



London, 1971, revised 1978,  
[amended 2022] Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance



**RAINBOW PRIDE  
YOUTH ALLIANCE**

**UNITY  
HOPE**

**[Queer] Liberation Front: Manifesto -  
London, 1971, revised 1978, [amended 2022]  
Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance (RPYA)**

RPYA is a grassroots California 501(c)(3) founded in 2001. We provide services to LGBTQ+ youth, as well as their parents and caretakers, including workshops, online support groups, and linkage to resources. Visit our website for more information.

For crisis support you can also visit our peer crisis counselor program, **Unity Hope**.

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2022

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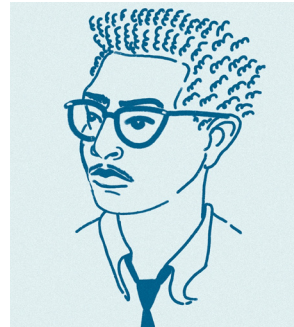
## **A note on the 2022 RPYA amendment**

Where necessary, we have amended some of the word choices from the original document to reflect a more inclusive understanding of the world. What that will look like most of the time is replacing the word [gay] with the word [queer]. Queer here will mean: any people who identify as LGBTQ+.

We have included footnotes and additional comments throughout in order to understand the context in which the document was written, as well as to contrast issues then with issues today. Our goal is to provide a modern lens with which to understand the manifesto today so that it can remain a relevant, living document; a tool with which

to continue the story of queer liberation in the 2020s and beyond. To that end, we have also left space for notes, where you can write your own observations and reflections.

Any modifications or additions to the original text are indicated by [single words or entire text blocks placed in brackets]. We have also omitted some sections completely. You can access the original document in its entirety on our website by simply following the QR code on this page. You could also search "Gay Liberation Front Manifesto" in a search engine.



QR Code to "Gay Liberation Front Manifesto" full text.

Dear Reader,

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was one of several grassroots movements of its kind that emerged at the dawn of the modern LGBTQ+ civil equality movement (late 1960s/early 1970s). "Gay liberation" drew wisdom and insights from the Civil Rights Movement, and especially from Black activists such as Bayard Rustin, often regarded as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "right-hand man." Dr. King's stance of non-violence was informed in large measure by Rustin, who was raised as a Quaker and studied Gandhian nonviolence in India. Rustin was also openly gay, so the connection between Black liberation and queer liberation was clear to him. It was through his work and the work of others like him that the culture at large would also see the connections between all people's movements for equity and justice.

The Gay Liberation Front: Manifesto can be considered a fundamental document in the study and practice of queer liberation. Keep in mind that this document was written over 50 years ago; as such, you will notice both differences and similarities between then and now. **Be slow to criticize and be quick to reflect on the context in which these authors were living.** Think about how our own language might resonate or fall flat with an audience living 50 years in the future; then, as now, some language might seem a bit antiquated, while some more universal principles will still ring true.

The authors of the GLF Manifesto acknowledge that their writings may lack refinement, especially in the eyes of future readers. For example, today we might say queer liberation instead of gay liberation because it is a broader, more inclusive term. The original authors were doing the best they could with what tools they had, same as us. What is important for us to recognize is how their efforts opened a door to where we are today. We stand upon their shoulders, and we are all looking in the same direction.

The central principle of the GLF Manifesto remains pertinent to modern queer radicals: to rid society of the rigid gender-role system, which is

the root of oppression, and to raise consciousness on a collective level, which is the root of liberation.

The GLF took form in different parts of the world in the 70s, most notably in London, New York, and Buenos Aires. Facing violence from a hostile society, many of these groups disbanded within a few years. Sadly, the path toward civil equality for LGBTQ+ folks has not been won by way of radical thought. Rather, it has been won by way of assimilation, that is, by convincing straight people that "we're just like you." The problem with this tactic is that (1) its not true, and (2) true tolerance should mean acceptance of queer people despite any differences that might exist between queers and straights, not accepting queer life on the condition that it bend to resemble straight life.

Queers have come a long way, but even today our community makes its strides by seeking to normalize, to appease, and to assimilate to a heteronormative society. This was never the intent of the pioneers of our movement. Our very existence as queer people challenges, questions, and aims to positively transform the status quo. May these words incite rebellion in you.

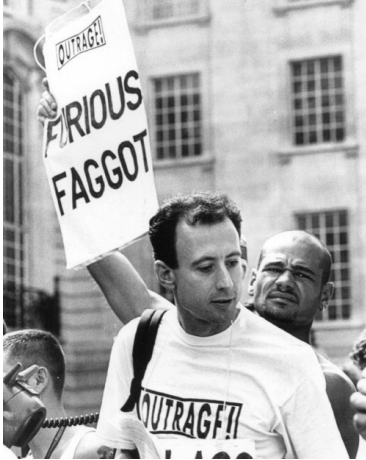
In service,  
**RAINBOW PRIDE  
YOUTH ALLIANCE**



## INTRODUCTION

Throughout recorded history, oppressed groups have organized to claim their rights and obtain their needs. [Queers], who have been oppressed by physical violence, and by ideological and psychological attacks at every level of [society], are at last becoming angry.

