

# First Draft - Proposal for Study of Gay Liberation and Party-Building

## I. History of the Gay Liberation Movement

- A. Early Movement -- Germany, Britain, US (1865-1940)
- B. Modern US Movement Part 1 (1950-1969)
  - 1. Organizational Development
  - 2. Political Development (Special focus on Mattachine, DOB)
- C. Modern US Movement Part 2 (1969 - )
  - 1. Stonewall and the Gay Liberation Front
  - 2. Present Day Gay Liberation Movement -- Organization and Politics of the major trends -- NGTF, CLGR, Church Groups, local forms, March on Washington.
    - a. National Minority Participation
    - b. Sexism and separate women's organizations
  - on Class composition of leadership

## II. Political Analysis of the Question of Gay Liberation

- A. Objective conditions of lesbians and gay men
  - 1. Prevalent forms and levels of discrimination (discuss men and women separately)
  - 2. Review legal status of gays -- anti-gay laws and gay rights measures.
  - 3. The "Gay Ghetto"
- B. Capitalism and Homosexuality
  - 1. What is the utility of homophobia to Capitalism?
  - 2. What concessions can capitalism make to GL without a serious threat to its hegemony (ideological) over the working class?
- C. Political errors in GLM - what is their basis and how can we fight them?
  - 1. Racism
  - 2. Sexism
  - 3. Reformism
  - 4. Anti-Communism
  - 5. Feminism
  - 6. Subjectivism
  - 7. Ultra-democracy

## III. Party-Building and the Gay Liberation Movement

- A. Is Gay Liberation a Revolutionary Task? (Does the elimination of homophobia require the overthrow of capitalism?)
- B. Gay liberation and Democratic Struggles
  - 1. Relationship, theoretically and practically, between GL and the struggle against sexism.
  - 2. Gay Liberation and the Struggle against racism
    - a. Attitudes of Black Community and Black Liberation Movement towards lesbians and gays
    - b. Developing contacts with Black lesbians and gay men.
  - 3. Gay Liberation and the Working Class Movement
    - a. The experience of Gay Liberationists in the TU movement.
    - b. Raising the question within the rank and file movement.
    - c. Involving gay and lesbian workers in the rank and file mvmt.
- C. Gay Liberation and the new family
- D. Gay Liberation and the US Left
  - 1. Historical survey -- CPUSA, New Left (SDS), SWP
  - 2. Modern anti-revisionist movement -- sectarianism homophobia, and the alienation of progressive lesbians and gays.
- E. The International Communist Movement and the Gay Question
  - 1. Historical positions -- German Social Democracy, the Bolsheviks, Stalin.
  - 2. Present day positions -- USSR, PRC, Cuba; ~~China~~ GDR; new socialist countries and liberation movements.
  - 3. Developing a principled public criticism (esp. re Cuba)

A special focus of any OCIC investigation of the gay question must be the relationship between gay rights and the Black liberation movement. The impact of capitalism on the Black family, resulting in different roles and a different division of labor for men and women than in the white working class, has resulted in different attitudes toward gays. The historic problem of sexism in the Black Liberation Movement, which is normally associated with extreme homophobia (most clearly illustrated in the Nation of Islam) exists alongside a supportive attitude, based on identification with being a discriminated group, on the part of many Blacks. Within the gay liberation movement, the visibility of white male petty-bourgeois leadership, and the failure to take up the struggle against racism have exacerbated tensions. Perhaps the clearest example is the frequent use of white gay men as "shock troops" in areas scheduled for recycling. (Being able to double up incomes and being usually without children, gay men can frequently afford recycled housing and ignore the neighborhood around them). Subjectivism in the gay movement, also most pronounced among white men, whereby gay activists deny the material differences between gay oppression and racism must also be dealt with.

To begin this process, our group is circulating the questionnaire below to all OCIC forces. We are proposing that cadre from our organizations, both gay and straight, begin a common study leading to a better strategic understanding of the gay question in relation to party-building. A tentative outline of that study is attached, and some of us are doing bibliographic work now to help flesh it out.

For this study to happen, organizations must agree that the gay question deserves more attention and release some portion of some cadres' time to undertake the study. The response you send to the questionnaire will help us determine if our organizations agree and what our next steps will be.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your organization support the democratic rights of gays and lesbians?
2. If your organization does not have a line on the gay question, could it subscribe to the perspective put forward in the Organizer, October 1979 (and reprinted in the Guardian, Left Press Column, Nov. 14, 1979)?
3. What role, if any does your organization or members of it play in local or national gay organizations?
4. Do you know if there are gay or lesbian members of your organization? What has been your practice on their being open in various situations? Can you put them in touch with us?
5. What is your response to having one or more members of your organization participating in the proposed study?
6. Do you have any bibliographical material to contribute to such a study?
7. If you do not agree that work on the gay question should be undertaken now, under what material conditions should the OCIC forces begin such work?

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for the OCIC Oct. 14th ad hoc group,

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