

An investigation into the early beginnings of the radical queer movement and its commodification and suppression through a capitalist and anti-queer establishment in the western world.

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An investigation into the early beginnings of a radical queer movement and its commodification and suppression through a capitalist and anti-queer establishment in the western world.

Within the first breaths of the queer liberation movement in western culture during the 60s/70s, radical leftist ideology had been a foundation and basis for the constitutional freedom and safety of queer people. The main focus of this movement is undeniably to secure equality and expressive freedom for those who identify under the umbrella term of 'queer'. This term will be used throughout the essay to describe anyone who may describe themselves as LGBTQ+. The queer movement also shares views in the abolition of prison systems, armed forces, authoritarian policing and most prevalently anti-capitalist ideology. The early beginnings of the queer movement aligned its political position with other civil rights groups such as the Black Panthers and the Guerrilla Girls as they worked not only to fight gender and racial bias as well as institutional violence against their communities but to also deconstruct the capitalist regime that enforces this bias. "Build a party that could both overthrow capitalism and end the oppression of Black people." (Pasquale, 2020). Each group fighting the same enemy, fighting the same biases but in different settings. A common enemy was clear. This essay will examine the radical roots of the queer movement in the early 60s/70s and its rebellion against the capitalist machine in addition to its eventual decline in revisionist ideology through history bringing the movement into the present. This essay will situate itself with similar arguments to Shon Faye's *'The Transgender Issue'* that highlights the radical beginnings of the movement and creates strong arguments against the capitalist regime. Faye's book features many shining examples of queer community as well as references to various theorists that will be mentioned in this essay. Moreover, examples of cousin political groups such as the Black Panthers and the same fate they suffer will lead into an exploration into the suppression tactics the capitalist regime has used. Furthermore, this essay will inspect the commodification of Pride. The largest and most overt day for queer people as well as a repeatedly documented day in the mainstream press, Pride started as a small protest created by queer people to celebrate queer people. Its' evolution into the parade it is today has allowed the claws of capitalism to mould it into a desperate cash grab.

Chapter 1 will attempt to examine the grassroots of the movement as well as a general history of the queer movement in the western world focusing mainly on the U.K and U.S.A and its alignment with communist and marxist theory. As well as this, a clear relationship between the establishment and queer people will be solidified. Moreover, reference and teachings from queer icons of the community that dedicated a majority of their lives to fighting for their rights and the movement as a whole will be explored.

Chapter 2 will delve into the slow decline in radicalisation of the queer movement and suppression tactics used by the capitalist regime to nullify queer people. This chapter will investigate the commodification of pride and its affects on the community and the negative effects integration of queer people into the cisgendered heterosexual mainstream. The last point focusing on queer people serving in the military and other authoritarian systems.

2.2 As an extension of chapter 2, 2.2 aims to highlight further the impact of the commodification of Pride and more specifically delves into the ethics of Pride month and Pride specific branding that can be damaging to the queer community.

Chapter 1

'To be radical is to grasp things by the root.'

(Karl Marx)

The roots of almost every major political movement are nurtured in the ideology of radicalism, whether that be on the left or right side of the ever polarising spectrum. Movements such as the gay liberation movement, Black panthers and even the Suffragettes, despite their racist and transphobic past “we must also recognize that they played a powerful role in maintaining White supremacy.” (Knott-Dawson, 2019), have been born out of this political radicalism. An injustice was experienced by minority groups and then challenged by those oppressed. Each of these groups, in particularly the Gay Liberation Movement and the Black Panthers, built their foundation from the ideology of socialist and marxist theory “A section of the Black movement was coming to reject not only moderating institutions like the Democratic Party but also capitalism in its entirety.”

(Pasquale, 2020). It is no surprise that these groups found communism as a basis for their organisation as equity is in part a main factor of marxist theory. It is almost poetic that minority groups , in particularly in the U.S.A, made enemy by the capitalist regime had chosen communism as a political system to grow their groups. “Communism as I see it has no place in the United States, and the American people will not stand for its teachings.” (F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1926). Fitzgerald ,a dominant literary figure in in the 1920s, echoes the opinion of America in the zeitgeist as well as present day in his attitudes towards communism. It’s almost as if the shared ostracisation of communist theory and queer people drew the two together to challenge a capitalist regime.

