

The Frente de Liberacion Homosexual-Homosexual Liberation Front (FLH-HLF, 1987-1976) was the first political movement of homosexual men in Argentina, and included writers such as Manuel Puig and Nestor Perlongher. Despite its short life span, this organization set the ground for future developments. The FLH emerged in the context of increasing authoritarianism rather than being the result of a transition to democracy. The relationship with homophobic Peronists and left-wing traditions was, paradoxically, crucial for the emergence of the FLH. Most homosexual activists came from the left, and they understood homosexual liberation as one aspect of the struggle against capitalism. These activists were highly critical of anticapitalist politics as it existed in Argentina at the time, but they also actively sought to become allies of the expanding New Left during the period. Eventually, however, the 1976-1983 military dictatorship made all forms of dissidence impossible, and the FLH had to dissolve. Perlongher himself fleeing to Brazil while others were forced to flee or face being "disappeared"--the U.S.-backed dictatorship's preferred form of execution.



SEX & REVOLUTION

FLH

Homosexual Liberation Front

Preface

In the present we are coming to a moment in the history of revolutionary processes in which the accumulation of historical events yields a sufficient number of elements to be able to discover a common characteristic among almost all of them. It consists of a generalized tendency, on the part of the subjective expressions of said processes, to outline a questioning of the social structure based on the method of capitalist production, and on the juridical-political apparatus derived from it. There exists a theoretical reason that justifies this praxis: the assumption that, deriving the ideological superstructure (which is crystallized in a particular "life-style" of a given society) from a basic economic superstructure, when the latter is modified through a revolutionary process, the ideological superstructure would suffer a mechanical modification in terms of its concepts of justice and equality, characteristics of the new economic order.

However, history does not pay for this assumption. On the contrary, the exclusive modification of the economic infrastructure and the juridical-political apparatus do not revolutionize the ideological superstructure *per se*; if it survives, the persistence of the ideological superstructure drowns out the revolution sooner or later. Throughout this investigation we will attempt to clarify this subject.*

*At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict

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The relations of production, which, insofar as it exists as a form of exploitation expressed by dominant and dominated classes, are in contradiction with the development of productive forces, they tend to support themselves through representations of these relations of production in the minds of individuals (ideology) and the action of the juridical-political superstructure, but they also govern specifically over the terrain of these ideological representations. From this point onward the problem of how a change in the relations of production as a result of a modification in the juridical-political superstructure can end up not necessarily producing a subversion of the current ideology begins to make itself clear, ideology being best understood as a representation internalized by individuals.

with the existing relations of production or--
this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms--with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution."

(K. Marx, "Preface", A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1997)

We should start by asking ourselves what factors inherent to human beings as a species might create, establish, and perpetuate the origin of domination. Because if we do not have those factors clarified, it would result in being impossible to explain why human beings accept and even defend the oppression to which they submit themselves, which rips apart their physical health and also their freedom.

A social system is maintained not only based on the mechanisms of economic exploitation, rather the production of complete human beings with a standardized psychology according to the needs of this system is essential for the perpetuation of these mechanisms. This means that a capitalism society desperately needs to produce not only goods, but also human beings that can produce those goods according to the established method of exploitation. Which is to say that a system of alienated production needs to form-- or rather, deform--human beings to their correct measurements. What are these measurements? What is the form--the deformation--to which a person is submitted?

As production for the benefit of the dominant class is a characteristic of the capitalist system of production, the concrete establishment of domination over the rest of human beings interests this class greatly. In this manner, individuals are sculpted to be dominated and or to dominate, and this is carried out through specific and powerful psychological mechanisms, mechanisms that ultimately end up sustaining and perpetuating that order of domination. It is important then to discern the existing relationships between the structure of exploitation (extraction of capital) and the everyday ideology that surrounds every one of these acts, as small as they might be, that the individual carries out. Insofar as (and this is necessary to stress once more), the feeling, purpose, and crux of this system of domination is to secure the exploitation of the workforce for the benefit of the privileged class, all of these acts by all of these individuals are directed towards that ultimate goal. No area of individual behavior can escape from this overdetermination, since then the individual would remain free to call into question the system of domination. Any system based on exploitation cannot avoid being "totalitarian". Every area of life (every little ordinary happening) is integrated into the system with a specific role. It is for this reason that all private acts and all communal acts by all individuals (be it football, vacations, love, consumption) end up becoming acts that fulfill a political function.

