

*queer  
against  
capital*

*A Marxist Understanding of LGBTQ+ Oppression and  
Liberation in the United States  
By Bennett Shoop*

## **Introduction**

Over the past century, attempting to understand the oppression of queer and trans people in the United States has been the goal of a wide range of different theoretical and political projects. However, some of the earliest articulations of this phenomenon (such as August Bebel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or Harry Hay in the early 20<sup>th</sup>) relied upon a Marxist approach which sought to locate the struggle for queer liberation in tandem with the other struggles of the Left against oppression. While these analyses at the time were not typically incorporated by the larger Left movement, they laid a foundation for a queer Marxist tradition that would continue to be expanded over the progression of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In a time with increased attacks on queer and trans people all throughout the United States, it is imperative to return to a theory of LGBTQ+ oppression and liberation that takes into account the political-economic roots of this phenomena. The aims for mere democratic rights or discursive linguistic shifts that differ little in a material way from liberal views of political change have failed us. It is clear that the LGBTQ+ working class will not be saved by the gay elite, and that capitalism will not secure our freedom from oppression. We must return to a Marxist perspective of our liberation.

## **A Marxist Understanding of the Emergence of Modern Queer Subjectivities**

Much of the existing literature and theory attempting to understand the history of queer people and the oppression we face attempts to articulate that ‘we’ve always been here.’ However, social categories, like gender and sexuality, arise from specific material conditions and cannot be

said to be uniformly transhistorical. Marx stresses this when he argues that “even the most abstract categories...precisely because they are abstractions – are equally a product of historical conditions even in the specific form of abstractions, and they retain their full validity only for and within the framework of these conditions”.<sup>1</sup> So, while same-sex desire and gender variance have certainly existed in some form or another throughout all of history, these took very different forms at different times, some having little to nothing in common with the experience of queer and trans identities today which tend to be predicated on some kind of group identity and the experience of the world from a specific standpoint of sexual and gender difference. It follows, then, that our oppression as queer and trans people today is not simply an inheritance of outdated ancient sexual norms, it is a feature under the current mode of production, capitalism, finding its modern origins in its development. Instead of trying to argue that ‘we have always been here,’ we must understand that gender and sexual diversity as we understand it today is unique to our epoch, with the understanding that this also means *that heterosexuality and cisgender identities are also modern, and not eternal categories either.*

We turn our attention, then, to how modern sexual identities emerged via the history of capitalist development. This modern sexual taxonomy that developed alongside capitalism began to form from the transformation of feudalist productive relations. Christopher Chitty explains that:

[A]lternate or queer sexualities...historically emerged along the fault lines of transformed property relations in a process of combined and uneven development. This development involved the displacement from the countryside of populations superfluous to agrarian production, the concentration of those populations in urban centers and in institutions attempting to manage or capture this surplus within

---

<sup>1</sup> Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 210.

either a productive apparatus for valorizing capital or state apparatuses for managing to social fallout of economic development; and these sexualities figured as problematic to a bourgeois moral separation of private acts from public spaces.<sup>2</sup>

Where feudal relations began to break down and people entered into wage relations, populating urban centers, the potential for the emergence of new sexual/gender possibilities was realized. This happened at different times and at different rates in different parts of the world, based on their respective development.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century America, prior to the development of capitalism, the family was the main unit of production. Within these family relations, production was “structured around a household economy, composed of family units that were basically self-sufficient, independent and patriarchal. Men, women, and children farmed land owned by the male head of the household. Although there was a division of labor between men and women, the family was truly and interdependent unit of production”.<sup>3</sup> However, “By the nineteenth century, this system of household production was in decline...Men and women were drawn out of the largely self-sufficient household economy of the colonial era into a capitalist system of free labor”.<sup>4</sup> These early capitalist relations transformed the family. While the family remained dependent on each other, as the production of consumer goods was not as developed yet, “wives still baked into bread the flour they bought with their husbands’ wages; or, when they purchased yarn or cloth, they still made clothing for their families,” the transition to capitalist relations “destroyed the economic self-sufficiency of many families”.<sup>5</sup> It is of importance to note

---

<sup>2</sup> Chitty, *Sexual Hegemony*, 179.

<sup>3</sup> D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity” 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

here, however, that these shifting family formations were not a universal form of organization, as those subjugated by systems of exploitation such as chattel slavery were withheld from access to wage labor and its new cultural formations (and even after the abolition of slavery in name, sharecropping and tenant farming often required the maintenance of the family as a unit of production). Nor was this shift universal to all locations, as these shifts directly corresponded to places like New England in which productive relations were developed to a certain point.

Capitalism continued to develop and transform the rest of the American continent. As this process occurred, capitalism's development chipped away at the material base of the family "by taking away the economic functions that cemented the ties between family members".<sup>6</sup> So, "As more adults have been drawn into the free-labor system, and as capital has expanded its sphere until it produced as commodities most goods and services we need for our survival, the forces that propelled men and women into families and kept them there have weakened".<sup>7</sup> With these developments, "it became possible to release sexuality from the 'imperative' to procreate...In divesting the household of its economic independence...capitalism has created conditions that allows some men and women to organize a personal life around their erotic/emotional attraction to their own sex. It has made possible urban communities of lesbians and gay men and...a politics based on sexual identity".<sup>8</sup> While this timeline is specific to the American context, similar trajectories took place in other parts of the world at different times when and where feudal relations broke down, capitalist relations began to develop, and wage-labor began to free people from the necessity of family relations in order to survive.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 7

## Capitalism and LGBTQ+ Oppression

If capitalism produced the possibilities for the emergence of queer communities, then why are queer and trans people oppressed under capitalism? The answer lies in the capitalist ideological system which utilizes gender and sexuality as a regulatory tool.

### *The Family, Women's Labor, Reproduction, and the Gender Binary*

The first thing that must be established about the oppression of LGBTQ+ people is that it is an ideology used to enforce existing systems of dominance and exploitation. Unlike the oppression of women and people of color, as such, which are designed to extract greater surplus value through the lowering of their social value via ideologies of racism and sexism, the oppression of queer and trans people exists as a maintenance of these relations of exploitation, particularly that of women in the family.

