

Gay Men's Liberation and last motive

1972

one dollar

IMAGES OF LIBERATION:
GLOWING LOVERS FLOAT DOWN
HOSTILE STREETS
AN ARMY OF LOVERS,
MARCHING, BANNERS, FISTS
OPENING
KISSING, HOLDING, MAKING
LOVE IN CITY ROOMS,
IN THE COUNTRY
TENDING TO DRAW TWO
REMINDE MYSELF THREE
FOUR MANY
KEEP IT POLITICAL

BEAUTIFUL FACES
(A FRIEND SAYS IT'S
SEXIST TO DRAW JUST
BEAUTIFUL FACES)
THE MALE BODY DANCING
STANDING SITTING LYING
DOWN
DRAG BUTTERFLY GAY
SUNSHINE FLOWER

BUT FOR ME IT'S STILL
SO SLOW · UNSPONTANEOUS.
LABORED PICTURES OF
IMAGES OF THE VISION
SURE THERE ARE TIMES
WHEN IT'S REAL
THIS LIBERATION
SOMETIMES WHEN MAKING
LOVE OR WORKING TOGETHER
ON THE NEWSPAPER OR
HEARING THAT SOMEONE
YOU KNOW HAS COME OUT.

BUT DISTANT FROM ME
NOW LYING HERE ON A RAINY
DAY IN A STRANGE CITY
TRYING TO CREATE
SOMETHING OUT OF THIS
RECENT CELIBACY

motive

1972

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table of contents

Editorial: Approaching Lavender	Roy Eddey and Michael Ferri	2
St. Tarcissus Was a Sissy	Daniel Shaunessey	4
Homosexual Sonnets	(poem) Kenneth Pitchford	7
Beyond Rhetoric	John Preston	11
What Price Manhood?	(poem) Paul Mariah	15
Who Are the Flaming Faggots?	Kenneth Pitchford	16
Letters: A Family Portrait	Chris Douglass	20
Gays on Campus	Warren Blumenfeld	22
'There Is No Humanity'	(interview) Ortez Alderson	26
Always We Watch Them	(poem) Paul Mariah	28
Mr. Euclid/Father Geometry	(poem) Paul Mariah	28
Finding Ourselves . . . Coming Out	Sweet Basil Razzle-Dazzle	29
The Orderly	Robbie Skeist	34
Feeling Free Enough to Be . . . Ourselves	(photos) David Aiken	36
Testament	(poem) Benny McAdams	38
untitled	(poem) James Mitchell	38
In America, All Men Were Created Straight	Perry Brass	39
I've Never Been to Majorca	(poem) Kenneth Pitchford	43
Dethroning the King	David Aiken	46
On Our Own: Gay Men in Consciousness-Raising Groups		49
When I Think About My Brothers From the Past	(poem) Perry Brass	52
untitled	(poem) Perry Brass	52
For Sterling, With Love and Resentment	(poem) Chris Douglass	53
Surviving Psychotherapy	James Coleman	53
International List of Gay Groups, Places, & Things		60

Editorial: APPROACHING LAVENDER

By ROY EDDEY and MICHAEL FERRI

This issue is for you and us, Gay men, knowing that in our strength we are proud and glad to be Gay, to be able to love other men, both emotionally and sexually, and knowing that this is beautiful even though our anti-Lesbian/anti-Faggot society denies our existence by dismissing us as "sick," as "misfits." We know we exist. We are *gay* and we are proud. *motive*, even with its long history and affiliation with the United Methodist Church, has *come out!*

And gay people have brought it out. Virtually every aspect of both the Lesbian/Feminist and the Gay men's issues have been produced by and for Gay people. Lesbians and gay men have written all the articles and poetry in our respective issues, have created the art work, and done all of the editing and technical layout and production; a lesbian collective has printed both issues. As Gay men, we see this issue as a beginning in our struggle to explain how we feel about gayness. We hope it will reach you at some point in your life and say that you as a Gay man are not alone.

We have tried to bring together in this issue a collection of articles that reflect part of our personal history and future direction as Gay men. We have included come-out experiences, examples of specific society oppression, gay poetry, and finally some analysis and suggestions for the eventual direction of our liberation movement. We have included the come-out experiences because we want to show the commonality of feelings — fear, guilt, aloneness, isolation — that Gay men have had when they begin to react physically and emotionally to other men. We feel that these negative feelings arise not from honest, innate experiences but from a societal value system based on a straight phobia of homosexuality. This fear of homosexuality permeates all American cultural institutions: young people growing up in nuclear families, attending schools and churches, being exposed to medical and therapeutic models. All are inundated with anti-homosexual male-supremacist values. From our efforts to *understand* these experiences, we have begun to see the true source of our oppression. And from that understanding, we can move toward a truly *Gay* analysis that will enable us to successfully fight for our freedom.

We want to share some of our personal background and experiences to give you some idea of who we, Roy and Michael, are and where we're going. Our methods of dealing with our emerging gay feelings contained many similarities and differences, and, even though our come-out environments were not the same, our

accompanying feelings were essentially positive. Roy came out through the bar scene in Kansas City and Nashville, while Michael came out at the founding meeting of the District of Columbia Gay Liberation Front. Both of us experienced a sense of breaking through — a sense of relief that was tremendously uplifting. For Michael, the feeling of group support ended his isolation much more than did Roy's bar experiences. Even though the bars were for Roy — and still are in many cities — the only place where gay men can meet, he feels that his more recent involvement with radical gay people, has given him an important sense of openness that the bar scene didn't provide.

Our coming out was a time when we fully admitted to ourselves and to others, both gay and straight, that we really were gay. Roy felt this after he first slept with another man; Michael's gay identity emerged after a year of closeted, dishonest bisexuality. One week's honest, supportive struggle with GLF men enabled him to break through that final barrier and admit to himself and others that he was *homosexual*. Before coming out, our lives were patterns of denial and escape from dealing with our gayness. Each time those feelings surfaced, straight society provided us with an easy out, a role or substitute image that diffused the tension and pressure that might have enabled us to break through. For both of us, however, our flight culminated in relationships with women in which we felt we "fucked them over," mostly because we were dishonestly dealing with our own gay feelings. We tried to escape into all of those straight, male-oriented images and institutions we had been taught: man/woman relationships (man on top, woman on bottom), marriage and the nuclear family. Coming out removed those false masks. The following lines of a poem Michael wrote when he was coming out express what we both felt after we stopped trying to be straight males:

*I see myself as I am,
God, what a gift . . .
But yet, what should I do?
Behind the masks I was one of them.
Accepted.
Secure?
But now I am different,
I am no longer of them;
I cannot be.*

"But what should I do?" was the question in both our minds. And as we were trying to find some direction, other oppressed gay people were taking to the streets in self-defense in the Stonewall Riots of '69; then the Gay Liberation Front—with all the energy and excitement it

generated—brought together large numbers of us who for the first time recognized the need to organize ourselves into a strong, determined liberation movement.

We “found” ourselves, and joining others like us, began our involvement in gay liberation. We joined consciousness-raising groups. For the first time, we talked about our personal feelings, experiences, and relationships with other gay people, with our families, with our straight friends, and we began to realize that in order to free ourselves we needed a personal/political analysis of our oppression to guide our actions.

For us, much of the analysis coming from our consciousness-raising groups dealt with the ending of male/female social-sexual roles, our male chauvinism toward women, our racism, and ways we could stop sexually objectifying each other. We saw our liberation as purging ourselves of the straight values we had learned as we grew up in this society. But even though we knew male supremacy (sexism) was at the root of our oppression, we did not use our personal experiences in forming our own political/economic analysis. We continued to believe in a straight man’s myth that the Marxist dialectic — creating a socialist economic and political revolution by smashing capitalism — would end all oppressions. But the Marxist dialectic must be carried a step further, we realized. For in its interpretation, it does not provide for the liberation of Lesbians and Gay men.

Lesbians kept telling us we oppressed them with our blatant chauvinism. Reacting as any male would when criticized by women, we did not struggle with their criticism. In addition, Third World people criticized us for our racism. In the case of D.C. GLF, the attempted struggle between black and white men was very competitive and destructive. In not dealing with these two criticisms, GLF ceased to function as an organized group in D.C., as well as in other urban areas like New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Hanging on to the straight male qualities of aggressive competitiveness and individualism kept us from dealing with the Lesbian and Third World criticisms and involved us in many energy-draining actions with the straight male Left, most notably Mayday. And this has been the largest failure in the Gay movement as we have experienced it.

For us, our analysis must show ways to give up the straight, white, male privileges that give us power over women, Third World peoples, and less masculinist gay men. That means that Marxist ideology must be extended to include an analysis of sexism. As a beginning, it must be *stressed* that the first division of labor was based on the biological differences between men and women. Women

were the first people to be dominated by men because of their biological vulnerability in the procreative process. Men obtained power and privilege over women because of this, and established the patterns of domination which still permeate our society and have become synonymous with male-ness. Women’s oppression is the basic oppression that exists in every society and has been the archetypical model of the domination of any oppressed group of people.

Straight men, with their privilege of domination, have made women into sexual objects. They have twisted human sexuality into a power relationship over women. And when we, as Gay men, give up that power over women, we become—in the eyes of the straight male—powerless “non-men”—another group for them to dominate and to fear. Straight men, defining their own masculinity in terms of power over women, fear us because we reject that concept and take on qualities that they consider feminine or effeminate—or *unmasculine*. When we show that we can be sensitive, gentle, affectionate, open, and caring, straight men shit on us. And if we express our sexual attraction to straight men, our experience has been they freak out. They only understand sexual attraction in terms of the domination they have over women and to deal with what we feel, is to threaten that masculine power identity.

It is through an understanding and obliteration of this masculine power identity that we continue to form our analysis and to seek our identity. By destroying these masculinist traits in ourselves and confronting these traits in other gay men, we move toward “de-manning” ourselves, toward giving up our male privileges, and toward ending our immediate oppression of Lesbians and ourselves.

For us, Michael and Roy, this struggle has meant putting our energies into creating gay support groups. Michael is involved in radical therapy and a gay men’s living collective. Roy is in a gay newspaper collective and a consciousness-raising group.

We are also calling ourselves effeminists, root word feminist which shows our link to lesbian oppression, and faggots, a word previously used by straight men to oppress us, but which we are using as a defiant statement of pride in our new found identity and history. Even though we are helping to create our own movement, we must understand the Lesbian-Feminists’ analysis and deal with the criticisms they are making (see motive’s Lesbian-Feminist issue).

This is where we, Michael and Roy, are, and we hope that what we and our faggot brothers in this issue have said reaches you and in some way touches *your* faggot/effem-inist identity.

St. Tarcissus Was A Sissy

By DANIEL SHAUNESSEY

It's June 1970. I'm really in a daze as I walk down Market Street to the Greyhound station to catch a bus from San Francisco to Palo Alto. Shuddering visions torment me, and I want to cry for help but I know it's not time yet. My sweaty and shaky hand clutches tightly \$15 worth of Gay pornography that it took me three hours in that fantasy-haven bookstore to get up the nerve to buy. The realization of what that symbolic act meant hits me with its uncomfortable revelation. I have just admitted to myself for the first time in my life the single fact that has accounted for many of my loneliest moments and my loveliest fantasies. I'm a *homosexual!*

But it cannot be, I tell myself, as with very shaky and unsure steps I approach the station. I'm not queer. I'm normal. I just won't let myself believe I'm some kind of pervert. Two very attractive Gay kids, standing arm in arm smiling at each other and then at me, hand me a leaflet. I do not take it because I can't. The nerve they have to "uncover" me. It must have been the books under my arm. I certainly don't look queer! Walking only a few steps further, I stopped and looked back. I'd realized that my identity had been confirmed. I wasn't ready for those kids yet. I remember having an impulse to run, or to cry and let it all out, or at least smile. Looking back on that day, I believe they sent a ray of sunshine into my life. They had the courage I needed. I wish someday I could thank both of them.

