

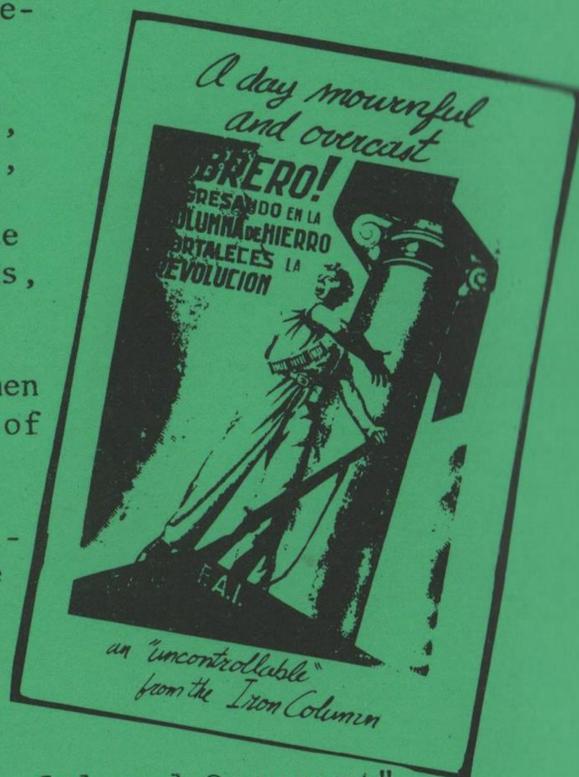
TOWARDS
A GAY
COMMUNISM
Mario Mieli

A demonstration
of the extra-parliamentary left
is in crisis
a group of homosexuals
crazy with love for communism
have managed to get close
perhaps too close
to the comrades
these are now very red
but this time with embarrassment
their hands on their arses
they aren't even able
to consult mao
to settle the dispute.

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At night, conveying my sorrow and pain to the men, my anarchist comrades there in the harsh Sierra, huddled in small bunches under the vigilant eyes of the enemy, how often would a friendly voice and loving arms restore my love for life! And each time the sufferings of the past, with all the horrors and torments that wracked my body, would be thrown to the wind as though from a distant age, and I would abandon myself joyfully to dreams of adventure, beholding with heated imagination a world that I knew not in life but in desire, a world that no man has known in life but that many of us have known in dreams. And dreaming, time would fly by, and my body would stand weariness at bay, and I would redouble my enthusiasm, and become bold, and go out on reconnaissance at dawn to discover the enemy's positions, and... all of this in order to change life, to stamp a different rhythm onto this life of ours; all of this because men could be brothers and I among them; all of this because joy that surges forth even once from our breasts must surge out of the earth; all of this because the Revolution, this Revolution that has been the guiding light and watchword of the Iron Column, could soon be tangible reality.



This is an extract from "A Day Mournful and Overcast", written in 1937 by a militant of the Spanish Iron Column. The article was part of the response to the efforts of the Spanish republican state to subordinate the autonomous armed anarchist groups to the logic of capitalism. The pamphlet is available from: C.P.282, Succ. "E", Montreal, P.Q. H2T 3A7 It is being distributed in Britain by Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX who will supply it by mail order for 60p + 15p p&p.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that there are several publications in circulation at the moment which detail the intensity of the 'Italian Situation', from the 'hot autumn' of '69 to the present, precious little is known in the revolutionary movement about the Italian Gay Movement during this period. In fact, while these publications analyse the involvement of specific groups (women, immigrants, marginalised sectors, etc.) only scant reference is made to the Gay Movement. Oversight or not, we still remain quite ignorant of gays in Italy. So when Mario Mieli's book 'Homosexuality and Liberation' was published in Britain (Towards a Gay Communism' is a chapter taken from this book) it was a pleasant surprise.

Although the Italian and British Gay movements share a similar history, the radical stance that the British section had taken more or less died out after 1973 with the demise of the GLF. The Italian section on the other hand, was able to retain its original character and developed its own ideas, being far more influenced by psychoanalysis and Marxism. Mieli draws on both these influences to provide an interlocking framework for investigating the effects of institutionalised heterosexuality over society which go further than just creating specific problems for gay people. Mieli transposes the argument to demonstrate that homosexuality holds a principle position and that its liberation is an integral and indispensable part of a much wider emancipation. But no sleight of hand or juggling of theoretical schema's merely to fit the argument, is used. Although there is a wideranging usage of theory this hasn't reduced the text to the level of mere metaphysical contemplation, since the theory has been nicely counter-balanced by Mieli's personal experience. The essay combines serious theoretical argument with a gay sensibility and humour. A critical introduction could be made but the limited space available here makes this impossible. We think it suffices to say that the positive aspects of the book far outweigh its shortcomings.

We decided to publish this section of the book for two reasons. Firstly though this chapter represents only 15% of the total length of the book, its relationship to the rest is largely synoptic and outlines the main arguments. Secondly though it says little of the Italian Gay Movement's history, it does indicate the ideas circulating within it. The fact that it is a damning condemnation of the conditions of sexual repression which revolutionaries grow up with but still (passively) reproduce, and that it's done from an explicitly gay perspective makes this, as reading material, quite unique.

In this new format Mieli's argument will hopefully be more accessible. The original book probably encouraged straight revolutionaries to shy away from it because the title is implicitly perverse.

It would be good if its republication generated some discussion - although we're not too optimistic about it. In any event however we remain in agreement with Mieli's basic message - Actions speak louder than words !

One or two of the concepts used in this article may not be familiar - particularly the terms 'trans-sexuality' and 'Schizophrenia' which Meili uses in his opening paragraphs. We have thus put together the following extracts from Meili's writing explaining these two concepts. In his use of the term 'Schizophrenia' Meili is influenced by the Anti-Oedipus school of Anti-Psychiatry.

Schizophrenia

Today, of course, society as a whole is neurotic and schizoid. Capitalist ideology, phallogocentric, heterosexual and Eurocentric, founds and constitutes the world view of one-dimensional man, *homo normalis*, the fetishistic vision of the human being alienated from himself, from the world and from others by the work of capital. Just like the habitual neurotic condition of people considered 'normal', so the whole logic of capitalism is schizoid. Dissociated or rather riven between ego and non-ego, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, desire and 'non-desire', sense and intellect, public and private, unconscious and conscious, mechanical materialism and teleological spiritualism, this capitalist logic governs the insane equilibrium of the 'sane' individual, more or less adapted to the schizoid social system.

Psychiatry often uses the terms 'schizoid' and 'schizophrenic' as synonyms. But if so-called 'normal' life is in fact itself dissociated and schizoid, then the 'schizophrenic' alteration of the process of association is far from being the dissociation it is said to be. It is rather a superior and deeper ability to grasp significant relationships between things and/or events that we normally define as connected only in a fortuitous way, or rather in a way that is obvious and banal. It is also a still more profound faculty to recognise the evident significance that is hidden in apparently casual relations. For this reason (despite the fact that there are undoubtedly certain 'borderline' cases), I use the terms 'schizoid' and 'schizophrenic' essentially in two opposite senses: the former as a synonym for 'normal', and to indicate the dissociated character of the commonly held vision of the world; the latter to denote the decidedly alternative and far less dissociated conception of the world which is customarily considered 'crazy'.

To quote Wilhelm Reich:

The schizophrenic world mingles into one experience what is kept painstakingly separate in *homo normalis*. The 'well-adjusted' *homo normalis* is composed of exactly the same type of experiences as the schizophrenic. Depth psychiatry leaves no doubt about this. *Homo normalis* differs from the schizophrenic only in that these functions are differently arranged. He is a well-adjusted, 'socially minded' merchant or clerk during the day; he is orderly on the surface. He lives out his secondary, perverse drives when he leaves home and office to visit some faraway city, in occasional orgies of sadism or promiscuity. This is his 'middle layer' existence, clearly and sharply separated from the superficial veneer. He believes in the existence of a personal supernatural power and its opposite, the Devil and hell, in a third group of experiences which is again clearly and sharply delineated from the two others. These three basic groups do not mingle with one another. *Homo normalis* does not believe in God when he does some tricky business, a fact which is reprimanded as 'sinful' by the priests in Sunday sermons. *Homo normalis* does not believe in the Devil when he promotes some cause of science; he has no perversions when he is the supporter of his family; and he forgets his wife and children when he lets the Devil go free in a brothel. (Character Analysis, London 1955 p.399).

Any 'normal' person, therefore, is a latent 'schizophrenic' just as much as a latent homosexual. But the manifest 'schizophrenic' experience is in the highest degree something different from the 'normal' everyday life: it reveals what we are 'in reality', the universal history concentrated in us, and the trans-sexual and communist potential with which we are pregnant.