As illustrated above, the development of the capitalist system breaks down the foundation of the family. This Marx notes himself, stating that “large-scale industry, in overturning the economic foundation of the old family system, and the family labour corresponding to it, has also dissolved the old family relationships”.<sup>9</sup> However, the family clearly did not disappear. Instead, “the ideology of capitalist society has enshrined the family as the source of love, affection, and emotional security,” and elevated the family to a moral imperative.<sup>10</sup> D’Emilio explains that the “elevation of the nuclear family to preeminence in the sphere of personal life is not accidental. Every society needs structures for reproduction and

---

<sup>9</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, 620.

<sup>10</sup> D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” 11.

childrearing, but the possibilities are not limited to the nuclear family,” however, “the privatized family fits well with capitalist relations of production”.<sup>11</sup> The nuclear family is not an eternal formation, instead, “In the early twentieth century, the nuclear family became a powerful regulatory instrument for reproducing a reliable, regimented population”.<sup>12</sup> We see that in order “[t]o counteract the high turnover of labor in Ford’s factories, the paradigmatic industrial enterprise created a Department of Sociology to investigate its workers’ family life and ensure the ethnic immigrants of Detroit had been transformed into proper ‘Ford men.’ The discipline in Ford’s factories expanded to target areas of housing and family life that had historically been a matter of indifference to the concrete production process”.<sup>13</sup> Not only did the discipline of a capitalist nuclear family ensure reproduction and a regimented labor force, but Marxist scholar Silvia Federici points out that “housework and the family are the pillars of capitalist production” for the very reason that women’s reproductive and domestic labor in the home are a part of the cycle of production.<sup>14</sup> She notes that “Beginning with ourselves as women, we know that the working day for capital does not necessarily produce a paycheck, it does not begin and end at the factory gates...while it does not result in a wage for ourselves, we nevertheless produce the most precious product to appear on the capitalist market: labor power.”<sup>15</sup> Housework, then, “is much more than house cleaning. It is servicing the wage earners physically, emotionally, sexually, getting them ready for the work day...It is taking care of our children—the future workers...ensuring that they too perform in the ways expected of them under capitalism.”<sup>16</sup> Capital is then

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Chitty, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 33-4.

<sup>14</sup> Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero*, 31.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

able to ensure a reproduction of the labor force through ideological structures which make it a social/moral imperative to marry into a heterosexual family and produce children, and is able to avoid paying for the maintenance of that reproduced labor force through the unwaged labor of women in the home. It is important to note though, that many upper class women, outsource this labor and exploit the labor of other women, predominantly migrant women of color from the Global South who do this work for them. These relations thus reinforce a racist and sexist organization of reproductive labor.

The nuclear family is a great deal for capital. They do not have to pay for the reproduction of the workforce, nor the work it takes to maintain it. This is where we see the oppression of ‘sexual and gender deviants’ come into play. As D’Emilio argues, “while capitalism has knocked the material foundation away from family life, gay men, lesbians, and heterosexual feminists have become scapegoats for the social instability of the system”<sup>17</sup>. In the crises experienced by capitalist nations following World War I, “Socially repressive forces were brought to bear on proletarian cultures of lawlessness; prostitution and homosexuality were increasingly subject to police power and pathologizing discourse” and through this repression we see “an extension of bourgeois sexual hegemony over working-class norms and self-understandings”.<sup>18</sup> Thus queer and trans people, to this day, are blamed for the weakening of the moral foundations of America: the proper relations between men and women and the purity of the family.

This particular threat that homosexuality, feminism, and prostitution posed to the family was often articulated in terms of gender transgression. As Federici notes, housework has “not only...been imposed on women,

---

<sup>17</sup> D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” 12.

<sup>18</sup> Chitty, 34.



but it has been transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need...supposedly coming from the depth of our female character”.<sup>19</sup> And so, the very nature of what a ‘woman’ is and her destiny is predicated upon a specific division of labor that becomes naturalized through the gender/sex binary. This kind of naturalization takes work to maintain. Of interest here is the fact that “Proletarian queers’ association with gender-variant self-presentation —and the state repression of such activities in the public sphere—have been historically documented...since the early eighteenth century”.<sup>20</sup> And in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, “what today we might distinguish as ‘homosexuality’ and ‘[transgender identity]’, were intimately linked,” in fact, “even gender-normative queer men who resisted the implication that their desire for men represented an inner femininity...could not help but fear that it *did*”.<sup>21</sup> Even when gay people were considered men and women, or at least considered themselves as such, their desires were often still articulated through an understanding of gender difference, hence terms like sissy, faggot, dyke, etc. We see here, then, that the persecution of queer people has not been just a means to uphold the family, but also the gender binary upon which it is based. This gendered basis of LGBTQ+ oppression also accounts for the differences in the experiences of oppression between queer men and women, with lesbians in particular facing unique challenges and struggles with homophobia due to their ‘failure’ to fulfill their designated capitalist social role as caretakers of the male proletariat and their children.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw numerous shifts in the gendered order throughout multiple periods. At the same time that women began entering

---

<sup>19</sup> Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Chitty, 186.

<sup>21</sup> Chauncey, *Gay New York*, xxiii.

into the workforce in larger numbers (it important to also note, though, that Black women had already always been in the workforce) during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly during World War I, and the feminist movement began to pose a challenge to the bourgeois gendered order, we see an increase in the persecutions of sodomy and concern about homosexual activity. George Chauncey notes that “World War I was a watershed in...the role of homosexuality in reform discourse. The war embodied reformers’ darkest fears...for it threatened the very foundation of the nation’s moral order—the family,...the racial and gender hierarchy...It also led them to focus for the first time on homosexuality as a major social problem.”<sup>22</sup> We see then that there is direct relation between the unsettling of the gendered order of labor and the persecution of gender and sexual ‘deviants’.

