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GAY LIBERATION, CAPITALISM, STALINISM, SECTARIANISM, ULTRALEFTISM, AND TROTSKYISM

by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

I. *What contributions can the gay liberation movement make to the revolutionary process?*

A. It can discredit capitalism, to the benefit of socialism, in the eyes of the masses.

FIRST: A basic axiom of capitalism is the desirability to the individual of power over others. The bourgeoisie and all previous ruling classes have arrogantly forced their views onto others, even in such purely personal matters as bedroom habits. The basic concept of socialism opposes the power of one person over another, and seeks to abolish it everywhere, including in the bedroom. Opposition to the power of one person over another is what makes socialism so attractive, so human. And just as we understand this, and are socialists because we understand this, likewise the masses—made of the same flesh and bones as we are—will come around to socialism for this reason. The gay liberation movement can make a valuable contribution to this process. First, it can articulate the instinct of the masses that the power of one person over another is unjust, inhuman, and must be abolished; it can do this through education around the very important example of the right of all people to choose their own erotic activity. Second, it can show the masses that it is socialism which understands this principle of humanity, and capitalism which denies it. In helping to show the masses that freedom is a socialist concept, gay liberation is a valuable tool in the socialist cause.

SECOND: Another equally basic reason why we believe that socialism is superior to capitalism is that socialism is utterly scientific, while capitalism is the most powerful contemporary force opposed to science. Long ago, when capitalism was still a revolutionary force, it promised to rule through science; this promise has long since been betrayed. Nowadays, when capitalism uses science at all (as in chemistry), it misuses it (as in napalm and cyclamates). Where science is needed most, capitalism stays as far away from it as it can. Even into the twentieth century, the bourgeoisie fought hard to defend the myth that the world was created just a few thousand years ago, in less than a week, by a superman who rested on the following day. The socialist movement, even in its early days a century ago, energetically embraced Darwinism when hardly anyone else did. Likewise, our movement long ago realized that science is the only acceptable approach to understanding the erotic side of life; capitalism, on the other hand, is tied to superstition and tradition. Just as we understand the necessity for science in the study of all human activity, so do the masses also understand it—they only need for their instincts to be articulated.

The gay liberation movement takes the scientific method as axiomatic. The same two-sided role exists. The gay liberation movement helps the masses to articulate their understanding of the superiority of science over superstition, and it further aids the masses in seeing that soci-

alism is scientific and that capitalism is the opposite; in this way, too, gay liberation is a powerful force.

THIRD: Capitalism is tremendously prudish. Its monotheistic culture, symbolized by the Calvinist ethic which opposes erotic pleasure even within marriage, dates back to the ancient Hebrews, who invented human self-hatred. They believed that the human body is shameful and should be kept covered; they believed that all humanity was banished from the Garden of Eden because one woman ate an apple, believing it would bring her greater knowledge (what sensible person would pass up such an apple?), and that all women were condemned to be slaves to men as further punishment for this one act; they put the commandment "Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery" on the same level as the commandment "Thou Shalt Not Kill"; and, as Comrade Lauritsen tells us, 18 of the 36 crimes they punished by death dealt with harmless erotic activity.

Capitalism believes that erotic pleasure is bad. It believes that the only permissible purpose for our erotic drives is to get us to reproduce. Any erotic pleasure that isn't directly associated with reproduction is intolerable. Thus it bans gay love, it denies all erotic freedom to children (even believing that children are "innocent" of erotic desires), it opposes contraception and abortion, it condemns liaisons with animals, etc.

Prudishness in general, and anti-gay prejudice in particular, are clearly based on patriarchal family structure, but it's more complicated than that. Anti-gay concepts are not associated with the patriarchal family in general—the ancient Greece of Socrates and Sappho was a patriarchy, but still the Greeks valued gay love even probably a little more than they valued hetero love. Of all the ancient patriarchies, the Hebrews were almost alone in opposing gayness.

On the other hand, anti-gay concepts are hardly restricted to the more modern, nuclear form of the patriarchal family. It was under feudalism that we saw the classic models of the extended (as opposed to nuclear) family, but repression of gays was quite universal under feudalism.

Some things which do seem to correspond much more closely with anti-gay prejudice, are monotheism and money-worship, which were absent or weak in ancient Greece, but which flourished among the ancient Hebrews, in the Pope's Empire, among the Puritans, and in America today. How these are connected isn't very obvious, but we can safely say that anti-gay prejudice is more or less equivalent with prudishness—prudishness being understood as the belief that the only proper purpose for erotic pleasure is to encourage reproduction.

To analyze anti-gay prejudice, we must first of all consider what it is that anti-gay people accuse gay people of doing. Anti-gay people (both religious and "scientific") accuse gay people of diverting the reproductive drive into unintended channels; gay love is thus taboo for the same reasons as contraception and abortion, erotic activity among children, masturbation, oral or anal love-

making (even among heterosexuals), liaisons with animals, etc.—because erotic pleasure, in their eyes, is basically bad and is acceptable only where necessary, namely to drive us to reproduce.

But the biological purpose of erotic pleasure is not just to motivate reproduction. It is also designed to lead the infant to seek its mother's breast, as well as to lead the mother to nurse the child—and, what's more, in a thousand other ways to lead people to want to associate with other people, to make us a social animal.

From a scientific point of view, it matters very little whether the persons being attracted to each other are of the same or different sexes. It is a heterosexual act for a mother to nurse a male child, and it is a homosexual act for her to nurse a female child. When two friends of different sexes kiss, it is a heterosexual kiss; when two friends of the same sex kiss, it is a homosexual kiss. In principle, the only difference between heterosexual and homosexual love is that hetero love, under certain conditions, can produce children. This difference, being the only basic difference between the two, must be what matters to anti-gay people, and they are the first to tell us so.

In summary, then, capitalism is prudish—it condemns love-making and erotic pleasure in general, making a reluctant exception only where reproduction requires it. The individualism which is axiomatic to capitalism is the opposite of love. But the socialist movement—from Engels to Reich to Guevara to Emma Goldman—is based on love. The masses, of course, are a lot more pro-love and pro-love-making than the official bourgeois ideology. The gay liberation movement, then, by being pro-love and anti-prudishness, helps to articulate the healthy instincts of the masses and, again, it helps lead the masses to understand the difference between socialism and capitalism. The potential power of the gay liberation movement, then, corresponds to the power of the natural human drive for erotic pleasure and love. Which is pretty powerful.

B. Furthermore, the gay liberation movement can discredit our opponents on the left, to the benefit of Trotskyism.

FIRST: The CP will openly admit to being anti-gay (whereas they won't admit to being, say, anti-female). They are tied to the Stalinist view that gayness is a form of bourgeois decadence, and to the Stalinist tradition of imitating the bourgeois policy of repression of gay people. In contrast, our movement has a heritage dating back to Lenin and Trotsky, of standing for full democratic rights for gay people (Comrade Lauritsen deserves much credit for refreshing our memories in this matter). In the struggle for the leadership of the gay liberation movement, the CP can hardly compete with us. As a result, the greater the growth of the gay liberation movement, the more the CP will be weakened, to the benefit of the Trotskyist movement.

SECOND: PL will also openly admit to being anti-gay; in this respect, they are the same as the CP. While PL is certainly losing influence already anyway, they are far from destroyed; the gay liberation movement can help finish this process.

