...Homosexual oppression is thus rooted in the structure and function of bourgeois society and this points the direction which the struggle must take. The monopolies and their state have demonstrated their readiness to eliminate democratic rights in the interests of maximizing profit and a basic democratization of our society can be achieved only at the side of the working class.

--statement of Homosexual Action--West Berlin, (HAW), quoted in *Body Politic* #13, The Gay Movement in Germany Today by Jim Steakley

### INTRODUCTION

The question of gay oppression has been relatively ignored by the Marxist movement and consequently the Canadian left (except for a long dead end discussion that took place in the period 1972-73 in the League for Socialist Action). Marx and Engels in any references to homosexuality capitulated to the backwardness of bourgeois morality (for example, see Engels references to homosexuality in ancient Greece in the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*). Their own backwardness on the subject can be understood to a degree in the context of the historical period in which they lived. The position of the Bolsheviki, Lenin, and Trotsky, although more advanced on the questions relating to sexual oppression, were also rather backward on homosexuality.

The main Bolshevik rationale for the abolition of anti-homosexual laws after the revolution appears to have been the difficulty with enforcing these laws in the first place and that homosexuality was a scientific or personal psychological problem and not a criminal one in the second place (see Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*). At the same time, however, there were also elements in the Bolshevik Party and the early Comintern who had more advanced positions on the questions relating to sexual liberation (i.e. Kollontai). We are therefore faced with a problem in that we have little theoretical foundation to start with on this question and a historical responsibility to begin this analysis.

Many tendencies in the workers' movement internationally--Stalinism, Maoism, and Castroism are generally, and in some instances rabidly, anti-gay. This is reinforced and partially created by the continuance of the nuclear family with all that it brings with it in societies dominated by these tendencies. In Canada, most of the left groups are explicitly heterosexual chauvinist or more subtly anti-gay (with the exceptions of the RMG, LSA and the Spartacist League). This point is quite important to be aware of because the results of revolutionaries not taking up this question can be seen in the concrete example of Cuba, where gay people are legally suppressed, harassed, oppressed and potentially subject to death penalties for their sexual orientation under the mascara morality of "subjecting the young to unnatural impulses". An example of such laws was contained in the document of the 1971 Culture and Education Congress in Cuba:



"On Homosexuality: It was resolved that it is not to be tolerated for notorious homosexuals to have influence in the formation of our youth on the basis of their artistic merits...It was proposed that a study should be made to find a way of applying measures with a view to transferring to other organizations, those who, as homosexuals, should not have any direct influence on our youth through artistic and cultural activities...It was resolved that those whose morals do not correspond to the prestige of the Revolution should be barred from any group of performers representing our country...abroad. Finally, it was agreed to demand that severe penalties be applied to those who corrupt the morals of minors, depraved repeat offenders and irredeemable anti-social elements...Cultural institutions cannot serve as a platform for false intellectuals who try to make snobbery, extravagant conduct, homosexuality, and other social aberrations into expressions of revolutionary art, isolated from the masses and the spirit of the Revolution...The social, pathological character of homosexual deviations was recognized. It was resolved that all manifestations of homosexual deviations are to be firmly rejected and prevented from spreading."

*Cuba  
alt-homosexuality*

In 1965 there was a roundup of homosexuals to force them off the streets. In 1967 teachers suspected of being homosexual were made to publicly "confess their sins" before large audiences in the universities. (See *Women and Revolution*, No. 6, Summer 1974, "Women in Castro's Cuba"). Such positions of a workers state reinforce reactionary sexism of workers, revolutionaries and others around the world. Cuba, in fact, has not adopted the most right-wing stance. For in the Soviet Union, the USSR has theoretically broadened its position of homosexuality being a sign of "capitalist degeneration" and China has proclaimed that there is no homosexuality in the People's Republic.

At root the positions voiced by the parties of the workers states are based in a conception of the static, monogamous marriage and family which is viewed as the alternative, even the proletarian alternative, to sexual "promiscuity" and homosexuality. The attitudes towards socialist realism in art in fact have their relationship to the idealist conceptions of what a workers family would look like. Both essentially reactionary concepts lead the bureaucracies to adopt political positions that reinforce sexism and discrimination with regard to sexual orientation.

*Stalinist  
nuclear  
family*

Almost without exception, the tendencies which identify with Cuba, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, Albania, etc. in Canada, reflect their lines on sexuality.

Where the Canadian Revolutionary Left Stands (While we decide where we stand)

The far-left in Canada can be divided into two camps on the question of homosexuality. Appropriately enough, as implied above, their views on the question reflect their views on the family.

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and the Canadian Party of Labour have essentially the same position, that is that homosexuality is a bourgeois disease which has been liquidated in China. CPL, of course, is no longer an adherent of Peking. Nonetheless, the essence remains the same.



CPL, however, has been somewhat more aggressive on defining questions of sexuality. There are gay comrades in CPC (M-L). In CPL, they would have to be extremely self-repressed to survive in an organization that believes the proletarian family is endangered by women's liberation and the proletariat is threatened by abortion campaigns.

It should be noted, however, that there are segments of the CPC (M-L) which believe gays are wrongly oppressed for being diseased--a standard social-democratic liberal stance.

The "Trotskyist left" has a broad spectrum of views viz-a-viz gays. Beginning from the right, the Socialist League--Labour Action axis support democratic rights for homosexuals. To their credit, they raise the question quite openly. To their fault, Forward lays out a strategy for gays struggling for their rights revolving around laws to make homosexuality a legal sexual variant. Again, the position is liberal and, in essence, says gays are not normal and for this they are oppressed. No stance is taken on whether non-exploitative sexual relationships between people of the same sex is an alternative for all. Overwhelmingly, the Socialist League position is shaped by an orthodox Freudian analysis which in no way threatens the family and is similar to the way they view the abortion movement in raising the central slogan for abortion as being "Every Mother a Willing Mother, Every Child a Wanted Child". If one takes a line aimed at opportunist broad liberal alliances which ignore the family as a repressive institution, the consequences are that no challenges to bourgeois sexual notions are made. The core of the Socialist League position is consistent with old LSA-single-issue reform perspectives which are shared by former LSAers playing leading roles in gay organizations. Out of the perspectives flow an orientation to the introduction of "sexual orientation" into Human Rights Codes, tailing after the NDP and bourgeois politicians to promise their support, and apolitical marches of a tame, clean-cut form from point A to point B to chants of "2-4-6-8, Gay is just as good as straight", "Gay Power", etc.

The inheritance of the present gay leaders reflects a previous convergence of a sector of the gay movement and the LSA/SWP where a certain tactical aggressiveness (and even provocation actions) became contained in a reformist political and organizational straitjacket. In fact, the gay organizations were partially depoliticized by the LSA/SWP experience whereas the splits in the gay movement (in the period 1971-72) were potentially quite important political developments which were largely derailed by the influence of so-called Trotskyists.

