

On the Party's Line on Homosexuality

The problem with this letter on why the Party should recruit homosexuals is that it fails to address the central question of homosexuality squarely. Basically, there is only one question involved: is the development of homosexuality a positive or negative development for the working class? We think it is a negative development, logical to the decline of capitalism.

The working class is the only class with a future. And this future must be assured not only by winning millions of workers in fighting for Socialism, but also by guaranteeing the consolidation of working-class power under Socialism, and eventually developing a communist society. As a trend, homosexuality closes off this type of outlook. It closes off proletarian family life as we conceive of it. Nor do we want a "test-tube" society. We don't want relationships based simply on reproduction. Homosexuality basically denies the future. And in that sense it reflects the demise of capitalism. Capitalism has no future!

Capitalism, among many things, breeds individualism. "Do your own thing" is the capitalist cliché that symbolizes individualism. The Party leadership has long taken the position that homosexuality is a bad development for the working class because it is the antithesis of a positive outlook. And, unlike other deviations of a political character, most homosexuals deny that it is a bad thing. Therefore, they close off struggle against it. But, in the Party now, and in the future under Socialism, our Party will not accept the idea of "do your own thing."

Consequently, our Party takes the position that what is bad for the working class must be opposed. Unless this position is reversed, we feel homosexuality is a negative trend amongst the working class. But, since this previous letter implies that homosexuality is alright--and thus primarily a matter of individual concern and choice--there is no possible struggle against it, as with other errors.

We do not feel that a negative trend amongst the working class should result in Party membership. And for every bigot like Bryant who condemns homosexuality from their class point of view, ten times as many bosses--especially the main wing of the ruling class--say it's O.K. As a matter of fact, Carter supported various demands of homosexuals. This, therefore, doesn't make the writer of the letter in league with Carter. It just means that at this stage of history, for various reasons, the main sections of the ruling class and their medical community do not consider homosexuality bad.

Any derogatory language or action by party members relative to homosexuals is bad. Homosexuals are not the enemy of the working class or of the Party. Many homosexuals can be won to be allies of the working class and of the Party. But, the fact is that anti-homosexuality is not the same as racism, male chauvinism or other forms of oppression. We cannot equate bias against homosexuals with serious attacks on the working class.

Unfortunately, in the Party and in its base there is much subjectivity on this question. "Homophobia" is not a problem in the Party. The problem in the Party is right-opportunism. This is reflected in many ways. As indicated, one way is the proposition that, "As long as I can help the Party and the working class, I can be a member." This places the question in a narrow, personal context, and not within a class framework, of whether or not our Party should O.K., justify or encourage homosexuality. We think it shouldn't. We think that anyone who will not be open to struggle on any question because of "my own belief" should not be a Party member.

--National Steering Committee

This statement was written as a reply to the article "Homosexuals Should Be Recruited to the Party" which follows it. The next three articles were all written as a response to this statement. I apologize for the underlining. It was not done to underscore points for readers now, but rather was done when I first read the articles some time ago. If I had a copy without underlining I would have used it, but I do not. The same is true of underlining on the following article.

## Homosexuals Should Be Recruited to the Party

The Party now has an unstated policy which forbids the recruitment of any homosexual. This policy denies the Party the opportunity to win many good fighters; the present policy prevents the Party from leading struggles against reactionary chauvinists like Anita Bryant's fascist grouplet. The exclusion of homosexuals represents a concession to the sexist propaganda of the ruling class, which says we should be grateful because we are better off than the faggots (encouraging workers to put their energies into keeping homosexuals down, rather than uniting to fight the ruling class).

The bosses use many weapons in their battle to maintain their rule over the working class. As our Party has consistently pointed out, one of the bosses' most important tools has been to divide the workers; to persuade workers that the problem lies with another group of workers, not with the capitalist system. The ruling class promotes every sort of imaginable division among the proletariat: citizen vs. immigrant, Christian vs. Jew, Protestant vs. Catholic, black vs. white -- and heterosexual vs. homosexual.

