

# **Pink and Black Attack #3**



**New York City 1969**



**New York City 2009**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Statement.....	1
Ariel Attack Arrested in Denver.....	2
Support Ariel Attack.....	3
Tel Avivi: Pink Communities forms inreponse to tragedy.....	4
Reportbacks from Anti-Corporate Pride Actions.....	6
Lubing up the Social War.....	8
HRC is Not Your Friend: Call for Submissions.....	9
40 Years after Stonewall, Police Still Raiding Gay Bars.....	10
A Compilation of Critiques of Hate Crime Legislation.....	11
Fear of Castration and the Parable of War.....	13
Your Rights as a Trans Person.....	16
Excerpt from <i>Free Comrades</i> .....	17
Interview with Terence Kissack.....	19
Criminal Intimacy.....	22
No Cops No Sponsors.....	24
Excerpt from “Queers Read This!”.....	28
Poetry.....	29

# **Pink and Black Attack**

## **Editorial Collective**

### **Statement**

Welcome to the third issue of Pink and Black Attack! This issue is a bit delayed, but we think that the extra time was worth it. We hope you agree. This issue is our longest, and hopefully our best, yet.

The news we cover in this issue ranges from exciting to heartbreaking and all along the spectrum between those two extremes. As for other content, we are excited to present an interview with Terence Kissack, the author of the excellent book *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States 1895-1917*. This accompanies an excerpt from *Free Comrades*, which is an excellent read. We've also put a lot of work into the layout of this issue, and we believe it to be an improvement over the previous issues.

Additionally, we would like to emphasize the legal troubles being faced by many of our comrades, including those targeted by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) lawsuit after the Lansing church action, and Ariel Attack, a comrade (and contributor to this fine publication) from Denver who was arrested recently.

As a disclaimer, we do not agree with everything printed, but we do agree that the following pieces are worth reading, and we believe in the importance of spreading anti-assimilationist, anarchist thought and analysis. Feedback is always appreciated, and you can contact us at [pinkandblackattack@riseup.net](mailto:pinkandblackattack@riseup.net).

We're still proud to be a part of the growing queer anarchist network, and we're seeing radical queer organizing and actions happening all across the country. We'd love to continue featuring action reportbacks and information about local projects. Our next submission deadline is December 15th, with *Pink and Black Attack #4* out in January. We are looking for a range of submissions, including analytical pieces, art, action reports, personal essays, and anything else related to queer anarchy. Our e-mail is [pinkandblackattack@riseup.net](mailto:pinkandblackattack@riseup.net). Please send submissions to us at that e-mail.

#### **Points of Unity:**

- We are queer anarchists. We oppose the state and capitalism in all their forms.**
- We are anti-assimilationists. We refuse to beg the state for equality.**
- We actively oppose heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, patriarchy, classism, and white supremacy.**
- We believe in collective liberation for all people.**
- We believe in revolutionary solidarity with everyone in the struggle against the state and against the domination of capitalism. We especially support our comrades who face legal trouble because of their struggles.**

# ARIEL ATTACK ARRESTED IN DENVER



The Democratic Party Headquarters in Denver had eleven windows smashed out with hammers early on the morning of August 25, 2009. The damage was estimated at \$11,000. It was exactly the one year anniversary of the commencement of the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver. Police reported seeing two vandals who fled. A single arrest was made (the police witness and arrest seems to have been a case of bad luck). That individual, Ariel Attack, was held in Denver City Jail for about 36 hours before a bail hearing and the full \$5000 bail was raised quickly.

As of September 4, almost two weeks later, the windows were still boarded up. This means that on “First Friday,” the monthly night when yuppies flood the neighborhood to peruse art galleries and spur gentrification forward, the Democratic Party HQ was still seriously damaged.

When news of the vandalism got out, the media was quick to speculate that the person arrested was either a conservative against the health care reform or a Democratic Party “operative” trying to make the Republicans look bad. That was before they discovered that the anarchist community, including the Denver Anarchist Black Cross chapter, was raising funds to bail the individual out. “Anarchists raise bail for Dem. HQ window-bashing suspect,” read the Denver Post headlines. “Alleged Colorado Democratic HQ window basher may be fan of no party.”

Surely they intended to say, no party but the dance party.

As hard as it was for the media to wrap their heads around an (anti)politics that is neither Democratic nor Republican, even more troublesome was the apprehended anarchist’s (anti)gender, which wasn’t easily identifiable as simply “male” or “female.”

For one rare moment, it seemed, society’s spectacle of simple binaries (liberal/conservative, male/female) was being publicly trashed. But then, the media is well-versed in making a spectacle of anarchists and trans people alike, and dragging their names through the mud. And so they did. And so it goes.

As to the anarchist criminal’s perspectives on the health care debate, we are unable to speculate, but it is rumored that anarchists are making the total destroy in many countries which offer the “universal health care”.



# SUPPORT ARIEL ATTACK!



Ariel Attack, who was arrested for allegedly smashing 11 windows of the Democratic Party Headquarters in Denver, has been charged with Felony 4 Criminal Mischief. She faces 2 to 6 years in prison, plus parole and fines if convicted. Ariel has hired a lawyer with solid radical politics and legal fees are estimated at \$1500 to \$2500.

Ariel has made clear their intention to proceed with dignity and not compromise their principles in court. However, a plea deal that's not contingent on sacrificing is very desirable for at least two reasons: total legal fees would be lower, and a deal could prevent prison time. If Ariel does time in prison, there is a good chance it would be spent in solitary confinement because Ariel is a smoking hot trans person and might be unsafe in the general "male" population. Solitary is hard time.

So we are begging all of you for your money. We know nobody has a lot but there are a lot of you, so if you can give a few bucks it is awesome. Everyone who donates any amount will receive a hand-painted and signed card from Ariel. If you donate \$10, we'll send you the latest copy of Denver's anarchist periodical "Til It Breaks" and a few glossy "It's Hammer Time!" stickers. If you donate \$25 or more, you'll receive all that plus one of our sweet graphic "It's Hammer Time!" T-shirts. And for large chunks of cash, we'll figure out how to treat you real special (wink, wink).

To donate via paypal, send to [mjschwenk@gmail.com](mailto:mjschwenk@gmail.com). To donate via snail mail, send us an email.

More important than your money or keeping Ariel out of prison, is your struggle for freedom and abolishing prisons. Think solidarity actions. They would be hugely appreciated!

If you wanna holla back, [grrl: friendsofariel@riseup.net](mailto:grrl:friendsofariel@riseup.net)

**Donations can be sent  
directly to Ariel via  
paypal to [mjschwenk@  
gmail.com](mailto:mjschwenk@gmail.com)  
Solidarity means  
attack!**

# Tel Aviv: Pink Communities forms in response to tragedy

[Editorial Collective note: This piece is in response to the horrific attack that occurred on August 1st at Club Noir, a queer community center in Tel Aviv. Two were killed, with 15 others wounded. The following was taken from Bash Back! News <bashbacknews.wordpress.com>]

Last Saturday a nightmare came true: we where hunted down.  
A faceless man went into a room full of youngsters and opened fire.

Now 2 of them are dead and many wounded, some outed on a hospital bed.

When the news of the murder came, it was all too easy for me to picture the scene – I used to spend most of my waking hours in this secluded basement flat in central Tel Aviv, the offices of the Israeli GLBT association, Haaguda, working on Pride and AIDS awareness events.

We felt very safe there. Confidant. We had the of City Tel Aviv on our side, hanging rainbow flags on demand. We had the police doing our bidding instead of detaining and forbidding.

Ok, we had to swallow a few LGBT – phobic jokes from officers, bureaucrats, and commercial sponsors. But we thought it was a small price to pay for ten's of thousands marching in the streets of Tel Aviv, safe and proud, landing courage to countless kids across the country.

The price we paid now isn't small. It is immeasurable. The life of 2. The health of 15 , a collective trauma.

I do not feel safe now In Tel Aviv. Our strong hold. Our ghetto. I feel grief stricken and furious and betrayed.

I want to know who was this man in a ski mask dealing death in whose name. Was it a homophobic zealot? A fascist? A crazed family member or even a lover? How can I spot his kind and seek shelter when I recognize danger?

Maybe I should simply watch out for man with machine guns.

But this is far from simple In Israel, where most young men are drafted at 18, many issued a gun. Reserves soldiers – the entire able boded male population – often take their gun home too. There are guns on the bus, guns in Cafes, guns in restaurants, guns on the trains and the beach. Security guards and police have pistols. Settlers carry fire arms where ever they go.

In fact, there are probably only 3 segments of the population in Israel that are less likely to have access to guns: Work migrants, Palestinians, and ultra religious Jews.

Yesterday the Israeli police accused the LGBTQ communities of prematurely calling the murders a hate crime. Of inciting hate against other minority populations.

I agree with the police- it is too easy to point the finger at the extreme religious parties. Or at immigrants. Better look for the real villains: Better accuse the policemen who on Sunday called the supporters of the evacuated families in east Jerusalem, filthy faggots – When Many of them arrived directly from a memorial demo protesting the murders in Tel Aviv. Better investigate law enforcers calling conscientious objectors stupid dykes while smashing their heads on the pavement. Better beware of the police arresting and bashing queer activists in Central Tel Aviv on the very same day as the murders, after they have tried to protect refugees and their children from being deported.

Better point the finger at the soldiers who kill peace loving men and youth in non-violent demos in Palestine, and round up others in the dead of night.

I accuse them of creating a society of hatred and brute force where no minority is safe.

But it is also too easy to blame the police. The police is only a symptom, a tool of the government and the state. The same government who did nothing when calls for our blood where heard from its benches. The same state that it's president, Shimeon Peres, objected in 2007 to the Pride parade in Jerusalem in – where 3 people where stabbed only 2 years earlier.

Many of us in the Jewish LGBTQ community in Israel believed we would be safe if we will “be like everyone else” be mothers, solders, consumers. Be poster boys and girls for “the only democracy in the middle east”. Be a tourist attraction.

We were told that we could be safe if we distance ourselves from any hint of otherness. Because “the other” draws fire.