THIRD: The Workers League is also openly anti-gay (for instance, in reporting the death of J. Edgar Hoover,

they took special pleasure in accusing him of being gay, just as the Stalinists have done). This group, while claiming to be the polar opposite of the Stalinists, time after time takes positions close to those of the Stalinists (saying feminism and Black nationalism are reactionary, concentrating incomparably more criticism on George Wallace than on George McGovern or Shirley Chisholm, etc.). The WL still has much less influence than we have, but they still have much more influence than they should. Again, the gay liberation movement can help discredit them, to our benefit.

FOURTH: The same situation exists for most of the other radical tendencies, in one form or another. The International Socialists, after initially turning towards the gay liberation movement, soon got scared and reversed themselves, now standing in opposition. The Panther Party had a long history of anti-gay rhetoric, which was brought to an end last fall; they even expressed solidarity with the struggle of gay people at that time, but since that time they have pretty consistently ignored the gay liberation movement, and are not about to start intervening in it.

The Castro leadership has adopted the general Stalinist approach to gay people (just as they have on such questions as freedom of speech, party democracy, legality of marijuana, etc.), even though they have very revolutionary positions on many other questions. The recent anti-gay measures taken in Cuba have already had a considerable impact on the gay liberation movement in the US (see, for instance, the excellent polemic by the Yellow Springs gays, which Comrade Lee Smith submitted into the Discussion Bulletin No. 1); this has already had considerable effect in reducing the tendency of U. S. radicals to over-glorify the Cuban regime. The Communist Tendency (the eight former-SWPers who made lots of noise at our last convention but who seem to have disappeared completely since then) was as anti-gay as Stalin ever was. Etc. Etc. Etc.

There are tendencies within the gay movement which resemble various of our opponents, as well as pro-capitalist tendencies. Our lack of intervention into the gay movement has made it much easier for them to conceal their contradictions. They themselves are well aware of their utter inability to compete with us for the leadership of the gay movement; this is why they are more concerned with keeping the SWP out of the gay movement than they are with struggling for gay liberation. By restricting the SWP's role to that of cheering from the sidelines and occasionally taking a small part in a local action, we are playing into their hands.

* * *

II. *What is needed, to maximize the contribution of the gay liberation movement to the revolutionary process?*

A. Whatever power the gay liberation movement might develop at any point can be translated into support for socialism over capitalism and support for Trotskyism over our opponent tendencies—only to the extent that we take advantage of the potential. At our present level of only occasional, limited involvement, with no effort to become the leadership of the movement, we make it easy for other tendencies within the gay movement to red-bait us, to accuse us of seeking to "use" the gay lib-

eration movement for our own ends, to spread lies about us, etc. When our participation is so limited, it suggests that our commitment is likewise limited. To honest gay activists we may well seem not much better than the Stalinists, and maybe not even as good as some liberals. What can we possibly gain by this?

B. Any contribution that the gay liberation movement can make is at any given time going to be proportional to the size, strength, health, and quality of leadership of that movement. Like any other movement, in order to grow at its greatest potential rate, the gay liberation movement requires proper leadership. Like any other movement, it can get this proper leadership from the Trotskyist movement and nowhere else. It can't spontaneously duplicate our leadership, and none of our opponents can lead it anywhere. Only under our leadership will the gay liberation movement understand the concepts of mass action, of independence from capitalist politics, of defensive formulations and democratic and transition-

al slogans, etc. Without understanding these concepts, the gay liberation movement must suffer, and cannot grow in strength, size, and health at anywhere near its full potential, nor can it make its full contribution to the overall revolutionary process.

* * *

IN SUMMARY: If we want to make full use of the great potential of the gay liberation movement to discredit capitalism, Stalinism, ultraleftism and sectarianism, to the benefit of Trotskyism—and if we want the gay liberation movement to grow at its full potential—then we must intervene in the gay liberation movement, show gay activists *in practice* the differences between ourselves and our enemies and opponents, pass on to gay activists the experiences we have gained in decades of struggle all over the world, and struggle for a Trotskyist leadership for the gay liberation movement in order to better struggle for gay liberation and socialism.

June 27, 1972

ANTIGAY LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES

by David Thorstad, Upper West Side Branch,
New York Local

Nowhere in the world is hostility to homosexual behavior reflected in law with the harshness that one finds in the United States. This, of course, is not to say that countries like, say, Brazil or Spain, where homosexual acts are not against the law, are homosexual havens; they are not. Nor is it to suggest that there is a direct correlation between the degree of homosexual oppression in a given society and the severity or leniency of its laws on homosexual sex; the law is only one reflection of the ways in which society attempts to regulate or eliminate certain kinds of sexual behavior. It is certainly not to suggest that the existence of antigay sex laws alone explains the need for a gay liberation movement; the fact that this movement is growing in countries that do not have or have recently eliminated such laws (Holland,

England, France, Italy . . .) demonstrates that gay liberation involves a struggle for far more than the mere repeal of draconian legislation.

But if the law does not say everything about homosexual oppression, it does say something. Even if a law prohibiting homosexual sex is not enforced—as most in the U. S. are not, if for no other reason than that it is virtually impossible to legally prove that such an act has taken place—it reflects to some extent the prevailing attitudes of society. It can also—as it does in the U. S.—serve to reinforce antigay discrimination on all levels of society. (State laws serve, for instance, to underpin and "justify" antigay ordinances on the municipal level.) And the psychological harm these laws do to gays is not negligible: the knowledge that the law is *there* reminds

us from the very moment we first become aware of our homosexuality that our love is criminal; the law hangs like a sword of Damocles over an important part of a gay person's life and often injects a kind of pervading fear and distrust into our relations with others that heterosexuals never know.

The following is a very sketchy, but I hope useful, survey. As far as I can tell, it is an up-to-date survey. In the case of the United States especially, the lack of detail is intentional: I don't want to burden or bore comrades with more than they need to get the point. In other cases (China, India), lack of detail is the result of my own lack of information.

United States

The antihomosexual sex laws in the United States are known as the "crime against nature" or "sodomy" laws. This is not because sodomy (anal intercourse) is all they proscribe, for in fact the definition of "sodomy" in these laws has been stretched to include a wide variety of sexual acts; this definition differs from state to state.

The basis for American law in this matter (as in other countries with an Anglo-Saxon heritage) is a 1533 statute from the reign of Henry VIII that prohibited buggery with mankind or beast under penalty of death. "Buggery," however, includes only genital-anal contact between two men or between a man and a woman, and "bestiality" (genital contact with animals). It does not include fellatio (mouth-penis contact) or cunnilingus (mouth-vagina contact).

The courts have tended to interpret sodomy statutes in different ways, usually in the direction of broadening their interpretation to include as much "unnatural" sex as possible ("unnatural" sex is essentially seen as any sexual intercourse in which the man is not inserting his penis into a woman's vagina with the man on top and the woman flat underneath). The result of judicial haggling over what is and what is not sodomy is statutes like Washington's and Minnesota's, which prohibit almost everything. Here is Minnesota's:

"A person who carnally knows in any manner any animal or bird, or carnally knows any male or female person by the anus or with the mouth, or voluntarily submits to such carnal knowledge; or attempts sexual intercourse with a dead body, is guilty of sodomy, and is punishable with imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 20 years, and any sexual penetration, however slight, shall be sufficient to complete the crime."

Even masturbation can fall under the ban of sodomy and crime-against-nature statutes. Both Indiana and Wyoming declare guilty of sodomy "whoever entices, allures, instigates or aids any person under the age of twenty-one years to commit masturbation or self-pollution." In one interpretation of the Wyoming statute, masturbation or self-pollution was held to include the crime of cunnilingus, which is defined as "any unnatural sexual gratification which tends to corrupt the morals."