To you, our [queer] sisters and brothers [and gender non-conforming (GNC) siblings], we say that you are oppressed; we intend to show you examples of the hatred and fear with which straight society relegates us to the position and treatment of sub-humans, and to explain their basis. We will show you how we can use our righteous anger to uproot the present oppressive system with its decaying and constricting ideology, and how we, together with other oppressed groups, can start to form a new order, and a liberated lifestyle, from the alternatives which we offer.<sup>1</sup>

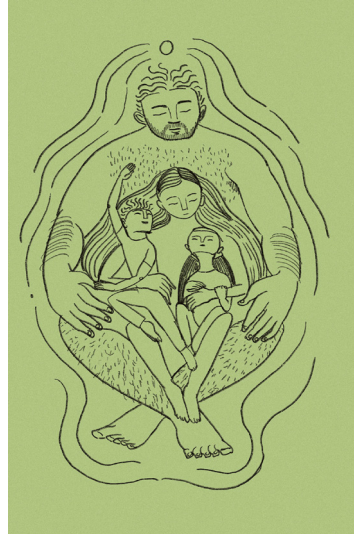


## HOW We Are Oppressed

### FAMILY

The oppression of [queer] people starts in the most basic unit of society, the family. Consisting of the man in charge, a slave as his wife, and their children on whom they force themselves as the ideal models. The very form of the family works against [queerness].

At some point nearly all [queer] people have found it difficult to cope with having the restricting images of man or woman pushed on them by their parents. It may have been from very early on, when the pressures to play with the 'right' toys, and thus prove boyishness or girlishness, drove against the child's inclinations. But for all of us this is certainly a problem by the time of adolescence, when we are expected to prove ourselves socially to our parents as members of the right sex (to bring home a boy/girl friend) and to start being a 'real' (oppressive) young man or a 'real' (oppressed) young woman. The tensions can be very destructive.

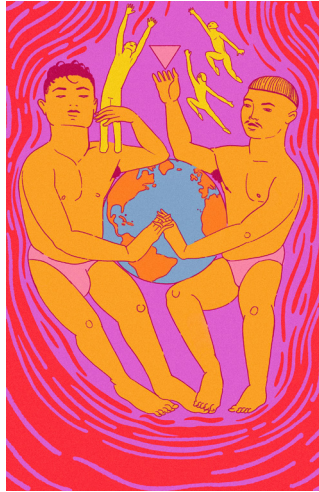


The fact that [queer] people notice they are different from [the

other members of their family], causes them to feel ashamed, guilty and [like] failures. How many of us have really dared be honest with our parents? How many of us have been thrown out of home?<sup>2</sup> How many of us have been pressured into marriage, sent to psychiatrists, frightened into sexual inertia, ostracized, banned, emotionally destroyed by our parents?

## SCHOOL

Family experiences may differ widely, but in their education all children confront a common situation. Schools reflect the values of society in their formal academic curriculum, and reinforce them in their morality and discipline. In the content of education, [queerness] is generally ignored, even where we know it exists, as in history and literature. Even sex education, which has been considered a new liberal dynamic of secondary schooling, proves to be little more than an extension of Christian morality. [Queerness] is again either ignored or attacked with moralistic warnings and condemnations. The adolescent recognizing [their queerness] might feel totally alone in the world, or a pathologically sick wreck.



<sup>1</sup> The queer radicals of the 1970s were righteous in their anger, but let's consider moving away from violent language like "uprooting" and "dismantling." To use violence against the oppressor is to become an oppressor ourselves. Let's consider queer-driven social change as an opportunity to expand our frameworks of understanding, not destroy them; to shift our perspective on cultural narratives, not throw them away altogether. If you're unsatisfied with your kitchen, you don't burn the house to the ground, you renovate your kitchen.

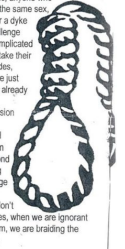
<sup>2</sup> Queer youth still account for upwards of 40% of homeless youth in the US. Most have been thrown out of their homes by their families. BIOPC queer youth are at 83% higher risk of homelessness. See: Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America (2018).

### [Queer-inclusive education today]

[The majority of US states do not protect LGBTQ+ youth and do not provide queer-inclusive curriculum. In 2022, California is one of only six US states to require queer-inclusive, comprehensive curriculum. In 2022, California is one of only six US states to require queer-inclusive, comprehensive sex education in public schools. Sexual conservatism, homophobia and transphobia remain so strong that many California public schools have refused to implement state-mandated curriculum altogether. As a result, all adolescents, straight and queer, lose. Where sexual wellness education lacks, the results are the very health outcomes that all parents and caretakers want their children to avoid; namely, unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, dating violence, and poor mental health outcomes.