The League for Socialist Action has practically no formal position on homosexuality at this point. Formally, of course, they stand on democratic rights but even here the question of what democratic rights implies is quite limited. The human rights code, legal protection against attacks, etc. are defined as human rights but election campaigns of the LSA (virtually the only place where the LSA now deals with the questions) pose tactics and tasks as largely legislative ones with the LSA as the ombudspeople of the oppressed (gays, Native people, women, etc.). Nowhere is it examined what the nature of ... psychological repression, heterosexual, educational channeling, sexual rights of adolescents and children, etc. are. In essence, the position of the LSA is shaped around the problematic of matriachal family reductionism. (That is, all sexual problems become reduced to the problem of the patriarchal family. Reich, Rohem, Reed and left anthropologists in examining existing neo-matriachal family structures have

Reed



found mixed attitudes towards bisexual activities.) The problem of course is not to construct a more progressive family form by "finding women's history" but to destroy all forms of the family--be they matriarchal or patriarchal. Redefining roles within the family is little more than life-style radicalism and can produce objectively reactionary dynamics--feminist chauvinism and passive male roles for examples. None of the underlying sexual problems are dealt with because they remain "personal social" questions counterposed to the political tactics in the Morgentaler or abortion campaigns. All this regarding the LSA should not have the influence of implying the LSA has a practice in gay liberation. They do not. There are gay LSAers who either work as independent activists in the gay milieu or have no relationship to it at all because of proscriptions on such work. The problem we will face regarding the LSA in gay work is to oppose its phantom--the ghostly perversion of Leninism perceived there (in the gay milieu) owing to the LSA's manipulation in the past of several gay organizations.

Finally, there is the Spartacist League. No tracts have been written that we are aware of but we do have the position of *Workers' Vanguard* which supports democratic rights and the struggle for them within the working class. The position is not the liberal one of the other "Trotskyist" groups but here we must caution comrades not to assume that a "proletarian orientation" is automatically the pat solution for a line on gay liberation or necessarily any better than a democratic rights single-issuism. Most SL comrades do not know what their position is on gay liberation beyond democratic rights. Our response to experience with individuals in their Toronto organization is that their consciousness is liberal, even somewhat paternal on the questions of sexual oppression--especially their male militants. Some of the writings of the SL's women's journal indicate women SLers have a more internalized grasp of the issues. No doubt this relates to their own experiences in the women's movement rather than collective acquisitions of the SL. The journal's recognition that all non-exploitative sexual relationships should be defended is a long way down the road to saying, in fact, that all non-exploitative sexual relationships are real alternatives for workers and revolutionaries and when restricted from such relationships (whether by the state or the family), sexual relations are deformed.

We will not go further into the SL's position here because it, like ours, is emerging rather than having been fully shaped.

#### Far Left Practice in the Gay Milieu

The only tendency which has had an intervention of any notable character in Canada, of course, is the League for Socialist Action. Having perceived empirically what it thought would become a permanent mass movement with an "inherently anti-capitalist dynamic", the LSA engaged in an organizational intervention marked by a general apoliticism (lack of selling the section press, lack of independent leaflets, development of an analysis after the intervention was being phased out, etc.) and lack of internal discussion on the question of sexual oppression related to homosexuality (except the most mundane tactical items). The gay comrades of the LSA had to largely intervene in a personal ad hoc basis, given the organization's questionable positions. These comrades, following the LSA's sectoralist approach of the time, tried to organize a mass single issue campaign around gay civil rights.

long  
criticism  
what is a  
non-  
exploitive  
sexual  
relat.



Although their efforts did not reap great rewards, they did succeed in some cases in giving gay activists some organizational forms. Even the notorious Halifax Young Socialists played an initiatory role to a certain extent in setting up a "gay action" group, which still exists today. As the LSA continued to stall in its discussions on gay liberation and the SWP made its anti-gay turn (spring and summer of 1973), these comrades left the sections. This has left these people, who are in the leaderships of gay civil rights organizations across Canada with little more than their single-issuist approach. This at the same time has left a bad taste in the milieu around work with left and "vanguard" organizations. Our intervention in this milieu will partially have to play the role of correcting these militants' views of Leninism.

In the conjunctural sense in Canada at present, the situation for us is highlighted by a number of factors. First of all there is a small but important layer of people working around this question including some former LSAers and ex-New Leftists (including Marcusians). Because of the type of people working around the question, it provides a possible pole of regroupment of reformist elements (i.e. the ex-LSAers and the international gay "independent Marxist" current crystallizing around David Thorstad, a former member of the SWP presently engaged in building a left wing in the Gay Action Alliance in New York City). However, the base of many of these gay rights organizations (i.e. GATE - Gay Alliance Towards Equality - in Toronto) are less sectarianized towards us and some elements could possibly be won politically. We at present have a very limited number of comrades who could do some sporadic work in this milieu. An intervention into this area would allow us to pose a class perspective but at the same time avoid any economist attitudes to the question of sexual oppression. It would also allow us in a more long-term perspective to intervene into a sub-culture which has a heterogeneous class basis which has to be differentiated between oppressors (i.e. gay bar owners, hip gay capitalists, the gay church, etc.) and the oppressed (gay clerks, workers, teachers, etc.).

## GAY OPPRESSION

Evidence of homosexuality and bisexuality have appeared in most cultures in varying degrees from the most primitive to the most advanced. The central point in terms of the introduction of oppression against gay people comes with the rise of class society and the consequent rise of the nuclear family. The development of heterosexual monogamy and sex being tied to reproduction obviously would work against homosexuality. In different class societies, however, the weight of oppression has varied. The source of gay oppression is therefore the need for class society and in this case capitalism to maintain the nuclear family and monogamy. The weight of gay oppression, as seen by the example of ancient Greece, points to a relationship to the level of generalization of the nuclear family throughout society and its importance and specific cultural and historic traditions.

