

A GAY MALE NEWSPAPER / Fall 1971 / BOSTON MASS

letters

Hello all you gays of FAG RAG,

Your paper is a noble attempt, but having read it cover to cover - three times - me and two gay pals of mine read it too - it is really a very *dull* paper - compared to Gay, GAY Power, Dick and Screw - it is kind of lousy all around.

The cover is stupid! What the hell has -illegible- got to do with Gay and Gay Power. Why not a nice naked guy with a semi-hard cock and a smile? That's the real hang up - you guys have no sense of humor. All that shit about "Pigs" - it is now passe' - the revolution and crap. Grow up dopes.

There's no nude photos. No drawings or pictures of nudes and naked asses and cocks and balls. The picture on the last page - or the lack - is *gruesome* a stupid dreary bunch of creeps - not one of you looks as though you'd know what to do if a guy shoved his cock in your face. The article on "Cocksucking" is pretty good, but lots of words and not much action. Why don't you have a "clinic" in cocksucking and show us how to do it. If I and some of my gay pals come over to 91 River Street would you give us a demonstration. Would you strip and fuck around and suck our cocks - and do it real nice - with a couple of fingers up our ass at the same time?

Come on down to the baths at LaGrange St. some night about eleven and come into the Siesta Room. You'll see some real cocksucking - nice, beautiful, clean, naked gays with big, juicy, hot, throbbing cocks doing their stuff.

3 gays
Jo, Pete, and Dick
69 Fuck St.

P.S. The poetry is really terrible - like "Love Story" with a hard on - what lousy shit you worked your asses off for.

(This letter also included some charming artwork which we have turned over to our art staff to see what they can do with it. FR)

We have tried to make contact with gay people who are in prison. The Media Center receives lots of letters from prisoners asking for copies of the MOLE. Since the MOLE no longer exists we have been sending prisoners copies of FAG RAG and asking them to pass it on to gay prisoners. So far we haven't heard anything from gay people in prison who read FAG RAG, but we did get the following letter from a straight prisoner:

Dear FAG RAG,

I just got your magazine, the FAG RAG, and also read your letter, so to answer it, I wish to say first off I am not gay and then to tell some of the reasons it's like this. Although I am straight, my sexual deprivation from being in prison has on one occasion led me to look up a friend who was gay because I just wanted to relieve myself and I knew he sucked cocks. Although he did get my dick into a semi-hard, I could not enjoy it so I got no satisfaction out of it and I guess even tho I am no gay, I do see and believe in gay liberation. It's a shame that if two men love each other or feel good touching and caressing one another that the people turn against it and this goes for women too. I believe that people should go by what they feel, not by some code that was established before our time and also I believe in the near future with your magazine and others like it, maybe this freedom will come about.

Maybe I am straight because to touch a male or bump him makes me uncomfortable whereas with a girl, I would enjoy it or maybe it was my upbringing. I don't and can't really say for sure. And one other thing, this is one straight guy who don't condemn a gay one. Hell, you should be allowed to do your own thing.

Peace and love
stay cool,
Robert
no. 690834

P.S. I wish you alot of luck on your movement!

RADICAL THERAPIST
23 Hancock St.
Sommerville, Mass.

- a newspaper done by radical shrinks
- always looking for good articles
- subs: \$6/year (nine issues)
- free to prisoners, G.I.'s and those without \$

FAG RAG was written and put together by the following people:

Kevin, McGirr, Larry Martin, Ken Beck, Steve Barru, Richard, Charley, Lenny, Little John, Jeff, John Mitzelle, Rabelle, Alan Troxler, Bob, Leland Steve Mermon, John Murray, Larry, Billy, Aaron and more whose name's I can't remember right now.

Any mail should be sent to -
FAG RAG

c/o Red Book Store
91 River St.
Cambridge, Mass.
02139

GAY MALE LIBERATION

Meetings: 8:00pm Tuesday
The Red Book Store
91 River Street
Cambridge, Mass.

We don't have a phone right now, check the PHOENIX and B.A.D. for a new listing soon.

Student Homophile League - see ad on page 18
Homophile Union of Boston 282-9181
1514 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester
Mon. - Fri. 7-4 Sat. 1-4
Parents of Gay Offspring 964-8111
B.U. Homophile League 232-7284
Daughters of Bilitis 926-3439
Box 221, Pru. Center Station
Boston 02199
Grad. Student Homophile League
of Harvard 498-4237
Homophile Community Health Service 423-6398
112 Arlington St., Boston
M,W,&F 7-9pm 423-6399

OTHER NUMBERS

Cambridgeport Free Clinic 661-1010
Free Medical Aid 227-3803
F. Lynch Free Clinic 442-0100
Venereal Disease (x 434) 734-5300
(We have heard from quite a few people that the best of the best of the V.D. clinics in the local hospitals is at the New England Medical Center on Harrison Ave. in Boston. Their attitudes towards gay people seem to be very open. Call 482-2800 and ask to be connected with Mrs. Clare. All expenses for the treatment of V.D. is paid for by the state - it's free!)
Mass Welfare 864-2980
Camb. Tennants Organization 354-2064
Men's Child Care 547-2855
Sanctuary 492-2000
Red Book 491-6930

GOOD NEWS FOR ALL YOU CONFERENCE QUEENS OUT THERE. Conferences are in again this season. The Fall 1971 Gay Liberation schedule shapes up like this:

Oct. 1-3, the Hartford Kalos Society is sponsoring a gay conference and festival to celebrate Connecticut's new penal code which has eliminated some of the old sex laws. There will be a march calling for more legislation concerning gay people. For more information, call (203) 547-0940 or (203) 367-8950
P.S. This all takes place in Hartford.

Oct. 22-24. This one is being planned by the Rochester Gay Liberation Front and will be in Rochester, New York (how do you like that). There will be a registration fee of \$5.00 which will cover all events. Housing will be provided, but bring sleeping bags. The schedule looks like this:

Fri., Oct. 22 5:00pm registration, 8:00 concert and reading, 10:30 coffee house.
Sat., Oct. 23 speakers and workshops, 5:00 dinner, 9:00 dance (costumes welcome).
Sunday, Oct 24 workshops, 1:00 brunch, 2:00-chapel service.
University of Rochester Gay Liberation Front
Todd Union, River Station
Rochester, N.Y. 14627
(716) 275-6181

Nov. 25-28 The Gay Liberation Front of Madison Wisconsin is sponsoring a National Gay Thanksgiving. They are interested in people coming together to talk about what's been happening with the gay movement in the last year and to make plans for the future. Right now they are interested in ideas about what people think should be talked about and what kinds of activities should be planned for the festival. If you want to know more write:
Gay Liberation Front of Madison
10 Langdon Street
Madison Wisconsin 53703

about FAG RAG

One of the things we received a lot of criticism about was the name of the paper, FAG RAG. Many gay people felt insulted by the name and felt that it was wrong for us to use a word that is used by the straight community as a term of their contempt for us. We talked at some length about these criticisms and after all was said and done, we decided to keep the name FAG RAG. We also feel that it is important for us to explain our reasoning to you. When we were at the Christopher Street Parade in New York, some of us got a leaflet put out by a group called the Flaming Faggots. In that leaflet there was a section describing why they call themselves what they do. In large part it explains our own position:

WHO'S CALLING US WHAT? At one time, the Man showed his contempt for us by emphasizing how unhappy he assumed we must be not to resemble him. So we chose the word "Gay" to describe ourselves-to affirm our right to be free, unashamed, and joyous. Now many of us are wondering if the word hasn't outworn its usefulness. The Man digs it as a way to trivialize us. And far from having to clown for him any longer, we are now determined, angry and proud. That's why we like the word "faggot" better. It can't be co-opted. Also it refers to our martyred brothers who were once burned at the stake and still die every year from the Straight Man's hatred. Brazenly calling ourselves faggots thus keeps us from denying our oppression. And it helps us turn our pride into righteous anger, our anger into action.

When a straight man calls us faggots he is in effect saying we aren't like him, he is showing his contempt for us because we don't fit the stereotyped definitions of manhood Amerikan style. And basically we're PROUD of the fact that we don't fit those definitions because they are essentially anti-human. We're proud to take the straight Man's term of contempt and throw it back in his face; proud to admit, flagrantly, that we don't fit and don't want to fit Straight Amerika's definition of manhood.

It's very hard to put out the kind of paper we are trying to do and not entirely lose a sense of humor, leaving the paper full of heaven, serious tracts about the state of the world. All of us feel that to some extent we have to go about what we're doing with some sense of humor because that is very important to the vision of the world which we have. Calling the paper FAG RAG is one way (probably not that good a one) we felt would incorporate that sense of humor into what we're doing.

A WORD ABOUT THE COVER

There was a feeling among some of the people who worked on the paper that we shouldn't use the cover we have on this issue. They felt the drawing was an idealized portrait of a romantic "pretty" boy and that it was an unfair representation of who we are and who gay people are in general. They were also concerned with the fact that gay papers always seem so directed towards a young audience at the expense of older gay people. They felt that the cover flaunted that kind of "ageism". After some discussion we decided to keep the cover because we didn't really have anything else and also because we felt it would be better to print the picture and then talk about why some people didn't like it rather than just throw it away, which really wouldn't give anybody a chance to see it.

ABOUT THE PRICE

In spite of the wage-price freeze we have raised our prices. Selling the paper for a dime made it impossible for us to make enough money to keep putting the thing out regularly. Also, the size of the paper has increased from 16 to 20 pages which means a considerable increase in expenses. Sales from the first issue left us 150 dollars short of the \$425 dollars needed to put out a 20 page paper. We had to make up the difference out of our pockets which isn't good because we aren't rich. I guess that's how inflation works. Sorry.

ABOUT SUBSCRIPTIONS

We decided that we wouldn't have subscriptions for this issue of the paper because we aren't sure just exactly how many more FAG RAG's there will be. We felt that it was a rip-off to have people send in money for five issues and then only put out two more. When, if ever, we get things more together, then we'll try subscriptions.

The Gay Yoga class meets every Saturday at 10:30 at St. John the Evangelist Church, 33 Bowdoin Street on Beacon Hill near Sporter's in Boston. The class is 25 cents. Bring blanket and loose clothing.

Fag Rag blues

When I started this article it was intended to be a kind of Open Letter or "editorial" about the paper, like we had in the first FAG RAG. Well, in the process of writing the article my intentions changed quite a bit. I began trying to write about some of the problems we have had putting out this issue of the paper. Our staff meetings have often been long and bitter arguments. We have had a great deal of trouble working together. Because of that, work on the paper has gone very slow. As I wrote, I expanded on that theme a lot because I think the problems we have had are facing the gay movement as a whole. What I finished with is anything but an editorial. I am most certain that what I have said does not represent the opinion of many people who worked on the paper. And if it does I am sure they would express themselves very differently about it. What I have come up with is not an Open Letter, but a statement of my own feelings about many of the problems we are having with FAG RAG and also with GML.

When I read a newspaper, it usually comes off as a collection of statements about a set of issues. Most of the time there is little indication of the process that was used to decide what was printed, what wasn't printed, how the paper was laid out, which drawings and photographs were chosen, etc. I imagine that FAG RAG must appear the same way. An example of what I mean is the article "To Be 27, Gay and Corrupted". As you read it there is nothing to indicate that that article was the cause of an extended and often bitter argument. Many people felt it shouldn't be included because it presented such a negative picture of gay life. Others (myself included) felt that, while it was negative, it was also a realistic statement which talked about feelings which many of us could personally relate to and which we felt a good many others could also relate to. All of us wished that the article said more about the kinds of conditions and institutions which help to create those feelings.

The intensity of our meetings and the animosity which many of them produced indicate that there was more at stake than simply whether or not a given article was printed. The kinds of disagreements we had can best be understood in the context of what has been happening with Gay Liberation Fronts all over the country. The last few months have seen the collapse of many GLF's all over the place. For example, New York City GLF split into a whole collection of splinter groups and from all I can gather, there is a good deal of antagonism between members of the various groups. In San Francisco and Berkeley, the same kind of fragmentation has occurred. And while we haven't "officially" split here in Boston, we are certainly divided among ourselves and finding it hard to work together.

I think it is important to start talking about why all these splits have occurred and why it is so hard for us to do things together and, most importantly, why there is so much bitterness among all those involved. My own feeling is that the events of the last few months, here and elsewhere, are the inevitable outgrowth of the way in which we have faced the problem of "gay liberation". We have based a lot of what we have done for the last couple of years on some assumptions which are basically untrue. Probably most crucial, we have assumed that because we have all come together in a group called Gay Male Liberation, that we share a good many things in common. This assumption, which I think is wrong, appears all the more real because we use many of the same words to express ourselves - words like "sexism", "racism", "gay", "straight", "gay identified", "straight identified", "oppression", etc.

Working on this issue of FAG RAG has more than ever given me a sense of how different our definitions of those words are. For example I was having a conversation with a friend the other day about *Fortune* and *Men's Eyes*. I was saying that the movie wasn't really about gayness or homosexuality and he was saying that it was about homosexuality and not gayness. After about twenty minutes we discovered that our disagreement was not about the movie at all, rather it was about what we meant by the words gay and homosexual. Finally, what seems to happen is that anyone or anything that somebody doesn't like is labelled "sexist" or "straight identified" while anything someone does like automatically becomes "gay" identified. Everyone is walking around with their own fantasy of what those words mean and of what gay liberation means.

The fact of the matter is that while we have all come together in GML or to do FAG RAG, we are coming from very different places. And the fact that we are all "gay" isn't enough to make up for those differences, particularly when everybody has a somewhat different idea about what being gay is all about. The differences between us are many and they are important. We come from different economic backgrounds. Some of us grew up in the city, some in the suburbs, some in rural communities. Some of us have had far more involvement with the radical movement than others. Some of my friends are eighteen, some are over thirty. And perhaps most important, our experiences as homosexuals, as gays, have been incredibly different.



When I began having my first sexual relationship with a man two and a half years ago, I had never thought much about things like "male chauvinism" or "male privilege" or "gay consciousness". Sleeping with a man was something I had to do, I didn't have much choice in the matter. I didn't think about the whole thing and come to a decision - I was driven by needs which I didn't, and to a large extent still don't, understand. All I was really aware of was that my needs for physical-sexual contact with a man was both absolutely necessary to my life and contrary to everything I had ever been taught. And that's just my experience.