The U. S. laws read quite a bit the same from state to state. Most of them use the terms "sodomy" and "crime against nature" as synonyms. Typical of these laws (most of which do not mention the more exotic forms of sex—with birds and dead bodies) is Virginia's defining "crimes against nature":

"If any person shall carnally know in any manner any brute animal, or carnally know any male or female per-

son by the anus or by or with the mouth, or voluntarily submit to such a carnal knowledge, he or she shall be guilty of a felony and shall be confined to the penitentiary not less than one nor more than three years." In an interesting—and apparently generous—interpretation of this statute, the court held that proof that the accused had his head upon the stomach of another with the penis in his hand is insufficient to prove carnal copulation in the mouth.

Such laws have been repealed in the following states: Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, and Oregon. Repeal of Idaho's law went into effect in January 1972, but after only three months the old law outlawing homosexual sex was restored by the state legislature in March by a slim margin. In addition, Florida's law, which provided for a maximum of 20 years in jail, reduced sodomy to the category of misdemeanor in December 1971. Proposals to revise the penal codes are under consideration in more than a dozen states. Sodomy became legal in Washington, D. C., this spring.

Hawaii (which repealed its law in March 1972) is now the most liberal state in the country because it also sets the age of consent at 14. Most often it is 18 or 21, which of course frequently adds to the risks that gays run—the one that we may find ourselves charged with corrupting the morals of a minor. This is still a source of blackmail. Not long ago, someone I know was blackmailed into paying more than \$30 to a New York cop who came to his door with a 17-year-old who was in minor trouble and whom my friend had helped.

While the sodomy laws are usually defined to include sexual acts practiced by heterosexuals too, they have rarely been applied against straights. I have never met a straight person who was actually concerned about the legality of what he or she did in bed in private. On the other hand, I have not met a gay person who has *not* been worried, annoyed, or outraged by this question. And for good reason: the laws are aimed at us.

In most states, homosexual acts are felonies (punishable by more than one year in prison); in others they are misdemeanors. In some states the court has the option of using either felony or misdemeanor charges. In most states, the punishments are severe, for the biblical injunction calling for death for the sodomite still holds sway with the solons who warm the seats of the state legislatures.

California and Nevada provide for indeterminate sentencing—one year to life. In Georgia the life sentence is mandatory for sodomy unless clemency has been recommended. More than thirty states provide for a maximum imprisonment of at least 10 years. In North Carolina it is 60 years. In other states, payment of a fine is enough to pay for the "crime."

In addition, some twenty states have "sex psychopath" laws, by which homosexuals can be detained and registries kept on them. Pennsylvania's Barr-Walker Act allows indeterminate detention of "sex psychopaths" in mental hospitals. In California, a similar law permits detention of gays in mental institutions from one year to life. In some cases, the price they pay to get out of these torture chambers is "voluntary" castration.

Compulsory sterilization of "hereditary" criminals (read: repeaters) is still prescribed by the laws of twelve states; seven of these states include sex offenders in this category.

The viciousness of the antigay laws in the United States does not reflect the prevailing psychiatric view that homosexuality is a disease (which it is not, in any case) or a sin (which is every bit as barbaric a concept). Rather, these laws treat gay sex as if it were a depraved perversion and view those who practice it as less than human.

Most often, gays are not prosecuted under these sodomy laws but under misdemeanor laws forbidding sexual solicitation, vagrancy, loitering, cross-dancing, "outrageous conduct," and "lewd behavior." Sometimes a judge will allow gays to plead guilty to lesser charges like loitering. Misdemeanor punishments range from a \$10 to \$10,000 fine and from three months to a year in jail, sometimes suspended. In Illinois, which was the first state to abolish its sodomy law (1961), there has been a great deal of persecution of homosexuals under the solicitation law.

Much of the discrimination gays face comes not from state laws but from city ordinances. Many cities bar us from certain professions, like taxi driving and bartending. With exceptions you could count on one hand, the trade-union movement has not seen fit to oppose such regulations or seek job protection for gays.

In addition, many school systems have general "moral turpitude" clauses in their contracts that are used against gays whose sexual orientation is discovered.

A Miami ordinance forbids gays from working or being served where alcoholic drinks are sold; last December a municipal judge threw out charges against four bartenders accused of serving homosexuals, but his ruling is not binding unless appealed to a higher court and upheld. Just this June a federal judge, in response to a suit brought by the Gay Activists Alliance, declared a Miami Beach ordinance banning female impersonation and transvestitism unconstitutional. And it was only last October that New York City, where there are an estimated half a million or so homosexuals, decided to delete sections of its regulations that prohibited gays of either sex from frequenting or being employed in cabarets, dance halls, and food-catering establishments; it nonetheless retained an idiotic regulation barring transvestites from teen-age cabarets.

Only one city in the entire country — East Lansing, Michigan — has a rule barring employment discrimination against homosexuals. The regulation was adopted on March 7, 1972. The New York bill (Intro 475) banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, employment, and public accommodations was defeated by the city council early this year in what was an important defeat for gay liberation. Mayor Lindsay has reintroduced this bill into the council.

It has long been federal policy to bar or discourage gays from the armed forces and the civil service on the grounds that they are both security risks and "generally undesirable." This policy, which is being challenged, was codified during the witch-hunt by a 1950 inquiry by the Senate Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments. One of the primary objectives of this inquiry, the committee stated, was "to consider reasons why their [homosexuals] employment by the Government is undesirable." Not "if," but "why."

Regarding the "general suitability" of gays as government employees, the committee stated: "It is generally believed that those who engage in overt acts of pervers-

sion lack the emotional stability of normal persons. In addition there is an abundance of evidence to sustain the conclusion that indulgence in acts of sex perversion weakens the moral fiber of an individual to a degree that he is not suitable for a position of responsibility." This lesson on the need to keep America's "moral fiber" strong was blandly offered by a gang of moral perverts in Washington who saw their campaign against homosexuality as an indispensable ingredient in their efforts to weaken the American left and to strengthen U. S. imperialism. The entire American left, including the SWP, was influenced by this campaign and for a time even used some of the same arguments to exclude gay people from membership. It is to the SWP's credit that it has been able to rectify this in a straightforward and honest way.

Victories against these legal forms of antigay discrimination can be won. The gay community and straight supporters should be mobilized to force state legislatures to repeal antigay sex laws; to compel city governments to eliminate discriminatory regulations and to adopt equal rights legislation that applies to sexual orientation as well as to race, religion, and sex; to back legal challenges of such laws; to press the executive branch of government to issue an executive order banning such discrimination; and to have the provisions of the Civil Rights Act extended to include gays. Support for such efforts should be sought in all quarters, including the trade-union movement. Our gay comrades within gay liberation organizations should take an active role in proposing and helping to build struggles around such efforts.

France

It is certainly not coincidental that the first big step forward in the legal emancipation of gays came with the revolutionary upheavals in eighteenth century France. In 1791, the Constituent Assembly introduced legislation that for the first time in the history of Europe placed homosexual and heterosexual crimes on the same legal footing by making no mention of the "unnatural vice." A commission was set up in 1801 to work on establishment of a definitive penal code. This code was finally published on February 22, 1810, as the Napoleonic Code we know today. By removing homosexual acts from criminal law, it ended a European legal tradition going back nearly 1,300 years to the time of Justinian's codification of Roman law prescribing the death penalty for homosexual acts. The death penalty continued in Anglo-Saxon law, and was not eliminated in England until 1861.