### THERE ARE NO QUEER TEEN SUICIDES. ONLY QUEER TEEN MURDERS.

Anyone who espouses anti-gay rhetoric, anyone who says its unnatural to love someone of the same sex, anyone who calls someone a faggot or dyke maliciously, anyone who does not challenge heterosexuality as a cultural norm, is implicated in the deaths of queer teenagers who take their own lives. Those deaths are not suicides, they're murders. The young people are just doing to their bodies what others have already done to their souls. They don't kill themselves. Christians kill them, television writers kill them, Big Red gum commercials kill them, their parents kill them, their schools kill them. I kill them and so do you. We need to move beyond comforting homophobia to challenging heterosexism. When we don't challenge exclusionary sex education lessons, when we don't cross dress, when we don't act on our sexual desires and fantasies, when we are ignorant about intersexuality and transgenderism, we are braiding the nooses upon which queer teens hang.



Five US states (Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Alabama, and Florida) forbid mention of queer life in public schools, while two more states (Missouri and South Dakota) forbid anti-bullying policies "that enumerate protected classes of students," a term that seeks to deny the history and release the responsibility of anglo-protestant aggression against marginalized groups in this country over the past 400+ years.

Such omissions and denials of queer life amount to a callous attempt to erase LGBTQ+ people from society by pretending as though such students do not exist and denying these students (who do exist) information that would set them up for success in adult life. In 2022, Florida passed the "Don't Say Gay Bill", which prohibits any mention of queer life in public schools (in-



cluding banning queer literature in libraries), much less queer-inclusive curriculum. Moreover, the risk of depression, anxiety, and suicide, the rates of which are already high among queer youth, increases if a young person does not live in an affirming environment. Often, the biggest bullies in a queer teen's life remain family members. So, many queer youth, unaffirmed by their families and their schools, will have no where to turn.]



## CHURCH

Formal religious education is still part of everyone's schooling,<sup>3</sup> and our whole legal structure is supposedly based on Christianity whose archaic and irrational teachings support the family and marriage as the only permitted condition for sex. [Queer] people have been attacked as abominable and sinful since the beginning of both Judaism and Christianity, and even if today the Church is playing down these strictures on [queerness], its new ideology is that [queer] people are pathetic objects for sympathy.

[Queer-inclusive churches have appeared since the 70s, as well as movements for queer-inclusion in various religions, including Christianity. Unfortunately, the religious right, whose worldview still guides conservative politics in the USA, remains staunchly anti-queer.]

## THE MEDIA

The press, radio, television and advertising are used as reinforcements against us, and make possible the control of people's thoughts on an unprecedented scale. Entering everyone's home, affecting everyone's life, the media controllers, all representatives of the rich, male-controlled world, can exaggerate or suppress whatever information suits them.

Under different circumstances, the media might not be the weapon of a small minority. The present controllers are therefore dedicated defenders of things as they stand. Accordingly, the images of people which they transmit in their pictures and words do not subvert, but support society's image of 'normal' man and woman. It follows that we are characterized as scandalous, obscene perverts; as rampant, wild sex-monsters; as pathetic, doomed and compulsive degenerates;<sup>4</sup> while the truth is blanketed under a conspiracy of silence.



[The media's approach to LGBTQ+ representation today is profit-driven, touching only on surface-level progress. The purpose of queer representation is not to promote a more nuanced understanding of queer life or to combat stigma, but rather to exploit LGBTQ+ dollars, as our community is seen more as a growing and profitable market than anything else. DISNEY is a good example of a company that panders to the LGBTQ+ community by creating queer and BIPOC content, while at the same time donating to anti-LGBTQ+ organizations and politicians who work actively to attack queer livelihoods and civil liberties.]

In the case of advertisement, queer identity becomes merchandise that is then sold back to us.

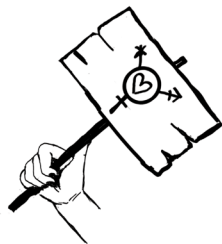
The fire of revolution that once burned at the heart of our movement is turned into a docile commodity which trivializes the radical ideals upon which queer liberation was founded. It is as if the media and corporations prefer to sell the idea of an inclusive society in lieu of taking action toward truly achieving inclusivity in society.]

## WORDS

[Anti-queer] morality and ideology, at every level of society, manifest themselves in a special vocabulary for denigrating [queer] people. There is abuse like 'pansy', 'fairy', 'lesbo' to hurl at [those] who can't or won't fit stereotyped preconceptions. There are words like 'sick', 'bent' and 'neurotic' for destroying the credence of [queer] people. But there are no positive words. The ideological intent of our language makes it very clear that the generation of words and meanings is, at the moment, in the hands of the enemy. And that so many [queer] people pretend to be straight, and call each other 'butch dykes' or 'screaming queens' only makes that fact the more real.

The verbal attack on [people] who do not behave as they are supposed to, reflects the ideology of masculine superiority. A man who behaves like a woman is seen as losing something, and a woman who behaves like a man is put down for threatening men's environment of their privileges.

**[Since the 70s, the Movement has made efforts to reclaim terms. Even the term queer was once used as a pejorative to describe LGBTQ+ people, a term which we now use proudly to describe ourselves. This is great.**



However, new anti-queer terms emerge and anti-queer rhetoric becomes more subtle (and somehow still incredibly clumsy). The use of the term "grooming," by the right to describe efforts on the part of progressives to introduce queer-inclusive curriculum in schools is a loaded term because it makes the comparison between child-abuse and queer life. Instead of saying "God Hates Fags," the Right-Wing now will suggest their opinion instead of saying it outright.]