On the basis of the correspondence between structure and superstructure, between what belongs to the individual and what to the social, we will try to describe how it is an "ideologization" of life itself. For this reason, we should center ourselves in the socialization process of the individual, which means to center our investigation around the system of preparation and training to which one is submitted with the purpose of adjusting to the demands of a certain determined society. In our case, the capitalist system. In what manner is the human being converted into the oppressor and or the oppressed? What values, fears, behaviors, feelings, are inculcated by it, and in which stage or moment of the individual's development?

From birth, every human being confronts a primary group: the family. What does the family mean? For a creature such as human beings, whose period of learning (infancy) is the most prolonged of the biological kingdom, a social agency is necessary. This agency is specifically charged with educating them, helping them and keeping them together during this process. This means that the family is a factory of social human beings. Now moreover, in the way in which a social group based on exploitation needs people preadapted to enter in the process of alienated production, the family, the nurturer, must become a "deforming" agent.

It consists of a micro-society that reproduces the system that feeds it in nurseries. The overused affirmation that "the family is the ba-

basis of society" acquires its clear validity: this is because it reproduces all of its characteristics and because it is the agency for production of human beings conditioned for the system of family relations and by extension, social relations.

In the standard family unit there is a holder of power, the male, who, inasmuch as he controls the economic power of the family and the political power of a society, he controls in his own right the system of family relations and their extension, social relations. The object of his domination is, first of all, the wife, and secondly, the children, who are the product-commodity of the family factory. The ultimate meaning of the family is to produce human beings that replace their progenitors in their tasks, inculcating them in the mechanisms of domination so that they can perform them without protest. In this way the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy is verified and secured on this level, as well as in all the other dimensions of social life.

This domination is not just some abstract theoretical question, but rather, as we have said, it governs all acts of everyday life. It is revealed at its core in the sexual power of the male over the female in the sex act. The sex act becomes an institution structured culturally for the satisfaction of the man, who holds all the initiative, and who has the legal right to pleasure.* This domination in the sex act ultimately

*Recently performed studies, Masters and Johnson, "Hu-

in the ideological sphere, "is" the objective manifestation of the domination of the woman by the man in everyday life. Thus the woman becomes an object of pleasure and reproduction. It is necessary to remark that the system that imposes the need to perform household tasks without giving the right to any remuneration, which unveils her true situation: domestic servitude.

This framework of partnership corresponds more or less closely to the prevailing order of our civilization (males govern, females obey), even in moments in which the capitalist process gradually incorporated women into the productive apparatus by virtue of its growing needs for production. Relatively speaking, this insertion undermined the authority of the males and inspired demands from the women. However, the male's hold on power did not wane: he was compelled to make concessions; yet at the same time, a large part of the authority of the family depends on the State, which he controls, directly or not, through other ideological apparatuses (schools, tools of mass communication). The battles won by women were not able to change--until now--the essence of the chauvinist system of domination. In fact, men continue to control the basic resources within

 "Human Sexual Response," Mary Jane Sherfey, "The Evolution and Nature of Female Sexuality in Relation to Psychoanalytic Theory," Vintage Books, 1973 etc. open the door for a deeper proposal with regards to the relevance of the repression of feminine sexuality in the maintenance and upkeep of the dominant culture.

the processes of production and continue to take on the role of protagonist in the sexual act. The nucleus of women's oppression, continues, then, intact.