I had first heard about Gay Liberation a month prior to my California excursion, in a radical newspaper published at the University of Illinois called the *Walrus*. My roommate, Nick, showed me the article, told me about Gay Liberation, and said there was a chapter in Chicago. I was pleasantly surprised that Gays were organizing. But somehow I couldn't believe it. Gays were *supposed* to hide like I was doing. Their coming out threatened me. Even though Nick and I were very close, I didn't tell him about myself.

We had been living for a year in a Chicago neighborhood known as "Back of the Yards" made up of working class Polish and Irish Catholics and were part of a local group of radical organizers. I had grown up in the neighborhood and, having completed eight years of seminary training, had returned to organize.

The California trip and the *Walrus* article raised severe contradictions in my way of thinking, conditioned by years of Catholic education and working class mores. I was really shook up and still unready and unwilling to deal with all that I was feeling. But I was not alone here, for all of us in the organizing collective sensed that something was missing in our lives and we began exploring some alternatives: discussions about communal living, male chauvinism, and women's oppression, sex roles in a sexist culture, and ultimately Gay liberation. I didn't tell anyone I was Gay

until a couple of months later, when after many weeks of putting it off, I went to a Gay Liberation meeting. The announcement was received well and I drew the support I needed.

And now it's been about one year since I "came out" and joined Gay Liberation. The personal torture of ten years in a guilt-ridden "closet" didn't get erased very easily. It took some time! Meeting people, sharing feelings and experiences we had in common, the nightmares, the agony, the loneliness. Understanding it. Doing something about it. And it's still happening. Because for the first time in my life I felt whole, that I could love and be loved. I felt proud and respected myself. I felt Gay. I can't recall a time in my life when I felt so happy and comfortable about myself.

I am of Irish Catholic working-class stock. My grandparents immigrated from Ireland; my parents are second generation Irish-Americans. Father was a mail carrier for the Post Office until he retired. Mother stayed at home and took care of four kids. We could afford to live moderately, not rich, not poor. Like many Irish Catholic youths, I had decided to study for the priesthood and I began Quigley Preparatory Seminary in Chicago as my first step. I'd wanted to be a priest since I was ten. I wished to serve people, be close to God, have a meaningful relationship with Jesus. But I had to deny myself a lot of things: I couldn't date, have sex, or get married. This separated me from my peers, but that was OK since I had no desire for that stuff anyway. But it also meant that I couldn't get close to my friends, have emotional feelings, or fall in love. The seminary called these relationships *particular friendships*, things a priest must do without. A seminarian could be close only to God. We just weren't *supposed* to have emotional feelings toward others. So I went to Mass and prayed my rosary daily, and for a while, I liked it.

My indoctrination with Catholic norms on sexuality was successful in that it taught me to sublimate and repress my emotional feelings, and hence much of my developing personality. We learned in religion class that sex was a necessary evil that produced a necessary good: children. It was distasteful and dirty, sinful to participate in unless you were married, and something seminarians weren't to discuss with each other, but only in the confessional. The sole purpose of marriage was the procreation of children. The only acceptable sexual model was heterosexual sex. And the only acceptable sexual relationship was Christian marriage. It was just that simple.

I've masturbated since I was thirteen. The religion books called it the sin of "self-abuse." It was a mortal sin (equivalent to murder). You could go to hell for it. During my teens, I'd go to bed afraid to fall asleep, fearing God

would strike me dead-on-the-spot for the horrible thing I'd just done. I'd get really scared. Seminarians were afraid to even discuss sex. It was unmanly, unholy, displeasing to God. Anyway, we couldn't participate in sex nor have sexual feelings. Our model to emulate was the golden rule of purity, chastity, asexuality.

The seminary authorities did attempt to make sexual repression and sublimation easier, however, by forced participation in sports, weekly confession, bi-weekly spiritual conferences with a spiritual director chosen for you, not by you, and daily spiritual readings. It may sound ridiculous but it even worked for a while. I succeeded in becoming a well-disciplined, introverted and inhibited, very unhappy person. In other words, I was the model seminarian.

Because I couldn't identify with the pro-football star, the successful businessman, or the cop on the beat, I looked for other models to imitate. And the seminary provided them. The church instructed seminarians to follow the examples of the saints who unselfishly dedicated their lives to God. I could identify with Francis of Assisi who lived the contemplative life and seemed at peace with himself. But then I wondered about St. Tarcissus, a youth whose mission was to carry the Blessed Sacrament to a place of safety in a town under siege. Piously, he ran about with his hands around his breast while his friends were playing ball. They'd mock and tease him but determinedly he ignored their jeers. His buddies must have called him a sissy. Mine did. I bet he was unhappy, too. Perhaps a bit Gay. The examples I was to imitate must have been just as repressed and frustrated as I was. Tarcissus sure must have been.

Somewhere in my high school days I was called a sissy quite frequently. It wasn't because kids had suspicions that I was Gay but that I wasn't like them. I went to Quigley, the place "where all the sissies go." I didn't play sports much or very well, didn't go on dates, didn't talk about the girls I'd like to "lay," didn't "fit in" with the boys. Hence my neighborhood friends, the "greasers" I hung around with, didn't consider me as part of their gang even though I spent most of my time with them, on the streets, driving around town, shooting pool, going to booze parties. I must admit I often felt awkward even being with them. My classmates, middle-class suburbanites, looked down on me for not being like them. I didn't live in a \$75,000 townhouse, didn't have a car of my own, didn't have a daddy who ran a corporation or a mom who could afford to wear mink stoles. They referred to my neighborhood as the ghetto and refused to drive through it since once their Lincoln Continental was stoned as they were on their way to pick me up.

I really didn't have a peer group I could fully identify with or friends that I felt I could trust. I was caught between two worlds, as it were; I was part of both, yet I belonged to neither. It soon became clear to me that a working class sissy was *not* something to be.

With much doubt and uncertainty as to whether I could really grow in the ways that I wanted to, I entered college at the St. Mary of the Lake Seminary to continue my studies for the priesthood. The first two years were spent in Niles, Illinois and the last two in Mundelein, Illinois, both places just outside Chicago. This was to be the first time I'd ever lived away from home for any length of time and had

many fears of being cut off from neighborhood friends, my family, and the environment I really knew.

Several experiences put me in touch with my Gay feelings and the Church's attitude toward homosexuality. I became aware of sexual feelings toward many classmates in the dorm. I would incessantly glance at Randy in the shower room. He was the 125-pound high school wrestling champ. I was extremely envious of his athletic build and versatility and he knew it. And there was Marty, who played guard on the varsity basketball team who took a real liking toward me, usually expressed in teasing and mocking. He liked rough, physical contact and we'd often wrestle and shadow box. Because I was so attracted to Randy and Marty, I was afraid to get very close. I had similar feelings toward Frank but handled them differently. My attraction was immediate. One time he was sick, I would bring him meals, feed him, sit on his bed and comfort him. Frank could be very distant at times and near the end of that year, I thought he'd rejected my friendship. But my sophomore and junior years were to prove otherwise.

In psychology and sociology classes, I learned that homosexuality was an emotional sickness, a social disease. Gay people were sexual deviants. A friend in my English class wrote a story about a man's terrifying experience in a Gay bar. It was the first time I'd ever heard the word "Gay" or knew there were such places for homosexuals to meet. The story frightened me. The platonic dualism of mind and body learned in philosophy class forms the basic Christian doctrine of man—a soul imprisoned within the body. Christian theology goes on to say that your body is evil and your soul is corrupt. Man is a sinner. The church teaches people to disrespect themselves. I gradually became more withdrawn and reserved, lacked confidence, and grew insecure. Sophomore year commenced.

Bob was probably the first really close friend I had, and the only person I could talk with at moments when I needed understanding. It was easy to sense that Bob was more involved with Mary, a woman he sang with in the seminary choir, than with me and to him this was to be



expected. He thought I'd understand. Perhaps I understood, but I couldn't accept it. I loved Bob, I wanted to show that. Love without expression is not possible. But to express love, sexually, to a man was perverse, criminal. It felt very natural for me to be in love with men but homosexuality was sinful, debased and indicated maladjustment. Never again could I allow myself to fall in love with another man, because my need to feel that love returned would never be fulfilled. I began to feel incapable of being loved. I was condemned to live in alienation and loneliness . . . until I fell in love with Frank.

The first couple of months of my junior year were difficult without Bob. He decided to leave following sophomore year. His decision caused me to reevaluate my own. I almost left, too. But the priesthood was my destiny, the seminarian my identity, the loss of which frightened me. I was determined to stay on. Frank and I grew very close. We had a lot in common: similar goals, the need for change, the same friends. I was becoming more political, he more theological. We appreciated and respected each other. Often we'd lie on top of his bed, and for brief moments hold and touch each other. He was very handsome and I really like staring at his naked body when skinny-dipping in the pool. I tried not to think about having sex with Frank. I knew he wouldn't be into that and felt that my friends would totally reject me if they knew I was Gay. The very thought of sleeping with a classmate scared me half to death. It was horrible enough just have the feelings I did. But one night, it almost happened. Frank and I were both very drunk. He was lying on top of me and I could feel his warm breath on my cheeks. I stroked his lustrous black hair and touched his gentle face but was afraid to kiss him. My hand was just above his cock but I was afraid to feel him. So happy to be with him now, I was uncertain as to what to do. I wanted to make love. But instead of expressing what I felt, I let out with this anguished moan and held him very tightly. Suddenly Kevin made his way into my room. We got up very quickly, rapped some very nervous conversation, and within moments they were gone. Later that night, Frank and I talked about what had happened. It was nice, he said, but we had to be careful lest we go "too far." I nodded in agreement without saying much. Looking back, I realized I should have.

That was almost five years ago. Dammit, I should have told him I loved him, that we should have made love, that I was Gay, but I didn't and steadily we grew further apart. I was quite busy with adult discussion and college student groups in my senior year. I was becoming politically radical and the church's involvement with social issues became the vehicle through which I channeled my energies. My loneliness became less intense. A group of us got involved with demonstrations and pickets of various churches with a group of interdenominational radical/liberal seminarians called SORJ (Seminarians Organized for Racial Justice). Kevin and I spent a lot of time with each other but I spent much less time with Frank. Politically, he and I were growing much further apart. Our paths were no longer the same. He was going on to study theology; I had decided to leave the seminary.

How do I feel about it now, my friends often ask. Well, the seminary is not a very Gay place to be. It's taken me two years away from that scene to fully discover that much of my loneliness during those "closeted" years came from having to hide from myself and from others my desires and fears, my attraction to men, the hostility I felt towards sexist institutionalized Christianity. The loneliness came from the repression and sublimation none of us could deal with. And I know that I was but one among many of the closeted Gays at St. Mary of the Lake. I never met any classmates at GLF meetings which I hoped I would. Maybe some of them may read this article, discover themselves, and open the door that's been closed for too long. God, I hope so.

Luckily for me, a year of radical organizing in a working class neighborhood in Chicago put me in touch with my roots and forced me to be honest with myself. It gave me the courage I needed to walk into a GLF meeting (half-drunk but making it!) in August 1970. "Hello, my name is Dan, and this is my first time here and I'm scared." There were many of us there for the first time. Very much like myself. Alone. Frightened. But we'd had enough.

HOMOSEXUAL SONNETS

1

Bob, nothing in me wants to tell you again
about those seven years — we in our twenties,
a poet and a pianist, both in our first passionate sexual
physically satisfied love affair, but I never fail

to remember seeing your spotlit face brooding over
a Brahms intermezzo late at night in a deserted building
as my weekend pass ran out and I had to get back
to my infantry rifle company at Fort Lewis.

