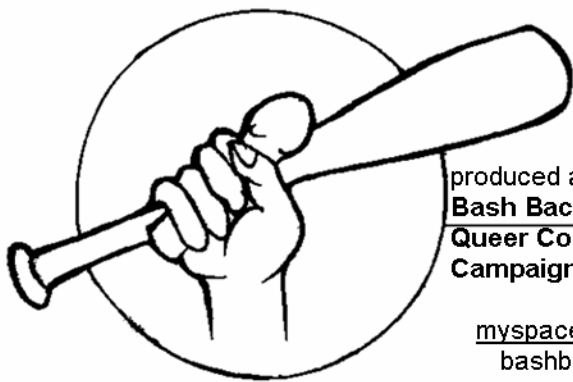


Contract for Enlistment in US Military, Section 8c:

“The agreements in this section and attached annexes are all the promises made to me by the government. Anything else anyone has promised me is not valid and will not be honored.”

in other words,
RECRUITERS LIE!



produced and distributed by
Bash Back! Denver
Queer Counter-Recruitment
Campaign

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**BE ONE OF THOSE QUEERS YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT:
UNDERMINE THE ARMY'S
ABILITY TO FIGHT!**



Queer
Counter-
Recruitment

resource guide

just some stuff to help educate yourself and others, and to get plugged in with others who do counter-recruitment

General Counter-Recruitment

- DC Anti-War Network counter-recruiting resource center
www.counter-recruitment.org
- Counter-Recruitment listserv (high traffic)
groups.yahoo.com/groups/counter-recruitment
- National Network Opposing Militarization of Youth
www.nnomy.org
- American Friends Service Committee :: Youth & Militarism
www.afsc.org/Youth&Militarism/

Queer Counter-Recruitment

- "Surviving Militarism, Racism & Repression: An Emergency Preparedness Kit for LGBT & Queer Youth" (12 pgs full color)
webarchive.afsc.org/pdf/queer-youth-and-militarism.pdf
- "Queer Resistance to Militarism" in The Malfunction zine from Queer Beograd (eastern European context) (24 pgs)
www.eng.queerbeograd.org/images/stories/docs/queerb.g2_en_final.pdf

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- [10] "British Army targets gay graduates through new recruitment guide," *Pink News*, 30 Oct 2008. <<http://gaynews.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-9432.html>>
- [11] same as 8.
- [12] Deborah Davis. "Illegal Immigrants: Uncle Sam Wants You," *In These Times*, 25 July, 2007. Cartel Impacto.

Be Supportive- thinking about joining the military is a big decision, with more on the line that just someone's life. Money for college, respect from family and community, self-confidence, and thousands more are promised to potential enlistees. Most young people, regardless of whether they are thinking about joining the military, have a lot of concerns about the world, themselves, and how to make everything work. Sometimes just being a listening ear and offering advice is really all someone needs. Some recruiters see themselves as some sort of counselor with a service to provide.

Be Persistent- the recruiter will call young people at home, see them at the store or at school, and the army sends constant messages about enlisting. Don't be afraid to call every couple days to see how things are going, share answers you found, ask questions, find more answers, etc. Almost everything and everyone is going to tell them to join; it's your job to counter that.

Don't Try to Convert- a lot of counter recruiters run into the problem where they preach a certain ideology or message (from peace to anarchism) and turn off whoever they're speaking to. People who are going to join the military because they want the military to continue as an institution will do so; it's more worthwhile talking with people who are considering because of the potential benefits of enlisting. This doesn't mean that you can't include your politics in discussions, but that counter recruitment is about providing options and support so people don't join, not to build your movement.

Educate Yourself- there is a lot of things to learn about recruitment, recruiters, the military, and counter recruitment. Look at the links in the back of the zine, talk to vets, listen to young people, learn about oppression and the poverty draft, read stories from people who are live war, write your own thoughts, learn where young people hang out the most outside of school, and anything else that might be related. The more you know, the bigger help you'll be.

introduction

What you are reading is not counter-recruitment material aimed at potential military recruits. This is recruitment material aimed at a radical trans and queer audience, encouraging you to get involved in counter-recruitment.

