

# COME OUT FIGHTING



The Newspaper of the Lavender & Red Union

## LIBERATION CONTINGENT

"The People United  
Shall Never Be  
Excluded!"

The 1975 Christopher Street West/Gay Pride activities in Los Angeles were a huge success for progressive, militant, Lesbian-feminist and Third World Gay people.

The misleaders of the Gay community on the Christopher Street West Association (CSWA) were unsuccessful in excluding the Liberation Contingent. We marched loudly - the largest contingent in the parade - behind the banners of "Lesbian Liberation", "Gay Liberation and Socialist Revolution, the Lavender and Red Union", "Black Gays Unite", and "Support the GCSC Strikers".

We chanted "'69 Stonewall Riot '75 We Won't Keep Quiet", "Off the Sidewalks and Into the Streets, Join the People's March", and "the People United Shall Never be Excluded".

The Liberation Contingent swelled to 600 people by the end of the march as people joined from the sidewalks along the parade route.

CSWA turned out to be a paper tiger collapsing totally under the weight of our solidarity. In the closing days before the parade CSWA relied heavily on the threat of police violence and arrest to dampen our momentum but to no avail. Determined to march peacefully the Liberation Contingent through the Gay Community Mobilization Committee organized it's own monitors, legal observers, sound system and para medic teams. But as it turned out they made no attempt to keep us out of the march and it went without a hitch.

In a show of their utter contempt for the people, at the beginning of the parade, CSWA canceled a scheduled rally (from which we had been excluded) but later told people there would be a rally. In an effort



Walt Blumhoff

More Photos of March in Center

to diffuse the anger of those who had been excluded they would not start the rally. People yelled start the rally now. But the association fiddled around as a 1000 people waited in the blistering sun.

The Liberation Contingent then moved to a nearby park and held it's own rally. No sooner had we left that the association started it's rally lasting only ten minutes.

At the Liberation Contingent rally we celebrated our victory, as well as educating people about the issues involved in the Gay Community Services Center Strike, the Boycott

against Studio One and our original exclusion from CSW.

The three speakers who had been excluded from the original rally spoke. Ron Grayson told the 200 marchers at DeLongpre Park that despite the official theme of CSW it is not a "A Gay, Gay World". Ron also spoke to the racism in the "leadership" and the community-at-large. June Suwara, a fired GCSC worker, underlined the growing class consciousness recent events have engendered. Gene Shofner of L&RU exposed the bogus issue of us

continued in center

# COME OUT FIGHTING!

The Lavender and Red Union is a Gay liberation/Communist organization. We struggle for an end to the exploitation of people for profit. And as Gay liberationists, we feel a cultural and political identity with our people and work for our liberation.

We will not hide behind a cloak of "impartiality". We are upfront Gay people and Communists, we are partisans of Gay people and the working class and all oppressed peoples, we will present their view of the world, the only view that holds any hope for humankind.

We welcome your participation and support.

## SUBSCRIBE

With this issue we are raising the subscription price to \$2.50 and single issues to 20¢. This is necessary because of an expanded format and because L&RU can no longer afford to subsidize it.

We need help getting new subscribers and places to distribute COME OUT FIGHTING.

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75¢  
THE POLITICAL  
PERSPECTIVE OF  
THE LAVENDER &  
RED UNION



# World to Win

## ON THE FAMILY

This column is a regular feature of COF. It includes excerpts from classical Marxist works and current revolutionary thought. The following are taken from The Communist Manifesto and Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State by Marx and Engels.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty...

The bourgeois clap-trap about the

family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

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The overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children. This degraded position of the woman, especially conspicuous among the Greeks of the heroic and still more of the classical age, has gradually been palliated and glossed over, and sometimes clothed in a milder form; in no sense has it been abolished...

Its (the family) essential features are the incorporation of unfree persons and paternal power; hence the perfect type of this form of family is the Roman. The original meaning of the word "family" (familia) is not that compound of sentimentality and domestic strife which forms the ideal of the present-day phillistine; among the Romans it did not at first even refer to the married pair and their children but only to the slaves. Famulus means domestic slave, and familia is the total number of slaves belonging to one man. As late as the time of Galus, the familia, id est patrimonium (family that is, the patrimony, the inheritance) was bequeathed by will. The term was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism whose head ruled over wife and children and a number of slaves, and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all.

## ON STRIKE! at Gray Community Services Center - 14th Week

Both sides of the GCSC strike shifted into low gear after Christopher Street West. The management of GCSC and the striking workers had called into play in CSW all of their supporters in what turned out to be a spectacular display of support for the strikers.