## EMPLOYMENT

In their work situation, [queer] people face the ordeal of spending up to fifty years of their lives confronted with the [anti-queer] hostility of their fellow employees. There are words like 'sick', 'bent' and 'neurotic' for destroying the credence of [queer] people. But there are no positive words. The ideological intent of our language makes it very clear that the generation of words and meanings is, at the moment, in the hands of the enemy. And that so many [queer] people pretend to be straight, and call each other 'butch dykes' or 'screaming queens' only makes that fact the more real.

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**[In 2022, less than half of US states have legislation that protect LGBTQ+ folks from discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, education, federally funded programs, credit, and jury service. LGBTQ+ people are not protected at the federal level in any of these areas and are still excluded from protections under the Civil Rights Act.]**

<sup>3</sup> Even if we are not raised in an anglo or protestant home, we should recognize that US society was conceived and constructed using an Anglo-protestant worldview, which inevitably influences our cultural understanding, values, and judgment.

## THE LAW

If you live in Scotland or Ireland; if you are under 21, or over 21 but having sex with someone under 21, if you are in the armed forces or the merchant navy; if you have sex with more than one other person at the same time-and you are a gay male, you are breaking the law.

The 1967 Sexual Offences Act [in the UK] gave a limited license to adult gay men. Common law however can restrict us from talking about and publicizing both male and female homosexuality by classing it as 'immoral'. Beyond this there are a whole series of specific minor offenses. Although 'the act' is not illegal, asking someone to go to bed with you can be classed as 'importuning for an immoral act', and kissing in public is classed as 'public indecency'.

**[In the first three months of 2022 alone, 150 pieces of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation were presented across the United States. With several anti-LGBTQ+ bills already enacted into law in 2021, we are living through one of the worst attacks on LGBTQ+ civil equality in recent history. Conservative legislators continue to use language that takes advantage of antiquated cultural messages that frame queer people as immoral, indecent, etc. For example, a proposed (as of early 2022) bill in Georgia that would prohibit discussions of queer life in private schools carries the name "Common Humanity in Private Education Act." ]**

## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

On 25 September 1969 a man walked onto Wimbledon Common. We know the common to be a popular cruising ground and believe the man to have been one of our gay brothers. Whether or not this is the case, the man was set upon by a group of youths from a nearby housing estate, and literally battered to death with clubs and boots. Afterwards, a boy from the same estate said:

<sup>4</sup> See "Cruising" (1980) with Al Pacino, a movie about gay life in the 70s seen (directed) through a straight lens

'When you're hitting a queer, you don't think you're doing wrong. You think you're doing good. If you want money off a queer, you can get it off him-there's nothing to be scared of from the law, cause you know they won't go to the law'. (Sunday Times, 7/21/1971).



Since that time, another man has been similarly murdered on Hampstead Heath. But murder is only the most extreme form of violence to which we are exposed, not having the effective rights of protection. Most frequently we are 'rolled' for our money, or just beaten up: and this happens to butch looking women in some districts.

**[Public affection between same-sex couples still elevates the risk of violence for queer people worldwide, even in large cities like San Francisco and New York. Queer people are at higher risk of violence not only from strangers, but also from authorities like the police. Black, trans women and indigenous women face the highest risk of violence in US-society, in part due to the endurance of cultural messages that regard Black, indigenous, queer, and trans lives as less valuable or even inferior. Currently, the life expectancy of a trans woman who is Black, indigenous or a person of color, is between 30 -35 years old across North and South America. High rates of anxiety, depression, suicide, high-risk jobs, police violence, and lack of access to adequate healthcare among trans women are all reflections of an anti-trans society. As the most vulnerable members of our community, queer liberation should prioritize BIPOC trans women in our continued efforts toward civil equality and visibility in society.]**



## [PSYCHOLOGY & HEALTHCARE]

One way of oppressing people and preventing them getting too angry about it is to convince them, and everyone else, that they are sick. There has hence arisen a body of psychiatric 'theory' and 'therapy' to deal with the 'problems' and 'treatment' of homosexuality.

[The fields of psychiatry and psychology have since moved passed this reading of queer identities as akin to a mental illness (officially in 1975), but anti-queer conservatism still works within this antiquated assumption, pathologizing queer people and viewing us as degenerate, amoral perverts. This kind of anti-queer rhetoric contributes not only to misunderstanding about queer life in society at large, but also to violence against queer people (both in the home and in public) and to elevated risks of negative mental health outcomes like depression, anxiety, and suicide.]