In the spring you took me to the Seattle Arboretum
so that I would learn the names of trees and plants, both
exotic and ordinary, and it began to rain and everyone left

but I kissed your wet lips, our clothes drenched, discarded,
before we escaped home to our attic, leaning against the warm chimney
for a dozen naked hours of coming and coming.

2

I don't know what to think of the years in New York.
I can remember all the bad times in a row and say that's how it was,
or all the good times and see how much we shared.
Mixed all together, we still gave more love than most people dream of.

It was the bitter nineteen-fifties, retrenchment of
every fresh hope, and we played scales, made sonnets,
loved a lot of other people together, between us in our bed,
and didn't really believe how genocidally we were hated.

By ourselves? our friends? our enemies? our straight
compatriots who wanted to be seduced by expert artistic
hands like ours — to tell tales about afterward, hateful tales,

lying about the secret we always tried to tell everyone,
even each other: that male bodies together can learn
to lay aside their weapons and sleep in each other's arms.

3

Thatcher, the joke has been that out of all my love (or even hate) poems, not one has been about you. Does that mean I don't dare tell words of the quickbreath you woke in me when I first watched you dance, a blossoming branch of lightning?

Even in your Spectre of the Rose, unholy antique, I felt the holy genius your flesh held, a beautiful moving, a tender music never quite there when our bodies kissed and came, no matter how close or long we clung.

The way I loved you was cruel, hypnotized by my own longing, but the mask your passion wore was cruel, too, like a fake smile. I clutched at a dream of bodily grace through you, denying you. You clutched at some spume of bodiless spirit in me, denying me.

Our fault, our oppression, our loss. We can never be together. A grief as full of music as my own stopped breath.

4

Michael, as I was working late at my desk, I heard you talking bitterly to someone in your sleep – was it me? – and went into the bedroom and put my arms around you until the bad dream passed and you were breathing quietly again.

I've never been so afraid of anything as loving you and have already been hurt more than I'd like to admit when you tell me how low I fall on your long list of options: your way of avoiding some dread mesalliance with me.

So we strut around each other, huffy and invulnerable, like big tough he-men, unwilling to share or risk being "weak." Yet how can we claim to be revolutionary faggots if we've gone this far and still can't even imagine what loving each other might be like?

As you slipped peacefully back to sleep, I bent again over your body's dear sweet earth-smell, too late now – fool! – for unloving.

5

When it comes to sex with other men, we both admit how easy it is to be "natural," each in his chosen scenario, though we choke on our own reluctance to tell each other about it, much less *show* it, spontaneous in our oppression, awkward only in revolution:

with each other. We say that we are "in struggle" and that we don't want to play *Avis* to some straight man's Hertz. And we know how all of this makes any show of affection, much less passion, difficult, stilted and arbitrary. But not impossible if we believe

that through struggle we will somehow learn at least to defy the oppression we cannot defeat except through the worldwide anti-gender revolution of which we are part. Changing ourselves

to begin with, beginning now. A commitment of years, until we walk openly arm in arm down public streets, laughing. That's the dream denied us in one-night stands of first names only.

We put Blake to sleep between us, lying in both our arms.
Some kind of miracle, too beautiful to describe.
I think of his two years stretching to twenty, when you'll
be nearly fifty, I nearly sixty – if we live that long.

Will we have been able to unteach ourselves man-ness enough
to help him from having to learn it to the same depth as we?
He'll need more than one un-male to stand with him against
all the hate he'll get, whatever sex he chooses to be.

But short of prison, etcetera, I can see all of us together sharing
poetry-music-dance, swimming, camping out, learning how to put
the straight-imperialist male of our species out of his misery,
gore-maddened from gorging on even his own eviscera.

We have already entered history together, Michael – I can't
think of anything like us before. No wonder it scares me.

7

My lovely, unnatural sonnet, distorted, psychotic, only you
can express this struggle to love another man with mind
and eyes wide open, instead of in some romantic fog
where nobody wants to be Tristan and there isn't any Isolde.

Loving another sonneteer who wrote about loving men
(although not the hatred of women in those sonnets),
I once became practiced in every sonnet form, English,
Italian, sestet, couplet, you should have seen my voltas.

But only *you* will do now, dear fractured fourteener, as I try
to talk about loving Michael in a time when everything is ending
or else beginning or both – without much overlap – and what earthly
use will this form of desire between men be when that new world arrives?

Maybe none at all, unless it tells those people then something about
loyalty, struggle, and being human – like an outmoded sonnet.

8

You worry, Michael, about being cast in the role of The Other
Woman: you sobbed on your first acid trip when Nina Simone sang
that song as Steve and I held you and tried to comfort you.
You fear leading an empty life except when it touches mine

with Robin and Blake, although you see already that it will never
be that way. And then there's my fear: actually having what I say
I've always wanted and not knowing what to do with it:
the love and trust (whatever that means) of one other man.

Imagine how righteously suspicious any woman would be of this,
especially when some are saying that all male games – like this one –
have to be bad. Still, I'd like to share my life with you,

not like most men do, locked in competition, but in love,
and there's got to be something good about that,
or wanting that – or wanting to find a progressive form for that.

9

You're up now, downstairs, sitting at the table, reading.
We're expecting Robin and Blake any minute, back from the country.
Maybe there's enough time to say that I've always wanted
to write a sequence like this to the you I didn't know until now.

Not like Shakespeare or Paul Goodman, hating women in order to
love men, but in whatever fullness and openness of heart
struggle creates alongside of the pain and day-by-day effort
to change and the failures and the depressions and starting over.

Michael, neither of us are any dream of heaven, but something
in me loves the way you feel, even now when I know
you well enough to lose interest deliberately, because my oppression
requires the stranger who looks like you, not the friend, not the lover.

There was a moment we lost once, on acid, dancing at the Hippadrome:
a rush of love-energy between us, crackling from us like lightening.

10

When we left the Hippadrome, we walked down the street
at an outrageous clip, arms around each other, one head
on the other's shoulder now and then, both giggling with the madness
we had become, past caring who knew who or what we were.

There were frowns from consequential people,
but there were also smiles from people who saw
what was going on with us — an exchange of energy,
a relaxed admission and acceptance of ourselves.

A slight, graying woman stopped us on St. Marks and asked us
for our change, telling us that she was one of us, but just
hadn't been the same since the woman she lived with

died last year, and how sweet we were to give her all our
quarters, and how she was thinking of fixing herself up nice again
for a new friend she'd just met and thanks and goodbye.

KENNETH PITCHFORD

Beyond Rhetoric

By JOHN PRESTON

Mike McConnell's application for a job as a cataloging librarian had been vetoed by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents in July 1970. Less than a hundred people showed up at a rally held by FREE, the only Gay organization in the Upper Midwest at the time. Only one non-Gay person — a radical Methodist minister — endorsed the rally. There was little news coverage of the event and what there was was accompanied by snickers and smiles by the reporter. A demonstration against the administration was originally co-sponsored by the campus SDS, but the non-Gay "radicals" put down their placards and posters and left almost as soon as they had started — they couldn't handle being called "faggots" by the onlookers. Gay liberation in Minnesota had gotten off to a lonely start. A half-year later, the 8th District Court of Appeals in St. Louis agreed that the University did not *have* to hire a "known homosexual."

The ruling was a stinging affront of the civil rights of the Gay community. Describing our Gay identities as "socially repugnant life-styles," the court said simply and purely that a person who acknowledges his or her homosexuality has no rights left in this country. A lower court's statement that "a homosexual is, after all, a human being" was denied.

The response to this ruling was immediate and strikingly different than the protest of a year and a half ago. This time, groups rushed to endorse the rally in support for McConnell, by now a nationally known figure. The full page ad in the *Minnesota Daily* included a list of endorsements that read like a Who's Who of the state: the former state commissioner of human rights, the president of the NAACP, the president of Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, and leaders of Women's liberation and radical Black organizations. At the rally itself, the spokesperson of the Chicano movement in the state approached the podium and, though obviously hassled by the *machismo* of his community, asked to speak.

This time the rally was not made up of a group of people just coming out. There were over a thousand people who never held back in applause or singing. A group of people both celebrating their liberation and rising up as a community to protest an assault on the rights of a Gay brother. This time there were five Gay groups from the Twin Cities, and representatives of groups from throughout the Northern States area. This time there were no snickers on the faces of reporters; the evening news was headlined "Gay Liberation on the Move" and spoke of "thronges of McConnell's supporters."

A lot had happened to Minnesota in a year and a half and it was not measured by the size of the rally alone or by

"acceptance" of Gay liberation by good liberals or by the emergence of any one leader. Part of what had happened could be heard in the rhetoric that was used in both rallies. When "sexism," "oppression," "chauvinism" had been used in 1970, hardly anyone in the audience knew their meaning. In 1970, the call for violent revolution seemed absurd. But in 1971, the words needed no definition. While cries of defiance in 1970 came across as blind defensiveness, in 1971 vows of struggling for Gay community and the cries of "liberation *now*" had new meaning. There was a new consciousness that a struggle for dignity and self-respect had been joined and that our lives were in the balance.

It would be impossible to clearly state what had happened to the Gay liberation in Minnesota and to each one of our own liberations; the forces working upon us and our experiences with other movements were too great. Also, the manifestation of Gay liberation as a movement whose time had come in Minnesota are not transferrable to other areas or situations. It is my hope though that sharing our experiences with others will help us all develop a level of consciousness where Gay Power, Gay Pride, and Gay community can be transformed from meaningless pieces of rhetoric into meaningful, useable concepts.

One important move for the Gay community came with the opening of Gay House in March, 1971. FREE, as with so many other Gay groups, was hardly beginning to perform some of the functions many of us saw as being desperately needed. FREE had begun with a burst of activity in the form of demonstrations, actions and lawsuits, but the energy was all too often directed to responding to negative forces. It became apparent to many of us that our activities and our lives could not be directed solely to demonstrations *against* institutions, that if we were to go anywhere, we would have to start demonstrating *for* people.

Gay House was conceived as a community service center; it has never been in opposition to FREE but has been complementary to it. It was to be a place where Gay people could come to find support in their day-to-day lives, especially those Gay people who were denied access to other social service agencies.

Gay House opened in March with a \$2000 grant from a small local church foundation and some money for training from the United Methodist Voluntary Service. With this seed money we rented a large frame house in the heart of the Gay ghetto in Minneapolis.

By working through a community service center, we were soon able to hear and see the needs Gay people have as a *whole* community. It came as a shock to some naive people that there were Gay people who were not all young, all anxious for a radical, fluid life-style. We were able, through much hard work to transform this recognition into a powerful force, one with a strong sense of Gay sisterhood and brotherhood.

We started a counselling service staffed by Gay volunteers. The needs saw as greatest were aloneness and communications. By aloneness I do not mean stereotypic *Boys in the Band* loneliness—but the aloneness, the alienation that is omnipresent in urban American society. Such simple group activities as pot luck dinners were our first major successes. The dynamic of shared meals continues to carry enormous weight in our interactions. Other successful activities were as revolutionary as a softball team and picnics at local beaches.

Aloneness also brings fear and Gay House's function as a drop-in center soon proved itself a way to overcome that

fear of aloneness. We became a gathering place where fear could be overcome by sharing with others. We had put together a large room of Salvation Army furniture and an open door without knowing what types of people would be attracted to try to meet what needs. Within a few weeks, it became obvious that there would be no "type" of Gay House person. Without FREE's political and confrontational orientation and with a conscious effort on the part of both men and women to work together on this particular project, Gay House attracted some middle-aged, middle class and working class, as well as the more expected college aged group. The conversations did become typed enough though — over and over again the basic exchange was about the fear of "discovery" by family, friends, employers. It soon became obvious that the people coming to Gay House were coming to express these fears and to find strength to overcome them with positive action.