These patterns repeat most clearly during World War II and the post-war period. World War II “seriously upset patterns of daily life. Following in the wake of a depression that saw both marriage and birth rates drop precipitously, the war further disrupted family stability and social relations between the sexes”<sup>23</sup>. One of these disruptions was the increase in women’s role in the workforce. World War II “prompted one of the largest shifts in female labor supply in U.S. history. Roughly 6.7 million additional women went to work during the war, increasing the female labor force by almost 50 percent in a few short years. A large share of these new entrants worked in previously male-dominated jobs.”<sup>24</sup> Due to this gendered shift in labor, “a female world beyond the confines of the household and family spread enormously during the war years.”<sup>25</sup> American society could not help but sustain this shift throughout the war,

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>23</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 23

<sup>24</sup> Rose, “The Rise and Fall of Female Labor Force Participation During World War II in the United States,” 1.

<sup>25</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 29.

being that the labor women were doing needed to be done by someone. However, after the war, “The arrival of peace...ended the wartime boom in female employment almost as abruptly as it began. Female employment declined precipitously in the fall of 1945 and spring of 1946, returning aggregate female labor force participation...almost to pre-war levels.”<sup>26</sup>

John D’Emilio elaborates on this abrupt change:

After 15 years of war...traditional sex roles were reasserted. GIs shed their khakis and become breadwinners as they took back the jobs that women had filled during the national emergency. Millions of men and women married. The birth rate, having declined for more than a century, shot upward as the war came to a close. Generous educational benefits and home buying-arrangements gave millions of veterans the wherewithal to marry and support a family at a younger age than usual. A barrage of propaganda from businesses and government informed women that, with the war ending, they must relinquish their places in the workforce to make room for returning soldiers. Opinion surveys indicated that most women in heavy industry wanted to keep their jobs, yet employers routinely dismissed them in the months after VE Day. In the media, pictures of sparkling, well-equipped kitchens occupied by young mothers with babies in their arms replaced images of women in hard hats surrounded by heavy machinery. Popular psychology books and women’s magazines equated femininity with marriage and motherhood.<sup>27</sup>

The period after World War II saw a concerted effort by capital and the state aimed at reforming the pre-war sexual/gender norms which enshrined a gender conforming, nuclear family.

---

<sup>26</sup> Rose, 1.

<sup>27</sup> D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 38.

What we also see during the period immediately following World War II was the most unparalleled crackdown on gender and sexual ‘deviants’ in modern American history. Christopher Chitty’s analysis provides us some clues on this increased homophobia and the gendered economic shifts in the post-war period. He explains that “Toward the end of the nineteenth century, male homosexuality and female sex work became problematic when and where previously anarchic proletarian sexualities were subsumed through the extension of bourgeois norms to greater swaths of the working-class population,” and that these sexual “campaigns of repression tended to shore up the political support of the middle classes.”<sup>28</sup> He concludes that “socioeconomic progress is directly to blame for a wider basis for sexual repression. Thus, the massive economic boom of consumer society following the Second World War extended middle-class norms to ever more Americans and led to the most extensive policing of homosexuality in any period of history.”<sup>29</sup> Importantly, he notes that though “there were other candidates for the primary figure of ‘unnatural’ sexuality in the period from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, none of them played as central a role in marking out the field of sexual categories...as homosexuality.”<sup>30</sup> He continues, stressing an important point for our analysis, that “With respect to social power, however, the disciplining and regulation of female sexuality and the policing of the moral limits of acceptable female sexual expression was far more important to the regulation of human sexuality,” but that “There exists a historical dialectic between women’s emancipation and homosexuality that remains to be explored.”<sup>31</sup> The World War II period illustrates best this very relationship. The ideology of sexuality that

---

<sup>28</sup> Chitty, 136.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 136-7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 137.

formed itself in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was directed precisely at the maintenance of specific gendered relations of labor which reproduced the workforce. World War II provided sex-segregated environments that led to all kinds of potentials for threats to the preservation of the family, and for the experiencing of homosexual intimacy.<sup>32</sup> Following this, capital required not only the dissolution of the homosexual and intimate homosocial bonds formed by soldiers abroad and at home, but also the formation of these populations into nuclear families to not only address the loss of life in war, but more importantly to raise the previous extremely low birthrates. Women's forced dismissal from their jobs and their loss of a wage (often times making them dependent upon a male wage), the economic incentives given to veterans that encouraged the family form, and the propaganda designed to reconstruct a 'traditional,' white femininity all contributed to this effort to secure an organization of reproductive labor favorable to capital. But so did homophobic violence and public shifts in the understanding of sexual difference.

While the medical model of homosexuality certainly existed prior to World War II, it achieved its public popularity around that time. D'Emilio expresses that "psychiatric screening of inductees ordered by the federal government during World War II catapulted the psychiatric profession into the lives of millions of Americans."<sup>33</sup> This indicated a transformation in the public's knowledge of homosexuality. In fact, "In the fifteen years after World War II, legislatures of more than half the states turned to psychiatrists for solutions to the problems of sex crimes, and they passed the sexual psychopath laws that officially recognized homosexuality as a socially threatening disease."<sup>34</sup> Thus, with homosexuality and gender deviance now popularly recognized and understood as a moral *and*

---

<sup>32</sup> D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

medical threat to society, the nuclear family became re-established as a moral imperative indicating the good nature and well-being of a person. The gender/sexual deviant's subversion of norms becomes a direct influence to the moral (re)valorization of the white, heterosexual family in the post-war period, the persecution of their gender and sexual deviance a key component of obtaining and maintaining capital's desired gendered relations of labor.

### ***Race, The Family, and Sexual Ideology***

Given that the above analysis is very much one which focuses on the attempts to regulate the gendered relations predominantly in white families, it becomes imperative to address the issue of race and racism. Important questions arise: why was Black women's participation in the labor force, which predated the World Wars, not an issue that resulted in nationwide revitalization of sexual norms? If the family is important to capitalist production and reproduction, why have there been attempts to stigmatize or prevent family formations amongst people of color? The answer is that the constructions of gender and sexuality under capitalism have developed along racialized lines.