Our Party must take the lead in rejecting these divisions. The campaign against "homophobia" (fear or hatred of homosexuals) is in the interests of all workers. Whenever the bosses can divide the workers and get them to fighting each other, they have won a big victory. The only way that any workers can win in the long run is through workers' unity; when we allow racism or sexism to divide workers, we are betraying the workers' interests. We will win advanced workers to communist ideas only if we are in the vanguard of struggles against all forms of racism and sexism. If we cave into the prejudices of the bourgeoisie, then we can't expect to win respect from many advanced workers.

Our ability to win workers to communist ideas is seriously weakened when Party members display prejudice and mouth disgusting derogatory comments. We did not go to Washington on Carter's inaugural to "show those faggot liberals a lesson they won't forget", as was said at a NY Party forum -- we went to attack all liberals, no matter what their sexual orientation. At a Boston demonstration, a Party leader said, "ROAR is composed of police agents and homosexuals." Besides being inaccurate (ROAR has beaten up patrons at several gay bars and is very 'pro-family' in the sexist sense), this statement implies that homosexuals are enemies of the working class -- which is sexist nonsense. I could give many more examples of 'homophobia' in the Party. What they reflect is a reactionary attitude ("we are better than those fags") which says that the enemy is homosexuality not the ruling class.

The principal reasons offered to justify the policy banning homosexuals are that homosexuals are inherently unstable as well as probably sexist, a security risk, and uninterested in family life. The Party clearly must require that members lead a stable family lifestyle. A revolutionary communist party can not be based on lumpens who can't hold a steady job or on people who spend their lives chasing after sexual excitement. We need to form organizations with our fellow workers, including social friendships. We need to build lasting and meaningful interpersonal relationships to overcome the isolation capitalism forces upon us and to give us the emotional and personal strength to carry on a life-long struggle.

These are all criteria that must be used to evaluate any potential recruit to the Party, be they heterosexual or homosexual. There are simply no scientific reasons to announce by fiat that homosexuals could never meet the Party's standards. Some people might argue that few homosexuals would be eligible for Party membership (because the pressure society puts on homosexuals makes them unstable). I strongly doubt this; there are after all millions of homosexuals in the U.S., most of them workers who could be won to communist ideas. If there are any homosexuals who would be an asset to the Party, then they should be recruited. There is no sound reason for a ban on homosexuals in the Party; the ban is an accommodation to the sexist stereotypes of bourgeois society.

It may seem that the question of allowing homosexuals into the Party is such a minor question and is so controversial that it would be better to sidestep the whole issue. This would be a serious mistake. Our Party is a vanguard Party -- it must point the way to the working class, even when that way is controversial and unpopular. To cave into the prejudices which the bourgeoisie has drummed into the proletariat is a mistake; it is opportunism. We must be capable of discussing questions scientifically. In particular, our science, Marxism-Leninism, teaches us to evaluate our theories based on our experiences. Party members should ask themselves: do I know of any homosexuals who are potential recruits to the Party? Obviously we may know homosexuals who would be very inappropriate for the Party, but that is also true for many heterosexuals we may know. If the answer is yes, then this brings into question the accuracy of the Party's current position.

There is another reason why our Party must address the question of homosexuality. With the move towards fascism, there are increasing sexist attacks on the working class. Most of these are aimed at women, but some at homosexuals. In 1976, the Supreme Court upheld laws making homosexual acts into crimes. Then in 1977 along came Anita Bryant with a full-blow fascist movement in Florida. The "Save Our Children" campaign rallied bigots and reactionaries of all sorts; it was well designed to terrorize homosexual workers, who can now be legally fired for the mere fact of being homosexual. Bryant took aim at Miami teachers; her talk about a 'plague of homosexuality' among teachers is a good way to poison any teacher-parent alliance. The bourgeoisie gave Bryant incredible publicity; now she is speaking all over the country (at \$5,000 a lecture) plus she has a nationwide TV talk show.

Bryant is living proof of the reactionary nature of anti-homosexual attitudes. Our party can become stronger through leading struggles against this sexist nonsense, just as the Party has grown by taking the lead in attacking the KKK and the Nazis. Instead the Party has isolated itself from homosexual workers and from other workers who see that it is in their interest to overcome the bosses' propaganda about homosexuals. The Party should take the principled stand: homosexuals shall be recruited to the Party on the same basis as anyone else.