One of the most well known days in the ‘Gay Power’ movement in America are the Stonewall riots that took place in 1969. After the unlawful and homophobic raid against a gay bar in New York, the queer customers inside the bar fought back with fury. Even though it is arguably one of the most historic days in the lives and futures of queer people, it is also one of the most vaguely recorded



Figure 1

events in gay history. “ Given the varying accounts of a messy and complex situation” (Faye.2021, P. 206). It is unclear who threw the first brick, or whether the brick was a shot glass, as well as the exact timing of the event in the evening. This event mixed with the intoxicating characteristics of the drinks served at the Stonewall Inn as well as the drugs ingested by queer customers made the historical retelling into ‘an origin myth or oral tradition... the LGBTQ+ championed different retellings.’ (Faye, 2021. p. 206). This messy and ever-changing story, while extremely important, has led to rows over the prominence of leading figures within the riots. One of which is the identity of Marsha P.Johnson, photographed on the left (Fig 1) . Often referred to as a trans woman, Johnson never identified as such. They rather identified as a gender non-conforming person who expressed feminine identities, choosing to align themselves as a ‘queen’ or ‘transvestite’ as

opposed to asserting themselves as a woman. The idea that trans women did play a large role in inciting the riot is in some ways correct. Johnsons contemporary and trans woman Miss Major Griffin-Gracy played a role in the riots too. This confusion of Johnson's identity is a prime example of the oral tradition of re-telling the Stonewall riot story that still echos through to present day. Griffin-Gracy is one of the few queer trailblazers alive that took part in Stonewall, while the tradition of the Stonewall retelling is important to the education of queer history to young queer people and allies that identify as heterosexual, its mixed stories and somewhat confused timeline can draw focus away from the main point. "The Stonewall Uprising... featured lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans and gender non-conforming people rioting against the same forces of state and oppression."(Faye, 2021. p. 207) Stonewall was the first time that every type of queer person had come together to fight a common enemy, stood shoulder to shoulder they hurled projectiles, insults and outright rebellion against the oppressor. That evening the 'Gay Power' movement in the U.S.A was catapulted into motion.

It has been argued that the history of Stonewall is the most popular piece of queer history, even in Britain. " The American story of Stonewall is better known to most British people than the early days of LGBTQ+ organising in our own country" (Faye, 2021, P. 207). Inspired by the Stonewall events, on the 13th October 1970 the British Gay Liberation Front (GLF) held its first meeting in a basement of the London School of Economics. Inspired by the unification of multiple queer identities in the United States, Bob Mellors and Aubrey Walter created a parallel movement based on revolutionary politics. The U.K's gay liberation front is one of the most overt movements born out of revolutionary ideology. The GLF embedded its politics within the same political doctrine as socialism, its aims were to not only fight for the rights of the politically oppressed but to also challenge society as a whole "the nuclear family, gender roles and patriarchy. it was a socialist movement that rejected capitalism." (Faye, 2021. p. 207). The GLF's alignment with feminism in its rebellion of patriarchal dominance proves the importance of queer people in the early discourse of intersectionality.

The GLF was a radical socialist group that highlighted the importance of unification with all oppressed groups in order to create an effective movement. As well as this, the GLF is responsible for planting the seeds for other activist groups such as the 'Transvestite, Transsexual

