



PHOTO BY ANDREA UEMURA

"There really wasn't room in the peace movement for people who were out queer activists 10 years ago," she says. "Queer people are so busy trying to just maintain survival rights ourselves that we haven't had a lot of energy to put into the 'other issues.'"

During 1991's Gulf War most gay men and lesbians had other things on their minds—namely Ballot Measure 9, which would have specified that they were "perverse" and "abnormal" in the Oregon Constitution. Tinker likens the current war on terrorism to the "cultural war" declared by anti-gay leader Lon Mabon.

"It's essentially those same people who are now pushing the military invasion of Iraq," she says. "It's the Oregon Citizens Alliance and the Christian Coalition...who are sponsoring the pro-troop rallies. Their agenda is, quite simply, Christian dominance of the world, and they see that as a good thing."

Tinker realizes that not all gay, lesbian, bi and trans people are opposed to the war and that she could lose funding from donors who disagree with her organization's stance. But when the future of the planet is at stake, she believes it's worth the risk.

"For LGBT people it really behooves us to remember that if we don't maintain a healthy respect for diversity and a healthy respect for the nonviolent resolution of conflict, we don't survive," she says. "The attack on Iraq is fundamentally an attack from people...who do not respect even diversity of religion, much less sexual orientation. And if they take over the world, we're not gonna come out on top."

Love Makes a Family held a workshop April 12 to teach activists how to practice nonviolent communication skills when speaking up for peace. According to Tinker, the program originally was developed as a way to talk to homophobic people during ballot measure campaigns but can be applied to the anti-war movement, too.

"We have got to connect up with other movements and specifically with the peace movement if our work is going to have any meaning at all," she says. "Queer people are a people who are defined by the way we love, and I think that it therefore falls to us to take leadership in this peace movement."

Three months ago Catherine Sameh, founder of the women's bookstore In Other Words, formed a new group to give activists a forum where they could discuss the connections

and support the troops, and to some degree that's always been the case. There was a strong pacifist movement before World War II, but once Pearl Harbor hit...the country was united for that period of time," he says. "It will take some time for this to play out."

Dixon sees the connection between his sexual orientation and his opinion about the war.

"I may be a little more skeptical about accepting the position of my government, because I know there's a huge amount of hypocrisy involved in how the government treats gays and lesbians and, in particular, gay and lesbian servicemembers," he says. "So I suppose it's easier for me to question the official line."



PHOTO BY JIM RADOVIA

Bonnie Tinker was a peace activist long before she became a lesbian activist. But then her attention was diverted to her role as executive director of Love Makes a Family, which advocates for queer parents.



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between radical queer politics and the peace movement and learn how to become more visible advocates for change. Out Against the War's first meeting Jan. 19 drew a wide array of people, including anarchists, socialists, feminists and unionists. Participants critiqued capitalism, linked cuts in social services to escalating militarism and called for a practical organizing response.



PHOTO BY ERIN SEITON

Barbara Turrill, Lesbian Community Project board chairwoman, has been involved in Out Against the War ever since. She believes queers, as a marginalized community, can relate to what the Iraqis are enduring.

"We have a lot in common with some people who are dealing with poverty issues, with issues related to racism and gender issues and all the social service cuts that have happened over the last couple of months," she says. "We're really familiar with being pushed to the edge like that, of being perceived as a community that can be almost disregarded.... The war seems to be an effort to do the same, only in a different country."

Out Against the War made its presence known to the "mainstream" peace community

by holding a feeder march during one of last month's peace protests downtown. According to Turrill, the group has given activists a much-needed space to talk about their personal beliefs, the war and the increased stress they are feeling right now.

"In general, I think whenever civil rights are threatened, the queer community is threatened," she says. "It's much easier to control people when they're afraid, so anyone who lives on a margin or is perceived as being different has much less security." □

PRIDE AT WORK OREGON will hold its monthly meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. April 22 at the Communication Workers of America Local 7901, 2950 S.E. Stark St. For more information call 503-516-2498 or e-mail prideatworkpdx@yahoo.com. OUT AGAINST THE WAR will meet 7 p.m. April 27 at the Bread and Roses Center, 819 N. Killingsworth St., and 7 p.m. May 4 at In Other Words, 3734 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. For more information call Catherine Sameh at 503-335-8306 or Cheryl Nally at 503-238-8591. The LESBIAN COMMUNITY PROJECT and the WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM will co-sponsor a forum on how the Homeland Security Act affects women and queers from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. May 23 at the Northwest Cultural Center, 1819 N.W. Everett St. For more information call 503-227-0605.



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READY FOR ACTION?

The war on Iraq has left many members of the sexual minorities community feeling powerless about what they can do to get their message through to the U.S. government. Here is some advice provided by leaders of the queer peace movement to help remedy this:

- **Express yourself.** Identify yourself as a pacifist by talking to friends, participating in rallies, wearing buttons, posting bumper stickers, contacting elected officials and writing letters to the editor.
- **Open your mind.** Read international news sources and attend lectures, films and workshops related to the war.
- **Family matters.** Help gay and lesbian servicemembers' relatives, who can't seek assistance if their loved ones are killed, injured or captured on the battlefield.
- **Give a little bit.** Organizations like Servicemembers Legal Defense Network need financial support. But don't forget all of the community groups that are doing day-to-day work in fighting AIDS, discrimination, etc.
- **Go online:** Electronic activism is thriving at MoveOn.org and TrueMajority.org.
- **Vote.** For registration information visit www.sos.state.or.us.