Trans-sexuality

Underlying the presence in every individual of an erotic trend directed towards persons of the same sex, psychoanalysis has established an infantile 'perverse' polymorphism. (..). Among the forces that inhibit and restrict the direction of the sexual drive are, above all, 'the structures of morality and authority erected by society'. The repressive society and the dominant morality consider only heterosexuality as 'normal' - and only genital heterosexuality at that. Society forces on children an *educastation* (.) the objective of which is the transformation of the infant, in tendency polymorphous and 'perverse', into a heterosexual adult, erotically mutilated but conforming to the Norm. I shall use the term 'trans-sexuality' to refer to the infantile polymorphous and 'undifferentiated' erotic disposition, which society suppresses and which, in adult life, every human being carries within him either in a latent state, or else confined in the depths of the unconscious under the yoke of repression. 'Trans-sexuality' seems to me the best word for expressing, at one and the same time, both the plurality of the erotic tendencies and the original and deep hermaphroditism of every individual. We call 'transsexuals' those adults who consciously live out their own hermaphroditism, and who recognise in themselves, in their body and mind, the presence of the 'opposite' sex (..) Persecuted by a society that cannot accept any confusions between the sexes, they frequently tend to reduce their effective trans-sexuality to an apparent monosexuality, seeking to identify with the opposite 'normal' gender to their genital definition. Thus a female transsexual feels herself a man,

opting for the male gender role, while a male transsexual feels himself a woman.(.) Society induces these manifest transsexuals to feel monosexual and to conceal their real hermaphroditism. To tell the truth, however, this is exactly how society behaves with all of us. In fact we are all, deep down, trans-sexuals, we have all been transsexual infants, and we have been forced to identify with a specific monosexual role, masculine or feminine. In the case of manifest transsexuals, or those rare persons who have not repressed their trans-sexuality in growing up, the social constraint produces the opposite effect from what it does in 'normal' people, in as much as a male person tends to identify with the feminine role, and vice versa. As we shall see, manifest transsexualism does not necessarily involve a propensity for homosexuality. There are many heterosexual transsexuals. But when, for example, these are males who feel themselves to be women, but who also sexually desire other women, their heterosexuality is then, in a certain sense, homosexuality. Far from being particularly absurd, transsexualism overthrows the present separate and counterposed categories of that sexuality considered 'normal', which it shows up, rather, as a ridiculous constraint.

In conclusion, we can say that neither manifest homosexuality nor heterosexuality necessarily correspond to any specific mental, somatic, or hormonal characteristics; both the gay desire and the desire for the other sex are expressions of our underlying trans-sexual being, in tendency polymorphous, but constrained by oppression to adapt to a monosexuality that mutilates it. But the repressive society only considers one type of monosexuality as 'normal', the heterosexual kind, and imposes education with a view to maintaining an exclusively heterosexual conditioning. The Norm therefore, is heterosexual.

towards a gay communism

1. *Transvestism. Homosexuality and 'Homosexualisation'*

There is more to be learned from wearing a dress for a day, than there is from wearing a suit for life.¹

As we have seen, 'schizophrenia' sheds light on the trans-sexual substratum of the psyche, our bodily being-in-becoming (the mind is part of the body, and the body as a whole is far from completely monosexual). We have also established that it is via the liberation of homoeroticism, among other things, that transsexuality is concretely attained; and however much homosexuality is put down by the system today, we gays are among those persons most aware of the trans-sexual 'nature' that lies within us all. Fantasies of a trans-sexual character often spring to our consciousness, and many of us have had more or less trans-sexual experiences.

This does not mean that a good many people defined as 'transsexuals' today, do not start out from heterosexuality. (Likewise a large number of transvestites.) 'Heterosexuals' aware of their trans-sexuality, however, are at present far less numerous than gays who have undertaken the trans-sexual trip. This is because heterosexuals, as a general rule, have adapted to their mutilated role of man or woman as something 'normal', obvious and taken for granted, whereas we gays almost invariably experience it as a

burden that we have to be exclusively men or women, and suffer from the resistance with which we, and our desire, are opposed by heterosexuals of the same sex as ourselves. The hermaphrodite fantasy, dream and ideal occupy a major place in the gay existential universe.

Society is especially harsh in its attacks upon transexuals or those who might appear as such: the butch lesbian, the queen or 'effeminate' male homosexual bear a greater brunt of public execration and contempt, and are frequently criticised even by those reactionary homosexuals who are better adapted to the system, the 'straight gays' who have managed to pass as 'normal' or heterosexual. These reactionary homosexuals (homo-cops) make out that outrageous queens and transvestites ruin the gay scene and spoil the image of homosexuality. For our part, we outrageous queens see them as queens dressed up as straight men, unfortunate people who are forced to disguise themselves and act a role imposed by the system, and who find ideological arguments to justify their position as contented slaves. They wonder what it is the gay movement wants, what it is fighting for, because nowadays our society accepts diversity. True, even today we can't make love freely wherever we feel like it, on the buses or in the streets, but then not even straights are allowed to do that. So things aren't that bad. Some consolation!

Many feminists criticise us queens because we often tend in our dress and behaviour to copy the stereotyped 'feminine' fetish that women have to fight. But if a woman dressed like a starlet or cover girl is normal for the system today, a man dressed in a similar way is quite abnormal, as far as 'normal' people are concerned, and so our transvestism has a clear revolutionary character. There is no harm in us queens having our bit of fantasy: we demand the freedom to dress as we like, to choose a definite style one day and an ambiguous one the day after, to wear both feathers and ties, leopard-skin and rompers, the leather queen's chains, black leather and whip, the greasy rags of the street porter or a tulle maternity dress. We enjoy the bizarre, digging into (pre)history, the dustbins and uniforms of yesterday, today and tomorrow, the trumpery, costumes and symbols that best express the mood of the moment. As Antonio Donato puts it, we want to communicate by our clothing, too, the 'schizophrenia'

that underlies social life, hidden behind the censorious screen of the unrecognised transvestism of everyday. From our vantage point, in fact, it is 'normal' people who are the true transvestites. Just as the absolute heterosexuality that is so proudly flaunted masks the polymorphous but sadly inhibited disposition of their desire, so their standard outfits hide and debase the marvellous human being that lies suppressed within. Our transvestism is condemned because it shows up for all to see the funereal reality of the general transvestism, which has to remain silent, and is simply taken for granted.

Far from being particularly odd, the transvestite exposes how tragically ridiculous the great majority of people are in their monstrous uniforms of man and 'woman'. You need only take a ride on the underground. If the transvestite seems ridiculous to the 'normal' person who encounters him, far more ridiculous and sad, for the transvestite, is the nudity of the person who laughs. So properly dressed, in his face.

For a man, to dress as a 'woman' does not necessarily mean projecting the 'woman-object'; above all, because he is not a woman, and the male fetishism imposed by capital decrees that he should be dressed quite differently, reified in a quite different guise, dressed as a man or at least in unisex. Besides, a frock can be very comfortable, fresh and light when it's hot, and warm and cosy when it's cold. We can't just assume that women who normally go around dressed as men, swathed tightly in jeans, feel more comfortable than a queen dressed up as a witch, with full-bodied cloak and wide-brimmed hat.

But a man can also get pleasure from wearing a very uncomfortable 'feminine' garb. It can be exciting, and quite trippy, for a gay man to wear high heels, elaborate make-up, suspender belt and satin panties. Once again, those feminists who attack us gays, and in particular transvestites, for dressing as the 'woman-object', are putting down gay humour, the transsexual aesthetic, the craziness of crazy queens. Their new morality is in fact the very old anti-gay morality, simply given a new gloss by modern categories stuffed with an ideological feminism, ideological because it provides a cover for the anti-homosexual taboo, for the fear of homosexuality, for the intention to reform the Norm without eliminating it.

Heterosexual feminists fail to hit the mark when they discuss homosexuality. And we queens, moreover, have no intention of being put down by women any more than by men. In the course of our lives, many of the educastrated educastrators we have encountered have been women, and there are certainly far more women still opposed to homosexuality today than there are gay men who are male supremacist and enslaved by the dominant ideology. Many women have abused us and still do so, they have ridiculed us and still do so, they have oppressed us and still do so. These women cannot but be opposed to us, and we cannot but 'oppose' them, if we intend, from the gay standpoint, to wage a struggle for universal liberation (a struggle, therefore, which involves them as well, fighting against their prejudices, with a view to dissolving all anti-gay resistances). I have already shown how the contradiction between men and women and the contradiction between heterosexuality and homosexuality are intertwined. And so if feminists cannot but oppose the persistence of male supremacy among us queens, we cannot but challenge fundamentally the heterosexual 'normality' with which the women's movement is still pervaded, despite the new fashion or ideology of 'homosexuality' that has become widespread in it.

Franco Berardi (Bifo), a heterosexual man, speaks of the 'homosexualisation' of the women's movement, a 'homosexualisation' (the term could hardly sound less gay) which he supports, as a heterosexual male in crisis (but not too much so). And yet Bifo's 'homosexualisation' has little in common with the struggle of us queens for the liberation of the gay desire. The concept of 'homosexualisation' is all too reminiscent, beneath the 'feminist' camouflage of Men's Liberation, of the male supremacist bisexuality of the hustlers. But Bifo will not understand, in fact he cannot understand. To do so, he would have to savour the fragrance of the urinals, and feel in his own person the full weight of oppression that weighs on the shoulders of us gays. For the moment, please, let us speak about homosexuality, we who have come out in the open; homosexual is something one uncovers, not something one becomes. I would like to get her in bed, that Bifo, and confront her 'homosexualisation' with my homosexuality. And that is a gay desire – an advance, not a concept.

