Influences of Socialism and the Socialist Workers Party on the Detroit Gay Community During the 1970’s

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The 1970s were a dynamic time for the gay community of metro-Detroit. In previous decades, the community lived under the suspicion of communism, discrimination in public and private sectors, and the threat of arrests from city vice officers. Yet, beginning with the Stonewall riots of 1969 in New York City, the gay community of metro-Detroit began an effort to form a single voice to represent the community, and to mobilize in mass for the first time in the city’s history. This was the beginning of the Detroit Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a radical gay civil rights organization based on the restructuring of capitalist society in order to gain recognition and greater civil rights for homosexual citizens.

Nonetheless, socialists organizations such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) also held sway within the city and other leftist movements such as the gay civil rights movement during this period. It was during the beginning of this decade that the gay community of Detroit and the SWP began a relationship to advance the agenda of both organizations. However, as the decade progressed, this relationship began to break down and the SWP’s influence on the gay community of Detroit waned. In researching the topics related to these questions, during the early 1970s, many voices in the gay community of Detroit such as the GLF held a greater sway with the larger Detroit gay community. This organization fostered an attitude that was more radical, that held the belief that capitalism and the business oriented American society was the main cause of homosexual oppression. It was this idea that allowed for an environment in which socialist sentiment could grow within the gay community of Detroit. Yet, in the latter part of the 70s, a more accepting atmosphere coupled with residual anger from discriminatory SWP
policies weakened the hold of socialist influence on the gay community of the city. This diminished influence ultimately led to a gay community focused on changing attitudes about homosexuals, and fighting for civil rights within the context of current American society.

**Early Socialism and Gay Organization**

In early August of 1922, federal agents arrested an immigrant named Joseph Kowalski in New York City on charges of violating his deportation agreement and accused him of spying for the Soviet intelligence agency known as the Cheka. In 1919, Kowalski had left the Polish Socialist party and was a key member in forming an American communist party in that same year. He was deported in 1921 as an undesirable, and upon returning to his home in the Soviet Union, was greeted as a hero and was made a member of the International Communists (IC). He was sent back to America in 1922 by the IC to infiltrate American industry and was under orders to build communist support among industrial workers, with the target being the industrial capital of the U.S., Detroit, Michigan.¹

After serving 18 months in an Atlanta penitentiary, Kowalski moved to Detroit where he quickly began to organize discontent and unrest among workers in the auto capital. In 1926, he and other communist leaders began to sabotage the heart of the American auto industry machine, the assembly line. Production was slowed at many major auto plants and the resulting layoffs, coupled with the start of the Great Depression, were more than enough for Kowalski to build sizable support for the communist party in the city. In 1932, Kowalski, along with communist leaders in other cities, organized a mass march in Washington bringing attention to

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the growing communist movement. The later 1930’s brought greater opportunities for Kowalski as the depression deepened. He organized more sabotage campaigns against major automobile suppliers and to place many communist friendly officials in local city and county governments. In the end, Kowalski was able to maintain a great amount of influence in the Detroit region for almost 30 years, until the threat of deportation loomed once again and finally he left the city.²

Even though he was a major influence, Kowalski was no pioneer of Socialist and worker oriented sentiments in America. Early in American history religious communities such as the Quakers began small religious conclaves first planted the ideas of a worker-oriented society.³ In these religious communities, though the practice of socialism was not the focus, inadvertently their way of life was similar to the socialist way of life. All members of the community worked for each other and cared for each other’s well being. Eventually it came to the fact that these religious and worker-oriented communities outlasted the actual communist movements of the 18th and 19th century. As time passed, these socialist and communist like ideas began to spread and evolve and by the start of the industrial revolution; these leftist movements would gain a strong foothold in a new industrialized society.⁴

In a way, “[m]odern Socialism…is the product of full grown capitalism.”⁵ With the rise of industry also came a rise of a new larger working class and a new class of the wealthy industrialists. By 1905, the national wealth had “reached $95 million, and more than one half was concentrated in the hands of 40,000 families, or .25% of the population.”⁶ With the