Some of the reasons that capital needs the nuclear family are as a mechanism of social control and socialization, in reproducing labour power, in maintaining male-female roles and divisions and as a general conservatizing influence. While capitalism can tolerate varying levels of involvement in the

gay oppression  
prop. relats.



nuclear family and monogamy, it is clear that once beyond a certain threshold, capitalist interests would be threatened--i.e. if a substantial portion of the population began to live outside of repressive structures. Thus, such things as the "liberal turn" in liberal morality (male nudes in mass magazines, Ms. for feminists, etc.) can be seen as both contradictory to and auxiliary to the shaping of bourgeois conservative morality by extending its capacity to absorb broader layers.

good  
(AC/DC)  
an outlet

#### What this means for OUR ORIENTATION

"Revolutionary Marxists" central pivot of intervention into this milieu will be around the need for a socialist revolution to create the pre-conditions for gay liberation as part of the withering away of the family (see the Toronto RMG leaflet to August gay rights march--*Workers of the World, Caress, Sexual Liberation Through Revolution not Reform*). That is to say total and generalized liberation is impossible short of the material transformation of society. Our challenge must be against bourgeois morality. This means that gay groups must ally with the left and workers movements in their fight for liberation. Fighting anti-homosexual prejudice in working class as some GATE members did in the Vancouver post office and as the left wing of the European gay movement does, takes on much importance. This means that theoretical clarification on how to achieve gay liberation and a Marxist reorientation for at least a part of the milieu is necessary if the gay movement is to go forward. This means that our intervention will have a highly propagandistic profile. This does not mean that campaigns for law reform to provide formal equality for gay people--and other such campaigns--are not valid tactics for the movement to discuss. They are necessary but only insofar as they bring the question into exposure to other oppressed layers and aid gays in coming out and drawing new forces into the gay movement. For this reason, we side with the activist current against the reformist lobbying current. Gay liberation will not come through law reform in the capitalist state but only through its conscious destruction by a working class which is also conscious of the need to end all forms of oppression and exploitation.

\* absorption  
principle -  
how far  
will it go?

important

In looking at the activist wing on the other hand, we must also note the life style politics of some sectors of the gay milieu because style alone is also no real alternative. While coming out is absolutely necessary for the gay movement to survive, an emphasis on "life style" politics will only provide marginal solutions for middle class gays (since only these layers can afford the cost of living in the sub-culture with its exaggerated cultural norms). All relationships will continue to be deformed as long as the pressures of capitalism remain.

Any intervention into the gay milieu will also run into organizations like Toronto's CHAT which are nothing but social service groups hoping for a little more acceptance of gay people under capitalism. This orientation of reform and the line of retreat into the safety (?) of the ghetto is exactly what capitalism can tolerate. Since capitalism cannot eliminate homosexuality--if gays stay closeted in their ghettos, they can be controlled by the oppressive sub-culture of the gay church, the gay bars, and gay capitalism. If they adopt the line of liberal reform, the "liberal" bourgeois moralists can easily tolerate them as a harmless deviant group.



As the capitalist crisis develops and fascist and reactionary ideas expand in influence, we can expect increasing attacks on gay people and the withdrawal of many of the rights they have now. Thus, the gay sub-culture serves not only as a conservatizing influence upon gays but also to a degree as a trap, in the long term sense. When these attacks begin, the gay movement cannot be left isolated. The workers' movement and the left must display their solidarity.

## DEMANDS

Some of the demands that we should support, extend, and take into the working class where possible, include the following:

democratic rights--

1. an end to discrimination of gays in jobs and in housing
2. abolition of all legal discrimination against homosexuals including police harassment and entrapment, immigration restrictions, etc.
3. the right of homosexuals to look after or have access to their own children (as raised in recent cases in Regina and Toronto) and the same right as heterosexuals to adopt children
4. the right of people to dress in whatever form they choose
5. full democratic rights for homosexuals as are available to heterosexuals

In response to the repression against gay people practised by the psychiatric profession:

6. an end to aversion therapy and the treatment of homosexuality as a disease or sickness.

## DEATH TO SHRINKS.

Much of the oppression of gay people is rooted in the stereotyping and socialization that takes place in youth and adolescence--

7. abolition of age of consent laws for sexual acts--sexual rights for young people

(Some comrades have already expressed their uneasiness with this demand. We would simply respond in the opening of this discussion that if you are opposed to sexual rights for young people--even if you base your opposition on some fear of victimization of youth through some belief that children and young people are somehow alienated from their sexuality until age 18--you would essentially have to say that the laws should either be left as they are under the supervision of parents and the state or that it is merely a matter of reversing the laws and allowing the parents to define the limits of sexual freedom for children. In either case, oppression would continue to exist and be perpetuated especially if the revolutionary organization takes a neutral stand on the question.)

8. state supported economic independence and residences available to all adolescents and pre-adults
9. access to the schools for gay organizations--for an end to exclusively heterosexual sex education in the schools

In the unions, aside from other demands--

10. for an end to exclusionary membership clauses in unions on the basis of sexual orientation (yes, comrades, there are unions where such rules exist).

Reich

⊗ →

lesbians



In the gay milieu, given its heterogeneous and multi-class basis (which means no common relationship to the means of production), there are no transitional demands that can be applied. Aside from the demands relating to adolescent economic independence, there are no demands we can raise which really question the basis of capitalist society as a whole. We should attempt to interrelate the struggles for gay rights and women's liberation as much as possible. We also must call into question the nature of sexism which prevails within the gay sub-culture itself and reproduces forms of oppression within monogamous and casual relationships alike.

Possibilities will exist in periods of attack by right wingers and bigots (as in the spring and summer of 1972 in Toronto), for gay self-defence groups (as have existed in the U.S. in Detroit and California as the Lavender Panthers) to be initiated which could be linked up with the left and workers' defence.

As well, we must continually pose the necessity for the gay movement to ally with and support struggles of the working class. We should attempt to get gay leftists into anti-fascist actions, in workers support actions, and into international solidarity demonstrations such as Chile.

Gay liberation is more than a sexual struggle. It is a social struggle which can be potentially a valuable element in the radicalization of some sectors of the working class but which can also be diverted into reformist traps.

#### TRENDS IN THE EUROPEAN GAY MOVEMENT

Although we have rather scanty information from Europe it is clear that the gay movement or at least its most advanced layers are beginning to take on a class perspective and go through a Marxist reorientation. In Germany, the gay action groups participate in left demonstrations and support workers struggles. In Britain, sectors of the Gay Liberation Front intervene in the class struggle as well as carrying their own autonomous actions (see appended documents). A series of gay Marxist groups have appeared in Britain in which both the IMG and the International Socialists participate. In France, Antinorm Sexpol has an anti-capitalist orientation and supported Alain Krivine in the recent elections.

#### ...AND NORTH AMERICA

In the United States, the collapse of the New Left had an effect on the gay movement which itself was only beginning to pull together. The broad amorphous revolutionary currents grouped in the many Gay Liberation Fronts collapsed, decomposed, and were isolated from the rest of the radicalization. Superceding these we see the rise of GAA-type organizations which focus mainly on civil rights and are mostly reformist, although they contain more advanced elements.

The Red Butterfly (a radical current in the New York GLF) was the source of recruitment for some leading gay activists to the Socialist Workers Party and opened its capacity to intervene in the gay milieu. This was terminated, however, when the SWP began to make a sectarian economist turn. Many of the gay comrades of the SWP left or were booted out. David Thorstad's international tendency (mentioned above) must be watched closely. The exact nature of this tendency will have to be investigated when it begins to document its positions- however, it can be clearly stated that Thorstad, Lovenstein (also once with the



SWP) and others were marred by previous perspectives of reformist and particular civil rights approaches. We can also say that the only possible basis for this current's consolidation will be if the lessons from the left wing of the gay movement in Europe are not transmitted to North America.