and Drag Queen Group' founded only a year after the GLF. Due to the GLF's union of multiple queer identities, other lesser expressed groups of queerness found each other and formed their own subgroups. For the first time in contemporary western history these politically ostracised people had found others like them. The Transvestite, Transsexual and Drag Queen Group released their manifesto '*Declare your Sex*' proclaiming the earliest signs of trans liberation as a branch of the wider gay liberation movement. " Many gay people are confused by the separation between 'gay transvestites and 'straight transvestites'. But this is an artificial split, imposed on us by those people who seek to isolate us and deny our identities" (*Declare your Sex*, 1971. p. 326) The GLF had a large role in the grassroots of many different LGBTQ+ civil rights movements, the '*Declare your sex*' manifesto was an endeavour to solidify the existence of trans people in the U.K and the wider world. Trans people ,unfortunately, are still fighting to prove their existence in the zeitgeist so arguing for your own existence in a time period in which you were invisible is almost impossible. Especially when some queer people also denied your existence." The problem with transsexuals was twofold... transsexuality wasn't particularly well known... and a lot of people didn't believe it existed" (Power, 1995, p. 244) Furthermore, Stuart Feather who was a member of The GLF describes a hesitancy within the group to accept trans identities. " We thought transsexuals... could not perceive of any alternative to the heterosexual model, until surgery had corrected what the mind had partitioned off." (Feather, 2004, p. 324). Only after a select few gay and lesbian members of the GLF recognised the complexity of transsexualism did the majority of the group accept them too. As a result an inherent need for the Transvestite, Transsexual and Drag Queen Group was founded. However, this wasn't the end for trans and gender non-conforming people fighting for the confirmation of their own existence. In 2016 Ben-Shalom, a longstanding lesbian activist, was removed from Milwaukee's Pride parade after signing a transphobic petition on Change.org, writing in the '*reason for signing*' box. " I do not want to shower next to a swinging dick which says the dick is a lady wand" as well as " I am tired of watching the so-called trans community try to extinguish us and extinct us. (Shalom, 2016) With such explicit transphobia, Ben-Shalom whom was once viewed as an LGBTQ+ icon revealed their transphobic beliefs in an attempt to dehumanise and insult the trans community. Throughout queer history trans and gender non-conforming people have been consistently removed from queer discourse as well as insulted and humiliated. The early hesitation from GLF members to

accept trans identity seemed to have been an early warning sign for trans people and the fight for acceptance within their own community, despite their heavy involvement in the rights for queer people in both the U.S.A and U.K. While this is a long standing issue within the queer community, each movement was somewhat founded in the same socialist ideological pond as the other, all fighting the same oppressor for the same reasons. Some may argue that the earliest formation of The GLF and its cousin groups were the most radical, most comprehensive and most effective demonstration of a unified community.

Chapter 2.1

The relationship between the LGBTQ+ community and the establishment ('the establishment' is used to describe a dominant group or elite that controls a polity or an organisation) throughout history is clear, with no trust in each other and a clear abuse of power stemming from one side. Some may argue that queer people and the institution cannot co-exist peacefully." Trans people should not aspire to be equals in a world that remains both capitalist and patriarchal and which exploits and degrades those who live in it." (Faye, 2021, P. xi). Searching for equality in a system that was designed to favour those who implemented it seems almost pointless. The Gay Liberation Front and many other civil rights groups understood this and so adopted a radical political ideology in order to challenge or ,in a more optimistic scope, revolutionise and rebuild the system. Unfortunately it seems that capitalism has managed to null this ideology and progression of the latter in order to distract or create a much more palatable 'political movement'.

One of the most cunning ways the capitalist establishment has distracted focus from the key



Figure 2

points of the queer movement is with the constant 'debate' over trans bodies. With trivial questions such as the bathrooms trans people should use, whether they should be allowed to

compete in sport and a hyper-fixation on the genitals they had. Important issues that could have been raised were missed out. "In 2020 alone *The Times* and its sister paper *The Sunday Times* between them ran over 300 articles." (Faye, 2021, P 6) This debate, often televised and broadcasted on daytime T.V became an almost daily fixture in the lives of everyone in the U.K between 2017 and 2020 ,before the coronavirus pandemic gave trans people a break from the media lynching. A leading figure in a lot of these debates was Piers Morgan, a controversial media figure in Britain, who would conjure up imprudent farfetched examples and connections to completely hypothetical situations in order to prove his anti-trans dogma. "Piers Morgan asked two trans guests if trans identities were 'gobbledigook' and wondered - live on air - whether he could identify as a 'black woman' or an 'elephant'. (Faye, 2021, P. 6). This kind of absurd, humiliating and dangerous line of questioning that forefronts the extremities of identity politics not only outwardly aims to embarrass the trans guests on *Good Morning Britain* but also keeps the important points they were trying to make in the background. This distraction tactic has been used several times by Piers Morgan and the wider media in order to spread dangerous misinformation about trans people and their needs. "media agenda set by cisgender people, often - as we've seen - for the purposes of creating controversy and fuelling a culture war"(Faye, 2021, P. 48). Further, the use of distraction has been a favoured tactic of white supremacists for decades. "Know the function, the very serious function of racism, is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being... None of that is necessary. There will always be one more thing." (Morrison, 1975).