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## Internal on the Party's Line on Homosexuality

I oppose the Party's line on homosexuality.

The biggest problem with the National Steering Committee's statement on homosexuality in the Nov. 23 Internal Bulletin is that the NSC offers little or no evidence for many of their major statements.

I will try to summarize the NSC's position.

The NSC seems to say essentially five things: 1) the working class is the only class with a future, and the future must be guaranteed by fighting for socialism, consolidating working class power under socialism, and eventually developing a communist society; 2) a socialist or communist future depends at least in part on the continuation of "proletarian family life as we conceive of it" (paragraph 2 of the NSC statement); 3) "proletarian family life" includes, as an essential and integral element, having children (the NSC does not say this directly, but I think one can reasonably infer it from other remarks in the statement); 4) people choose to be homosexual because of bourgeois individualism; 5) because having children is essential to guaranteeing the future of "proletarian family life", and because people who choose to be exclusively homosexual will not produce children and therefore will not take part in an essential element of guaranteeing the future of "proletarian family life" and the working class--therefore this particular expression of bourgeois individualism cannot be tolerated within the Party, or any communist movement. (The implication follows from this, though the NSC does not directly say it, that individualism by anyone on the question of having children cannot be tolerated, and therefore all communists have an obligation to have children.)

My disagreements are several, and they extend beyond the specific question of homosexuality, and cover the entire scope of what the NSC calls "proletarian family life as we conceive of it."

First let me say: my comments here are in no way intended to support bourgeois "gay rights" movements. Such movements are just another form of nationalism and divide the working class. Nor do I intend to defend any forms of degenerate or Lumpen behavior. I speak here only of the form of human relationship known as homosexuality.

Above I listed five points in the NSC statement. I will address each of the points in turn.

I have no disagreement whatsoever with the first point: that the working class is the class of the future, that the future must be guaranteed by building socialism and communism.

Point number two: while I agree that a socialist or communist future depends on the continuation of some form of "proletarian family life", I am not at all sure what form the NSC is talking about. I will examine this for a moment.

As civilization develops and advances, new political forms arise and launch into conflict with the old. Currently we see the communist movement for socialism in savage battle with the old established form of capitalism.

As the conflict heightens, society changes, sometimes in small

gradual shiftings, sometimes in enormous quantum leaps; the changes build on one another and accelerate the rate of change until the old society has reached the utter peak of its development, until it can develop no further.

At critical points such as this, the only way for history to move forward is for the new developing political form to violently smash the old dying one, to cast it off as so much dust.

What is "proletarian family life"? Obviously, it is different under different economic systems. The capitalist "ideal" of proletarian family life is to have a man and a woman married, the man working, the woman sometimes working (for sexist low wages) and sometimes staying home and taking care of the house and children (which is also work, paid indirectly through the man's wages). A primary function of this family form under capitalism is to isolate women, to isolate children in their early years, ~~to~~ to create internal contradictions in men between isolation with their families and detachment from their families to achieve socializing. My analysis of family life under capitalism leaves much to be desired, but I think the picture I've given here is accurate as a generalization.

Under socialism or communism, both men and women would be paid directly for work, with no sexist wage differential. Child-raising would be a collective function, the responsibility would belong to the whole society. Family life would be stripped of the isolation necessary under capitalism.

"Proletarian family life" as we now know it does have positive aspects. It is (or can be) a source of stable relationships. It can be a source of calm and stability in our lives generally. Under socialism and communism we would guarantee the preservation of the positive qualities. But under capitalism these qualities are not the primary aspect of "proletarian family life," they are secondary. The negative qualities, the qualities that help uphold bourgeois capitalist culture, are currently primary.

If industrial production is to change under socialism, we must first smash all the old capitalist forms of production and production relations--we must get rid of bosses, centralized separate profit control, etc. If we are to have an effective people's army, we must first smash the structure of the old professional ~~army~~ army, we must thoroughly dissolve the old army and assimilate it back into society. The same for education, sports, science, art, all the institutions of our world--if we are to install new socialist forms, we must first ruthlessly smash the old capitalist forms, wipe them from the earth.