⁴ Hillquit, History of Socialism
⁵ Hillquit, History of Socialism, 136
⁶ Hillquit, History of Socialism, 138
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growing wealth disparity between workers and the ruling class, a socialist message became much easier to perforate through the nation. In addition to a large number of socialists and socialist leaning people emigrated from Europe, on the heels of the 1917 Russian Revolution and beginnings of labor organization in the early 20th century also were conducive to an environment ripe for socialist thought to take root. The collapse of the stock market in 1929, along with the Great Depression during the 1930s, with mass unemployment and discontent among workers provided an ideal socialist and Marxists ideas to spread. The 1930s “offered (radical activists) a multitude of possible roles” and an increase in the amount of Marxist and other leftist literature, as well as an increased presence within American society.

With the end of WWII and the start of the Cold War, the Red Scare and McCarthy politics gripped the nation, casting a shadow on many far left and communist organizations. In the 1950’s, one of the main communist groups in the U.S. called the Trotskyists, split into two socialist groups. One called the Sachtmanists was a more conservative socialist organization, joining the socialist party and becoming an organization rooted in suspicion of communism. The second group formed from the split was the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Though it was the smaller of the two, it held a great deal of influence in organizing and supporting other new left movements during the 50s and 60s. McCarthy-ist politics caused many communist groups during the 50s to lose much of their influence. However, this directed McCarthy and the public’s gaze away from the socialist parties and allowed socialists time to grow in influence. By the 1960s and 70s, these socialist parties were major players in the New Left Movement. In

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8 Buhle, *Marxism in the United States*, 20
10 Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 194
the early 1970s, The Socialist Workers Party grew in influence by reason of its leadership in the anti-war movement and the collapse of the separate Socialist Party in 1972.\textsuperscript{11} From here, the SWP was a major influence on many of the new civil rights and anti-war movements, including women’s liberation, black civil rights and racism, and the start of the modern gay rights movement.

For around the first 100 years, the term “homosexuality” or its place as a sexual identity did not exist in American society. Even “Heterosexuality remained undefined, since it was literally the only way of life.”\textsuperscript{12} Through the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, most homosexual acts were random and scarce, and those who occasionally participated in homosexual behavior still lived a heterosexual way of life.\textsuperscript{13} It was not until the Industrial Revolution that a homosexual identity began to develop in American society. America’s new industrial economy brought millions of Americans up and out of the home environment and to life in the cities and other population centers where persons with same sex desires could interact en masse and form a homosexual identity. Growing cities of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century could provide social interaction for the gay community and allow for gays of that time to finally share their experiences with others of their community.\textsuperscript{14} By the 1920’s, the gay community had already established its own culture with “meeting places…institutions such as bars and friendship networks…”\textsuperscript{15} For the first time in American history a “homosexual identity” and people to identify as such became a part of American life.

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\item \textsuperscript{11} Gosse, \textit{Rethinking the New Left}, 25
\item \textsuperscript{13} D’Emilio, \textit{Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities}, 10
\item \textsuperscript{14} D’Emilio, \textit{Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities}, 14
\item \textsuperscript{15} D’Emilio, \textit{Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities}, 12
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With the onset of WWII, much of the male population of the U.S. was drafted to fight overseas leaving millions of women to fill in the roles men had left behind. Women left their domestic, stereotypical “female” lifestyles at home to go work in factories and other typically male-dominated professions. Women began to interact much more than had been possible in past decades, and provide opportunism for lesbian women to move away from oppressive hometowns to more progressive cities such as New York or San Francisco. With new wage earning abilities, women were able to provide for themselves and give them the freedom to explore and discover new parts of American society. Homosexual males also benefited from this upheaval of American society. Many gay soldiers that had been discharged from the armed forces were able to congregate in many cities across America to open bars and social clubs that attracted hundreds of homosexual men. With places to meet, homosexuals were able to find a support network and a shared experience, and a place that fostered political action later in the century.