The more rational and humane approach of the Napoleonic Code to homosexual sex has tended to prevail in the legal provisions of Judeo-Christian nations not under the influence of Anglo-Saxon law. In non-Judeo-Christian nations not under the influence of Anglo-Saxon law, consensual homosexual acts are virtually never mentioned in legal statutes.

The trend in France, however, has been a reactionary one. This trend is highlighted by two laws.

First, on February 8, 1945, the DeGaulle regime added to the penal code the Vichy law raising the age of consent for homosexual acts to 21, while the age of consent for heterosexual acts remained at 18. (This kind of discrimination is common throughout Europe.) There is considerable concern and anger among French gays over this law, and it is certainly one that the gay libera-

tion movement there should fight to change.

Second, on July 18, 1960, the French parliament branded homosexuality a "social scourge," placing it on the same plane as alcoholism and prostitution. In debate on the question, Paul Mirguet made the following reactionary and racist observations in defense of his amendment to an amendment supporting "all measures appropriate to combatting homosexuality":

"I don't think it is necessary to discuss this at any length since you are all aware of how serious a scourge homosexuality is, a scourge from which it is our duty to protect our children.

"At a moment in which our civilization has become so vulnerable and is in such danger since it represents a minority view in a world that is undergoing great changes, we must combat anything that contributes to a lessening of its prestige. France must set an example in this field as it does in others. This is why I ask you to adopt my amendment to the amendment. The parliament will thereby be demonstrating its awareness of this question and its determination to prevent the spread of this scourge by means that are more effective, in my opinion, than the promulgation of repressive measures." Amid general sexist merrymaking and mirth from the benches, Mirguet's amendment was adopted.

Soviet Union

The second giant step forward in the emancipation of gays came with the Russian Revolution, which struck the czarist antigay laws from the books and fostered an open-minded attitude toward homosexuality among the Soviet people. Unfortunately, with the reintroduction of penalties against homosexuals under the Stalinist reaction in 1933-1934, all that gays won in 1917 was lost (see John Lauritsen's "Aspects of the Gay Liberation Movement," Discussion Bulletin Vol. 30, No. 1). Today, the "infamous and criminal perversion" of homosexual sex (law of December 17, 1933) can bring a prison term of between three and eight years in the first workers state. Some day the Stalinist traitors will pay for this.

While the Bolsheviks based their discussion of homosexuality in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia on the work of the gay pioneer in the study of sexuality, Magnus Hirschfeld, the 1952 edition of this encyclopedia (Vol. 12, Second Edition), says things Hirschfeld would never have thought. It blasts bourgeois countries, for instance, where it claims that "homosexuality is an expression of the moral degeneracy of the ruling classes" and as a result "is in reality not suppressed." Indeed! So much for the Stalinist school of falsification.

Life is pretty tough for gays in the Soviet Union, reports Allan Kriss in an article on Soviet gay life in the May 1972 issue of the French gay magazine *Arcadie*. While young gays he met in Soviet cities would like to see the current antigay laws changed, they do not see how they can accomplish this without support in the population as a whole, and this they do not see. They are very isolated, both from the general population and from each other. They are incredulous and excited to learn that there is a growing gay liberation movement in the bourgeois West. Kriss had to explain to them that the mere existence of a gay movement did not mean that everything was just great in the West—quite the opposite, in fact.

The main question that Soviet gays are asking, according to Kriss, is "how homosexuals fit into society." The answer for now is obviously that they do not. One young homosexual in Moscow told him: "All homosexuals, whether young or not so young, try to hide their tendencies. If they are found out at work—for example, at the university—they are fired or simply dismissed. The management always looks for ways to get rid of a homosexual."

In one way, ironically, life is easier for Soviet gays than for most of us: because of Slavic attitudes, it is not unusual to see two boys or even two men kissing in public. "Naturally," writes Kriss, "homosexuals take advantage of this freedom. And I was frequently extremely shocked at how open they were: kisses on the neck, caresses, and tender gestures are common on the benches of the Bolshoi Square" (a gay cruising area).

Cuba

So far as I know, there is no specific law banning gay sex in Cuba. There is, however, an explicitly antigay policy fostered by the regime. This policy was adopted at the First National Congress on Education and Culture in Havana April 23-30, 1971. The severity and Stalinoid ring of the denunciation of homosexuality by this congress revived memories of the period in the sixties when Cuban gays were shamelessly herded into the UMAPs (Military Units to Aid Production), which were little more than concentration camps.

This congress branded homosexuality a "social pathology" in terms reminiscent of those that coaxed chuckles and votes from the righteous bourgeois gentlemen and gentlewomen in France a decade earlier when they declared it a "social scourge." "The social pathological character of homosexual deviations was recognized," the congress stated. "It was resolved that all manifestations of homosexual deviations are to be firmly rejected and prevented from spreading. It was pointed out, however, that a study, investigation and analysis of this complex problem should always determine the measures to be adopted." The congress "agreed to differentiate between the various cases, their stages of deterioration and the necessarily different approaches to the different cases and degrees of deterioration."

From now on 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 foresaw the "transferring to other organizations" of gays who, for no other reason than the fact that they are gay, "should not have any direct influence on our youth through artistic and cultural activities." It barred gays ("those whose morals do not correspond to the prestige of our Revolution") from representing Cuba abroad as members of performing groups.

Finally, it asked that "severe penalties be applied to those who corrupt the morals of minors, depraved repeat offenders and irredeemable antisocial elements."

It is no accident that this vicious and barbaric statement was drawn up at the very time that certain Stalinist elements have been reasserting themselves in Cuba.

China

I do not know if there is any law against homosexual sex in China. It was in hopes of finding out that I called the Peking mission to the United Nations on June 22.

The conversation I had with the spokesman for the delegation confirmed what I had read about the suffocating prudishness of Stalinist China.

It took a moment or two for me to realize that my question—if there were any laws in China regulating homosexual sex—assumed too much. Once I explained what a homosexual was, the spokesman said he would prefer to speak French since he was better at it. The conversation went something like this, with nervously bemused chuckles accompanying virtually every statement from the other end:

Him: "There is no such thing in China."

Me: "How can you say that, since homosexuality has played such an obvious role throughout Chinese history? Some of your greatest emperors were homosexual."

Him: "No, that does not exist in China. In my opinion, it is a completely abnormal and unnatural thing. Oh, perhaps it existed before the liberation. But after the liberation, our youth acquired a healthy outlook and they carry out this healthy outlook both in their study and in their work."

Me: "But how can you be so sure it doesn't exist?"

Him: "In twenty years of the revolution I have never heard of this kind of curious thing."

Me: "On the other hand, science has established that homosexuality is completely normal and that it exists in all societies."

Him (triumphantly, with the knowledge that I am suffering from bourgeois decadence): "That's all right for you to say."

Me: "And yet, I happen to be a socialist."

Him: "Oh, well let's just hope you're a socialist" (much mirth).

Me: "Are you aware of the fact that Lenin and the Bolsheviks took a very different approach from yours? They

wiped the old czarist laws against homosexuality off the books. It was Stalin who reestablished the old czarist laws, and now the Soviet Union has antihomosexual legislation, as does the United States."

Him: "I never read where Stalin did that."