Some of my friends have been heavily into tea-rooms. Some cruise on the Fenway. Some had their first sexual relationships when they were fourteen; others had no contact with men until they were 21 or 22 or older. And with the growth of Gay Liberation Fronts, many men have been in the position of making a choice between gayness or straightness. In other words they have come to gay liberation, not with a background of homosexuality, but out of feelings of dissatisfaction with their position as men in this culture. And while these men and I have both been fucked over by the same system (are reacting against the same system), our specific experiences are very different and our perspective is also very different.

I've spent lots of time dwelling on things which, at least for me, why the people who worked on FAG RAG and, more generally, why GML are so untethered. My point in doing this is not to say that we should forget it and stop trying to do anything. While it's true that we are all coming from different places, we still share some common goals which, even though they aren't so specific, really bind us. All of us have a vision of freedom, of a society that is committed to life rather than death. But there's no point in doing a long rhetorical trip about the future - the crucial thing, the

vision, is still just that - a vision; we're still a long way from making that vision reality.

The process of making vision reality, the process of revolution, is certainly tedious and long and sometimes it seems hopeless. My own feeling is that the beginning of that process is for people to recognize and appreciate and respect in realistic ways the vast differences in experience, life style, and perspective which divide us. Only in that way can we create the kind of love and trust necessary to build on a vision, to build a revolution.

What is discouraging me now is that many people seem to be farther away than ever from talking about why we can't work together, what things keep us apart, why things are breaking up here and elsewhere. What I see is people running off and creating new fantasies about gay liberation now that the old ones seem to have failed. Some examples:

There is a new phrase going around these days - "gay feminism", new in the sense that it is now being used to talk about gay men. People have told me that I should get into "gay feminism". Each time someone has said this, I have asked what gay feminism is and what it has to do with a faggot like me. So far I have gotten no answer. Instead of sitting down and trying to get some sense of what that word means, everyone seems to be off creating their own private little fantasy about "gay feminism", just like we've done before with words like "sexism" and "gay".

And there are more new lines. There is a thing going

around now where some "gay revolutionaries" are busy creating distinctions between "gay" people and "homosexuals" (i.e. bar people, drag queens, sex criminals, tea-room people, etc.). This distinction is then being used to trash "homosexuals" for their sexism, etc. It is also coming down that "gay revolutionaries" with authentic "gay consciousness" shouldn't have to relate to the kind of trash in the bars or on the Fenway and other places. In other words these so called revolutionaries are busy putting down the very groups of people who are most exploited by the anti-gay nature of this country.

Here in Boston people in GML are talking about a community center again. This is fine except that nobody has ever really taken the time and gone to the effort of analysing why the community center we had last winter collapsed in such chaos and bitterness. Doing that kind of intellectual analysis has somehow gotten categorized as "straight identified" (read - bad) and something we needn't be bothered with.

And lastly there is FAG RAG, itself. As I'm writing this, the paper sits more than ¾ done, waiting mostly for final touches in the layout. And now, with this issue still unfinished, many of the people who were working on the paper are talking about putting out a gay street sheet in the next few days. That disturbs me for two reasons. First, FAG RAG sits here unfinished and, secondly, like usual, nobody seems very willing to talk much about the problems that surrounded this issue of FAG RAG. Instead of sitting back and going through the difficult process of figuring out what went wrong, it is far easier to launch another venture, which I see having little chance of success as long as the basic problems that we have working together are being shoved under the table.

Much of the depression and frustration I feel comes from the fact that I can't just leave or quit "Gay Liberation". I came to Gay Liberation in the

cont. p. 17

May Day Conference

Atlanta



In a gathering of tribes at Atlanta, the spirit of Mayday seemed to live only among women and gay people. As Peaches, a member of the Dallas Purple Star Tribe, said, "We are the spirit of Mayday; we are beautiful; we are together." The straight men came and left: confused, disoriented and dispirited.

Between August 10 and 13th, there was a preliminary Women's Conference and Gay Gathering. "The purpose of the Gay Gathering," according to the call, "will be to continue discussion of building Gay Revolutionary Collectives around the country and political analysis of how these collectives and individual gay activists should relate to each other, to their communities, to the People's Peace Treaty, and the Mayday actions. There will be no structure set for this—we will learn from each other and build together towards Gay Revolutionary Consciousness."

From the beginning of the conference through the end of the whole gathering August 17, gay males met continuously in both formal and informal discussions. We lived together first at the Free for all Baptist Church and later at the Jewish Community Center—waking up and going to sleep together, eating and talking, bathing and making love, sharing news and ideas, touching, kissing and hugging one another—we learned the depth and strength of our love for one another.

Being together, we also divided (about evenly) on relating to May day, the straight movement, politics, etc. Our anxiety was in how we could both free ourselves and fight capitalism, racism and imperialism. One group believed that coalition with other groups (particularly Mayday) was essential—that we would betray the Vietnamese and other victims of imperialism and racism, if we pushed an exclusive battle against sexism. Gay males generally agreed on the importance of an independent gay caucus, of course, but some felt it should work immediately toward goals within the framework of the Mayday conference; others from the beginning were skeptical of such coalition, believing it would lead only to the perpetuation of sexism and oppression within the movement itself.

The latter felt sexism was the primary contradiction that we faced in our living and that we must struggle first against it and in doing so, we would likewise destroy the capitalism, racism and imperialism that oppressed us. (I myself strongly share this view.) A critique of Mayday by a group of women in Seattle spelled out the feeling behind this position. "We accept," they wrote, "the analysis that the main threat to American imperialism is, at this time, from the Third World and that the highest level of struggle is now Indochina, but we

define our anti-war work in terms of *imperialism as a manifestation of sexism, which necessitates our strengthening an independent base.*" The Redstockings Manifesto likewise identified "the agents of our oppression as men. *Male supremacy is the oldest, the most basic form of domination. All forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism) are extensions of male supremacy: men continue to dominate women, a few men dominate the rest.*"

From our first meeting together on Tuesday night, this division appeared. Coalitionists wanted to meet immediately with all the women to draft proposals and strategies for the plenary session; Gay Collectivists wanted first to get together with other gay people and seriously debate whether there should be a coalition. As it turned out, both groups met together lovingly and generally did both things at once. We strengthened our consciousness and collectivity while Coalitionists wrote a resolution for the plenary session and met in conferences with straight groups.

Our workshops in particular deepened our gay consciousness. We needed self-definition and strength to get ourselves together. Gay males desperately felt the need to define ourselves, find ways to work out the internal and external contradictions within the gay liberation movement. This was especially important because half if not more of the gay brothers had come out in the last year and felt uncertain in their gayness. And we all had to struggle against the straightness that lingered in us.

On Wednesday (the second day) we broke into small groups to discuss ourselves generally, our politics, our present predicaments and problems, etc. Here some of the differences and difficulties we faced became clearer. The tendency of Mayday and of the movement had been to sweep these questions aside; the result was now collapse and disharmony.

Thursday, we had a transvestite workshop which was perhaps the most moving part of the conference for gay males. The Purple Star Tribe brought out dresses, and instead of talking about wearing, everyone actually put on dresses until the stock was exhausted. In dresses, people found it difficult to be movement heavy; it became easier to sing, dance—easier to be free and loving. We also understood better the way society used dresses as badges of slavery and cast. Drag was both fun and revolutionary; in the words of our song: "We are faggots, flaming faggots, / We are queens, we are drags, we are fiery femmes, / We off the pig state by smashing manhood, / We make the revolution now."

On Friday morning the S & M workshop was less effective because so few people had had actual

S & M experience. But those few helped us better understand the limitations of feeling sex only in pleasure without pain. Also we saw better the genital oriented and conventional tendencies in much gay male sex, notwithstanding our having given up ideas of procreation.

On the same afternoon, there was a general workshop on Cuba for women and gay males. We felt a grave urgency about the place of gay people within the Cuban revolution because we loved both the revolution and our gay brothers and sisters. We felt anguish in seeing gay people oppressed in a country which had been an inspiration for us all. (Some had come out because of their Cuban experience which had developed their sensitivity and weakened their aggressive individualism.) We were also angry that gay Northamericans were being systematically excluded from the next Brigade.

In the workshop on Cuba, the contradictions we faced became clearer. We saw the dilemma of our having to fight our own racist and imperialist society—a common enemy between us and Third World people—and yet at the same time having to fight sexism—which oppressed not only women and gay males within our society but also in Third World countries. And increasingly we saw the hypocrisy of many white male movement leaders who excused their own oppression of women and gays by pointing to the oppression of Third World people and telling us to wait. (They also excuse themselves by pointing to the absence of a strong gay liberation movement in Third World countries such as Cuba. If Cuba isn't fighting sexism, why they ask should they.) The straight men thus play a dual role of oppressor: trying to divide us, the victims of sexism (women and gay males in different parts of the world revolution) and to "defeat" us by putting themselves up as judges of our oppression. The Seattle Women's critique of Mayday pointed out that "Third World glorification to the degree that the women's and gay liberation movements are so blatantly sold out is only one of the several trends within the male movement which indicates its increasing irrelevance."

When the straight men arrived for the plenary session opening Friday evening, they quickly demonstrated their irrelevance. Gay brothers marched into the meeting at Reverend Ralph Abernathy's West Hunter Street Baptist Church singing gay songs, dancing, hugging, and demonstrating our love and togetherness. At most our entrance lasted fifteen minutes—far less than say the demonstration for Humphrey at the 1968 Democratic convention—However, at this gathering of tribes, representing the revolutionary youth movement, we were considered outrageously

"disruptive" and lacking in "decorum." According to one heavy, our "celebration of gayness continued for what seemed an awfully long time considering there were only three days to discuss serious matters."

After some hassle about chairing the meeting, a representative of the women's conference called for a day's delay in opening the meeting. Women needed another day for discussions among themselves, and straight men might also use the time to discuss their own sexism.

Some people immediately replied that there were "serious matters" to discuss—matters more important and pressing than sexism. One heavy charged that we who put top priority on the problems of sexism were enemies of the Vietnamese people. At this my stomach twinged and I wanted to cry. What arrogance was this? who was this man to say he was the friend, and we the enemy of the Vietnamese people?

During the whole convention we faced such slurs; straight white male "revolutionaries" arrogantly assumed that they were the revolution, that they should judge the degree and importance of our oppression, that they should decide whether we were revolutionary enough or even revolutionary. They seemed to assume that the revolution belonged to them, that it was the exclusive property of white, male, middle-class heavies. One woman asked how such people could have (let alone lead) a revolution if they couldn't identify their own oppression. She asked how they could battle for other people's liberation in other than an imperialistic and paternalistic way.

As debate wandered away from the proposal to delay opening the conference, Ralph Abernathy came to speak. He had not known we were to be in his church because of some lack of coordination in arrangements, but finding us there, he went out of his way to welcome us. During his speech, he was hissed vigorously for references to Eugene McCarthy and Daniel Ellsberg. Of the latter, he said that Ellsberg faced jail as we all did, and that he, having spent time in jail, took it seriously. When he was listing battles to be fought against in our racist, capitalist, imperialist society, some yelled to add sexism.

After Abernathy left, debate resumed, but a gay Black brother got up and said he could not stay in the meeting. Besides the thick sexism, we had been racist in hissing a black brother in his own church and his own community. When he walked out, almost all the gay caucus silently followed to meet in the basement. Upstairs, the group delayed the conference a day and dispersed. We in the basement joined arms to sing in love and union. The more we felt oppressed, the more we needed one another.

Most of the remaining plenary sessions were devoted to choosing a chair—eventually resolved by having a woman, a representative of the third world and a representative of the gay male caucus jointly chair the meeting—and establishing an agenda. Proposals were presented but no concrete action came out of the meeting.

The gay caucus continued to meet and have workshops. We discussed racism in a Saturday afternoon workshop and attempted to understand the relation of institutional sexism and racism as well as our individual white-skin privileges and prejudices. Particular ways in which white gay people have racist fantasies and oppress black gay brothers were discussed while the Third World gay Caucus met separately to consider their own position.

Plans were also underway for a "Coming Out" workshop for straight men on Sunday morning. This workshop was well attended. A "straight" man, Steven D'Arazen in Boston's PHOENIX described what it meant to him: Sunday "started with the gays asking straight men to relate to each other non-verbally. Believing that 'gayness' is more than having sexual relations with a man, they asked us to participate in a sensitivity session. For me, the experience of touching other men was neutral. It's not something I normally do. And beyond that lies the suspicion that the touching the gay community advocates can be as inauthentic as conventional insistence on 'good manners.' My rather pleasant discovery, though, was a gay man who was not sure sexism was the 'primary contradiction.'"

Gay males had contradictory feelings about the "Coming Out" workshop. We did not want to put ourselves in the position of becoming teachers of gayness to straight people; we had more important things to do and did not want to ape the aggressive oppressive ways in which straight men relate to one another. But we did want to provide a vehicle for brothers who were struggling to change their ways. We had all come out, and our becoming gay had too often been achieved in a humiliating and degrading way (tearoom contact, rape, etc.). Some men at Atlanta did in fact "come out" and for the first time recognized their gayness, and others felt warm about exploring the possibility of gay love.

I cannot describe the "business" of the remaining plenary sessions, since I avoided them and in one instance went instead to a gay workshop. "Sex and Sexism among gay males." There we discussed the way we relate to each other and to straight people in male chauvinist ways because the meeting and context were set up and defined in these terms. The only power we could exercise was straight power. We also discussed the way we sexually objectify each other using straightness as a norm. Everything in our lives seemed to be defined not by us but by others.

More and more we came to ask how much our relation to straight, white males within the movement weakened not only us but the potentialities for revolution itself. "Compradors"—house servants to the big men, gay males and women were being ripped off while the revolution itself faltered, much of the confusion within the movement in fact comes from the failure of men to struggle against male chauvinism and sexism. Within Mayday, gay males and women have also been frustrated by the tendency of the organization to use them as tokens in the battle against sexism.

Certainly all the proposals brought to the convention placed a low priority on sexism in their "scenarios." Only the "Snapdragon" proposal explicitly called for a personal struggle in collective efforts to combat male chauvinism and sexism. They called for a new form of "collective eroticism." Their proposal was presented by several speakers instead of just one (which freaked out some of the individualist men, who objected), and the Snapdragon group decided to withdraw their proposal since they believed it either would not be adopted or would be adopted and not implemented.

We probably felt the least harmony with people from the New York group, who despite the vast gay community in New York City, had developed their plans in conventional male ways. At the convention, they attempted to amend their "Scenario" by adding an attack on "rip-off gay bars." As bad as gay bars are, straight people's attacking them would

be too much like white people's attacking Black churches for their theism. The last meeting of the gay caucus decided on Tuesday afternoon not to send any "representatives" as a caucus to work on the New York proposal.