### GAYS IN THE RMG

The question of political attitude to a sector of intervention must have its relationship to the internal life of the revolutionary organization. Given we are not talking about sizeable (in terms of comrade hours and priorities) perspectives on gay work, it is important that the RMG grasp politically the significance of the issue. To begin with, gay liberation is not a sector for a few comrades who have a direct link with the issues. That is to say that they alone are not responsible for the issues involved any more than any other work of the organization. Comrades will be compelled to integrate an understanding of gay liberation and sexual oppression into all areas and into their own consciousness. As the political familiarity with the issue broadens and we develop the beginnings of an analysis as an organization, this compulsion will be as strong from outside as from within.

The RMG exists within the framework of capitalism and its sexist social relations. It is therefore completely utopian for the RMG to completely break from these relations. The RMG continues, in fact, to reproduce within it some of the worst aspects of capitalist social relations. It is therefore quite understandable why comrades have difficulty learning the capacity to accept and adjust to homosexuality, especially given its unashamed nature in and around the organization.

It appears, however, that the RMG as an organization has receded in consciousness in general of sexual oppression. This is particularly important to openly deal with if we are going to begin intervention into the gay milieu with possibilities for recruitment emerging in the medium term. The reaction of many comrades to a gay contact involved in the Brazil actions does not hold well for this. (This contact has become a sort of permanent sympathizer on our periphery in Toronto and yet he is not considered by comrades to be serious or a possible participant in our internal lectures. In fact, using the excuse of his flamboyant life style, some comrades have taken what we can only view as flagrantly contradictory positions viz. -a- viz women's liberation and gay liberation if not covertly veiled straight chauvinist comments.)

Lastly, the few gay comrades in the RMG are subject to pressures in the form of yellow humour and a certain degree of social alienation.

These manifestations of anti-gay prejudice within the organization must be understood and overcome. Overt manifestations of anti-gay chauvinism must be eliminated. The difficulty which comrades have with grappling with these questions must not stop us from trying to deal with and eliminate these manifestations--especially when no one has challenged our general approach to the work as carried thus far nor the reality of homosexual relations within the organization.

The attitude of most RMGers towards gay comrades and gay people in general can be characterized as liberal tolerance. This attitude should be replaced by acceptance of homosexuality as a natural form of sexuality, and an alternative open to all comrades, as well as a growing understanding of the problems gay people face.

In the future as we attempt to recruit gay leftists (and we are already



finding that there are quite a number of gays in other tendencies), we will find problems in the integration of gays into a predominantly heterosexual organization. Gay recruits will also face the living contradiction facing them between political work (shaped by the RMG) and their sexual-social life (the gay milieu). Gays in the organization already have been compelled to deal with the contradiction by sacrificing one to serve the other. The steps we can now take to try to overcome these problems are to deal now with anti-gay heterosexual chauvinism within the organization and developing an adequate understanding of gay oppression. Ultimately, however, these problems will only be solved by the rise of the class struggle, the growing interrelationship between gay liberation and the left, and the expansion of the gay cadre of the RMG.

### OUR ORIENTATION IN TORONTO\*\*\*

Given we have a very limited number of comrades to do any work in this milieu, it can only be of a sporadic and selective character. The work should be under the direction of the branch executive.

Our intervention to date has been important. From our flamboyant and successful appearance at the GATE meeting for all-candidates, a defence of homosexuals at a City Hall all-candidates meeting, an intervention into the gay pride demo in August, we have now entered into a clarification of the issues before the gay movement. The nationally important articles in the September-October *Body Politic* and the continuing, somewhat heated, debate with Maurice Flood of Vancouver should serve as some indication of the potential of the intervention despite our present almost non-existent intervention.

Possibilities for intervention in the future will include the following:

1. Intervention into GATE demonstrations including Gay Pride marches in the summer.
2. Prodding GATE and others to support and participate in anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, and workers solidarity and other actions.
3. Intervention in GATE conferences and public meetings where we can differentiate ourselves from GATE's reformist perspective. We should support demonstrations and militant actions against tendencies to focus on petitions and letter writing, etc. We will also outline the need to struggle in an anti-capitalist direction and the need to ally with the left and the workers movement. (We can already point to a lost opportunity in Toronto at the annual GATE conference, which was held in the midst of a crisis around perspectives at the same time as the *Body Politic* had carried the material by us. Because of a general breakdown in the division of labour in the branch, one gay comrade who does not have responsibilities for local initiatives around Chile solidarity work ended up carrying the bulk of the contact and political preparation for the memorial to Miguel Enriquez. Thus, a comrade whose time was otherwise adequate for the annual GATE conference was thrown into work he was not even responsible for at other times. This too, is a structural form of anti-gay prejudice.)
4. Writing articles and letters for the *Body Politic*, *Gay Tide*, and possibly American gay publications. Our August leaflet is already being translated into French for publication in a new journal in Quebec called *Anti-Norm*.

Through this process, we can attempt to gain contacts over the longer term to establish a periphery in the milieu. Depending on the forces we can



eventually draw around us, a Red Circle or some form of independent pole may be constructed as an alternative to GATEs, or within the GATEs themselves, and as a transitional formation.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, CARESS!

BRIAN SMITH

KEN TUCKER

\*\*\*Most of the gay activists in Toronto are grouped around the paper the *Body Politic* (which sometimes has a few good articles, but is mostly focussed around law reform and possesses an uncritical approach to the gay ghetto) and GATE. The people who founded GATE, split from CHAT. The first formation (Toronto Gay Action) was defined in terms of radical activity in general but collapsed because of internal contradictions (i.e. lack of organizational and political perspectives). GATE was set up by people who wanted to limit political perspectives to civil rights. GATE has different currents within it--including the previously mentioned mixed bag of ex-LSAers, New Leftists, liberals, reformists, and a few Christians. Some of the ex-LSAers describe GATE as a gay cadre organization which will defend their line of single issue campaigns for civil rights with a non-class orientation. Its major activity is focused around having "sexual orientation" added to the human rights code to supposedly end discrimination against homosexuals. The major activities around the campaign are attempts to pressure liberals, writing letters, presenting briefs, and having the small odd demonstration. They also maintain the National Gay Election Coalition which sends letters to candidates asking them to take a position on equal rights for gays. This usually leads to supporting NDP candidates (the view of success of ex-LSAers) but sometimes includes Liberals, (such as Peter Maloney for the Toronto school board--Maloney came out during the campaign).

ON TO THE APPENDIX....