Early concerns about white women's labor and homosexuality were directly tied to eugenic concerns for the proliferation of the white race. Thomas C. Leonard stresses that Progressive Era concerns which attempted, and succeeded, at regulating women's labor were built on a combination of factors, "on grounds that it would (1) protect the biologically weaker sex from the hazards of market work; (2) protect working women from the temptation of prostitution; (3) protect male heads of household from the economic competition of women; and (4) ensure that women could better carry out their eugenic duties as 'mothers

of the race.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, early sexology and the persecution of homosexuality was carried out through racist means. Siobhan Somerville states that “Sexologists...invoked the concerns of eugenicists in pathologizing homosexuality. William Robinson, a doctor who was a prominent sexologist...in an article entitled ‘My Views on Homosexuality,’...wrote that he considered homosexuality a ‘sign of degeneracy’ and that it was ‘a sad, depolarable, pathological phenomenon. Every sexual deviation or disorder which has for its result an inability to perpetuate the race is *ipso facto* pathologic, *ipso facto* an abnormality, and this pre-eminently true of homosexuality.”<sup>36</sup> Havelock Ellis, also a prominent sexologist who often wrote of homosexuality, was an avowed eugenicist.<sup>37</sup> George Chauncey also explains that prior to the 1880s, the prosecutions for sodomy for the past eight decades were negligible, however, “By the 1890s fourteen to thirty-eight men were arrested *every year* for sodomy...Police arrested more than 50 men annually in the 1910s—more than 100 in 1917—and from 75 to 125 every year in the 1920s.”<sup>38</sup> This was influenced by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children who “involved itself in the cases of men suspected of sodomy with boys in order to ensure their indictment and successful prosecution,” targeting its efforts at immigrant neighborhoods in “the poorest sections of the city.”<sup>39</sup> Importantly, he notes that during the period of the Second World War and after, “African-Americans and Puerto Ricans would become the primary targets of sodomy prosecutions.”<sup>40</sup> We see then, that these concerns about homosexuality and women’s labor were not race blind, but were in fact directly informed by race. Concerns about gender

---

<sup>35</sup> Leonard, “Protecting Family and Race,” 757.

<sup>36</sup> Somerville, *Queering the Color Line*, 31.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Chauncey, 140.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 140-1.

and sexual norms were also always concerns about race and racial norms in service of maintaining white supremacy and its disciplining and organization of the labor force.

Racism functions under capitalism as an ideology, like gender as discussed above, to maintain specific labor relations that allow for the brutal super-exploitation of racialized labor. Harry Haywood explains that “The maintenance of the pariah status of [Black] Americans, their lack of equality, is an integral part of the policy of American finance capital” and that this policy is designed to achieve “The artificial and forcible stifling of the free economic and cultural development of [Black people] through racist persecution as a basic condition for maintaining...super-exploitation” and as a “deterrent to the formation of a common front of labor and democratic people against the common enemy—monopoly capitalism.”<sup>41</sup> Super-exploitation in this context references the Marxist understanding that exploitation is located in the extraction of surplus value, or value extracted from the productive activity of the laborer that exceeds the value for which they are compensated. If we understand that women and people of color, emphasizing that there are gradations within these categories based on race, gender, etc., are paid less than white men on average, receiving lower wages (or no wages at all), then we can also see that due to these lower wages, the capitalist is able to extract further surplus value from marginalized populations. This is accomplished through a number of means: the use of propaganda and institutionally enshrined racial and gender ideology to naturalize and justify the lowering of wages paid to people of color based on a supposed status of ‘inferiority’ or their characterization as a foreign element, through the use of repressive laws, or absence of protective ones, in order to attack and restrict the political and economic freedoms of racialized populations and women,

---

<sup>41</sup> Haywood, *Negro Liberation*, 139.



and the use of state violence to subjugate marginalized populations and ensure their continued exploitation through force (police violence, the KKK, prison labor, etc.). Capitalism, then, has a vested interest in the maintenance of white supremacy and a racially divided labor force.

The question of the family in racialized terms then comes into focus. Why was there a concerted effort in removing white women from the labor force in order to achieve a nuclear family, but not for women of color? This is precisely because the pathologization of the family formations and genders/sexualities of people of color was a key strategy in articulating them as racialized ‘others’ and maintaining their conformity into specific family formations. Roderick Ferguson describes that “As racialized ethnic minorities became the producers of surplus-value...[n]onwhite populations were racialized such that gender and sexual transgressions were not incidental” to the construction of racial difference, but a key technology of it.<sup>42</sup> He notes that “The entrance of Mexican immigrant labor into the U.S. workforce [in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century] occasioned the rise of Americanization programs designed to inculcate American ideals into the Mexican household. Those programs were premised on the racialized construction of the Mexican immigrant as primitive in terms of sexuality, and premodern in terms of conjugal rites and domestic habits.”<sup>43</sup> He continues, “as African American urban communities of the North were created out of the demands of northern capital in the early twentieth century, they gave birth to vice districts that in turn transformed gender and sexual ideals in practices in northern cities.”<sup>44</sup> Ferguson concludes that:

As capital solicited Mexican, Asian, Asian American, and African American labor, it provided the material conditions that would

---

<sup>42</sup> Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

ultimately disrupt the gender and sexual ideals upon which citizenship depended. The racialization of Mexican, Asian, Asian American, and African American labor as contrary to gender and sexual normativity positioned such labor outside the image of the American citizen. The state's regulation of nonwhite gender and sexual practices through Americanization programs, vice commissions, residential segregation, and immigration exclusion attempted to press nonwhites into gender and sexual conformity despite the gender and sexual diversity of those racialized groups. That diversity was, in large part, the outcome of capital's demand for labor. As a technology of race, U.S. citizenship has historically ascribed heteronormativity... to certain subjects and nonheteronormativity...to others.<sup>45</sup>

Through propaganda which argued there was a deficiency in the family formations, gender, and sexuality within communities of color, famously canonized in works like *The Moynihan Report* which pointed to the 'dysfunction' and 'non-normativity' of Black familial relations rooted in a supposed matriarchy, capitalism achieved two goals: the disciplining of white people into advantageous reproductive relations through enshrining gender conformity as a symbol of whiteness and national belonging, and the disciplining of communities of color into maintaining these same or similar relations of reproduction through compelling them to strive to shake off the stigma of sexual/gender perversity attributed to racial difference. This production of racial difference through gender and sexual pathologization also explains, in part, the increased violence against queer and trans people of color. As people of color are already stigmatized as sexual/gender deviants by racist propaganda, queer and trans people of color become even more aberrant in the eyes of reactionary forces.

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 14.