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There are also feminists for whom the 'new homosexuality' discovered by the women's movement, is not the same thing as lesbianism, which – they hold – is still marked by a male model. Some of them say they came to accept homosexuality after realising the impossibility of going on with relationships with men, and that the homosexual choice is a necessary one for women as long as their struggle has not yet radically changed men and therefore their relations with them. Once again, homosexuality is presented as a substitute choice, a palliative, a surrogate sexual dimension in which the libido withdrawn from male 'objects' is politically channelled.

This is what the new 'homosexual' fashion among feminists amounts to, a fashion that is quickly recuperated by the system (the *Corriere della Sera* has articles about it on its feature page), and which, despite appearances, is simply a new form of the old anti-gay exorcism. (And on fashion, moreover, we have always been the experts, recognising the new styles at first sight.) The 'new homosexuality' of feminism is worth little more than the 'homosexualisation' of someone like Bifo. It boasts a 'homo' mask, but this actually serves to (un)veil the genuinely latent gay desire, and above all the conscious heterosexual desire that wears the mask. If this mystification is the 'new homosexuality' of women, or at least of certain feminists, then it is quite true that it has little in common with lesbianism. Lesbians are right if they refuse to identify with the general heterosexual atmosphere of the feminist movement, and continue to organise in autonomous ('homonomous') groups.

When there are women who criticise us gays if we dress as 'women', we should not ignore the pulpit from which this preaching comes. I have never been attacked by a lesbian for my make-up, my floral gowns or my silver heels. It is true, of course, that, if for centuries women have been forced by male power to dress up in an oppressive manner, the great creators of fashion, the couturiers, hair-stylists, etc. have almost always been gay men. But the homosexual fantasy has simply been exploited by the system – it still is² – in order to oppress women and adorn them in the way that men want to see them. For centuries, the system has exploited the work of homosexuals to subjugate women, just as it has made abundant use of women to oppress gays (any gay man need only

recall his mother). For this reason, if it is very important for women today to reject certain ways of dress, i.e. being dressed and undressed by men, it is equally important that gays should recapture and reinvent for themselves the aesthetic that they were obliged for centuries to project onto women.

If Marlene Dietrich in her glitter is an emblem of the oppression of women, she is at the same time a gay symbol, she is gay, and her image, her voice, her sequins form part of a homosexual culture, a desire that we queens recognise in ourselves. It is true that for a woman today to present herself like a *Vogue* cover girl is in general anti-feminist and reactionary. But for a gay man to dress as he pleases, boldly expressing a fantasy which capital has relegated to the reified pages of *Vogue*, has a certain revolutionary cutting edge, even today. We are fed up with dressing as men. We ask our sisters in the women's movement, then, don't burn the clothes that you cast off. They might be useful to someone, and we have in fact always longed for them. In due course, moreover, we shall invite you all to our great coming-out ball.

There can be no doubt that queens, 'effeminate' homosexuals and transvestites are among those men closest to trans-sexuality (even if frequently, because of oppression, they live their trans-sexual desire in alienated forms, infected by false guilt). Queens and transvestites are those males who, even though male, understand better what it means to be a woman in this society, where the men most disparaged are not the brutes, phalocrats or violent individualists, but rather those who most resemble women.

It is precisely the harsh condemnation of 'effeminacy' that sometimes leads gay men to behave in a way that is functional to the system, to become their own jailors. They then balance their 'abnormal' adoration for the male, the tough guy, the hoodlum, with a 'normal' and neurotic anti-woman attitude, which is counter-revolutionary and male supremacist. But the homosexual struggle is abolishing this historical figure of the queen enslaved by the system (the 'queer men' whom Larry Mitchell distinguishes from 'faggots'), and creating new homosexuals, whom the liberation of homoeroticism and trans-sexual desire brings ever closer to women, new homosexuals who are the true comrades of women. To the point that they can see no other way of life except among other homosexuals and among women, given the increasingly

detestable character of heterosexual males. Whenever we gays see 'normal' males discussing one another, or rather tearing one another to pieces, whenever we see them attack one another in a profusion of thrusting insertions, then we truly do think they have understood nothing, if they are still unaware of the homoerotic desire that pushes them towards one another and yet confuses them because it is repressed. And if the gay struggle elevates the acidic and put-down queen (acidic even when she's not on acid), transforming her into a *folle*, a gay comrade who is ever more trans-sexual, it also negates the heterosexual man, since it tends towards the liberation of the queen that is in him too.

2. Anxiety and Repression. Gay 'Filthiness'

The particular behaviour and fantasies of homosexuals have their counterpart in the blindness and ignorance with which the majority of people respond to the entire sexual question, and the homosexual question in particular. Most of them are still far too unaware of the limitations involved in the opposition between the sexes, even though this may well play a substantial part in their own suffering.

This lack of awareness is the product of the repression they have undergone, and it serves in turn to perpetuate this repression. A severe mental and social censorship conceals what has taken place: their original polymorphous, 'perverse' and undifferentiated erotic disposition was condemned and repressed in the course of infancy, so that the weight of condemnation gradually drags them down into the hell of the adult world, of which the hell of childhood is only the antechamber. Repressed, and thus constricted and deformed, the existence of this tendentially polymorphous disposition has been relegated to the harsh prison of the unconscious, tortured like the bound foot of an old Chinese woman. Restrained by the censorial walls of this prison, each individual has to internalise the sexual values and customs of the heterosexual male model that are imposed by patriarchal society (in our case, capitalist society in particular). In the words of Norman O. Brown:

The pattern of normal adult sexuality (in Freud's terminology, genital organisation) is a tyranny of one component in infantile sexuality, a tyranny which suppresses some of the other components altogether and subordinates the rest to itself.³

The gay movement maintains that the tyranny of genital heterosexuality by no means completely suppresses the polymorphous tendencies of infantile sexuality, it simply subjugates them to the yoke of repression. The struggle for the liberation of Eros can release even the most hidden of desires (for example the coprophagous and necrophilic).

In any case, genital tyranny produces anxiety and suffering in us all. The harsher the repression, the stronger the anxiety induced, in our experience, by persons, events and situations which conjure up the wide scope of the repressed contents and tend to disrupt the repression itself. Thus the homosexual is mistreated by the heterosexual because he 'reawakens' in him the homoerotic desire that has been forced to lie dormant for so long. This 'reawakening' is rarely complete, generally taking the form of a disquieting stirring, the presentiment of an earthquake that would threaten the rigid structure of his ego, based as this is on the repression of homoeroticism. The heterosexual insults, provokes and threatens the homosexual because he feels himself challenged by his presence, which besieges his 'normal' equilibrium by suggesting that he might himself be both object and subject of the gay desire.

According to Groddeck, as I have already pointed out, homosexuality is not completely repressed. Rather than repression, it is a question of a daily self-deception, a 'quasi-repression', a bad faith that leads the heterosexual to present himself as exclusively such, even though he knows in fact that he does have gay desires.⁴ It is symptomatic of this that so many men maintain they have never wanted sexual relations with other men; they fear this might please them too much, and that they might become gay themselves.

As a general rule, the heterosexual views the gay man as 'filthy'. This is due, above all, to the fact that the 'normal'

individual sees reflected in the gay person the homoerotic component of his own desire, negated and repressed in its anal eroticism, urophilia, coprophilia, etc. 'Normal' people consider 'filthy' any sexual acts bound up with those erotic tendencies which repression has induced them to renounce, giving rise in them – via the induced guilt of their repressed desire – to a particular authoritarian morality, which induces further guilt in its turn. 'Normal' people become maniacs of a certain type of order, of a certain type of cleanliness [*pulizia*] and of the police [*polizia*].

Homosexuals who go out cruising – and almost all gay men do so – know perfectly well that their pleasure very often involves them in breaking the law, disrupting order (even in those countries where homosexuality is not as such a criminal offence). We gays have almost invariably made love in the streets, in parks, in public toilets, in cinemas, museums, churches, in the Tuileries. We have been fucked behind barrack walls, we have sucked each other off kneeling in front of religious statues, we have held splendid orgies under railway bridges. 'Normal' people can only see it as 'filthy' that we like to eat sperm and be fucked in the arse. And yet those of us who are revolutionary see it as absurd that we are not allowed to cruise openly, wherever we like, that we can't take off our trousers or petticoats wherever we happen to be.

3. Fear of Castration and the Parable of War

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)'.

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.⁵

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

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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'.⁶

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).⁷ 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

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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 coopting 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 bisexuals, 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

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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!

4. The Sublimation of Eros in Labour

And meanwhile the proletariat, the great class embracing all the producers of civilised nations, the class which in freeing itself will free humanity from servile toil and will make of the human animal a free being – the proletariat, betraying its instincts, despising its historic mission, has let itself be perverted by the dogma of work. Rude and terrible has been its punishment. All its individual and social woes are born of its passion for work.