But now the strike faces the difficulty of focusing the Gay community's attention on the strike again without the big public arena that CSW provided.

In the meantime there is a shake-up going on in GCSC. The Rev. Bob Sirico has moved into the job of Executive Director. Another MCCer Sharon Cornelison joined the Bd.

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# After This It's All Uphill

The following is an interview with Lynda Chaffin, the Lesbian mother who has finally won custody of her children Tracy and Shelly (See COF No. 3). A few notes on some of the cast of characters: Cheryl Bratman (the Lesbian law student who wrote the brief for the appeals case and argued it in court - Cheryl has since earned her law degree) and Kelly (Lynda's lover and strong companion through the whole struggle).

**COF:** Well you've said there were lots of problems with some of your close Gay friends. Why was that?

**Lynda:** We openly came out and said we were Lesbians. I mean we committed a cardinal sin.

I could have gone in there and won the case easily if I had denied it, because they couldn't have proved it. But that's against my principles. I am (a Lesbian) and I'm not ashamed of it.

## Interview

And if you want to know what the true test of a relationship and that means a relationship between partners and mothers and children and friends and so-called friends- go through a court battle and openly admit you're Gay.

You know that we've had more straight people standing behind us than Gay people. Our landlady refuses to tell anybody we still live here.

**COF:** We're your parents involved with you at all during this time? (Lynda's parents were trying to win custody over her children in the court battle.)

**L:** Oh they came down (from Washington State) to try and rip the kids off several times - as you can see we seem to live in New York - we've got 82,000 locks on our front door. We ran and hid for eight months to avoid the marshall picking up the kids in hopes that the appeal would go through.

**COF:** Did that cause lots of problems with your jobs and things like that?

**L:** Well with me not working and Kelly took off when I first got sick to take care of me because I was so ill, we had no problems about jobs. It did create a problem because I had to go to my doctor every other week for a blood test. The medicine I was taking had to be controlled by the amount of

whatever it was that was wrong with my blood. So we'd sneak into my doctor's office and thank god they never knew who my doctor was or they could've nailed me right there. I'm telling you we played cops and robbers for eight months. Kelly would hide me and the girls out at the local Ramada Inn and she'd come back to the house and take care of business. One time we hid out in a desert cabin and it didn't even have running water.

My kids have been put through pure hell and the whole thing comes down to the establishment. The so-called mother "you-know-what" establishment that likes to dictate to people what they should do.

My parents set themselves up as paragons of the establishment and they've never been able to tell me what to do. As you see there is no love lost between us and that's what the whole thing is. They could no longer tell me what to do.

**COF:** Well after the eight months of hiding you had to send your daughters back?

**L:** We finally found out that if I was outside the law at the time of the appeal they could just decline even listening to it. So we sent the girls back up.

Well my parents immediately started hassling the kids and wouldn't let them call me - no mail, no phone calls. So as far as they were concerned I had no contact with my children from that time on. But Tracy, being the ingenious child, snuck off campus everyday and kept us informed on what was going on.

Tracy would call everyday - "God I can't stand it, I'm gonna run away." I'd say "God don't run away, the appeal is coming up. She'd call and say "Mom I can't stand it, the ole battle axe slapped me around today." Nobody will ever know exactly everything that happened until I write the book. Kelly has already named it - After This It's All Uphill.

(Note-COF- The young women ran away to a Metropolitan Community Church preacher and he put them on the plane to Los Angeles.)

**L:** Talk about gutsy kids - those kids walked out of that house - they had on tennis shoes, jeans and a jacket. Shelly didn't want to part with her

birthday present which was a cassette AM-FM radio. So she said that she was a sound man for a play at school that day and had to use her radio. They bought her story and she rips off her own radio.

When they got here we took them into court and the judge said he had no jurisdiction and as far as he was concerned we had done nothing wrong. The appeal had not come back - it was still in deliberation. I called Cheryl and she said we should do something. I said why don't we do what nobody has bothered to do before and let the kids be heard. So I filed and the kids filed. (The very day the young women entered school the appeal came back and Lynda had not won custody.)

We were armed to the hilt when we went into court this time (probation officers, child psychologists, etc). Everyone recommended that I keep the children. Everything was done in chambers, nobody had to take the stand and we won the case. (This was the first decision of its kind that was unconditional - there were no stipulations that Lynda could not live with a lover, etc.)

**COF:** From that decision, it doesn't seem like there would be, but do you expect anymore trouble?

**L:** Oh yea I expect it.

**COF:** You've said that you want to help people in whatever way you can because of all the help and support you've gotten.