In addition, there was no need to take women of color out of the workforce to establish advantageous reproductive relations in communities of color. Gendering is always a racial process, and not all femininities are constructed (or valued) in the same way as hegemonic white femininity. As Angela Davis expresses, Black women were historically de-gendered through their labor as enslaved people, which masculinized Black women in the white supremacist imagination.<sup>46</sup> Black women were thus seen as able to bear a more laborious burden, being viewed as deviantly masculine in contradistinction to white femininity. Davis notes that this meant Black women “have carried the double burden of wage labor and housework.”<sup>47</sup> Given that this is the racial fantasy of Black women’s (de)gendering, there was no need to remove Black women from the workforce in order to attain a properly American, capitalist gendered order, because Black women’s participation in labor never disturbed this gendered order. The gendered order was constructed along racial lines with the very notion that Black women, and other women of color, were made to labor. Thus they could service capital in two ways, through the reproductive labor in the home and the super-exploitation of women of color through wage labor.

It is important to also address, however, that the reproduction of the racialized labor force is not attributed the same value as white labor under American racialized capitalism. While at times it is seen as advantageous for capital to reproduce a racialized workforce (i.e. when the American economy remained based on the labor of enslaved people after the abolition of the international slave trade), at other times efforts have been directed to restrict the reproduction of families of color. For example, in 1906 President Roosevelt voiced the concerns of white supremacy with his

---

<sup>46</sup> Davis, *Women, Race, & Class*, 230-1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

warning of the “impending threat of ‘race suicide.’”<sup>48</sup> Davis notes that the movement for birth control and reproductive freedoms accepted this race suicide thesis, taking action to introduce birth control in communities of color, making it a moral imperative for women of color to refrain from reproduction and restrict the size of their families as to not create a drain on the wealthy or the state in order to support them.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, women of color have been systematically sterilized in the United States throughout history, in absurd percentages: reports from the 1970s indicating that “20 percent of all married Black women have been permanently sterilized. Approximately the same percentage of Chicana women had been rendered surgically infertile. Moreover, 43 percent of the women sterilized through federally subsidized programs were Black,” and importantly these sterilization campaigns were frequently done against their will.<sup>50</sup> So why does a system that benefits from the labor of racialized people seek to prevent their reproduction? The answer lies in the fact that racial minorities are typically rendered ‘surplus populations’ under capitalism. Marx defines surplus populations as “a relatively redundant working population, i.e. a population which is superfluous to capital’s average requirements for its own valorization.”<sup>51</sup> Marx explains that “a surplus population of workers is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis...It forms a disposable industrial reserve army...a mass of human material always ready for exploitation by capital.”<sup>52</sup> Ferguson argues that “In the United States, racial groups who have a history of being excluded from the rights and privileges of citizenship...have made up the surplus populations upon

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>51</sup> Marx, *Capital Volume I*, 782.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 784.

which U.S. capital has depended.”<sup>53</sup> So, while capital disciplines racialized peoples into reproductive relations which ensure that capital does not have to compensate reproductive labor, as it does with the white population, it is certainly not always committed to the proliferation and reproduction of minority racial populations in the same way. Sterilizations of women of color happen precisely for the reasons stated above, that these women are viewed as inevitably producing a surplus, more than what capital needs, and importantly, more than capital wants to support, believing that these women’s children would produce a strain on the wealthy and the state’s welfare programs, and that the reproduction of people of color beyond a strategic amount for capitalism is unwanted and restricted, unless needed in crises of reproduction.

The logic of the family and the function of gender and sexual ideology is varied and nuanced. It is neither race-blind, nor class-blind, but instead serves to discipline specific populations into specific formations which benefit a racialized and gendered organization of labor under capitalism. Furthermore, the oppression of LGBTQ+ people is also not race-blind or class-blind, and is instead built on a foundation of racism. Queer people of color are not only characterized as more deviant, and therefore rendered more vulnerable, than their white counterparts in the eyes of the state due to the racial construction of gender and sexual norms, but their status as racialized people enduring super-exploitation compounds their oppression.

### ***Capitalism, Religious Conservatism, and LGBTQ+ Oppression***

Capitalism is often discussed in terms of an ‘amoral’ system, one which is concerned with no particular form of morality, and thus religious

---

<sup>53</sup> Ferguson, 15.

fundamentalism and extremism is sometimes articulated as external to it, or even in conflict with its development. This framing renders the discussion of the religious-themed persecution of sexual and gender minorities rather confusing. However, by peeling back the fantastical façade of the religious Right, we see nothing but the agents of capitalist exploitation.

Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis note that “Free-market, laissez-faire economics, the militarization of the country... ‘bolstering internal security,’ for example, giving the FBI and CIA free rein...cutting all social spending except that devoted to building prisons and ensuring that millions will fill them; in a word, asserting US capital’s ownership of the world and setting ‘America’ to work at the minimum wage (or below) are goals for which all the New Right swears on the Bible.”<sup>54</sup> They conclude: “Always, when uncertain of its foundations, capital goes down to basics...The institutionalization of repression and self-discipline along the line of the New Christian Right is required today at both ends of the working-class spectrum: for those destined to temporary low-waged jobs, or to a perennial quest for employment, as well as for those destined to work with the most sophisticated equipment technology can produce.”<sup>55</sup> Capitalism, through the ideology of religious right, achieves a disciplined workforce of “angels motivated by religious-patriotic concerns.”<sup>56</sup>

Religious manifestations of the oppression of sexual and gender minorities are not at all at odds with capitalism, but a primary feature of its ideology in America. Religious fundamentalism and extremism promote the very ideals of a disciplined worker and an adherence to an advantageous sexual ideology and reproductive politics, marking religious conservatism as a tool of capitalist domination over the working class.

---

<sup>54</sup> Federici and Caffentzis, “Mormons in Space Revisited,” 108.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

Persecution by hegemonic Christianity is not a unique aspect of LGBTQ+ oppression, but part of the larger picture by which capitalism regulates and disciplines the working class through its ideological apparatuses. Instilling within the working class a religiosity, manifesting as a self-disciplining that favors the needs of capital and simultaneously a value system which valorizes the family formation, reproduction, and obedience, is killing two birds with one stone, so to speak.