We also found that there is no special type of aloneness for Gay people. We have some areas where needs were intensified, but basically we were called on to do the same things that every other community service agency in the Twin Cities found itself doing: taking older women and men through the maze of welfare, providing emergency loans for housing and food, smoothing over rifts between parole officers and parolees, visiting single people in the hospital, arranging birthday parties for people new in town. Any Gay group lax in meeting these real needs of the community should try to increase their effort. It is precisely because of such areas as these that younger militant groups seem to find themselves unable to relate to older people. Our more fluid lifestyles and our youth tend to help us to superficially overcome basic aloneness and make us forget the legitimate needs of others.



The problems in communication became obvious to us through those people who sought actual "counselling" through individuals and groups.

Again the problems were not unique to our Gay community, but they were intensified. All too often our only ways to communicate affection, fear, love, loneliness and anger are based on American sex roles. One key to liberating ourselves from sex roles is to find more honest and direct ways of communicating. It is because of this observation that group sessions aimed at communication skills and led by trained group leaders have become our major form of counseling.

The basic problems seem to come down to the fact that men and women simply do not know how to relate socially and sexually to people of the same sex and therefore felt themselves alienated even from their own Gay community. The invalid sex role models of American society became totally inapplicable to a Gay situation. The problems seemed most acute in males, but perhaps I say that because I am male. We simply do not know how to hold other men's hands comfortably. If men and women are to overcome sexist stereotypes, they must be given models of alternatives and avenues where they can develop their own alternatives with strong support from others.

Once we began the counselling work and the drop-in center, we soon came to find a growing sense of humility in our inability to meet the needs of a community as large as ours is in the Twin Cities. It has become increasingly obvious to us that if we were able to meet these needs we could not just engage in the construction of our own

alternatives, that we also had a responsibility to help other agencies respond positively to the Gay community. Many people had reservations, but we soon found out that when people were saying "They are oppressive, we should have nothing to do with them," they were often really saying "I'm frightened they'll reject me." If Gay Power and Pride is to have any meaning, it must be found in our willingness to risk hurt or rejection and to react as strong people willing to deal with actions which are just as much rooted in oppression as the pain of our identity-seeking process.

Whatever we might think about capitalistic structures, the institutional church, counselling professions, etc., they *do* exist, they *are* powerful and we have the power to affect change in them. The most important fact about these groups to me is that they deal with Gay people continually, and if we won't help them do it well, then no one else will. Every time one of us approached another alternative culture agency, a psychologist, a clergy person, or a personnel director from a position of strength and integrity, we were convinced that the next time a weaker Gay person came into contact with these people, he or she would be dealt with with less hysteria and more humanness. If the situation proved so totally oppressive that action was called for, we have never shrunk from that action, but much to the surprise of some we found allies. We helped form the Youth Service Coalition in alliance with other alternative culture groups in Minneapolis and St. Paul and have been able to call on these groups for support and action whenever we felt the need. (Interestingly, the most vehement opposition to all our activities has come from the old left — especially college-oriented Marxist-Leninist groups playing with revolution.)

One important factor in the development of Gay House and the Gay movement in Minnesota has been the evolution of strong leadership among the men and the women and the support of the leadership by the Gay community. It is not, I believe, a case of messianic cults or of blind ego trips. Most often, it is not a question of anyone taking control of a Gay group — that's not the form of leadership I mean — rather, it's a question of someone like Jack Baker winning the presidency of the Minnesota Student Association, or Mike McConnell fighting his job case, or the others of us being willing to take public stands and willing to encounter the rest of the society with integrity.

Often this "leadership" functions as a vicarious experience. ("I wish I had the guts to do what you're doing.") Soon it becomes an example. If I can take what looks like a major exposure by appearing on television without fear, then another could take an apparently smaller risk of no longer presenting a false front to an employer. We have been, and I am sure will continue to be, attacked by some for taking ego trips, but the impact of our models does not give me so much the feeling of power (the dirty word of radical rhetoric) as it does the awe of responsibility. I can imagine no worse misuse of power than for a Gay person not to recognize the responsibility of using all means available to present positive alternatives to America's oppressive sex roles.

Again, it is a question of presenting positive models instead of just negative reactions. It is far more effective for me to present other options to people instead of attacking her or his position. It seems that the use of such phrases as "smashing monogamy" when used on a less-aware person is not in any way

aimed at change or communication; few people can hear those messages when they are so threatened. What then is the purpose? I am afraid that all too often Gay people and our movements take on the American characteristic of totalitarianism. All too often we feel that if a life style is the most valid for us then it must be accepted by all others and whoever does not accept it must be at fault — never have we to examine our positions? Such mind sets are frightening. It is obvious to me that we have to have alternative approaches to our thought processes if we are to achieve change.

We have accomplished change in Minnesota on many levels through Gay House, FREE, through our two newspapers, through continuing expanding programs of community organization and education. In doing so, we soon found out that change was not going to happen through confrontation alone, but to some extent we had to be willing to confront with an openness for dialog and a large measure of love. I understand and feel the pain of those who turn off to American society; I too hurt from



the oppression of our sexual politics; I hold out for myself the option of revolution and the demand for the right of self-defense. But I also see ours as being a time when the opportunity for initiating dialog is present and I believe I have the responsibility to try to take that power of initiation.

Gay House and its leadership has been one of the forces which has changed the Gay community in Minneapolis-St. Paul — but of course not the only one. Our most powerful lesson has been that the struggle for liberation is multilateral. There is no one way; there is no one truth revealed. Community organization and self-help are vital — but when they stand alone they are not enough.

We have kept up political activities — confrontation for sure has occurred when it has been necessary to force dialog or when dialog has failed. But rather than trying to close down conventions or offices, we have instead demanded and received time to present our viewpoints at many of the state and national conventions held in the Twin Cities. Groups as different as the American Baptist National Convention and an international human rights convention have been confronted and have responded positively to us.

Educational activities for both our community and for the whole society have been greatly increased through Gay House and especially through still another new group, the Minnesota Council for the Church and the Homophile.

Some have questioned the value of speaking to such groups as local colleges and churches. To the majority of us the value is clearly and totally shown by the fact that everyone of the literally hundreds of speaking engagements we have accepted has meant that some Gay person in the audience has approached us, found sisterhood and brother-

hood and has expressed support. Reaching Gay people who live without community support or friends and who are still trapped in non-Gay situations must be a priority.

Our political activities have not all been confrontational. Gay candidates for student body elections have won victories throughout the state. We expect to field Gay candidates for the next state and city elections. As many non-Gay candidates as possible are polled on their views and those views are being transmitted to Gay voters.

Our experiences in Minnesota have not been all positive by any means. I can never convey the pain, the rage, the hurt that I have experienced when oppression of another Gay person has led to suicide — and as a counselor, I have been exposed to it all too often. We have had too much lack of love and respect for one another. We have failed to reach large segments of the community. We have never had nearly enough resources to operate efficiently. And we have changed direction often in our struggle to define a proper course for ourselves as individuals and for Gay House as a Gay community activity. My own concerns have been basically expressed through counselling and education and as Gay House became even more community and socially oriented and in need of even more democratic decision-making processes more in line with that direction, it became evident that I should leave my role as coordinator and allow myself and the group more growing space.

What we have done though is to start our struggle in our situation to make Gay community into a strong positive force. I cannot think of a stronger means of confronting America than by helping others to stand in front of it and say, together, "I am Gay; I am Proud, and you will deal with my existence!"



WHAT PRICE MANHOOD?

(a collect telephone call to Richard Nixon)

...
thousands of crusaders who marched
thru a very young Europe
were those men who marched
from childhood into manhood
on the road to Jerusalem; those heretics
burned by Rome thru the dark period
of history thruout the witch
period of history thru which
period of history we still sometimes live
NOW accept this history
where you, President Nixon,
are killing thousands of Vietnamese
women & children daily & their fathers
& their husbands as a price
of manhood from the fantasies
of yr dreams, President Nixon,
surely you must have had more than one
torn Hollywood dream about being victor
in a spoils of war & rubbing
salt into the wounds for cure;
those men who no longer can stand
man's inhumanity to man either kills
himself, retreats into the church,
or wanders aimlessly, refusing to spill
his seed upon this earth's
woman as long as we kill each other:
this is the way gay men will
to will no child to this world,
this is our price manhood, what price
is your manhood, Richard Milhous Nixon?
...the Sebastians of Rome died for
such liberty, & we collide once more
with quack doctors of church & state
who say we are ill, who have made
castrati of us choir boys
for too many centuries and we
no longer sing in that choir

...
the voice of the dream where you sleep
everynight with a Vietnamese woman
in your arms, bloody & dying,
you can no longer hear her voice;
this outside voice has collected
this telegram tonight to send to you
from the streets of the crouched
who stalk without prey, night or day,
those who touch and know the meaning
of touch that which you are no longer
doing to the woman in your dream
for you have dropped her and
are running thru the fields
toward the whore's house in Saigon
to get some junk for your dying buddy

...
we love in a larger body than
you can perceive, if only all the blood
in my body would voluntarily flow
out of my body to end the war
(O if that is *all* it would take)

the will to leave my blood
is that strong. I will you my blood,
Richard Nixon. Drink, be happy...
an artist is always an instrument
of peace and of force
and the 90,000 Americans
in Cambodia would hear
if you would unplug the media
as would Europe who knows nothing
of America's Left
and Right Underground

...
whereas the ghosts of men
who were herded like animals
several hundred of them,
into trains in Northern Australia
just before DDay and VDay have visited
me honorably although
they were dishonorably discharged
and herded home: HOMOSEXUAL,
and they speak thru me
PENTAGON SECRET...

...
since before the time of Jonathan
and David, homosexuality
has been with most cultures &
has been several ways of life
and life-forces & we, as higher
intellects, must now recognize
the validity of that life
in subject matter and in energy
of evolutionary importance
...
(if according to the processes
of true democracy that majority rules
then Russia and the United States
must equilaterally agree
that the logic of the century
is Chinese.

The religious wars
still with us: Catholic & Buddhist
in Vietnam. Protestant & Catholic
in Ireland. Judaism & Islamic
in Middle-east.)

...keep
the sex-change propoganda and
the hormone shots & shock treatments
because we don't want them.

Each master
race has found us among their race
and felled us with hate, torture
and laws, being election year,
have already been felt
thruout the states and
this is your long battle to hate
and you archtypally continue
that tradition where in democracy
in the states every election year,
we *feel* but never hear,
the voice of the torture vice,
"Get the queers..."

...
Paul Mariah
August 1971
San Francisco

Who Are the

By KENNETH PITCHFORD

Who are the Flaming Faggots? In our first incarnation, we were a small consciousness-raising group of revolutionary male homosexuals, some of whom had helped found New York Gay Liberation. Our earliest discussions resulted in the thinking reflected in an article "Hey Man" by Steve Dansky, calling for collective struggle against all forms of sexism on the part of men in GLF; we also saw quite early the need to set our consciousness-raising in the context of our being a Lower East Side revolutionary male homosexual action collective.

From the first, we understood that the Gay Activist Alliance had moved rightward in pressing for homosexual reforms within the system. But we also became increasingly discontent with the way NYGLF made itself subservient to the demands of leftist groups, no matter how anti-homosexual, and ended up caring far less about fighting homosexual oppression than fighting for other causes. This disillusion with NYGLF reached its climax during the first Christopher Street Gay Liberation week in 1970 when true homosexualists within GLF (including Flaming Faggots) confronted the Venceremos Brigade for ripping off a gay benefit—only to find other GLF men chose to cling to their straight-male-left identification and pass for straight, rather than join us in our protest. Out of this conflict, our poem-manifesto "The Flaming Faggots" was born, written by me, but transmuted through criticism within the group into a document we chose to represent our politics.