**L:** If there's any mother that just needs to talk to somebody or just needs advice I'd be more than happy to talk to them. You've just got to get in there and fight with everything you've got.

I have said a few times in retrospect, had I not gone into court and said I was Gay, I would have won immediately - there would have been no question about it because they couldn't prove it. But I couldn't do that. You know the first time I went into court and they asked me if I was a Lesbian I whispered it. The last time I shouted it!

As Lynda says the battle could start up again and she has a lot of back legal bills, etc. So if people want to help write to: Lynda Chaffin Defense Fund, PO Box 3984, Torrance, Calif. 90510. (She'll answer every letter personally).



# '69 Stonewall riot

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causing violence in the parade, which CSWA gave as their excuse for trying to exclude us. He explained that we never had any intention of starting violence and that indeed those who were violent were those who fired workers and denied them of their livelihood and their supporters (CSWA) who crossed picket lines and trampled on workers rights.

To L&RU the day signaled a giant leap forward. For the first time in recent years a coalition genuinely embracing a wide spectrum of militant, Lesbian-feminist, Black, Brown, Asian and white Gay people has been forged. The utter weakness of the reactionaries and the strength and discipline of the Liberation Contingent puts within our grasp the goal of wresting control of the Gay liberation movement from the likes of the GCSC management, the Metropolitan Community Church leadership and CSWA.

# '75 we won't keep quiet



Tammy Tyler



Walt Blumhoff



Walt Blumhoff



Tammy Tyler

# REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

"Some of us can climb and make it" By the very utterance of these words the reformists point out that inequality is basic to capitalist society. Why, and over whom, do we have to climb? Why do only some of us make it? Why do laws guarantee equality that does not exist?

In "The Place to Sleep" Bertolt Brecht tells of a man who stood in winter on a New York corner, offering a few homeless wretches a place to spend the night. He concludes:

A few people have a place to sleep,  
For one night the wind is kept from them,  
The snow, bound for them, falls on the street,  
But the world is not thereby changed,  
Relationships between people do not thereby improve,  
The age of exploitation is not thereby shortened.

The rise of the Gay liberation movement has raised theoretical problems and differences in the American left. There has been no true revolutionary programme for Gay liberation developed by a national Communist or workers organization, while some have sided with the bourgeoisie in their attack on Lesbians and Gay men. The fact that no revolution to this time has had a programme even dealing with Gay people or understanding the contradiction between Gay and non-gay people, has added to the confusion and also to reactionary positions by some.

Besides the problems existing in the revolutionary left there have developed, in the Gay liberation movement, many theoretical differences. These stem from contradictions amongst Gay people; especially male supremacy, racism, ageism against both young and old, and basic class differences reflected in the community and the movement. These problems are often glossed over by certain male "leaders" with their calls for "unity". The fact remains that the divisions in the Gay community are a reflection of the institutions of the monopoly-capitalist system (imperialism) that sustains forms of oppression that serve its interest: the division of the working class through racism, sexism, anti-gayness and ageism.

This quagmire raises a basic question: Which way to our liberation? Which really boils down to: Reform or Revolution? This has been the question in every movement that calls for social change.

First, the only way towards our liberation is socialist revolution. Reform represents a few concessions to the demands raised by the masses of people. Only when the working class (the class of people who have to work because they own no means of production) takes over society and runs it collectively in the interests of people and not profit, and when the aim is the complete destruction of all unequal divisions in society, will freedom be won.

To say that reform is a valid path for a liberation struggle is to accept the capitalist system - but (only) with a few changes. The reformist proclaims "Everything is good except I don't get as much of the pie as I want."

To accept the capitalist system (even with reforms) shows no knowledge of what actually causes oppression - the class system, represented in all its ugliness by monopoly-capitalism.

The reformists will rant and rave about the chances to make it to the top. They will point to this, that, and the other individual who has "made it". They will point to legal equality while not looking at the actual inequality. They will say "Some of us can climb and make it". By the very utterance of these words the reformists point out that inequality is basic to capitalist society. Why, and over whom, do we have to climb? Why do only some of us make it? Why do laws guarantee equality that does not exist?

The reformists are defeated before they start because they must accept inequality and oppression as a given. The revolutionists say away with inequality, smash oppression.

The reformist says "Wash out the garbage so it won't stink so much" and accepts garbage as a given. The revolutionist says, "Away with all

this garbage. Get rid of this rubbish called the capitalist system and build a new society".

Laws do not create or destroy oppression. Laws reinforce and fortify institutions but the economic system is the base from which all institutions arise and all of society reflects that. The exploitation of the working class, the nuclear family, racism, sex-roles: none of these arise from laws and none can be fundamentally changed by laws.