LAFARGUE⁸

According to the metaphysical theory that sees the process of civilisation as the conversion of powerful libidinal forces, their deviation from the sexual aim into labour and culture, repressed Eros may be viewed as the motive force of history, and labour as the sublimation of Eros.

In Freud's words:

The tendency on the part of civilisation to restrict sexual life is no less clear than its other tendency to expand the cultural unit . . . Here . . . civilisation is obeying the law of economic necessity, since a large amount of the psychical energy which it uses for its own purposes has to be withdrawn from sexuality . . . Fear of a revolt by the suppressed elements drives it to stricter precautionary measures.⁹

Civilisation, therefore, is seen as having repressed those erotic tendencies that are subsequently defined as 'perverse', in order to sublimate this libidinal energy into the economic sphere (and into the social sphere, too: we have seen how Freud deemed the sublimation of homoeroticism a useful guarantee of social cohesion).¹⁰ This is one of the most interesting hypotheses on the historical imposition of the anti-homosexual taboo, something that cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be considered in relation with other things, particularly the heterosexual Norm, marriage and the family, and the institutionalisation of woman's subjugation to man.

According to Marcuse:

Against a society which employs sexuality as means for a useful end, the perversions uphold sexuality as an end in itself; they thus place themselves outside the dominion of the performance principle and challenge its very foundation. They establish libidinal relationships which society must ostracise because they threaten to reverse the process of civilisation which turned the organism into an instrument of work.¹¹

This is already somewhat out of date, and needs to be revised. Today it is clear that our society makes very good use of the 'perversions'; you need only go into a newsagent or to the cinema to be made well aware of this. 'Perversion' is sold both wholesale and retail, it is studied, classified, valued, marketed, accepted, discussed. It becomes a fashion, going in and out of style. It becomes culture, science, printed paper, money – if not, then who would publish this book? The unconscious is sold in slices over the counter.

If for millenia, therefore, societies have repressed the so-called 'perverse' components of Eros in order to sublimate them in labour, the present system liberalises these 'perversions' with a view to their further exploitation in the economic sphere, and to subordinating all erotic tendencies to the goals of production and consumption. This liberalisation, as I have already argued, is functional only to a commoditification in the deadly purposes of capital. Repressed 'perversion', then, no longer provides simply

the energy required for labour, but is also to be found, fetishised, in the alienating product of alienated labour, which capital puts on the market in reified form. Precisely in order to be liberalised and marketed, 'perversion' has to remain in essence repressed, and the libidinal energy that is specific to it must continue in large measure to be sublimated in labour and exploited. Repressive desublimation involves the perpetuation of the coerced sublimation of Eros in labour. It is clear that those erotic tendencies defined as 'perverse' cannot but remain repressed, as long as people continue to accept the truly obscene and perverted products that capital puts onto the market under the label of 'perverse' sexuality, and as long as there are still those who are content for their 'particular' impulses to be vented in a way that gives them a mediocre titillation from the squalid fetishes of sex marketed by the system. The struggle for the liberation of Eros is today, among other things, the rejection of a sexuality that is liberalised and packaged for sale by the permissive society; it is a rejection of sexual consumerism.

On the other hand, given that capital has reached its phase of real domination, i.e. that capitalist concentration and centralisation, inseparably bound up with the progress of the productive forces and the 'technological translation of science into industrial machinery' (H.J. Krahl), have reduced to a minimum the amount of necessary labour, the maximum portion of labour-time is surplus labour, so that there is what Marcuse calls 'a change in the character of the basic instruments of production'.¹² This process was already foreseen by Marx in *Grundrisse*:

In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth.¹³

This transformation creates the essential premises for making the total qualitative leap realised in the communist revolution. And Marx adds:

As soon as labour in the direct form has ceased to be the great well-spring of wealth, labour-time ceases and must cease to be its measure, and hence exchange-value [must cease to be the measure] of use-value. The *surplus labour of the mass* has ceased to be the condition for the development of the general wealth, just as the *non-labour of the few*, for the development of the general powers of the human head. With that, production based on exchange-value breaks down, and the direct, material production process is stripped of the form of penury and antithesis. The free development of individualities, and hence not the reduction of necessary labour-time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather the general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them.¹⁴

In the face of this qualitative leap, standing as we do before the prospect of revolution and communism, sexual repression is obsolete and only serves as an obstacle. In fact it maintains the forced sublimation that permits economic exploitation, 'the theft of alien labour-time' (Marx), the theft of pleasure (time) from woman and man, the constriction of the human being to a labour that is no longer necessary in itself, but only indispensable to the rule of capital. Labour, today, serves to preserve the outmoded relations of production, and to ensure the stability of the social edifice that is built upon these.

'Capital', writes Virginia Finzi Ghisi, 'has made use up till now of the erotic nature of labour in order to force man into this, having preventively withdrawn from him any other sexual adventure (relations with the woman-wife-mother in the family circle are no adventure, but only an extended substitution). . . . Heterosexuality becomes the condition for capitalist production, as a modality of loss of the body, a habituation to seeing this elsewhere, and generalised.'¹⁵

The struggle for communism today must find expression, among other things, in the negation of the heterosexual Norm that is based on the repression of Eros and is essential for maintaining the rule of capital over the species. The 'perversions', and

homosexuality in particular, are a rebellion against the subjugation of sexuality by the established order, against the almost total enslavement of eroticism (repressed or repressively desublimated) to the 'performance principle', to production and reproduction (of labour-power).

The increase in the means of production has already virtually abolished poverty, which is perpetuated today only by capitalism. And if the sublimation of the 'perverse' tendencies of Eros into labour is thus no longer economically necessary, it is even less necessary to channel all libidinal energies into reproduction, given that our planet is already suffering from over-population. Clearly, repressive legislation on the number of children, abortion, and the wars and famines decreed by capital, will not resolve the problem of population increase. Such things can only serve to contain it within limits that are functional to the preservation and expansion of the capitalist mode of production. They serve to increase the war industry and to maintain the Third World in conditions of poverty and backwardness that are favourable to the establishment of capitalist economic and political control. The problem of over-population can be genuinely resolved by the spread of homosexuality, the (re)conquest of autoerotic pleasure, and the communist revolution. What will positively resolve the demographic tragedy is not the restriction of Eros, but its liberation.

The harnessing of Eros to procreation, in fact, has never been really necessary, since free sexuality, in conditions that are more or less favourable, naturally reproduces the species without needing to be subject to any type of constraint. On the other hand, if the struggle for the liberation of homosexuality is decisively opposed to the heterosexual Norm, one of its objectives is the realisation of new gay relations between women and men, relations that are totally different from the traditional couple, and are aimed, among other things, at a new form of gay procreation and paedophilic coexistence with children.

In a relatively distant future, the consequent trans-sexual freedom may well contribute to determining alterations in the biological and anatomical structure of the human being that will transform us, for example, into a gynandry reproducing by parthenogenesis, or else a new two-way type of procreation (or

three-way, or ten-way?). Nor do we know what the situation is on the billions of other planets in the galaxy, many of which, at least, must be far more advanced than ourselves.

If we can thus understand how the repression and sublimation of Eros, and the heterosexual Norm, are absolutely no longer necessary for the goals of civilisation and the achievement of communism, being in fact indispensable only for the perpetuation of capitalism and its barbarism, then it is not hard to discover in the expression of homoerotic desire a fertile potential for revolutionary subversion. And it is to this potential that is linked the 'promise of happiness' that Marcuse recognises as a peculiar character of the 'perversions'.

5. *The 'Protectors' of the Left*

The left – above all the Italian Communist Party, but also all the self-proclaimed revolutionary organisations – were slow to adopt even an attitude of 'protection' towards gays. For a long time they simply repressed homosexuality directly, negating it by exalting the tough, virile figure of the productive (and evidently reproductive) worker. They ridiculed homosexuals, defining them as an expression of the corruption and decadence of bourgeois society, thus making their own contribution to confirming gays in an attitude that is in some respects counter-revolutionary. They put forward an image of revolution that is grotesquely bigoted and repressive (based on sacrifice and on the infernal proletarian family) and a caricature of virility (based on productive-reproductive labour and on brute militarised violence), and they held up the model of those countries defined as socialist, who liquidate homosexuals in concentration camps or 're-education centres', such as Cuba or China. It is scarcely surprising, then, that gay people saw only the system itself as their 'salvation'.

When the homosexual liberation movement started in Italy, the left did their best to induce it to silence and discourage it. We can all cite an endless series of insults, provocations and even physical attacks from militants of the left. Those of us who belonged for a while to such groups know very well the sum of humiliations and frustrations involved in being a gay activist in

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the heterosexual left.

