

# LAVENDER GUARD MANIFESTO

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The liberal project for trans liberation has come to a head, defeated. The loftiest achievements of this movement were prescription hormones and surgeries... Only for those with the cash to afford them, and only after navigating various institutional barriers. It raised a handful of transsexuals to the lofty heights of the ruling class as if to say “Look! You are represented!” while the many suffered: discriminated against in employment, in housing, in healthcare; disowned by their family members and left behind by the bourgeois state. “But at least we can use the public bathrooms now!” I hear some saying. Yes, perhaps — in some places, sometimes. This is the legacy of the liberal movement for trans rights: eliminating gender discrimination, sometimes, inconsistently, and only for those of means. Class-collaborationists, assimilationists, reformists: bear witness to your great success! It is as the great Reverend Martin Luther King jr once wisely said: “What good is the right to sit at a lunch counter if you can't afford to buy a hamburger?” Indeed, what good is the right to sit at a lunch counter if such a right must be continually defended, fought tooth and nail largely by those who can't afford to even sit there, against the forces of reaction who alone seem capable of wielding power in the bourgeois state? Our liberal “allies” can do nothing but idly observe this current wave of intense reaction, inevitable as the procession of a pendulum, which is tearing away even at these meager gains.

No, there is no liberation to be found within liberalism, no liberation to be found so long as the capitalist system remains. And why should that be? From whence does trans oppression originate? Looking back in history we can see a variety of ancient societies and cultures with gender variation and diversity, where no special oppression of transsexuals took place. Trans oppression, transphobia as it were, is NOT primordial, spontaneous, or the product of a flawed “human nature” — it has a definite beginning in history serving a very particular purpose. What happened, and how did it develop? It is a long and complicated question which we do our best to summarize here (primarily) from the work of Leslie Feinberg:

Nearly — if not every — early civilization was communal and classless: the land, the shelter, the basic necessities of life were all shared among the people who worked together to meet the needs of the whole community. In these ancient communalist societies, the unrefined tools and techniques of the time necessitated the arrangement that everyone contribute their

labor; a parasitic ruling class could not exist where there existed no surplus. Often in these societies, tools were owned by *matrilineal gens* (family units). Various degrees of transsexuality, transvestism, gender diversity, etc, were not only tolerated, but in many cases *celebrated*; there was no reason, no motivation, no material basis in these societies for prejudices of these sorts. As the forces of production developed, as production became more efficient and surpluses began to form, the first vestiges of private property began to form alongside it, bringing about class society, slavery, and “the historic defeat of the female sex” (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*). The patriarchal and *patrilineal* family structure emerged to keep this newfound wealth centralized in the hands of men of the same family, securing their newfound class position over generations through the institution of inheritance.

Everywhere that class society developed, hostility towards women, homosexuals, and transsexuals developed alongside it, encouraged by those who sought to rule over others: “A tiny, parasitic class can’t live in luxury off the wealth of a vast, laboring class without keeping the majority divided and pitted against each other. That is where the necessity for bigotry began” (*Transgender Warriors*, 52). Misogyny was necessary to naturalize and justify rule by men. The strict gender binary, alongside sexual metaphysics (the idea that sex is an immutable, unalterable characteristic), developed to consolidate patriarchal rule by violently erasing the middle ground between the sexes (and because transvestism remained associated with mother-worshipping pagan rituals from the prior age of communal society). So we see now that this development was not random, but the outcome of developments in the organization of society, in its *mode of production*. We see then that the *material basis* of trans oppression lies at the very heart of class society and patriarchy.

These forms of exploitation and accompanying ideologies were exported together through conquest and colonization across the world. Many European colonizers of the Americas left journals and diaries recounting the “*sinful, heinous, perverted, nefarious, abominable, unnatural, disgusting lewd*” acceptance of men and women who dressed and behaved as the opposite sex--alongside acceptance of same-sex love (*ibid*). Even among the subjugation and genocide of the native peoples, the gender variant among them were subjected to particular violence: “Galancha wrote that during Vasco Núñez de Balboa’s expedition across Panama, Balboa ‘saw men dressed like women; Balboa learnt that they were sodomites and threw the king and forty others to be eaten by his dogs’” (*Ibid*). There are many stories, likewise, of colonial agents, i.e. of the US government, stripping down, torturing, cutting the hair of those

whose gender were scrutinized, forcing them to dress and behave as they saw fit. Cultural genocide and ideological indoctrination inevitably follows subjugation, because, as we have seen, there is a relationship between the organization of society, its *material base*, and the ideological, cultural, and philosophical ideas of that society, its *ideal superstructure*. As Karl Marx once famously said, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas... the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas.” Whether through acts of overt violence as described above, or through institutions such as education, the ruling ideology is imposed upon the population because it works in the interests of the ruling class, because it facilitates the mode of production, because it facilitates exploitation of various kinds. This pattern transcends all types of class societies, though the details therein tend to change.

We provide this context because it is necessary to answer the question at hand: how can transsexuals, the gender-variant, the queer, etc, be liberated? Shadows of the future lie in the past, and in glimpsing into the forces of development, we see the essential root of the cause: class society and patriarchy. It is clear, then, that the fight for trans liberation must be, in the first instance, a fight against capitalism and patriarchy, the fight for workers and women’s emancipation. Trans oppression began with the defeat of communalism, and it can only be ended through the development of communism: a classless society in which private property once again becomes public, where the productive forces of society *and* its relations of production have become socialized; a system which abolishes the anarchic production of commodities on the basis of profit for the individual capitalist, and substituting for it the production of goods and services based on a definite plan for the use and consumption of the entirety of society; a system which has no need or incentive for bigotry, chauvinism, or discrimination. In short, we reaffirm Karl Marx’s view on what liberation means and entails: “Liberation’ is [a] historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse” (*The German Ideology*). It is not sufficient, as is the liberal view, to educate or coerce the masses into being respectful, to use the right language, or to think the right thoughts — to keep gendered social relations untouched. We say again: the fight for trans liberation is the fight for communism! This is, of course, no small task.

We now see the long term strategy in its broadest sense. But what do we do right here and now, what immediate tactics do we use to get there? First, we must show the people the

contradictions of our society while explaining how these contradictions must necessarily lead to socialism (or to extinction); we must show the masses that relying on the false shepherds of liberalism betrays their interests; we must demonstrate competent leadership in order to win them over to our program; and we must win critical concessions in order to restore the masses faith in their own ability to successfully organize against the paper tigers and tyrants who rule over us. This requires us to be educated in our critique of capitalism, in our understanding of communism, and in the science of revolution. The organization of book clubs, a paper, a social media presence, or other such means of spreading class consciousness will be prepared to this end. In the second instance, we must survive this immediate wave of reaction which seeks now to claw away at our ability to access healthcare, which is tearing children away from supportive and loving parents, which is steadily preparing and intensifying a program of our extermination; trans survival will have to be prioritized in the short term over trans liberation. This will require organization and the construction of systems of *mutual aid* and *communal self defense*, which is to say, in short, independent systems of self-reliance which circumvent the bourgeois state. We founded the Lavender Guard for this very goal: to arm, train, and organize the trans and queer masses; to provide a secondary source of HRT for those without the legal or financial means to acquire it elsewhere; to provide a political education; and to provide volunteer security services by our trained cadre. This is what must be done to ensure survival; this is what must be done and so shall it be done!