With the end of the war, many of the freedoms homosexuals had gained were lost to a return to conservative social values. The 1950s brought waves of panic and suspicion by the government and society over the “red menace“ and the presence of homosexuals in government positions. These “sexual perverts” were considered threats to the American way of life and were subject to a massive purging from all government posts. As homosexuality was an offense that led to immediate termination, homosexuals could be blackmailed to keep their homosexuality from the government, making gays a potential target to communists looking for government secrets. At its peak, homosexuals were being fired at a rate of 40 per month from

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16 D’Emilio, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities, 23-40
17 D’Emilio, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities, 41-53
various government positions and arrests skyrocketed through most of the 50s. Though underground homophile movements existed during this time, it was not until the Stonewall riots in New York in 1969 that the gay community finally began the push for vocalization and organization.\textsuperscript{18} 

\textsuperscript{18} D'Emilio, \textit{Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities}, 224-240
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Socialism and Detroit Gay Liberation

On February 21st, 1971, a man named Michael Fylstra, an open homosexual who had participated in Gay Liberation movements in Detroit, was arrested under Detroit’s Accosting and Solicitation (A&S) laws under the suspicions that Fylstra had been eliciting an “immoral act”. Fylstra had been walking home down Woodward Ave by himself when two plain-clothed officers invited him into their car, where they promptly arrested him. The trial garnered the attention of a national gay oriented newspaper called *The Advocate*. The trial became a test case for A&S laws in the city and throughout the nation with Fylstra’s defense arguing that A&S laws were a violation of the due process clause, claiming that these laws unfairly targeted homosexuals. Ultimately while Fylstra was released, Detroit’s A&S laws were upheld.

Such entrapment cases had been used time and time again to arrest and convict numerous homosexuals, or suspected homosexuals, in the Detroit area, as well as the rest of the country. However, during the early 1970s a group known as the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) had taken root in many cities across the country. The Detroit chapter of the GLF made the Fylstra case, along with the issue of entrapment and discrimination, a top priority in its goal to support the gay community of the Detroit area.

The formation of the GLF marked a significant change in the direction of the gay movement, not only in Detroit, but also throughout the country. The GLF had been, from the start, a new radical left movement, with calls for the abolition of current social institutions, and a declaration of “Revolution”. The GLF was more radical in its anti-capitalist sentiment and

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22 Gosse, *Rethinking the new left*, 171
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anti-sexism goals, as well as its opposition to the war in Vietnam. The organization had debated the GLF’s relation to other new left movements such as the socialist movement. Massive anti-war rallies held in the early 1970s provided rallying points for gay activists, and showed that the burgeoning gay rights movement was a major player in the New Left political agenda. The focus of the new GLF and gay movement at large was to work towards New Left political and social goals, and to support other organizations of the New Left movement.

After the original Detroit chapter of the GLF collapsed in 1971, new and former members joined together to re-create the organization in that same year with the publication of The Gay Liberator. This organization had the same principles of gay liberation and believed capitalism was the main player in oppression of the homosexual community. The new GLF, like the original chapter, was politically charged and socialist oriented, and was the only gay news reporting service in the city of Detroit. For the early part of the 1970s, due to its status as the only gay media outlet in the city, the organization quickly became a voice and an influence for homosexuals within Detroit. However, since the new liberation front began in Detroit, its motives, like the gay liberation movement at large was not strictly for the support of the gay community. The desire to work with other leftist groups and political action for equality for other oppressed peoples were issues that the national GLF and the GLF chapter in Detroit worked to advance. These basic principles outlined in its first issue of the original Detroit Liberator in 1970. The Women’s Liberation Front was a major leftist organization that the new GLF had closely allied with, and the GLF of Detroit would continue to support women’s right causes throughout the life of the organization. However, another leftist group the Detroit chapter of the

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23 Gosse, Rethinking the new left, 177-178
25 Sunny King, "Liberation is coming." The Detroit Liberator, April 1970.
GLF had come to support over its seven-year life span was the leftist organization known as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