### *Queer Class Ascendancy and Transgender Oppression*

The oppression of queer people does not, as it has been previously argued, take a transhistorical and eternal form. As Christopher Chitty notes “The broad cultural shift away from identification with the gender-variant type in the 1970s and 1980s represented an attempt to construct a more masculine self-image during gay liberation struggles and distanced gay men from a historically working-class queer subjectivity that had been comparably unconcerned with the loss of bourgeois status... This shift and the oblivion into which a swishy working-class dominant has fallen,” allowed for the creation of “commercial establishments openly catering to gay clientele.”<sup>57</sup> And these “new spaces of acceptance formalized previously criminal cultures of public sex, creating a buffer zone against legal forces of repression... a plebian counterpublic was replaced by a new foundation in small businesses allowed to operate unperturbed by the state. As state violence receded, markets stepped in to meet and shape a consumer profile of gay identity.”<sup>58</sup> While it cannot be stated that gender-nonconformity exists only amongst working-class queer people, it is worth noting that the ascendance of gay people into a market group, as well as

---

<sup>57</sup> Chitty, 187-8.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 188.

their ascendance into acceptance into the ranks of the upper class, coincided with the turn towards a new potential: the popularization of a gender-normative gay subject. As bourgeois gay people in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries began to prove that gay people could also be properly gendered subjects, could also have families, and could also form ourselves into reproductive relations that capital found advantageous, the ideology of sexuality and gender shifted, along with the political arena. Marriage became a primary concern for the ascendant gay rights movement, and its legalization actually became a possibility. It is also worth noting that during this time, the prior trend of the consistent, but limited increase, of women's participation in the labor force, as well as the postponing of marriage and childbirth by a sizeable portion of these women focusing on careers seemed to stop, instead, "Beginning around 2000, the advances in women's labor force participation stopped. The rate flattened and then began to decline. To be sure, the decline is relatively small...but it is real and it is unique among developed countries," noting that these trends have continued through 2016.<sup>59</sup> Capitalism seemed to have stabilized the threat that shifts in the regulation of gendered labor divisions had previously posed. These two simultaneously occurring phenomenon might, in part, explain the state's concession to certain democratic rights for gay people.

Around the same time that the gay liberation movement shifted towards a more liberal pursuit of inclusion in bourgeois institutions and celebration of the normative gay 'clone' aesthetic and politics, the transgender liberation movement was also beginning to assert itself as distinct from LGB emancipatory projects. Susan Stryker explains that "Transgenderism and homosexuality had been conceptually interrelated since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and transgender politics, the homophile movement, and gay liberation had run alongside one another and sometimes

---

<sup>59</sup> Jacobs and Bahn, "Women's History Month: U.S. Women's Labor Force Participation."



intersected throughout the 1950s and 1960s.”<sup>60</sup> With the decline of the militant gay liberation movement in the mid 70s, however, there was “a watershed moment in this shared history when the transgender political movement lost its alliances with gay and feminist communities” and instead shifted the focus of trans activism to addressing transness as a unique social phenomenon, contrary to the now very gender normative culture amongst gay people.<sup>61</sup> As the gay liberation movement in its more radical stance against capitalism and the family began to dissipate with the advent of neoliberalism and HIV/AIDS, gay emancipation movements moved shifted towards a movement dominated by the newly arising gay petit-bourgeoisie, accomplished in part through its retreat into the non-profit sector. The transgender movement, however, continued to pose a threat to maintaining the gendered order of labor that the bourgeois gay rights movement no longer sought to trouble in the mainstream. This is very much represented in the fact that as programs making medical transition more widely available developed, “trans people seeking surgery and hormones quickly discovered” that “the new university-based scientific research programs were far more concerned with restabilizing the gender system...than they were with helping that cultural revolution along by further exploding mandatory relationships between sexed embodiment, psychological gender identity, and social gender role.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, “Access to transsexual medical services...became entangled with a socially conservative attempt to maintain traditional gender configurations in which changing sex was grudgingly permitted for the few seeking to do so, to the extent that the practice did not trouble the gender binary for the many.”<sup>63</sup> Refusals to be assimilated and the advocacy for a destabilization

---

<sup>60</sup> Stryker, *Transgender History*, 118.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-8.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

of a static gendered order that the transgender liberation movement represented in spite of these attempts, continued to receive mass state repression even after the state began to wane its more outright attacks on LGB people, as seen through bills targeting the ability of people, especially children and teens to medically transition and access healthcare, even criminalizing transition for teenagers and those who aid them in Alabama with felony charges. This continued persecution represents an offensive from the ruling class that attempts preclude any other ways of articulating oneself or living outside of the bounds of the capitalist, heterosexual reproductive gender binary.

As bourgeois, and even working-class LGB people, began to articulate themselves, at least in the visible mainstream, as distinct from a gender revolution, often limiting participation in the unsettling of these boundaries to entertainment purposes through mediums like drag, the separation of the LGB movements from the T and their potential for inclusion in the state became more concrete. The transgender population, except as tokens for progressive facades, has remained less assimilable for a system which has historically depended on a rigid definition of gender and sex in order to maintain its current/favored relations of production and reproduction. This allowed many bourgeois gay institutions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to essentially deflect their historical oppression onto transgender people and the queer working class by leaving them, and their concerns/interests, out of their campaigns for rights, as is evident by the work of the Human Rights Campaign in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or by joining in with their straight oppressors in reaction, stigmatizing transness and advocating for a separation of these movements and their history.

While capitalism, as the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries went on, provided allowance for the emergence of new socially permissible, though not

always widely accepted, family formations that did not significantly trouble the gendered order or capital's access to a reproductive labor force, the recent crises in production and reproduction, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, seem to have reignited the fires of sexual ideology in ways that seek to increase repression against gender and sexual variance and to restrict reproductive freedoms. With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and the threat of even more radical restrictions on IUD's and other contraceptives hinted at by Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves coinciding with the exponential heightening of the rate of introduction and passing of homophobic and transphobic legislation since 2020, it seems that the crises of capitalism have produced another crackdown on gender and sexual norms to reassert its domination, often leaving bourgeois queer people stunned as they suddenly finding themselves once again marginalized like their working-class counterparts.