The left thus did all it could to extinguish our movement. They stubbornly characterised it as 'petty-bourgeois' at the very time that we were starting to come out in a revolutionary way. As far back as 1971, Joe Fallisi could write that the left was concerned above all to 'modernise reformist politics and impose (in the heaven of the Spectacle) new ideological images of the "challenger", the "tough guy", the "extra-parliamentarist", the "new partisan".' And if the reformist politics of the left are phallogentric and heterosexual, their ideological counterpart was the 'tough guy with a big cock and muscles of steel', who sets even the fascist bullies to flight.¹⁶ It is no accident that the extra-parliamentary groups of yesterday are today seated in Parliament.

Today, the real revolutionary movement includes above all else the movement of women and gays, in struggle against the system and the heterosexual phallogentrism that upholds it, chaining to it the (male) proletariat itself. The organisations of the left, on the other hand, essentially male and male supremacist, heterosexual and anti-homosexual, support the public and private capitalist Norm, and hence the system itself. The movement of revolutionary women has shaken the entire society, putting in crisis even those groups who call themselves revolutionary and yet have so far been ramparts of male supremacist bigotry. Even the movement of conscious homosexuals, revolutionary or at least open to a vision of themselves and the world that is different from the traditional one, can no longer be simply neglected by the left politicians. The parties of the left, great and small, now have to try and recuperate homosexuals too, though I think Stalin would still turn in his grave at the very idea.

The heterosexual left, in dealing with the homosexual question, is trying a similar recuperation, if on a lesser scale, to that which it has effected vis-à-vis feminism. Up till only recently, the thieving and 'fascist' government, for the extra-parliamentary left, was also obviously 'queer'. Today, however, it seems even a gay person can prove himself a 'good comrade', a 'valuable activist in the service of the proletariat', while it is also opportune that all 'good comrades' should begin to take account of the contradictions inherent in the sexual sphere. The contrast is blatant. On the one hand, the term 'queer' is used as an insult; on the other, the wolf

dresses up as a lamb, preaching acceptance and understanding for homosexual comrades.

For almost all activists in these groups, the homosexual question is a problem of secondary importance, 'superstructural' and involving only a minority. 'We must tolerate homosexuals, so that they don't cause trouble by questioning our heterosexuality and pretending that we too would like to get fucked in the arse'. This last type of reaction enables us to grasp, behind the appearance of a new and more open attitude, the really closed mentality of the heterosexual 'comrades'. And, as a general rule, I would reply: Dear comrade, you are upset when someone questions the repression of your homosexual desire? And don't tell me: 'You can do what you like among yourselves, but don't interfere with me', when you are not free to desire me, to make love with me, to enjoy sensual communication between your body and mine; when you rule out the possibility of sexual relations with me. If you are not free, then how can I be free? Revolutionary freedom is not something individual, but a relation of reciprocity: my homosexuality is your homosexuality.

I believe that homosexuals are revolutionary today in as much as we have overcome politics. The revolution for which we are fighting is among other things the negation of all male supremacist political rackets (based among other things on sublimated homosexuality), since it is the negation and overcoming of capital and *its* politics, which find their way into all groups of the left, sustaining them and making them counter-revolutionary.

My asshole doesn't want to be political, it is not for sale to any racket of the left in exchange for a bit of putrid opportunist political 'protection'. While the assholes of the 'comrades' in the groups will be revolutionary only when they have managed to enjoy them with others, and when they have stopped covering their behinds with the ideology of tolerance for the queers. As long as they hide behind the shield of politics, the heterosexual 'comrades' will not know what is hidden within their own thighs.

As always, it is only rather belatedly, in the wake of the 'enlightened' bourgeoisie, that the left-wing groups have begun to play the game of capitalist tolerance. From declared hangmen, and a thousand times more repugnant than the hustlers and fascists, given all their (ideological) declarations of revolution,

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the activists of these groups have transformed themselves into 'open' debaters with homosexuals. They fantasise about becoming well-meaning and tolerant protectors of the 'deviant', in this way gratifying their own virile image, already far too much on the decline, at a time when even the ultra-left have suddenly to improvise 'feminist' representatives for 'their' women. Moreover, the fantasy of protectors helps them to exorcise the problem of the repression of their own homoerotic desire. Under it all, the activists of the left always hope to become good policemen. They do not know that real policemen get in there more than they do, and that when this happens, they make love precisely with us gays. When will there be a free homosexual outlet for the activists of the ultra-left?

As good policemen for the system, the grouplets are doing their utmost to construct an 'alternative' ghetto for us 'deviants', and since they do not want to pollute their serious and militaristic organisations with anything gay, they prefer to concede us free access to the rubbish-heap of the counterculture. For the time being, however, the left is more stupid and clumsy than the system's traditional Mafia, and in no position to create for us homosexuals attractive ghettos comparable with those constructed by the capitalist 'perversion' industry. Anyone who says that we are 'paranoid' simply means that we are quick to grasp the insufferable atmosphere created by people who can scarcely even tolerate us, the hidden aggression of phallogocentric 'comrades', the negation of homosexuality that – in the typical form of male bonding – both unites and divides them at the same time, and certainly divides them from us.

But times are finally changing. The groups are now giving us a certain space of our own: a weekly broadcast on the 'free' radio, and two or three regular pages in the underground press. This is a space well guarded by the policemen of the left, whose function is that of reinforcing the lack of confidence that gay people have in themselves, and convincing them of the need to put themselves in tow to (and at the whim of) this or that powerful protector. All the more so, in that 'If it wasn't for the left, we would have fascism' – a new scarecrow to replace that of revolution, so that everyone, homosexuals included, will remain well lined up, separate and tidy on the democratic and anti-fascist parliamentary

benches.

Those homosexuals who appeal to the left are only preparing a new prison for themselves, providing new energy to keep alive these organisations and the male supremacist, anti-woman and inhuman ideology that they propound.

We conscious homosexuals can find the strength to defend ourselves and to live in this homicidal and homocidal society only in ourselves. No kind of delegation is possible any more. Paternalism and appeal to the democratic pretensions of the left-wing groups can only construct a new ghetto. Only an intransigence that leads us to tell things they way they are, and to act together in a coherent way without renouncing any aspect of the communist world that we bear within us – only this can put in crisis, a gay crisis, the men of the political organisations, forcing them to abandon their role and thus to abandon these organisations. Only the strength and determination of the oppressed, and his power of fascination that leads his oppressor to recognise himself in him and to recognise in him his own desire, can direct the violence of gay people (up till now almost always turned against ourselves), and the violence of youths who are anti-homosexual but homosexual underneath (up till now turned against open gays), against the system that oppresses both the victim and the murderer, the system that is the real murderer, always unpunished and ever ready to defend itself against its victims. Only we homosexuals can discover and express this gay strength.

Finally, let us have done once and for all with the argument that the homosexual question is 'superstructural', and that priority should be given to the socio-economic (structural) level over the sexual struggle. Leaving aside the critique, no matter how important, of the mechanistic and non-dialectical sclerosis, among many so-called Marxists, of the concepts of 'structure' and 'superstructure', it is a grievous mistake to continue to treat the sexual question as superstructural, given that labour itself, and hence the entire economic structure of society, depends on the sublimation of Eros. Sexuality is hidden at the base of the economy, so that Eros is actually *substructural*.

Even before this conception of the psychoanalytic matrix of economics and the fundamental function of libido in the process

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of civilisation, Marxism already maintained the structural character of the sexual function, though as yet from a certain historically limited standpoint, since, among other things, this was heterosexual and thus partially ideological. As Engels wrote:

According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organisation under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production.¹⁷

Here we can see how the rigidly heterosexual social institutions of nineteenth-century Europe led Engels to see sexuality as a determining moment of history only in its procreative role. Engels referred in particular to the men of ancient Greece who 'fell into the abominable practice of sodomy and degraded alike their gods and themselves with the myth of Ganymede'.¹⁸ Today, the materialist conception has recognised the structural importance of desire, which cannot be reduced to coincide with the procreative instinct alone. And on the other hand, our revolutionary critique must eliminate the present prejudices of Marxism itself, its masculine spirit that would 'ask a proletariat corrupted by capitalist ethics, to take a manly resolution . . .'¹⁹

As for our heterosexual 'comrades', only if they free themselves from their structural fixations, from the mental superstructure that leads them to act in the way that the system allows, will they be able to grasp why the liberation of homosexuality is indispensable to human emancipation as a whole. At the present time, it is above all the repression of their own gay desire and their acceptance of the anti-homosexual taboo so dear to the system that leads them to treat the homosexual question in a capitalist fashion, and essentially to negate it.

6. *Straights Faced with Transvestites. Some Points on the Family*

So-called 'normal' people are so adapted to the male heterosexual code that they are in no position to understand, as a general rule, the relativity, contingency and limitation of the concept of 'normality'. They refuse to understand, the better to confirm themselves in their own prejudices. There is no shortage of 'scientists' prepared to bend to the prevailing ideology. Thus if heterosexuals have always seen homoeroticism as a vice, some psychologist will come along and maintain that homosexuals are 'immature and confused'. 'Perversions' have to be stigmatised, today by a 'scientific' veil made up of the most insolent lies: 'as if they exerted a seductive influence; as if at bottom a secret envy of those who enjoy them had to be strangled'.²⁰

'Normal' people do not tolerate gays, and not just because, by our very presence, we display a dimension of pleasure that is covered by a taboo, but because we also confront anyone who meets us with the confusion of his monosexual existence, mutilated and beset by repression, induced to renunciation and adaptation to a 'reality' imposed by the system as the most normal of destinies.

