

Letters to Lambda

Revolutionary Relief

Dear Lambda,

As a gay person who believes that only concerted, popular change through revolution is the final, long-term answer to oppression, I am increasingly disillusioned by the various sectarian left parties that seem more concerned with expounding their special brands of "revolutionary theory" than they are with arriving at creative solutions to the very real problem of entrenched late-20th century capitalism.

This refusal to come forward out of the past, out of the realm of mental abstractions, can be seen in the position of such parties on gay rights. Either the party is hostile to us, seeing in us the nadir of bourgeois decadence, or it is condescendingly pro-gay rights.

Take the Revolutionary Communist Party. They have a confusing argument that being gay is somehow a pernicious outcropping of capitalist sexism, and that once the revolution comes gayness will be eliminated because society will be non-exploitative.

For adherents to this party, being gay is a sickness or perversion; yet the party (being as numerically weak as it is, unable to attract broad popular support) has indicated it would be willing to work with us on "common issues." Then, will we be exterminated?

There are groups like the Socialist Workers' Party, who have apparently taken up the struggle for gay rights as part of their "platform"--but only about a decade ago, and after bitter intra-party controversy.

Not only do these parties lack a comprehensive understanding of what it really is to be gay, but they also lack an over-all class analysis that takes into account modern socio-economic conditions. Hence the confusion they run into when they "confront" the "gay issue." That's just the point--rather than offer us a down to earth insight into the oppression we face, they instead either dismiss our oppression altogether or turn it into some kind of isolated, abstract "issue" to be seized upon, advertised and flaunted.

The fact is that gay people, rather than being examples of "capitalist decadence," have been harassed and oppressed since long before the advent of capitalism.

The fact is, most parties that supposedly stand for social revolution do not address our oppression adequately.

In the United States, social revolution is not going to be accomplished by either traditional electoral politics or armed struggle. There are no easy answers here; "material dialectics" have gotten too complex for that. Many people are beginning to feel that part of the solution may lie in "grassroots substitution"--that is, in the revolutionary development of popular institutions from the bottom up: institutions (as non-institutional as possible) that will inexorably start to replace the structures of our present society. And, concomitant with this growth must be uncompromised unity of all oppressed peoples on an international level.

Sincerely,

XTC, Triangle Area

Support For Health

Dear Lambda:

In both animal and human studies, there is evidence that suggests that the presence of significant others during times of stress has ameliorative (beneficial) effects on the person who is under stress.

In the 1979 Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Beatrix Hamburg, MD, and Marie Killilea review the findings on stress and social support.

(Letters, cont. p. 8)

Lambda Collective

Staff

Arthur
Elizabeth E.
Lee Mullis
Lorien Marcher
P. Mantis
Paul Miles
Randy Woodland

Contributors

Allan Troxler
Ian
Mitchell
Patty Carlisle
Stefanie

Special thanks to the Newman Center for use of printing facilities.