Moreover, the right wing obsession with identity politics and taking it to its extremities seems to be favoured by many in the media. In 2018 Channel 4 hosted the show '*Genderquake*' in an attempt to debate the 'transgender issue' live on T.V. "that became so hostile that the trans participants were heckled with graphic abuse live on primetime television." (Faye, 2021, P. 6). This feeble attempt to give trans people a platform to discuss serious issues affecting the trans community on primetime T.V was met with abhorrent responses from its audience in the show as well as a wider general public opinion that was quickly becoming just as hostile. "In June 2019 a Freedom of Information request by the BBC showed that the number of anti-trans hate crimes recorded by police forces in England, Wales and Scotland had risen by 81 per cent" (BBC, 2019). These polarising debates were repeatedly broadcasted to the general public and withheld

important information about the struggles trans people face as well as amplifying false narratives around them. It is no surprise that there seems to be a steady increase in anti-trans hate crimes. “Data obtained by the BBC showed there were 1,944 crimes across 36 forces in the last financial year compared with 1,073 in 2016-17.” (BBC, 2019). The Home Office attributes this increase in anti-trans hate to better recording and policing but this excuse can only go so far. The media is capitalising on the hate train that alienates trans people as well as the wider queer community in an effort to destabilise any further forward motion in securing an understanding for queer people. The Trans community however is not the only victim to suffer this fate. “ Trans people have now become one of the a number of targets in the right-wing media, alongside, for instance, Muslims, immigrants in general, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, Black Lives Matter, the fat acceptance movement and feminists...” (Faye, 2021, P. 14). The list goes on, almost every minority activist group has been targeted by the media establishment and the wider capitalist institution in order to create a ‘culture war’ that undermines any serious topics that these groups are raising.

While distraction has been a useful tool in undermining the queer movement, it is impossible for the establishment to completely

disregard the existence of any queer person despite their efforts. As a result capitalism has managed to sink its teeth into the most palatable aspects of the queer community in order to commercialise and commodify the movement. The most overt example of this is the commodification of Pride. The first Pride , or at the time Gay Liberation



Figure 3

Day, took place on June 27 1970 in Chicago. ‘Around the country, groups began to plan their own commemorative marches.’ (Blakemore, 2021). It was the first time in western history that queer people came together to march and celebrate their difference. For too long queer people hid in the shadows, enough was enough. Beginning in 1970, every subsequent year the march would become larger and larger spreading across the country until eventually coming over to the U.K in

1972. Pride today is arguably the most prevalent day for queer people across the western world. As a result, this huge interest has created capital. Every year in Pride month, thousands of Pride related products are released in an attempt to create profit from a serious political movement. Annually British Airways sponsors London pride in a thinly veiled attempt to look inclusive and queer friendly, yet their ethical practice does not echo the same merit. “ British Airways has been condemned for cooperating with the removal of refused asylum seekers persecuted for their sexuality while sponsoring the UK’s biggest gay pride event.” (Gayle, 2018). This horrifying and frankly disgusting discovery of British Airways’ involvement with the Conservative government to deport queer people who have immigrated to the U.K in order to seek asylum is an exposing and telling example of the duplicity capitalism presents.”The presence of companies that profit off deportations is an affront to the vision of freedom Pride represents”. (Gayle, 2018). Companies like British Airways plaster their logo ,cladded in the false security of rainbow colours, all over London Pride in an attempt to sell their products to queer people under the guise of inclusivity and acceptance. “Abbott, one of the signatories of the letter, said: “Any airline that engages with the Home Office’s current regime is quite clearly putting their profits ahead of basic human rights. “ (Gayle, 2018). Abbot ,who was Shadow Home Secretary at the time, was one of the few leading political figures to co-sign a letter to British Airways calling for reform in their communication with the Home Office. In response British Airways claimed it was under legal obligation take part in immigration removals yet these claims seem to be a sort of ‘get out of jail free card’. “airlines who refused to carry out immigration removals could face criminal charges, but in practice it was likely that the government and airlines had more pragmatic arrangements.” (Gayle, 2018). The irony is striking.