Likewise, if we are to develop new forms of proletarian family life, we must first abandon and sweep away all old concepts of what proletarian family life is and should be. This will, of course, have many implications for child-raising, child-producing, relationships between men and women, human relationships in general.

However, so far as I can discern, the form of "proletarian family life" to which the NSC refers is a form with its basis in bourgeois capitalism. The NSC seems to have given no consideration at all to the political nature of all forms of family life. They seem to regard family life as a politically neutral form, and this is not the case.

Point number three: certainly the existence of "proletarian family life" of whatever form, and indeed the existence of society and culture as a whole, depend on at least some people having children. But does the existence of "proletarian family life" depend on everyone having children?

The answer is that it does under capitalism. But in a socialist or communist society, where the task of child-raising-- a task central to ~~a~~ any form of family life--would be collectivized, it would no longer be necessary for everyone to have children, at least not in a purely ~~xx~~ scientific sense.

But--and this leads to the kernel of the question--if it is not necessary for everyone to have children, then on what basis do we decide for whom it is necessary to have children, and who need not have them? How do we decide this?

This brings us to point number four.

The NSC ~~xx~~ says that homosexuals, at least, make the decision to be homosexual (and therefore not to have children) because of bourgeois individualism.

~~XXXXXXXX~~

I disagree.

The decision to have or not have children is often based on bourgeois individualism. But this is not because of the nature of having children. It is rather because of capitalism, the nature of capitalism--capitalism encourages bourgeois individualism in all aspects of our lives, including having children.

Under socialism or communism, the decision to have or not have children could, and perhaps should, be arrived at scientifically, ~~xx~~ collectively, after a period of principled struggle within a collective--much the same way "purely" political questions are struggled over within the Party now.

Likewise, the decision to become homosexual is often based on bourgeois individualism. But, again, this is not because of the nature of homosexuality. It is, rather, because of the nature of capitalism--capitalism encourages bourgeois individualism in all aspects of our lives, including decisions on sexual preference.

Under socialism or communism, decisions about sexual preference, and all sorts of decisions about human relationships, could, and perhaps should, be arrived at scientifically, after a period of principled struggle in a collective--much the same way "purely" political questions are struggled over within the Party now.

~~X~~ I will add that while I have here utterly rejected one theory put forward by the NSC as to why people decide to become homosexual, I still have not put forward any theory of my own on the question. This is because I don't know why people decide to become homosexual. This perhaps deserves more discussion in developing a line on homosexuality.

Point number five: I feel I have adequately refuted most of the essential elements of this point by now. But there is ~~X~~ one aspect I want to address further.

If (following for just a moment the NSC's logic) ~~ixix~~ homosexuality is bad because it doesn't produce children (adding to the future of the working class), then it is reasonable to assume that any relationship that doesn't produce children is, by virtue of that fact, a bad relationship, bad because the decision not to

have children is based on bourgeois individualism. Once again, even if we assume this is true, (and I don't), it is not because ~~xx~~ of the nature of having children, but because of the nature of capitalism.

I cannot defend the Party's current line on homosexuality, as stated by the NSC. I cannot defend it because I don't know how. I have been unable to find any scientific basis in the NSC statement for defending it.

Furthermore, if I have accurately perceived what the NSC says "proletarian family life" is, I cannot adequately put forward ~~af~~ or defend this conception of it. I cannot because I have found no scientific basis in the NSC statement for defending it.

And still further, if it is indeed the Party's line that all communists should have children, then I cannot defend this line either. I don't know how. I have found no scientific basis in the NSC statement for defending it.

I will add that besides not being able to defend any of these three positions, I also disagree with all three of them. This fact is secondary in the discussion, but I say it here to clearly state my position. It is not just a matter of my not being able to defend the line, although that is primary; I also disagree.

In order to develop a good line on homosexuality, we need to find scientific answers to at least two questions. (This may not be all there is to it, but it's a ~~xxx~~ start.)

1. What is homosexuality?

Some people believe that if two people of the same sex touch each other, that is homosexuality. Other people believe that only the most explicit homosexual acts constitute homosexuality. Still others believe it's possible to go through "phases" of having homosexual experiences and still not be really homosexual. There are yet other viewpoints. Certainly homosexuality can be scientifically defined, but we have not scientifically defined it.