### **Communism and LGBTQ+ Liberation**

From the above it is clear that oppressive regulations of sexuality are a key function of the superstructure of capitalism, shifting and changing to meet its dynamic needs. There is no reform under this system that can fully do away with the contradictions and crises that engender this kind of violence. We must then turn to a system which uproots the very foundations of class society in which the oppression of gender and sexual variance is rooted. This system is communism.

### ***Communism, Sexuality, Gender, and the Family***

From the time of Marx and Engels, the abolition of the bourgeois family was a component of a communist revolutionary platform. Even while still holding to a heteronormative framework, they reference

famously in *The Communist Manifesto* the “Abolition of the family,” noting how “Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the communists.”<sup>64</sup> They continue, asking “On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain.”<sup>65</sup> They argue that “The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production” and that the point of the abolition of the family under communism is “to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.”<sup>66</sup>

Decades later, Alexandra Kollontai would expand upon this principle of communism. She argues:

Family and marriage are historical categories, phenomena which develop in accordance with the economic relations that exist at the given level of production. The form of marriage and of the family is thus determined by the economic system of the given epoch, and it changes as the economic base of society changes. The family, in the same way as government, religion, science, morals, law, and customs, is part of the superstructure which derives from the economic system of society...

The communist economy does away with the family. In the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat there is a transition to the single production plan and collective social consumption, and the family loses its significance as an economic unit. The external economic functions of the family disappear, and consumption ceases to be organised on an individual family basis, a network of social kitchens and canteens is established. and the making, mending and washing of clothes and other aspects of housework are integrated into the national economy. In the period of the dictatorship of the

---

<sup>64</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 26.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

proletariat the family economic unit should be recognised as being, from the point of view of the national economy. not only useless but harmful...

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat then. the material and economic considerations in which the family was grounded cease to exist. The economic dependence of women on men and the role of the family in the care of the younger generation also disappear. as the communist elements in the workers' republic grow stronger. With the introduction of the obligation of all citizens to work, woman has a value in the national economy which is independent of her family and marital status. The economic subjugation of women in marriage and the family is done away with, and responsibility for the care of the children and their physical and spiritual education is assumed by the social collective.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, we can see that as the family is the product of specific material relations under certain forms of production, the abolition of class society will also be the foundation for the abolition of the family. Understanding the centrality of reproductive labor in the family to the oppression of women, and its concomitant gendered binary enforced to maintain these divisions of labor, it is evident that a communist society which abolishes classes and private property uproots the economic basis of women's oppression and lays the groundwork for women's true equality.

As previously discussed, a critical function of the oppression and stigmatization of LGBTQ+ people is the maintenance of the family and the oppression of women. Given that the transition to a communist society tasks itself with the destruction of these gendered relations, it follows that communism, alone, with its abolition of the family can finally bring liberation for LGBTQ+ people.

---

<sup>67</sup> Kollontai, "Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations," 225-6.

Traditionally, Marx, Engels, and Kollontai, along with others, saw this communist abolition of the family embodied in a new, more egalitarian formation of heterosexual relationships. However, with the advent of gay liberation and other movements which illustrated the potential for other family formations, we can see that communism has the potential not to just simply finally realize heterosexual relationships in their 'highest form,' but allows for an expansion of affective relations *beyond* the heterosexual family. Importantly, though, family has been, especially in marginalized communities, a space of refuge from the exploitation in capitalist society, so it is important to note that the abolition of the family does not mean familial ties are simply destroyed, but these relations are made truly egalitarian and freed from the limiting constraints of capitalist relations. Further, with the socialization of reproduction and reproductive labor, communism makes possible the reorganization of relations between people, romantic, sexual, *and platonic*, in numerous and unforeseen ways. The communist future holds the potential for all kinds of new forms of partnerships, both casual and committed, that are unrestrained by a capitalistic moral regulation. We cannot yet see what these may be until we get there, but what is clear is that communism lays the foundations for a true liberation of human sexuality and romantic affection.

Furthermore, the freeing of reproduction from a gendered division of labor through its socialization frees that labor from its gender binary, and us from gender. Rather than some state mandate outlawing gender, viewing this issue from a Marxist standpoint we can understand that without its material basis, the state enforcement of rigid gender regulation withers away. Without the need to socialize bodies to prepare them for certain labor and performances of gender to maintain those relations of labor, communism at last frees us from gendered constraints. While

demands must be made now and through revolutionary action for the immediate abolition of restrictions on trans healthcare, allowing free access for trans individuals to any services they see relevant to their transition, the potential communism holds expands beyond just a valorization of trans rights and our free access to healthcare. Communism, freeing us from the material basis of a class-based gender regulation, opens up the door to new gender formations and relations we have yet to conceptualize. This does not mean that cisgender people must simply one day stop being men and women under some new world order of transgender communism, but that communist society will release transgender *and cisgender people alike* from the regulation and enforcement of a rigid gender binary which limits the human potential for expression and embodiment. A communist future holds great potential for freedom in the realms of relationships and gender expression for *all people*.

### ***Working Class LGBTQ+ People Need a Working-Class Revolution***

LGBTQ+ oppression is a malleable component of capitalist ideology, one which is able to be utilized at a moment's notice by the ruling class to ensure the re-disciplining of the workforce in times of crisis. This reveals it as a system which is not going away under capitalism, at least not perceivably. Even in times of progress (though often only for some), we are always, as illustrated above, just one crisis in (re)production away from an intensifying of homophobic and transphobic oppression. Thus, it is also revealed that it is the communist movement which is uniquely empowered to liberate LGBTQ+ people from oppression.