What follows are leaflets and internal documents from England. They give an idea of what the nature of the left in the gay movement is like in Europe and also how heterosexual chauvinism can strike even the most astute revolutionary...yes...even Ernest Mandel.

COMRADE MANDEL'S MEETING IN LEEDS

by J. Mills and D. Cameron (an internal IMG document)

1) What Happened? The first meeting of cde Mandel's British tour took place in Leeds. It was fairly large and on the whole successful. During the discussion period two members of the GLF asked cde Mandel about the FI's attitude to the gay movements. What ensued took a considerable period of the discussion period and revealed an aggressive and hostile attitude on the part of the GLF members involved. In addition there seemed to be linguistic problems. Nevertheless a large part of what cde Mandel had to say on the question was felt by the membership of the Leeds branch to be inaccurate and inadequate. Accordingly, two comrades from the Leeds branch drafted a letter



to cde Mandel which has now been dispatched. The last gay caucus meeting approved the line of the letter but with some specific reservations being expressed by some of those present.

2) THE CAMERON-MILLS LETTER

Dear Comrade,

As leading members of the IMG in Leeds we would like to express to you our disquiet at your replies to questions at your meeting here on 23rd April on homosexuality and the radical homosexual movements which have developed in a number of countries in the last five years. There are a number of points we would like to raise.

First of all concerning your statement that the oppression of homosexuals is secondary to that of women because women constitute 50% of the population and homosexuals do not. While agreeing wholeheartedly that the homosexual question is secondary to that of women's liberation we cannot agree that the reason for this lies in the relative numbers involved. In fact the reason we would give is that the oppression of homosexuals derives from that of women. The maintainance of the situation within the family is dependent on a denial of women's sexuality. Thus formidable ideological restraints and social pressures act against the formation of lesbian relationships. The situation of women also has repercussions for men. In order to maintain their position in the family, men find it necessary to subscribe to an ideology that enables them to deny any point of psychological contact with women. One of the expressions of this ideology is the complete disparagement of homosexuality on the one hand, and the forcing of male homosexuals into a stereotyped and sterile relationships on the other. For working class men there is a particularly acute contradiction. While male workers (having nothing else to lose) tend to be especially ingrained in their chauvinist attitudes towards women and their disline of the homosexuals at the same time a significant section of working class youth is subject to the most shameful exploitation at the hands of bourgeois male homosexuals.

The position of homosexual workers (both male and female) is something that weakens the labour movement. The hopeless situation of female homosexuals is one of the most tragic products of bourgeois culture. The sexual exploitation of youth is a consise expression of the interpersonal alienation present in class society. For all these reasons the homosexual question is one which revolutionaries must take up. However an analysis of the problem makes it clear that it can only be realistically taken up within the general problematic of women's liberation.

The second point we wish to raise is your remark that we defend homosexuals just as we do religious and other minorities. We would like to disagree sharply with such an analogy. While the FI defends freedom of speech for religious minorities it also quite clearly situates itself within the communist tradition of expecting the disappearance of these minorities and of all religion with the disappearance of class society. Indeed it will be our task to assist that process but by means of ideological struggle not repression. With homosexuality the situation is quite different. Even bourgeois anthropologists now recognise that homosexuality is a general phenomenon not just in all human cultures but among the higher primates. We expect that in a communist society the elmination of the distrtrtions of human sexuality enforced by class society would release the potentialities of this particular form of interpersonal expression. For this reason we would suggest that our defence of homosexuals and support of homosexual groups is qualitatively different from our defence of religious minorities.

Over the last couple of years the IMG has developed work with and among radical homosexual groups. This is true especially in Leeds. These groups are currently playing an important and courageoms role in the struggle against fascism. We realize that this



## Cameron-Mills Letter continued

aspect of the work is more developed than is the case with other sections in Europe. Nevertheless we think that they will also be confronted with the question in the next few years. In this context we feel that the problem of security (which you raised) is one which has to be considered. In some countries it may be very serious (e.g. Spain) but in others it is one which need not serve as a total obstacle to work on this question. In any case we think that questions of homosexual oppression should be one which is taken up by our sections, albeit not a key one. In this respect we think that the experience of the pre-1914 SPD and later the KPD is one worth studying.

We would stress that we are in no way associated with those who harassed you at the meeting in Leeds. They represent a current in the gay movement with which we have profound differences. Nevertheless we cannot say that your response to them was adequate and we have tried to explain why. We would appreciate your comments. With Communist Greetings,  
Janice Mills (convenor IMG gay caucus)      David Cameron (organiser Leeds IMG)

## 3) RESERVATIONS EXPRESSED BY GAY CAUCUS MEMBERS

- a) We agree that gay oppression is secondary to women's oppression in a structural sense but not in the sense of being less important.
- b) The casual lives of primates has no bearing on the reasons for homosexual behaviour. Homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is the result of the socialization process.
- c) There is a need for comment on the surprise with which cde Mandel greeted the questions.

## ON GAY WORK by Janice Mills (an IMG internal document)

This document is a reworking of the earlier document on this question "Draft Perspectives on the Gay Liberation Movement" (referred to here as Mills 1). That document has a number of inadequacies some of which emerged during discussion of it in the gay caucus, others pointed out by various comrades outside the caucus, and a few that have dawned on me over the last few months. The emphasis of the present document is *practical* and does not seek to preempt the discussion that must surely arise on this issue. It is my contention that the problems thrown up by the gay movement cannot begin to be resolved, nor perhaps even meaningfully discussed without practical activity and more specifically, practical activity that is in the context of our general perspectives. This document is in other words a move towards a situation in which the problems can be faced and a worthwhile discussion held. A certain amount of both explicit and implicit theoretical analysis has to be presented but its amount and kind is conditioned by the remarks above.

THE RELEVANCE OF GAY WORK: Homosexuality is a generalized phenomenon in all human societies and indeed at many other places lower down the evolutionary ladder. The less closely sexuality is tied (via mating periods etc.) to reproduction (physically tied that is) the more this is the case. The development of human society has indicated the possibility of completely divorcing sexuality from reproduction. In such a context it would be possible to visualize a state of affairs in which sexuality was not necessarily genitally oriented. That of course, has as a prerequisite the disappearance, or massive diminution, of interpersonal alienation. Because homosexual behaviour is physically a move away from purely reproductive sexuality (as is heterosexuality with contraception) and a step towards non-genital specific communicative sexuality. Because homosexuality is (as a rule) still genital specific (indeed it arises as a genital alternative to reproduction) it is able to become the major al-



ternative in class society to a heterosexuality that is necessarily located in a pro-reproductive social framework.

