

40 years after Stonewall Riots... **STEP UP THE FIGHT FOR LGBT EQUALITY**

Stonewall Riots 1969



This year marks an important fortieth anniversary for all who support equality for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) community.

On 28 June 1969 the police raided the Stonewall Inn in New York. This in of itself was not unusual. This time however LGBT people fought back against the police over two nights of rioting. After the Stonewall riots those involved in fighting police harassment organised the Gay Liberation Front which united with socialist, anti-war, anti-racist and trade union activists in the fight for liberation including bravely organising the first gay pride events.

The struggle for equality born out of Stonewall has won important rights such as the legalisation of homosexuality, anti-discrimination laws and civil partnership. However we are still a long way off equality. Internationally many viciously homophobic regimes still exist and rights previously won are under attack. In 82 countries, homosexuality is still a criminal offence with seven carrying the death penalty, including Western supported governments such as Nigeria, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In Russia and some Eastern European countries, the right of LGBT communities to organise has been attacked with Pride demonstrations banned and coming under attack from police and fascist groups. *Continued overleaf*

Unite against the Bigots

In Northern Ireland, the LGBT community still has to fight against homophobia. In a recent survey carried out among the Irish LGBT community, 80% said they have been verbally abused due to their sexual orientation and 40% have been physically attacked.

Iris Robinson's comments last year, claiming that homosexuality is an "abomination," are still raw in the minds of many people and expose the bigoted attitudes of many politicians who supported her views.

More worryingly the election in England of two members of the BNP, a far right party with a fascist core, to the European Parliament poses a threat to the LGBT community. Not only does the BNP support the re-criminalisation of homosexuality, but it gives confidence to bigoted thugs to attack those they hate, including gays and lesbians.

The Socialist Party played a leading role in organising protests of local residents after racist attacks on Romanians on the Lisburn Road in Belfast. We believe it is important to isolate bigoted thugs who wish to make scapegoats of the most "vulnerable" in our community including the use of "gay bashing".

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We won't pay for the bosses' crisis

(Continued from overleaf)

We also need to take on the social problems that are allowing these bigots to grow, such as the lack of jobs and housing and the massive attacks on our public services. Big business and the sectarian politicians in Stormont are determined to make working class people pay for an economic crisis that was created not by them but by rich bankers, speculators and politicians who were happy to gamble away our future.

To do this they will attempt to divide workers in order to weaken opposition to their attacks, including possibly using homophobic legislation. In the 1980's, Thatcher's government introduced "Section 28" which banned local authorities from "intentionally promoting homosexuality" or recognising lesbian and gay re-

lationships as "a pretended family relationship". This was used to undermine not only gay rights but to attack social housing and sack council workers. It was only because of a mass campaign that this was repealed in 2000. The Southern Irish government has also introduced reactionary legislation, like the blasphemy laws which could be used to attack socialist, trade unionist and gay rights activists.

Pride not Profit

This makes the tradition of Stonewall all the more important and shows that LGBT people need to organise politically to defend and extend their rights. Pride should be an event where the attacks from big business and their political parties are opposed, with demands for real

equality rather than a march which acts as a parade of advertisements for companies that see the LGBT community as a market.

The Socialist Party stands for the unity of workers and young people against the attempts by big business and right wing politicians to make us pay for the capitalist crisis. We believe it is necessary to build a new party for working class people that can take up the issue of homophobia as well as sexism and racism. It is clear that capitalism is incapable of providing a decent standard of living for working class people. We need to fight for a socialist society which can provide full rights including full marriage and adoption rights for LGBT people. If you agree with us join us today!



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For Workers' Unity & Socialism

What We Stand For

- An immediate increase in the minimum wage to £8 per hour as a step towards the European Decency Threshold.
- Abolition of the youth exemptions.
- For a 35 hour week without loss in pay.
- Full employment protection rights from day one of employment.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws.
- Reject Welfare to Work; for the right to decent benefits, training or a job without compulsion.
- Stop the sell off of schools, hospitals and other services.

- Scrap student fees - for a living grant.

Equality

- A complete end to all forms of discrimination, whether on the grounds of religion, race, sex, sexuality, or disability.
- Free nursery and creche facilities.
- Equal pay and equality of opportunity for women.

No to racism & homophobia

- For mass community action to stop the racist attacks and the attacks on gays and other minorities.

No to the bosses EU

- For solidarity action by the working class across Europe.

- For a socialist confederation of European states established on a free and voluntary basis.

Socialism

- Capitalism is capable only of delivering poverty, environmental destruction and war.
- We need an international struggle against this system and its effects.
- Take the major finance houses and the 500 largest companies into public ownership and place them under the democratic control and management of the working class.
- Build a socialist world in which the resources of the planet are used to satisfy the needs of the mass of the people, not the thirst for profit of a tiny minority of super rich.

Join the Socialist Party

I would like to join more info

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