This partner of domination, in which the new equality is a bluff, is reproduced, has children, and is raised for this purpose. Children are the objects of paternal domination. The father, who controls the household finances, concomitantly possesses the power to issue indisputable orders, supported by the false ideology that the child is chronically incompetent, unable to even choose their own actions. The child is an object of their parents' possession, a situation sanctioned by the juridical concept of parental authority. They are deprived of rights up to such a point that, in the sexual field, childhood sexuality is considered "a recent discovery".

This first great sex object of the child, in our current culture--the mother--is prohibited as a taboo since time immemorial: the taboo of incest, one of whose many goals consists in reinforcing the authority of the father and his exclusive right to bodily access of the mother, separating her from her children. In general every sexual activity is prohibited for the child: groping, masturbation, etc. Childhood sexuality is denied explicitly by the ideology of this system; while, nevertheless, it functions objectively, this negation operates in practice as a mutilation. Truly what is childhood sexuality? Childhood sexuality shows the variety of impulses, be they coprophilic, homosexual, fetishistic,

heterosexual, bestial, autoerotic, etc., which when manifested prior to the process of socialization, are shown to be inextricable elements of human libidinal output. It is in this sense that the child has been characterized as a "perverse polymorph" (in familial terms, "that little degenerate"). Childhood sexuality, then, shows the variety of impulses of all types and object that make up the human libido, and in this way, it is the most authentic face of life itself.

What is real is that in sexuality, in the multiplicity and richness of its possibilities lies the first glimmer of freedom that we find in nature, and it is this enormous output of potential energy in the libido that must be directed towards the social issue of alienated labor. The castration of sexuality has as its objective the introduction of domination of the system in the brain itself, in its intimacy, in order to "soften up" human beings in fertile ground for this system's ideology and for alienated labor. A human being who makes their sexual impulses an object of domination, will not be surprised to find people who are repressed and dominated in the social world; a human being who makes their sexual impulses an object of domination, is prepared to adopt the role of dominator and-or dominated without flinching. In this caste system, boys are educated in domination, and women in submission. The individual internalizes the same roles that they find in the family: to be a father-oppressor if they are seen as male, or mother-submissive if they are seen as female. The authority figure of

the father is reproduced later in the figure of the police, of the boss, of the State, pillars of the system before which individuals kneel as before their father. In this way the scheme of domination is transferred faithfully to the individual through the family. Furthermore, in the class system, each one receives training according to the position that is preordained for them. The son of the aristocracy is educated so that they may order the proletariat and at the same time to obey their hierarchical superiors. The son of the proletariat is educated to be a worker, or rather, to obey their boss--or eventually to attempt to also be the boss--.

The domination of the libido (sexuality) culminates with its reduction to determined parts of the body, especially the genitals. In reality, the entire body is capable of providing sexual pleasure, but the society of domination needs as many zones of the body possible to be able to attribute them to work. Genitalization is destined to remove the function of producing pleasure from the body in order to convert it into an instrument of alienated production, rendering sexuality as only that which is needed for reproduction. It is for this reason that the system condemns all forms of sexual activities that are not the introduction of the penis into the vagina with special severity, calling them "perversions", pathological deviations, etc. In order to chain the human being to alienated labor it is necessary to mutilate them by reducing their sexuality to the genitals.

We should remember that these processes are done within a specific socioeconomic mark that is characterized by exploitation. The ruling classes perform a very particular administration of a of universal process inherent to the human being as a species: the free development of human sexual energy in the sense of its maturation and creation, changing its course and its goals. The dominant classes restrict and legislate the process of socialization in view of its objective, alienated production, converting it in a process of transformation from free sexual energy to alienated labor.