We are not safe. We are being murdered. And in order to protect our self we should be nothing like everyone else. We should demand they put away the guns they use to shoot us. We should denounce violence and repression of other minorities. We should honor the murdered by remembering – Homophobia is Racism. Racism is Homophobia.

tamara

# Reportbacks from anti-corporate Pride actions: Memphis and Seattle

## Memphis:

On Saturday, June 20th, Nike hosted a pride event to shame all others. Complete with HRC floats, “progressive” politicians, overpriced concessions, corporate advertising, army recruiters (?!), police, and speakers calling to send even more folks into the prison industrial complex with hate crime legislation, Memphis Pride provided us with a glimpse of the dreadfully dull world we would live in if the mainstream gay and lesbian “movement” had its way.

Luckily, BB! Memphis was there to remind folks that a queer community exists that isn't funded by Budweiser, that doesn't settle for politicians empty promises, & doesn't treat the BTQ in LGBTQ as an afterthought.

### Friday June 19th

-BB! lines Cooper Street with anti-police and anti-Nike fliers, even flying around the Cooper-Young police substation.

### Saturday June 20th

-BB! drops a banner near the assembly point for parade goers and the Nike float, which reads “Labor, Just Exploit It” in response to this year's theme “OUR RIGHTS ARE CIVIL RIGHTS” and the choice to allow Nike to become the major sponsor. Some folks cheer while others look on, confused what racism & sweatshops have to do with rich white gay civil rights.

-BB! file in behind MAGY (Memphis Area Gay Youth) and HRC, and eventually form a breakaway group. Carrying a banner that reads “FABULOUSLY FIERCE”, a boom box, and signs commemorating murdered transwomen, they begin militantly chanting which riles up the crowd.

-When the BB! marchers approach the Cooper-Young railroad trestle, a giant banner it dropped over the trestle by BB! operatives which reads “THE MPD KILLED DUANNA JOHNSON! END RACISM & TRANSPHOBIA, BASH BACK!”

-When the banner is dropped BB! marchers play “Fuck the Police” on the boom box and a dance party under the railroad trestle ensues. The march stops, police look bewildered, and other folks start cheering and joining in.

-BB! reunites at Peabody Park where the festival is being held and begins passing out queer counter-recruitment literature (thanks BB! Denver!) in front of the Repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell folks.

-BB! confronts Michigan Womyns Festival who is tabling at Memphis Pride and call them out on their transphobia.

-A BB! operative interrupts Congressman Steve Cohen while he is on stage saying he supported ENDA, calling him “Transphobic Liberal Scum”. Some folks cheer on the protester, some transphobic folks boo them.

# SEATTLE: COPS BUST MASSIVE ANTI-CORPORATE PRIDE CRIMINAL DANCE PARTY

These kids wanted to put the “punk” back in “punctuality” so they promptly began at 11:55pm. The first song was by Michael Jackson, the crowd of more than 250 people went crazy. They were kicking up dust and yelling. They had been enduring a costly, corporate 21+ pride for two whole nights, this was there moment, their time to shine.

Someone climbed to the top of the hill and asked the DJ to stop. “It’s midnight motherfuckers! Stonewall was a queer and trans riot and it happened 40 years ago as of right now! Maybe you didn’t know Pride is supposed to be celebrating that moment in our history, Budweiser doesn’t include that on the banners they have all over the place. Fuck 21+ venues, fuck covers, fuck corporate Pride. This moment is yours, its ours!”

Dolly Parton blasted and everyone cheered. We did it, we really did it.

At the other end of the parking lot two cars had called the cops because of a minor wreck. The cop who was taking that report had been watching the goings-on and called for backup. The parking lot where a queer bar called Pony used to be suddenly got the Swine Flu as more and more cop cars showed up and began shining their lights on the crowd. The queers were not phased, they danced harder, used to the things they value being threatened by the systems that are supposed to protect them.

After five songs and much “you need to leave the parking lot” talk, the cops approached the speaker where the music was coming from. The DJ calmly unplugged his music player and walked away as he had been instructed. One person grabbed the cords connecting the device and disappeared into the crowd. The queer in charge of the power source flew into action and had everything in his bag in a matter of seconds. The kid who needed to take one part of the sound system ran with it clutched to their chest, ridding away in car. All of this took seconds to happen. These well prepared folx had their shit on lock and the cops were too slow to stop them.

The woman in charge of getting the speaker that was providing sound was carrying it away. The cops grabbed her by the hair and pulled her back, she screamed, witnesses saw the cops hand come down hard on the woman’s back. Another cop was shaking a man by his jacket screaming, “I’ve worked for 12 hours and don’t have to deal with this shit!”. The cops had pushed the large crowd out of the parking lot by now. Cops yelled hilarious things like, “There’s still time to drink, go back to the bars!”. Some of the crowd had disappeared leaving only 150 people to chant things like, “give us back our speaker!”, “up the punks!”, “fuck corporate pride”, “out of the bars and into the streets”.

One man was arrested, a cop claiming he had keyed his car. The man’s room mate was with him the entire night, “He was standing with me, he didn’t key anything. He was standing there and then he was gone.” People quickly formed a group around supporting the man until he got out on bail.

Last night’s guerrilla dance party showed two things, that queers now how to throw a fucking party and that we’re only allowed to celebrate Pride if a large company profits from our gatherings. But the cops came too late, we had proved to ourselves and others that queers don’t need to be backed by a corporate sponsor in order to commemorate the queer and trans folx who came before us and made the shit we do daily possible. The folx at Stonewall would have been proud of us and recognized what we were doing because they did it themselves, last night we made the world we wanted to see.

# **LUBING UP THE SOCIAL WAR: BASH BACK! BEING SUED BY THE ALLIANCE DE- FENSE FUND, THE TIME TO FUNDRAISE IS NOW! BY AN ALLEYWAY TRANARCHIST**

Note from Pink and Black Attack: The 4 comrades arrested in Chicago have had their charges dropped since this piece was originally published.

In the fall of 2008, the Lansing, Michigan chapter of national queer and trans anarchist group Bash Back! descended upon anti-queer mega church Mount Hope in two strategically placed groups of disruptionists. The first of these groups diverted the attention of security, pink and black blocked up and waving signs which read such things as “Dykes of the Damned” and “Satanic Trannys 666”. Inside, others waited patiently in their best Sunday drag until at once they rose, interrupting the service with cries of “Jesus was a homo!”, a banner drop from the balcony that said “It’s Okay to Be Gay! Bash Back!”, queer kiss ins, over a thousand strewn fliers with queer positive content aimed to console potentially queer youth of the church, and pulled fire alarms. Afterwards, a communiqué was written proclaiming “So long as bigots kill us in the streets this pack of wolves will continue to BASH BACK!”

Cross country chapters and cells of Bash Back! have since emerged at a rapid and steady pace. Several churches have been attacked, spray painted and glued shut, transphobes have been beat down, the officer responsible for the brutal beating of trans womyn Duanna Johnson who was shot and killed in the process of suing the Memphis Police Department has been sent caskets and death threats, corporate pride events have been stormed, a queer and trans squat has been opened in response to the disproportionate rate of queer and trans homelessness, dance parties have spilled out of convergences transforming the trains of Chicago into queer fucking, crowd surfing and graffiti writing modes of public transportation, which then spilled into the streets along with a couple trashcans and newsstands leading to four arrests and several unarrests. And to top it off they state that they “know you call us terrorists because our very existence terrorizes you. This makes us proud but you ain’t seen nothing yet.”

Yet as the queerest hours of the night are lit by the fuchsia flames of insurrection and liberation, and as the candle lit vigils of the soon to be past erupt into wild infernos which reach urgently into the sky, we must not forget that there are also sirens wailing in the not so distant background.

Bash Back! has received the attention of endless right wing wingnuts, the Ku Klux Klan, disapproving assimilationist gays, the FBI, Bill O Reilly and the Alliance Defense Fund, who are a right wing rights group that is currently in the process of suing over 20 subpoenaed, alleged Bash Back! members in connection to the action at Mount Hope Church. Bash Back!’s response? “Bash Back! and radical transfolk/queers cannot and will not be intimidated. Some of us face life and death on a daily basis. This lawsuit ain’t shit.”

Even so, with resistance comes repression. And while there is such an overwhelming, immediate need to bring the entire atrocity known as the prison industrial complex to it’s heartless fucking knees, there is also an urgency in keeping gender variant populations free and out of the transphobic, gender binary segregated cages of the state. So let’s get fucking organized! Solidarity means attack. It also means fundraise! Legal expenses are unreal, but networks of support and creativity can warm hearts and give queers in court a fighting chance. Organize a benefit show! Play one! Distro! Have a bake sale! A secret cafe!

Let us join the wolf pack, have each other’s backs. Sing our howling warcries to the moon, and continue to make clear that queer and trans oppression is part of a system of oppression, and that no part of that system will be spared the fierceness of our fury!

# HRC IS NOT YOUR FRIEND!

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### From Saffo

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO: [anarchoqueer@gmail.com](mailto:anarchoqueer@gmail.com)  
AND PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY!

As Radical Queers, we are in a constant war against the HRC. Our frustrations run much deeper than ENDA or any other single issue. However, I have often found myself unable to substantiate my frustrations when talking with more mainstream “LGBT” folks. So, me and a friend are planning to compile and edit a zine on why we hate the HRC. We are looking for more radical perspectives written in a language that would be accessible to more mainstream “LGBT” folks.

Talking points could/should include, but are not limited to:

Racism, Classism, Assimilation, Militarism/Imperialism, Transphobia, The Prison-Industrial Complex, The Non-Profit Industrial Complex, Immigration as a Queer Issue, Public Sex/Sexuality and Pleasure (and how the HRC tries to hide that as a part of our identities), The culture of respectability, Healthcare.

Or maybe, even more fundamentally, why there are no “separate issues.”

We would also be interested in writings on things people have done, actions that have been taken against the HRC, and why we don’t need the HRC. (We can do this shit ourselves!)

Remember, the intended audience is mainstream “LGBT” folks who aren’t already radical– this is an attempt to radicalize them!– so please make sure submissions are written in a way that will make sense to these folks. (I.e. don’t assume somebody knows what the prison industrial complex is or why we don’t like it.)