British Airways isn’t the only company to adopt the rainbow in order to create profit, HSBC a leading bank in the U.K also sponsors Pride annually in Birmingham and London. Again changing its logo for a month in a pathetic example of performative activism ,“supporting a cause or issue to garner attention, support or monetization from others rather than actually caring about making a difference in the cause”(Candelario, 2021) , HSBC follows suit and taints Pride with its desperate attempts of marketing. HSBC’s ethics and sustainability is questionable.“the bank financed at least four fossil fuel companies that are actively involved in the construction of new coal, tar sands and/or oil and gas infrastructure, as well as directly financing an offshore oil and

gas project.” (ShareAction, 2020). With heavy investment in multiple unsustainable fuel projects , most notably the financing of offshore oil drilling, HSBC clearly has more concern for profit over the sustainability of our planet. This revolting display of heavy handed capitalist ideology that prioritises profit over people has no place in Pride. Especially when Pride and the GLF were born out of a socialist and anti-capitalist regime. “On 22 September, HSBC helped lead on a bond deal worth \$1.24bn issued by Aker BP ASA, a Norwegian oil exploration and development company. “ (ShareAction, 2020). This kind of careless and regressive approach to the sustainability of the planet is a key reason as to why capitalist companies have no place at pride. In addition, HSBC has faced backlash for its name-change policy that directly affected people who were transitioning and could not alter the name on their bank account. “The policy is said to make it difficult for transgender people to remove their deadname - the name they were given at birth - from their bank account.” (Card, 2021). This marginalising piece of corporate legislation alienates trans people, the same people they so call ‘celebrate’ every year in Pride. Companies like British Airways and HSBC have no business in Pride, they do not care for securing rights for queer people. Their yearly involvement in Pride is two dimensional, counterproductive to the queer movement and fuelled in self interest.

Chapter 2.2

As argued, Pride has been infiltrated by the capitalist regime in effort to sell product, but this is



Figure 4

not the full extent of the regime’s demoralised effort to squeeze every penny out of queer people. In the month of the Pride parade is Pride Month. Taking place yearly in June, ‘Pride Month’ is a dedicated period in the year to celebrate queer people. The idea of setting aside a single month to discuss important issues, even though well intended, seems a little superficial. “If a brand doesn’t have a 365-day-a-year plan for LGBTQ inclusion, they really need to prioritize that over prioritizing a one-off Pride campaign.” (Graham, 2021). Much like HSBC and British Airways, thousands of companies brandish the rainbow hue in the beginning of June in effort to represent themselves as inclusive only to then quickly revert back to their original logo at the stroke of midnight.

With an array of rainbow products released from Skittles and their subversive removal of the rainbow colours claiming that ‘During Pride only one rainbow matters’ to M&S and their introduction of the LGBT sandwich to celebrate Pride, companies have found new ways to clumsily align themselves with queer people. While there seems to be no immediate threat for brands to flaunt their so-called inclusivity through their products one question does arise, how does this benefit queer people ? “any social justice-orientated marketing is driven primarily by money, not advancing the cause of human progress.” (Jones, 2019). This kind of surface level ‘pro-LGBTQ+’ branding does almost nothing for queer people but involve them in a ‘culture war’ (Faye, 2021) that they did not ask to be apart of. The LGBT sandwich sparked debates on shows such as *‘This Morning’* as to the legitimacy of the sandwich which only added fuel to the media’s distraction tactics in an effort to derail important issues raised during Pride Month. “daytime television settled on a former associate of David Icke, who proceeded to rant about trans people.” (Jones, 2019). Suffering the same fate, trans people were again attacked in the media for ‘encouraging’ this kind of product. When in reality there seems to be no evidence of trans people’s involvement in making the sandwich. Trivial acts like the LGBT sandwich, while possibly originating from a place of innocence, is another example of capitalist greed that disregards the people in favour of profit and allows the establishment to distract from important causes.

Another example of a companies hyper fixation on proving their LGBTQ+ inclusivity is Ernst & Young. An accountancy firm in Britain, Ernst & Young flaunt their queer friendly credentials in an effort to improve brand identity. “here is a firm that facilitates tax avoidance on a grand scale at a time when LGBTQ services are being cut on the basis there isn’t enough public money to fund them.” (Jones, 2021). This kind of institutional hypocrisy only highlights the issue of brands self-proclaiming their advocacy for queer rights when actions taken by the same company directly influence queer people negatively. “However much it contradicts the profit motive, he thinks, a company shouldn’t do something to make money, but because it really believes in something.” (Jones, 2019) While this sentiment is optimistic, its argument is relevant. If brands really strived for inclusivity and tolerance then examples of corporate oxymoron like Ernst & Young would not exist. This kind of ‘woke-washing’, “a term used to define practices in business that provide the appearance of social consciousness without any of the substance.” (Howard, 2021), is careless

and somewhat detrimental to the lives of queer people. With Ernst & Young's involvement in tax avoidance and its butterfly effect to the cutting of LGBTQ+ funding, queer people are negatively affected by the same companies that claim to support them. Capitalism and its demonstration of careless marketing combined with distraction techniques is actively harming the LGBTQ+ movement in a way that is derailing important conversation and harming the livelihood of queer people.