Another important element—indeed, the most important element—of our politics is our insistence that there can be no liberation for male homosexuals at the expense of women, as was the case in ancient Greece. More than that, our very struggle for liberation as oppressed faggots cannot proceed in any way oppressive to women. This means making the struggle to combat our own male supremacy a priority in our work. When "gay men" try to ignore the necessity of this effort, their manner of bonding, as in GAA, all too easily resembles a fraternity domination-submission trip, with cookie-pattern muscle boys denying their own oppression by passing when convenient and continuing to abhor everything "feminine" and "effeminate." The way sexism oppresses *both* women and male homosexuals should be clear; male homosexuals cannot be revolutionary about their oppression, however, if they cling to their male supremacist privileges as males and avoid The Horrible Truth: The effeminate in us is both the source of our oppression and the clue to our liberation.

Nor is this merely a matter of body-type (a typically straight-male fixation)—effeminacy appears in men as the

willingness to cooperate rather than compete, as the preferring of collectivity to individualism, personal solution, or privatism, and as the valuing of what is tender and gentle in men, what is delicate, sweet, lyrical, affectionate, considerate, aesthetic. The dominative straight man and the dominative male homosexual both emphasize ripping off their own needs at the expense of others. Both are one-track-minded, self-preoccupied, goal-oriented toward orgasm or aggrandizement—rather than polymorphous, outgoing, open-ended, process-oriented toward sharing and giving without first striking bargains about "results." Both bristle with excitement at the chance for competition, at the evaluation of themselves and others in terms of superficial measurements: who has the biggest muscles, the loudest mouth, the most intimidating manner, the largest penis, the most of this, the greatest that.

The Flaming Faggots became hated very early in their existence by those male-supremacist homosexuals who refused to struggle with these criticisms. During a Speak Bitterness confrontation with an editor of *Gay Sunshine*, we asked him why the art in that sexist newspaper depicted only males with huge penises; were only such males worthy of liberation? Had he thought how insulting this ranking and measuring process was to those who, on one score or another, did not "measure up"? Women have said before us that beauty standards were oppressive. We realized in these kinds of confrontations that masculinist standards not only oppressed us, but had to be eliminated from our own psyches, too, just as we had to expose "bisexuality" for the political fraud it is, as another gambit of the straight male to continue toying with us and keeping us in our place. Homosexuality, for us, is the capacity to love another man and is, as such, in itself a complete and valid way to human fulfillment; bisexuality is a "better-than-you" put-down, a competition for measurement, a new wrinkle to preserve straight male power and avoid choice or commitment, an extension of objectified sex by the dominative male to include the use of faggots as servicing instruments in the same way he has used women. As we rejected one form of masculinism after another, we found that we *had* to begin to love homosexual brothers not in accordance with all of those oppressive values we had naively accepted from our male-supremacist culture, but in accordance with the beauty of a person's willingness to struggle, to share his suffering with us, to comfort another suffering brother, to dedicate himself to our collective liberation.



In emphasizing the task of de-manning ourselves and other men, however, we tried to avoid two mistakes. First, by insisting on our right to be gentle, we did not and do not mean to imply that we are not committed to fighting our oppression in a militant way. Second, to say that the effeminate in us is associated with the sweet and lyrical can in no way be accepted as a stereotype of women's roles and capacities. Women themselves are shattering stereotypes that consign them to submissive roles, to feeling but not thinking. Whatever we do, we are determined *not* to strengthen sexist stereotypes or make their overthrow more difficult. Consequently, it is as *non-men* that we insist on our rights to qualities previously denied to us by our culture, and *not* as imitation women. To put it another way, just as The Flaming Faggots criticized the unquestionably oppressive refusal of GAA and GLF men to relinquish their male-domination trip, we also criticized male homosexuals whose oppression had forced them into a submission trip that is parodistic of women and is based on stereotyped women's roles, fashions, and mannerisms. We have the right to feel and be beautiful—without *having* to put down women. No revolutionary white person goes around pretending to be Stepin Fetchit as though this could somehow be justified as anything other than an unspeakable offense to all black people. Similarly, no revolutionary male homosexual has the right to call himself or other genital males "she" or parody women or their oppression. Period. That goes for Holly Woodlawn. That goes for the Cockettes and their queer-baiting, woman-hating bisexual-ity and androgyny. For the first time in history, we faggots have a chance to take our rightful place in a revolution against sexism, in the anti-gender revolution now underway, but not if we refuse at the outset to create revolutionary changes within ourselves.

For the record, male homosexuals previously oppressed as "submissives" were far more willing to struggle over their (and our) anti-women attitudes than "dominatives." Which

is not to say that "doms" have not been oppressed; it is only to say that when they refuse to struggle they have chosen the side of the oppressor—as collaborators—rather than that of their oppressed brothers. The Flaming Faggots, for instance, argued that the very terms "butch" and "femme" were extremely offensive and degrading both to homosexual men and to all women. After listening to and discussing this argument, a brother group called Femmes Against Sexism dropped that name in a spirit of revolutionary struggle. In contrast, *Gay Sunshine* continues to publish with an intensified male-supremacist "dom" consciousness, purveying the same old sexism in a way designed to drive the non-passing "sub" out of the movement, thereby destroying Gay Liberation as a revolutionary force. In a recent issue, Allen Young accuses us anti-masculinists of doing damage to the gay movement. Frankly, either the gay movement must stop oppressing women and the majority of male homosexuals, or it richly deserves its own self-destruction.

Besides the sub-dom contradiction (as we came to call it, simply to avoid offensive terminology), one other question kept recurring as a subject for discussion. Most members of Double-F (as we called ourselves because of a Janus-faced double F that was our symbol) individually felt that the very word "gay" trivialized homosexuals. We noticed how women in Daughters of Bilitis and those splitting from GLF (because of its anti-womanism) were both reaffirming their right to the single proud word, Lesbian, to describe themselves, even though this had once been used abusively against them. We disliked the two-word phrase "gay men;" it made clowns of us. And "male homosexual" was hard to keep saying over and over. Then we learned that the word "faggot" originated from our persecution in the Middle Ages: when a woman was to be burned as a witch, men accused of homosexuality were bound together in bundles, mixed in with bundles of kindling wood (faggots) at the feet of the witch, and set on fire "to kindle a flame foul enough for a witch to burn in." So the enemy has known all along the danger in strong women and gentle men, has known that both present the same threat to masculine domination. That's why we embraced "faggot" as *our* one word description, complete with a piece of our buried history unearthed, and accepted it positively as a tool to cut through our last ties to "passing"—those of us who were in the privileged position of having such an option. We called ourselves faggots in the name of Jacques DeMolay, in the name of Bernard de Vado, tortured by fire applied to the soles of the feet to such an extent that a few days



afterwards the bones of his heels dropped out, in the name of nineteen brothers from Perigord tortured and starved for six months running, in the name of ten thousand Knights Templar burned at the stake for the crime of homosexuality, in the name of all nameless brothers still tortured in mental hospitals and in psychiatrists' offices by aversion therapy, shock treatment, apomorphine, and succinylcholine. We *are* flaming—with the fire of final revolution. We are not ashamed of being faggots. We are proud.

In terms of organization, we developed a number of techniques to build collectivity and egalitarianism. We used the disc system for political discussions; each starts with a certain number of discs; each pays out one for every statement other than "yes" or "no" or "can't hear;" one must remain silent after spending all his discs until everyone else has spent his: this was an attempt, borrowed from The Feminists, to equalize over-talkers and under-talkers. Two over-talkers, in parti-

cular, often had to wait for long periods while others discovered *they* had room in which to develop their own thoughts in their own way. We also used the Lot System for equalizing shit-work. Our list of consciousness-raising topics grew into four lists of about fifty topics each: one relating to our homosexual oppression; one relating to our anti-woman feelings; one interrelating our homosexual oppression with our racism; and one exploring the relations between homosexuality and class. We also developed a two-meeting week that alternated between consciousness-raising and political work. The first meeting-night was set aside to build Unity in the group by sharing our suffering; the second night, later in the week, was used for Struggle by means of criticism and self-criticism. Their rhythm of Unity-Struggle-Unity was meant to sustain us as we began to face outwards as an action-oriented tactical squad.

Tactical practice usually took place after Struggle meetings; the tactical leader was chosen by lot for each "run;" each had a number so that the tac leader could call formations for walking, running through the streets, for patrolling a cruising area where police or jocks harassed homosexuals (park, dock, etc.), and for moving through a demonstration. As it happened, all of this practice made us street-seasoned in time to take part, during the late summer of that year, in an urban riot of lesbians and faggots—in which we functioned with skill and efficiency.

More and more, we became an action group. We stood with the last occupiers of NYU's Weinstein Hall (an action protesting that institution's anti-homosexual bigotry) when the GLF masculinists fled in the face of impending police violence. We helped plan and took part in the disruption of an anti-homosexual play at the Gate Theater; Clive Barnes, the drama critic of the NY Times, lauded the point of our protest and panned the play. And we were among those disrupting a conference of anti-homosexual (male) psychiatrists at Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. At the second Christopher Street parade (by which time we were the oldest small group functioning in the New York Gay movement), we declared war on the sexism of the Warhol movie industry in a leaflet attacking his film, *Pigs*—their word for us. Interestingly, the anger generated by merely supplying the homosexual community with this information was enough to prevent (or at least postpone) the film's release and national distribution. Another leaflet called for the creation of a national anti-male-supremacist network of small groups of faggots.

That has now begun to happen. Quite independently of us, a group known as The Effeminist began to publish a newspaper in Berkeley, with politics similar to ours. There is also a new Bay Area Flaming Faggots, a newly-formed New York group, and other groups now existing or threatening to come into existence (at last report) in places as remote as Seattle, Washington, and Sarasota, Florida. Happily, the title of The Effeminist newspaper itself suggests a new term to describe this emerging politics of anti-masculinism, whatever its origin, that can and must completely alter the nature of our struggle. The politics I am speaking of is emerging to the left of the Gay Liberation Movement entirely and can only be called Revolutionary Effeminism. It is part of a gathering force that has already begun to change the world.

Recently, as this new politics has started making itself visible in a dozen different places, spontaneously or synergistically, The Flaming Faggots themselves are in flux. I heard from one of our original members that he was preparing a substantial bibliography of material pertinent to homosexual oppression. I myself have been travelling around the country, speaking to effeminists and faggots, visiting their consciousness groups or helping to form them, struggling with them in criticism and self-criticism sessions, and confronting the oppressor with them. At present, I am in Sarasota at New College, a hoopla pseudo-experimental Hollywood haven designed to apathize students with repressive tolerance as though it were the liberation they really hungered for instead. But effeminist students, rejecting this plastic oppression, have presented the administration with a list of demands concerning their right to sexual self-determination, and have thus ripped off the liberal mask that hides bigotry, assaults, police harassment, persecution, and expulsion merely for being overtly homosexual. A nationally noted critic, Benjamin DeMott, triggered our anger by calling us "screaming fags" when we asked him about the possibility of an effeminist studies program.

Amazingly enough, a few straight effeminists came forward, willing to accept the leadership of faggots, willing to be identified as faggots, but also willing to work with us for our demands by any effective means. Gay masculinists (always willing to be taken as straight) have accused The Flaming Faggots and effeminists in general of categorically hating straight men and thus being separatists, whatever that bullshit means. To such a charge, what better answer could we make?

Faced with the administration's rejection of our demands, a struggle promising further confrontations has begun that encouragingly enough the New College president himself has said could destroy the institution, since conservative trustees could never tolerate or even understand the mere presence of unashamed effeminists on campus, much less an effeminist studies program, an effeminist community center etc. Previous GLF material had not succeeded in mobilizing these homosexual men; this new anti-masculinist consciousness did. Some for the first time felt that there was a movement which was actually talking about *them* and not some straight leftish he-man or muscle-building biker or queer-hating Jagger. We are on our way, fellow faggots and effeminists. There is no turning back. We will have our humanity this time, or humanity itself will perish.