However, with this reality it becomes imperative to note the class specificity of the current LGBTQ+ movement. Bourgeois status has

allowed many LGBTQ+ people to essentially escape systemic homophobia and transphobia to varying degrees. Homophobia and transphobia, especially in times of relative progress or easing of sexual/gender regulation, is unevenly directed primarily towards working-class LGBTQ+ people. There have been reasonable critiques, then, of the gay rights movement, that it does not attend to the issues of those most vulnerable in the LGBTQ+ community (i.e. trans people and working class queer people, specifically those who are people of color). While these critiques are important, what is often missing is the understanding that the bourgeois LGBTQ+ community is not different from any other bourgeois population. To suggest “[t]hat the queer rich would fund social justice programs for the queer poor suggests that the queer mind is immune to free-market ideology...it ignores the economic grounds of hegemony and instead imagines a marketplace of ideas...Should we be surprised that the queer rich have failed to fund social justice for the queer poor and instead use their money to selfishly advance their own propertied interests? Take out the word queer and we find the status quo. The argument...assumes that these funds are community funds rather than rich people’s money expropriated from poor people’s labor.”<sup>68</sup> It becomes clear that a politics for LGBTQ+ freedom that assumes solidarity with the rich, or even community with them, is doomed to fail us. But as a fraction of an already minority population, importantly without the same resources as the queer rich, working class queer and trans people must look for allies elsewhere. This does not require us to simply abandon any struggles for our rights or conditional coalitions with the queer rich for specific goals of reform, or the subjugation of our struggles to others. But what it does require is that we must join the broad working-class movement for socialism.

---

<sup>68</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Everybody*, 234-5.



The reactionary position held by the communist and socialist movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which denied the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in their ranks (however we were always there anyways: Harry Hay, Leslie Feinberg, Claude McKay, Lorraine Hansberry, Angela Davis, etc.) and the response of gay liberation and later queer politics to then see LGBTQ+ liberation as the lone vanguard of the struggle for freedom obfuscated the necessary relations of these movements. In response to our exclusion from the traditional Left in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the gay liberation movement espoused a kind of radical idealism in the realm of sexual politics. Simon Watney explains that “in a bizarre way one finds a kind of radical parody of the traditional ‘corruption’ theory of homosexuality, to live an ‘out’ gay life is to challenge the entire structure of social relations under capitalism and, by extension, is an active revolutionary process in so far as homosexuality itself is seen as ‘innately’ and contagiously subversive.”<sup>69</sup> He continues, asserting that “At the time it seemed as if a choice had to be made between a total commitment to gay politics, or else to a traditional left party framework in which issues of sexuality could not possibly be raised with the urgency they required.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, “The result was a splendid isolationism...Demands for radical social and cultural change were interpreted solely in terms of an extremely vague theory of Total Revolution, of which the GLF [Gay Liberation Front] was to be the self elected vanguard, piping the masses forward simultaneously from the tyranny of sex-roles and capitalism as a whole...This was the measure of the absence of any firm theory of class and ideology in relation to sexuality within the framework of the GLF.”<sup>71</sup> This reaction, however, is understandable contextually given that even the traditional Left had largely opposed itself to gay liberation as a demand of socialism, giving

---

<sup>69</sup> Watney, “The Ideology of GLF,” 68-9.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

them the perception that as all forces were against them. However we can see today that this position is misguided. The *being* of any particular identity is not a revolutionary act in itself, even one that is oppressed. Would simply existing as a proletarian and having pride in that overthrow capitalism? Obviously not. And yet this particular standpoint still remains somewhat present in certain sectors of queer Left. It is not enough to organize ourselves as LGBTQ+ people, even those of us who are working-class, especially given the tendency of white LGBTQ+ radicals and organizations to marginalize questions of race and class. Even attempts for more radical transformation under the current conditions, such as abolition of the family, would fail ultimately as a revolutionary platform. Capitalism would find other means of procuring its reproductive needs, it is nothing if not adaptable to shifting conditions and resistance. And even transformations of this sort under capitalist relations could certainly not be said to be favorable to working-class LGBTQ+ people, who often depend on current family structures to pool resources. Additionally, it would even more certainly not undo the oppression people of color experience under capitalism. We cannot resort to separatism like our predecessors, whose sexual revolution failed partly for that very reason.

We must, then, pursue our goals and the abolition of the material basis of our oppression through a broad, cross-identity working-class movement. Capitalism views the lives of queer and trans people as collateral to the maintenance of its profits. It is clear that whatever reforms are possible under capitalism will only ever benefit the queer rich, with the rest of us only getting the leftovers. Through broad coalition with other members of the working class for the program of socialist transformation, we can expropriate the expropriators. It is imperative, then, that we join the movement for socialism *as working-class LGBTQ+ people* (along with those LGBTQ+ people who see the necessity of the working-class struggle

for socialism) and advance our demands within it. By empowering the working class struggle for socialism with an understanding of the oppression of queer and trans people under capitalism and its connections to the oppression of all working class people, one that is importantly informed by gender, race, and class differences, and demanding that we, too, be liberated from it *on our terms as members of the working-class*, we can secure freedoms untold that the queer rich and capitalist reform could never give us.

## Works Cited

- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York*. New York: Basic Books, 2019.
- Chitty, Christopher. *Sexual Hegemony*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.
- D'Emilio, John. *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- . *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Federici, Silvia and George Caffentzis. "Mormons in Space Revisited." Federici, Silvia. *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin*. Oakland: PM Press, 2020. 107-15.
- Federici, Silvia. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland: PM Press, 2012.
- Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Haywood, Harry. *Negro Liberation*. New York: International Publishers, 1948.
- Jacobs, Elisabeth and Kate Bahn. "Women's History Month: U.S. Women's Labor Force Participation." 22 March 2019. *Washington Center for Equitable Growth*. 17 May 2022.
- Kollontai, Alexandra. "Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations." Kollontai, Alexandra. *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*. Trans. Alix Holt. New York, 1980. 225-31.
- Leonard, Thomas C. "Protecting Family and Race." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (2005): 757-91.
- Lewis, Holly. *The Politics of Everybody, Feminism, Queer Theory, and Marxism at the Intersection: A Revised Edition*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. New York: International Publishers, 1970.
- Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: International Publishers, 1948.

- Marx, Karl. *Capital Volume 1*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Rose, Evan K. "The Rise and Fall of Female Labor Force Participation During World War II in the United States." *The Journal of Economic History* (2018): 1-39.
- Somerville, Siobhan. *Queering the Color Line*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*. New York: Seal Press, 2017.
- Watney, Simon. "The Ideology of GLF." *Homosexuality: Power & Politics*. Ed. The Gay Left Collective. New York: Verso, 2018. 64-76.