At Atlanta revolutionary gay love took another stride forward. We came more clearly to see straight, white, middle-class rhetoric and posturing as irrelevant if not absolutely oppressive to us. We also developed plans for getting together without straight people. Hopefully somewhere in the mid-west in October, gay people can come together and develop independent plans for our own Mayday. We also met to discuss a Gay Growth Center, where we could get our heads together in gay love and revolution.

In our strength, we came better to understand some of our weaknesses. Within gay male liberation, we saw better the racist, middle-class quality of much of our lives and the way our privileges often divide us from our own gay community. We also saw better the way sexism not only oppresses us externally but internally as well. We use each other in oppressive ways, falling too easily into roles of manipulator, competitor, and ruler—roles derived not from our gay love but from our sexist society. We also could see the way we remained "men" in our relations to the women at the convention although we did not pursue them as sexual objects, we did often relate to them in "manly" ways. (Our gay sisters saw no need to meet with us because we were men, and they largely left the conference as soon as straight men arrived.)

Our own meeting with straight Mayday people generally weakened our own gayness. A transvestite summarized the problem: On Thursday, almost all the gay males were in dresses? as straight men arrived, fewer and fewer dresses could be seen in our caucus. I felt the conference ended after the opening plenary; we dissipated our energies in trying to prove to the straight people that we were revolutionary, legitimate; in doing that we denied our gayness and betrayed ourselves.



GAY GROWTH CENTER

At the Gay gathering in Atlanta a few gay brothers had a workshop about a project we had been putting energy into for the past few weeks—that is a Gay Growth Center.

The idea for the growth center grew from some of us who felt our energy was being ripped off by the straight "revolutionary" movement. Too much of our time was being spent on proving the worth of gay people to straights, energy used to be "teachers of sexism" to straight males, compromising our search for an understanding of our gay identity—all of this being done in a straight environment that kept us separated and down. We were becoming "comprador homosexuals" catering to a dominated straight-white-male movement.

We felt that if there was a place for gay revolutionaries to gather in an environment that was conducive to building of gay consciousness while putting energy into thoughts and actions towards making a gay revolution it would be worth our time.

Right now we are looking for a place (preferably in the country) for the gay growth center. Here we would gather resources to learn and build. Gay revolutionaries around the country could come to stay awhile to share thoughts with each other, learn things like putting out a newspaper, running food co-ops, arts and crafts, ways in which we can support ourselves, etc. The growth center could also be a clearing house for news on gay revolutionary organizations and collectives around the country.

Of course the growth center is just in its embryo stages—a lot of gay males were excited about it and began thinking of creative ideas that could be included in this project. Right now we need some money to help finance the center.

If you have money, contacts who do, or ideas about how to raise some, and if you would like to work on this project please contact us. Temporary mailing address

Gay Growth Center
c/o Red Book Store
91 River Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

To Be 27, Gay and Corrupted

Through the last few years, I have felt my gayness beginning to turn sour on me; corrupted by the anomic of bars, parties and numbers too numerous to tell. Too often I have found myself at midnight languishing up against the bar at Sporter's - bored beyond action, inaccessible, endlessly waiting for the electric charge of some impossible fantasy man to awaken me to attention and struggle. Even when I am not at such a bar, I wonder whether he may be. When I am there, my presence is merely thick and alcoholic. In the waiting, both my liver and my nerves are growing green.

This boredom is not merely a product of the inherent repressions of gay life, although it certainly comes out of that. Basically, it seems to be the inevitable result of my own internal processes and behaviors as I have come to accept my gay maleness and struggled to find some way to live it out in the world in a way that would do both me and those that I love justice. Throughout all this, my aspirations have been lowered rather than heightened. I have come to suspect that my gayness has unwittingly led me to transcend both the sacred and the profane uses of flesh. I have instead come to encounter it merely as meat; simply as stuff that holds little or no excitement beyond the momentary glitter of whatever fantasies I can project upon it. Flesh has become a masturbatory tool, a transient sex-fuck machine with warm openings for insertions. The mystery of the forbidden has been shattered and the ultimate taboo has revealed itself to be common, ritualized and even uninteresting. Now that I have come out, I am a has-been, corrupted with my success at beating the world at its own fag-hating game.

I have felt this process of corruption moving through me in several ways: my compulsive, ritualized attendance at the nightly bar seance, trying to raise the dreary-pastel dreams of my romanficed youth; my lack of desire to deal with gay people in real and significant ways; the fitting of everyone into some sort of cardboard sexual category; the increasing sweatiness, work and especially speed of my own sex; my reliance on pick-ups of the most obviously destructive sort; my increasing lack of directness in all such matters; my avoidance of any kind of continuity in relationships; my need for reassurance and my denial of it when it comes.

All of this signals me to a growing corruption in my spirit and intentions; to a lessening of my faith that true loving and the good life with people can be mine, to a kind of lazy desperation in how little I seem willing to settle for. A friend once said of a mutual acquaintance that he had settled for less than he needed. I fear such a thing may prove true of me as well. Obviously I am uneasy with such a prospect. I am impelled to try and figure out why this sense of corruption has occurred; what has happened to me since I came out; what sin of knowledge have I committed that has robbed me of very own best intentions in less than four years?

When everything is permitted each person must choose for himself what he wants. While it is intellectually possible to opt for everything, in the specific behaviors of interaction, choosing is a process of selection and elimination. of saying this and not that - at least for now. To choose everything at a particular moment is to immobilize oneself. Doing and acting are essentially exclusivist, a focussing of energy rather than an attempt to diffuse it.

When I came out, I felt myself entering into a life where everything was permitted, where magic reigned and anything was possible. The gay world seemed the height of sophistication, the apotheosis of total permissiveness where even the most taboo relations were accepted. I found, however, that in time my capacities for making choices amid such apparent freedom diminished. I became an easy score, another number. Less and less seemed possible to me in this world of easy come and go. Not only did I discover that others were frighteningly constrained by their fantasies, I began to discover the extent to which mine occupied me. I began to withdraw from the bars and what passes for the life, and became less accessible, less out-reaching. It became increasingly difficult for me to exercise any will, choice, or action. The apparent anarchy of it all seemed to rob me of my nerve. Today, I feel even less able to decide what I want to relate to, who I need to be with, how I want to live my life. I have had too much: too little of it has been satisfying. I am disillusioned, floundering. The edge to my need has become dulled, and I find

it ever more difficult to cut through the maddeningly inert bullshit of gay life and into some meaningful core. Most ironically I find myself becoming part of the bullshit, another one of the disinterested "phonies" who line the bar in lacoste shirts. About my own inner compulsions and needs I remain resolutely inexplicit, partly I suspect out of fear of embarrassing myself with what I want. Also, not articulating them guarantees that no one will ever be able to satisfy them, and this of course can save one from the risks of relating deeply to another person. With gay people, I am generally vague, casually polite, solicitous, non-committal, good mannered, even a "wonderful person" And they are all wonderful people too. It just doesn't seem to get us anywhere.

In making progressively fewer exclusive and excluding choices, I suspect I may have validated the worst choice of all: pleasantly, amiably doing nothing but waiting. The alternative to this would be, I suppose, to actively seek out those kinds of people I think I want and could relate to: the Athlete, the Truck Driver, the Virile Old Man, the Young Boy, the Adonis, whoever. But I have always felt such a course to be too fetishist, too limiting and compulsive, one that finally turns people into objects for one another. I have wanted to remain more open for change and possibility than such single-minded desires imply. Nevertheless, I realize that such patterns have shaped my responses to and judgements about people, and that in their subtle dominance, I have evolved a different form of limiting compulsiveness - witnessing the gay scene rather than participating in it.

So in a world where everything is permitted, I have been reduced to two equally unattractive choices: either making no choices, remaining open and relatively passive, and languishing in the vague anomic of bars where everything is promised to everyone and no one gets anything; or codifying my sexual needs into pornographic cartoons and seeking out people who can fit into them in a kind of hard-core combat zone manner.

The implicit promise of the first choice is to meet someone with whom one could build a continuing and rewarding relationship - a person who is sexually and personally "right". The second choice promises frequent, speedy, somewhat fantastic sex

with people who step into the cardboard cut out of one's fantasies like cocks through a men's room "glory hole". The first relation happens rarely, and when it does, it often seems neurotic in its isolation and possessiveness. The second alternative is more easily had, but I have blown too many people and walked away with a limp and saddened cock too many times to feel that such activity is at all sexual for me. All it provides is masturbatory food.

So here I am: 27, gay and corrupted, seeking for some way to be with my body and other's bodies in ways that do us both justice. I am trying to re-sanctify my own body and my relations to the bodies of others, trying to come to a point where I can allow a gay relationship to be meaningful rather than trivial, seeking for a sexuality that is neither neurotically fixated nor so casual it belies its own intentions. In a way, the question is one of dignity, of presence for self and other, of openness and willingness to forge new modes of relation with people one cares about. It is also scary: my fantasies are deep and they are attractive. I have been very involved with them. I am not easy with the idea of going to bed with someone unless he falls fairly well into them. I realize that these are the very things constraining me into this corrupt path, and I strongly feel the need to move beyond them and into a realm where need, desire and caring can all be expressed. I have few illusions about how difficult that will be for me, and about how much such an effort will require the presence of other people who feel similar needs.

At heart, what I feel is not the limitations and repressions of gay life, though they are real and tangible, but rather the limitations of my own life and the ways in which I have intentionally or unintentionally been led to order it. It is time for me to exercise a more existential kind of choosing, time to move beyond the anonymous excitement of the midnight encounter in the park, time to abandon the triviality of easy bar sex. I want to move toward freshness, peace, openness, a willingness to allow both self and other, a sexuality that denies neither person but validates both. I want to move, as it were, beyond this corruption and into a fresh and knowing innocence.



Straight Politics and the SWP

The past two years have seen our movement grow become increasingly diverse, and spread to all parts of the country. More and more people are openly proclaiming their gayness, refusing to hide any longer. It is slowly becoming a possibility for people to come out in an atmosphere of trust and understanding, rather than being shrouded by ignorance, fear, and isolation. And all of this is really exciting and wonderful. Unfortunately, however, our continued growth has some negative side effects. As the number of openly gay people increases, not only do we become more visible to each other, but our growing numbers make us visible and attractive to the greedy eyes of a variety of political opportunists interested in using the power our numbers represent.

In this article I will describe a whole series of incidents that hopefully will describe what I mean by political opportunists. Such a description will also give people some idea about the manipulative kinds of tactics these groups have used in their dealings with us. Throughout the article, I will be paying particular attention to the activities of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) mainly because the underhanded ways in which they have dealt with us are such a good example of how people are trying to exploit us in the name of revolution.

As recently as the beginning of this year, the SWP had an explicitly anti-gay policy. Homosexuality was considered a sickness of decadent bourgeois society and was grounds for expulsion from the party. Sometime between January 1 and the April 24th anti-war demonstrations in Washington, this policy changed. It is interesting to note that the SWP had a very large stake in organizing the April 24th demonstration. Apparently they decided that we were a legitimate (i.e. large) enough group to organize for April 24th (and naturally future actions where SWP feels our support is desirable). So suddenly, early this year, a barrage of pro-gay leaflets, position statements, and propaganda issued forth from the miraculously developed gay consciousness of SWP.

My experience with this begins as follows: I was walking down Bolyston St. one day in early April and was given a leaflet for April 24th, which said something to the effect of "Come to Washington April 24th - End the War, etc." and then there was a section mentioning all the groups supporting the demonstration - workers, blacks, women, students, Chicanos, etc. There was no mention of gay people on the leaflet. At the time I didn't think much of it, I had already decided to go to Washington on May Day and wasn't paying much attention to the efforts of the April 24th people. Well, later in the same week a guy came to our GML meeting and announced he was gay and from SMC (Student Mobilization Committee - a group which is controlled by SWP locally and which was part of the National Peace Action Coalition which organized the April 24th demonstration. NPAC was controlled by SWP on the national level.) He passed out leaflets about the "Gay Task Force" in Washington and he told us how thousands of gay people were going to march to end the war on April 24th. We asked him why there was a special "gay" leaflet and why leaflets passed out to "normal" people didn't mention the so called "Gay Task Force". Were SMC and SWP ashamed of our support which they claimed to want so badly? He hemmed and hawed and finally mumbled something about how the leaflets were printed in New York City and he didn't know much about them. No one at that meeting was particularly interested in April 24th; we had previously decided that we were going to be involved in May Day actions. So we told him that we weren't interested, but that he was welcome to stay for the rest of our meeting which he did. And that was that, or so we thought.

A week later a woman showed up and said she was a gay feminist and wanted to talk about April 24th. She too was loaded down with leaflets. May Day was close at hand and we still had a lot to talk about so we said no, the group wasn't interested, but if there were some individuals who were, perhaps they could go to another part of the room and talk with her while the rest of the group discussed May Day. This, however, was unacceptable - she insisted on talking to the whole group about something none of us were interested in. Our entire meeting was disrupted and we had no chance to talk about Gay May Day.

After their rebuttal the first time, in my opinion, it is no coincidence that the April 24th people sent a gay woman to our meeting the second time. Most of us in GML have spent a lot of time thinking and talking about male privileges and gay male chauvinism and we are continually trying to deal with those attitudes in ourselves. Because of this we are very reluctant to trash a woman, particularly a gay woman, even

though this may sometimes be justified. So instead of asking that woman to leave our meeting, we allowed her to disrupt it. It is clear to me that SMC sent a woman because they were aware of the fact that she had a far better chance of forcing herself on us than a man would have had. To me this is a very good example of how our honest attempts to deal with sexism can be used against us by manipulators and opportunists, both male and female.

What disturbs me most about all this is not the fact that people were sent to speak to us about April 24th, but the way in which this was done. Not only were people sent to two of our meetings when we expressed no interest, but one of those meetings was completely disrupted. And what's more important, not once did anyone ask what we thought about the "gay task force" or the April 24th demonstration, or SMC or how we felt about the war and how it could best be stopped. We were simply told that we should support this action because we are gay and therefore, we should want this and we should want that. In other words our feelings and ideas weren't wanted, only our faggotbodies were needed to add to the numbers and prestige of a demonstration in which all the thinking was done by others, all of whom were straight. I ended up feeling the victim of a rather crude attempt to use me.

May 5th was a day of national actions against the war. In Boston there was a large rally on the Common. Toward the end of the program a "representative" of the Boston gay community spoke. It turned out to be the same woman who had come to our meeting. Though she claimed to be a gay feminist, there is no evidence to indicate that she was speaking for Gay Feminists. In fact from all I can gather, this woman belongs to no gay organization in this area (here only political affiliation is with SWP) and she knows very few gay people in the area. Presenting speakers who claim to represent a community, but who in fact represent only the party line is a favorite tactic of the SWP. This same woman, by the way, was sent a short time later to California by SWP to "organize" out there.