PLEASE EMAIL SUBMISSIONS, QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS TO:  
[anarchoqueer@gmail.com](mailto:anarchoqueer@gmail.com).

AND PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY!

Thanks!

Solidarity and Sodomy,  
~Saffo

# 40 YEARS AFTER STONEWALL, POLICE STILL RAIDING GAY BARS

In recent months there have been two big raids of gay bars, one in Fort Worth, TX on June 28th (the 40th anniversary of Stonewall), and another on September 10th in Atlanta. One man was hospitalized in the Texas raid, with a total of 7 arrested. 8 employees of the Atlanta bar were arrested for not having proper permits.

In the Fort Worth raid, the pretext was that the raid was a compliance check, with the 7 arrestees charged with public intoxication. In Georgia, the pretext was that undercover officers had seen sex acts when they visited previously. These are the excuses that are provided for charging into a bar and forcing everyone to the ground, then roughly 'searching' people while using anti-gay slurs.

Protests were, of course, held in both Texas and Georgia, and the raids have sparked outrage. However, there's a couple things missing, especially given that one of the raids occurred on the anniversary of Stonewall. First, why such a meager response? If we are truly to appreciate the legacy of Stonewall as a milestone in the queer liberation movement, then why do we not respond like they did? After 40 years, we're still facing police harassment and brutality, along with the standard homophobic remarks and attitudes. The struggle seems to not have changed, so why does our response? Granted, the police have responded in typical ways. Three officers were fired in Texas, which is notable only in that it is uncommon for such drastic action to be taken. Additionally, Texas police have promised to update their policies on raids. Next time, queers will be fortunate enough to have police harass and brutalize them according to proper procedure. The police in both jurisdictions are investigating police conduct during the raid. Yes, the cops are essentially investigating themselves.

The fact that these responses are seen as acceptable points to a deep flaw: queer people have been taught to trust the state. The same government that criminalized our very existence for so long now has the trust of many queer people. Granted, things are different now than they were 40 years ago. Politicians now pay lip service to protecting queer people. I suppose that's the other thing that's missing: the understanding that the state is not on the side of queer people.

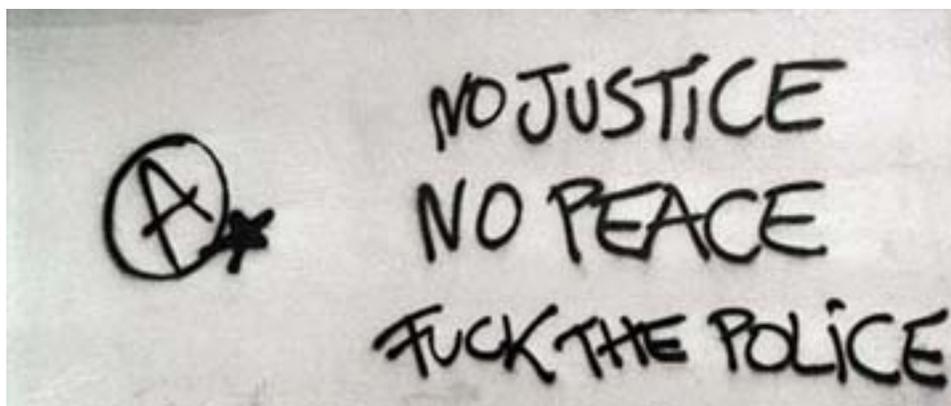
I want to be clear: the police did this. The fault for these raids rests solely with the police. There is no excuse for these brutal, targeted raids. However, given these facts, I wonder why the queer community responds only with calls for accountability within the system. Queer liberation started with a riot, and it taught us a valuable lesson: fighting back increases our power.

Hopefully we can (re-)learn our lesson this time.

For more information on the raids:

Atlanta raid- <<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-14051.html>>

Fort Worth raid- <<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-13276.html>>



# A Compilation of Critiques of Hate Crimes Legislation

## from blackandpink.org

Many liberal, and even self-proclaimed progressive, organizations are fighting for “hate crimes” legislation nationally and state-by-state. The Senate just voted in favor of the “Matthew Shepard Bill”. Challenges and critiques are made over and over again by queer/trans/gender non-conforming folks, people of color, low-income/poor folks, and others most impacted by the many tentacles of the prison industrial complex, yet the campaigns continue on. This document is intended to be a bullet point compilation of materials put out by the following organizations (in no particular order): **Sylvia Rivera Law Project** <<http://www.slrp.org>>, **Audre Lorde Project** <<http://www.alp.org>>, **FIERCE** <<http://www.fiercenyc.org>>, **Queers for Economic Justice** <<http://www.q4ej.org>>, Peter Cicchino Youth Project <<http://www.urbanjustice.org/ujc/projects/peter.html>>, **Denver Chapter of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Denver on Fire**, and the article “**Sanesha Stewart, Lawrence King, and why hate crimes legislation won’t help**” by jack. The intention behind this document is to present a somewhat simplified critique that can inspire a desire for more information.

**If a particular crime is deemed a hate crime by the state, the supposed perpetrator is automatically subject to a higher mandatory minimum sentence. For example, a crime that would carry a sentence of five years can be “enhanced” to eight years.**

Plain and simple, hate crimes legislation increases the power and strength of the prison system by detaining more people for longer periods of time.

**Trans people, people of color, and other marginalized groups are disproportionately incarcerated to an overwhelming degree. Trans and gender non-conforming people, particularly trans women of color, are regularly profiled and falsely arrested for doing nothing more than walking down the street.**

If we are incarcerating those who commit violence against marginalized individuals/communities we then place them behind walls where they can continue to target these same people. It is not in the best interest of marginalized communities to depend on a system that already commits such great violence to then protect them.

**Hate crime laws do not distinguish between oppressed groups and groups with social and institutional power.**

This reality of the state makes it so that white people can accuse people of color of anti-white

hate crimes, straight people accuse queers, and so on. Such a reality opens the door for marginalized people to be prosecuted for simply defending themselves against oppressive violence. This type of precedent setting also legitimizes ideologies of reverse racism that continuously deny the institutionalization of oppression.

**Hate crime laws are an easy way for the government to act like it is on our communities’ side while continuing to discriminate against us. Liberal politicians and institutions can claim “anti-oppression” legitimacy and win points with communities affected by prejudice, while simultaneously using “sentencing enhancement” to justify building more prisons to lock us up in.**

Hate crimes legislation is a liberal way of being “tough on crime” while building the power of the police, prosecutors, and prison guards. Rather than address systems of violence like health care disparities, economic exploitation, housing crisis, or police brutality, these politicians use hate-crimes legislation as their stamp of approval on “social issues”.

**Hate crimes laws focus on punishing the “perpetrator” and has no emphasis on providing support for the survivor or families and friends of those killed during an act of interpersonal hate violence.**

We will only strengthen our communities if we take

time to care for those who have experienced or been witness to violence. We have to survive systems of violence all the time and are incredibly resilient. We must focus on building our capacity to respond and support survivors and create transformative justice practices that can also heal the perpetrator (though focusing first and foremost on survivors).

**Hate crime law sets up the State as protector, intending to deflect our attention from the violence it perpetrates, deploys, and sanctions. The government, its agents, and their institutions perpetuate systemic violence and set themselves up as the only avenue in which justice can be allocated; they will never be charged with hate crimes.**

The state, which polices gender, race, sexuality, and other aspects of identity, is able to dismiss the ways it creates the systems that builds a culture of violence against marginalized communi-

ties as it pays prosecutors to go after individuals who commit particular types of interpersonal violence. Hate crimes legislation puts marginalized communities in the place of asking the state to play the savior while it continues to perpetuate violence.

**Hate crimes don't occur because there aren't enough laws against them, and hate crimes won't stop when those laws are in place. Hate crimes occur because, time and time again, our society demonstrates that certain people are worth less than others; that certain people are wrong, are perverse, are immoral in their very being.** Creating more laws will not help our communities. Organizing for the passage of these kind of laws simply takes the time and energy out of communities that could instead spend the time creating alternative systems and building communities capable of starting transformative justice processes. Hate crimes bills are a distraction from the vital work necessary for community safety.

**Passing hate crimes legislation will not bring back those who have been killed by hateful violence, it will not heal the wounds of the body or spirit, it will not give power to communities who have felt powerless after episodes of violence.**

Organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and others take advantage of our pain and suffering to garner support for these pieces of legislation. Advocates in the campaigns for hate crimes legislation tokenize individuals like Sanesha Stewart and Angie Zapata while still pushing forward the white, class privileged, gay and lesbian agenda. To truly honor those we have lost and to honestly heal ourselves we must resist the inclination to turn to the state for legitimation or paternalistic protection; let us use the time to build our communities and care for our selves.



# Fear of Castration and the Parable of War

by Mario Mieli

The following is taken from a text called "Towards a Gay Communism" written in 1980.

Elvio Fachinelli asks what lies 'at the root of the rejection of homosexuality (essentially of male homosexuality, given that female homosexuality today speaks a language that is very different and less significant, for reasons connected with the historic position of women)'.<sup>4</sup>

It would be interesting to know why Fachinelli sees less significance in the 'language' of female homosexuality. Perhaps because he is a man and is thus concerned above all with his own rejection of male homosexuality. But we shall come back to this in a minute.