Me: "Let me ask you this. You say you think homosexuality is abnormal and unnatural on the one hand. And on the other hand, you say it does not exist in China. Do you mean to say that there are no abnormal or unnatural people in all of China?"

Him: "Excuse me, but I have a lot of work to do today."

If there is anything worse than being persecuted, it must be to learn that, quite simply, one does not even exist.

Other Countries

In only a few nations are all homosexual acts labelled criminal and punishable by law. Besides the United States and the Soviet Union, they include Australia, India, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and New Zealand. In most of these countries prosecution is rare and repeal of the laws is being considered. Finland and Austria removed homosexual sex from criminal status in 1971. In May 1969, West Germany approved a new penal code removing private homosexual acts between consenting adults from criminal status. On July 1, 1969, a similar change was signed into law in Canada.

Czechoslovakia and Great Britain repealed their anti-gay laws in the sixties. Within the past three decades, this has also occurred in Hungary, East Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden. Similar legal immunity exists in Poland and Norway (in Norway, for instance, the law is by official order not enforced). Antihomosexual laws were repealed a century ago in Belgium and Holland. In Italy, Spain, Greece, Mexico, and Brazil there are no laws against homosexual sex.

June 25, 1972

GAY LIBERATION AND THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

By Jon Hillson, Denver Branch

"Only through socialism can you have sexual *joie de vivre*."

Wilhelm Reich, 1932

The literary discussion on the party's orientation to the gay liberation movement creates the context and necessity for a general discussion of the central dynamic from which the gay liberation movement emanates and to which it objectively points: the sexual revolution. This theoretical discussion links intimately with and demands a specific discussion on strategy and tactics; at the same time, a discussion limited to tactical and strategic considerations is insufficient in light of the need for a general analysis of the scope and meaning of the particular *movement* under discussion.

The sexual revolution, the emancipation of sexuality and the shattering of bourgeois sex morality are incorporated into, a motive force and logical consequence of the proletarian socialist revolution.

No revolutionary party has ever engaged in this type of discussion. No revolutionary party, in the epoch of women's liberation and gay liberation, can turn aside from it. The discussion involving the dialectics of the sexual revolution and the discussion involving the specific tactical and strategic orientation of the party to the gay liberation movement are the two component parts of one process. The following contribution deals with the former, and a forthcoming contribution will deal with the latter.

Heterosexual Monogamous Morality

The material basis for the creation of a sex morality based upon heterosexual monogamy necessarily was coincident with the period of consolidation of the nuclear monogamous family and the development of "divine" (Judeo-Christian) sex morality. The nuclear monogamous family is not only the crucial unit for the reproduction of the population, but also for the creation in that population of the character structure most responsive to class rule and class oppression. The patriarchal domination of the family and the concomitant oppression of the woman ideologically prepare the offsprings in their most formative stages for assimilation into a society which is the multiple of their family: bourgeoisie (father) and proletariat (mother).

The "immorality" of homosexuality, an *idea*, developed alongside of and as part of the ideology which the patriarchal monogamous family created for its perpetuation, a perpetuation demanded by rising class society: that is, the *necessity* of procreation. And while homosexuality is as old as humanity, while heterosexuality and homosexuality intertwined as sexual practices prior to the rise of the nuclear monogamous family, it was the advent of sex morality *itself* in western society which demanded the exorcising of homosexuality, branded it a crime

against nature and banished at least to limbo those who broke the bonds of heterosexual morality.

In the context of expanding markets, technology, production and consumption, procreation is a central task of the woman. Her function of childbearing demands she have children to rear, of homemaking a hearth (family) to tend. Her life is surrounded by filial-procreative definitions: mother, daughter, aunt, niece, etc. And her health is judged by society on the basis of her fertility. If "barren," her *husband* is pitied, if she bears scads of scions, still her fertility is second to his "virility." This task complements her ideological functions, and is a basis for her oppression as an unpaid domestic worker.

Competition is the *compulsive* core of capitalism. The dominant sexual norm of class society reflects, reaffirms and pushes forward that compulsive, forceful character of capitalist competition. The religious paeans for "procreation of the species," demands for the reproduction of armies (ever since there were armies), the necessity to carry on family "blood lines" and the "incentive" of inheritance adds the dynamics of "duty" and "service" to the ideology of compulsive procreation. And, of course, the better half of the fruits of procreation would be most welcome if male. The family with four daughters is more embarrassing to the father and less bolstering to the dutiful mother than the family of male children.

While now homosexuality *per se* may be tolerated it obviously cannot be encouraged. And while homosexual activity is itself a threat to prevalent sexual morality, it is the *politicization* of the activity by those victimized for it which is all important.

The process by which a child is conceived is a sexual act: but the male consciousness of the ability to sire is a *sexual* consciousness, a consciousness of power, a reflection of the domination of heterosexuality by the ideology of compulsive procreation.

In the June 10 *Saturday Review*, Marvin Grosswirth deals with this point in "Who's Afraid of Vasectomy?"

For many men masculinity is directly connected to the ability to make babies. Contraception historically has been a male responsibility so that the man, in effect, has control over the pregnancy of the woman . . . Several psychological studies have that, when contraception was removed from the ultimate power by men by the introduction of the Pill, many men suffered insecurity and uncertainty regarding their role in life.

And Norman Mailer's confession (*The Prisoner of Sex*) of male chauvinist mysticism and insecurity ends, after pages of violent assaults on women and women's liberation, with a plea for females to take everything they want, reach the goals of economic equality and social self-confidence. But with one anguished disclaimer: "don't quit the womb" whatever you do.

To be sure, just over the past decade there has been a "sexual revolution" launched to erode certain aspects of bourgeois sex morality which stood in the way of the mass reification of "pleasure" all the way from unleashing pent-up spending power on "sex appeal" to having the effect of breaking into openness the booming pornography industry.

The translation of male supremacy into a supermarket of styles, garments, cosmetics, sprays (\$100 million a year alone for mostly female, but some male genital deodorants), magazines, books, automobiles—nearly everything—has had the impact of loosening up traditional strictures on premarital sex: women were freed (sic) to have intercourse before marriage (though that taboo is far from eliminated from society), men had alternatives to brothels for their premarital release. In New York City, bourgeois politicians call for the legalization of prostitution. And sex education, with a jaundiced view of homosexuality and intercourse previous to marriage, proliferates.

Obviously, this is no revolution, instead, at most, a "greening" of bourgeois sex morality. It does not fundamentally challenge the male chauvinist and heterosexually preeminent ideas of sexuality, but while reaffirming them has chipped away at a traditionally dominant idea in Judeo-Christian sex morality: sex, in and of itself, without intent to procreate, is lustful and hence, a sin.

The rise among more and more Americans, especially young Americans, of this idea—the *temporary* disassociation of marriage and procreation from heterosexual activity—links with an increasingly obvious fact which complements and adds to the revolutionary dynamics of gay liberation.

That is, coupled with a growing consciousness of the obsolescence of the compulsive procreative force as a justification for heterosexual pleasure (which is an explicit statement of homosexuality, *for* sexual pleasure) is the *practical obsolescence* of the womb as the only place for the gestation of offspring.

The fact that artificial wombs have been perfected to a great extent underlines the technological obsolescence of human housing of the fetus. The burden of gestation is then not necessary, practically, for the female: a fertilized egg can develop with less complications, less chance of injury, birth defect or other malady, in the artificial womb than that of the female. For the woman, it is the liberatory alternative to the psychological and physical burden of gestation and giving birth, the release from fears of child deformation through accident or disease and from the fear of miscarriage or death during or because of delivery.