All of this is irritating, but doesn't really prove much of anything or really indicate the intentions of SWP with regards to us. The plot, however, thickens considerably with the coming of Gay Pride Week.

The events of Gay Pride Week in Boston were organized by a Planning Committee composed primarily of representatives from various local gay organizations. There were also three allegedly gay members of the SWP who worked on the committee. They claimed to be there as individuals though, not representatives of the SWP. There was some curiosity as to their motivations since none of them had ever participated in any gay group nor had they previously identified with the gay movement. The planning committee was informed that there were lots of gay people in SWP, interesting in terms of SWP's recently changed policy of excluding gays. People wondered if there

were so many gay people suddenly in SWP, why didn't they spend their time working within SWP creating a gay caucus and a gay voice of some kind for that party, rather than magically appearing as individuals to "help" with Gay Pride Week.

Gay Pride Week was scheduled to begin on June 20th with a gay worship service and continue through the week, culminating with the Christopher St. Parade in New York City on June 27th. These events were widely leafleted. About a week before the beginning of Gay Pride Week, a new leaflet appeared announcing a "Forum of Gay Liberation" sponsored by SWP on June 18th, two days before the first of the previously scheduled events. This "forum" was advertised as being part of Gay Pride Week, but for some strange reason no one in SWP bothered to tell the Planning Committee about the forum until after it had been well publicized. Of course, the gay community at large was unaware of this double dealing on the part of SWP and about 100 people showed up at the forum, no doubt believing that it was the first legitimate event of Gay Pride Week. A rather slick bit of maneuvering, don't you think?

The Forum itself was also rather interesting. SWP promised speakers from the organized gay community in Boston, a promise which turned out to be a thinly veiled lie. There was a "representative" from the Student Homophile League, a member of SWP who had attended one SHL meeting to plug the SMC sponsored April 24th march. As you can probably guess by now, no one from SHL was contacted about providing a regular member to speak. The rest of the speakers were directly associated with SWP. Kip Dawson, SWP political candidate from New York, addressed the forum. The tactic of importing speakers, an SWP standard, accomplishes two things, I think. First it gives the impression that SWP is a large, concerned organization with influence and "political muscle", an impression which SWP does much to cultivate. Second, it gives the impression that the local autonomous community is too untethered and disjointed to provide qualified speakers of their own, which in fact means that there aren't any speakers qualified to give the impression desired by SWP.

It was decided early in the planning sessions that no pictures or tape recordings would be made during the Gay Pride Week workshops. It was felt that some people would be discouraged from participating if they knew they were going to be photographed or taped. But at the Weds. night workshop on "Sexism" and the Thurs. night "Gay Organizations" workshop, a man was present setting up an expensive tape recorder. One of the SWP planning committee members rushed about telling the other committee people that "someone from the MIT radio station, WTBS, wanted to record the workshops for a program on the station - Voices of Dissent." Upon further inquiry by two

cont. p12

we didn't make this up either

Dear Abbey.

I have an 11 year old son and a ten year old daughter. Last week I came home from the store and found the boy dressed in his sister's clothes. I was so mad I made him sit on the porch so everyone could see him. After about an hour I called him in and asked him why he did it. He said because he wanted to see how he would look dressed as a girl.

Abby, now my daughter tells me her brother has been after her to let him wear her clothes. She has told him no, but she knows that he has worn them anyway when she wasn't around.

Now my daughter is setting his hair and he likes it. I am getting confused because he makes a prettier girl than his sister, but I don't think he should be encouraged in this, do you? Will he outgrow it in time? Please help me. He has no daddy.

Troubled Mother

Dear Mother,

Get in touch with your local mental health clinic and make an appointment for your son. Boys should be boys and girls should be girls, and the tendencies to be otherwise are rarely outgrown.

Fag Rag

goes to Washington D.C.

When you're in the nation's

Kapital, get your copy at

THE RED HOUSE

8 blocks from the White House

1247 20 St. NW

Washington D.C.

3rd World GAY Revolution



Our straight sisters and brothers must recognize and support that we, third world gay women and men are equal in every way within the revolutionary ranks.

We each organize our people about different issues, but our struggles are the same against oppression, and we will defeat it together. Once we understand these struggles, and gain a love for our sisters and brothers involved in these struggles we must learn how best to become involved in them.

The struggles of the peoples of the world are our fight as well; their victories are our victories and our victories are theirs. Our freedom will come only with their freedom.

Together, not alone, we must explore how we view ourselves, and analyze the assumptions behind our self-identity. We can then begin to crack the barriers of our varying illnesses, our passivity, sexual chauvinism, in essence, our inability to unabashedly love each other, to live, fight, and if necessary, die for the people of the earth.

As we begin to understand our place in this international revolution, and join with others in this understanding, we must develop the skills necessary to destroy the forces of repression and exploitation, so as to make it possible for a new woman and man to evolve in a society based on communal love.

While we understand that in the United States our main enemy is the socio-economic political system of capitalism and the people who make profits off our sufferings, fights and divisions, we also recognize that we must struggle against any totalitarian, authoritarian sex-controlled, repressive, irrational, reactionary, fascist government or government machine.

What We Want/ What We Believe:

1. We want the right of self-determination for all third world and gay people, as well as control of the destinies of our communities.

We believe that third world and gay people cannot be free until we are able to determine our own destiny.

2. We want the right of self-determination over the use of our bodies: The right to be gay, anytime, anyplace. The right to free physiological change and modification of sex on demand; the right to free dress and adornment.

We believe that these are human rights which must be defended with our bodies being put on the line. The

system as it now exists denies these basic human rights by implementing forced heterosexuality.

3. We want liberation for all women: We want free and safe birth control information and devices on demand. We want free 24 hour child care centers controlled by those who need and use them. We want a redefinition of education and motivation (especially for third world women) towards broader educational opportunities without limitations because of sex. We want truthful teaching of women's history. We want an end to hiring practices which make women and national minorities (1) a readily available source of cheap labor, (2) confined to mind-rotting jobs under the worst conditions.

We believe that the struggles of all oppressed groups under any form of government which does not meet the true needs of its people will eventually result in the overthrow of that government. The struggle for liberation of women is a struggle to be waged by all peoples. We must also struggle with ourselves and within our various movements to end this oldest form of oppression and its foundation—male chauvinism. We cannot develop a truly liberating form of socialism unless we fight these tendencies.

4. We want full protection of the law and social sanction for all human sexual self-expression and pleasure between consenting persons, including youth. We believe that present laws are oppressive to third world people, gay people, and the masses. Such laws expose the inequalities of capitalism, which can only exist in a state where there are oppressed people or groups. This must end.

5. We want the abolition of the institution of the bourgeois nuclear family.

We believe that the bourgeois nuclear family perpetuates the false categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality by creating sex roles, sex definitions and sexual exploitation. The bourgeois nuclear family as the basic unit of capitalism creates oppressive roles of homosexuality and heterosexuality. All oppressions originate within the nuclear family structure. Homosexuality is a threat to this family structure and therefore to capitalism. The mother is an instrument of reproduction and teaches the necessary values of capitalist society, i.e. racism, sexism, etc., from infancy on. The father physically enforces (upon the mother and children) the behaviour necessary in a capitalist system, intelligence and competitiveness in young boys and passivity in young girls. Further, it is every child's right to develop in a non-sexist, non-racist, non-possessive atmosphere which is the responsibility of all people, including gays, to create.

6. We want a free non-compulsory education system that teaches our true identity and history, and presents the entire range of human sexuality without advocating any one form or style; that sex roles and determination of skills according to sex be eliminated from the school system; that language be modified so that no gender takes priority; and that gay people must share the responsibilities of education.

We believe that we have been taught to compete with our sisters and brothers for power, and from that competitive attitude grows sexism, racism, male and national chauvinism and distrust of our sisters and brothers. As we begin to understand these things within ourselves we attempt to free ourselves of them and are moved toward a revolutionary consciousness.

7. We want guaranteed full equal employment for third world and gay people at all levels of production. We believe that any system of government is responsible for giving every woman and man a guaranteed income or employment, regardless of sex or sexual preference. Being interested only in profits, capitalism cannot meet the needs of the people.

8. We want decent and free housing, fit shelter for human beings.

We believe that shelter is a basic need and right which must not be denied on any grounds. Landlords are capitalists, and like all capitalists are motivated only by the accumulation of profits as opposed to the welfare of the people.

9. We want to abolish the existing judicial system. We want all third world and gay people when brought to

trial, to be tried by a people's court with a jury of their peers. A peer is a person from similar social, economic, geographical, racial, historical environmental, and sexual background. We believe that the function of the judicial system under capitalism is to uphold the ruling class and keep the masses under control.

10. We want the reparation for and release of all third world, gay and all political prisoners from jails and mental institutions.

We believe that these people should be released because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.

11. We want the abolition of capital punishment, all forms of institutional punishment, and the penal system.

We want the establishment of psychiatric institutions for the humane treatment and rehabilitation of criminal persons as decided by the people's court. We want the establishment of a sufficient number of free and non-compulsory clinics for the treatment of sexual disturbances, as defined by the individual.

12. We want an end to the fascist police force.

We believe that the only way this can be accomplished is by putting the defense of the people in the hands of the people.

13. We want all third world and gay men to be exempt from compulsory military service, in the imperialist army. We want an end to military oppression both at home and abroad.

We believe that the only true army for oppressed people is the people's army and third world gay people, and women should have full participation in the People's Revolutionary Army.

14. We want an end to all institutional religions because they aid in genocide by teaching superstition and hatred of third world people, homosexuals, and women. We want a guarantee of freedom to express natural spirituality.

We believe that institutional religions are an instrument of capitalism, therefore an enemy of the People.

15. We demand immediate non-discriminatory open admission/membership for radical homosexuals into all left wing revolutionary groups and organizations and the right to caucus.

We believe that so-called comrades who call themselves "revolutionaries" have failed to deal with their sexist attitudes. Instead they cling to male supremacy and therefore to the conditioned role of oppression. Men still fight for the privileged position of man-on-the-top. Women quickly fall in line behind their men. By their counterrevolutionary struggle to maintain and to force heterosexuality and the nuclear family, they perpetuate decadent remnants of capitalism. To gain, their anti-homosexual stance, they have used the weapons of the oppressor, thereby becoming the agent of the oppressor.

It is up to men to realistically define masculinity, because it is they, who, throughout their lives have struggled to gain the unrealistic roles of "men." Men have always tried to reach this precarious position by climbing on the backs of women and homosexuals. "Masculinity" has been defined by capitalist society as the amount of possessions (including men) a man collects, and the amount of physical power gained over other men. Third world men have been denied even these false standards of "masculinity." Anti-homosexuality fosters sexual repressions, male-supremacy, weakness in revolutionary drive, and results in an inaccurate non-objective political perspective. Therefore, we believe that all left wing revolutionary groups and organizations must immediately establish non-discriminatory, open admission/ membership politics.

16. We want a new society—a revolutionary socialist society. We want the liberation of humanity, free food, free shelter, free clothing, free transportation, free health care, free utilities, free education, free art for all. We want a society where the needs of the people come first. We believe that all people should share the labor and products of society, according to each one's needs and abilities, regardless of race, sex, age, or sexual preferences. We believe the land, technology, and the means of production belong to the people, and must be shared by the people collectively for the liberation of all. Revolutionary Socialism Is The Answer.

Watch out for this person!

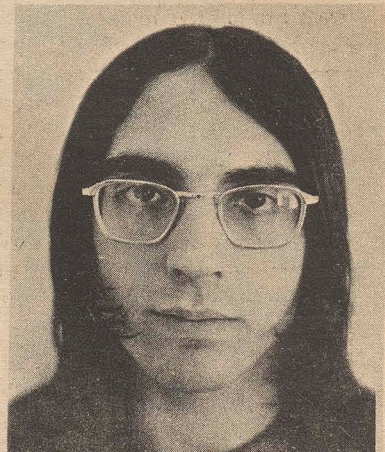
Nik James Santilli (alias Claude Wade Graham) has for the last year or so specialized in ripping off gay people and organizations. Recently he seems to have moved into the straight movement; representing himself as a spokesman of gay liberation, he has approached Mayday and others for funds. Whether he is a police agent or suffering from disorders common in our exploitative society or just a clever con artist (or all of these) is uncertain; but that he is a menace to anyone dealing with him is crystal clear.

Saying he was an ex-Weatherman, "Wade" gained the confidence of Boston's Gay Male Liberation as he helped put out the first issue of LAVENDER VISION. He pretended to get a church for a dance last December to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the NLF, and shortly thereafter ripped off \$700—our entire bank account for running our community center.

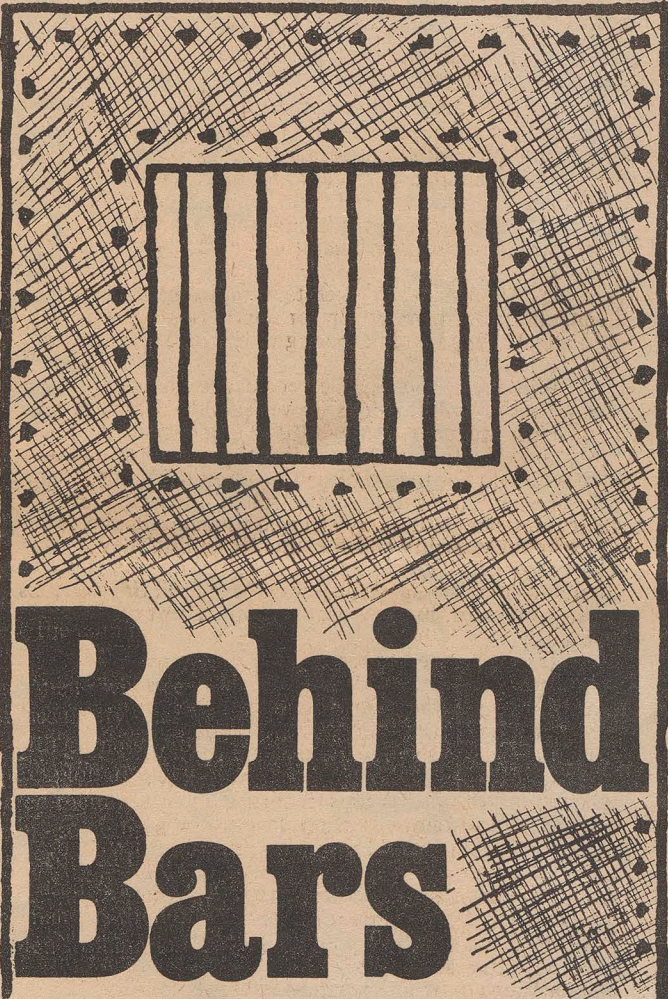
His method for doing this was about the same he used in Philadelphia: he wrote a lot of bad checks

on an account he opened at the same bank where the PLAIN DEALER had its account and at which he had used the newspaper as a reference. He can write a bogus check on his personal account, deposit it in the gay liberation group's account, then write a check on the gay liberation account (either legitimately or forged) and skip with the money. Similar rip-offs have occurred in Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Boston, Providence, Washington, D.C., and possibly Madison, Wisconsin.