This sexual schema has lost its characteristic strictness in the last century, and this is this is not casual. As capitalism erodes itself, as a result of its own internal contradictions, it starts to reveal its sources of economic and sexual misery, it is these that the people question in their everyday actuation, therefore taking down the old codes of conduct. But as long as these needs for freedom are not combined with an explicit revolutionary platform, this same system is the only one which gives them a response, maintaining the same sources of sexual oppression but providing illusory or substitutive satisfactions. Thus for example, as a response to these demands, the system produces and brokers a flourishing pornography industry, which transforms the subject into spectator of their own sexual fantasies, in place of becoming the happy actor of them.

To whom does this preservation of traditional

moral values benefit? The dominant classes, those which make sure that the individuals subjected to its empire will suffer a process of socialization ("education") destined to provide them with docile servants in a continuous manner. The preservation of the traditional moral values, the survival of authoritarianism and the extension of the authoritarian character to all social classes are only benefits the ideology of domination; even when the dominant class--in our case the bourgeoisie--agrees to economic or political reforms, including, be it in a weakened state, the subsistence of the patriarchy* assures the permanence of a mental and ideological apparatus that will hold on to power, even if for the bourgeoisie--through the control of the means of production--or for the bureaucratic covers which eventually replace it, in direct or indirect control of production and culture in the broadest possible sense of the term. gamut of the possibilities of human relation: the homo and heterosexual tendencies abide in it in perfect harmony. It is the process of alienated socialization which introduces the separation between the good and the bad, between guilt and bad conscience.

It is not casual, then, that the two things most tabooed by our society are money and sex. The general state of things in the culture has not

*System of domination of one group defined by anatomical conformation--men--over another group also defined by anatomical conformation--women.

changed, substantially, given that the men continue to make up the dominant group and women the dominated group. Even in a wide array of fields the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy is maintained.

But this is not the totality of the system of male oppression. Those individuals who do not comply with their established sexual role, the homosexuals, are experienced as the greatest threat to this system, to the extent that they not only defy it, but also disavow them but refute the system's pretensions of identifying itself with the order of Nature. Nothing in the biological sciences authorizes us to overvalue one form of sexual relation to the detriment of the others. The desexualization of the human body is the work of culture. In the case of men, it charges passive anal coitus, the utilization of the anus as a sexual zone, despite the fact that it is surrounded by erotic nerve endings. Male breasts are also strongly taboored, despite being erogenous areas, solely based on their resemblance to feminine anatomy.

The sexual ideology of the system does not extract its validity from a correct biological theory, as it sometimes pretends to by means of its scientific spokespeople, rather by structuring its rules according to the interests of domination. These interests fight against pleasure, which would debilitate the reserve of alienated labor, and place reproduction as the only objective of sex. Everything else is sin.

But this involves applying theological categories to human sexuality, and it is in such an

intent where we can see the illness of culture. If sex has any function it is to unite human beings in constantly renewed and creative forms. Its opposite means reducing sex to only one of its possibilities--reproduction.

It is for this reason that the male culture needs to label homosexuals as "degenerates", "diseased", "abnormal", "delinquent". In reality, the homosexuals demand, in fact, the plastic possibilities inherent to the human libido, that the system of sexist domination is determined to mutilate. As we have seen before, the libido in itself encompasses without conflict the total amount of the possibilities of human relation: the homo and heterosexual tendencies abide in it in perfect harmony. It is the process of alienated socialization which introduces the separation between the good and the bad, between guilt and bad conscience.

This unequal partition of sexual power in favor of heterosexual men is reflected in a powerful ideology (compulsively internalized by the members of our society): who violate its laws--some written and others not, but completely effective and operational--do not receive only a moral sanction, which would be guilt, but instead are punished through the repressive State apparatus. For example, the exercise of sexuality by minors--who are denied the right to pleasure by the system--brings about the punishment of "pertenaire" and allows the judge to confine the minor to a reformatory, as if they had committed a crime. But the homosexuals are the sacrificial

lambs of sexual repression, upon whom fall the most severe and immediate punishments. Moreover, a police edict valid in the capital, prohibits its inciting a sexual act in public. (2nd H). In practice, this law is never applied to male heterosexuals who cateall women in public, even when they do so in the most brutal forms; but a cat-call to a woman from a man, or a homosexual who looks at another man on the street, automatically suffers the whole weight of repression. Other antihomosexual edicts punish private meetings of homosexuals, or that a supposed homosexual walk on the street in the company of a minor. These examples reveal the existence of a discriminatory persecution, exercised by the state through the Police, against all forms of unconventional sexuality, and reflect the full force of the male system, as well as the purpose of those who exercise the power to continue it.