When Detroit’s GLF began in 1970, the Socialist Worker Party (SWP) had a rocky relationship with the gay community. In the early 1960s, the SWP began the unofficial purging of gay members from its ranks, due to security concerns that blackmailed homosexuals, would give away valuable party secrets, similar to the official purging of homosexuals from government positions. However, beginning with Stonewall and the subsequent rise of the modern gay rights movement, the SWP would come to find this unofficial policy a hindrance to their recruiting endeavors across college campuses.26

Finally, in the fall of 1970, the party decided to reverse its policy of excluding homosexuals from its organization and brought forth a period of shared struggle and sentiment for the Gay Liberation movement and the SWP. Overnight, SWP activities and members openly began the push for gay rights and coordination with the gay liberation movement. Through its paper The Militant, the SWP began a push for gay rights activists support in the 1972 presidential elections for their candidates Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley.27 Militant articles throughout 1970 and 1971 called attention to Gay Liberation in numerous cities across America, and even reported on anti-gay discrimination bills in play across the U.S.28

With the national SWP, at least for the early 1970s, in support of gay liberation and rights at the national level, the Detroit chapter of the SWP followed suit. In their 1974 election campaign, the SWP of Detroit nominated openly gay, Rachele Fruit, for the Detroit City

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28 Kate Millet, "Kate Millet on gay liberation." The Militant, April 2, 1971.
Common Council, and a hetero-sexual pro-gay rights candidate for mayor, Maceo Dixon. In their campaign flyers and ads, the SWP of Detroit put gay rights as a major campaign issue in its larger platform of a more equal and worker-oriented society, free from the two “capitalist parties”. Detroit’s SWP touted many issues as part of their larger scheme for remaking the city and the nation including gay child adoption, police entrapment and the “repeal (of) all laws…which discriminate against gays” (Candidate Rachele Fruit was a participant in Gay Liberation events in the city, had been an active member for other SWP chapters in other cities. She had also contributed articles to The Gay Liberator in Detroit. She was as The Gay Liberator described “the first candidate ever to approach the local gay community with a serious, non-insulting campaign.” Candidate Maceo Dixon’s campaign was even more publically pro-gay, with Dixon himself participating in a Detroit GLF protest outside a traffic courthouse where Liberator contributor Bob Holmes was being held under A&S charges. The paper in turn described him as, “the only non-gay candidate to have so clearly and publically identified himself with the struggle for gay rights.”

The running of these two pro-gay candidates was a major change for the SWP in Detroit, as their previous Common Council election campaign for 1968 made no mention of gay liberation or indicated that gay civil rights was part of the SWP platform. This would support the conclusion the SWP in Detroit likely shared the same policies as the national level towards homosexuals in the 1960s. However, along with the national party, Detroit’s SWP drastically changed its attitude and support for the homosexual community in the early 1970s. With this

support, the SWP was able to provide the gay community of Detroit a chance at homosexual representation, and a step forward in the fight for civil rights.

The GLF’s support for the SWP of Detroit and socialist ideals was not a random occurrence. Though few individuals founded the GLF of Detroit, it had always had a degree of socialist influence in its leadership or in its membership.\(^{34}\) Frequent contributors to the *Gay Liberator* run by the GLF of Detroit such as Wayne Pierce and James Mott who both came into the organization as members of the International Socialists, a socialist organization headquartered within the city of Detroit.\(^{35}\) In addition to socialist members within the organization, the distrust of Democratic and Republican parties also fueled support for the SWP and its socialist candidates. The GLF had stated from its beginning that change would not come from the major parties. According the James Mott, writer for The *Gay Liberator* and member of the Detroit chapter of the GLF, “The future of gay liberation rests upon the future of the worker’s movement!”\(^{36}\) Through *The Gay Liberator*, Detroit’s GLF reaffirmed this sentiment with messages of suspicion and stories of gay liberation being shunned by major political candidates.