It is essentially, on the part of the heterosexual male, the fear of losing his masculinity in contact with the homosexual, i.e. something very deeply bound up with his personal identity. Vis-à-vis homosexuality, he feels almost as if his very position as a male were being challenged, and hence his individual self-definition. It is as if this proved unexpectedly precarious or insecure, far more so than it generally is. Hence the reactions of rejection and disparagement, hence the various well-known behaviour patterns of aggressive hypermasculinity, which are often surprisingly accompanied by a certain solicitude for the homosexual in as much as he acts like a woman... We can say, therefore, that the homosexual reawakens, as a male who seems to have suffered castration, the fear of castration that is latent in every man. And as simultaneously both male (which he ultimately is) and female, he is often experienced by the heterosexual as endowed with a paradoxical castrating and assimilating capacity.<sup>5</sup>

What Fachinelli says here is on the whole a valid interpretation, even if I would see it as risky to consider it an explanation of what 'lies at the root of the rejection of homosexuality'. Heterosexuals, as a general rule, tend to give over-hasty replies to the homosexual question (if rarely anything like as intelligent as this). We can add, however, that, if the homosexual usually reawakens the 'fear of castration' in the male heterosexual, this is also due to the fact that the heterosexual sees his own castration shown up by the gay man, i.e. the castration he has suffered with respect to his homoerotic desire. The heterosexual male fears losing his masculinity, and hence his heterosexual identity, because he knows this is all that remains to him of an Eros that has already been mutilated. And it is precisely because of this castration of his homosexual desire that he does not manage to understand homoeroticism as the totalising, satisfactory, full sexuality that it is, and so fears falling into a void were he to let himself be seduced into a gay experience. Since he knows his heterosexuality to be based on the loss of homosexuality (which does not necessarily mean he is consciously aware of this), the male is afraid of losing his heterosexual identity, should he abandon himself to his unknown homosexuality. In other words, he has internalised the evident if mysterious law of the system: either heterosexuality or homosexuality.

According to the Milan *Fuori!* collective, the continuous violence inflicted on homosexuals, 'just like that exercised against women, is indissolubly bound up with the male's fear of losing his power over women. The man who goes to bed with another man is jeopardising his power, betraying the "solidarity" among males, and this is why he brings all their repression down on himself'.<sup>6</sup>

For many heterosexual men, the homosexual liberation struggle is a war waged against their Norm. Now in war, every army seeks ways of aiding desertion from the other side. And in these last few years, the number of heterosexual males who desert has steadily grown, experimenting with homosexuality and experiencing the emancipating influence of the gay movement.

In a conflict, however, someone who deserts is generally exposed to a greater risk (at least if the

army from which he deserts is not completely and irreversibly in rout), the risk of dying a shameful and infamous death, being labelled a traitor and accused of cowardice. Hence any army that fights intelligently understands the importance of positively attracting deserters from the enemy to its own ranks, and carries out propaganda of disaffection directed at the enemy camp. Propaganda of this kind can prove a deadly weapon, able to destroy a whole army without firing a shot (think of the puppet army of South Vietnam, literally broken apart by desertion).

If, on the other hand, the deserter is uncertain of his fate, and expects to face the inextinguishable hatred of the other side, if he fears risking a cruel death, should he take refuge in the opposing army, or being degraded by deprecation for his cowardice (the fate that his own side would inflict), then he will refrain from putting his planned desertion into practice, however sadly, and remain with his old comrades, continuing to depend on them for his physical survival.

Clearly, any desertion is going to be met with a certain diffidence. It must be, at the very least, individual and unreserved. The deserter will be enrolled in a company of trusty veterans, and certainly not left together with other deserters. Above all, the desertion of an entire enemy unit that wants to maintain its integral character is a cause for suspicion: men's awareness groups, for example, or the gangs of 'neo-homosexual' comrades, if we are to apply the metaphor to the present confrontation between gays and the heterosexual Norm, the deserters being those straight men 'in crisis' who can no longer fit completely into the army of normality and its ideology. Men's awareness groups have no other purpose than to prolong their dithering between the sacred 'normality' of the system and a gay, total opposition to it. We look forward to their dissolution, and to the participation of their former members in the revolutionary homosexual movement, particularly in its pleasures, in our particular pleasures.

To return to the war, given that little boys are so fond of playing at toy soldiers (whereas we queens prefer to be played with by toy soldiers). In the case of a group desertion, it is an elementary security measure to break up the deserting unit and distribute it in small nuclei among one's front line formations, those most experienced in combat (to put David Cooper in with the Gazolines, for example, or Franco Berardi with Our Lady of the Flowers).<sup>7</sup> More must be expected of the deserter than of any other soldier, just as he needs to be ensured of the fullest support and solidarity of his new comrades.

To give a final example. Let us assume that straight men are fighting in an all too normal colonial army engaged in massacring a black (read 'gay') population, who are nevertheless reacting courageously with ever bolder guerilla actions. The hetero-colonialist males, despite the fact that their army still controls the main centres and road junctions in the region, and has formidable technical instruments of repression at its command, are unable to carry on. They are sickened by the reprisals which they have had to take part in, and by the atrocities in which they have been accomplices. The last village that they razed to the ground prevented them from sleeping. And so, after having carried out a commendable work of dissatisfaction in their platoon, they decide to desert en masse, bringing all the weapons that they can smuggle out – first among these a perfect knowledge of the mentality and methods of their former army. They venture out into the jungle that surrounds the occupied cities, in which the guerillas are forced to hide. They are both frightened and fascinated. What holds them back is their uncertainty that the guerillas will spare them once they reach their camp. In other words, they have deserted from the colonialist army, but are still afraid of being fucked in the arse.

They take to the maquis and begin to fight the colonialist army, and yet they still maintain operational autonomy, undertaking guerilla actions and sabotage independently from the black guerillas. The latter then have various options. They know very well that the presence of an independent white unit could have a decisive demoralising effect on the colonial army, and they are also aware that acceptance of a united struggle might involve innumerable dangers for the coordination and effectiveness of their actions. On the other hand, however, there is the risk that the deserters, still unrepentant colonialists, might degenerate into simple acts of brigandage against both armies: these are the bisexuals.

It would be opportune for the guerillas to enter into negotiations with a view to co-opting the deserters. They can certainly agree that these should maintain their autonomy for a certain period of time, as long as they have not sufficiently given proof of their gayness; i.e. to see to what point the bisexu-

als, absolute heterosexuals until yesterday, are genuine deserters, and form part of the liberation struggle against the Norm.

The solution to this problem lies in the victory of the revolution, in the creation of communism, in the ending of all war, and the definitive withdrawal of all armies. Today, the revolution is being prepared, among other things, by the conflict between the gay movement and the Norm, and by the encounter between homosexuals and deserters from the army of normality. The heterosexual males 'in crisis' must understand that we do not want war : we are forced to struggle because we have always been persecuted, because the policemen of the heterosexual law have repressed us, because we look forward to the universal liberation of the gay desire, which can only be realised when your heterosexual identity is broken down. We are not struggling against you, but only against your 'normality'. We have no intention of castrating you. We want on the contrary to free you from your castration complex. Your arse has not really been amputated, it has only been accused [*imputato*], along with your entire body.

To come over to our side means, literally, to be fucked in the arse, and to discover that this is one of the most beautiful of pleasures. It means to marry your pleasure to mine without castrating chains, without matrimony. It means enjoyment without the Norm, without laws. It is only your inhibitions that prevent you from seeing that only by coming over to our side can we achieve our revolution. And communism can only be ours, i.e. belonging to us all, those of us able to love. Why do you want to be left out? It is capital that still so insistently opposes you to us. What you have to fear is not being fucked in the arse, but rather remaining what you at present still are, heterosexual males as the Norm wants you to be, even in crisis, as if it was not high time to oppose yourselves forever to crisis, to castration, to guilt. As if it was not time to gay-ly reject the discontent that the present society has imposed on us, and to stop the totalitarian machine of capital in its tracks by realising new and totalising relations. And given that we are bodies, this means erotic relations among us all.

You fear us on account of the taboo you have internalised, and which you still uphold. But this taboo is the mark of the system in you. And we don't want to be led into the catastrophe that is threatening, nor do we want the struggle for liberation, which has only one genuine enemy, capital, to be crippled by your resistances, dogmas and ditherings, by your susceptibility to images and your submission to the Father-system. Your terror of homosexuality is the capitalist terror, it is the paternal terror, the terror of the father that you have not overcome.

There have been wars in which the oppressors, sullied by atrocities, have degenerated to such a point that the only way for the oppressed to conquer has been to eliminate them to a man. In a case of this kind, it is impossible to expect many deserters. We find this in the Biblical wars : God commanded that none of the inhabitants of Jericho should survive the fall of the city. But we don't want to sound the trumpets of Jericho, rather the Internationale. What we propose is an erotic understanding. We don't want any more destruction, that is precisely why we still have to struggle. Revolutionary wars are never anything like the destruction of Jericho.

In 1917 the Bolsheviks and all other revolutionaries proclaimed war on war and preached defeatism in all armies. The Russian revolutionary soldiers fraternised with the German 'victors', they danced together, embraced one another on the occupied Russian soil and shared their rations. Today, with gay clarity, we must wage the true war against capital and no one else. Eros to you and to us, captivating sisters and attractive brothers of the universal incest that is announced and impending!

5. Elvio Fachinelli, 'Travesti', *L'Erba Voglio* 11, May-June 1973, p.38.

6. *Di omosessualita si muore*, a leaflet published by the Milan Fuori! collective on 25 October 1975, just one week before the death of Pasolini.

7. The Gazolines were the most outrageous group of queens and transvestites from the old Paris FHAR; Nostra Signora dei Fiori is a theatrical group within the Milan Homosexual Collectives.

# YOUR RIGHTS AS A TRANS PERSON

This document is based on discussions from the trans caucus from the radical queer convergence last may

-You have the right to choose your own name. You do not have to keep any gendered name or names you have been given.

-You have the right to dress in the clothing of your preferred gender. You do not have to conform to any gendered assumptions made of you or gender tyranny forced upon you.

-You have the right to choose and enforce your preferred pronouns. You do not have to accept the pronouns people choose for you or accept peoples' assumptions about your gender.

-You have the right to not answer questions about your body or your transition. You have the right to NOT be defined in terms of how you wish to change or not change your body.

-You have the right to alter and modify your body. Your body is your own and no one else's. No one can make decisions about your body other than you. You have the right to love or hate your body and take steps to change your body into how you feel it should be.

-You have the right to your own identifying terms, for yourself as a whole and for your body parts. You have the right to your own terms for describing your genitals and chest. No one can tell you what to call the parts of your own body.

-You have the right to choose the language you and your partner(s) use while talking about sex. You do not have to remain limited to terms used by non-trans people.