LETTERS: A Family Portrait

By CHRIS DOUGLASS

DEAR GEOFF,

I told you last time we talked over the phone that I was thinking about doing an article on gay brothers. I don't know exactly what it is that is unique about gay brothers that has any impact on gay liberation as a political/personal movement. I don't know if that is important except for the purpose of writing this article. For that matter, why did the thought even pop into my head. What is it that I wanted to say. That is, by writing this article, what feelings did I have that I wanted to get in touch with. I'm not going to write about gay brothers. I'm writing this to you.

You are my brother. That is I grew up with you.

*You are my brother. That is, we are involved
in the same struggle.*

*How do I deal with that. How do we deal with that.
Here are some feelings I want to get in touch with.*

I think you have felt, because you are older perhaps, that you are responsible for my being gay. Have we, have I ever talked about this? I know I've said, "Of course you're not" but now I feel differently. Yes, you are responsible to a large extent for my being gay. Can I ever express the love I have for you for allowing it.

When I first heard Mom and Dad talking about their eldest son, when you first told them you were gay, you were very young, not more than 12 or 13, and because of what that meant at the time you felt you should see a shrink. Precocious. And thanks be that our parents were scared enough about shrinks on one hand not to send you, on the other to know what anguish you went through when they just wouldn't listen to your feelings. They were scared, and knew that made you even more anxious, guilty and . . .

AT THE TIME, I was the proverbial little brother who went through his older brother's desk drawers; letters, sketch pad and all. But I think I did so with a relentlessness that even you may not have realized.

And what was the reason. We know that children, even before they know what the word homosexual is, know what their feelings are. Communication between us was distant. And was that because you were so threatened by my insistent probing, and what it meant. How it reminded you of your own predicament. If it had an adverse effect on you, I think it had for the most part a good effect on me. I found the male nude drawings in your sketch pad, the magazines you were able to muster up the courage to buy. Even the most innocent magazines become a terror something to be kept hidden away from parents. But little brothers find, and I found them. I found your diaries, journals that described in circumspect detail the terror of your discovery about yourself. You knew by then the word, homosexual, and all the hate that went with it. I didn't know the word. I knew my brother.

Thinking back on some of the things you wrote in your

journals, I know that they were so obscure that only, THIS IS IMPORTANT, only another person with the same emerging feelings could understand what lay behind the words. I too was homosexual and so I could read between the lines.

When you realized you were gay, you were alone. I didn't give you support. When I probed through your private world for the answer of what it was that set you apart, I found the feelings. And found that those feelings were mine. My frantic searches through your letters, books and all were what kept me from being alone. When I began to feel those first feelings of love and physical longing for another man, and knew that all of society told me that was wrong and perverted, I was not alone. I knew that another person felt the same way. I knew it clear and beautiful and plain, that my brother felt the same way.

I could not add to the lack of communication we already had at that age by admitting how I had invaded your privacy. And every time I felt for another man it brought me less pain than joy. First of all, it brought into my life a commonality with you which I never had. And secondly, it helped me to believe that what I was feeling was not wrong. How could it be. Geoff felt the same things.

A FEW YEARS LATER. Remember you came home from your first term at college for a visit. I was in high school. And that summer had fallen in love with a boy that lived a couple of hundred miles away. We kept up correspondence. I heard from him about once a week. And I carefully tore up his letters into what seemed a thousand pieces and buried them in the garbage (remember guilt, fear of discovery. He was thrown out of his house when his parents found one of my letters).

You and I went for a walk. Both of us to have a cigarette. We had gone a few blocks when you pulled the letter I had received the day before from Tom out of your wallet. It was carefully pasted together, at least a hundred pieces of it. Two pages. My first reaction was, my god what feat. And then I was angry and hurt that you had spied on me. Then I remembered my own past intrusions on your privacy. . . and I remembered why it was necessary. You tried very hard to show me that you weren't shocked or angry by the discovery of the love letter. I have still in my mind the image of your smile and of my smile as we looked at each other and "admitted" our own common feelings.

How it was. The first time. We were brothers. We could share. And it was the elimination of our "aloneness." You left to go back to school. All too soon. And you became to me more than ever a hero. Someone without faults. And that meant that I again overlooked any of your pain. And only kept grasping at that commonness within us. I made you into a cult, and reduced you as a person because of it. Perhaps that is how I handled my own guilt.

When GLF was starting. When you and I talked about some of the things we both went through in our consciousness raising cells, I can remember telling you that I didn't feel as much self-hate as you said you had gotten in

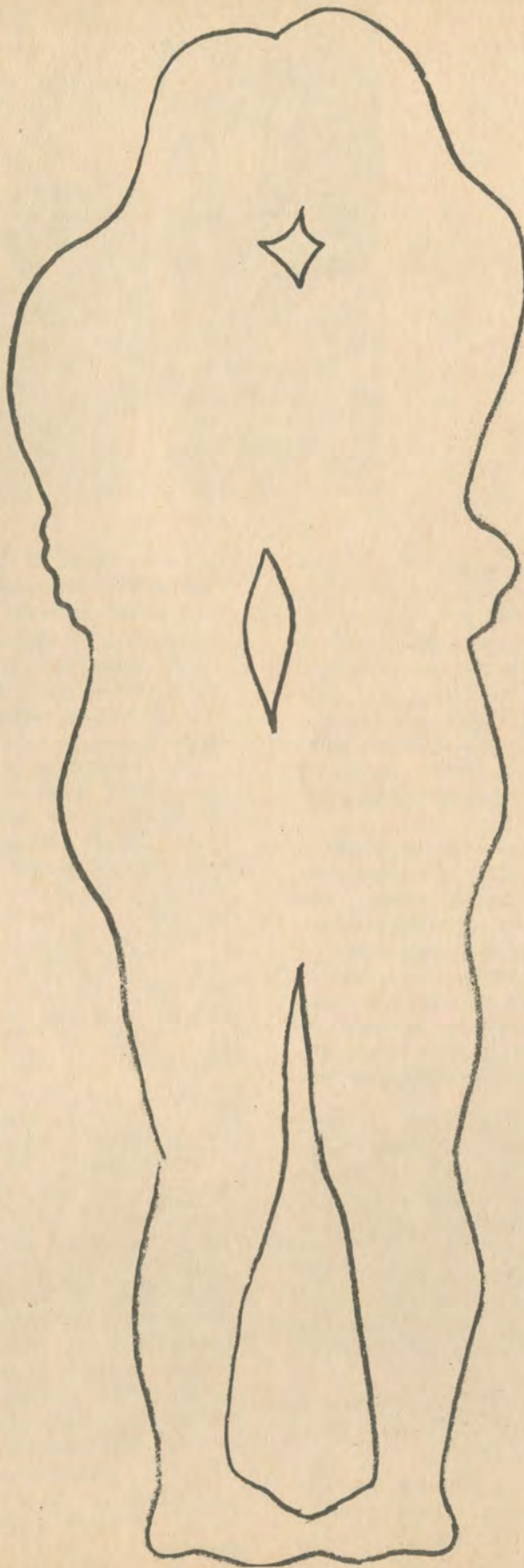
touch with. That I didn't feel as guilty. This made you angry. It made you feel alone again. I know now that it wasn't that I felt less guilty, it was simply that you had made it easier for me to deal with my guilt.

IT WASN'T UNTIL YOU CAME TO D.C. When we had both dropped out of college. We shared an apartment for awhile. We talked alot. I started seeing you as a person more and less as "older brother hero."

And then the weekend we both went to the first Christopher Street March. Could anyone have been so lucky. To march down the straight streets of New York with my brother, meeting some people from D.C. there. Talking. Being on my own. Being with you. Walking to someone's apartment with about six other people, we all held hands in new brotherhood. (I realized that what the other people were feeling was indeed, a brotherhood. And I stuck close to you.) When people started holding hands, I was standing next to you. Flattered for an explanation. For the first time we touched each other as gay brothers.

It is still hard for us to express physical love for one another. Ain't it hard enough being gay, without the incest crap hanging around. I know friends are always asking have we ever made love. . .and how it became imperative for us to explain that, no. . .never. Not touched.

AND THEN YOU LEFT FOR SAN FRANCISCO. A get together with all our friends. Our gay brothers. And I felt left out. Michael and Tim hugged and kissed you. And everyone said good-bye and touched and left. I



had repressed, as usual, feelings of what it would be like not to be with you. And I left before other people. You came outside with me. We are so clumsy with each other. I said good-bye. . .and then terrified moved to embrace you. We held each other for the first goddamn time. I'd said I love you brother. I love you.

You are as far away now. We talk on the phone. Write letters. You talk about a new dress you've bought. I talk about wearing some lipstick to the movies the other night. We talk about other things. I told you the other night about "breaking up" with someone. Feeling so "unliberated." So tied to so many person to person hangups. Feel caught in the same patterns.

And when I sat down to write this tonight I was thinking. . .brother, for now you are the only gay man I've had a lasting relationship with.

I'm not laying more shit on your head. I don't want to be your lover. I am your lover. That is what I'm writing. What does being in love with someone mean. Not that I can get it together to go to bed with you.

I am your lover. That means I love you more and more as a gay man. As a person. . .who also happens to be my brother. Perhaps what our struggle as brothers in gay liberation has done is to eliminate, or free us, from each other as family. It means so many things. We can talk about that.

For this article . . . **THERE IS MORE**, so much more, than coming out . . . brothers.

*Love,
Chris*

Gays on Campus

By WARREN BLUMENFELD

When I entered college a few years ago, I felt a sense of joy at finding what I considered a more open-minded atmosphere than that in high school. In college, for the first time, I joined with other people to demonstrate our open opposition to the war in Vietnam; now I felt the joy of joining with my Black and Chicano sisters and brothers in our common struggle against housing discrimination around campus by the local slumlords; now I was able to voice my disgust at the state of ecology by helping to plan workshops during specified ecology teach-ins held around campus.

All of these activities gave me a greater sense of worth, in that now I felt free to act upon many of my previously held ideals. Something was still missing though. There remained within me a great unescapable void because I was a homosexual on a straight American college campus. I knew the time was drawing near for me to make a decision of either admitting my homosexuality to myself and others, or else remaining in my suppressed state as I had done ever since I could remember. I continually asked myself why there were no openly Gay people or Gay organizations on campus.

Then one day in the campus newspaper, I saw a headline, in big bold letters, "Gay Liberation Front Denied Campus Recognition." The article went on to say that the chancellor of the California State College system had denied recognition of the campus chapter of the Gay Liberation Front on the premises that:

1. "... the effect of recognition by the college of Gay Liberation Front could conceivably be to endorse, or to promote homosexual behavior, to attract homosexuals to the campus, and to expose minors to homosexual advocacy and practices; and
2. "... belief that the proposed Front created too great a risk for students— a risk which might lead students to engage in illegal homosexual behavior."

Recovering from my initial disgust and outrage over such absurd reasoning, I decided to "come out of my closet." I soon joined an encounter group in the college counseling center, that gave me the support I needed to start handling

my homosexuality in a constructive and creative way. Soon I gained the needed courage to contact the coordinator of the local Gay liberation group, and became involved in Gay activities and Gay sensitivity groups.

The void is finally being filled because now I have found people who are proud of their Gayness—people who are no longer putting up with the oppressive conditions which our society imposes on us.

The inception of the first Gay student campus group back in 1968 at Columbia University in New York sparked the growth of the new Gay student movement in this country. At the present time, there exist over 150 Gay student groups located on college and university campuses throughout the United States. Although the Gay student movement is a nationwide movement, it has different meanings and is called different names depending on its location or its political, social, or moral philosophies. Some examples are the Gay Liberation Front at Rocky Mountain College, in Billings, Montana, "HOPS" (Homophiles of Penn. State), and FREE (GLF at the University of Minnesota). Some other student groups also go by the name of the Gay Activists Alliance, the Student Homophile League, the Radicalesbians, or names which have special significance to the individual group.