One cause of this suspicion came during February of 1972, when Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern made a statement in support of gay rights, giving hope to the national gay rights movement that a major party candidate would run on a platform that supported the gay community and other minority rights. However, James Coleman, writing for the *Gay Liberator*, portrayed McGovern as betraying the gay rights movement and as


Coleman wrote, “as McGovern moved nearer to the top, he toned down the radical sounding proposals.”\(^{37}\) McGovern’s backing down on the gay rights agenda gave credence to a proposal set forth by the GLF of Detroit after the Democratic conference in Chicago in which Detroit’s GLF put forth a strategy in which the gay rights movement should be opposed to “both the Democratic and Republican parties”. Instead the GLF of Detroit supported “independent candidacies for gay rights.”\(^{38}\) With McGovern and the Democrat’s reversing their position on the gay rights platform, the GLF of Detroit had gained influence within the national gay community and for the time was proven right about the need for a third party candidate. In its 1972 presidential election recommendations, though not giving explicit support for the SWP, and citing numerous issues with the SWP’s platform particularly its past banning of homosexuals from its party, in the end The Gay Liberator urged voters to call “for the end of the two capitalist parties” and vote in the SWP’s column.

Unfortunately for the SWP, Linda Jenness, their candidate for the 1972 elections did not win.\(^{39}\) However, the 1972 general election showcased the cooperation between the Gay Liberation Front of Detroit and the Socialist Workers Party and highlighted the influence of socialism and the SWP had on the Detroit gay movement in the early 1970s. Both of these organizations worked for the liberation of women, African Americans and other minorities, and recognized that change was needed in America at that time. They worked for a dismantling of both major parties and both shared the belief capitalism was the main force behind


\(^{38}\) Colman, “One thousand percent of nothing”


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discrimination in America and throughout the world. In Detroit, the message of socialism was especially prevalent in comparison to other cities. For the early part of the decade, *Militant* subscriptions in the city outpaced other mid-west cities such as Chicago and Cleveland, reaching to over 1,000 per month in 1971. In addition to, Joseph Kowalski’s story confirms that socialist activities had a sizable presence in the city since the early 20th century. With the heart of the auto industry and a considerable blue-collar workforce, together with uneasy race relations of the 1970s, Detroit made a prime environment for an equal, worker-oriented message to take hold. It is plausible to conclude that with a socialist foothold already established in the city, that new radical social groups in the city such as the GLF would come to harbor a degree of socialist influence. Nonetheless, this period of shared beliefs and cooperation would come to an end later in the decade with the start of a more effective and stronger gay civil rights movement.

**Independent Detroit Gay Organization**

In the spring of 1976, Bob Stanton, member of the GLF of Detroit and writer for its newspaper *The Gay Liberator*, described due to the fact that “many people, probably the majority, don’t like radicals and radical politics” had spelled the end for *The Gay Liberator* and the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) that had produced it. The paper and organization itself ushered in an era of radical and socialist influence of the gay rights movement in Detroit. Over its six years, the GLF of Detroit through *The Gay Liberator* advocated for the end of the capitalist system and sought cautious cooperation of socialist groups such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). It was a staple of the gay community of Detroit, but with the death of *The Gay Liberator*,

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*Liberator* and the GLF, it allowed for a new type of gay rights movement to take hold.

Radical left groups and influence had been on decline through the mid part of the 70s due to a new recession that dried up the money and “revolutionary euphoria” that had allowed for the New Left and the GLF to come about earlier in the decade. The end of the Vietnam War, which provided a rallying point for many New Left groups such as the GLF and the SWP, also diminished support and enthusiasm for more New Left actives. With the New Left diminishing and radical groups losing their power to influence American society, the gay movement in America began to adjust itself to appeal to a broader range of the public. This change similarly took place within the Detroit gay movement, with the death of the GLF leaving a vacuum for more moderate voices to be heard.42