-You have the right to know your legal protections. Every school, city, county, and state has different non-discrimination policies and laws regarding the rights of trans people. Know what these are where you live. Remind the authorities of the laws they have created for themselves to protect you.

-You have the right to keep your identity hidden. It is not always safe for us to be out as trans people. You have the right to choose when it is safe to reveal your identity as a trans person.

-You have the right to make community with other trans people. Transphobia is a very violent form of oppression and the statistics on our survival reflect this. It has been said that one in three trans people will commit suicide in their lifetime and that one in ten will be murdered. Creating community and being visible as trans people is an important part of our collective liberation and safety. Solidarity within the trans community is important if our voices are to be heard and our lives to remain intact.

-You have the right to know your history. Trans folk have always existed in human cultures. Our history has been taken away from us by nations, states, and religions. Find your people's history and remember it.

**-YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE FUCKING ANGRY!!!!**

# Excerpt from *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895 – 1917* (AK Press, 2008)

by Terence Kissack

## Chapter Four, 'Love's Dungeon Flower': Prison and the Politics of Homosexuality, 101 – 105.

By far the most famous prison text written by an American anarchist that discusses the moral and social status of same-sex love in the context of prison is Alexander Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*. Berkman's book is an account of the fourteen years he spent in Pennsylvania's Western Penitentiary following his conviction for a failed assassination of Henry Clay Frick, the manager of Andrew Carnegie's steel empire. Frick was responsible for crushing the Homestead Steelmill Strike of 1892. Published in 1912 Berkman's book was widely reviewed inside and outside the anarchist movement. Some of his mainstream critics dismissed *Prison Memoirs* as the rationalization of a killer; others saw more. A reviewer in socialist journal, *The Coming Nation*, stated that Berkman's work "is a great human document, a remarkable presentation of prison conditions, and an intimate study of prison types."<sup>1</sup> Writing for *Mother Earth* a young Bayard Boyesen said that "here, from an Anarchist, is a book of rare power and beauty, majestic in its structure, filled with the power of imagination and the truth of actuality, emphatic in its declarations and noble in its reach."<sup>2</sup> Boyesen's praise reflected the high regard in which Berkman's book was held among anarchists and those sympathetic to their message.

In order to ensure that his book reached as broad an audience as possible, Berkman sought out a writer to compose an introduction for his memoirs. Berkman first approached Jack London, who had himself spent time in prison and had expressed some sympathy for anarchist ideas.<sup>3</sup> London's introduction proved too permeated by his political loyalties—he was a member of the Socialist Party—for Goldman and Berkman who ultimately declined to use it. To replace London, Berkman turned to Hutchins Hapgood. Hapgood was wildly enthusiastic about the text and fascinated by anarchism. His introduction was extremely complimentary. "I wish," Hapgood wrote, "that everybody in the world would read this book ... because the general and careful reading of it would definitely add to true civilization." Hapgood believed that Berkman's book would help "do away with prisons" and he commended Berkman's skill at illustrating the human relationships that structure prison life. "[*Prison Memoirs*] shows, in picture after picture, sketch after sketch," Hapgood wrote, "not only the obvious brutality, stupidity, [and] ugliness permeating the institution, but very touching, it shows the good qualities and instincts of the human heart perverted, demoralized, helplessly struggling for life; beautiful tendencies basely expressing themselves."<sup>4</sup> Although Hapgood was clearly a partisan voice his enthusiasm reflects the fact that *Prison Memoirs* is one of the most important and widely read texts to emerge from the turn-of-the-century anarchist movement.

Homosexual desire, in all its manifestations, is a key theme of the *Prison Memoirs*. *Prison Memoirs* documents not only the coercive sexual culture of prisons—rape and prostitution—but also the consensual loves that existed behind bars. It is this aspect of the work—its careful consideration of the possibility of love between people of the same sex—that makes Berkman's text such a rare document within the

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in "What the Critics Say," *Mother Earth*, March 1913, n.p.

<sup>2</sup> Bayard Boyesen, "Prison Memoirs," *Mother Earth*, February 1913, 424.

<sup>3</sup>Alex Kershaw, *Jack London: A Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). Kershaw suggests that London had a sexual relationship with another prisoner during his jail stay (36 – 38.)

<sup>4</sup>Hutchins Hapgood, "As Introductory," in Alexander Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Company 1912), ix – xi.

corpus of prison writing. Written from an insider's perspective, Berkman's work is an astute sociological and psychological analysis of the intimate life of prisoners. Prison life according to Berkman is deeply marked by "the swelling undercurrent of frank irrepressible sex drive."<sup>5</sup> In several lengthy passages, Berkman recounts the sexual and emotional brutality, pleasures and desires shared by his fellow prisoners. Near the end of his book Berkman devotes an entire chapter to the moral, ethical and social place of same-sex desire. Berkman presents love between inmates as a form of resistance to the spirit-crushing environment of prison. The representations of homosexuality in *Prison Memoirs* span the full range of human emotions and behavior. *Prison Memoirs* contains one of the most sustained consideration of the ethical, social and cultural place of same-sex relations of any of the published works produced by the turn of the century anarchists. It is one of the most important political texts dealing with homosexuality to have been written by an American before the 1950s.

The representations of homosexuality in the *Prison Memoirs* are complex. Berkman's text is not a simple defense of same-sex love. In fact, Berkman was quite critical of much of what he witnessed in jail. This is especially true in the beginning of the book. Berkman's first reaction to the existence of prison homosexuality is shock and disgust. By the end of his narrative, however, Berkman considerably altered his view of homosexuality. In his memoirs Berkman describes the evolution of his attitudes toward same-sex prison relationships. He tells how his initially horrified response to homosexuality is replaced with understanding and even an appreciation for the erotic and loving relations between men. As one late twentieth-century critic suggests, a reader could very easily find his or her "moral attitudes" regarding sex transformed by the vicarious experience of Berkman's own change of thought. Swept along by Berkman's revealing autobiographical work, the reader experiences the process by which the author "moves from a cold and abstract idealism to a warm and sympathetic identification, even to an unembarrassed and untroubled acceptance of the reality of homosexual love."<sup>6</sup> This analysis mirrors that made by Hutchins Hapgood, who wrote in his preface that reading *Prison Memoirs* "tends to complicate the present simplicity of our moral attitudes. It tends to make us more mature."<sup>7</sup>

Berkman and the staff of *Mother Earth* were well aware of the importance of his memoir as a work of sexual politics and they presented Berkman's treatment of same-sex relations in prison as a major theme of the book. The letters sent to *Mother Earth's* subscribers seeking prepublication subscriptions for Berkman's book clearly indicated that the sex life of prisoners was among the topics that Berkman dealt with. Advertisements for *Prison Memoirs* that appeared in *Mother Earth* highlighted the "homosexual" (the term used by the advertisements) content of the work. Following the book's publication Berkman delivered lectures on homosexuality that drew upon the material in his memoirs. The lectures served to advertise the book and elaborated upon the sociological and political implications of the text. Berkman's lectures both presented the erotic life of prisoners to a broad audience and contained a defense of the right of individuals to love whomever they wish. In a number of ways *Prison Memoirs* was marketed and presented as a significant contribution to the understanding of the social and moral place of same-sex desire. In promoting the book, Berkman and his colleagues foregrounded the sexual politics of *Prison Memoirs*.

Contemporary reviewers noted Berkman's "frankness of utterance" in regards to his treatment of homosexuality. "No detail of prison life is lost on Berkman's mind," a reviewer for *Current Literature* wrote in December 1912. "He dramatizes in particular, the abnormality of the prison situation. He shows us what happens when men are separated from women, when sex-instincts are repressed." The reviewers themselves, however, were less than "frank," choosing to omit any explicit discussion of homosexuality all the while hinting at its presence. The reviewer for *The Coming Nation* told readers only that Berkman's

<sup>5</sup>Berkman, *Prison Memoirs*, 263.

<sup>6</sup>John William Ward, "Violence, Anarchy, and Alexander Berkman," *New York Review of Books* (November, 5 1970), 27.

<sup>7</sup>Hutchins Hapgood, "As Introductory," x.

<sup>8</sup>"Two Indictments of Our Prison System," *Current Literature*, December 1912, 673.

The book has one great fault which may go far to hurt its effect. True to his tenets, Berkman has excluded nothing from his account. There are things done in prisons which a writer must be content to pass over lightly; many which he must absolutely omit if his book is to be universally read. These things Berkman has told in detail.<sup>9</sup>

book includes descriptions of “the hideous personal degradations fostered by the prison atmosphere.”<sup>8</sup> *Prison Memoirs* was also reviewed in periodicals outside the Left. The *San Francisco Bulletin* played at the edges of what could and could not be named in public discourse:

By not naming those “things done in prison which a writer must be content to pass over lightly” the *Bulletin’s* reviewer was carefully observing the rules of decorum to which Berkman refused to adhere. Of course, by indicating that the book was filled with these forbidden facts the reviewer was, if anything, heightening their salience. The unspoken jumps from the page. This is the same kind of resonant silence that commentators often used in treating the Oscar Wilde trial and other sexual scandals of the period.

A number of reviewers attacked Berkman’s book because it dealt openly with the subject of homosexuality. Berkman, like many authors a keen follower of the critical readings of his work, collected some of these negative reviews. Typical of these criticisms are the words of one reviewer, who thought *Prison Memoirs* “a book by a degenerate.” The reviewer found Berkman’s work to be “indecent ... both a glorification of assassination and an apology, even justification, of unmentionable crimes.” Shocked by the frank nature of Berkman’s text, the reviewer declared, “Mr. Comstock had better look into this work.” This critic, like others who wrote for what Berkman characterized as the “bourgeois press,” was not explicit in his or her discussion of the sexual content of the book, but the words used to describe it—“unmentionable crime,” “degenerate,” “indecent”—more than hinted at why Mr. Comstock, the best-known sexual purity advocate of the period, should take interest in the book. Berkman characterized the negative reviews he collected as coming from the pens of “intellectual Mrs. Grundys.”<sup>10</sup> By calling his critics “Mrs. Grundys,” a term for social purity activists, Berkman implied that the sexual content of his work not Berkman’s role in one of the United State’s most spectacular and well-known attempts at political assassination was central to the negative reviews he received. His critics found the sexual politics of *Prison Memoirs* as objectionable as the book’s anarchist politics. What the critics did not understand is that the two aspects of the book’s politics were integrally related.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in “What the Critics Say,” *Mother Earth*, March 1913. n.p.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Berkman, “October 19th, 1912,” *Alexander Berkman Archive*, International Institute of Social History.