### [Implicit sexual prejudices in healthcare]

[Another reason that LGBTQ+ folks are likelier to have poor health outcomes compared to straight people is because of pervasive prejudices that exist in our healthcare system. A 2015 article in the American Journal of Public Health<sup>6</sup> found that among heterosexual providers, implicit preferences always favored heterosexual patients to gay and lesbian patients, leading to mistrust of healthcare professionals and mistreatment of queer patients. This can manifest in a lot of different ways. For example, a doctor who is uncomfortable with a gay patient will avoid learning about or addressing healthcare options that may benefit the patient, like HIV-preventative care. This kind of negligence can lead to a higher risk of HIV-infection for that patient and contributes to a cultural attitude about HIV and gay men, namely that gay men deserve to live with HIV or will inevitably seroconvert (become infected) because all gay men are sex perverts and

and therefore unworthy of care or compassion.

Queer people of color are even higher risk of poor health outcomes due to these pervasive prejudices related to homonegativity and racism. Men who have sex with men (MSM) as a group are at higher risk for HIV than the rest of the population.<sup>6</sup> MSM who are POC are at even higher risk.<sup>7</sup> The answer to lowering the risk factor is providing equitable access to healthcare for high-risk populations.<sup>8</sup> Instead, these high-risk populations are stigmatized and discouraged from seeking care for fear of being shamed or mistreated. Often, queer people are blamed for their health status by their providers.<sup>9</sup> As a result, individual risk factors rise even higher.

So, although the American Psychological Association no longer regards LGBTQ+ people as mentally ill, cultural attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people are still extremely negative, which manifest in every aspect of life, significantly in healthcare. Individual providers play a role, while medical institutions are also to blame in part for the lack of cultural competency requirements in medical school. Legislators and government are also to blame because not only do LGBTQ+ people lack basic federal protections related to healthcare access, state governments continue to make attempts (sometimes successfully) to limit anti-discrimination laws that would create more equitable access to healthcare for queer people.]

## SELF-OPPRESSION

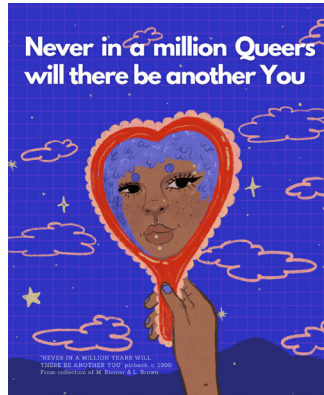
The ultimate success of all forms of oppression is our self-oppression. Self-oppression is achieved when the [queer] person has adopted and internalized straight people's definition of what is good and bad. Self-oppression is saying: 'I accept what I am', and meaning: 'I accept that what I am is second-best and rather pathetic'.

Self-oppression is the dolly lesbian who says: 'I can't stand those butch types who look like truck drivers'; the virile gay man who shakes his head at the thought of 'those pathetic queens'. This is self-oppression because it's just another way of saying: 'I'm a nice normal gay, just like an attractive heterosexual'.

The ultimate in self-oppression is to avoid confronting straight society, and thereby provoking further hostility: Self-oppression is saying,

**[As queer people assimilate into mainstream society, queer expression is limited by a cis-heteronormative understanding of what is acceptable and what is not (e.g. same-sex couples can marry, but affection in public is discouraged). In the process, our community is divided, with some wanting accept the limits that mainstream society sets on us, and lashing out against those queers who refuse to assimilate on those terms. This need to appear normal and to punish nonconformity manifests as biphobia, aphobia, and TERFs (trans-exclusionary radical feminists).**

**Sometimes queer people are punished by members of their own community for not normalizing, and suddenly a community that once represented solace, support, and safety seems distant and hostile. As a result, many face imposter syndrome, e.g. "Am I really transgender if I don't want gender confirmation surgery?"**



**If we accept the limits that a heteronormative society places on our expression, we lose sight of the transformative power of the queer liberation movement, which is that in challenging social norms we enact positive change and broaden our frameworks for understanding the world. If we lose this, everyone loses. In the words of Marsha "Pay it No Mind" Johnson, "until all of us are free, none of us are free."]**

## WHY WE ARE OPPRESSED

[Queer] people are oppressed. As we've just shown, we face the prejudice, hostility and violence of straight society. Shouldn't we demand reforms that will give us tolerance and equality? Certainly we should! In a liberal-democratic society, legal equality and protection from attack are the very least we should ask for. They are our civil rights.

But [queer] liberation does not just mean reforms. It means a revolutionary change in our whole society.

### [Reforms]

Reforms may make things better for a while; changes in the law can make straight people a little less hostile, a little more tolerant - but reform cannot change the deep-down attitude of straight people that [queerness] is at best inferior to their own way of life, at worst a sickening perversion.



Laws will not eliminate prejudice from the hearts of human beings. But that is no reason to allow prejudice to continue to be enshrined in our laws - to perpetuate injustice through inaction.

-Shirley Chisholm

### **[A broadening understanding of gender and sexuality]**

What we are taught about the differences between man and woman is propaganda, not truth. The truth is that there are no proven systematic differences between male and female, apart from the obvious biological ones. Male and female genitals and reproductive systems are different, and so are certain other physical characteristics, but all differences of temperament, aptitudes and so on, are the result of upbringing and social pressures. They are not inborn.