It is for this reason that every human society (and every class within each society) has had to come to terms with the existence of homosexual behaviour. The responses are many and varied. Primitive societies whose economies operate at a semi-famine level (for the same reason as they introduce primitive contraception) tend to be in favour of homosexual behaviour. Societies (e.g. feudalism) that need, and can support, continual additions to the work force respond to homosexual behaviour repressively.

The response of bourgeois society is unique. Capitalism has made homosexuality the prerogative of homosexual individuals. Such people (as indeed are heterosexual individuals) are a creation of capitalism. The creation of this grouping also involved on the one hand, a specific milieu (the 'gay ghetto') for it to operate in, and on the other hand a virulent anti-sexual ideology for the purposes of containing and limiting the activities of the ghetto. That ideology is of course in the last analysis backed up by the might of the state.

It is of course the case that these formations do not account for all, or possibly even most sexual activity in bourgeois society. For most people, operating under the most formidable ideological restraints, the homosexual outlet is a sporadic and occasional one. However the more that outlet is sought the more likely it is that the person concerned will be drawn into the ghetto which de facto controls various meeting places, etc.

Another qualification that has to be put on what has been said is a comment on the somewhat distinct position of gay women. Whereas the experience of a sizeable number of gay women does conform to the paradigm given this is far less the case than with gay men. Because bourgeois sexual ideology includes a denial of the autonomous sexuality of women on the one hand, lesbianism does not surface as frequently as male homosexuality and on the other hand often does so in areas (the theatre, academic world) where women have relatively more scope than is the case elsewhere and that also have made a far less harsh accommodation to homosexuality than is normal and that therefore puts no pressure on the women involved to disappear into the ghetto. The men in these milieux have (because it is easier for them to come out) generally entered the ghetto before they enter the milieu. Nevertheless a sizeable number of gay women (perhaps the majority) are participants in the ghetto scene although they come into it by a different route and have far more contacts outside than is the case with the men.

This also has its impact on the ideological complexion of the ghetto. Ghetto consciousness is heavily laden with sexism and consumerism. On the other hand nearly all ghetto homosexuals are strongly aware of their position as a social minority. For gay women the tendency is to see this as an oppression of them as women first and only in a more secondary sense as gay. For reasons I shall come onto this insight has much truth about it. This gives the social position of gay women a homogeneity and an inter-group solidarity that is by and large lacking amongst gay men. For amongst gay men their relations to each other are illuminated by a sharp and clear class divide. The ghetto is historically a formation to enable bourgeois gay men to buy or cajole sexual satisfaction. It is also a market place in which impoverished proletarian male youth can obtain means of subsistence, either by direct prostitution or by pseudo marriages. That is the essential dynamic of the activities of men inside the ghetto and as a consequence, group consciousness is shattered. Men's consciousness inside the ghetto tends to be either highly competitive or totally sexist and



## On Gay Work continued

bourgeois. In addition it is necessary to point out that there is a noticeable strand of male gay opinion, that is decidedly misogynist and that resents the presence of women in the ghetto scene.

Despite the confusion of most gay men, the ghetto is the focal point for gay rebellion. This is most strikingly illustrated by the Christopher street riots in the USA (in which we should note the men who participated were precisely from the young working class layer referred to above) and also in a more confused way in the emergence of radical gay groups in Britain, Italy, Germany, Brazil and to a lesser extent Argentina and Thailand. In France FHAR started outside the ghetto but, particularly after it was banned found itself forced more and more into a ghetto orientation.

The relevance of gay work can be conceived in four ways. The first is the importance of homosexuality itself as an alternative to pro-reproductive heterosexuality and therefore the contribution of a radical gay movement will have for the undermining of the family and for the promotion of independence for women as a contribution to the sort of consciousness that can fight for demands like free contraception and abortion, and could fight for the active involvement of women. It is in fact a necessary part of those fights, for in raising questions like abortion that bring up debates about the independent sexuality of women, the possibility of lesbianism appears and we have therefore to have a stance on the question. The second is the position of working class male youth in the ghetto--for as the economic crisis of the capitalist order deepens more and more young men (like their sisters in a heterosexual way) will resort to this way of life. Our perspectives on such questions as youth employment (indeed on the whole problem of immiseration) will have to include proposals as to the ending of the actual exploitation and probable repression not only of these young men but also female prostitutes. Thirdly the gay movement has in the logic of its development an anti-imperialist dynamic. The appearance of groups like Red Butterfly in the USA, Anti-Norm in France, Gay Marxists in Britain and the Argentinian gay group, illustrates this. Because gay women are not integrated into the point of opposition (and indeed politicized gay women have often seen their future as being outside the gay movement) and because of the divisions amongst gay men the gay movement finds it hard to become a powerful oppositional force. Nevertheless it is an oppositional force and a revolutionary marxist hegemony of its politics is in our interests. Fourthly there is a question of the direct repression suffered by homosexuals (which we defend them against) and perhaps more important the way in which homosexuals stand directly in the firing line of a significant section of the far right.

(We have excerpted the section above from Mills' longer document. Further sections dealt with the British gay movement, student work, industrial intervention, and an important conjunctural section on anti-fascist work which has become an important question before the British gay movement. Mills' general analysis is supported by RMG gay comrades with specific exceptions such as her comments on the "development of an anti-imperialist dynamic". Nonetheless, we believe the document and others are very valuable for beginning this discussion.)

*The difference between the old clan and the socialist collective is that the former is based on blood relationship and becomes an economic unit on that basis; the socialist collective, on the other hand, is not based on blood relationship but on common economic functions; the economic unit necessarily leads to personal relationships which finally make it also a sexual collective. Just as in primitive society the family destroyed the clan, so does the economic collective destroy the family. (emphasis in original--Wilhelm Reich discussing Marx's view on decay of family in Sexual Revolution.)*



## GAY LIBERATION FRONT PAPERS TO THE MANCHESTER CONFERENCE ON FASCISM

## FASCISM AND SEXUALITY

Reactionary ideas about sex are very widespread, even amongst the left. Unfortunately the importance of these ideas tends therefore to be underestimated. The issues (because they are "embarrassing") tend to get swept to one side or relegated to tail end place in a list of slogans. The right wing does not make the same mistake. We have only to notice the large numbers of NF (National Front) members at the meetings and rallies of SPUC to see this. The right in general and the fascists in particular have always taken sexuality seriously. Time and time again defence of "law and order" is directly linked with defence of the family. Time and time again outcries against militants are linked with outcries against "moral degeneration". Do the connections only exist in the overheated imaginations of reactionaries? On the contrary-family structures and sex are of great importance even under "ordinary" conditions. The family serves 'w vital functions under capitalist-first economically, as a sort of servicing depot for (usually) male workers. Wives serve as unpaid domestic labour force that releases the husbands and sons to work for long hours on the production line. The second function of the family is as a forcing ground for ideas. The consciousness of children is trained inside the family unit and it is inside that unity that the various ideas that obstruct real understanding are passed on. But the family structure (which depends on the oppression of women) is also continually undermined by the systems need to draw women into work outside the family unit. This process makes it possible for working class women to broaden their consciousness. At the same time it puts strain on family life and comes to be seen by working class men as a threat.