The Nik James Santilli-Claude Wade Graham case shows pointedly some of the dangers in the rip-off way-of-life: if stealing is done to support the people and harm our exploiters, it is good, but developed as a habit and super technique, it can be used even more effectively against the exploited (such as gay people) than the exploiters. Because of our loneliness, our repression, and our poverty, we inevitably want to come together and trust one another. The saddest thing about all this is the distrust it inevitably breeds: we really have to guard what little we do have and this inevitably creates bad vibrations.



GEORGE JACKSON WAS KILLED
IN SAN QUENTIN AND A WEEK
LATER 41 PEOPLE DIED IN
ATTICA. THESE EVENTS
CONCERN GAYS BECAUSE
IN THE EYES OF AMERIKA
WE ARE "SEX" CRIMINALS
MANY OF OUR BROTHERS
ARE SUFFERING UNDER
THE CONDITIONS WHICH LED
TO THE EXPLOSION IN ATTICA



on 09 ninth month 1968 i stood before judge christie in huntington west virginia and was sentenced to four years for refusal to report for and submit to induction. then, little more than a month later i was sentenced in boston by judge garrity to a year for destruction of more than 700 I-A files. at the time i was terribly frightened and feeling really alone. the primary fear (and it still lingers with me) was one of being raped. at the time of sentencing i hadn't come out. i was terribly frightened of the word "homosexual." most radicals, and especially radical pacifists, have a rather puritanical attitude towards gays mixed with a bit of fear and outright repulsion. i wasn't in jail five minutes (quite literally) when i got a taste of what jail was like. some one was already trying to put the make on me. ("I'll protect you," etc., ad infinitum, ad nauseam) but i did manage to put him off. in the county jails i laughed at the queer jokes, and hoped it would not be me who would be the butt (so to speak) of their next jokes, after travelling around the country in the custody of federal marshals (on my way to or from trials and sentencings, etc) my initiation into federal prison came at petersburg, virginia. the federal government has a reformatory there. because i came in during a holiday (the receiving & discharge guard was out) i was put in the hole, which is the customary practice, until the first regular working day for the guards. petersburg (or petrograd as it is known) was

a real mind-fuck. the gays were openly reviled, hated, exploited, and generally fucked over. gays were there for every one's pleasure... every one that is except the gays. if some body wanted a lay or a blow job they came to the gays; and the gays were expected to comply, no questions asked. (this is common in all prisons and jails.) gays were singled out for particularly rough treatment by the other inmates and therefore many, if not all gays, had a "daddy". a daddy is a straight guy who got horny in the joint. (translate "joint" any way you like.) his main job is two fold. to fuck and to protect. needless to say, not very many meaningful relationships came of this arrangement. after a month or so at petersburg i, along with two other c.o.'s, was transferred to lewisburg where we each discovered that we were headed for three different prisons. our reason of transfer was because we had initiated a suit in federal court charging discrimination in the prison on the part of the administration. you know who the judge believed. i was in the hold-over section of lewisburg about a month when i was sent to the federal youth center at ashland, kentucky. ashland is much like a boys' camp. most of the inmates were younger than i was (ranging from one 15 year old to usually twenty or so.) realize that i still had not come out. people at ashland were not as overtly callous (with the exception of a few loud crackers) as people in other joints and i quickly adjusted to the place as much as one could possibly adjust to sheer insanity. i did have my own room, in which was a bed, desk, two chairs, locker, shelf and clothes rack. i also had a radio and key to the room. i shared this dormitory of private rooms with about forty other inmates, about five of whom were gay. about two months after i got to ashland i noticed that i had fallen for one of the guys. i'll spare you the details of this classic high school crush and let's just say i came out. (oh happy day) coming out in prison, even when there is no overt sexual pressure, is a mind blowing affair (wrong choice of words?). most of my straight "friends" immediately began speaking less and less frequently to me except of course the horny ones who spoke more and more to me. the reaction of the guards was especially interesting. before i came out they all knew who i was and what i was in for and felt that i was somehow different...i had an upbringing, i had morals, and education, etc. i ate it up. really did. fell for that bull shit hook, line and sinker. when i came out, i think it blew their minds (except a few of course who wet their lips in eager anticipation of finding me alone somewhere... an impossibility) guards always wanted to know where i was, with whom, and JUST WHAT THE HELL IS THAT FAGGOT DOING? i must say tho' that my supervisor allowed me to keep my job dealing with "confidential" information as medical clerk and later when i was replaced by a civilian, gave me my choice of jobs in the hospital. i was assigned the operating room during the day and the evening nurse's shift. i loved those jobs.

but certain jobs are fag's jobs, mainly clerk's jobs. the free amerika would have given these jobs to women. so we see how on the one hand gays are denied their identity and our humanity (let 'em have the bitches' jobs) and on the other hand we can see how women and gays are both placed in an inferior position. frustrating as hell

making love is a precarious affair. it's a crime as far as the administration is concerned. it's perfectly legit as far as the inmates are concerned... at least most inmates; the jehovah's witnesses and, the co's thought it was awful, but...

once a gay is busted making love he's sent to the hole for a very v e r y long time. a friend of mine was there for a little over two months. i got busted once and spent two days there. i still don't know why i was released so soon. i think a lustful administrator had something to do with it. relationships in prison tend to mimic the worst of straight relationships outside. we are always referred to as she, her, miss thing, etc, never being given any sort of identity or humanity. gang rapes of gays are not uncommon, tho straights tend to get gang raped more because they don't have daddies to protect them (or to fuck them.). people at petrograd were still talking about a gay who'd been raped by about twenty guys one night during a power failure. (power failures can be heaven or hell for obvious reasons). i can personally

remember treating a straight who had been raped by an equally number of straights as our gay friends had. that sort of nursing is not conducive to loving one's straight neighbor. also, parole is denied to gays for longer periods of time than it is to straights. some guards will try to make you, but if you don't want to you don't have to. they'll try to bribe you with everything from perfume to nylons to god knows what all (the perverted bastards). if a gay gets vd he's sent to the hole. a straight gets sent back to his dorm with treatment. and the community that is built up by and for gay people! its strong and tight and loving. i have never been with a more together group of people than those at ashland that were gay. my gay brothers there took an awful lot of shit and came out of it (tho some are still going thru it) with grace, dignity, and a determination to fight the bastards til we win. oh, my dear gay sisters and brothers, i do love you so.



As the news flashed the four day scenerio of the Attica prison rebellion, I broke into tears. Twenty eight prisoners and nine guards dead at the hands of those same people - rich, white, straight men who put us in mental institutions and prisons because of our love. There as the story was shown, Black and Third World and poor white prisoners demanded to be free; to be flown to a non-aggressive country that respected their humanity. It was a dream because Amerika would never free them, just as they have escalated, not stopped, the war in Viet Nam. But no more of a dream than a free gay society where all can live.

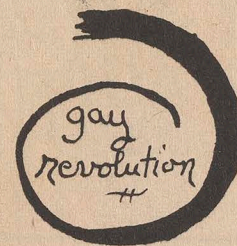
Attica, a state prison outside of Albany, New York, is composed of 80% Black and Third World prisoners (not to mention the unknown percentage of gay prisoners). Prisons are the ultimate (next to complete genocide) punishment of the white straight male ego trip; similar to "if you're bad (read -if you rebel), you'll be sent to your room without supper." Black and Third World prisoners are subjected daily to the beatings and racism of the guards. Homosexuals are subjected to the sexism of all. People work for five cents an hour in the prisons. The guards play on the differences that keep people apart by giving favors to prisoners who are "good boys". The divide and conquer tactic has made it very difficult for prisoners to unite against their oppression. Devise phrases are constantly driven into the prisoners minds - "don't rebel, it's the niggers' fault"; get that faggot, he's the reason for your problem". The Attica rebellion was a bond of solidarity of people inside facing the same oppression. Black and Third World prisoners rebelling in the face of racism and the fact that they are the most exploited. The demands ranged from good food to amnesty and they were all met with bullets which left 41 dead. And then the beatings which went on for a week. The same response comes to us when we try to tell of and show our love openly - beatings, jails and mental institutions are society's answer.

The killings in Attica and the murder of George Jackson in San Quentin shows us that straight white Amerika will not allow anyone out of its norms (i.e. the John Wayne, Superman, woman slayer, plantation owner consciousness) to be free and exist. Attica must be a symbol of people struggling to be free - for us gays it should and must mean a commitment to fight all forms of racism and sexism, till we can be gay and free.

Attica means fight back!

In order to arrive at what you are not

You must go through the way in which you are not,
And what you do not know is the ONLY thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.



From "Four Quartets" by T.S. Elliot

In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, To get from where you are
not,

You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know

You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess

You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not

You must go through the way in which you are not,

Gay Power meets Straight Lib

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN QUEEN KONG MEETS GORGEOUS GEORGE

Gay Male Liberation now oscillates between the two goals of liberating the gayness in everyone and of liberating gay people. Obviously, both are necessary, both require great energy, and in the end both are harmonious parts of the same struggle; however, at the moment the two are sometimes in conflict.

There is a strength in gay people accepting their gayness; it's gay power, and gay people have been used to being powerless too long. But in directing that power towards straight people, we run the danger of neglecting our subjugated gay brothers - the "dirty old men" cruising Amerika's back alleys and men's rooms; street transvestites hustling johns; thousands of gay "sex criminals" locked in jails and mental institutions; the jaded "bar queen" touching fifty--alcoholic, bitter, defeated--these lumpen contain a dynamo of repressed energy--revolutionary energy that can be released only in gay liberation. (Street "queens" led the battle against the police at Stonewall.) Would any of these people feel welcome at a Gay Male Liberation meeting? Or would they feel like shit?

By contrast with these brothers, many of those who have never known any gayness appear glamorous and attractive. This comes from our long deference to straight people, our tendency to rank a gay person by how close he approximates straightness. As part of our liberation, we desperately need more consciousness about why we are attracted to stud-types such as drug-store Che Guevaras, cowboys, sailors, athletes, and other symbols of masculine strength. At any rate part of our present gay oppression is the widespread preference among gay people for either straight or straight acting-looking people.

Every gay male organization cannot help dealing with straight men - doctors, police, teachers, lawyers, judges, bar owners, employers, etc. - all tend to be exclusively straight and men. Consequently, there is eagerness to be open to various educational programs speaking at schools, churches and rallies; sexual liberation workshops; guerilla theater; pamphlets; actions; etc. The hope being that if we can't convert our oppressors at least we can weaken their will to oppress us. There is an occasional sexist response openly expressed that we are primarily seeking sexual partners; and the idea generally remains in the fevered imaginations of straight men that every gay person is hot as hell after them. This attitude could be found even at so radical and "hip" a conference as the August May Day gathering in Atlanta, where the coming out workshop alarmed some.

More surprising among straight men - who see homosexuality as a threat to their masculinity - has been the interest in experimenting with gayness. For some this experiment has been quite exploitative; they have tried gay men's bodies, compared them to their women, and returned to their women - sometimes even insulting their gay partner for having seduced them. Occasionally, gay liberation has been used as an excuse to get rid of some woman a straight man has tired of. A recent article in WIN, "My Own Men's Liberation",



explains that "When sex between J [a woman] began to go bad (or, when I began to become aware of how messed up it was), I felt again unfulfilled, angry, and confused, and I began having more homosexual fantasies."

The emergence of these "nouveau gay" brings new life to gay liberation, but it also brings problems.

These are human beings, brothers, and we cannot just write them off by saying they're straight pigs - not worth our time or love. But the struggle of these men to become liberated may be used as another form of oppression for gay people. Women have for generations served as psychological pillows for all the difficulties "their men" have gone through in battle, at the office, and in the factory. With women no longer serving this function - or at least abandoning it more and more - men in their bewilderment and anxiety can look to gay people for a sympathetic ear. I was once surprised to find how easy it is to take a motherly role to a straight man who wanted to pour out all his fears and uncertainties about his wife, three children, job, home, etc.

This kind of exchange is not healthy for either a gay, straight, or coming out person. For the person being in such a position may be a great boost to the ego; instead of being the despised outcast, we are now priests of a new liberation, ready to explain the ins and outs of sexism, cruising, men's bodies, psychologies, etc. For the straight person, just changing sexes for a confidante fails to break the pattern of sexist exploitation; it's too much like married men taking a mistress who can really "understand them". For the person coming out, there is a tendency to treat gay people as fixed objects - to forget that they too have problems, fall in love, need help, etc. Sue Katz's "On Messing With Straight Women", (Lavender Vision no. 2) explains some of the exploitation gay women have already undergone in such relationships. Gay men are now facing some of the same hassles.

I have myself felt all the difficulties of messing with straight men coming out. Because they are so very uptight about physical sex, I have learned many things about my own sexism and how oppressive it and I can be. I doubt that I could have reached this understanding so rapidly without my brothers help. I have also been surprised to find how exhilarating the fire of love (even if unrequited) can be.

Still, the weakness of role-playing and in particular the weakness of private "personal" talking about "problems", "struggle", and "liberation" - the weakness of all these have been deeply brought home to me. When two or even three undertake such conversations, they become wound into husband - wife type roles; there is an inadequate check to prevent one person's "struggle" from sweeping all else away.

In dealing with straight people, those coming out, and with gay liberation, our problem has been too much individualism. We need to organize and live in more than groups of two or three; otherwise we are too likely to perpetuate a patriarchal pattern in which one "man" or man-type dominates and oppresses others. We must form collectives for our own sanity as well as our liberation; the fact that such collectives and groups do not exist should drive us all the more to form them. Only on TV and in sentimental poetry does individual love overcome oppression; in the struggle we face an army is needed, an army of lovers. And this army must be more than two or three people.



