

# HOMOSEXUALS & REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

## WHAT IS THE BASIS OF OPPRESSION IN OUR SOCIETY ?

The economic basis of our society is the production of goods for sale, to make a profit. The workers whose labour goes into producing the goods, don't get these profits. The profits are kept by the capitalist capitalists who own the factories and offices.

Workers are not just those employed directly in the manufacture of goods but they also include so-called "middle class" people, who work in offices, teach in schools and who keep the system functioning. These people are workers because they maintain themselves by selling their labour - whether manual or mental.

So, we can see, the vast majority of the population can be justifiably termed workers. We work for what we earn and have little or no control over our work and our lives.

## HOW ARE WORKERS DIVIDED ?

There are many factors used by the ruling class to divide workers. Chief amongst these are sexism, heterosexism and racism.

We are conditioned from birth into stereotyped roles according to our sex. The nuclear family is the instrument of perpetuating these roles. Women are thought to be emotional, weak, illogical etc. .... men are supposed to be strong, emotionally cold and logical.

Built into these roles is the power relationship of men over women in our class society. Simply by being male all men automatically reap certain benefits - for instance, look at the limited range of jobs open to women. Women do not automatically have these benefits and only come by them through aligning with men or by relating to a man, as in marriage, or through long, hard struggle.

Workers are divided against each other along sex lines as well as by heterosexism and racism. Women tend to be employed in less skilled, lower paid areas than men and often have to work harder and more consistently in these jobs.

There is also the double work load many working women labour under. The situation is quite common where a woman comes home from a full-time job to do all the housework for her family.

## WHY ARE HOMOSEXUALS OPPRESSED UNDER CAPITALISM ?

As homosexuals we have reacted, either consciously or unconsciously, against socialization into particular sex roles. By making this choice some homosexuals have rejected the power relations that are inevitable under capitalism.

homosexuality is an ideological threat to the nuclear family and "norms" of sexual morality. The family is central to capitalism because of its role in reproducing labour and socialization of children into roles accepted in society.

Some men, in choosing homosexuality, reject some of their power over women. In not oppressing women in sexual relationships, they avoid more direct expressions of sexism. However, if they do not have non-sexist attitudes they can, for instance, treat women they work with in a sexist manner. Many homosexual men also reap the benefits of being male when, for instance, they take heterosexual women to company functions. Lesbians are not really in the same position with heterosexual men.

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Some male homosexuals are gay for misogynistic reasons. They react to the dominant ideology, that women are inferior, by rejecting women on every level. Often, consequently, they display very sexist attitudes to all women.

#### WHY DO WOMEN AND MEN NEED TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE GAY MOVEMENT ?

Over the past 5 years there have been many splits of lesbians away from the rest of the homosexual movement - because of the sexism of the gay men. Over these years we have gained the strength and political experience to stand up for our rights.

It is true that, as well as lesbians being oppressed as women, all homosexuals are persecuted because of our homosexuality. This is an obvious basis for a united front political alliance between lesbians and male homosexuals. For instance, it is obviously ridiculous to run separate defence campaigns for the women arrested in the Kings Cross Mardi Gras and for the men arrested there.

#### WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF HOMOSEXUAL RIGHTS STRUGGLES TO REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM ?

It is necessary to fight our direct oppressor - the capitalist state, which attempts to slot us into roles of heterosexual, woman, black etc. for the purpose of our own exploitation.

Homosexuals, women and blacks by themselves do not have the power to totally change society. The working class, with its key role in production, its size and organizational strength, alone has the power to overthrow the system.

In times of economic crisis many reforms are eliminated or reversed. Examples of this are the totally repressive new abortion laws in New Zealand and Fraser's absolute destruction of Medibank.

In such times of general attacks on workers' conditions, homosexuals, women, migrants etc. are scapegoated. Homosexuals and women become victims of a tightening of social mores. The nuclear family is reinforced as a socializing and reproductive unit. At the same time, the work ethic is bolstered by dole bludger propaganda which also serves to push workers into increasingly lowly paid jobs with bad working conditions.

By working with the working class movement in a struggle for revolutionary socialism, homosexual activists are fighting our direct oppressor - the capitalist state. At the same time we realize that a socialist revolution will not automatically end the oppression of women and homosexuals. That is why we need to maintain our own organization.

Homosexuals are still persecuted in most so-called socialist states like China Cuba and Russia. This is because the workers do not hold power - they are not socialist states. That is - the place of the private capitalists is taken by a new bureaucratic elite, which forms a state capitalist ruling class. The dominant ideologies of these states is almost identical to western capitalism. Their emphasis on the nuclear family and denial of the existence of homosexuality bears witness to this.

#### WHAT STRATEGIES SHOULD THE HOMOSEXUAL MOVEMENT USE ?

In times of economic boom it is possible for major reforms to be won by activity outside parliament. However, the current rash of overturned reforms points to the fact that it is useless to rely on parliamentary politics. It may be a useful way of building a

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campaign for homosexual rights to demand law reform, but it's pretty futile as an end in itself. However, the forthcoming NSW state election elections may provide a forum to ask embarrassing questions of Premier Wran - who is also Minister for Police.

Gay Trade Union Caucuses : Probably the most effective, long-term strategy for the homosexual movement is to push individual trade unions to take a stand on homosexual discrimination. These principles, once accepted, can be used to defend homosexuals victimized at work.

We are not advocating, however, that union bureaucrats are the ones to approach in this matter. Rather we urge the formation of caucuses of rank and file gay workers in each union. Union bureaucrats come and go and with them, policies change. It's only through continuing rank and file pressure that these gains can be used and maintained.

In forming these caucuses, we reach other workers and attack one of the divisive tactics of capitalist ideology. It puts our case to the sector of society that most needs to hear it.

Demo. Tactics : It is clear that we have to refuse to be intimidated by police violence, such as that on the night of June 24 in Kings Cross. By the same token, we must avoid the demoralizing effect of the type of arrests outside Darlinghurst Police Station two weeks later.

The Mardi Gras through Kings Cross led to an obvious and brutal attack on us by the cops. In fact, those arrests were a triggering factor in the current upsurge of activity in the homosexual movement in Sydney.

The later demo. was a valuable lesson in the need to organize unified marches. The cops moved in as the march was leaving Darlinghurst police station and, in fact dispersing, and arrested 14 people. These arrests occurred simply because we did not defend our own.

We should have been walking backwards with arms linked, to prevent some of us being picked off. Also in this demo., people with megaphones created chaos amongst the marchers. They urged people to leave so quickly that the back of the march was not defended.

We need to continue militant demonstrations confronting our oppressors at symbolic places like, in Sydney, Kings Cross and Darlinghurst Police Station. We need to organize, have unified tactics and have people with megaphones to be bound, as far as possible, to use them to organize the defence of marchers.

As homosexuals we need to join in other struggles. Other oppressed and exploited groups need to support our struggle. We must realize the insidious nature of our common enemy, the capitalist class, and the way it divides us all for their benefit.

DIANE MINNIS & MARTIN HIRST - members of International  
Socialists Homosexual Caucus