The sexual implications of this are most graphic, and ignite an explosive charge sufficient to expose the deepest roots of sex oppression and compulsive sexual behavior.

Graphic also is the great possibility of the misuse of this concept in the horror societies of capitalist culture. While the technological potential for socialism and abundance exists as never before, the absolute barbarism of the American bourgeoisie (among others) stands to be conquered for that accomplishment. The combination of artificial child reproduction, coupled with genetic manipulation, the creation of "special strains," etc., conjure up the most nightmarish of capitalist schemes, a techno-barbarism

and profit motivated re-creation of the human being from zygote to death in a mentality (maleable but docile) perfect for its surrender to complete human oppression.

What stands between the consummation of that possibility is the reality of social revolution.

What is at the root, however, of these unconscious but inextricably linked phenomena is the disintegrating dominance of heterosexual monogamy—around which is constructed the nuclear family—based upon patriarchal ideology and the drive of compulsive procreation. The patriarchal glue which materially binds capitalist society is beginning to lose, in the process of both individual and collective struggle against it, its aggressive powers of adhesion and oppression.

The growing sexual tension in this society is a reflection and part of the general radicalization, a motor force of it, a confirmation of our party's understanding of its depth and intensity. The continuing erosion of bourgeois sex morality, the feminist exposure of the "Playboy sexual revolution," the advent of an increasingly large, militant movement of gay women and men are but an indication of the thoroughness and world historic extent to which the socialist revolution will go in the creation of a fundamentally new order of human organization.

Consciousness, Being and Biology

The *event* of the gay liberation movement, a component part of the historical development of the struggle for human liberation, reshapes and must reshape not only "social" values, but values determined seemingly "outside" the social arena: the "biology" of sexuality.

Heterosexuality, for the "value-free biologist" is the inevitable sexual act between human beings because of the very physiological shaping of the sex organs of the male and female, the concurrent "naturalness" of the act, the biological unity of sperm and egg in zygote and the function of procreation, the very bone structure of the female for the bearing of a child, etc. Homosexuality, then, if private, is a mistake between two (or more), but if public, a flagrant violation of the laws of nature. In fact, heterosexual activity not leading directly to procreation (sodomy, oral-genital activity) is a taboo in the Catholic Church, among other organized bodies of superstition and is specifically illegal in several states.

The biological arguments are essentially the searching by "scientists" for arguments in *nature* they cannot *formally* accept as the articulated word of God, whose expressed intent, we remember, was the creation of the patriarchal family. The coupling of the same sex was grounds for the abomination of the deity, who, of course, had recently created the nature He wanted no crimes committed against.

The *event* of the gay liberation movement must advance the consciousness of the revolutionary movement—*whose consciousness lags behind events*—not sending it scattering for a series of "materialist" justifications for the predominance of heterosexual activity or shying away from discussion at all. The biological definitions pointing to the superiority and inevitability of heterosexuality are a product of a *social* reality imbued with a dominant ideology which views homosexuality—at best—as a private disease, to be pitied and permitted, but with liberal toleration laced with liberal revulsion.

While of course men and women can and *had* to make babies for the survival of human beings (this biological *fact*, however, did not at all necessitate the social ideology of *exclusive* heterosexuality and anti-homosexuality), their respective anatomies exist in a society and a history of class societies which *compel* their *exclusive* attachment, bind that attachment with offspring and socially ostracize those unwilling to fit the socially defined patterns and compulsions.

The "biological" justification for heterosexuality, in terms of physical pleasure, is increasingly being challenged by the feminist critique of the vaginal orgasm. The "oceanic feeling" produced by the vaginal orgasm, the "only" orgasm for women, is necessitated by male penetration. The debunking of this myth, linked with the orgasmic potential of clitoral sensuality, are intrinsic to the sexual theory advanced by both gay and (sections of) straight wings of the women's liberation movement. It cuts across the reactionary ideas of frigidity and the necessity of male *power* in heterosexual relationships while attacking the notion of sexual passivity for women, the "being washed over by the oceanic feeling" orgasm theory, popularized by D. H. Lawrence, among others.

And, clearly, it asserts sexual fulfillment through orgasm does not demand male participation.

What is being advanced is a female-oriented theory of sexuality and sensuality: that, in and off itself, is precedent setting. The woman is not the passive recipient of male sexual prowess. And its *bisexual* implications add to the cutting of the chains *socially imparted* to women that link them to the currying of the male ego which has heretofore dominated sexuality.

The empirical facts of biology and physiology are first and always in bourgeois society at the behest of interpretation by the ruling class: the *social* evaluation of their meaning by the bourgeoisie is bourgeois ideology.

The "physiology of attraction" is but the mass presentation by the ruling class of criteria by which intimate personal relationships *most conducive to the reproduction of class society* should be formed. Warped, distorted and oppressive, these factors, in a period of now unparalleled and unprecedented radicalization explode in all directions. Linked with the disintegration of the compulsive heterosexual monogamous relationship as a norm—the goal of the golden anniversary—and the general challenges by the feminist and gay movements to heterosexual dominance and male supremacy there grows an increasing sexual tension and social polarization over its impact. And while the layer of the population *conscious* of its roots and meaning and implications is small, because this tension is an objective tension in decomposing class society, its *general and contradictory impact is massive*. By contradictory I mean on the one hand the creation of a conscious vanguard in action, in motion, whose impetus comes from their healthy consciousness of that tension. Concretely, the development of the women's liberation and gay liberation movements; the experimentation going on in alternative living arrangements; the openness of the radicalization to new ideas of sexuality in general; the developing consciousness of the revolutionary vanguard.

On the other hand, the development of a mass movement of reaction, based upon antipathy to aspects of the sexual revolution and general social crises (the breaking down of the family and traditional sex roles, decom-

position of governmental credibility, etc.): the revivalist, evangelistic Jesus movement; the response of layers of the bourgeoisie and the increasing intervention of the Catholic Church against the abortion law repeal movement (although sections of organized religion are passing liberalized statements on homosexuality, female rights and the right of women to control their own bodies).

This polarization is the first wave of response to this incipient chaos. This tension will deepen and broaden *prior* to the final quest for power by the American working class. In contrast, it was the striking, explosive transformation of sexual roles that occurred *without warning* in the Soviet Union *after* the revolution that challenged the Bolsheviks to devise an analysis of and response to the sexual revolution, a challenge understood by Trotsky, among others.

There grew a general fear resultant from the rapid collapse of roles of men and women in the early days of the first workers state (the release of women from economic servitude and housewifery, the abolition of compulsory marriage, right to divorce, abortion on demand, sexual experimentation among youth, the escalation of the role of women in political and social life, abolition of anti-homosexual laws, socialized child care, etc.).

This *fear*, in the absence of a theory and understanding of sexual revolution—coupled with the horrors of civil war, famine, the absence of proletarian revolution internationally and the concurrent isolation of the Russian revolution—was mobilized by the bureaucracy in its usurpation of power and victory of reaction.