We can observe, for example, the attitude of 'normal' people towards transvestites. Their general reaction is one of disgust, irritation, scandal. And laughter: we can well say that anyone who laughs at a transvestite is simply laughing at a distorted image of himself, like a reflection in a fairground mirror. In this absurd reflection he recognises, without admitting it, the absurdity of his own image, and responds to this absurdity with laughter. Transvestism, in fact, translates the tragedy contained in the polarity of the sexes onto the level of comedy.

It is not hard to grasp the common denominator that links, in a relationship of affinity, all the various attitudes people assume towards queens, and towards transvestites in particular. These reactions, whether of laughter or something far more dangerous, only express, in different degree and in differing qualitative forms, a desire extraverted under the negative sign of aggression and fear – or more precisely, anxiety. It is not really the queen or transvestite who is an object of fear for 'normal' people. We only represent the image that provides a medium between the orbit of

their conscious observations and an obscure object of radical fear in their unconscious. This anxiety is converted into laughter, often accompanied by forms of verbal and even physical abuse.

The person who laughs at a transvestite is reacting to the faint intuition of this absurdity that he already has – as has every human being – and which the man dressed as a woman, who suddenly appears before him, externalises in the 'absurdity' of his external appearance. The encounter with the transvestite reawakens anxiety because it shakes to their foundations the rigidly dichotomous categories of the sexual duality, categories instilled into all of us by the male heterosexual culture, particularly by way of the family, which right from the start offers the child the opposition of father and mother, the 'sacred' personifications of the sexes in their relationship of master and slave. We all form and establish our conceptions of 'man' and 'woman' on the models of our parents, the one as virility, privilege and power, the other as femininity and subjection. To these models, which bind us to them thanks to the hallowed web of family ties that determines our personality, we adapt our conception of anyone who, in the course of life, we encounter or even merely think of. We think only in terms of 'man' or 'woman', to the point that we cannot even imagine anything but 'men' or 'women'. In ourselves, too, we can recognise only the 'man' or the 'woman', despite our underlying trans-sexual nature and despite our formation in the family, where our existential misery is determined by our relationship to mother or father. The child of the master-slave relationship between the sexes sees in him- or herself only one single sex. This singleness does not seem contradicted by the evident fact that we are born from a fusion of the sexes. And yet we need only look in the mirror (during a trip) to see clearly in our features both our mother and our father. Monosexuality springs from the repression of trans-sexuality, and trans-sexuality is already denied before birth. Conception itself, in fact, proceeds from the totalitarian negation of the female sex by the proclaimed uniqueness of the phallus as sexual organ in coitus and its 'power' in the parental couple.

But the phallus does not just coincide with the penis, even if it is superimposed on it. While the penis is what distinguishes the male anatomically, the phallus represents the patriarchal

absolutising of the idea (of male power) which the penis embodies, an idea that characterises all history to date as his-story. In a world of symbols, the ideal symbology of power assumes a phallic form.

Concretely, this 'power' is based on the repression of Eros, which is a repression of the mind, the body and the penis itself, and above all the negation of femininity. In the present pre-history, it is first and foremost a function of the oppression of women.

From the negation of the female sex in the heterosexual relationship, individuals are born either male or female, the former sexual (as bearers of the penis, the bodily vehicle of the unique sexual organ in the patriarchal phallic conception), the latter 'female eunuchs'. Either, or. The tragedy is that 'normal' people cannot tolerate the transvestite showing up the grotesque aspects of this process, committing an act of sacrilege in confusing the sacred opposition between the sexes, given that he combines in himself both sexes, daring to impose a femininity which has been reduced to a mere appearance onto the reality of a male self. The transvestite sins very gravely, demanding vengeance from the guardians of the Phallus.

If the child of the heterosexual relation is a male, he finds himself forced to suffocate his own 'femininity' and trans-sexuality, since eduction obliges him to identify with the masculine model of the father. The son has to identify with a mutilated parent, who has already negated his own 'femininity' and who bases his privilege in the family and in society precisely on his mutilation. The father is unaware of this process, or does not want to be aware of it, but presents as a 'natural mutilation' both the natural difference of women and their mutilation as the work of male 'power', which he, as the guardian of the order, perpetuates. The father negates the mother sexually, a fate to which she was already condemned from birth (since from the patriarchal standpoint she is only a second-class human being, lacking a penis); even before birth, since the repression of femininity and of women has prevailed for millenia.²¹ In his sexual relations with the mother, the father generally absolutises the passive role of the woman, her function as hole and receptacle for the phallus with which he is endowed, and which is presented, visibly active,

as the sole sexual organ, establishing a symbolic form in which female sexuality – in fact all sexuality – is alienated. The child sees this clearly in all aspects of the relationship between the parents.

If the child is a girl, then the daughter of the heterosexual couple is condemned to view herself in the stereotype of 'femininity', as the negation of woman, and by way of education she is forced to identify with the servile model of her mother. Educastration consists not only in the concealment of the clitoris, but also in the repression of homosexual desire and trans-sexuality, of woman's whole erotic existence. Female (trans-)sexuality has to be violently repressed so that the woman can appear 'feminine', can be subjected to the male and to the insults inflicted on her by his sexuality, the 'only true sexuality.' On the basis of the Norm, female sexuality cannot exist except as something subordinate. It must not exist in and for itself, but only outside itself, for someone else.

'All this removes any surprise from the fact that historically, femininity has always been perceived as castration, so that according to Freud, at a certain moment the child sees the mother as a mutilated creature, and from then on always lives in fear of castration'.²² Or as Adorno puts it (and these are both only male views):

Whatever is in the context of bourgeois delusion called nature, is merely the scar of mutilation. If the psychoanalytic theory is correct that women experience their physical constitution as a consequence of castration, their neurosis gives them an inkling of the truth. The woman who feels herself a wound when she bleeds knows more about herself than the one who imagines herself a flower because that suits her husband. The lie consists not only in the claim that nature exists where it has been tolerated or adapted, but what passes for nature in civilisation is by its very substance furthest from all nature, its own self-chosen object. The femininity which appeals to instinct, is always exactly what every woman has to force herself by violence – masculine violence – to become: a she-man.²³

In the name of the phallus, the male is forced to deny the sensuality of his arse, and his erotic fullness in general. Ashamed of the arse for being a hole, and yet (in Sartre's phrase) 'the presence of an absence' as much as the vagina and the woman's arse, he comes to conceive it as 'the absence of a presence': i.e. he does not realise that he could enjoy his arse, and sees it as the greatest shame and dishonour to have its sexuality recognised and exercised on himself. The male sentiment of honour springs in fact from shame. The Arabs, among whom male homosexuality is almost universal, paradoxically view it as highly dishonourable for a man to be fucked. They abhor the 'passive role'.²⁴ This kind of discrimination, and the sexual fascism it involves, is very widespread also among the Italians, the Latin peoples in general, and very many others. 'Double males' are even to be found in Greenland.

Forced to murder his own 'femininity', so as to meet the imperative model of the father, the male child cannot love a woman for what she is, since he would then have to recognise the existence of female sexuality, finding in it a reflection of the 'femininity' within himself. He comes to love women above all as objectifications and holes, and hence does not really love them at all. He tends rather to subjugate them, in the same way that he has already subjugated the subterranean presence of 'femininity' in himself, on the altar of virility.

For him, heterosexual love is the negation of woman, the mutilation of the trans-sexual Eros. It is a tangle of projections and alienations. 'You are my anima, I am your animus. With you I sense only having overcome isolation. I see nothing of you but that which you do not see of me.' The system sanctions the negation of love, institutionalising it in the heterosexual Norm and hence in that 'normality' which is the law of the sole sexuality of the phallus. And it condemns homosexuality as a rebellion against the subjection of Eros to the order of production and reproduction, and against the institutions (in particular the family) that safeguard this order.