At the same time, as well as examining the family itself we must also look at the whys and wherefores of the regulation of sexual behaviour in general, the greater part of sexual activity does not take place within the family unit. If we put together "adultery", masturbation, and female and male homosexuality and prostitution we are presented with a far greater volume of activity than can be seen in the use of sex for procreation or relief between husband and wife. However these extramarital activities are in no way "liberated". They also have been integrated into the system. Under capitalism, sex is a commodity like everything else. It is an essential component of many luxury goods and even basic commodities. Even the most casual study of advertising reveals this. But this market quality of sex is also apparent in the relationships themselves. Most people are aware in one way or another of the impersonality of sex, our tendency to treat each other as objects. This tendency reaches its logical conclusion in strip clubs and brothels.

The situation of the prostitute sums up the nature of womens sexual oppression. This oppression ultimately derives from the situation of women in the family, a situation which differentiates them from the supposedly active men by fixing them in a passive relation to the world. The rigid sexual caste structure that this causes means that a women who manages to desire any degree of freedom seems condemned to a lifelong hopeless battle. The women of whom this is particularly true are female homosexuals. This is so much so that society whenever possible ignores their existence. When they bring themselves a degree of attention they are dealt with in one of two ways-extreme objectification (the lesbian motif) in pornography or strict segregation (often even from male homosexuals) into their own bars, clubs, etc.

However the continual commercial use of sex has other consequences. It has facilitated advances in contraception which have made it easier for women to work towards their independence. The attempts of the status quo to assimilate the most exploitable parts of (male) homosexual culture (law reform on one hand and David Bowie on the other) led to campaigning (male) homosexual organizations out of



which sprang the rebellion of those men who can and will not fit-the queens. When the so called underground started preaching free love, the women in it very quickly discovered the love was to be free only for the men. The same consciousness was achieved by gay women in or around the "traditional" homosexual organizations. These tendencies find their expression in womens and gay liberation movements.

At the same time as the struggle against capitalism starts (only starts) TO INCLUDE THE SEXUAL STRUGGLE, another aspect of the sexual struggle begins to show itself. Huge reactionary movements like SPUC and the Festival of Light are protesting over abortion, contraception and "permissiveness", etcetcetc. The extreme right has latched into this very quickly. We are confronted not only with the presence of the MF in SPUC, but with vicious attacks on the womens movement in Spearhead, and a ferocious queer-bashing rhetoric from the British Movement.

Movements like SPUC and the Festival of Light are not of themselves fascist. They are composed on the one hand of alarmed middle-class people who feel the economic situation pushing them into the working class and visualize this in terms of the dissolution of the family, and on the other hand working-class women mystified by their domestic situation (and often by religion too) with working class men threatened by an influx of female labour. What these groups aim at is the restitution of the normal state of affairs with its appalling consequences for women and sexual minority groups. However, sexual reaction is a major growth point for fascists. It is as important as racism and orangeism.

In many situations the right wing need do little about sexuality. In Spain in the 1930s despite the existence of a revolutionary situation the grip of religious and capitalist ideas on sex were so strong that the left did not think and the right did not need to have programmatic ideas on sex. The situation of women remained almost totally unchanged on both sides of the line. The fascists murdered the male homosexual poet Lorca. The anarchists in Barcelona shot the local male prostitutes. For those two groups the sexual questions were a non-issue.

In Germany in the 20s and 30s sexuality was a live issue. Despite the fact that the views of the left were extremely muddled by the standards of today's feminist movement there had been not only considerable breakdown in family structures but also much radicalization around the question. The ghost of Rosa Luxemburg exerted great influence and the views of sexual radicals like Magnus Hirschfeld and Wilhelm Reich made a noticeable impact. The Nazis responded to this with great thoroughness. Their propaganda laid great emphasis on the ideals of Kinder, Kirche and Kuche (children, church and home) for women and on a vision of motherhood as a woman's highest aspiration. After 1934, massive purges of male homosexuals were instituted. This group suffered casualties second only to those of the Jews. Sexual normality was restored.

There is only one point that needs clarification. Many homosexual German men joined/had links with the Nazi party (Ernst Roehm being the most noticeable example). This indeed was the excuse Stalin used for his anti-gay programs. It would serve us to understand well the situation better than Stalin did. Homosexuals are often lonely and isolated people. As homosexuals they rarely have a collective identity-that happens only in ghetto bars. Gay women can vary easily acquire an identity as women-indeed this is practically thrust upon them. The situation of gay men (especially those outside the ghettos) is quite otherwise, and not only can they fall prey to reactionary ideas with great ease but can actually acquire an anti-female outlook that is quite contrary to their own objective interests. It is in this way and for this reason that the gay struggle must be seen as subordinate to the general struggle of all women. But this does not mean that the left should not fight against the oppression of gay men. Quite the contrary-if many men become dupes for reaction it is in part because the left does not take their demands and needs seriously. IF WE ARE TO FIGHT FASCISM WE MUST FIGHT FOR SEXUAL FREEDOM. WE MUST TAKE ON THE FASCISTS OVER THEIR SEXUAL LINE. WE MUST CAMPAIGN FOR THE DEMANDS OF THE WOMENS AND GAY MOVEMENTS.

I have a lot of trouble with this



We are not ones to be dependent on quotes but since most of North America is so backward, in terms of knowledge and not necessarily openness, on the topic, we would like to close this document with some relevant quotes which should not be interpreted as the Reichianization of Marxism but, after all, even Trotsky said that the area of theory in relation to sexual liberation was one that had to be explored by Marxists. At the time of the writing of some of these comments, Reich was attempting to bring about a fusion of Freud and Marx--an attempt which he withdrew from in his later years.

From the "Abolition of the Family" (a chapter in Sexual Revolution):

In Trotsky's "Everyday Questions" we find ample material concerning the disintegration of the family during the years of 1919 and 1920. The following facts were noted:

The family, including the proletarian family, began to "disintegrate". The fact was not being denied, and was interpreted in diverse ways; some were "disquieted", others reserved, still others did not know what to make of it. All agreed that they were confronted with "some major, very chaotic process which might soon take on a tragic form" and which "did not as yet disclose its possibilities of a new, higher form of family order". Many believed that the disintegration of the workers' family resulted from a "bourgeois influence on the proletariat". Others considered this a misinterpretation, pointing out that it was a matter of a much deeper and more complex problem; that the main process lay in the pathological and critical "evolution of the proletarian family" itself, the first chaotic stages of which they were witnessing.