(To give this some perspective--there is also a good deal of disagreement about what constitutes heterosexuality. Some people BELIEVE only penis-vagina intercourse is heterosexual; some people feel a man and woman holding hands is; others consider oral, anal, and other physical acts between a man and a woman to be heterosexual; etc. etc. etc.)

2. Why do some people become homosexual?

The NSC advanced a theory in their statement. I have given reasons why I think this theory has no basis. But the question still needs to be answered.

I will add one final note. In trying to defend the NSC's position, some comrades may turn to the history of other communist movements to see how they ~~xxx~~ dealt with the question of homosexuality. This is certainly valid and may indeed provide the answer. (For instance, I've heard somewhere that homosexuality virtually disappeared in China for a period of time immediately after the revolution.) The NSC gave no specific historical examples. I'd be interested to see something along these lines.

However, communist movements have been wrong in the past about

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many questions. Communist movements of the past, at least up to the Cultural Revolution in China, have been weak particularly in the area of struggling over culture and ideology. This category would certainly include the question of homosexuality.

I am naturally interested in any and all responses to what I've said here.

*Party member of 1000  
Minneapolis*



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Some Reactions to the National Steering Committee Statement, "On the Party's Line on Homosexuality".

The National Steering Committee correctly says that we must judge the question of homosexuality from the perspective of the interests of the working class -- not from the perspective of any individual NOR from the perspective of bourgeois prejudice about homosexuality. Unfortunately, the statement does no such thing.

\* We must evaluate any form of personal relationship, including sexual relationships, by the basic question: "Is it productive for the working class?" In other words, does this relationship create strength to carry on the struggle in the face of hardship; does it develop the individuals' ability to care about others, such that they will react stronger when their fellow workers are attacked; and so on. Basically: does this form of relationship advance the struggle for socialism? That is the correct criteria. An incorrect criteria would be, "does this relationship produce children?" Having children may be part of a productive sexual relationship, but it is hardly the main purpose of sexual relationships. This is a point well understood by the Party in its relationship with single people, with sterile people -- yet somehow things become different when we are discussing homosexuality.

It should be pointed out that people like having kids. Given the economic possibility of having kids, most people throughout history, throughout the world, do. In fact, a high percentage of 'homosexuals' have kids -- which shows how ridiculous it is to partition the world into 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual.' Sexuality is a continuum; most workers to whom the Party would deny entry on the grounds of homosexuality have lived and/or will live with someone of the opposite sex. When we talk about so-called 'homosexuals' what we usually mean is people who may have sexual relations with people of either sex. A good example of the attitude of 'homosexuals' towards kids: one of the biggest issues of lesbian rights has been the right of lesbian mothers to keep their children (the state harasses open lesbians by suing to take away their kids).

\* When we discuss our attitude towards forms of sexual relationships, the phrase 'proletarian family' pops up. What is generally meant by 'proletarian family' is the kind of family life practiced (or held up as an ideal) by most workers today. Comrades, it is a serious error to pretend that we are fighting for a society which will be like the ideal held by most workers today. Workers under capitalism are subject to the pressures of bourgeois ideology; as Marx said, "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class." Ideologies which now have a powerful grip on workers -- ideologies such as individualism, passivity, and sexism -- will be eliminated only through struggle, especially the struggle for socialism (a struggle which will continue after workers seize state power). We should not idealize the present-day working class. The present form of the family is bourgeois, based primarily on the oppression of women.

\* The NSC statement omits any discussion of the form of sexual relationship that capitalism is now pushing -- that is, the commoditization of sex. Sexual relationships of a stable sort (lasting, loving) are being torn apart and replaced by sex as a commodity. Not only the tremendous growth in pornography and in prostitution, but also the encouragement of fleeting sexual relationships: the singles bar becomes the prototype. The enormous growth in single-person households reflects the discouragement of any lasting relationships among people. This is a very negative trend for the working class. Isolated individuals can not develop the kind of deep solidarity with the working class that is necessary to carry on the struggle. The Party should encourage all its members and friends to develop stable ties with fellow workers -- not only friendships, but also a stable sexual relationship with a fellow worker. This should apply to both homosexual and heterosexual relationships.