Comrades know the *central* and leading place the famine and war and absence of world revolution took in the ability of the bureaucracy to consolidate itself as it crushed the internationalist, revolutionary wing of the Bolshevik Party. What I want to stress here is not that, but rather the role played by the bureaucracy in jelling the response of the primitive Russian population in their fearful reaction to the sexual revolution (for an excellent documentation and analysis of this, see "The Sexual Revolution In Russia" in Wilhelm Reich's *The Sexual Revolution*). The "Bolshevik" enemies of the revolution, materially buoyed by the privileges they accrued from the NEP and the subsequent bureaucratization of the state and party apparatuses, and in the context of the general easing of social dislocation after the civil war, attacked the growing gains in the social arena. By the mid-1930s, Stalinist degeneration manifested itself in the rolling back of all the gains made in behalf of the homosexual population, the cutting away of significant divorce rights for women, abolishing the right to abortion on demand, and was reflected in a strict family-oriented, patriarchal sexuality, complete with "socialist masculinity and socialist femininity" and state pleas (demands) for the rearing of "good Stalin children."

In the United States, much prior to the socialist revolution, we can readily see the impact of the feminist movement and the increased impact of the gay movement. Because of the questions they pose, because of their impact *against* the tremendous sexual conservatism and male-chauvinist rigidity that dominates traditional American morality, the fullest embracing of the gay movement, our critical understanding of and intervention into it and the development of a Marxist analysis of the sexual revolution generally are new requirements placed upon the

revolutionary vanguard, as we strive to build a party capable of leading the struggle for the dismantling of the bourgeois state and the creation of the socialist society.

Homosexuality and Gay Liberation

More than a few of our opponents mirror the outlook of bourgeois ideology in their positions on homosexuality and gay liberation. While, for instance, such diverse groups as the Communist Party, the National Caucus of Labor Committees and the Workers League affirm the irrational character of capitalism, they attribute homosexuality and the growth of the gay liberation movement as a product of the decadence of bourgeois society. The converse of that kind of analysis would find heterosexuality as somehow *fundamentally* impervious to that kind of decay, curiously in agreement with Penelope Rosemont, an American surrealist, who states in *Arsenal* (the magazine of self-proclaimed surrealist subversion) the very *unsubversive* viewpoint: "the task of the revolution is not to liberate homosexuality, but to liberate homosexuals from homosexuality."

In other words, all the irrationality involved in the development of human oppression in the construction of class society has not altered one irreversible "universal" truth: exclusive heterosexuality *is* sexuality. There is not an iota of material evidence for that statement, of course. It is rather a confirmation of the depth of prejudice against homosexuality, against gay liberation, against, no doubt, discussing sexuality. And because of their deeply *idealist* nature, those positions can ultimately be traced to a method other than that of dialectical materialism, with eyes and minds off the earth, looking for some *universal* truth, the product not of "decaying capitalism" but rather some *safe—divine?*—pronouncement.

Honest, open sexuality exists only as a *potential*. Sexuality is generally aberrative in class society. The forcing of human beings into tiny, sexually-segregated units, rife with sexual temptation and taboos, intrafamily rivalries, steeped with undercurrents of guilt, violence and fear, readies human beings for infant entry into a society which is a macrocosm of that irrationality, a society which blows up, packages, sells and resells that irrationality. Emotions, attraction, pleasure are produced on production lines, forced and regurgitated in schools, churches, jobs and families: and that is what *passes* for sexuality in, to be sure, decadent capitalist culture.

Sexual activity between members of the same sex has no intrinsic progressive or explicit political character: except in a period where that activity, while stigmatized, is the basis for political organization, in which case, and only, are the implications towards political activity possible. Stated another way, only in a period of radicalization generally can the gay population come out and fight for its liberation, a period where the stigmata of "sickness" becomes a challenge to act. That period of radicalization has not yet *fully* existed until now, until the period of declining neo-capitalism. While the seeds for such a movement were partially sown in the German Communist Party when Wilhelm Reich had a significant following, or immediately after the Bolshevik seizure of power, never has the soil been objectively ready, never have the seams of the varied forms of capitalist oppression in all its forms been so stretched to snapping as now.

The gay liberation movement is the organization of the

understanding of what generally oppresses homosexuals: the patriarchal, nuclear family and its norms in society in general. Its *initial* blasts were directed at nothing less fundamental to class oppression than the family itself. It poses the power of the ability to challenge and *erode* central myths of sex oppression and bourgeois sexual ideology which form a crucial pillar of the general ideology of class oppression.

There can be no "proletarian culture" Trotsky says, because the proletariat will cease to exist as a class, because it does not seek to prolong its own existence, but *abolish* itself, to see the state and dictatorship it *temporarily* constructs in its own defense wither.

Similarly, the classifications of sexual taste, of heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality, exist in the context of sex oppression, in the context of definition of healthy sexuality stuffed and compressed into the box of exclusive monogamous heterosexuality dominated and compelled by male supremacy and compulsive procreation. This noose-like definition was tightened even more irrationally in the compression chamber of the family and pressure cooker of class society.

While it would be incorrect of us to make programmatic or state as inevitable a revolutionary prediction of sexuality after the transition to socialism, we should not use that as a *blinder* to the fact that the explosion of the pressure cooker will not signal a kind of communist Romeo and Juliet monogamous norm. If anything, a Marxist outlook would portend the general inevitable sexual change which would emanate from a mass revolutionary upheaval. To call this "utopian" is as singularly incorrect as to attribute a similarly applied statement *vis a vis* racism as some kind of extra-terrestrial racial ultraleftism.

The technological developments the *socialist* society has at its disposal, the integration of the sexual struggle and the struggle for the emancipation of women into its very fabric (among other struggles), the alternatives to traditional gestation and childrearing, and the dethroning of compulsive heterosexuality, all point to the context for the development of altogether new human beings in a society that truly "controls nature." And that is not utopian, not a vision that denies the central role of the creation of a society where the responsibility of *production to replenish and aid the overexploited sectors of the domestic and international population is of primary importance*. Simply stated, the sexual struggles that are occurring now are but the very tip of an iceberg which will hardly be melted with the destruction of the ruling class.

The entrance of the gay liberation movement into the class struggle speeds the process of radicalization: it forcefully raises the outlook of sexual revolution, of social revolution, each bound together inextricably.

The necessity of our intervention in the gay liberation movement is obvious. There is no party other than ours, no tendency, that can seriously participate in and learn from the gay movement, either because of inveterate sectarianism, backwardness, both, or utopian idealism, ultra-left abandon, or both.

Our ability to influence the course of struggle of the gay movement while recruiting the most serious militants would be of serious material gain for us and the radicalization. The political rounding of gay activist recruits into lifelong Bolsheviks would add a new layer of Trotskyist militants to *all* areas of our work. Moreover, the gay movement is growing internationally, with actions and manifestos in

Ireland, Great Britain, France, Australia, Holland, New Zealand, Canada and Germany among many others. The SWP's analysis of and work in the gay movement will be of inestimable value to the Fourth International, which has sections or sympathizing groups in all the aforementioned countries.

The gay movement is on the upswing internationally, with growing numbers of nonhomosexual partisans among radicalizing youth across the world. Correctly, these youth ask the positions of contending revolutionary groups on the gay movement, their ideas on sexual revolution. It is a testament to the radicalization that all inhibitions are chucked overboard, that sexual questions become political, organized as a striking force against the bourgeoisie.

The Generalization of Sexual Oppression

The oppression of homosexuals is a special form of oppression in class society. Sexual oppression is a *generalized* oppression, to begin with: that is, the tensions and pressures that heterosexuals feel and reflect (consciously or unconsciously) in the form of generalized alienation* are products of the narrowing and channelling of the human sexual capacity into the tight, rigid norm of monogamous exclusive heterosexuality. That norm is a product of the compulsory sex morality endemic to patriarchal class society, a norm that affirms its "necessity," a norm that is affirmed by its superstitions, mysticism and legal and social penalties.