They pointed out that the process of disintegration of the family was far from concluded, that, rather, it was still in full swing. That everyday life was much more conservative than economy, among other things because it was much less conscious than the latter. It was further noted that the disintegration of the old family was not limited to the top strata which were most exposed to the new condition, but went far beyond the avant garde. The opinion was expressed that the revolutionary avant garde was only affected earlier and more intensively by a process which was inevitable for the whole class.

*deep structure* The revolution in the cultural superstructure fails to take place, because the bearer and guardian of this revolution, the psychic structure of human beings, was not changed.

On the rôle of the matriarchy: ...in primitive work-democratic matriarchy, economy was in the service of the satisfaction of the needs--including the sexual needs--of society as a whole; the unequivocal tendency of the true social revolution was to place economy again at the service of the satisfaction of the needs of all who do productive work.

Technocratic view of sexuality as expressed by Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene (yehh!!): During the revolution, the element of eroticism, of sexualism, played only a minor rôle, because youth was riding along on the wave of revolutionary feeling and was living only for the great ideas. But when the quieter times of reconstruction came, it was feared that youth, as in 1905, would now, cooled off and sober, start to engage in unrestricted eroticism.

On the basis of the experiences in the Soviet Union, I say that the woman, in experiencing social liberation and becoming acquainted with public social tasks that is, in her transition from a mere woman to a human being, went sexually cold.



to some extent. Her sexuality is, though perhaps only temporarily, repressed... The task of sexual pedagogy in the Soviet Union is to bring up healthy individuals, members of a future society in whom there is complete harmony between their natural drives and their great social tasks. To this end, everything that is creative and constructive in the natural drives must be furthered, and everything that could become harmful to the development of the personality of the member of the collective should be eliminated... Free love in the Soviet Union is not an unbridled, wild living out, but the ideal relationship of two free independent people who love each other. (1927... emphasis in original).

repression

ie nuclear family

The return of reactionary legislation on homosexuality in the Soviet Union (bearing mind the above stated "great social tasks"): ...The presentation of homosexuality in the great Soviet Encyclopedia was based on Magnus Hirschfeld and partly on Freud. The reason given for the abolition of the homosexuality (from Soviet sexual legislation) paragraph was that the problem of homosexuality was exclusively a scientific one and that consequently, homosexuals should not be punished... This achievement of the Soviet government gave the sex-political movement in Western Europe and America a great impetus. It was, indeed, not just a propagandistic measure, but it was based on the fact that homosexuality, whether it is considered congenital or acquired, is an activity which does nobody any harm. This was also the general feeling among the population. People in general were very tolerant in sexual matters, as one reporter states, homosexuals and lesbians were occasionally "made fun of in a kindly way." In contrast, conservative people, as everywhere, were still under the influence of ascetic ideologies and medieval prejudices. This class also had its representatives in the middle and higher strata of the party, so that its influence made itself gradually felt among the workers also. Gradually, two concepts of homosexuality crystallized themselves more and more: 1. Homosexuality is a "sign of a barbaric lack of culture", an indecency of half-primitive Eastern peoples; 2. Homosexuality is a "sin of a degenerate culture of the perverse bourgeoisie."

②

su

Such views together with the general lack of clarity concerning sexual problems, led to occasionally grotesque cases of persecution of homosexuals; as time went on, they became more and more frequent... With the general inhibition of the sexual revolution, therefore, a steady increase of homosexuality among the youth, especially in the army and navy, was inevitable. There was spying and denunciation, ostracism on the part of the party committees and even "party purges". In individual cases, old Bolsheviks like Klara Zetkin intervened and achieved acquittal. But gradually, as a result of the unsolved condition of the sexual problem in general, the wave of homosexuality increased, until in January 1934, there were mass arrests of homosexuals in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, and Odessa. These arrests were being justified on political grounds. Among the arrested there were a great many actors, musicians and other artists who, for alleged "homosexual orgies," were punished with several years of imprisonment or exile.

logic?

In March 1934, there appeared the law which prohibits and punishes sexual intercourse between men... The well-known Soviet journalist Koltsov had written a series of articles in which he spoke of the "fairies of Goebbel's propaganda ministry" and of the "sexual orgies in fascist countries". An article by Gorky on "Proletarian Humanism" had a decisive influence. He wrote: "One revolts at even mentioning the horrors which fascism brings to such a rich flowering." What he meant was anti-semitism and homosexuality. He continued: "In the fascist countries, homosexuality, which ruins youth, flourishes without punishment; in the country where the proletariat has audaciously achieved social power, homosexuality



has been declared a social crime and is heavily punished. There is already a slogan in Germany, "Eradicate the homosexual and fascism will disappear."

...People failed to distinguish the Männerbund homosexuality which, in fact, was at the basis of Rohn's as well as other organizations, from the emergency homosexuality among soldiers, sailors, and prisoners which was due to the lack of heterosexual opportunities. They overlooked, in addition, the fascist ideology with regard to homosexuality, which was also negative; one only has to remember June 30, 1934, when Hitler eradicated the whole leadership of the SA with the same argument which was used in the beginning of the persecution of homosexuals in the Soviet Union...

...The mass arrests of homosexuals led to a panic among the homosexuals in the Soviet Union; it is said that there were numerous suicides in the army. Up to 1934, there was no atmosphere of denunciation in the Soviet Union, but after these occurrences, it developed again. The general population, on the other hand, had a tolerant attitude toward the homosexuals...

Lenin in a preface to a new draft of marital legislation commenting on sexual freedom: "Certainly, laws alone won't do, and we will in no case be satisfied with decrees alone. As to legislation, however, we have done everything that was asked of us to make the position of the woman equal to that of the man. We have a right to be proud: At present, the position of the woman in the Soviet Union is such that even from the standpoint of the most progressive nations it would have to be called ideal. In spite of that, we say it is nothing but a beginning. (emphasis added)

#### CLOSING COMMENT

This section has been provided as a resource not normally available to comrades. The material from Europe indicates, we believe, the scope and import of the questions involved. The material from Reich provides a historical background often critical in face of reactionary stances on the question of homosexuality.

We have not attempted to say everything here. We did not, for example, go into the slogan "Workers of the World, Caress" which we know is somewhat controversial in the organization. We have attempted to lay down basic parameters of our intervention rather than deal with the conjunctural value of a slogan which serves to cut sharply across the antipathy to class distinctions in the gay milieu as well as posing the goal of breaking down the sexual and social alienation of workers from one another.

We are sure that this first document is but a beginning of what promises to be a heated, necessary and educational discussion. We may be wrong. It may only prove to be educational.

B.S./K.T. October 10, 1974

- ① Shaky
- ② legal reform
- ③ more supt for activists
- ④ link with class
- ⑤ what basis build gay movement on - what basis activists as res.