

LGBTQ+ oppression

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Until recent times, lesbians, gay, bi, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+) people were a mostly invisible minority. Very prejudicial and distorted ideas were held by many people. Those who knew the truth — that LGBTQ+ people were pretty much like straight people except for the added oppression they suffered because of their sexuality — had the choice of remaining silent or becoming victims of the prejudice themselves.

The Stonewall Rebellion, when LGBTQ+ people — the majority people of color — fought back against police harassment in New York City in June 1969, it was a signal to LGBTQ+ people everywhere that the time had come to challenge the historic legacy of oppression. This momentous event, the Stonewall Rebellion, is commemorated every year by thousands of LGBTQ+ people with marches and rallies in many cities.

LGBTQ+ people in large numbers continue fighting for an end to the discrimination they face in all areas of their lives. LGBTQ+ people are discriminated against by bosses and landlords. They face police brutality and are physically attacked by bigots who know the cops and the courts will almost always side in their favor. The struggle continues for the right of LGBTQ+ people to marry — not because marriage is some “sacred institution,” but to receive the hundreds of economic benefits given to married couples. LGBTQ+ youth are harassed at school and sometimes face homelessness after being kicked out of their homes.

LGBTQ+ people are also fighting erroneous ideas about them that are still widely held. For example, it is said that LGBTQ+ identity is rare, that it only exists in big cities, or in capitalist societies, or in families that are abnormal in one way or

another. All these assertions are contradicted by facts that show that many people have homosexual feelings to one extent or another and that LGBTQ+ people have existed in all societies, at all times, whether persecuted or not and regardless of how a particular society was organized. (Through most of human existence the patriarchal family as we know it today did not exist.)

All progressive people should speak out for the rights of LGBTQ+ people. In addition, we should understand how the capitalists make use of the widespread prejudice against LGBTQ+ people to hurt all working and oppressed people. It is one more way to divide us, to keep us fighting among ourselves instead of uniting to defeat our common enemy, the capitalists who exploit LGBTQ+ and straight alike.

Additional reading

- [The Social Evolution of Humanity: Marx and Engels were right!](#) - By Bob McCubbin
- [The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression - a Marxist view.](#) (PDF) - By Bob McCubbin
- [Lavender & Red.](#) (PDF) Leslie Feinberg's series on LGBTQ+ history.
- [Transgender Liberation: A movement whose time has come.](#) - By Leslie Feinberg
- [Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.](#) - By Leslie Feinberg

- Return to [What is Marxism?](#)