

# LESBIAN WOMEN HAVE RIGHTS AND SO DO OUR CHILDREN!

Because of the greater power of men -- straight and gay -- we lesbian women know first hand what violence they exercise against us and our children. The fight of many gay men to be with each other is to escape the role of dominance imposed on them by our dependence and poverty, which daily creates that brutality.

It is because of that violence that the lesbian movement is massive internationally. Some of us can afford to be open and live with other women: millions more are trapped in relationships with men by our lack of money and are therefore invisible. But the launching of the "Save Our Children" campaign against us is an index of the enormity of the power that we have all built against subservience and invisibility. How much we have to offer to other women, and children -- by our fight for independence -- is measured by extermination attempts like this.

Our weakness as women in relation to the men stems from the unpaid service we perform at home -- raising children, caring for the old and the sick, and preparing ourselves and our husbands or lovers to go out to work. Because we are not paid for that work, we take jobs outside our homes, often in social services, and almost always at low wages. Those of us who are lesbian have had to fight to get and keep every job, by staying in the closet and taking extra care to be "feminine" and "normal". These jobs are often our only access to money at a time when the economic crisis is affecting women on many fronts.

We are also always fighting to keep custody of our own children. Almost anyone who comes along -- husbands, relatives, or government agencies -- can lay claim to them. We are refusing to pay for our lesbianism by facing forced childlessness. The attack on us as being "unfit" to be mothers, and "unfit" to hold jobs where children are is an attempt to deprive both us and our children of the possibility of choosing our sexuality.

We stand behind the children's fight to be free, to have sexual choices, and not to be prey to anyone enlisting them for either heterosexuality or homosexuality. Our struggle in our own right against coercion makes us eminently fit to be mothers and teachers. **WE DON'T WANT TO CHOOSE FOR OUR CHILDREN. WE WANT THEM TO HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE FOR THEMSELVES, JUST AS WE WANT THAT POSSIBILITY FOR OURSELVES. THOSE ATTACKING US FOR RECRUITING ARE THEMSELVES RECRUITING INTO HETEROSEXUALITY, AND WE WANT NO FORCED SEXUALITY.**

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