# INTERVIEW WITH TERENCE KISSACK

*Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895 – 1917*, by Terence Kissack, is one of the few recent books that deals explicitly with anarchism and queer identity and politics. We here at Pink and Black Attack are proud to publish both an excerpt from this book and a short interview with Mr. Kissack. *Free Comrades* was published in 2008 and is available from AK Press. Mr. Kissack is the former director of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society in San Francisco, and still serves on its board.

The following is an interview with Mr. Kissack, conducted by e-mail.

Pink and Black Attack: Do you identify as an anarchist?

Terence Kissack: At best I am a bad anarchist. I’m not an activist—in the sense of someone who dedicates a significant part of their life working for social change. Some people make the argument that scholarship is a form of activism but that seems a stretch to me. If people find insight in something I’ve written and it leads them to create change, great. I do think that it is important to share ideas but I guess I set

the bar for declaring oneself an anarchist pretty high. I think in large part this comes from my study of anarchists late 19th and early 20th century anarchists—people like Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and Benjamin Tucker—who really devoted their lives to their beliefs. In comparison I’m pretty much a slacker. I do support a number of anarchist groups and efforts and I am drawn to anarchist analysis when trying to understand a political or social challenge. For example, I’m very much in sympathy with anarchist critiques of the prison industrial complex but is agreement in principle the same as working to tear down prisons? I’m not sure. I’ve written about anarchist views of prison but that seems a little removed from it all. I participated in a teaching program, the Prison University Project, that provides educational opportunities for prisoners at San Quentin for awhile and keep telling myself that I need to reengage. So why don’t we say that I’m a fellow traveler?

“There is a real danger that celebrating marriage—which the LGBTQ press and the community’s mainstream political leadership does at the drop of a hat—marginalizes relationships and sexualities that don’t fit comfortably into the white picket fence image of monogamous couplehood that seems to pop up everywhere within LGBTQ life.”

relationship to the New Left of the 1960s. In researching that work, which is entitled, *Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York’s Gay Liberation Front, 1969-1971*, I was struck by the complexity of the way orthodox Marxists, anarchists, and social democrats reacted to and interacted with GLF activists. I was also very curious to see whether similar moments, when social and political upheavals create openings for new action, happened early in U.S. history. And that lead me to the late 19th and early 20th century and the anarchists. Paul Avrich, who was teaching at CUNY when I was there, was very supportive and helped point me towards some key resources. I was also lucky to work with Martin Duberman, one of the real pioneers of GLBT historical study and someone who has a real passion for the history of political and cultural radicalism.

PABA: Where did you find your sources for the book?

TK: The first place I started was reading books and articles from others who have written about anarchists. I hope I captured all those titles and names in my bibliography; I could never have completed my work alone. In terms of what are called primary sources, i.e., the raw data of the past, one of the best sources for anarchist history—particularly in the U.S.—is the Emma Goldman Papers. This collection of works by Goldman, letters, notes—seemingly anything Goldman ever wrote—has been painstakingly and loving pulled together by scholars like Barry Pateman (who is a brilliant and really sweet guy) and Candace Falk and is just crazily fascinating. The Goldman Papers Project is located at U.C. Berkeley but I was able to access microfilm when I was a student in New York. I also did research at the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, the Tamiment Library at NYU, the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, and the New York Public Library. One of the most memorable moments of my research happened in a used book store in New York. I really love old books and was just browsing through the stacks when I came across a copy of John William Lloyd’s book, *Eneres; or, The questions of Reksa*, which is a pretty odd text. Lloyd is one of my favorite characters and as much as I tried to learn about him I think there is much more to do with him and his comrades. Of course, I also took advantage of all the materials and information that is available on the web. It’s a bit tricky to use web sources since often times its unclear where the info came from and what the source is but as a way to discover new leads it’s brilliant.

PABA: What made you interested in the subject and time period of your book?

TK: I've always been interested in the intersection of the left—broadly defined—and the politics of sexuality. My first real effort to research this was an article I wrote on the Gay Liberation Front's

PABA: You said that you're interested in radical politics and how that intersects with the politics of sexuality. Do you think that anarchism is still relevant to the LGBTQ community? How?

TK: Anarchism is absolutely still relevant to LGBTQ communities. This is particularly true for queer people living in theocratic countries where religious doctrine is used to legitimate state attacks on people whose gender identity and sexual choices are considered sinful and dangerous to the social order. For example, according to IRAQI-LGBT, a queer rights group, the Iraqi government has begun executing people for committing homosexual acts. Of course, there is also a great deal of non-state violence against queer people living in theocratic countries. For example, in Baghdad neighborhoods vigilante groups such as "Fazilat," which means virtue, have openly targeted people for murder and assault. State oppression of LGBTQ people in the United States tends to be sporadic and local—but getting beat up or thrown out of public accommodations by the police happens more often than many people are aware. And certainly there are lots of hate crimes (fag bashing, public shaming, and most especially violence within families) in the United States carried out by non-state actors. And while the U.S is not a theocracy, religious groups, such as Exodus, which seeks to "save" LGBTQ people from their supposed sinfulness, and Promise Keepers, a group that celebrates and shores up a hyper normative ideal of gender and sexual values, have a strong presence in cultural and political life. Anarchists have a keen understanding of how the state has mobilized to persecute and scapegoat various populations over time and reject the false claims to universal truth that religious leaders make on behalf of their sectarian interests. Of special relevance to those interested in LGBTQ politics, Anarcho-feminists have developed really insightful critiques of how rigid gender and sexual norms are used to prop up hierarchical and oppressive social and political relations.

I also think that anarchists have a great deal to say about the current push for same-sex marriage. I'm struck by how many activists pushing for same-sex marriage have an uncritical belief in the benefit of state and church sanctioned marriages. It is not an accident that the Christian Right uses the term "family values" as a cudgel against its targets. I think in some ways same-sex marriage activists are feeding into the idea that families—as defined by mainstream churches and the state—are better than other forms of association. There is a real danger that celebrating marriage—which the LGBTQ press and the community's mainstream political leadership does at the drop of a hat—marginalizes relationships and sexualities that don't fit comfortably into the white picket fence image of monogamous couplehood that seems to pop up everywhere within LGBTQ life. Andrew Sullivan, by all accounts a fairly conservative political figure, is quite open about why he believes marriage—not, for example, civil unions or even more radical reexaminations of relationships—is important. Marriage, Sullivan argues, is "a way to integrate gay people and protect marriage. Civil unions and other such institutions really will undermine marriage in a way gay couples never could." Andrew believes that the push for same-sex marriage "is a force right now for social conservatism." I'll grant Sullivan this: at least he is honest and upfront about why he supports same-sex marriage. I think, however, that those who normally find themselves in opposition to Sullivan's views and a range of issues (he was a huge cheerleader for the U.S. invasion of Iraq) should consider why they find themselves on the same page when it comes to priorities within the LGBTQ movement for social justice.

PABA: Anything you'd like to mention that wasn't asked about?

TK: I'd like to encourage your readers to challenge my book; to discover where my analysis falls apart or needs to be expanded. Don't get me wrong, I'm more than happy with my work and think that it is a valuable contribution to both historical and contemporary understanding of LGBTQ life. But it's hardly exhaustive and some of my readers have already pointed out mistakes and omissions. The best thing that could come of my writing this book is that more people become interested in studying what anarchists have said and continue to say about LGBTQ life.

# CRIMINAL INTIMACY

BY A GANG OF CRIMINAL QUEERS

## On Deadness

To live in this culture is to be dead, bare. Deadness is the affect and the aspiration of dominant social membership. It is the social relationship wherein life is reduced to exchange and capital. It is everywhere; in those walking the streets without ever meeting

the eyes of another, in the exchanges of service work, in the aisles of department stores and the pews of church. In capital, in heteronormativity, in law, in morality – everywhere is the logic of death.

The unthinkability of our desires is reiterated over and again. Power and control are written on our bodies. What is passion? Desire? Adventure? Play? What, but such catchy slogans for adverts. Our loves and our appetites and our very bodies are inscribed with this culture. Capital is written on our bodies. We dare not dream. How could we conceivably want more than this?

And the agents and exertions of biopower – the boots of queerbashers, the panoptical ever-present security cameras with the flashing blue lights, the sirens and guns of the police, the campaigns for gay marriage and military service, the lingering pains of monogamy, and such shapely mannequins, ad nauseum – stand everywhere erected as checkpoints guaranteeing the impossibility of anything else. Life, stripped bare, is nothing more than raw survival – banal, cold, numbing. Could it be more clear? Hetero-capitalism, this culture, this totality: It is out to destroy us.

## Taking and Sharing: on Getting What's Ours

The machinery of control has rendered our very existence illegal. We've endured the criminalization and crucifixion of our bodies, our sex, our unruly genders. Raids, witch-hunts, burning at the stake. We've occupied the space of deviants, of whores, of perverts, and abominations. This culture has rendered us criminal, and of course, in turn, we've committed our lives to crime. In the criminalization of our pleasures, we've found the pleasure to be had in crime! In being outlawed for fucking, we've discovered that we are indeed fucking outlaws!

Many blame queers for the decline of this society – we take pride in this. Some believe we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric – they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent, and revolting – but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet.

Let's be explicit: We are criminal queer anarchists and this world is not and can never be enough for us. We want to annihilate bourgeois morality and make ruins of this world. We're here to destroy what is destroying us.

