

Gay liberation- 1981

What are we fighting for?

Right now, in 1981, lesbians and gay men are under attack. We are the victims of violent assaults every day. The police brutalize and abuse us. And, right wing groups like the Moral Majority are spearheading a propaganda campaign aimed at driving us back into the closet. How can we fight all this?

CAN WE WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM?

No. The American system won't win our liberation for us. Neither the federal government, now even more right wing under the Reagans, nor the "liberal" San Francisco government has ever wanted to further our struggle. Our few concessions have been gotten because we fought for them. Instead of helping us, the government has attacked us, lied to us and tried to buy us off. They want to shut us up before we use our potential to make any change in this country.

Look at the escalating attacks against women that the federal government is spearheading. Congress is trying to illegalize abortion, and they're slashing budgets for childcare and other services that many women rely on. Along with escalating violence against women, these are attempts to narrow women's options and to force them back into more traditional male supremacist roles. As gay men, we have to reject the rigidly defined system of sex roles that imperialism uses to control women.

Here in San Francisco, Feinstein has launched a well-publicized campaign to recruit women, gays, and Third World people into the police force. But does that stop the police from beating and harassing gays and women, or from turning the Mission and the Fillmore into martial law zones? Across the country, in the last five years, police have murdered 2,000 Third World people. That's more than all the people killed in the war in Northern Ireland in the same period. We cannot win our liberation by working with the system that commits genocide against colonized peoples in this country. When we work with the police, we lend legitimacy to the very system that oppresses not only women and gays, but colonizes whole nations of people.

Now some members of the Board of Supervisors are proposing a Civilian Police Review Board as an answer to police violence. But many cities--including Oakland--have had one for years, and it hasn't stopped the police from murdering and terrorizing Black and Latino people. In five years the review board has made only ONE reprimand, and that was later rescinded!

We can take example from the struggles of Third World colonized peoples here and around the world. Their struggles show us that the only way to end oppression is to fight and defeat US imperialism once and for all. Through their resistance to genocide, police terror and the Klan, and in their fight for independence and human rights, Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano Mexicano and Native peoples challenge the functioning of US imperialism.

The attacks against women and gays, and the "solutions" that the government is offering have to be seen in the context of the enormous upsurge of white supremacy in this country. The rise of the KKK, more racist murders of Third World people, cuts in essential social services, and many other examples of white supremacy mean genocide for Third World people. The US government is sponsoring, funding and encouraging these attacks. We don't want to fight to be part of a government that thrives on oppression and exploitation. As lesbians and gay men, we have to reject the legitimacy of the US or San Francisco City Hall to represent our struggle. We have to build a gay liberation movement that challenges US imperialism, challenges white supremacy and supports the national liberation struggles that are leading in the destruction of imperialism.