As the names of the groups vary, to an extent, so do their purposes and their structures. Some groups may concentrate their major emphasis on the political aspect of the Gay movement while others concern themselves with bringing the Gay student community together for social gatherings. In essence, what all the groups are saying is that they demand the same rights and privileges that non-gay people enjoy on and off college campuses; they also demand the right to organize themselves to unite in a common effort against their common oppression. Although the organic structure of each group varies from campus to campus, many similarities do exist. For the most part, there exist either elected or volunteer officers or coordinators who facilitate activities and serve as group spokespeople. Usually the various organizations are divided up into small committees or collectives composed of volunteers. Committees common to many groups provide social and cultural



activity planning, coordinate speakers bureaus, provide publicity sometimes through regular newsletters, and plan political actions.

The basic structure of each group depends on the needs of the individuals which comprise the membership. As the needs of each group vary, so do the activities of different groups. Within the last year, many exciting and creative activities and publications have come forth throughout the nation. It was the Gay student groups which were instrumental in organizing regional and national conferences on homosexuality at Rutgers University in New Jersey, at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, at the University of Texas in Austin, at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, and at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. At these conferences, the local Gay campus groups organized workshops and panels dealing with the struggles and goals of Gay people on and off campus. These workshops, panel discussions and Gay rap groups were organized for the delegates to supply them with new ideas and insights to take back to their campuses.

Aside from these regional and national Gay conferences, individual Gay campus groups have expanded their activities and projects this past year; a large number of groups have organized Gay consciousness-raising groups for their members as well as for non-Gay students on campus. These groups are generally referred to as "consciousness-raising," rather than, say, encounter groups or therapy groups, in order to get over the stigma of the oppressive Freudian/psychoanalytical therapy situation. The consciousness-raising groups usually do not have a "leader" or "trained" psychotherapist and are based solely on the input of each individual in the group.

While Gay consciousness-raising is one expression common to large numbers of Gay campus groups, there is also a trend underway, in which Gays have formed communes and living centers where Gay men and gay women live together under one roof for the purpose of developing a lifestyle which they have chosen on their own.

Another phenomenon which is relatively recent to the

college scene but which is growing gradually is the Gay campus coffeehouse. One in particular is the Gay coffeehouse at the University of Maryland in College Park called, of all things, "The Closet Door."

On entering, one is struck by the casual relaxed atmosphere which surrounds the place. The lights are soft and the mellow voices of Judy Collins and James Taylor often fill the air. Maybe fifty or so men and women pour Cokes and coffee and eat cookies and potato chips, for a while at least shutting off the oppressive straight world outside. Coffeehouses also provide good places for Gay people under twenty-one years of age to get together.

Another place where Gay people get together in a non-hurried and upfront atmosphere is at "Gay House," run by the Gay Liberation Front chapter at the University of Minnesota. This house is, in essence, a three-story Gay community center funded by a private foundation and offers counseling and other services to the student and entire Gay community of the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Other Gay community centers are either already in existence or are being planned for other cities across the country.

Gay consciousness is reaching campuses even where no organized group exists. One example of how a single Gay person can raise the issue of homosexuality effectively comes from Mary Washington College, a women's college in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where a previously undeclared Gay editor of the campus newspaper "came out" with an issue of the paper devoted entirely to the topic of homosexuality and students' attitudes toward it. It was the editor's position that Gay people on her campus were discriminated against whether it be in the dormitories or in the classroom. She mentioned specifically that the attitudes of the other women toward homosexuality made it extremely difficult for an open Gay person to function on her campus. These attitudes were evident in a poll which she conducted among 222 students representing about ten percent of the Mary Washington College population. In the poll, it was discovered that more than three-quarters of those questioned believed that homosexuals are basically psychologically disturbed and more than one-fifth would make a personal

attempt to convert the person in question to a heterosexual way of life.

With the continued expansion of Gay student groups on campuses, many hurdles have been jumped, but at the same time this expansion has brought out many problems. Gay students at the University of Kansas, Sacramento State College and San Jose State College in California, Penn State, Florida State and at the University of Texas have been forbidden to organize into recognized campus organizations. The reasons given by the campus administrations for denying recognition were as vague and absurd as those given for denying such recognition on my campus in California.

Unfortunately, this absurd type of reasoning is not isolated in the relationship between campus administrations and Gay campus groups. In the case of Sacramento State College, the students decided that they would not be intimidated and sued the chancellor of the State College system in Sacramento County's Superior Court. In this case, the Gay Liberation Front chapter, represented by the student government, won the suit which forced the college to recognize the Gay Liberation Front as a student organization. The court upheld the Associated Students' contention that "... to justify suppression of free speech there must be reasonable grounds to fear that serious evil will result if free speech is practiced; there must be reasonable ground to believe that the danger apprehended is imminent."

With this precedent, other Gay groups on campuses are waging battles against similar oppression. Recently, one of the "Chicago 7" defense lawyers, William Kuntzler, agreed to represent the Gay students at the University of Kansas campus in their fight to get campus recognition. At other campuses, although authorities have allowed recognition of Gay organizations, these organizations have been subjected to official harassment in order to prevent them from educating Gays and non-Gays of their problems.

A recent example of this occurred at the University of Maryland when the university regents denied a funding request, amounting to \$250, to the University's Student Homophile Association. This money was to be used for the purpose of educating the campus to gay issues by providing speakers, cultural events, and open-house meetings for the student population. As a recognized campus group, they should have been entitled to the funding—as stated in the university charter. After the regents' decision to deny the funds, many SHA members, the student body president, and Frank Kameny (founder of Washington's Mattachine Society and defeated candidate for D.C. delegate to Congress) went to Baltimore where they confronted the regents at an open meeting. They claimed the regents' decision had been based simply on the regents' "fears stemming out of their own sexual hangups and misconceptions." Despite their effort, the Maryland SHA's fund request was voted down at the Baltimore meeting; the case has since been taken to the courts where the Sacramento decision may be entered as legal precedent enough to overturn the Maryland regents' decision.

Not every Gay campus group is fortunate to have the backing of its student government in confronting campus officials. This lack of sensitivity was the case as student government officials listened with deaf ears to the requests for support after the state college system chancellor denied the GLF group at San Jose State campus recognition.

When discussing the existing trend in many Gay student groups, it has been my observation that in various instances Gay women and Third World people have withdrawn their support. There may be many reasons for this, but that which is strongest is that they will not tolerate the chauvinistic and racist attitudes of the white Gay males in the groups. In many cases, women and Third World people have formed their own Gay groups. Some examples are the Gay Women's Activist Alliance in Washington, D.C., the Radicalesbians in San Jose, Calif., and the Women's Gay Liberation Front in New York and Boston.

It seems that although some of the major goals of the Gay movement are to break down sexual roles, to smash male chauvinism, and to end racist attitudes, we as Gay men have an extremely difficult time overcoming our own sexism and racism. The fact remains that we also were socialized as men in a society which is based on a sexist and racist doctrine manifesting itself through competition among people for power. As Gay men, we many times are aware of the problems, but overcoming this situation is extremely difficult. We are coming to an awareness of how we also oppress women and Third World people; a major part of the struggle we must confront is not only our liberation as Gay men but also liberating ourselves from the oppression we many times put down on others.

These internal problems presently occurring within some Gay student groups are starting to be dealt with, even though they have an enormous way to go before being resolved. These, like other struggles which the Gay movement is presently confronting, are by no means insurmountable. There is, at present, an organization which is just getting started for the purpose of acting as a national clearinghouse for Gay student groups and a center for innovation in the area of developing Gay projects and activities on campuses across the country. It will also aid Gay high school students in similar areas.

This new organization, the National Gay Student Center, is coming out of the National Student Association, headquartered in Washington. The Gay Student Center is the result of a mandate that was presented and adopted at a national NSA congress held in Colorado. That mandate called for establishment of a gay center "staffed by Gay people who were chosen by Gay people and responsible to Gay people on campuses throughout the nation."

At the present time, the center has proposed seven major areas of concern in aiding campus groups: establishing an information and resource library, including videotapes; establishing a Gay speakers bureau; establishing an information exchange through a nationally-distributed newsletter; developing Gay course outlines for possible implementation on high school and college campuses and at free universities; establishing Gay legal rights and providing legal assistance; establishing a Gay reprint series; and establishing a national Gay student conference where campus representatives can discuss matters concerning Gay student groups.

The hopes for the establishment of a Gay student group on a national level help to confirm and validate the existence of the Gay student movement, and that this relatively new movement is gaining a firmer footing day by day. Being a gay student in today's educational institutions can still be a very alienating and oppressive position to be in. However, due to the growth and continuance of the Gay student movement, Gay students can now gain the needed support from one another to fight this oppression.



On Being Black, Gay, and in Prison:

'There is no humanity'

an interview with ORTEZ ALDERSON

Ortez: My name is Ortez Alderson. I was recently released from Ashland Kentucky's Federal Youth Center where I was serving time for the destruction of government property. This crime consisted of destroying draft files. [Three others] and I were arrested on July 29, 1970, for the crime— or so they said it was . . .one has their doubts—of supposedly ripping off the Pontiac, Illinois, Draft Board. What I'm trying to relate is the experience of how it was for me as a black and and as a gay man to be within the jail system of America. First I'm going to talk about Peoria County Jail where I was held for a period of three months.

To understand Peoria, one must understand that there was nothing but bars there and it was rather sort of dead. The feeling if anything was that one was locked up like a caged animal. The only outlet that I had and that most of the prisoners had was reading, playing cards, and visits twice a week, visits where you were not allowed to hold or to touch whoever visited you, whoever cared enough to come that long way just to see you. When I was there, I was the only black on the tier for a long time. The rest of the people seemed to be poor whites from around that area and they also seemed to be—or were—very racist; something I put up with at the time. There were quite a few hangups going around at that time about whether or not I was actually gay. I of course am . . . and very proud of it. And then being a black man, too, everyone was rather afraid to try and hassle me or to try to do anything with me. I guess this had something to do with that All-American black male myth.

Question: *Later, you were sent to Ashland, Kentucky. What was it like there and did you have any contact with other gay prisoners?*

Ortez: Yes. Craig. He was a good friend of mine in jail and my closest brother and he was also gay. We sat down and talked about the gay's situation in jail—you know, hassles and stuff—and how we could stop it. The confrontation came on Gay Pride Day, June 28th, because we wanted to have a Gay Day celebration in prison. The prison officials said we could not have this celebration . . . At this point, we got up a petition attacking the institution's discrimination against homosexuals. Craig, Green, Davis, and myself were immediately arrested by the goon squad and put in the hole. Craig was Puerto Rican, Green was Black, and Davis was a full-blooded Sioux Indian.

Question: *Were there other confrontations around gay issues?*

Ortez: There were numerous confrontations, and there were times the confrontations happened just suddenly.

Sometimes we were in the yard and all of us would be together and the guards would say 'Huh uh, split up,' and we would say no. Then they would say 'Break up. We don't want all you folks together' and again we would say no. There were numerous confrontations. Then again, there were times when we would feel very secure and we would go and do some things. For example, there was rules like no kissing, no holding hands, none of that stuff; and we'd say the hell with it and we would go down there and kiss. There were numerous confrontations like these as well as major ones.