Let's be speaking of revolt. We are tracing the lineage of our queer criminality and charting the

**Because the night belongs to lovers.**

**Because the night belongs to us.**

**- Patti Smith**

demise of the social order. And oh the nectar from which we drink: lesbian pirates raging the seas, queer rioters setting cop cars ablaze, sex parties amidst the decay of industrialism, bank robbers wearing pink triangles, mutual aid networks among sex workers and thieves, gangs of trannyfags bashing-the-fuck back. We've been assured that each day could be our last. As such we've chosen to live as if every day is. In turn, we promise that the existent's days are numbered.

In our revolt, we are developing a form of play. These are our experiments with autonomy, power, and force. We haven't paid for anything we're wearing and we rarely pay for food. We steal from our jobs and turn tricks to get by. We fuck in public and have never come harder. We swap tips and scams amid gossip and foreplay. We've looted the shit out of places and delight in sharing the booty. We wreck things at night and hold hands and skip all the way home. We are ever growing our informal support structures and we'll always have each other's backs. In our orgies, riots and heists, we are articulating the collectivity of and deepening these ruptures.

## On Criminal Intimacy and World Making

The ecstasy and electricity of crime is undeniable. We've felt the sweetest adrenaline rushes as we've dashed from security and blown each other on the bus. And nothing offers up the feeling of being alive more than the weight of a hammer through the facade of capital. Crime helps me get out of bed every morning.

We queers and other insurgents have developed what good folks might call a criminal intimacy. We are exploring the material and affective solidarity fostered between outlaws and rebels. In our obstruction of law, we've illegally discovered the beauty in one another. In revealing our desire to our partners in crime, we've come to know each other more intimately than legality could ever allow. In desire, we produce conflict. And in conflict with capital, we may have found an escape route from the deadening of our lives. Our gang's discourse is conflict.

The real power expressed in our crimes isn't the damage caused to our enemies or even in the various improvements of our material conditions (though we take pleasure in both). The power we express is in the empowerments and relationships we're creating. In our sex and our attack – when we pull down our masks and share our cache of bricks – we are expanding the possibilities of our affinity. In our crime, we create dynamic new relationships of criminal intimacies. In these possibilities, we are learning how we might, together, reduce this world to rubble.

We must make ourselves bodies without

organs. Within each of us is contained a virtual pool of everything we are capable of becoming – our desires, affects, power, ways of acting, and infinite possibilities. To embody and activate these possibilities we must experiment with the ways our bodies act in conjunction with others. We commit crime together so that we can unveil our criminal becoming.

We do not offer 'criminal' or 'queer' as identities, nor as categories. Criminality. Queerness. These are tools for revolt against identity and category. These are our lines of flight out of all restraint. We are in conflict with all that restricts every and each desire. We are becoming whatever. Our sole commonality is our hatred for everything that exists. Held in common, such a revolt of desire can never be assimilated into the state-form.

Right-wing talking heads invoke the imagery of a 'culture war,' waged between civil society on one side and queers on the other. We reject this model of war. Our war is a social war. The nexus of domination and class society are everywhere. Yet everywhere, too, are ruptures and points of conflict. In these fissures we exist in rebellion – we queers, criminals, whatever.

Our dirty talk and our nighttime whispers comprise a secret language. Our language of thieves and lovers is foreign to this social order, yet carries the sweetest notes in the ears of rebels. This language reveals our potential for world making. Our conflict is space for our possible other-selves to blossom. By organizing our secret universe of shared plenty and collective-explosive possibility, we are building a new world of orgy, riot, and decadence.

**“Could it be more clear?  
Hetero-capitalism, this culture,  
this totality:  
It is out to destroy us.”**

Originally published in Total Destroy #3: <<http://zinelibrary.info/files/TD3imp.pdf>>

# No Cops No Sponsors: Pride and the Problem of Assimilation

by Phil

Another Pride season has come and gone, along with another round of explaining to all my friends why I don't go to Pride. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, which were anti-police riots in response to violence against queer people. While Stonewall led to the first Pride celebrations, the state-sanctioned parades and festivals of today serve more as an example of how the queer movement has changed. There has been a distinct shift from radical action to mild reformism, as noted by the fact that police now protect and at times join Pride parades.

Rather than serving as a useful commemoration of Stonewall, Pride serves as a means by which the queer liberation movement is brought into mainstream, acceptable political discourse. By extension, queer identity is changed from a revolutionary force to simply part of the range of identities that continually petition the state for protection.

Queer identity was, for most of the modern era, criminalized by two main entities: the state and religion. In many places, this has changed, with Pride celebrations occurring around the world. What was once a deeply criminal act is now tolerated in many countries and communities. While outright state repression has certainly decreased (but

In short, queer culture has accepted the logic of capital and state power, with a political effort of reform and a cultural effort of market-based consumption. While there are clear exceptions, assimilationist politics tend to dominate queer discourse.

it has not disappeared), religious opposition and social inequality persist. Where queer identity is no longer actively eliminated, it has been integrated into the marketplace. The concept of identity becoming a commodity is a fairly recent trend, but its emergence has been the product of trends inherent to capitalism: individualism and commodification. The individualism of capitalism is a forced social atomization, where organic relationships between people are demolished in favor of relationships that mirror or support the logic of capitalism. When queer identity was forced underground by the courts, prisons, and police, a culture evolved that consisted of people whose experiences were centered on desire that the state called criminal, and that society at large deemed immoral. Thus, queer culture was shut out of participation in the state and the marketplace. Queer culture was a culture of resistance, formed on the basis of mutual struggle, and this culture became infamous in the wake of the Stonewall riots. However, 40 years after Stonewall, the queer movement has become something very different. Instead of being criminalized and forced underground, queer identity is tolerated by the state and even celebrated. Rather than being a culture of shared struggle, queer culture has become a culture based on relationships of consumption and state acceptance. Both of these rely on the individual as their basis, as consumption of goods and experiences (buttons, t-shirts, bars) and voting (individual actions in support of bourgeois politicians) seen as central to queer identity and culture. The fact that Pride is something to be consumed/experienced (generally at a cost) is indicative of the commodification of queer identity.

The newfound tolerance that capital shows for the queer community is not limited to Pride, though. Indeed, an entire new image of the modern queer person is shown to us via TV, print (The Advocate, for example), and queer political orga-

nizations. This image is of the urban professional working in a corporate office, just like a straight person (but often better dressed). These people are offered to us as role models, as minorities who have become successful despite their sexuality. We are presented with lists of the most gay-friendly companies, to whom we can sell our labor and live in the progressive, hip (read: gentrified) district of the city. What we are being sold is, essentially, the queer version of the American dream. Indeed, being queer is even a bonus sometimes, as companies now value diverse perspectives. These examples are held up as evidence of our inclusion and value to capital, to the maintenance of the social structure. It is hardly surprising that our value is demonstrated by the success of a few individuals, because it demonstrates that capitalism is open to all based on merit, and thus that queers who remain marginalized simply are not marketing themselves properly.

Identity is, at its root, a social relationship that is negotiated by individuals or communities in relationship to a larger social structure. The early queer movement, criminalized and repressed, developed a queer identity that was in response to the social stigmatization of queer desire. However, as such desire has gained more acceptance from the state and society at large, queer identity has evolved accordingly. This has meant that queer culture has become part of the larger discourse in society, attaining the status of an interest group in politics while queer identity itself has been subjected to the marketplace. It is an inherent tendency of capitalism to attempt to turn a profit, with or without state sanction. However, it is certainly easier to profit off of a permitted culture, rather than face the difficulty of marketing a cultural identity to a group of people who are consistently and viciously criminalized and imprisoned. Thus, in the absence of the outright repression of queer people, capitalists have decided to make more money off of us. Rather than struggle and subversion being the objective conditions that inform queer experience and culture, capitalist commodification and state tolerance have become much more important in the negotiation of queer identity. In short, queer culture has accepted the logic of capital and state power, with a political effort of reform and a cultural effort of market-based consumption. While there are clear exceptions, assimilationist politics tend to



dominate queer discourse.

It is important to understand how the changing attitudes of the state have informed queer struggle. However, it is equally important to understand the ways in which the social movement has forced these changes and responded to them. To ignore this aspect would be to ignore the actual changes imposed on the social order by queer people. There has been a noticeable shift from a struggle for liberation to a struggle for equality, and this has not come around simply because of greater state tolerance. While decriminalization has certainly opened up possibilities, it has been queer people who have seized those opportunities and shifted the struggle's character. While I lack the understanding to provide anything resembling a comprehensive history of queer politics, I do believe that examining the priorities from Stonewall until now can provide insight on how queer struggle has shifted from what it was to what it is.

Indeed, Stonewall itself provides an excellent example of how queer struggle has changed. The Stonewall riot (and let us not forget that it was indeed a riot) was an instance of people directly defending themselves against police violence. Looking back 40 years later, it is telling how Stonewall is viewed. We are told that Stonewall was the beginning of the current gay liberation movement, but that times have changed. This is an incomplete, decontextualized history. Stonewall was not simply the beginning of queer liberation, it was many other things. For example, it was a response to police brutality, but not simply based on queer identity. The people who frequented the Stonewall Inn were

also largely poor and people of color, other communities that were and still are targeted by police. However, this is seen as incidental to the birth of gay liberation, which promotes the idea of queer identity being separate from other marginalized people. Police, far from being the enemies that they were during the Stonewall riots, are now included in some Pride marches. Pride, originally started to commemorate the Stonewall riots, has completely distanced itself from struggling against the social conditions that enabled the Stonewall riots, conditions which still exist to this day.

Stonewall also demonstrates a shift in priorities internal to queer culture. Specifically, it is no secret that many of the patrons and rioters of the Stonewall Inn were trans people, in addition to being poor and people of color. Far from being credited as an important force in the start of gay liberation, trans people have been used by those seeking assimilation as the part of the queer community that can be sacrificed. A prime example of this is the betrayal of the trans community by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), who had sworn that they would not support a version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that did not include protections for gender identity. In the face of political opposition, however, HRC flipped its position. Beyond the realm of representative politics, however, we also find ourselves in a world where trans people of color are still beaten by police and later murdered. The specific example I am referring to is Duanna Johnson, a black trans woman from Memphis, who was beaten by police officers after a prostitution arrest and was then murdered a few months afterwards. While there was an outcry over the police beating and later murder of Duanna, this outcry manifested itself as a call for more hate crime laws to protect queer people. This response fails to address the issue for two reasons: first, the statist logic that hate crime laws will protect marginalized people and second, ignoring the race and class dynamics that also contributed to the beating and murder of Duanna.