Straight Politics cont. from p7

other committee members, the man with the tape recorder admitted that he was assembling a program on Gay Pride Week. When asked who was responsible for the program, he paused before saying that it was put together under the auspices of SWP.

At the "Multi-media Workshop" on Friday night, the conflict broke into the open. Everywhere you turned there were SWP goons selling their paper, the Militant (complete with a gay article, natch), passing out their position paper on gay liberation, and trying to push their literature onto the publication table at the expense of ours. Shortly after the workshop began, a group of gay women spoke up about the actions of the SWP, some of the arrogant, high-handed tactics they had used in dealing with us and also how the SWP had used the same kinds of tactics in the past to subvert and eventually either control or destroy autonomous groups within the Women's Movement. (If you're interested see the story of Female Liberation and Cell 16 and Young Socialist Alliance, the youth wing of SWP, in HYSTERIA, Feb. 15, 1971, Vol 1, no.4)

By this time lots of us in the crowd were more than irritated, we were angry and mad and we responded in full support of the women. One of the SWP planning committee members demanded "equal time" and when the audience tried to tell him they were sick of SWP lies, he responded with a lecture about the "right" to be heard in a democratic society and then accused us of being exclusive by trying to drive away the help

and sympathetic support of all those gay people in SWP who had worked so hard (as individuals of course) for Gay Pride Week and isn't it important and necessary for straight organizations like the SWP to "help" the Gay Movement. This is another standard tactic of SWP, one which I find particularly insidious. When confronted for their underhanded, manipulative dealings with a group, SWP will respond with a guilt inducing lecture about democracy (a concept they have no trouble ignoring when it is convenient for them to do so - their actions during Gay Pride Week make that perfectly clear) and how the SWP really has your best interests in their itty bitsy little heart and how all they really want to do is help and how its for our own good.

The next day was the parade in Boston and the goons, mostly straight (when we told them this was a parade for gay people the response was "since when can't straight people support the Gay Movement.") were back with more leaflets and Militants. And much to our everlasting gratitude, the SWP candidate for

mayor of Boston, John Powers, marched along with us. On the day before the parade he issued a press release which appeared in the Globe saying that he supported "mass movements" including Gay Liberation. "This weekend," he said, "I plan to participate in Gay Pride Week, a homosexual observance in Boston." How nice of us to organize an event for his publicity. Maybe in a few years we'll become an "issue" in political campaigns just like Black people have. Look at all the wonderful things being an "issue" has done for the Blacks. And thus ends the most recent chapter in the story of SWP. Boston was not alone in gaining the attentions of the SWP. Reports from the Christopher St. Liberation Day Planning Committee in New York indicate that the same kinds of things happened in New York City and other places. It appears as if the SWP is involved in a national campaign to exploit and if possible, absorb the Gay Movement, thus strangling the authentic voice of the autonomous movement.

this is going to be an essay on liberation

an essay

on liberation

which means that

there will be

no

conclusions

no affirmations

just some opinions

and personal speculations

for everyone is talking about liberation

on being

on becoming liberated

or needing to be liberated

at least some people are

so it seems that alot of people are

talking about

LIBERATION*****

another cliché

It's begun to sound like

a poorly orchestrated symphony

composed by the intellectuals

conducted by the politicos

a lot of para intellectual jargon which has become

just

plain

street talk!!!

right on!

This word

which has, perhaps, a degree of

existential significance

has been used and overused

and has been the cause for smug smirks and quick dismissal of those who utter the sound

If

LIB A RAY SHUN

is not just a

WORD

which everyone is using

then what is it???

Is the answer in the dictionary ?

Is it a great mystery or some ancient carefully guarded secret?

Can Herbert Marcuse tell us the answer?

FUCK NO

Liberation is

is at

is

at

THE CORNER OF YOUR MOUTH

and if you want to see the corner of your mouth
you will probably have to go to a mirror

and mirrors

are nowhere, somewhere, and everywhere

for mirrors are not just mirrors

to MIRROR your everyday life

you will have not only to look

but also hear touch smell taste reflect upon
your sensations

thoughts

and fears

in everyday life

for the mirrors are everywhere

on the street

in the subway

sitting at home alone

and with others

or without

in gay bars

and in finding

experiencing

realizing

yours or my or our

self

a sexual self

and know

that at various times

there is fear

apprehension

reluctance

division

in your my our

self

and to feel that to be

GAY

has any significance

In America

in Boston

while working at the First National Bank

while on the way to a gay bar

searching for others who are like yourself

Such significance is somehow

by each one individual

consciously and subconsciously

decided

by

that

one

individual

for it is one

who perceives

each his own

situation

each day

and in retrospective reflection

and has decided

or is deciding or

perhaps is still deciding

these questions

regardless of whether he has asked himself

or has been asked

theses questions

about his self

his sexual self

and the nature of that self

in relation

to everyone else

on the street

in gay gatherings

home alone

You, I, We

have heard none some too much

verbage

about

about being in the closet

smashing monogamy

sexist pigs

and other such popular language

but you I we

no longer want to read or listen to

intellectualizations

around words

for

you I we

are

all of thoses things

first to realize that they are there.....

secondly to discover why or if or how

those things are to be eliminated from ourselves

and not to be righteously

each in his own time

articulate

discourse

on

sexism

monogamy

hiding the fact that you I we are gay

but to live through your my our

repressions about being gay

and gaining perspective

intellectually

physically

and emotionally

and Honest appraisal of you me us

within

to find that the anxieties

are not

so different

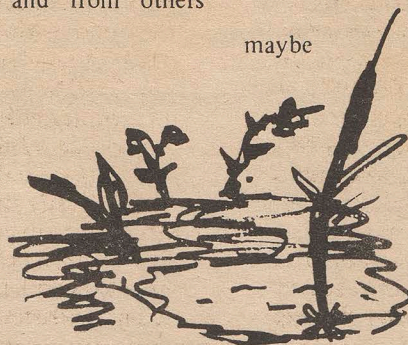
from others

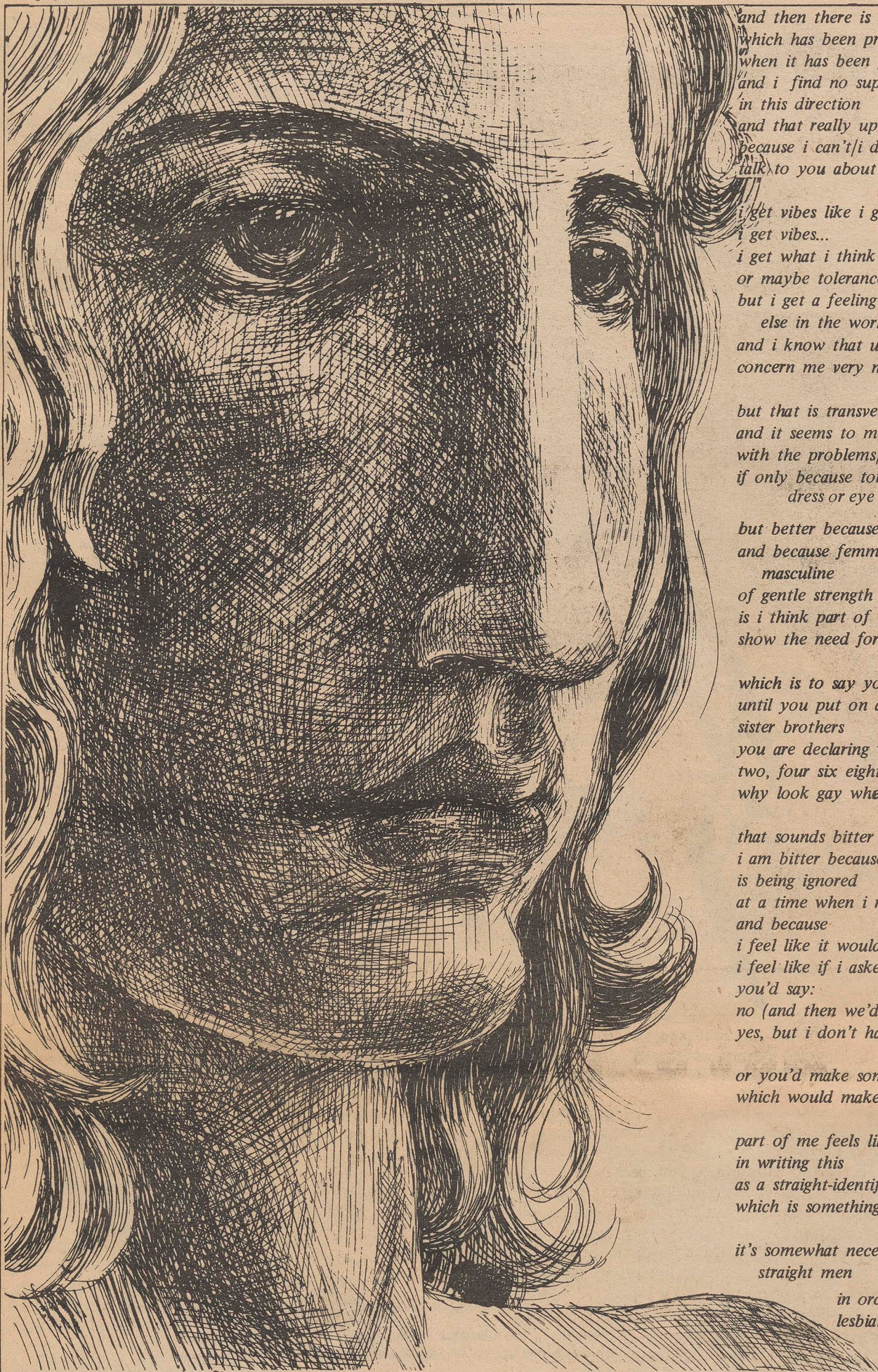
and from others

maybe

there is

trust





it's hard for me to write this to you
because it's hard for me to talk to you
because there is something about your being which attracts me very power-
fully
and i don't know what it is
but i don't think that it is objectification of you as a sexual object
although i know that i want to hold you
and lie in bed next to you and talk or sleep
or make love, whatever that is.
i'm afraid of making love these days.

and whenever i feel attracted to someone like i am to you
i am paralyzed in the sense that there is some kind of adrenalin
or some other body fluid which is running too fast or too heavy
for me to just sit and be relaxed in the presence of the other person.
and i will stop using the third person and talk about what is happening in
the first and second persons.
it's something that's happened before.

i think it's something like 'falling in love'
which has its basis in liking somebody but goes beyond that
in what i think is a fucked-up way
because something must be fucked up when i am sitting down here typing this
letter/poem/short story
to you instead of being upstairs having a good time.
but i feel desperate when i am around you because you seem
very busy
and always tired
and i feel like there is not the time
to be together with you
like i'd like to be

and then there is also my coming out as a transvestite
which has been proceeding very slowly until this past week
when it has been proceeding very rapidly.
and i find no support from you or from richard
in this direction
and that really upsets me.
because i can't/i don't feel like i can
talk to you about my new dress/the way i want to do my hair/or whatever.

i get vibes like i get....
i get vibes...
i get what i think are condescending vibes
or maybe tolerance vibes
but i get a feeling that transvestism is not as important as almost anything
else in the world/your world
and i know that until i got into transvestism their problems and needs did not
concern me very much at all

but that is transvestite oppression/straight-identified supremacy
and it seems to me that gay people would be very concerned
with the problems/meaning of transvestism
if only because tomorrow they themselves may be struck by the urge to wear
dress or eye shadow.

but better because transvestites are their brothers/sisters
and because femme-identification or the pushing forward of feminine over
masculine
of gentle strength over macho aggression
is i think part of the sexual politics which
show the need for and the direction of change in the society

which is to say you've come out of one closet, but
until you put on a dress and walk arm in arm down the street with your
sister brothers
you are declaring with your practice:
two, four six eight
why look gay when i can look straight?

that sounds bitter
i am bitter because i feel that my transvestite coming out
is being ignored
at a time when i need support
and because
i feel like it would be...
i feel like if i asked you if you wanted to wear a dress
you'd say:
no (and then we'd maybe talk about something else); or
yes, but i don't have time

or you'd make some other kind of negative response
which would make me miserable

part of me feels like i'm objectifying you
in writing this
as a straight-identified gay male
which is something that i don't feel good about altogether

it's somewhat necessary, just as it is sometimes necessary for us to objectify
straight men

in order to maintain our reality as gay,
lesbian identification seems to me to be the goal for all of us.

that doesn't necessarily mean that all men should dress in drag
because drag doesn't make a person femme-identified.
their feelings/ways of relating to other people/...
is what determines femme-identification.
being femme means rejecting a lot of things we thought were defining
characteristics of our personalities
it means taking on characteristics which may seem affected.

but look at who you are.
your identity is already affected.
that's not a personal cut
it's true for everyone.
all we are is piecings together of other people we know or have known.
and trees, and birds, and the ocean, and sunsets, and crunchy granola.
but still simple piecings-together.

change is what makes us alive.
being someone who we weren't ready to be yesterday.
i'm not what i'm not mostly for two, no three reasons that come to mind
right away:

because i haven't been exposed to something so i couldn't incorporate
it into me
because i'm afraid of something which i have been exposed to--
which usually resolves itself to being afraid of what other people will
think of my new behavior,
or because i have been exposed to something/have been that something
and have made a political/emotional decision to exorcise it from my
spirit.

i don't have an 'ending' for this.
it continues but not on this piece of paper or any other right now.

Father Knows Best

taken from
Iconoclast
Comes Out

I am gay and the father of three children. When I told my boys that I was gay, their first question was, "What does that mean?" I replied that it meant I prefer having sex with men. While at the time I congratulated myself for being so open with them, I think that this answer was a disservice to them, to me and to my gay sisters and brothers.

You see, I didn't help them come to a real understanding of who their daddy is. My answer was a shallow sex-oriented explanation. Of course, there is a simple explanation for my answering in such a way: I couldn't help the children understand because I hadn't helped myself understand. I hadn't come to a real understanding of who their daddy is and I still am having to work and struggle with what it means to say that I am gay.

I am at a place now where I am redefining what it means to be gay, and I can say without any qualification that I am not only proud to be gay, but I hope my boys will be gay. Before all of you begin desperately to fan yourselves and moan and groan over my desire to inflict such a life on those boys, let me try to explain myself.

Actually, I do prefer sex with men, as I had told my kids, but this is not the sum total of my gayness. Because the straight world didn't allow me a sensual relationship to men - only a handshake in public, butt slapping only on the football field, an occasional hug at funerals, guarded conversations about personal feelings and one-upsmanship in business and sex, because the straight world wouldn't let me talk about my feelings of love for men and left me only an inner-directed fantasy world of absurd sex, because the straight world forced my love-making underground (not just underground - they forced it into dark bars, regularly raided bushes and smelly toilet stalls), I was brainwashed into thinking that my gayness was a sexual obsession and, sure enough, THAT IS WHAT IT WAS!

