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Workers' Solidarity Federation

Women's Sexuality and Gay Rights

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We believe in the right of women to control their own fertility. Women must be free to decide to have children or not, how many and when. Thus we believe in the right to free contraception. Thus we support abortion on demand.

We also believe that all consenting adults should have the right to engage in the sexual practices and relationships that make them happy, and we therefore oppose the oppression of gays and lesbians. We do not accept the argument that gay and lesbian activity is “unnatural”, because such behaviour has always existed in all societies. This includes Africa, contrary to the claims of bourgeois nationalists who pretend otherwise.

The oppression of gays and lesbians, just like the oppression of women, is rooted in the nature of capitalist society and the ideas it promotes. As we discussed above, capitalism relies heavily on the heterosexual family which provides care for the workers, the sick, the elderly and the next generation of workers. The hostility towards gays and lesbians stems from the challenge that their sexuality poses to the idea that this is the only possible form of family. Clearly, it undermines the idea that sex is only for reproduction. Homosexuals are condemned as “unnatural” because their sexual activity cannot produce children. Promoting hatred of gays and lesbians (“homophobia”) is also a very effective way of dividing and ruling the workers and the poor. Personal freedom in the area of sexual preference is tightly controlled under capitalism and the State, with laws in almost all countries defining what forms of adult sex are and are not acceptable.

For these reasons, we do not think that the way to defeat gay and lesbian oppression is by promoting gay “business power” or by uniting all classes of the “gay community”. The presence of capitalists in the gay movement is a serious problem. We think that the fight must be linked to the class struggle against capitalism and the State, and we think that all progressive forces should support gays’ and lesbians’ right to equality. In immediate terms, we must raise the issue of fighting against discrimination on the job, in our trade unions. An end to harassment must be demanded. Stereotyping and anti-gay attitudes must be challenged everywhere. We support physical self-defence by lesbians and gays against gay bashers and the police

where necessary. We reject the right of the State to dictate the sexual choices of consenting adults. We support progressive initiatives of the gay movement such as Gay Pride marches, the scrapping of anti-gays laws and anti-discrimination campaigns. We also think that links must be built with other working class campaigns.