There are many aspects of hate crimes legislation to critique, and many people have done it. I will focus only on one aspect that I find particularly troubling: the assumption that police will enforce such laws to protect the community. It is no secret that police brutality against poor people and people of color is widespread, despite hate crime laws against racist violence. What, then, would lead



groups to assume that adding gender identity to the list of protected groups would decrease police violence against queer and trans people, especially people of color? The policy of pushing for more hate crime laws seems to be rooted in an idea of queer exceptionalism, separate from the lived experiences of other marginalized groups in this society and of many queer people.

Radical queers thus face multiple enemies: state regulation and repression, bigotry and violence from reactionary elements, capitalism and its commodifying tendency, and finally the assimilationists who seek integration into the state and the markets. It is obvious that all of these forces must be confronted, which leads to the question of how do we do it? I certainly cannot answer this question on my own, but I would like to share my thoughts on some steps towards liberation.

As mentioned above, queer identity is negotiated in relationship to the dominant socioeconomic structure. While assimilationism seems to dominate contemporary queer culture and identity, this does not mean that we cannot reconstruct a radical queer identity and culture. Rather than a queer identity and culture rooted in a discourse of equality, we can make a culture rooted in resistance. Mainstream queer politics rely on an approach of single-identity advocacy, with an end goal of full participation in the capitalist state. This is presented as the only alternative to a world of religious bigotry and discrimination, where we either work inside the system or we are smashed by it. This is a false opposition. It is no mistake that neither of those two options does anything to dismantle the institutions that have created and enabled bigotry and violence against queer people.

I am not, however, advocating a reductionist view that would ignore queer liberation to only focus on the state and capitalism. This view would imply that the struggles of queer people are contained entirely within and thus subservient to the struggle against capitalism and the state, implying that the class struggle somehow takes precedence over queer liberation. We do not have to give in to either reformism or class reductionism, because both are based on the idea that there is somehow a hierarchy of oppressions coupled with a scarcity of liberation. Under the reformist view, identities become effectively interest groups competing against each other for rights under the state, with some winning and some losing. Under a reductionist view, class is the all-important factor and other forms of oppression will be solved after capitalism is overthrown.

What then, does it mean to be an anti-assimilationist queer anarchist? I do not have a complete answer, but I do have some thoughts. Central to anarchism, of course, is a rejection of capitalism and state power, coupled with a rejection of hierarchy and authority. Anti-assimilationism can be understood as a rejection of the capitalist takeover of what was once (and to varying degrees still is) a criminal identity alongside a rejection of the integration of (some) queer people into the statist political order, particularly the dominant class.

At the heart of liberal identity politics is an assumption that people can separate themselves into social identities, much as a machine can be separated into the pieces that comprise it. This results in the construction of a queer agenda, a black agenda, a women's agenda, and so on. While even the liberals allow for some understanding of intersectionality, in as much as political coalitions can be formed around particular issues, the central problem remains in that people cannot be easily separated into discrete categories of social identities. I cannot wake up one day as a queer person, then wake up the next day as a person of color, and finally wake up on a third day as a man. Instead, I wake up every day as a queer man of color, and many other things. All of my experiences are in the context of my identity as myself.

Anti-assimilationism also means anti-capitalism. Too often the economic aspect of our social structure is ignored, despite the link between the

power of capital and the power of the state. Social relationships are heavily influenced by the economic structure of a society, especially class society. Our labor is already a commodity; this is a fundamental reality of capitalist society. However, to add insult to injury, our culture and our identities have also become commodities to be experienced/consumed. This is because queer has been stripped of meaning beyond what can be bought and sold. Resistance, then, lies in a rejection of the narrative of capitalist individualism and of the idea that culture and identity are commodities. We should build an explicitly anti-capitalist queer culture, one in which active participation is central, rather than passive consumption. This may take many forms, but what is important is a steadfast resistance to the attempts of capital to transform our culture into one that can be made into a commodity.

Being an anti-assimilationist queer, then, means that I do not accept for myself an agenda created by people who have every interest in upholding the institutions that create and enforce misery and domination. I equally reject the logic of class reduction, because this logic also requires a separation into separate identities distinct from my experiences. Much as capitalism imposes a scarcity of necessities via market forces, the state imposes a scarcity of freedom by its very existence. Identity politics forces people to compete with each other for a limited amount of freedom, while class reductionism forces people to ignore their experiences to unite under one identity, much as a vanguard party would operate with a party line. What this means in practice is that we must reject with equal vigor those who would push more laws, more assimilation, and more commodification as solutions to our inequality. We must instead fight for a destruction of class society, of state power, and of all inequality.



# EXCERPT FROM “QUEERS READ THIS!”

## PUBLISHED ANONYMOUSLY BY QUEERS

Editorial note: “Queers Read This!” was distributed as a leaflet at the 1990 Pride march in New York City. The full text has been re-released in zine form and is available at <<http://zinelibrary.info/queers-read>>

# AN ARMY OF LOVERS CANNOT LOSE

Being queer is not about a right to privacy; it is about the freedom to be public, to just be who we are. It means everyday fighting oppression; homophobia, racism, misogyny, the bigotry of religious hypocrites and our own self-hatred. (We have been carefully taught to hate ourselves.) And now of course it means fighting a virus as well, and all those homo-haters who are using AIDS to wipe us off the face of the earth. Being queer means leading a different sort of life. It's not about the mainstream, profit-margins, patriotism, patriarchy or being assimilated. It's not about executive directors, privilege and elitism. It's about being on the margins, defining ourselves; it's about gender-fuck and secrets, what's beneath the belt and deep inside the heart; it's about the night. Being queer is “grass roots” because we know that everyone of us, every body, every cunt, every heart and ass and dick is a world of pleasure waiting to be explored. Everyone of us is a world of infinite possibility. We are an army because we have to be. We are an army because we are so powerful. (We have so much to fight for; we are the most precious of endangered species.) And we are an army of lovers because it is we who know what love is. Desire and lust, too.

We invented them.

We come out of the closet, face the rejection of society, face firing squads, just to love each other! Every time we fuck, we win. We must fight for ourselves (no one else is going to do it) and if in that process we bring greater freedom to the world at large then great. (We've given so much to that world: democracy, all the arts, the concepts of love, philosophy and the soul, to name just a few gifts from our ancient Greek Dykes, Fags.) Let's make every space a Lesbian and Gay space. Every street a part of our sexual geography. A city of yearning and then total satisfaction. A city and a country where we can be safe and free and more. We must look at our lives and see what's best in them, see what is queer and what is straight and let that straight chaff fall away! Remember there is so, so little time. And I want to be a lover of each and every one of you. Next year, we march naked.

It's just the way my chips fall into place, I guess.  
If we knew,  
we would not be so scared of losing hair or slowing down.  
If we knew of the possibilities of what we could discover,  
we would not be so scared of meeting love  
and taking a walk around.  
It's not sad,  
not after I think about it enough,  
it's just the way it is.  
It's woven in between the stitches,  
covering the cages.  
Its just humanity as I see it from this point,  
all eyes on the magician  
and little to no concern of the trap door or the rabbit  
and how fast it can run until it's too late.  
It's not the work,  
it's the worry,  
but still I can hardly tell them apart.

I was wrong about everything I ever thought,  
everything I ever wanted.  
It was all just a feeling  
and nothing else;  
nothing compares to this.  
No matter how certain I was that I was touched before this,  
it was all just a story I told over and over  
until it was all I thought to be true,  
but I remember clearly now after hearing it said  
that I felt nothing before;  
nothing through out it all,  
nothing like this.

And it's not sad,  
not after going through it,  
even just for a moment,  
not after being dragged over the soil and sand  
and sidewalks and cities,  
from coast to coast,  
into and out of places.  
I never could of imagined;  
it's shattering and explosive,  
and it needs to have an image;  
it needs to have a voice,  
but I can't hear it inside of machinery  
and I can't see it in pictures.

And this thing,  
this thing that builds up within my dreams  
and slips away from me in the mornings,  
is all I have to imagine;  
it's all I feel,  
an overflowing glass of tediously over thought accounts  
that spill and soak through the pages,  
and there is no direction to gaze without seeing it on the horizon.

And I see now that this,  
this thing is something  
maybe only you can understand.

--rachel dubuc

**P**

**O**

**E**

**T**

**R**

**Y**

“Manchukuo”  
Don't waste a prompt  
urgency  
fuck appropriate  
inappropriate  
disturbing  
an idea  
concept  
interaction  
why read something normal  
something cliché  
that story of boy and girl and love #800  
what about story #1 of a genderfuck and sexless prison  
a destruction of binary  
and language of only vulgarity  
violence  
not the pleasurable gore of the pulse-racers  
not the entertainment  
the reality  
make someone feel exactly what it is to die or never smile again  
why not a story like \*girls\*  
everything seems ordinary but if it really were what would this story be  
written for  
but then a mug floats off the table and we were inside a torture victim's  
mind instead  
they don't think rationally  
just of flesh sliding off skin  
flesh sliding off skin  
over and over and over and over and over  
Remember how much you love Big Brother in the end  
Remember all the soma you swallow  
Remember that all books must be burned  
Remember how color means something is wrong  
Remember that passion is to be feared  
can't learn about art aesthetics affinity in this world  
all beauty was destroyed and replaced by technology  
Each man and woman and in between has been ingrained with the emotion of  
constantly being second-best  
it's as natural as each fresh breath and the people are always kept pushed  
down  
under the great invisible thumb  
the result is this tested controlled and expected violence  
rocks crushing your jaw  
sodomites celebrated  
blood and fucking everywhere across the landscape of a war against humanity  
yet no one is choosing sides  
lust and rage are one and embodied in you

Welcome to

a nation-state

**PINK AND BLACK DISTRO**

**queer resistance. queer liberation.**

**[pinkandblackattack@riseup.net](mailto:pinkandblackattack@riseup.net)**