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Reimagining family and love in a post-capitalist world

written by Gregory E. Williams

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The Compton's Cafeteria rebellion took place in San Francisco in 1966, three years before Stonewall. The cafeteria's owners frequently called the police to arrest and brutalize queers, leading to a picket by LGBTQ+ youth organization, Vanguard. One night, about a month later, a police officer grabbed a trans woman at Compton's. She responded by throwing coffee in his face, and a rebellion erupted, spilling into the streets.

Following is part five of an interview with gay communist activist Bob McCubbin, who has organized and written political analyses since the 1960s. He is the author of the 2019 book, “[The Social Evolution of Humanity: Marx and Engels Were Right!](#)” For Pride Month, Struggle-La Lucha writer Gregory E. Williams sat down with McCubbin to explore the revolutionary history of the LGBTQ+ struggle and what it means for today’s fightback.

- Part 1: [Targeted by fascism, united by struggle: Bob McCubbin on defending trans rights and building class solidarity](#)
- Part 2: [Inside the Bay Area’s Gay Liberation Front with Bob McCubbin](#)
- Part 3: [Bob McCubbin on LGBTQ+ liberation and Marxist organizing](#)
- Part 4: [Leslie Feinberg, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and the radical legacy of LGBTQ+ communists](#)

Two follow-up questions for Bob

Gregory Williams: At the beginning of this interview, we talked about the extreme repression in the 1950s and how the '60s youth movement was a reaction to that. The 1960s represented a big explosion of struggle. But there was also a lot going on in the '50s, as you wrote about. For example, you wrote about the gay men's organization, the Mattachine Society, and the Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian rights organization, both founded in the '50s. How did they relate to the Civil Rights movement of their period and the later LGBTQ+ struggle?

Bob McCubbin: I've characterized “the '50s” as a time of terrible reaction (I could have cited the ruling-class-ordered executions of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and the so-called “Korean War” (the U.S. invasion of Korea) as particularly horrific examples of that reactionary decade), but, as you note, it was also a period not at all devoid of progressive and even revolutionary struggle.

As well as the pre-Stonewall gay and lesbian organizations you mentioned, there was the pre-Stonewall Compton's Cafeteria riot / rebellion in 1966. It was highly significant that trans people were in the leadership of both pre-Stonewall, Stonewall and post-Stonewall mass resistance. It was the inspiring struggles of the 1950s that led to significant political advances for Black and other communities of color in the 1960s.

How did the early “gay and lesbian” movement relate to the Civil Rights movement unfolding in the same period? In general, as the Black Civil Rights movement became increasingly militant, so did the LGBTQ+ movement. And the LGBTQ+ movement certainly drew great inspiration from the Black and Latinx revolutionaries.

Chairman Huey P. Newton of the Black Panther Party demonstrated the vanguard role of himself and his party with an extraordinary public statement of support for the LGBTQ+ (at that time “Gay”) movement. It was the first such act of solidarity by any internationally known political leader anywhere in the world.

GW: In our first phone conversation, you said, “the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights is the beginning of something far more powerful in terms of changes in society and the family.” Could you say more about this?

BM: At the end of my book, “The Social Evolution of Humanity: Marx and Engels were right!,” I borrowed from Fred Goldstein’s 2012 book, “Capitalism at a Dead End,” where he asks his readers to begin thinking seriously about what a post-capitalist society would look like.

Goldstein writes: “There needs to be a serious conversation within the movement about what to replace the present system with. It is the thesis of this work that capitalism has reached a dead end. It is bringing humanity and the environment down. It must be abolished. The starting point for that conversation should be that

the new society must be free of class exploitation; must be free of national, sexual and gender oppression; must put an end to war; must be free of all forms of domination and have respect for the planet. Above all, it must use the wealth of society to benefit all of society.”

So what would it mean for post-capitalist society if, like in Indigenous, hunting and gathering societies, and in socialist Cuba, children were the serious responsibility of the whole community? What if, as already exists in Cuba, lovers came together purely based on their mutual feelings of love and / or physical attraction? And were able to separate without complications if and when those feelings faded?

With the abolition of private property, wouldn’t the tendency to view the ones “loved” (including one’s children) as one’s private or personal property disappear? Wouldn’t all the horrors of patriarchal culture be consigned to the garbage dump of history along with all manifestations of economic, social and political injustice that that culture bolstered through the various stages of class society?

Okay. But just so our immediate challenges of racism, imperialist war and economic injustice aren’t forgotten, let’s remember Che’s admonition: “The present is for struggle. The future is ours.”



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