The zine provides a framework for looking at militarism and at trans and queer youth—a collision of forces—and how a queer-military overlap is being expanded by an alliance of Don't Ask Don't Tell activists, military officers, military recruiters, and the Obama administration.

We'll touch on the intersections of queer and trans bodies with race, class, age, etc that produce more intense zones of vulnerability to recruitment.

There's a case study where we look at the situation in Britain, where queer and trans people are being actively recruited by the military.

Queer counter-recruitment is needed now—even before Don't Ask Don't Tell is repealed—and this work both defends our communities and attacks the infrastructure of United States imperialism.

We'll go into what queer counter-recruitment can look like, leaving plenty of space for creativity and development of strategies and tactics.

At the end you'll find a resource guide to get useful materials and guidance on doing queer counter-recruitment in your communities and regions.

Undermining the Army's ability to fight,

Bash Back! Denver
Queer Counter-Recruitment Campaign

May 2009



queer militarism and its expansion

There is a large and growing demographic of queers in the military, in spite of the official policy of the US military, Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), which bars openly gay individuals from involvement in the military and allows military personnel to be discharged for suspected queerness.

The military's policy during wartime is to retain queer soldiers. Since 2001, discharges of suspected homosexuals under DADT has dropped each year from 1,273 in 2001 to 612 in 2006 because of the troop shortage [6]. Exemptions are also often made for highly-ranked and highly-skilled personnel.

Soon, if Obama keeps his promise, Don't Ask Don't Tell will be repealed, allowing recruiters to directly go after the queer community.

Some factors that make queer and trans youth vulnerable to recruiters:

- disapproval, lack of support, or rejection by family when they come out
- social isolation, rejection by peers, harassment, and dropping out of school (due to harassment or other reasons)
- military-style programs like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are attractive to queer and trans youth and are heavily targeted by recruiters
- parents often send their "misbehaving" kids to military-style summer camps
- recruiters target youth who seem vulnerable

The military offers a future for trans and queer youth who are unsure about their future—like youth of color, queer youth don't have equal access to higher education and careers.

**MILITANCY
NOT
MILITARISM**

the basics of counter recruitment:

If you're thinking about doing counter-recruitment, there are a couple things to think about before you step out there and do it.

Make A Connection- the most important and basic piece of counter recruitment is making a connection with the young person you're talking with. It seems so obvious that it seems like it shouldn't even be touched on, but it is the single most important thing, and, most likely, the piece that will actually work. Remember: the military spends billions every year on active recruitment. And that doesn't include the billions and billions spent that glamorizes/hero-izes war and the military. Not to mention systems of power like white supremacy and hetero-sexism. Pretty much every where you look you'll see some kind of advertisement for the military, which means that everyone that young person thinking of joining is looking, they see it too.

When you hand out flyers, when you see someone talking with a recruiter, when you hear about a friend's friend wanting to join the military, take the step to reach out to that person. Ask them questions, give your phone number, offer them support.

Ask Questions- successful counter recruitment is centered around the young person you are working with and their experiences in the world; you won't be very successful if you just give them a bunch of information that doesn't connect to their life. There are a million reasons why someone might decide to join the military, so rather than trying to counter all of them it's easiest to just focus on what is more important to them. Don't be surprised if one question leads to ten questions from them, and don't worry if you don't have the answer. With so much information out there, it's impossible to know everything; just be committed to finding the answer. Which takes us to...

Help Find Answers- once you start asking questions, you'll invariably get to one that you don't know the answer to. When you get to that point, check out some of the resources in this zine to help the two of you find more information. If you don't they might end up asking the recruiter, who is less than likely to give an honest answer.

The military's strategy in the next few years will likely be to leverage the economic crisis and the repeal of DADT in order to shore up the shortage with new working-class and queer recruits. Our job is to foil them at every turn. The recruiters are getting ready.
What are you doing?

defend our communities

It's obvious why we don't want trans and queer people to join the military. We already face enough violence in civilian life. Soldiers, especially queer and trans, have even higher rates of injury, death, abuse, and sexual assault.

41% OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY FELLOW SOLDIERS

And militarism promotes homophobia and transphobia. Militarism and nationalism are in opposition to trans and queer liberation. In the nationalistic frenzy after September 11, 2001, for example, homophobic violence increased in the United States along with racist violence. Like nearly all institutions, the military promotes binary gender and heterosexism. Boot camp is an especially hateful environment where homophobia and racism are used as tools to strip recruits down so they can be easily trained.

undermine military infrastructure

Valid criticisms have been made of the anti-war movement's inability to cripple military infrastructure even as it succeeded in mobilizing millions of people. The problem was a reliance on "having our voices heard" rather than making our impact felt. Direct action strategies, including port blockades and the Stop Lake City idea are the right direction, and counter-recruitment follows this kind of strategy.

Troop shortage is one factor that could feasibly slow or halt the US imperial program. If this were not the case, why would the military be working so hard on recruitment? It is not true that queer soldiers will weaken the military, but queer counter-recruitment will.

bad timing? the non-profit meltdown

Another reason that now is the right time to get involved in counter-recruitment, and the reason that Bash Back! Denver started this work, is the financial meltdown of the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC). With widespread losses of foundation funding and personal donations, some major counter-recruitment activity in the NPIC is collapsing. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), which runs one of the most active nation-wide counter-recruitment campaigns, including a queer youth and militarism program, and employs the only paid counter-recruitment staff position within 1000 miles of Denver, Colorado, has lost huge amounts of its funding and has made severe cuts in its programs.

AFSC's counter-recruitment position in Denver is about to disappear in a few months, and the outgoing organizer has started working with several grassroots organizations in Denver including Indigenous Youth Sovereignty Project and Bash Back! to build a sustainable counter-recruitment movement beyond the NPIC.

Although this failure of the NPIC threatens to devastate our movements, it's an opportunity. It is opening up space for us to build movements that more accurately embody the kinds of worlds we want to create.

obama's war on queer and trans youth

editorial by Ariel Attack, originally written for the Queers Against Obama blog, March 9, 2009. Some edits made.

If a George Bush policy had had the systematic effect of bringing death, injury, sexual assault, harassment, psychological trauma, and suspension of civil rights to poor queer and trans people, while expanding the might of the military, there would have been widespread outrage from queers, anti-war activists, and liberals. Yet President Obama is able to push forward such a policy under the guise of equal rights and with the hearty encouragement of spellbound liberals and wealthy gays.

Fox News reported almost two months ago that Obama will repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), the law under which openly gay (or suspiciously queer) soldiers can be discharged from the military (1). According to the Washington Post, about 10,000 soldiers have been discharged under DADT in the decade-and-a-half of its existence (2).

Meanwhile, the military is facing a severe troop shortage. Obama's surge brings troop levels to over 50,000 in Afghanistan, and he plans to maintain 50,000 troops in Iraq past 2010 (3). Over 34,000 US troops have been killed or wounded in Iraq alone, numbers that need to be matched by new recruits (4). The poverty draft is in full effect; soldiers are serving multiple tours without leave; white supremacy in recruitment, deployment and military hierarchy continues to put the brunt of war on US communities of color. And in an under-reported historical first, a battalion has been deployed within US borders ready to squash civil unrest (5). With Obama's surge of 17,000 new troops in Afghanistan, soldiers on leave are now being called in for redeployment.

THE MILITARY IS FACING A SEVERE TROOP SHORTAGE... IT'S THE RECRUITERS' JOB TO KEEP THE WAR MACHINE RUNNING.

It's the recruiters' job to keep the war machine running through the shortage. Military recruiters work under intense quotas and are legally permitted to lie to potential recruits. Even with all their work and deception, they still run short of "bodies."