II

What happens when a revolutionary process is purely interested in economic infrastructure? A revolution that is able to alter this infrastructure, or even a revolutionary surge, produces a crack in the ideological superstructure. Now moreover, internalized ideology is the most conservative part of the human being, since its affective cement is the cement of daily living. It does not matter how much one is alienated from this system, it is always difficult and results in a painful change for another. These are the "factors inherent to the human being" that revolution obstructs. There is a phase shift between fascist values alive in the unconscious and revolutionary practice centered on economic and political changes. This is to say, that a revolutionary practice coexists with a structure of reactionary internalized values that go unquestioned in depth.

When that structure remains without being questioned, it tends towards its own impetus to reproduce itself. And when there is a lack of a conscious mechanism that can neutralize it, the subject enters into panic, since they are incapable of imagining an in-depth revolutionary conception by themselves, which is coherent from their own everyday life. The alternative is then, to embrace again those old values of the bourgeois order; its internalized ideology is reaffirmed, and demands to be concretized again in repressive institutions, that, at the social

level, will come to serve the figure of the father as their correlate. If the boss not longer exists, there will be bureaucrats in his place.

A change in values so radical cannot be made in a day, but the lack of political work on the ideological areas of the everyday not only slows the process of dismantling power on the part of the oppressed classes, but also can lead to drowning it indefinitely.

The Homosexual Liberation Front considers that the historical moment has arrived to propose and start to carry out a revolution that liquidates the system's ideological sexist supports, while simultaneously liquidating the economic and political supports as well, keeping in mind that, on the other hand, a system of oppression will be reproduced automatically after a revolutionary process that only alters the political and economic spheres. Our Movement arises as an organization of homosexuals of both genders that are no longer able to put up with a situation of marginalization and persecution because of the sole fact that we exercise a specific form of sexuality. As we have attempted to demonstrate throughout this document, this persecution has a root that is purely political. Sex itself is a question of politics. In this manner, the liberation that we postulate cannot have a place within an economic system of domination, such as it is in Argentine capitalism dependent society. But breaking out of our own marginalization, questioning our sexist society from this point of view, we arrive at a global critique of society.

We homosexuals are a sector of the people that suffer from a form of discriminatory and specific form of repression which originates in those very same interests of the system, internalized by the majority of the population, including by some sectors which purport to be revolutionary.

In this way, many of the forms of anti-homosexual prejudice remain intact, at times disguised as political critiques. For example, it is considered worth of objection that homosexuality is a product of decadent capitalism. Regardless, societies that are neither capitalist nor decadent, such as the Inca practiced it and praised it.* In addition, we have already seen that the original human libido does not reject any of its possibilities. Behind this critique is hidden the inability to formulate a new order, a truly revolutionary everyday life; in the face of the crisis of bourgeois morality, it seeks to return to the Spanish morality of the 19th century, rejecting the many cases of indigenous Americans that our conquistadors burned alive for practicing "the unnamable crime" in the light of day.

Another objection is that the HLF is a sectarian movement, and given this that it is not integrated into movements of political liberation. The reason is very simple: for us, like for all marginalized peoples, no one is going to def-

*This does not mean to affirm that these societies did not practice any forms of sexual oppression. But we are attempting to highlight that, in no way can the practice of homosexuality be considered a product of the form of capitalist production.

end us except ourselves. In reality, the argument is a fallacy: in fact those that marginalize us are them. What is important to us is the nuclearization and politicization of a traditionally marginalized and rejected sector of the population, which has remained as such divorced from all decision-making power, including the right to organize of the body itself.