Far from murdering his father so as to espouse his mother, the son rather murders his own 'femininity' so as to identify with the father. He is subsequently forced to blind himself by repressing into the shades of the unconscious the vision of the tragedy he

was forced to perpetrate, so that the 'femininity' he condemned to death will not revive in the darkness of the established patriarchal destiny. For Freud, heterosexuality is the 'normal dissolution' of the Oedipus complex. Homosexuality, which is the inverted solution to the tragedy, the homosexuality which, as Ferenczi put it, is an 'inversion on a mass scale', is condemned and excluded because it involves the risk, for male 'power', that the real version of the tragedy will become clear, to be genuinely dissolved and overcome for ever more. 'Only a particular love', wrote Virginia Finzi Ghisi, 'can perhaps show up the particular nature of the universal relation *par excellence*, i.e. the natural sexual relationship, the love of man and woman that reflects in the little magic circle of the family or couple the identical structure both founded on it and founding it, the structure of the big family (the office, factory, community, the world market).' Homosexuality makes possible 'the decomposition of the roles that the generalised natural relationship has crystallised, and the recomposition of new roles, complex and bizarre, and rich in shading: "All men are women and all women are men"'.²⁵

Homosexuality is a relation between persons of the same sex. Between women, it proclaims the autonomous existence of female sexuality, independent of the phallus. Between men, even though historically marked by phallocracy, homosexuality multiplies the sexual 'uniqueness' of the phallus, thus in a certain respect negating it, and discloses the availability of the arse for intercourse and erotic pleasure. Moreover:

In the homosexual relation between both men and women, power and its agency are put in question. Two social victors or two social vanquished find themselves equally forced to abandon and reassemble affection/power/absence of power, they cannot simply distribute them according to the social division of roles. This might seem very trivial, but it puts in crisis the foundations of the distributive order of the present society, its mode of politics, and the structure of political groups themselves.²⁶

7. *The Ghetto. Coming Out at Work.*

The union of male bodies, though paradoxically the union of penises, undermines the authoritarian abstraction of the phallus. But male homosexuality can also present itself as doubly phallic, or – in the ideology of the ‘double male’ – as maximally repressed, an unreserved mimicry of the heterosexual model. In such a case, the sexual relation between men is an alienating lack of communication. Given that homosexuality is considered and socially treated as an ‘aberration’ – or rather, that passive homosexuality is deemed dishonourable and disreputable, as in the Islamic countries among others – the gay desire, made guilty in this way, can find a certain justification by fully adapting to the laws of male ‘power’, becoming an actual champion of this. Even lesbians can be forced into such behaviour.

It is necessary at this point to remember that the homosexual, just like the heterosexual, is subject to a fixation to norms and values, the heritage of Oedipal phallic education, and to the compulsion to repeat. Educastration, as Corrado Levi shows, ‘tends to predispose and crystallise the libido of us all, by continuous acts of repression and examination, into images and models that subsequently underlie successive behaviours, in the coerced tendency to seek these and act them out’.²⁷ These images and models are all bound up with the values presently in force in the capitalist context. ‘The crystallising of desire onto acquired images tends to lead, and at times in an unambiguous way, to ruling out all other images that are different from these. Only certain images of man and woman are sought (whether heterosexual or homosexual), and we pursue physical types that we have associated with these images: young or old, blond or dark, with or without beard, bourgeois or proletarian, male or female, etc., tending to selectively rule out’ one of the two terms. The fixation of behaviour to family models, moreover, determines the type of relationship with the partner: ‘as a couple, a threesome, active, passive, paternal, maternal, filial, etc. Only through these filters and diaphragms can we then act, and see both ourselves and those persons we are involved with, who respond in their turn with analogous mechanisms’. Models, images and behaviour tend in general to be delineated in a perspective of male capitalist

values: domination, subordination, property, hierarchy, etc., ‘and this is connected’, Corrado Levi concludes, ‘with both the contents of the models followed and the mechanism by which they are pursued’.

Yet if these filters and diaphragms, these mechanisms, are in part common to both heterosexuals and gays, it is also true that, on the basis of the flaw that our behaviour, as a transgression of the Norm, represents for the present society, we homosexuals are in a position to put them in question, by discovering in our own lives a deep gap between the rules transgressed and the norms still accepted, and by the contradiction this creates in the system of prevailing values. It may well be that the growth of our movement has not yet led us to a complete unfixing of the internalised models and the compulsion to repeat and pursue them. But it has at least led us to question them, developing in us the desire to experiment, and suggesting new and different behaviours alongside and as a gradual replacement for the repetitive and coerced ones. This has happened above all in the USA, where the gay movement is so far much stronger than in Europe, and has brought about a considerable change in the social and existential conditions of homosexuals (in some States in particular), despite the insufferable continuation of the rule of capital. In America above all, we can see the rebirth of sexual desire between gays, which in our part of the world is still to a large degree latent, the fantasy of the heterosexual male, the *bête*, the ‘supreme object’ of desire, being still very much alive in many of us.

But the situation in the ghetto is certainly far from rosy, in America and in Europe, Japan or Australia. Often, many of us still tend to oscillate between repression and exaggerated ostentation, putting (deliberately) in doubt the genuineness of our ‘effeminacy’. This leads to a situation in which all spontaneity and sincerity is outlawed, and replaced by the pantomime of ‘normality’ or an ‘abnormality’ which is simply its mirror image. The exponents of such spectacles often end up making the ghetto appear monstrous to our own eyes, not to mention to those more or less scandalised by the far more monstrous heterosexual society that surrounds it.

One particular iron rule seems often to apply in the ghetto. Lack of spontaneity, of naturalness and affection, is often made

into a sacrosanct norm, 'communication' taking place by way of a series of witty quips, spectacular entrances and exits, arrows directed with unheard-of precision (unheard-of for heterosexuals). The ghetto queen is a past mistress not only of decking out herself and her apartment, in creating a certain atmosphere, in managing her own mask better than anyone else (which from daily use becomes an identification), she is also mistress of fazing other queens. Many homosexuals today wear the uniform of their persecutors, just as in the Nazi concentration camps. Only it is no longer the pink triangle that is in vogue, but rather a casing that covers the body from head to foot, a mask that conceals the physiognomy, a carapace that constrains the body like a crustacean.

The system has ghettoised and colonised us so deeply that it frequently leads us to reproduce, in a grotesque and tragi-comic form, the same roles and the same spectacle as the society that excludes us. This is precisely why we gays can often see through the misery that surrounds 'our' ghetto, and at times with exceptional aesthetic sense and irony. And yet if the present society can come to terms with the ironic finesse that some of us display, and is entertained by the inverted homosexual reflection of its own image, at the same time it does not contain its disgust at the real ghetto (or what it sees of it), and attacks it racist fashion.

But the ghetto is not outside the society that has built it. It is an aspect of the system itself. Moreover, the awareness of marginalisation and the sense of guilt induced by social condemnation poison the ghetto, leading it to assume the same distorted sneer as the society that derides it. And if homosexuals are very often not attracted by one another, this is very largely due to the ghetto atmosphere, which is anti-homosexual, precisely because held together by a false guilt and a very real marginalisation.

Homosexuals have been so much led always to see themselves as sick that at times they actually believe themselves to be so. This is our real sickness, the illusion of sickness that can even make people really sick. In a similar manner, people shut up for long enough in mental hospitals can end up showing the stereotyped signs of 'madness', i.e. the traces of the persecution they have experienced, its 'therapy' internalised in the form of sickness. Doctors (psychiatrists and anti-psychiatrists alike) are the real plague-spreaders, and the real sickness is the 'treatment'.

Towards a Gay Communism

Often, the illusion of being in some way sick affects the homosexual to such a point that he tries to disguise his own being, a distortion that he is forced to live as a deformation. If we homosexuals sometimes appear ridiculous, pathetic or grotesque, this is because we are not allowed the alternative of feeling ourselves to be human beings. 'Mad' people, blacks, and poor people all bear on their brow the mark of the oppression they have undergone.

But this mark can be transformed into a sign of new life. The face of a transvestite can burn with the gayness of liberated desire, an energy pointing towards the creation of communism. The war against capital has not been lost. Ever more homosexuals today, instead of struggling in silence against themselves, in individual anxiety and the seclusion of the ghetto, are beginning to cruise gay-ly with their eyes wide open, to fight for the revolution.²⁸

It is no time now to conceal our homosexuality. We must live it always and everywhere, in the most open way possible – at work, too, if we are not to be accomplices of all who still oppress us. Anyone who is afraid of losing his job can come out with moderation, and if necessary, it is possible to maintain a certain reserve without making shabby compromises with the Norm. Things can still be clearly said without using so many words, and one can act in a way that is compatible with one's ideas and desire while avoiding, for the time being, coming out explicitly, if this is impossible without getting the sack. True, the situation is far more difficult for gays in small towns in the provinces. But we can hope that soon the positive effects of the liberation movement will make themselves felt even here.

Given that people are forced to work in factories and offices, it is good that homosexual collectives should be formed here too. Union gives the strength to come out openly, and gay groups in schools and colleges are also steadily on the rise, even in Italy.

I have a friend who works in a bank, where he gets through the good and bad times with wit and wisdom. He recently marched past his colleagues and bosses, mimicking a parade of spring and summer fashions for bank clerks. His colleagues were entertained, and when one of them stupidly asked what the meaning of it all

was, he replied: 'I'm crazy', leaving it to the others to wonder whether he really was crazy, or simply gay.

In this and who knows how many other ways, the cause of liberation makes headway, without heroism, without even risking the sack. Every queen does what she can, according to the situation in which she finds herself. The important thing is to do one's best (i.e. to work out how one can obtain the best results), and to avoid being trapped by and resigning oneself to the Norm.