Only by the complete transformation of the economic base can real change take place.

Revolutionaries put forward the objective fact that external changes are not enough - the internal basis must be changed.



With this understanding revolutionaries work for certain reforms that benefit the struggle of the working class. They do this by pointing out both the good aspects and the bad aspects of the reform. It must be pointed out in what ways the reform benefits the working class and explained that reforms arise because of the class struggle and not because of benevolent politicians. Ways in which reforms can be used against the people must also be pointed out along with ways to combat those aspects.

Therefore at the heart of the whole question is the fact that the revolutionary understands that socialism must be achieved first, before any form of oppression can be effectively dealt with.

To build a bigger and better building, one does not just keep adding walls and floors and paint, in order to add a few stories. One must create a new foundation that will allow for more space and more stories and a far better building.



# Youth Liberation

The following is a reprint from FPS: A Magazine of Young People's Liberation.

If you're under 18, you probably already have a good idea what Youth Liberation is about. It was started, in 1971 because we wanted to work toward solutions to the special problems that young people face as a result of their age. At the same time, we want to see our entire society restructured into a more humane arrangement, so that young people will want to be a part of it.

The legal discrimination facing young people is the most clear-cut. State laws vary slightly, but generally under certain ages you cannot:

- \* Leave home without parental permission, or live on your own even with permission.

- \* Decide how you want to spend your time - in every state except Mississippi you must go to school until a certain age;
- \* See certain movies;
- \* Stay out past certain "curfew" hours;
- \* Drive a car, no matter how qualified you are;
- \* Be assured of a jury trial, even if you are facing the possibility of several years imprisonment;
- \* Get a job;
- \* Vote for people who make all these laws that affect you or run for public office.

Less obvious than legal oppression, but just as frustrating, is the general attitude that we call ageism. It means many adults feel they're smarter, wiser and more capable than young people, and that therefore they should tell you what to do - "for your own good". If you're young, it means that

your ideas and your feelings are likely to be ignored or not taken seriously - "Oh, she'll grow out of it," or "It's just puppy love, isn't it cute?" Your parents, having "better judgement," can tell you not to see certain friends, forbid you to get certain mail, and generally run your life as they think they ought to.

Out of all this grows a forced dependence. Because you can't work, you have to depend on your parents for housing, food, and spending money. Because you can't drive (and public transportation is usually a mess), you have to badger your parents for a ride. You may like things that way. But maybe you're fed up with it; if so, we want to work with you to get it changed.

Young people, though, aren't the only ones who face special problems in this society. Old people, stereotyped as senile and worthless, face many similar difficulties. So do women, gays, third world people, the poor, those who are handicapped, and many others. The solution, we believe, lies in studying the present system so that we can understand the roots of discrimination and oppression and why so many people feel purposeless. Then, we need to redesign that structure.

As a matter of fact, we are convinced that society will have to be restructured before the problems that we've discussed can be solved. To work only for equal rights with adults, within the present social structure, is unsatisfactory and unrealistic. Unsatisfactory, because a 14-year-old on a hierarchically-controlled, dehumanized assembly line is as bad off as a 44-year-old working there. Unrealistic, because in the present society, where the young must be prepared for dull and alienating jobs, there is no room for the idea of free, equal, inquiring young people to become a reality.

To work for these changes, Youth Liberation was formed. We have done organizing locally, and also have several activities to help young people in other areas who are working for the same goals. - Youth Liberation, 2007 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

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FPS is preparing a pamphlet about, and for, gay youth. It will list resource groups, magazines, bookstores etc., and they want to include several articles by Gay young people about their experiences. They need articles about coming out, about dealing with your parents and friends and people in school, ageism in the Gay community, etc. They hope to have some articles directed at kids who are already out, and some directed at those who are still suppressing their Gayness, giving them support and encouragement. If you would like to write something send it to FPS, 2007 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.

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## ON STRIKE!

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of Directors. Lillene Fifield, director of women scabs resigned to take a titular position as a resource consultant.

A decision has been made by the strikers to limit picketing of GCSC to three nights a week. This is in response to the decreased use of the center and in order to turn energy toward other forms of pressure.

The picket line has been strongest on Thursday nights (women's program night) when the line has

been bolstered by a large number of women from the community.

In order to get GCSC scabs to leave their fortress on Highland the strikers have challenged them to a debate at a mutually agreeable time and place.

The strikers have held several successful fundraising events for their defense fund including a spaghetti dinner and a garage sale.

The picket at GCSC is at 1213 N. Highland on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 5:30pm. Send contributions to the Strike Defense Fund 4401 Russell, LA.