Some critiques tend to consider it contradictory the fact that while we propound sexual liberation, we are organized as a group of homosexuals. To organize in any other manner would mean to neglect our specific oppression, forgetting that a very explicit punishment weighs upon us. People who are specifically oppressed by the sexism at the heart of this capitalist society are the homosexuals and women; and heterosexual men take on objectively, socially speaking, the character group of oppressor. Of course, this role of oppressor is not chosen freely by them but rather is culturally imposed by the society of domination. A society which freely allows them to enjoy the advantages that their position affords them over women and homosexuals. This affirmation does not intend to exclude the possibility of a modification, whose indications can be inferred: it is difficult, in these recent times, to be inclusive to approve an evidently unjust sexual order that, in some manner, represses and harms its own beneficiaries.

Machismo is eminently counterrevolutionary and antihuman, given that it represents the exacerbation of the patterns of economic and sexual

domination. We characterize it as a kind of "homemade" fascism. The bourgeois classes use it to dominate more effectively; in the oppressed party, machismo presents itself as the only plane on which they can be equal to their overlord, and for this reason it operates as a kind of compensation mechanism, as inefficient as it is illusory from a critical perspective, because it is also aimed at the groundwork of oppression upon which the system is built. Thus these machismo attitudes have a "boomerang" effect in the hands of the working class. In this way the worker abuses his wife or a homosexual to avenge the fact that his boss "is fucking him" (who exploits him and dominates him) and his comrades on a daily basis. For this reason, to the extent that our thinking does not generate a new formulation of the everyday, the people will continue being revolutionary in the street and counterrevolutionary in the home, where this system of domination will be reproduced in his children.

There exists an apparent gap between politics as an external, social activity, and politics as a private, individual, internal activity. Ideology is not only an intellectual superstructure affixed onto the affective foundation of the human being, but rather that these foundations are structure in a political manner from the beginning by the society in which the individual is born. Politics is something that is exercised in each moment of our everyday life and that is revealed in all our elections, as paltry as they are. In addition, it is for this reason that a

revolutionary questioning of the society of domination should be extended to all spheres of activity. A revolutionary praxis that does not call into question bourgeois morality, is objectively accepting it and perpetuating it on the one hand while pretending to destroy it on the other. It sabotages itself. It is ceding our feelings, our affects, to the enemy, who will reconstruct his bulwarks from them.

The lack of relation between private life and political action makes it possible that many people, after long periods of militancy, be recaptured by the bourgeoisie through the formation of the family, through the construction of the home, and the raising of children. Evidently in these cases the revolution is only exterior, and has not reached the deeper psychic structures of the individual.

The HLF is a non-verticalist, non-centralist organization of homosexuals--in which heterosexuals that give up their privileges can also participate--which has addressed itself to the task of integrating the specific demands and grievances of the homosexual sector to the global revolutionary process. It is an anticapitalist, anti-imperialist and antiauthoritarian movement, whose contribution seeks to be at the rescue for the liberation of one of the areas through which the domination of women and of men by men is made possible and sustained, in the conviction that no revolution is complete, and by this measure, successful, if it does not subvert the ideological structure intimately internalized by the members

of the society of domination.

We are aware that this system controls vast sectors of the people, availing itself of morality, or rather, of self-serving lies. We are conscious of the fact that the people themselves will abandon their prejudices, that constitute a concrete barrier for revolutionary development, as long as we, the homosexuals, form an active and militant part of a fight which is also ours. We call on homosexuals, women, and true revolutionaries to exercise the strength that is involved in questioning the patterns originating from the system of exploitation, with the goal of salvaging ourselves as efficient actors in a revolution without going back.

Buenos Aires, 1973

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