Really, when I came out I did the whole T-Room Trip with foot tapping and "What do you like to do" note passing. If I saw a face over the stall I would really freak out - all I wanted was an impersonal hand mouth or dick. And I hated myself for it. That kind of homosexuality, I do not want for my kids!

Later I met a guy and I found out that I could enjoy sex with a person - not just a hand. So I played the game of late hour visiting - the romance of a few "stolen hours", and then back to the pretense of being straight in the light of day. Things were better, but I was asking my lover to revolve his life around a few hours in bed and I always had to act my life out of a guarded sham and much guilt. That kind of homosexuality, I do not want for my kids!

So I came out in a really big way - separation and divorce from my wife and a different trick every night. Man was I free! All I had to worry about were those dry periods when I couldn't get a trick. A And Worry I did! Keep myself as butch as possible; hit the bars as often as possible; worry about my hair, my wrinkles and my charm. And that kind of homosexuality I definitely do not want for my kids! (Lest I sound too liberated: hair, waist, wrinkles, charm, butchness, bars and dry periods still plague me!)

Well, what do I want for my kids? To explain it, let me talk about some of my feelings as a child.

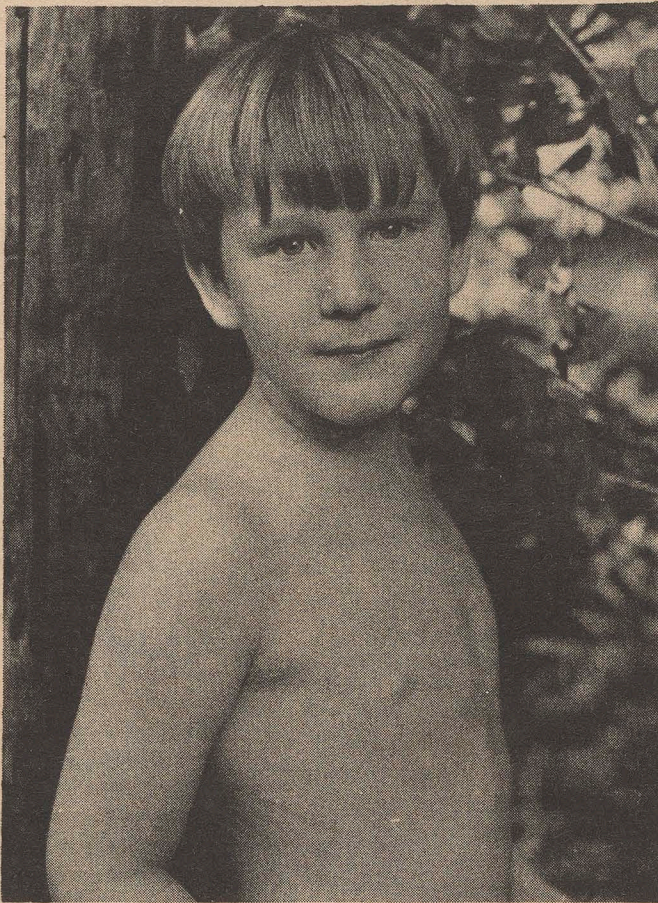
I can remember a time when my friends - boys and girls - related on a more or less equal basis. I loved and was loved without reference to gender. We shared secrets and games, dolls and marbles, hurts and pleasures.

Then, slowly attitudes began to change. A few samples of that change: football was no longer something we played for fun. It was a competitive and physical way to prove maleness. It encouraged the value of a boy to be judged by his ability to excel as an aggressor. I couldn't get into this and suddenly found myself separated from my brothers.

In regard to sex, it was no longer the innocent pleasure it had been in childhood. From the older boys we learned that sex was conquest. Little Janie always sat in a certain corner of the movie house. Who was brave enough to get a feel? Everyone knew Barbara was an easy lay. Who would be man enough to try first?

No, I won't accept any of this as "Boys will be boys. Isn't it cute to see them growing up?" It is the beginning of alienation of the sexes. Boys become masters over the soft little toys known as girls. Approval from the peer group is based on the success of "having my way" or "getting it on".

And I felt guilty when all of this repulsed me



as a child. When noon would come around at school, and I felt more at home hanging around with the girls, I thought something was wrong with me.

Hell, no! There was nothing wrong with me; there was something dreadfully wrong with my brothers. They were losing what I now call their gayness and were moving into that sickness I call the straight world. And it has nothing to do with whom one had sex. It is the attitude that man's tool makes him superior to women. It is the attitude that a man's relation to another man is aggressive and competitive. If he shows emotion, it is a female weakness. If he gently caresses a brother's hair, he is suspected of being somewhat less than a man. And, my God, if he touches his brother anywhere between waist and knee, he is sick! Bullshit! The gay man recognizes the oppression of women and strives to erase the prejudices which stand in the way of relating to them as equal beings. The gay appreciates the softness that should be a part of all men. The gay man gives up his privileged position of power and glories in his femininity. Gay women and men touch and trust. That's what I want for my boys!

But it may be too late. One of my sons had an illness which was almost fatal. As a result he has to wear special stockings all the time. He couldn't go to the bathroom at school this past year because the booths didn't have doors and the other guys made fun of his "women's stockings". He is dreading t his next year because all the other guys will be suiting out in gym. He is ridiculed because he has to wear a garter belt to hold up his stockings. What kind of hell is that to put a kid through?

Another of my sons has a slight eye problem. His depth perception is poor so that it throws his coordination off and he can't catch a baseball as well as the rest of the guys. Do you know the anguish that such a seemingly small thing causes? And it isn't enough for his mama and daddy to remind him that he is a fan-

cont. p.17

Let's Begin Anew!

Dear Lois

I want to write this to you, because a few weeks ago we saw each other and you asked me what I was doing - of course it had always seemed easier, and it seemed easier then, to answer "nothing" - or talk to you about my life and the Revolution in some safe, abstract terms. It's doubly ironic, because I feel for the first time as if I'm moving on my own definitions. I'm gay, and why am I so afraid to be honest with you about that?

We used to play alot together when we were kids - house and dolls and jump rope. You used to joke alot about being better at jumping and running than I was. We used to even share the same bedroom, talk quietly till late at night, and sometimes run our hands down each others' bodies and giggle about the differences. When you were ten and me eight, Mother moved me out of that room. I guess she was worried about something, because she went downtown once and brought back some Hardy Boys books and said "that I should read Hardy Boys and not Nancy Drew like you, because "that's what little boys read." She even bought me a baseball glove, which I promptly lost. It was weird, because I can never remember feeling good about doing any of the things little boys do, or even understanding why that was necessary. I never fought back when I was called a sissy, and I think I envied you alot, Lois.

About that time you got your first junior training bra and a set of curlers. In school, you started taking cooking and sewing (home economics I think it was called), and for the next few years you got up an hour before school just to comb out your hair in the right way and decide what to wear. I used to tease you alot about that, cause I knew that was what would hurt you the most. I used to fantasize about sleeping with your boy friends. I used to take out your padded bra from your drawer and kid around with your friends that you didn't really have tits. Once a friend of mine came over and met you and said, "she has good knockers." and it made me feel proud of you.

All that time when we were growing up I knew I was gay. Once when I thought nobody was home (it was a Saturday afternoon and I usually stayed home or went to a movie, cause I hadn't any friends and you were tired of me following you around), I dressed up

in your bra, panties, and dress and you surprised me. You threatened to tattle if I did anything mean to you. You kissed me and started crying and saying "didn't I know that dressing up like that just wasn't normal for boys and why didn't I just try a little harder not to be so clumsy and wouldn't basketball be easy for me, since I was tall. I remember you joking that sometimes you didn't think that there was anything good about being a girl - that curls hurt your head to sleep on and anyway later you'd just get married and have kids and the thing that scared you the most was in twenty years, you might be just like Mother. You hadn't said it then, but I think what you meant was that there wasn't anything else either of us could do. We were growing up with Gidget and Barbie Dolls and Superman. And we were to be channelled into White Amerika Family, where boys grow to be men, and girls grow to be women - each of us units competing and producing, separate and isolated, learning decorum and propriety so as not to upset balance. Even when I talk to you now about the Revolution, it's in old acceptable terms of projects and demonstrations. And it's alot male privilege, only it comes down in new ways: impressing you with my revolutionary manhood.

Why do we trust each other so little, why are we so threatening to each other?

Two weeks ago was Gay Pride week. It was two hours before the Gay Dance - our first dance in Boston this year - and Bob and I were helping each other into dresses. We walked outside and were holding hands. On the streets in front of the church with 300 gay sisters and brothers, there were hostile people, but mostly everybody was friendly. And Bob and I love each other, and if it's only the beginning, it's still everything. Like the Revolution starting from my/our joy, oppression, and anger. Inside. Outside. And there's infinite possibilities cause we're beginning to understand (slowly, very slowly) that there are ways to love other than from power politics, top/bottom, me/other - and from that, ways to fight to survive.

I feel good about writing this to you, and please, please, next time we see each other let's not be so afraid.

Gayness & the Cuban Revolution — more

BACKGROUND ON ANTI-HOMOSEXUAL POLICIES IN CUBA (LNS)

With the advent of a revolutionary government in Cuba, anti-homosexual attitudes did not disappear. In fact, in the minds of some Cuban revolutionaries, the concentration of gay people in Havana was just one more aspect of the vice imposed on Cuba by businessmen from the North, in a class with prostitution and gambling.

Before long, anti-homosexual policies, with varying degrees of repression, became part of the official Cuban way of life. These policies were premised on 1) a desire to be humane (thus, the push for "rehabilitation"), 2) age old Roman Catholic prejudice, 3) notions of bourgeois psychology exported from the U.S., and on 4) Soviet-style anti-sex puritanism developed under Stalin.

Before long, Havana's gay bars, where on July 1, 1959, homosexuals had cheered the victory of the *barbudos*, ("the bearded one" meaning Fidel and his guerillas), were closed. In the mid-1960's repressive camps, known politely as Military Units to Increase Production, were used to incarcerate homosexuals. When these camps were abandoned, the Cuban government reverted to casual anti-homosexual persecution in schools and workplaces, denying homosexuals promotions, access to certain courses of study, and positions of political authority.

A declaration by the recent First National Congress on Education and Culture in Cuba indicates an official government program against homosexuality that may even be used to excuse physical attacks on homosexuals. Some people from the North American movement have already used the declaration to excuse their own unwillingness to struggle for gay liberation, using the revolutionary credentials earned by Cuba in its many years of courageous struggle with the Northern Colossus, as their license.

taken from RAT

The following letter from a member of the 4th Venceremos Brigade applies equally well to the Cuba material printed in the last FAG RAG. The reply from a member of RAT provides an excellent statement of how we feel and also shows very clearly why revolutionaries should support oppressed gay people in Cuba.

To the Staff of Rat:

I am dismayed to see your article June 14-July 10 on Cuba's attitude toward homosexuals. I have to speak my mind about *your* attitudes.

You have excerpted the most vicious part of the Gay Committee of Returned Brigadistas' statement to print, and have done some editorial writing of a politically undisciplined nature. You have failed to explain the content, democratic nature of, preparation for, and issues involved in the 1st National Congress on Education and Culture, making it appear that the congress was held to discuss homosexuality. You have emphasized the Committee's stand that the popular congress was "fascist" and "reactionary."

You have many times shown your failure to acknowledge and respect the diversity of culture, the presence of specific historical factors, and have interpreted Cuba in the push manner of a ruling country's arrogance, which is not to be tolerated among people who supposedly oppose that arrogance.

You do much harm and injustice by the unfair omission of historical perspective and through discrimination against a country closely contaminated by Europe, while you regularly indicate your approval of cultures far removed from the West (Viet Nam, China). By the way, in those cultures recognizing homosexuality is not a priority.

Our reality, our heritage of 400 years of capitalist development, is not the reality of Cuba, or of any part of Latin America. I think that to play with the destiny of a people who have seized their country and are making their history is criminal, counter-revolutionary.

I know that there is not a consensus of opinion among gay brigadistas, that some possess more mature politics. I hope that other gay sisters and brothers will develop their politics from personal expression to anti-imperialism.

4th contingent of Venceremos Brigade.

ANONYMOUS LETTER FROM GAY CUBANS TO THE NORTH AMERICAN GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT:

By chance, we got a copy of your publication with the Third World Gay Revolution Platform (Gay Flames, Pamphlet No. 7).

We believe—as people who are discriminated against in a country that is supposedly in revolution to create the new man and end traditional injustices inherent in class society—that it is our duty to inform you of our situation as homosexuals....

If in a consumer society, capitalistic and oligarchic like the one in which you live, the life of the homosexual is discriminated against and suffers limitations; in our society—called marxist and revolutionary—it is much more so. From the beginning of the Cuban revolutionary movement the homosexual has been persecuted. First it was in a veiled form without scruples or justification; then by other methods from crude forms of physical aggression to attempts at psychic and moral disintegration of those individuals—incompatible, at least in theory, with the development of a society toward communism. The homosexual here is hurt and attacked obliged to conceal what the authorities consider an aberration or repudiated defect. This concealment varies from forcing us to marry and appear to lead a "normal" life to confining us to farms where the treatment is brutal, as in the case of the concentration camps of the UMAP



From a member of Rat:

I personally had a lot of objections to your letter. I feel you are mistaken about many things, but I know that many people share your views and I felt these views deserve a long public answer.

First of all, the statement by the Gay Committee of Returned Brigadistas was not "vicious:" it was a statement of genuine dismay and alarm at a development that transgresses a human right—the right to freedom of sexual expression. And publishing that statement was not "politically undisciplined": it was directed toward raising consciousness about a contradiction that affects everyone. Talking about the "content, democratic nature of, preparation for, and issues involved in" the Cuban Congress on Education and Culture as a whole in the face of its decision to eradicate homosexuals from Cuban society is not only anti-homosexual in itself: it is anti-human and, in my opinion, semantic bullshit. Cuba's anti-homosexual policy exists. It is a fact. We know about this policy not only from official documents but also from the personal testimony of gay Cubans. Many political and gay Northamericans have come to know gay Cubans personally and are well-acquainted with the pain and agony their Cuban friends have felt in their daily lives as a result of Cuba's policy. Any statement by gay people about this does not come from abstract balancing of theoretical ideas, as your letter does, but from real experience.