The environment for homosexuals in Detroit had changed significantly in the six years since the birth of the GLF. By 1976, the gay community had over a dozen homosexual organizations, churches, media outlets, and a dramatic increase in the number of social spaces. These included institutions such as bars and parks that homosexuals could congregate and socialize with each other. In addition, a new city charter adopted in 1974 had given the homosexual community protection against employment discrimination.43 With more and more opportunities for gays to be open with themselves, the community, and for the opportunity for more communication between homosexuals, pro-gay groups in the city also began large collaboration efforts to address issues the gay community in Detroit faced as a whole.44 It was this collaboration of various groups that filled the void left by the death of *The Gay Liberator*, the only gay newspaper in the city with the new pro-gay newspaper the *Metro Gay News*

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42 Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History*, 187
Homosexual activism had taken a new more moderate tone with the publication of the MGN. With its opening editorial, the paper declared its only purpose was “to provide an exchange of information” and to build an “even larger sense of community within metropolitan Detroit.”45 The paper took aim at the “flaming” and “diesel dike” stereotypes that existed about the homosexual community and was dedicated to changing the views about homosexual community. Through its two-year life span, the paper included gay civil rights issues, but also included sports, pro-gay events around the city and country, movie reviews, and advertising for many gay bars and other gathering places differentiated the MGN from its predecessor The Gay Liberator.46 With the MGN’s reporting not just only on gay civil rights issues, but also on community events and “average” everyday things, the paper brought a broader view of the Detroit homosexual community as a whole. Coverage of socialist and radical leftist stories and events that the previous Liberator had used to differentiate the homosexual community from the straight ceased. The goal now was to show that the Detroit gay community was just as “normal” as everyone else, a community that had little SWP influence or any other socialist influence.

One major example of this push for normalcy was the MGN’s coverage in 1978 of a male homosexual couple in the Minneapolis region. John Baker and Michael McConnell were a typical homosexual couple that gained the attention of national gay media as they were suing for a marriage license they applied for at the beginning of the decade. In its coverage of their story, the MGN portrayed the couple as “They live on a quiet little suburban street in a rented two bedroom house where one year has stretched into several as they lead busy lives and save for

the time when they can buy a place of their own...”

It was a description of not a radical homosexual couple displaying homosexual, “flaming” stereotypes, but of an average couple trying to find their way in the world. It was an image of self-betterment and the “white picket fence” American dream that would resonate with the average citizen in Detroit and the rest of the nation. It was an image essential to the new focus of the MGN’s message of a gay community that was just another “normal” American community.

This shift to a more conservative image not only occurred in the Detroit area but throughout Michigan and the rest of the country. In its founding message of affirmation, the new Michigan Organization for Human Rights (MOHR), a new gay rights group made up of homosexual rights activists from various cities across the state, outlined its goals to “protect the basic legal and human rights” of the gay community of Michigan. It was a message similar to the founding GLF message, except without mention of a social “Revolution” that the GLF advocated for American society. In fact the opening resolution of MOHR advocated the education of the general public as a basis of change, not liberationist, based on a radical change in society. This organization being statewide, the absence of a radical message would carry a sizable influence in individual gay rights organization in cities across Michigan. In turn as this more moderate message spread to local organizations, their efforts would continue to reflect this moderate shift and carry a more modest message to their communities, changing public views of the gay community.

In addition to distinguishing itself from The Gay Liberator in the social realm, the MGN

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used its influence to persuade gay voters towards a different political track. For the 1976 election year, the MGN set itself apart from its predecessor by siding with the Democratic party, a party that only four years before had been vilified by *The Gay Liberator*. No mention of the SWP or socialism, causes in which *The Gay Liberator* in the earlier 70s endorsed ever made it into the MGN’s election coverage. It had been for some time that the SWP had been on rocky ground with gay supporters. The party had banned participation of homosexuals during the 50s and 60s before deciding in 1970 to allow openly gay members. However, in 1973 during a party meeting, the SWP published a memorandum taking issues to the gay liberation movement and that “the party…should not take a stand on the nature of homosexuality.”\textsuperscript{49} This stance angered many of the pro-socialism gays in the early party of the 70s, and drove away their support. Though the MGN choose to refrain from making endorsements, it reported that throughout the country, including the state of Michigan, how Democratic candidates were seeking gay support and endorsing civil rights for homosexual citizens. James (Jimmy) Carter, the Democratic nominee for president, had declared his full support for gay civil rights, a support that stuck through Election Day.\textsuperscript{50} With the Democratic Party giving is definite support for gay rights for this election, the Democrats represented a more supportive choice than the SWP.