# WHY STUDY?

"Socialism having become a science, must be pursued as a science, that is it must be studied." -Engels

For the setting up of study groups we felt it would be beneficial to write down some thoughts on what a study group is, why it is necessary to study and how we go about studying.

Many people feel it is elitist to study because the people who study are highly paid intellectuals or people trying to climb the ladder of prestige. Other people feel study is useless and too hard for ordinary people. But ordinary working and oppressed people do not study for money or prestige. They study for freedom.

Study is hard for many of us and many things worth studying are difficult. That is why it is important for us to study together and learn the things we need to know to win our freedom.

"Complacency is the enemy of study. We cannot really learn anything until we rid ourselves of complacency. Our attitude towards ourselves should be 'to be insatiable in learning' and towards others 'to be tireless in teaching.'" -Mao Tse-Tung

It is necessary for us to study in every possible way, all the things that will help lead to our liberation. It is imperative for us to know who we are fighting, how big our enemy is, and all the ways our oppression is sustained. Above all it is necessary to know why we are oppressed in capitalist society.

One road of political action many people have taken is setting up alternative institutions where it seems we are doing wonders for people, creating places for people to be free, or that we are liberated and have a high consciousness. In actuality we are only glossing over our own and other peoples oppression by thinking we can combat this murderous system with alternative institutions.

We live in a world where lies and half-truths are put forward constantly by the ruling capitalist class to control our minds. We must seek the truth.

"No investigation, no right to speak: Unless you have investigated a problem, you will be deprived of the right to speak on it. Isn't that too harsh? Not in the least. When you

have not probed into a problem, into the present facts and its past history, and know nothing of its essentials, whatever you say about it will undoubtedly be nonsense. Talking nonsense solves no problems...

To investigate a problem is to solve it: investigation may be likened to the long months of pregnancy, and solving a problem to the day of birth. To investigate a problem is, indeed, to solve it." -Mao

## WHAT IS STUDY?

Study is not just going over facts and reading a lot of books. It is learning a thing in all its aspects and learning how things are related.

"Reading is learning, but applying is also learning and the more important kind of learning at that... it is often not a matter of first learning and then doing, but of doing and then learning, for doing is itself learning." -Mao Tse-Tung

Study includes reading about things other people learned as well as sharing things we already know. Many people will be more experienced in Marxist theory and can help us with their knowledge and yet others will be able to relate things they have learned in their practice of everyday life which is important knowledge as well.

All people in a study group will have important things to share; often times we feel ignorant or that we have nothing to share. We should work against our feeling unimportant. We may see some important aspect which other people may not and have knowledge about certain things which can benefit the group.

A study group is an important way of learning because a group of people can work through problems easier than an individual. Doing work together is more efficient and more thorough. We also can work through problems we have developed in the class oppressive schools we have attended.

## WHAT TO STUDY?

It will be important to study a great many things and see how they inter-relate. Historical and dialectical materialism is the Marxist way of looking at the world and studying all its different aspects. It will be important to study Gay oppression, women's liberation, the

class struggle, the situation in the world today, etc, all from a Marxist perspective. It is the key to understanding why things are the way they are. This will not only increase our knowledge but also help us deal with ways we oppress people and to see how we are oppressed.

Many people get scared that reading a lot of Marx, Lenin, Engels and other "left" literature makes you lopsided. It seems to them that it becomes much like a religion rather than a theory. Marx said we should question everything and study as much about a problem or thing as possible before making conclusions or acting as if we know all about that certain subject.

"The theory of Marx, Engels, and Lenin is universally applicable. We should not regard it as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution. It is not just a matter of understanding the general laws derived by Marx, Engels, Lenin from their extensive study of real life and revolutionary experience, but of studying their standpoint and method in examining and solving problems." -Mao Tse-Tung

Marxism is also incomplete. It did not die with Marx or stand still when he put his pen down.

"The Marxist-Leninist theory must not be regarded as a collection of dogmas, as a catechism, as a symbol of faith, and the Marxists themselves as pedants and dogmatists. The Marxist-Leninist theory is the science of the development of society, the science of the working-class movement, the science of proletarian revolution the science of the building of the Communist society. And as a science, it does not and cannot stand still, but develops and perfects itself. Clearly, in its development it is bound to become enriched by new experience and new knowledge and some of its propositions and conclusions are bound to change in the course of time; are bound to be replaced by new conclusions and propositions corresponding to the new historical conditions.

Mastering Marxism means assimilating the substance of this theory and learning to use it in the solution of practical problems of the revolutionary movement...

-History of CPSU (Bolshevik)