Conclusion

As established, the queer movement was born out of the incessant need for queer people to find each other. Aligning itself with communist theory, the early beginnings of the the GLF and Gay Power movement in the U.K and U.S.A was an anti-establishment, anti-capitalist activist group that sought to dismantle the structures of power in order to gain rights for its members. In doing so, already fractured relationships with authority and power became more fragmented and controversial marches and rioting shook the heterosexual cisgendered patriarchy to a point in which basic human rights were finally given to queer people. This uncompromising approach to securing the rights of LGBTQ+ people allowed "lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans and gender non-conforming people..."(Faye, 2021. p. 207) to stand shoulder to shoulder for the first time in western LGBTQ+ history in a demonstration of community outrage. A strong argument can be put forth that the GLF and Gay Power's radical communist ideology gave them the tools to fight for their rights. With leading figures in the movement in both the U.K , Bob Mellors and Aubrey Walter, and U.S.A, Marsha P Johnson, queer people for the first time had openly LGBTQ+ idols to admire. As pioneers of the movement, it is almost undeniable that their influence within LGBTQ+ activism was a leading factor in better treatment for queer people. Their fearlessness and ferocity when fighting the establishment is something to aspire to. As queer identity became a subject of growing popularity, discussions in the mainstream media grew. As a result it can be argued that the capitalist regime, seeing the queer movement and its links to Marxist theory, treated this growth in conversation as a threat to the foundation of capitalism. Thus resulting in the distraction techniques , explained and given context to earlier, that allowed right-wing media to derail relevant conversations about the queer experience and replace it with trivial and dangerous lines of questioning that attempted to represent queer people with a negative attitude. This sinister

political tactic proved useful when discussing trans rights and bodies, most evidently on morning talk shows such as “*Good Morning Britain*’.

While the distraction tactic was useful the total denial of all queer people was impossible. Resulting in the ‘woke-washing’ of brands, the queer movement was being commodified. With ethically questionable companies such as British Airways sponsoring Pride while providing flights to the Home Office to fly back queer immigrants who have fled their home in political exile or fear of imprisonment or death, companies latched onto the queer movement in order to broaden their target audience and create a positive brand identity. This kind of careless commodification of the queer experience was taken further when the LGBT sandwich was released under the guise of inclusivity when in reality all it brought was further ostracisation of trans people in the press. “David Icke, who proceeded to rant about trans people.” (Jones, 2019). The queer movement isn’t the only group to fall victim to this type of distraction and commodification, groups such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) have also suffered the same fate. “Nike’s profits soared to \$6bn after its Kaepernick ad. (Jones, 2019). After Colin Kaepernick took the knee in protest of the national anthem in support for BLM , Nike took it upon themselves to align with Kaepernick in a move to support BLM and improve their brand image. This decision, resulting in \$6bn, created a lot of profit but the question arises as to the ethics of their company, who makes the shoes? “The leading manufacturer of Nike shoes is China and Vietnam” (Cole, 2015). With overseas costs being lower and less than minimum wage payment to its employees it seems that Nike can also be viewed as a hypocrite. Both the queer movement and Black liberation movement were born out of radicalism yet they both fall victim to capitalism’s suppression tactics.

If there is to be a continuation of queer liberation then a regression back to the radical ideology of the GLF and Gay Liberation Movement may be imperative. A greater understanding of the tactics employed by the establishment to obstruct the movement is imperative. This combined with a critical approach to brands and their use of branding around Pride is also relevant. It is with the utmost importance that as a movement queer people question the integrity and motivation between brands and their sudden interest in Pride and LGBTQ+ people in its entirety. If you are to fight the enemy then you must first see the enemy. Why are they interested ? How are they improving the lives of queer people ? Who does this benefit ?

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