\*The NSC statement says, "For every bigot like Bryant who condemns homosexuality from their class point of view, ten times as many bosses -- especially the main wing of the ruling class -- says its O.K." Comrades, really! Let us ask: are homosexuals oppressed in this society -- do known homosexuals face discrimination on the job, in housing, etc.? The answer is obviously, "yes." Then where does this oppression come from? Does it fall from the sky like rain? Does it come from the working class (since when did workers have the power to say how contemporary U.S. society is run?) NO -- it comes from the ruling class! Of course the ruling class "says its O.K." -- they also say they are anti-racist, they say they are watching out for the workers' best interests, they say many ridiculous lies. When the Supreme Court says that teachers may be fired from their jobs just for being homosexual -- is the Supreme Court suddenly not in the main wing of the ruling class?? The NSC statement tries to deny the class character of the oppression of homosexuals. As Marxist-Leninists, we should know that the nature of this society -- including its oppression of homosexuals -- is determined by its class character. The bourgeoisie tries to divide workers along whatever lines of prejudice it can.

\* The NSC statement explains that the exclusion of homosexuals from the Party on the grounds that, "unlike other deviations of a political character, most homosexuals deny that it is a bad thing." This is a peculiar statement. There are many deviations of a political character where people deny that the deviation is a bad thing. Some of these deviations are so serious that the people concerned must be excluded from the Party; for instance, someone who thought that the Party is great, but the U.S.S.R. is basically a socialist country (that person would say his position is correct and the Party's is wrong -- in other words, he would deny that his deviation from the Party's line is a bad thing). Other deviations are not so serious and the people concerned can be let into the Party. In other words, there are secondary differences that we hope can be resolved over time. For instance, the Party has a policy to allow people who believe in God into the Party. These people certainly "deny that the deviation is a bad thing." (I could cite several people as examples). No matter what the Party's line on homosexuality, there would still be the question: is the position on homosexuality such an important question that disagreement on this question should keep someone out of the Party? I would say the answer is, "No" -- no one should be kept out of the Party because of their position on homosexuality, because homosexuality is a very secondary question.

\* Lastly, we get to the question, "Where does homosexuality come from?" -- or rather, "Where does sexuality come from?" Frankly, I think we are here entering the realm of sheer speculation -- we simply don't have the experience from human relations in a non-exploitative society to tell. (The Bolsheviks had some very confused ideas on this. In spite of Lenin, the predominant attitude was summed up in the phrase, "having sex is like drinking a glass of water" -- purely a physical act. The Bolsheviks legalized homosexuality -- the struggle for homosexual rights had been part of their work, as it had been for all the major parties of the 2nd International. The laws on homosexuality, divorce, abortion, etc. were changed in the 1930's). It is fun to speculate, but we should recognize how little scientific content there is to our speculation. The Party should certainly not take a position on the origins of sexuality until there has been a great deal more work done on the question (and there is no reason for us to do that work now). The Party does not have a position on every question under the sun, nor should it. As for my speculations about the origins of sexuality -- I suspect that while the sexual drive is innate, the fixing of that drive is social. In other words, people learn to be 'heterosexual' or to 'homosexual' (misleading terms, because they imply an 'either-or' choice, where actually there is a continuum). There is no spot along the continuum which is more 'natural' than any other spot. My personal prejudice is to suspect that in a non-class society, most people would be somewhere in the middle.

----- Pat Clawson

The National Steering Committee tries to approach the question of homosexuality from a political and not an emotional point of view. This is an advance from the avoidance of homosexuals because they are "sick," "perverted," etc. However their letter fails to fulfill this intention, by substituting a series of prejudicial and unsupported statements for reasoned arguments in favor of their stand:

(1) "Homosexuality basically denies the future." Why? Because it implies lack of reproduction? Aside from the many homosexuals with children, fertility has never been a criterion for Party membership. Nobody suggests we all become homosexual, let the species die out, etc. And what exactly is the "proleterian family"? This point needs plenty of discussion; we would hope that socialism will entail major changes in the traditional family bequeathed to us by the bosses.

