

## Romancing The International: Or, Gay Rights After Creating Change

The battle for Gay Marriage is over in the United States. It concludes the Holy Trinity of the mainstream Gay Movement, which included Hate Crimes Legislation and the end of Don't Ask Don't Tell. As a result, gay nonprofits like Human Rights Campaign and the National LGBTQ Task Force are forced to scramble for funds in the shape of new causes. Already HRC, the world's single largest gay nonprofit, has set its sights on international gay politics. And yet, as the fracas at the recent Creating Change 2016 conference indicates, the "movement" is rife with fissures and questions about what this international vision should look like, with the Task Force's characterization of anti-pinkwashing protesters as "anti-semitic" placing it squarely in opposition to the growing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. For Valentine's Day, GJ shared some radical love with international queers by hosting a conversation on what it means to act in solidarity internationally.

- We talked about the Creating Change protest and range of familiarity among activists involved concerning BDS, Israel and Palestine, and potential responses to their actions. One weakness of the action was that many participants were not very familiar with the issues in question.
- We talked about apartheid South Africa as the origin for BDS as an international activist strategy and what that looks like 20 years later.
- We screened excerpts from *Everything Must Come to Light*, Mpumi Njinge, 2003. We discussed the film's depiction of Sangomas, traditional African healers who are typically women and who take wives as part of their practice, as an example of indigenous spaces for queer relationships that are markedly different than global northern queer visions of identity & community.
- One of the features of enacting international solidarity is to not assume that strategies championed in the U.S will serve the global south.

### Major take-aways

- We can't expect ourselves or others to be deeply educated in every single situation, but refraining from acting in solidarity with international queers is also a political act, so how do we determine what appropriate action is when a call for solidarity goes out?
- If South Africa manifests increased inequality in every way except the legal institutionalization of apartheid, what does it mean to carry out a successful BDS

campaign? What implications does this have for BDS as a strategy for confronting the Israeli state?

- What does it mean to be queer activists when the international communities you are advocating for ask you to join them in activism that encompasses more than strictly queer experience?

Interested in hearing more? Get in touch - we'd love for you to join us or collaborate with us on continuing this and other conversations! Check out our events page for upcoming meetings.