Human [expression] could be much more [varied] than our constricted patterns of 'masculine' and 'feminine' permit - we should be free to develop with greater individuality. But as things are at present, there are only these two stereotyped roles into which everyone is supposed to fit, and most people (including [queer] people) are apt to be alarmed when they hear these stereotypes or gender roles attacked, fearing that children 'won't know how to grow up if they have no one to identify with', or that 'everyone will be the same', i.e. that there will be either utter chaos or total conformity.

There would in fact be a greater variety of models and more freedom for experimentation, but there is no reason to suppose this will lead to chaos.

### **[Queers as agents of positive social change]**

By our very existence as [queer] people we challenge these roles. It can easily be seen that [queer folks] don't fit into the stereotypes of masculine and feminine, and this is one of the main reasons why we become the object of suspicion, since everyone is taught that these and only these two roles are appropriate.

Since all children are taught so young that boys should be aggressive and adventurous, girls passive and pliant, most children do tend to behave in these ways as they get older, and to believe that other people should do so too.

Freedom for [queer] people will never be permanently won until everyone is freed from sexist role-playing and the straightjacket of sexist rules about sexuality. And we will not be freed from these so long as each succeeding generation is brought up in the same old sexist way in the patriarchal family.

### **[Queers as challengers of inhumane capitalist norms]**

Sexism is not just an accident - it is an essential part of our present society, and cannot be changed without the whole society changing with it. In the first place, our society is dominated at every level by men, who have an interest in preserving the status quo; secondly, the present system of work and production depends on the existence of the patriarchal family. Conservative sociologists have pointed out that the small family unit of two parents and their children is essential in our contemporary advanced industrial family where work is minutely subdivided and highly regulated - in other words, for the majority very boring. A man would not work at the assembly line if he had no wife and family to support; he would not give himself fully to his work without the supportive and reassuring little group ready to follow him about and gear itself to his needs, to put up with his ill temper when he is frustrated or put down by the boss at work.

Were it not also for the captive wife, educated by advertising and everything she reads into believing that she needs ever more new goodies for the home, for her own beautification and for the children's well-being, our economic system could not function properly, depending as it does on people buying far more manufactured goods than they need. None of these goods will ever satisfy, since there is always something better to be had, and the surplus of these pseudo 'necessities' goes hand in hand with the absence of genuinely necessary goods and services, such as adequate housing and schools.

The ethic and ideology of our culture has been conveniently summed up by the enemy. Here is a quotation, intended quite seriously, from

an American psychiatric primer. The author, Dr. Fred Brown, states:

*Our values in Western civilization are founded upon the sanctity of the family, the right to property, and the worthwhileness of 'getting ahead' The family can be established only through heterosexual intercourse, and this gives the woman a high value. (Note the way in which woman is appraised as a form of property.) Property acquisition and worldly success are viewed as distinctly masculine aims. The individual who is outwardly masculine but appears to fall into the feminine class by reason . . . of his preference for other men denies these values of our civilization. In denying them he belittles those goals which carry weight and much emotional coloring in our society and thereby earns the hostility of those to whom these values are of great importance.*

We agree with his description of our society and its values - but we reach a different conclusion. We [queer people] do deny these values of our civilization. We believe that the society Dr. Brown describes is an evil society. We believe that work in an advanced industrial society could be organized on more humane lines, with each job more varied and more pleasurable, and that the way society is at present organized operates in the interests of a small ruling group of straight men who claim most of the status and money, and not in the interests of the people as a whole. We also believe that our economic resources could be used in a much more valuable and constructive way than they are at the moment - but that will not happen until the present pattern of male dominance in our society changes too.

## **WE CAN DO IT: A NEW LIFE-STYLE**

In the final section we shall outline some of the practical steps [queer liberation] will take to make this revolution. But linked with this struggle to change society there is an important aspect of [queer liberation] that we can begin to build here and now - a NEW, LIBERATED

LIFE-STYLE which will anticipate, as far as possible, the free society of the future.

[Queers take the wheel!] In some ways we are already more advanced than straight people. We are already outside the family and we have already, in part at least, rejected the 'masculine' or 'feminine' roles society has designed for us. In a society dominated by the sexist culture it is very difficult, if not impossible, for heterosexual men and women to escape their rigid gender-role structuring and the roles of oppressor and oppressed. But queer men don't need to oppress women in order to fulfill their own psycho-sexual needs, and queer women don't have to relate sexually to the male oppressor, so that at this moment in time, the freest and most equal relationships are most likely to be between [queers].

But because the sexist culture has oppressed us and distorted our lives too, this is not always achieved. In our mistaken, placating efforts to be accepted and tolerated, we've too often submitted to the pressures to conform to the straightjacket of society's rules and hang ups about sex.

Particularly oppressive aspects of [queer] society are the Youth Cult, Masc and Femme role-playing, and Compulsive Monogamy.

### **THE YOUTH CULT**

[Our] obsession with youth is destructive. We must all get away from the false commercial standards of 'beauty' imposed on us by movie moguls and advertising firms, because the youth/beauty hang-up sets us against one another in a frenzied competition for attention, and leads in the end to an obsession with self which is death to real affection or real sensual love. Some gay men have spent so much time staring at themselves in the mirror that they've become hypnotised by their own magnificence and have ended up by being made unable to see anyone else.