With the Democratic Party now on board with a pro gay rights platform, the gay community of Detroit finally had a major party candidate with sizable support. The Democrats also had a greater chance of winning than a third party candidate such as the SWP candidate Peter Camejo. However, the MGN made one mention to a third party, the Libertarian Party.


The Libertarians were opposed to the government regulation of private business and individuals, and believed in an individualistic oriented society. This put the Libertarians at odds with socialist thought as they opposed a collectivist workers society and many other economic regulations of the socialist parties. However, what gave this party the mention of the MGN and gay community support was its opposition to the criminalization of private sex acts that had been used to jail homosexuals in Detroit and throughout the country. Though the party did not support banning discrimination against homosexuals in private business, it still garnered the attention of the MGN and the gay community. This attention given to the Democratic and Libertarian parties illustrates the shift from radical leftist support to more moderate views within the Detroit gay community. No longer was the election year message one of oppressive capitalism in which the SWP and the GLF believed was discriminating against the gay and other minority communities. Rather it was a message restricted to the support for candidates who advocated homosexual civil rights within the context of current American society. It was a more politically mainstream message that contributed to the moderation of previously radical views in the Detroit gay community.

With the modern LGBT rights movements making strides into anti-workplace discrimination and marriage equality for the LGBT community, it can be easily argued that the gay movement did itself a favor by shifting away from radical socialist attitudes in favor of a more assimilationist attitude. Within the state of Michigan support for gay marriage, something that had not even been mentioned even in radical groups such as the GLF during the 70s, now stands over 50% and over 15 of local municipalities have passed anti discrimination codes for
sexual and gender orientation. Yet, even with these advancements, basic discrimination based on gender expression and sexual orientation still exists within American society. One main argument against the expansion of LGBT civil rights, particularly in workplace discrimination, is the cost of extending protection to LGBT workers. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), outlawing discrimination for sexual orientation and gender identity, first introduced to Congress in 1994 and voted on in 1996, 2007 and recently in 2013, has been blocked by opponents claiming that this legislation would “increase frivolous litigation and cost American jobs, especially small business jobs.” It is an argument that is based on a fundamental capitalist principle of cost and its interaction with the health of business. It is an argument, under the beliefs of the GLF, which would be irrelevant as they advocated a society based on the need of workers, not on the cost to companies. In addition to, the beliefs held by the GLF and early 70s gay movement held that the homosexual and other sexual minorities should be more vocal and more demanding of civil rights. Such workplace discrimination if dealt with the radical socialist society proposed by the GLF and SWP would be irrelevant.

With the conclusion of the decade, the Detroit gay community had evolved into an independent movement, one more moderate than it had been in the early 70s. Early in the 70s, the SWP and gay organizations in Detroit such as the GLF shared a mutual belief that a

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Also see, Kate Lambertz, The Huffington Post, "Flint Equal Housing Rights Ordinance Passed After 2-Year Effort From LGBT Groups." Last modified March 5, 2012. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/05/equal-housing-rights-ordinance-flint-michael-brown-lgbt_n_1322440.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/05/equal-housing-rights-ordinance-flint-michael-brown-lgbt_n_1322440.html).

capitalist society was the cause of homosexual oppression. However, by the end of the decade, Socialist Worker Party and other socialist influence had faded dramatically as a more accepting atmosphere towards homosexuals in the political and social realm took hold in America. In addition to, residual anger towards the SWP for its barring of homosexuals from its ranks in the 1950s and 60s and the party’s refusal to apologize also contributed to the diminishing of SWP influence. Ultimately it was this diminished influence and a more accepting environment that allowed for the Detroit gay community to moderate its radical socialist views, and to form a modern gay movement committed to the struggle for gay civil rights.
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