(2) "The main wing of the ruling class say it's O.K." Likewise for the equality of blacks== they "say it's O.K." The ruling class puts forward lines to appeal to all segments of the population, but it doesn't screw them any less for it though. The media "embrace" homosexuality in the same way they "embrace" the liberation of women, as a laugh, a cheap way to make vulgar sexual references. It is on the same level of autistic titillation as the glorification of "swinging" and of the decadence of the Roman Empire ("I, Claudius"); this no more implies the evil of homosexuality than the movement of organized extramarital promiscuity implies that heterosexuality is bankrupt. Gay bars for "cruising" represent the same perversion of sexuality as "singles bars" and stem from the same repressive decadence. The ruling class in practice (along with the KKK, Roar, etc.) oppress homosexuals in a way they don't dare do to the rest of the working class==yet. Only homosexuality and Communism are immediate, complete justifications for firing a person from a job.

(3) "We cannot equate attacks on homosexuals with serious attacks of the

working class." Obviously in comparison with, say, racism sexual oppression is a secondary not to say tertiary contradiction. But as revolutionary Communists we fight against every aspect of the oppression the ruling class visits on us, not just the "primary" ones.

(4) "Our Party will not accept the idea of 'do your own thing.'" This is setting up a straw man in a way that is not worthy of the NSC of our Party. Further, a letter arguing one side of an unresolved question that is being presented to the Party's members for discussion should not be signed, and should particularly not be signed by an official organ of the Party.

How important is the question of homosexuality to our Party? For one thing there are homosexuals around the Party now who could be better fighters for their class if they were not closed out—and many more excellent people who have kept far away from the Party because of its reputation for anti-homosexual bigotry. Contrary to the writer from Minneapolis, homosexuality is not "usually encountered in the context of oppression." Kinsey's study found that one of five women had lesbian contact by the time they were 40; 13% had experienced orgasm in these contacts (*Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, p.454). Among men, more than one in three had at least one homosexual orgasm, one in five were as much homo- as heterosexual, and one of ten was exclusively homosexual (*Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, p.650). This was in the 1940's, far more "repressed" times than our own. I for one have known many homosexual men and lesbians who are stable, good people and strong instinctive anti-capitalist fighters.

But this reason is secondary to the main one: that anti-homosexual attitudes are just another aspect of bourgeois mentality. In order to maintain the special oppression of women and disunity between the sexes in the working class, the bourgeoisie teaches the totally false dogma that some character traits belong innately to men and others to women. We are told that women are passive, soft, weak, intuitive, affectionate; men are strong, independent, capable,

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unfeeling. These stereotypes serve specific purposes for the ruling class and are correctly perceived by the Left as handicapping the human potential of both men and women as well as directly and indirectly sabotaging the revolutionary movement. We in PLP encourage leadership in women, sharing of household duties, etc. and we generally put forward that men and women have the same potentials and the same limitations.

Yet it is precisely from these stereotypes that the horror of homosexuality arises: men should be Men, women should be Women. In the sexist schema there is no worse insult for a woman than to be called aggressive, nor for a man to be called soft. "Aggressive" women then are put down as "dykish," and any man who refuses the oppressive, tower of strength role must get used to being called a "fag." The roots of the hatred of homosexuality is not that it is unnatural or decadent, but that its existence challenges and blurs the categories vital to a sexist society. In fact the most rabid anti-homosexuals are almost always the most unregenerate sexists, both in and out of the Party. I maintain that even those who disagree with my analysis of the nature of homosexuality must admit that at least a portion of the general attitude against it is generated by sexism.

Homosexuality is by its nature neither reactionary (as the NSC would have it) nor revolutionary (as the Nazis and segments of the Gay Lib movement say). As a means of fighting sexism it is individualistic and non-productive, but as a form of expressing affection it is, per se, neither. It is impossible to say from the vantage point of a sexist society how much of presentday homosexuality occurs in reaction to sexism, and how much is natural sexuality. We cannot predict that in a society where women are not oppressed, homosexuality will disappear—perhaps it will be more widespread, or bisexuality will be the rule.

Anti-homosexual ideas split the working class struggle in two ways. First, they isolate homosexuals in "closets," forcing them to keep important portions of their lives secret from friends and co-workers. Their constant terror of