In the eyes of the military, the queer community is an untapped resource. Since 2001, we've seen that DADT discharges have been scaled back from 1,273 discharges in 2001 to 612 in 2006 [6]. In other words, queers are already being allowed in the military because of the troop shortage. Moreover, queer and trans youth - out or not - are already vulnerable to recruitment through programs like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts which are little more than military recruitment programs and heavily attract gender- and sexuality-questioning youth. The repeal of DADT would usher in a new rush of queer soldiers. Conservative

"gay rights" groups have set the stage so that when DADT is repealed, some queers will see it as a new opportunity, a new equality, the granting of their "right" to be gay in the military. Military recruiters will not miss this opportunity either. Recruiters are already at work developing programs to target queer and trans youth, but these plans await the repeal of DADT before they can be deployed.

DISCHARGES UNDER DON'T ASK DON'T TELL
DROPPED FROM 1,273 IN 2001 TO 612 IN 2006.

The Obama brand of "change" comes into sharper focus. The move to allow gays in the military, touted as a liberal gay rights reform, is in fact exactly what the military needs to make Obama's troop surge work. This is an old kind of "inclusive" liberalism that has been used to enlist African-Americans during the Civil War and non-citizens during the "War On Terror."

To be clear, the queers who will be recruited are not the same folks lobbying for their "right to marry." This is how it works: the upper-crust gays of the Stonewall Democrats and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) sit pretty in their boardrooms, gentrified gayborhoods, \$1,000-a-plate fundraisers, art auctions, and "gay-friendly" corporate health care plans, while queer youth of color, queer youth who've been kicked out of home, and gender-questioning youth are the ones who will be heavily targeted by recruiters, hear false promises, sign their rights away, and serve time in Afghanistan and Iraq.

RECRUITERS ARE ALREADY AT WORK DEVELOPING
PROGRAMS TO TARGET QUEER AND TRANS YOUTH.

The wealthy gays of the HRC are fighting for inequality. They work hard to maintain their positions of wealth and power near the top of a system of inequality. The lobby to repeal DADT, however cloaked in language of "anti-discrimination," is a bold move to strengthen the US military, a pillar holding up their thrones.

The dawn of Obama's presidency calls for incisive criticism that cuts to the reality of the mechanisms of power. If we perform this surgery will we discover that liberalism is a sophisticated form of repression that uses reform to maintain systems of inequality, and the rhetoric of hope, change, and equal rights to distract and pacify grassroots movements. Obama, it seems, is one of the most accomplished practitioners of liberalism in history.

Trannies, queermos, it's time to get out your scalpels.

case study: britain

Since the government of the UK removed the ban on queer people in the military in 2000, in part because they were being sued by "Stonewall" (a mainstream "gay rights" group), the military has launched multiple queer recruitment programs:

- At the 2004 Gay Pride in Manchester, the Air Force took part in the parade, the Army joined in 2005. They set up recruitment stands and marched in uniform. The RAF even had a float of a fighter jet "with an **oversized cockpit**" (emphasis added!). [8]
- In the next few years, all three branches of the military joined the "Stonewall Diversity Champions" program, in which they receive training and the ability to tout themselves as LGBT-positive employers [9]
- In 2008, the "Stonewall" lesbian & gay recruitment guide, a booklet for LGB graduates to find employment, featured the Army for the first time. The Navy and Air Force were already featured in the guide. 20,000 hard copies were distributed to gay graduates in addition to the online version. [10]
- The Air Force has championed its "acceptance" of trans people, even covering the cost of gender-confirming surgeries. [11]

Unfortunately, there is little information available about the effectiveness of these campaigns or about any resistance movement. Still, some lessons can be gathered:

- Trans and queer recruitment in the US will be more active and more intense. The UK does not have the same imperial needs or troop shortage as the United States.
- The recruitment programs in the US will be researched and cutting edge, targeting the queer community from within. In targeting Latin@ communities, the Army uses what they call "barrio anthropology" and grassroots "viral and guerrilla marketing" methods to "go deep into the neighborhoods and barrios" for recruits. [12]
- Organizations like HRC will ally with the military in recruitment, just like "Stonewall" has in the UK.
- US military branches will attempt to portray themselves as a "gay-friendly" employers.
- They have enormous resources at their disposal in terms of funding, marketing research, and experience.