The oppression of the homosexual is a result of the contradiction between the necessity to assert human worth and dignity, on the one hand, and on the other, the total frustration of that in societies which proscribe and penalize homosexuality as a disease and a crime and whose sexual ideology cultivates amongst homosexuals the hatred of their own being.

It is a *specifically social oppression*, linked to, part and product of the same system that profits from the subjugation of the proletariat, the Black and Chicano populations, the female sex. The ideology of the oppression of homosexuals, a heterosexual chauvinism rooted in male supremacy, is the *sexual ideology of property society*, the ideology which explodes in the distorted and compulsive relationships which too permeate the *heterosexual* population. The tensions of those relationships deepen class and race oppression, the oppression of women.

In other words, sexual oppression is intrinsic to race and class oppression, and is a social product of the material forces which make up the class society which oppresses Blacks, Chicanos, women, gays, the entire proletariat. The *seeds* of the struggle for the *emancipation of sexuality* are sown in the great mass of society: their *initial growth* is most obvious in the gay movement, and in certain aspects of the feminist movement. The unbreak-

* Extreme cases of this alienation, extreme in the sense those afflicted cannot abide by the regulations imposed by bourgeois morality, cannot be integrated into the system of capitalist production, are diagnosed "psychosis" and "neurosis," among other names. Many times rapists are considered the former. Rape is a crime which reflects the compulsive nature of sexuality in male supremacist society; it is naked compulsion unvarnished by bourgeois ideological niceties.

able link between sexual oppression and class oppression is the chain of human oppression: that is the central importance of the gay liberation movement, which is feared in mass society *because it poses questions the answers of which exist precisely in mass society, and are but embodied in the gay liberation movement.*

Thus, the consideration of gay oppression as "petit-bourgeois" is the most backward of positions. Posing as some sort of materialist statement, it has but the veneer of that. It reflects an absolute mechanistic, dogmatic and *frivolous* conception of Marxism, sexuality and class society. It presumes sexual oppression is suffered *only* by gays, that gays come from a tiny layer of small shopkeepers and doctors and lawyers, while raising the concept of some kind of "proletarian sexuality," a distinctly absurd and anti-Marxist contention. And it dovetails bourgeois ideology. At best.

The gay liberation movement undoubtedly has an impact on millions of Americans alone who have had homosexual activity at one time or another. As an organized reflection of the struggle of those sexually oppressed, it can affect millions more. It is an ally of and is sparked by the class struggle. The struggle for sexual liberation is the struggle against social backwardness, which the *ruling class will have no hesitation—less so if we do—in using to mobilize the conservative, backward elements of the class against revolution.*

The error of mechanically excluding from consideration the political impact of the sexual struggle, or putting it in the niche (marked "gay question," etc.) empirically disassociated from the struggle to develop revolutionary class consciousness amongst the mass of the population is analagous to the method and outlook of *economism*. It is a sexual (or asexual) *economism* which allows the bourgeoisie the *constant* upper hand in that area, is a feeble and brittle response to a deep, explosive churning motion and re-affirms the mystical, moral definitions that bourgeois ideology seeks to brand upon sexuality.

Wilhelm Reich's League for Proletarian Sexual Politics, at its peak shortly before the stolid bureaucrats expelled him from the Stalinized German Communist Party, had 20,000 members. Among its leading planks was the abolition of anti-homosexual laws. The backwardness of the CP leadership mirrored is sycophancy to the Moscow hierarchy, the conservatism of the labor aristocrats and careerists to whom the leadership fastened itself.

In banishing Reich and liquidating the Sex-Pol, the bureaucrats could only give "communist" confirmation to the fears aroused by the movement amongst the German workers. How simple it was for the Nazis to wield anti-homosexual pogroms. The German CP's action against Reich (which was accompanied by his expulsion from an international psychiatric organization) is a lesson: it is but a telling *microcosm* of the whole political outlook of the mass workers party which let Hitler come to power without firing a shot.

The nationalist movements and the organized, class-wide workers' struggles, embody mass forces which can *take power* from the bourgeoisie and create *states* (Workers Republic of the United States, Republic of Atzlan, Republic of New Africa, etc.*) *in their own names.* Be-

* These names represent only *examples* of the statified social power of the aforementioned sectors. What the names of the state(s) will or should be is not the point being made.

cause of geographic concentration, class composition and racial (and language) oppression, the national struggles of Blacks and Chicanos have a crucial social power when organized against the bourgeois state.

Because of their proximity to (and socialization by) production, service, and the recreation of ideology, the whole working class can seize control of itself and base a new state on the institutions of that autonomy. The ruling class cannot incorporate a separate Black or Chicano nation—the *possible* result of a struggle for self-determination—into the framework of monopoly capitalism: the requisite for such victories is a socialist revolution. Neither, of course, can the ruling class allow for the control and organization of its means of production to come under the authority of mass bodies of the producers. *It can, however, adapt to seemingly fundamental changes in sexual morality.* But because the nature of sexual oppression is *fundamental* to capitalist society and bourgeois culture (the hangovers of which can be strikingly seen in the deformed workers states and Cuba) the struggle for gay liberation and the dynamic of sexual revolution will not only carry through up to the dismantling of the bourgeois state and the construction of the socialist order, but will expand, take on new meaning and *become established in the very institutions of that order.* We can only imagine the scope and power in the context of the *political revolution* the sexual struggle will have; but we can be certain that its vitality and dynamism will starkly contrast with the leaden puritanism of the crumbling Stalinist monolith, adding new dimensions to and impelling for-

ward the struggle for its overthrow.

The immensity of the problems and questions posed by the sexual struggle are all the more large because of the abstention previous generations have practiced from discussing them. No small reason for that was the near extinction of the revolutionary Marxist current from the workers movement. But when questions of sexuality and youth and party created tension in the German Communist Party and its Young Communist League, Wilhelm Reich's* response was in order.

. . . if we agree that we have been evading the issue, we must be clear about why this is so.

A superficial reason is the fact that by ignoring the problem, we hope to be able to devote ourselves entirely to revolutionary work, thus emphasizing the difference between us and the bourgeois types whose interest is centered on the problem of sex and who do nothing but chatter about it. This has led us into a serious error. Many of us have wanted to discuss sexuality altogether, as something inessential or even "bourgeois." We were wrong: that is the lesson of reality. We must solve the sex problem in a revolutionary way, by evolving a clear sexual-political theory; proceeding from it to a sexual-revolutionary praxis; and integrating both these in the proletarian movement as a whole. That, we are convinced, is the *right* way towards a definitive solution.

June 27, 1972

* In the 1920s and '30s Wilhelm Reich had a permissivist attitude towards homosexuality. He believed the normative and healthiest relationship in a socialist, sexually well regulated society would be love centered, heterosexual and monogamous. He however recognized the reactionary character of Stalin's antihomosexual laws. He considered homosexuality itself an aberration reflecting the collapse of class society, but that homosexuals should not be harassed or repressed. In the latter part of his life, wracked by the easy victory of fascism, the further consolidation of Stalinism, World War II, he drifted into an idealist, biological determinist extension of his sexual theories. Rejected by psychiatric and psychological circles, defeated, bitter and broken, he began to fear homosexuals, refusing to treat them as he became a fanatic, and, after government prosecution for his application of his energy theories, dies in prison insane.