[Every stage of life contains different kinds of beauty, wisdom, and delight. Let us be more perceptive to different types of beauty.]

## [MASC] AND FEMME

Many [LGBTQ+ people] needlessly restrict their lives by compulsive role playing.

They may restrict their own sexual behaviour by feeling that they must always take either a [masc] or a femme role. [Many of us queer people] are outside the gender-role system anyway, and therefore it isn't surprising if some of us are more 'masculine' and others more 'feminine'. There is nothing wrong with this. What is bad is when [queer] people try to impose on themselves and on one another the masculine and feminine stereotypes of straight society.

[Queer liberation is, in large measure, about creating a more expansive understanding of social norms. Within our community, we should encourage people to express themselves in whatever way they see fit. Since people have traditionally been conditioned to play one of two gender roles without giving it much thought, we must work as individuals and as a community to cultivate and promote self-knowledge. Looking inward and understanding yourself will result in more authentic self expression and less judgment of others.]



## COMPULSIVE MONOGAMY

We do not deny that it is as possible for [queer] couples as for some straight couples to live happily and constructively together. We question however as an ideal, the finding and settling down eternally with one 'right' partner.

Monogamy is [historically] based on ownership - the woman sells her services to the man in return for security for herself and her children - and is entirely bound up in the man's idea of property furthermore in our society the monogamous couple, with or without children, is an isolated, shut-in, up-tight unit, suspicious of and hostile to outsiders. And though we don't lay down rules or tell [queer] people how they should behave in bed or in their relationships, we do want them to question society's blueprint for the couple.

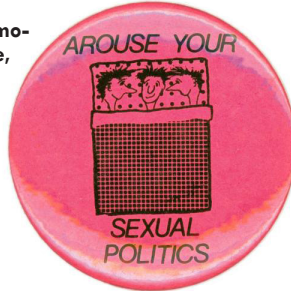
The blueprint says 'we two against the world', and that can be protective and comforting. But it can also be suffocating, leading to neurotic dependence and underlying hostility, the emotional dishonesty of staying in the comfy safety of the home and garden, the security and narrowness of the life built for two, with the secret guilt of fancying someone else while remaining in thrall to the idea that true love lasts a lifetime - as though there were a ration of relationships, and to want more than one were greedy.

[When people begin to date, most often the assumption is that they will be monogamous, which is due to social conditioning that favors monogamy. If we are to break free from rigid social norms, we must take an honest look at our own unconscious and conditioned reactions to social conventions like monogamy. Monogamy is a relationship model that may work for many people, but it is not the only relationship model that exists.]

Before beginning a romantic relationship, a conversation about our dating and relationships philosophy will go a long way. Some people will find that they feel crushed under the expect-

tation to be sexually exclusive with another person, potentially forever. Allowing for outside sexual contact within the context of a loving relationship could be helpful in that situation. Important to consider - love is not a limited resource. Human beings thrive and survive because of our intimate social bonds, which are established and nurtured, often, through sex.

There is nothing wrong with monogamous relationships per se, we just need to examine our own biases and have honest conversations with our partners before defaulting to a relationship model that may not work for us.]



### [Community Building]

[Sexual fidelity is not necessarily wrong]; what is wrong is the inturned emotional [exclusivity] of the couple which stunts the partners so they can no longer operate at all as independent beings in society. People need a variety of relationships [and a sense of community] in order to develop and grow, and to learn about other human beings. Single or isolated in couples, we are weak - the way society wants us to be. Society cannot put us down so easily if we fuse together. We have to get together, understand one another, live together.

Two ways we can do this are by developing consciousness-raising groups and [queer] communes.

Our [queer] communes and collectives ... must focus on consciousness-raising, [that is] raising or increasing our awareness of our real oppression and of [queer] liberation activity.

[Community building is key in liberation because together we create new understandings of the world and new approaches to solving the issues we face. Living together in communes (or intentional-communities) is an option, but not attainable for everyone. More practical is the establishment of collectives within communities and coalitions among community organizations.]



But victory will come. If we're convinced of the importance of the new life-style, we can be strong and we can win through.



## AIMS

The long-term goal of [queer] liberation, which inevitably brings us into conflict with the institutionalized sexism of this society, is to rid society of the gender-role system which is at the root of our oppression. This can only be achieved by eliminating the social pressures on folks to conform to narrowly defined gender roles. It is particularly important that children and young people be encouraged to develop their own talents and interests and to express their own individuality rather than act out stereotyped parts alien to their nature.

As we cannot carry out this revolutionary change alone [and as many queer people must contend with other marginal identities] we will work to form a strategic alliance with [other liberation movements], aiming to develop our ideas and practices [using an intersectional framework]. In order to build this alliance, the brothers in gay liberation will have to be prepared to sacrifice that degree of male chauvinism and male privilege that they still all possess.