To spread homosexuality in one's place of work, today, means spurring people to reject a labour that no longer has any reason to exist, and which largely consists of sublimated homoerotic desire. It is sufficient to enter an office or a factory to immediately sense how the degrading atmosphere of the workplace is pervaded with repressed and sublimated homosexuality. 'Colleagues' at work, while rigorously respecting the anti-homosexual taboo as capital would have them, make sexual advances to each other eight hours a day in the most extraordinary manner, as well as exhibiting themselves as rivals towards women. In this way, however, they only play the game of capital, establishing a false solidarity between men, a negative solidarity that sets them against women and against one another in the purposeless (and hardly gratifying) perspective of rivalry, of competition to be tougher, more masculine, more brutish, less fucked over in the general fucking over, which - despite the label - has no other purpose save enslavement to the capitalist machine, to alienated labour, and forced consent to the deadly repression of the human species, of the proletariat.

If the gay desire among 'colleagues' at work were liberated, they would then become genuine colleagues, able to recognise and satisfy the desire that has always bound them together; able to create, via their rediscovered mutual attraction, a new and genuine solidarity between both men and women; able to embody together, women and queers, the New Revolutionary Proletariat. Able to say 'enough' to labour and 'yes' to communism.

8. Subjection and the Revolutionary Subject

I believe it follows from the arguments put forward in these pages

that only those who find themselves in opposition to the institutionalised Norm can play a fully critical role. In other words, only feminist self-consciousness and homosexual awareness²⁹ can give life to a vision of the world that is completely different from the male heterosexual one, and to a clear and revolutionary interpretation of important themes that have been obscured for centuries, if not actually proscribed, by patriarchal dogma and the absolutising of the Norm. Women represent the basic opposition potential to male 'power', which, as we have seen, is in every way functional to the perpetuation of capitalism. And if it is the male heterosexual code that prevents us achieving that qualitative leap leading to the liberation of trans-sexuality which desire fundamentally strives towards, we cannot avoid accepting the potential and now actual subversive force of homosexuality in the dialectic of sexual 'tendencies', just as we cannot deny the revolutionary position occupied by women in the dialectic of the sexes.

To those anti-psychiatrists who have worked to understand the repressed trans-sexual nature of desire, I would maintain that the liberation of a trans-sexuality that has up till now been unconscious cannot be obtained by a male and heterosexual redeployment of the classical psychoanalytic categories (substituting for Oedipus, for example, an Anti-Oedipus), but only by the revolution of women against male supremacy and the homosexual revolution against the heterosexual Norm. And only the standpoint of women and gays, above all of gay women, can indicate the very important nexus that exists between their subordination and the general social subordination, drawing the thread that unites class oppression, sexual oppression and the suppression of homosexuality.

In women as subjected to male 'power', in the proletariat subjected to capitalist exploitation, in the subjection of homosexuals to the Norm and in that of black people to white racism, we can recognise the concrete historical subjects in a position to overthrow the entire present social, sexual and racial dialectic, for the achievement of the 'realm of freedom'. True human subjectivity is not to be found in the personification of the thing *par excellence*, i.e. capital and the phallus, but rather in the subject position of women, homosexuals, children, blacks.

'schizophrenics', old people, etc. to the power that exploits and oppresses them. This revolutionary or potentially revolutionary subjectivity arises from subjection.

There are here a series of serious contradictions, which have to be overcome so that the true Revolution can be achieved. Still today, in fact, the subversive potential of the majority is held in check by their adherence to one form of power or another. Too many proletarians, for example, and too many women as well, still keenly defend the heterosexual Norm, and hence male privilege and the domination of capital. And yet Elvio Fachinelli can already say: 'We are not far from the day when the peaceful and moderately efficient heterosexual will find himself fired upon by his homosexual comrade'.³⁰

But Fachinelli knows better than I do that the gun is a phallic symbol. We queens have no intention of shooting anyone to bits, even if we are prepared to defend ourselves as best we can, and will be better prepared in the future. Our revolution is opposed to capital and its Norm, and its goal is universal liberation. Death and gratuitous violence we can willingly leave to capital, and to those still in thrall to its inhuman ideology. Fachinelli, as a good heterosexual, fears gays armed with guns because he fears homosexual relations. It is only to be hoped that this heterosexual fear will be transformed into gay desire and not into terror, forcing us really to take up the gun. I believe the movement for the liberation of homosexuality is irreversible, in the broader context of human emancipation as a whole. It is up to all of us to make this emancipation a reality. There is certainly no time to lose.

notes

- 1 Larry Mitchell, *The Faggots and Their Friends* (unpublished), New York, 1975.
- 2 See Chapter Two, section 1.
- 3 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, London, 1959, p.27.
- 4 Georg Groddeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, pp.198ff.
- 5 Elvio Fachinelli, 'Travesti', *L'Erba Voglio* 11, May-June 1973, p.38.
- 6 *Di omosessualità 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.
- 8 Paul Lafargue, *The Right to be Lazy*, Chicago, 1975, p.38.
- 9 'Civilization and its Discontents', *Standard Edition* Vol. 21, p.104. According to the 'mature' Freud, notes Francesco Santini, 'it is not just sexuality that civilisation represses and sublimates in economic activity, but also the death instinct, which is thus also put in the service of the reality principle and externalised in the aggressive conquest of nature. Man conquers and destroys his environment, and in this way avoids destroying himself, prolonging his journey towards death'. See 'Note sull'avenire del nostro passato', *Comune Futura* 1, June 1975.
- 10 See Chapter Four, section 5.
- 11 Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, New York, 1962, p.46.
- 12 Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, London, 1968, p.38.
- 13 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p.705.
- 14 *ibid.*, pp.705-06. (Marx's emphases.)
- 15 Virginia Finzi Ghisi, 'Le strutture dell'Eros', an essay published as an appendix to the Italian edition of the French FHAR's *Rapport contre la normalité*.
- 16 Joe Fallisi, 'Lettera a Irene', *Comune Futura* 2, November 1976.
- 17 Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, London, 1972, pp.71-72.
- 18 *ibid.*, p.128.
- 19 Paul Lafargue, *op. cit.*, p.66.
- 20 Freud, 'A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis', quoted by H. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, *loc. cit.*, p.45.
- 21 Matriarchal society began to break down in the period that Engels, following Morgan, refers to as 'barbarism' (8000-3000 B.C.), giving way to 'civilisation'. According to Engels: 'The overthrow of mother right was the world-historical defeat of the female sex' (*op. cit.*, p.120).
- 22 Francesco Santini, *op. cit.*, p.28.
- 23 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, London, 1974, p.95.

See Piero Fassoni and Mario Mieli, 'Marracchino omosessuale', *Fuori!* 4, October 1972, also 'Les arabes et nous', in *Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*, Paris, 1973, pp.10-27, and the following articles. Very little is known in Europe of the situation of homosexuality among the Arab peoples, and the Islamic nations in general. In fact, homosexuality forms part of the Islamic religious tradition. In a contradictory fashion, this accepts active homosexuality while condemning the passive role. For the *meddeb*, the teacher in the Koranic school, it is quite proper to have sexual relations with his young disciples. Yet this should not give the impression that homosexuality only takes the form of sexual attraction towards adolescents. If this were the case, then the limitation of adults to an active role would be simpler to explain. The ephebe, in the patriarchal view of things, unites the woman and the man, and this determines his fixation to the passive role. The Arabs, however, are happy to fuck adult men as well, and frequently do so. It is as if the moral blame that their religion ascribes to a man who is fucked does not involve them, although they will often enough suggest the activity.

25 Virginia Finzi Ghisi, op. cit., p.172.

26 'I gruppi di fronte alla questione omosessuale', *Re Nudo* 5, November 1975.

27 Corrado Levi, 'Problematiche e contributi dal lavoro di presa di coscienza del collettivo *Fuori!* di Milano', 1973. These quotations are drawn from the printed version of this essay, published as an appendix to *Un tifo*, Milan, 1973.

28 See Chapter One, note 3.

29 This does not mean that I support uncritically all the feminist and gay groups that presently exist, still less put them blindly on a pedestal; see Chapter Three, section 5. It is necessary to point out the counter-revolutionary aspects of the *politics* of some groups, and to deplore the male supremacism of gay men and the anti-homosexual attitude still current among too many feminists. But a critical analysis of the situations in which feminist and gay groups are debating will precisely demonstrate the immense importance of the issues that they are confronting. Their great merit is to have been the first to raise certain fundamental questions that have been repressed from a very remote time, and they are consequently in the best position to resolve these in practice.

30 Elvio Fachinelli, op. cit., p.38.



WOLVERINE is an infrequent broadsheet put out by a few individuals. We call ourselves anarchists and it's from this position of political understanding that we assess the way in which capitalism and the state suppress our sexuality.

We think that class struggle is an indispensable means for our liberation as gays, and that a revolution is not the exclusive liberatory tool of white heterosexual working class males. It is, in part, our dissatisfaction with the current anarchist newspapers to realise this, that leads us to produce WOLVERINE. We also wish to re-state the revolutionary aspect of gay liberation which, with the rise of "gay-consumerism" has almost been forgotten.

WOLVERINE, c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London E1