How you can overlook this repression, the pain and suffering of a whole group of humanity in Cuba, and still call yourself a person who opposes arrogance or an anti-imperialist, is beyond me.

And I am speaking to you as a sister brigadista too. I went on the 2nd Venceremos Brigade. And I went down to Cuba very open to learning about and admiring the first socialist society in this hemisphere. And I did see a whole society geared to meeting people's needs sensibly: I did see many good things about Cuba. But I also remember that whenever Northamericans saw something to criticize about Cuba, they were told, and they told each

(Military Units to Increase Production).

This situation, due to the international scandal which it provoked, was eliminated; but farms exclusively for homosexuals are still maintained. On the street we suffer persecution, aggression and constant abuse by authorities, demanding ID cards, arresting us for our clothes, hair styles, or simple group meetings, which are rights guaranteed by the Declaration of Human Rights. It is a contradiction yet true that these rights are more respected in some societies labelled fascist than in ours, which you often see or feel to be a solution to the problems of individual and collective liberty. Methods of psychological repression—social isolation, control by neighborhoods, zones, and centers of work and study—with invariably negative aims are a common thing in this regime.

It may be said that there are many homosexuals intellectuals and others that live outside this situation. In the first place, they are few, and if people like this do exist they know they cannot cross the barriers drawn for them. Opposition means the risk of exile or confrontation with a dictatorial system which can lead to the worst consequences.

Freedom, respect, and justice for homosexuals in the whole world cannot be advocated without the knowledge of the situation of thousands of individuals in our country, and without protesting the treatment they are getting, searching for an effective—not a theoretical—solution to such problems.

other, that it was Cultural Imperialism for a North-american to criticize Cuba: that it was Americans thinking, as they usually do, that they know how to do something better than anybody else in the world. And I know that this attitude exists too. Cultural Imperialism is a fact too. But when gay Northamericans are outraged at the treatment of gay Cubans, it is not coming from cultural imperialism. Cuba's policy threatens the freedom of gay people everywhere, and is especially horrifying to gay people who have committed their lives to the building of world socialism as well as to fighting for the rights of gay people.

There comes a time in every struggle that you have to stop being silent because of political expediency. When you are a gay person working in this country for a revolution to free everybody and you find your allies, your examples, your "heroes" knifing you in the back, it makes you stop and wonder whether you are going to spend your entire life fighting to bring about a "revolutionary" society that will only turn around and *exclude* you and those like you.

I can tell from your letter that you are not gay and have never worried for a minute about whether gay people were going to be "allowed" in the life hereafter of the revolution. Your anti-gay attitude is very apparent - you "excuse" Cuba's anti-homosexual policy on the basis that every society is also anti-homosexual. You have the nerve to *taunt* gay people about this tragedy. You talk about "mature politics" in a very condescending way, setting yourself up as a judge of what are "correct" gay politics when you yourself are not even gay and have no conception of the anguish that can mean. At one time white "revolutionaries" found it politically expedient to do this to Black people and many still do.

You may think my answer is "counter-revolutionary". But I believe that if one is not fighting for a revolution for oneself too, then it is hollow and shortlived and imperialist in itself to be fighting a revolution for someone else. That's exactly what the U.S. State Deptment is doing in South Vietnam - they are "saving" the South Vietnamese from Communism. You are "saving" Cuba from Cultural Imperialism and "saving" gay people from "immature" politics. I think you'd better re-examine the whole issue.



looking for my father in corners of the few
i have eaten and searched in flowers
that made my tongue swoon, in winters that blew
my mouth mad like driven snow into woolen arms
that could not hold me. i am so crazy
about man, dad. it is all you: there
is not enough we could have of one another.

caught in each others aspect like flies
in the amber of blood tissue, we are
together only in our failing one another.
mother tied my ties at night, making me
pretty for my dance. you grumbled and were proud
at all the wrong moments. i am walking now, but
where. you could never tell me. i hated you
like love.

still a child of eager difference, dad,
i am making my life as it lives, frozen out
on film frame by frame, dirty pictures
in a show as continuous as eyes, burned
onto the screen. and who can look
at the movie they make.

somewhere there are points of flesh
that see me and are who you are, dad. even
as they puncture me to dissolving and loss,
i recognize their death in my mouth
as our own.



LAMENTATIONS OF A FAGGOT

I

Why do you scold me when I cruise?
Don't you realize cruising satisfies a real need?
A need which you fail to satisfy.
It's not sex, it's loneliness.

Why do you scold me when I'm tacky?
Don't you realize being tacky satisfies a real need?
A need which you fail to satisfy.
It's not gossip, it's a laugh.

Why do you scold me when I don't struggle?
Don't you realize not struggling satisfies a real need?
A need which you fail to satisfy.
It's not rest, it's YOU.

II

You, who has the vision of gayness.
Wait! Don't trash me--Love me.
I am you six months or two years ago.

I need that vision too.
And you can help me open my eyes.
But first I must tell you something.

You betray that vision when you trash me.
You forget to put your vision into practice.
You become straight in spite of yourself.

FATHER KNOWS BEST Cont from p.15

tastic reader. It isn't enough that we - his parents - can
see the beauty of his sensitive nature. No. The approval
of his peers based on learned qualities of the straight
world have already made him doubt his worth.

Why in God's name, must they go through
such needless hurt and self-doubt? Why? Because this
society of ours is ruled by the sick values of *butch* -
hail the conquering hero - watch me flex my muscles -
see what I have between my legs - males.

Don't ask me again why I want my boys to
be gay.

Postscript: I had originally intended this article
to end with that "Don't ask me again" sentence.
My sisters and brothers talked over the entire article
with me and I decided to add this postscript.

The reason for the abruptness at the ending
was the rage I was beginning to feel as the realization
began to hit me harder and harder that my children
are being pressured into a stereotype image of male-
ness that kills their innate sensitivities. I was also feel-
ing the pressure of the straight world that had forced
me to think I had no alternative but to live apart from
the boys - denying what I had to give them and what
they had to give me. (It should go without saying that
this also applies to the society encouraged barriers
between my ex-wife and me.)

I know that these three boys need the support
of a gay-identified society. They need the identity of
fully realized humanity - the "strength" that enables
a man to fight tyranny and oppression - the "weakness"
that allows a man to empty himself for another; the
"sharpness" that motivates him to drive a sword into
the injustices and inequities of today's power struc-
tures - the "softness" that gives him the force to reach
out and comfort his sisters and brothers

Pretty words and idealistic hopes? As a gay
brother and father, I'm ready to struggle so that words
and hopes become concrete realities for everyone - and
especially for three boys I know.

COUNTRY LETTER

The bat darts to a sound and then
off quick to some other.

On the far side of the pond my father is fishing.
In the dark he casts out and reels in.
He is very distant --- just a white shirt
reflected in the water.

He speaks to my mother who sits nearby
somewhere in the dark.

The line whimpers.

Steam moves across the water and fish surface
breaking the dark with rings of light.

A bat drums close by my ear and,
fast,
flies away. I'm not what he thought.

Whippoorwill. Bullfrogs. A door closes.
Mother calls across to say they are leaving.
"Goodbye."

The moon rises and shines over my shoulder.
Lightning bugs rise. Two bats touch in the air.

They are driving along the road at the other end
of the pond now.

Leaving.

Last night Daddy asked if I find time
to do much courting in Boston.

I used to walk in the woods and cry. Hug trees hard.
First time I went swimming naked, alone one night,
felt like I was flying slowly in a warm sky.

I finally explained to the blind girl,
almost a year ago, why I was scared.

If you listen carefully there's always a whippoorwill
somewhere tonight.

This afternoon while he painted the gutter
we talked about parents and last week's demonstrations,
about Moving On vs. Settling Down for a while.

(Sometimes I forget what's being said and instead
remember how a beard moves with a talking mouth
or what eyes are doing.)

This afternoon his back was brown from two weeks
of house painting. The hair on his shoulders glowed
against the sky.

The last time he wrote poetry was in jail.
"I guess that says something," he said.

Do you think bats can see lightning bugs?

The moon keeps moving.

FAG RAG Blues

Cont from p.3

first place because I was lonely and unhappy and dis-
couraged with my life. I was scared of a dismal future.
I felt, still feel, the need to change all of that. All of
us do. Gay Liberation is not a set of meetings or an
organization of a newspaper - it is my life, our lives,
in many ways. As such, I - we can't leave or go away.
One of my friends said that his relationship with gay
liberation was like a marriage - for better or worse.
I guess when I see things collapsing around me right
and left, I don't know what to do, where to turn. The
bars? Well, the bars are important to me and I enjoy
going but I certainly can't imagine building a life
style around them. The greatest joys and hopes in
my life and the most intense pain and sorrow all seem
to revolve around, be centered in, my gayness, my homo-
sexuality. The only way I see myself being able to
live with the joy, the hope, the pain, and the sorrow
of gayness is through a still vague thing called gay
liberation.

I t c a n H a p p e n H e r e !



In the battle against sexism, gay people lie across the gates of empire and fascism much as the Vietnamese people do. We have not chosen to do battle; in fact we are not by "nature" warriors. But just our being has placed us across the path of the behemoth. True, we aren't threatened with bombs, napham and torture right now; but we need to understand how tenuous our position is and how deeply the forces of fascism threaten us. Gay liberation represents an intolerable contradiction for fascism, and as the forces of repression grow, we will find our very lives and existence at stake.

People have feared that the Black revolution, the student uprisings or the communists might provide an excuse for ending what facade of "freedom" remains. Any one of these could provide an excuse; however, each is in some way or other now organized and even armed. The capitalists would have to risk civil war if they attempted to exterminate all the Black people students or communists now in Amerika.

The fascists might, however, be able to find an excuse and perhaps even unite (or at least silence) a large number of present malcontents during a systematic campaign against gay people. The government is doing research in this area. The National Institute of Mental Health in 1969 issued a report which concluded that anti-sodomy laws and police repression had failed to control the apparent spread of homosexuality. They strongly recommended that laws be changed and new techniques of control be developed on the basis of an intensive nation-wide investigation of "networks" of one-to-one relationships... collective patterns... formal and informal social organizations of "homosexuals. In other words they are collecting dossiers on gay people all across the country--even information about "one-to-one relationships."

Michael Goldberger, one of the Washington DC 12, has pointed out that "Heterosexual chauvinism, however one chooses to read the handwriting on the wall, is an important tool for an increasingly authoritarian state;" it is one of the most effective disciplinary tools against straight men and women; their fear of

being gay, or even appearing gay, is often enough to keep them in line.

Michael concludes that we can expect to be the excuse for perfecting the fascist state in Amerika. Wilhelm Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* shows how sexual repression (inherent in the nuclear family) is the foundation for every fascist state. As long as the family exists as it does in Amerika, the embryo of the fascist state is present.

In the battle against Amerika, all gay organizations (whether they want to be or not) are revolutionary because they challenge the family--mainspring for religion and the state ("God, Family and Country"). We need to be less modest in estimating the significance of our position in the "movement." Of all challenges to authority, we are the most direct, because we attack the base of fascist power--the family.

Boston's Gay Male Liberation could well study ways to develop our understanding and commitment in the struggle. The ideology of gay liberation is totally unclear and unarticulated. In working toward some collective understanding of our position, we might begin by all agreeing to read some common book or article each week and devote a part of our meeting to internal education (perhaps in groups of four or five to curb the ego trips).

There are obstacles to such a modest program; in our meetings there is a tendency to dismiss such discussion as "academic," "rhetorical," or "macho." People are afraid to open themselves up in such discussions--fearing either being put down for being too heavy or put down for being uninformed or unhip in the latest dogma. Ideas are too often used (even among gay males) for put downs and ego trips.

Valerie Solanas' SCUM Manifesto points out that, "The male, although able to understand and use knowledge and ideas, is unable to relate to them, to grasp them emotionally;

he does not value knowledge and ideas for their own sake (they're just means to ends) and, consequently, feels no need for mental companions, no need to cultivate the intellectual potentialities of others. On the contrary, the male has a vested interest in ignorance...."

If we are to take ourselves at all seriously as a revolutionary group, we must develop a greater common understanding of our commitment--something that we can share and something that can guide us in our war against the fascists. Our ignorance benefits only our enemies.

Of course, we don't need anyone to tell us we are oppressed; our experience dramatically underlines this. What we need is clarity in understanding how we can overthrow our oppressors. We don't need any male-oriented pig hierarchies, committees, constittutions; we do need strategies, discipline, commitment and love.

Certainly we need allies--students, Third World peoples, the youth culture--and the changes in attitude toward gayness throughout the movement is encouraging. But if such alliances serve only to reassure us, if they become a substitute for our own organization--then such alliances will only further our dependency on straight people and organizations and hinder our own self-growth and organization. Revolutionary groups are best protected by their own organization; from that strength they can form alliances. We in gay liberation still need to forge our internal strength and organization. We are not yet an army of lovers. An Army of Lovers Can Not Lose!

GAY PRIDE WEEK '71



The first all gay march and demonstration in this city's history climaxed Gay Pride Week with a large gathering on the Boston Common.

Some 150 marchers, chanting, singing, and displaying yellow "Gay" balloons, stage demonstrations en route at police headquarters, the Massachusetts State House, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church, all singled out as representing traditionally anti-gay social forces.

The June 26 demonstration was preceded by a week-long schedule of workshops on such topics as gay relationships, sexism, gay organizations and "coming out". The workshops, with attendance between 50 and 80 persons apiece, were followed by smaller discussion sessions, all open to the general public.

The planning committee for Gay Pride Week represented all gay organizations in the Boston area, with women's groups - particularly the Daughters of Bilitis - unusually active in planning and participation.

A multi-media teach-in at historic Old West Church on the evening preceding the parade was partially diverted

into a heated debate about the appearances throughout Gay Pride Week of representatives of the Socialist Workers Party. Several gay leaders denounced the SWP for "arrogant intrusions" and attempts to ally its political viewpoint with the "autonomous" nature of the homophile community.

The June 26 marchers were assembled at the Homophile Community Health Service in preparation for the day's first demonstration at Jacques, a gay bar in the Bay Village section. A climactic scene of the gathering on the Common was that of the "closet smashing" which was stage around a large brown closet bearing such inscriptions as "What if my boss finds out?" and "What if my family finds out?" Demonstrators joined hands around the structure, chanting "Come out! Come out!" Then the closets occupant suddenly emerged and bolted into the arms of his waiting lover. The closet itself was duly destroyed, as befits such a structure.

Hundreds of gay people joined in a valedictory dance at the Charles Street Meeting House that evening.