To achieve our long term goal will take many years, perhaps decades. But attitudes [about gender roles] in our society are changing rapidly, particularly the belief in the subordinate place for women. Modern conditions are placing increasing strain on the small nuclear family containing one adult male and one adult female with narrowly defined roles and bound together for life.

## The way forward

### FREE OUR HEADS

The starting point of our liberation must be to rid ourselves of the oppression which lies in the head of every one of us. This means freeing our heads from self oppression and male chauvinism, and no longer organizing our lives according to the patterns with which we are indoctrinated by straight society. It means that we must root out the idea that [queerness] is bad, sick or immoral, and develop [queer] pride. In order to survive, most of us have knuckled under

to pretend that no oppression exists, and the result of this has been further to distort our heads. Within [queer] liberation, a number of consciousness-raising groups have already developed, in which we try to understand our oppression and learn new ways of thinking and behaving.<sup>1</sup> The aim is to step outside the experience permitted by straight society, and to learn to love and trust one another. This is the precondition for acting and struggling together.

By freeing our heads we get the confidence to come out publicly and proudly as [queer] people, and to win over our [queer] brothers and sisters [and GNC siblings] to the ideas of [queer] liberation.

CAMPAIGN. Before we can create the new society of the future, we have to defend our interests as [queer] people here and now against all forms of oppression and victimization. We have therefore drawn up the following list of immediate demands:



that all discrimination against [queer] people, male and female [and otherwise], by the law, by employers, and by society at large, should end.



that all people who feel attracted to a member of their own [gender] be taught that such feeling are perfectly valid.



that sex education in schools [be queer inclusive]



that psychiatrists stop treating [queerness] as though it were a sickness, thereby giving [queer] people senseless guilt complexes.



that [queer] people be as legally free to contact other [queer] people, through newspaper ads, on the streets and by any other means they may want as are heterosexuals, and that police harassment should cease right now.

★ that employers should no longer be allowed to discriminate against anyone on account of their sexual preferences [or gender identity].

★ that the age of consent for gay males [men] be reduced to the same as for straight.

★ that [queer] people be free to hold hands and kiss in public, as are heterosexuals.



[2022 note: Taking a look at this list of demands we see some issues that have been resolved, others that seem to have made almost no progress whatsoever, and still others where the outcome is ambiguous. For example, “that queer people be free to hold hands and kiss in public” ... is technically legal, but still implies an elevated risk of violence.]

Those who believe in [queer] liberation need to support actively their local [queer rights] group. With the rapid spread of the ideas of [queer] liberation, it is inevitable that many members of such groups have only partially come to terms with their [queerness]. The degree of self-oppression is often such that it is difficult to respect individuals in the group, and activists frequently feel tempted to despair. But if we are to succeed in transforming our society we must persuade others of the merits of our ideas, and there is no way we can achieve this if we cannot even persuade those most affected by our oppression to join us in fighting for justice.

We do not intend to ask for anything. We intend to stand firm and assert our basic rights. If this involves violence, it will not be we who

initiate this, but those who attempt to stand in our way to freedom.

This manifesto was originally produced collectively by the Manifesto Group of GLF. We recognize that it leaves many questions unanswered and open-ended but hope it will lead to the furtherance of a scientific analysis of sexism and our oppression as [queer] people.

### ARCHIVAL CREDITS IN ORDER SHOWN

(Peter Tatchell (front) and other members of OutRage!, London, United Kingdom, 1992.)

Unknown, Portland, Oregon, 2004. c/o Queer Zine Archive.

“STRAIGHT ACTING? WHO YOU TRYIN’ TO FOOL, HONEY?” pinback, Dan Kaufman Graphics, Washington, D.C., c. 1994. c/o @lgbt\_history

“AROUSE YOUR SEXUAL POLITICS” pinback, manufactured by Patrick Bros., Melbourne, Australia, c. 1984.

Militant Stonewall Contingent for Lesbian and Gay Liberation, 1983” pinback, Christopher Street Liberation Day, New York City, June 1983.

### FOOTNOTE OVERFLOW

<sup>5</sup> See: Health Care Providers’ Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Toward Lesbian Women and Gay Men in the Am J Public Health (2015).

<sup>6</sup> MSM in the US face a 17% likelihood of HIV infection in their lifetime (1 in 6), whereas heterosexual men face a likelihood of about 0.1%. See: [cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/msm.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/msm.htm)

<sup>7</sup> Black MSM face a 50% likelihood of infection, while Latinamerican MSM face a 25% likelihood (CDC, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> See: “Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care” on [americanprogress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org)

<sup>8</sup> & “Anti-LGBT Discrimination in US Health Care” on [hrw.org](https://www.hrw.org)

<sup>9</sup> See: When Health Care Isn’t Caring Lambda Legal’s Survey on Discrimination Against LGBT People and People Living with HIV

<sup>10</sup> This is a good example of our inherited colonial mindset of our Anglo-protestant worldview in the US. To this day, a through and through American value is land ownership, it represents status and security, two more values we exalt culturally. Think about the ways that these values are rooted in a history of colonial oppression and illegal acquisition of lands from indigenous peoples.

<sup>11</sup> Consciousness-raising groups: provide examples of national leaders



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