Question: *From your own observations, what is it like for gay people in prison to "come out"?*

Ortez: I talked with quite a few people who would not "come out" publicly—in other words, when the other inmates were around. They would not have anything to do with our groups. But they would come to me privately and say: 'Look, Ortez, I want to join the group.' The problem in jail is that once you are openly gay literally you get ripped off. It's going to be a trying period. A lot of people are scared. By staying "closeted" you can have sex with one or two guys you know will keep it a secret. That way very few people will know. The "closeted" gays are very repressed and very scared human beings. To them, it's always the thing 'if I say the wrong word or if I do the wrong things, will someone think I'm gay and then what will follow from that?'

Question: *It seems that a lot of hostility comes from the straight prisoners and guards. Would you comment on this?*

Ortez: It's the "nigger" system and by the "nigger" system I mean there is always something to call lower than you. The guards tell the prisoners that gays are lower than them and thus they can oppress the gays without the guards or the system taking any action; they pit one oppressed group against another. They say: 'We are going to give you these other "niggers" (gays) to oppress to give you a feeling of power so that you won't act on your real powerlessness.'

Question: *Previous to your being in Peoria and Ashland Federal Youth Center, had you ever been in other prisons?*

Ortez: I've been to Cook County Jail in Chicago. I was there for five months right after the Martin Luther King riots in April 1968. What happened was I got arrested in downtown Chicago and charged with arson. I was only fifteen at the time and I didn't even know that Martin Luther King had been shot. I didn't know what the show was when I was walking down the street but I got thrown into jail with this ridiculous charge of arson. The folks there didn't know I was gay because I was so out of it. That was a

different experience than Ashland.

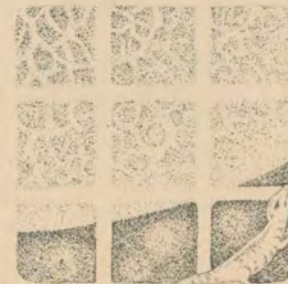
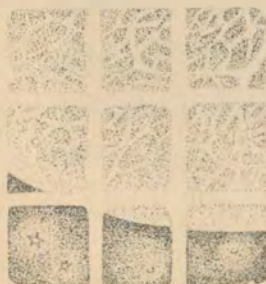
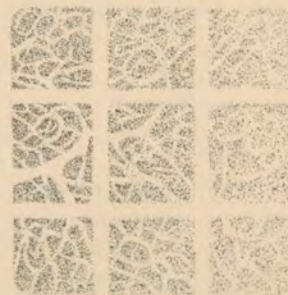
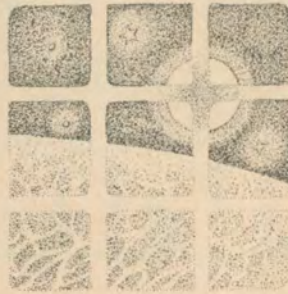
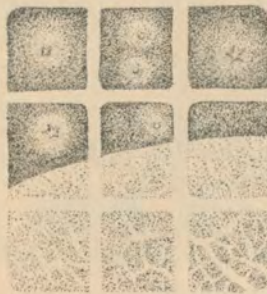
Question: *What is your impression about the way black people and gay people are treated in prisons?*

Ortez: Literally, when you talk about the way black people and gay people are treated, there isn't much difference. The only difference is that some of the black brothers would be so uptight because they couldn't get to the guards who were the ones really fucking them over and would pick on the gay people—but they are really both the same. There is no humanity for the prisoner, an animal who should be locked up. At any moment all these magnificent rights like going to a movie once a week or going out to the yard can be taken away for anything—and by that I don't mean a concrete act. The guard just might not feel good that day. Then there is also that brutality thing; when the guards actually do come in drunk, disgusted or whatever and they would pick on a black or gay person. They would beat them up and call the goon squad and the goon squad is known beautifully for *not* leaving any scars upon the body. At Joliet State Prison, gay people are segregated and the

goon squad takes pleasure with them . . . in other words, rapes them.

When I was in the hole for the June 28th thing, the warden came down to see me. He told me he would refuse to see a group of prisoners no matter who they were. When I asked him why, he said: 'Well, we cannot respond to rebellious prisoners.' And then I asked him, with guards outnumbered by the prisoners, whether or not psychologically one of their games was to keep the prisoners from rioting by playing off one group against another. This is why we thought they were discriminating against gay people. It was the guard's duty to sit there and make sure the prisoners overheard them calling us fags and queers and stuff like that. It was the guard's duty to spread anything bad they heard about any of us so it got around to the whole prison population. This was their duty.

I don't know . . . maybe it's because I'm black and gay, but I don't think there is very much difference between the way gays are treated and the way blacks are treated . . . except like I said: Gays get mistreated by everyone.



30

MR EUCLID / FATHER GEOMETRY

*"Hips lips fingertips
How high are the stars
Let me put you there
Hips lips fingertips."*

Conversation without
Mathematics is tragic
To his mind. The stock
Formulae inside his universe
Are cocks to grope. With.

Unable to respond behind bars
To his seven thousandth
"Good Morning"
He became Mr Euclid
of Menard, Father Geometry.

His pockets are laden
With pencils, a pencil
Pickerupper so he can
Write his freedom petition he
Has not found time to do.

His only friend is Pinky,
The black manic who puts
His penis in every hole
he finds, the fence, any
Tubular thing he plugs.

Euclid walks with his arms
Around Pinky when there are
No holes to fill or pockets
To depencil or cocks to grope;
They relate arm in arm

After supper lining up
To go back into lock-up
And another night's counting
Pencils, stars, holes
To plug up the single cell.

How many holes to fill?
How many good mornings before?
How high are minds like these
In innerplanetary travel?
How many marches til breakfast?

*"Hips lips fingertips
How high are the stars
Let me put you there
Hips lips fingertips."*

—Paul Mariah

ALWAYS WE WATCH THEM

They watch us always. You
And I
See their thugs drag

Blond Patrick out and down
The walk
Way to the shock room.

We know the routine. In
Weeks
Patrick will reappear

On the yard, in the circle
Walking
Walking off their casts

Muttering inconsequential
Nothings
Loudly, very loudly for all

His days to come. He is now
Among
Their number. His ears

Numbed to darkness, ache
Sput
Sputterings of electric circuit

Tangle his mind. He is engaged
To marry
The Electric Holding Company

—Paul Mariah

(Reprinted from *Paul Mariah: Personae non Gratae*)

FINDING OURSELVES



COMING OUT

By SWEET BASIL RAZZLE-DAZZLE

Before high school, "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" were far-in-the-future ideas for me; the labeling of classmates "lessie" or "queer" was something that seemed to be mainly picking up on the language of grown-ups. I knew I was different — that there was a horror to the competitiveness that was being trained into the boys and the passivity that was being forced on the girls. And my response to it, a natural, unanalyzed response — was something that could be recognized by the other kids on the football field, and called names, and laughed at. I was trying then to be me — but found out, grade by grade, that I was moving further away from what the school and my parents expected in a boy.

I liked to put on puppet and magic shows for neighbors and relatives, and really did enjoy playing sports, until it seemed that the main object was always to establish who was better, and I had to look down on others to ease my second-string feelings of inferiority. And the way I talked and laughed and wanted to cry sometimes all hit a good distance away from how young men were supposed to act. Maybe I could have changed — (it's such a hypothetical question) — but I knew and rejected then the sell-out that was being demanded. And I freaked at how others were selling out — last season's sideline sissies now carrying the ball in "slaughter" at lunchtime recess; seventh graders beginning the artificialities of the dating game in an effort to seem "bigger" — imitating the eighth graders who set the

values in the school. A hike through the woods stands out in memory: a friend and I had been with nature all afternoon, and at a rest stop were talking about how we would like to wear long hair and flowing clothes that only women are allowed to wear in this (then, pre-hippies, even pre-Beatles) society. But for him the sell-out had begun. College career-man now, those latent faggy thoughts have been long forgotten or denied, I'm afraid. Really afraid — because of the power he's bought with that denial — power he's going to use in trying to balance himself out now, by straightening out his kids and students.

But it was in Prep school, at swimming practices and on weekend trips, that I ran head-on into the full truth behind the names I'd been called. Because along with the other bullshit I'd rejected during the past years was an essential credo of how young men were supposed to relate to people: two opposite categories — girls to be called up and spoken for and fucked, and boys to be competed against. Unable to act out either script, I tried to develop friendships with people I saw every day in this all-male school. That was threat enough, in that it was covered up by the expected dating of girls from other schools, that I was wanting more of a closeness than could be scheduled into the rigid role-playing of day student/night stud. But as I began to understand my sexuality more as something I wanted to share with people I loved, I first saw the connection between "sissy" (defector from the male role) and "homo." Add to this the fact that much of my

emerging sexual identity had to do with the puberty values of developing beards and bodies, and because I was behind in this, I began to envy/glorify/desire those masculine symbols in others.

So I developed then, the "survival" technique of self-repression that I'm still trying to unlearn. Lunch conversations and gym changes and hitch-hiking jaunts had to be handled so that the delicate balance between friend and threat wouldn't topple me into a loneliness even more terrible by its public exposure. Just so I could be around the guys I liked, I attempted to talk in the right way — using the all-purpose "Fuck" in each sentence, picking up on the straight jive, and the always third-person basis for raps with friends. I wasn't good at it — it was, of course, a lie, and the sharper kids could tell. That's how I first heard of a blow-job — connecting it somehow to me years before I could figure what it meant — too afraid to ask. Desk-top graffiti behind-the-back slanders — that was my teenage homosexual education. And after-school stops in the porn shops, first by surprised discovery of their very existence, then by an every-couple-months magnetism that dragged me in, guilty and slinking past the "Over 21" sign, facing my bookbag's school insignia towards the wall for anonymity.

Hard to take those "Eat me" taunts, the oiled-body magazine models, or the image of the stereotype swishy faggot and identify with any — I concluded, and thought of myself for years, as unique in my situation. Sometimes a friend and I would talk about heterosexuality and I'd push my honesty far enough to be able to say that the whole imbalance of boy-girl dating really turned me off, and that the only kind of relationship I'd ever want to get into would be one with the potential of equality. But then I'd need some feedback, some reinforcement, to be able to really open up, and it never came — overtly. The vibes were often there: days in the country together, shows in New York, overnight stays, shared California dreamin' — the beginnings of the hippie myth got my hopes up. Those vibes and those hopes convinced me I was in love with my friend, and filled my fantasies with him. But there was too much for us to break through, and no sexual liberation mood in the air, no catalyst to really make anything happen between us. I cried when we graduated, seeing college life—geographical separation—robbing the energy we needed to get together.

It did. Long letters were exchanged, and hundreds of miles hitch-hiked to visit, but what didn't happen in day-to-day contact couldn't be so easily patched up. And the full pressure to be a man had hit my friend — Yale and future being much more easily handled with a chick by his side. Frustrated, I understood it then, but couldn't accept it — couldn't because it left such a gap that was so hard to fill with new people I'd just met after a severance of four years of familiar, if not understanding, faces. I had those same high school hang-ups, the same alone-in-the-world feeling, but now reset in a new context. I bounced through three colleges, emotionally drowning, caring little what happened in classroom simulations of life. Experimental education raps were the main thing in my head but had to be repressed the same way it had been in lunch conversations a few years earlier. Self-awareness as a lonely homosexual was becoming more distinct and primary, and the focus of my energy was becoming more directed to finding some solution.

The summer of the Stonewall riots I was on campus in Philadelphia, devising in my notebooks monograms for a guy in class I dug. In many ways he, and the closeted relationship I had to him, resembled that high school crush. I would walk near him between classes, my mind blanking out for conversation starters, then tensing up whenever he did talk.

The intensity of this self-repression had to explode, and soon my main college activity was sitting on the lawn reviewing my frustrations. I wrote a couple of naked-truth letters to my high school friend, freaking him out maybe, but an essential coming-out to the one person I thought I loved. A positive response would have helped me then, but the honesty alone had a great liberating feeling to it, that

let me know the first step had been taken. I dropped out of school, checking the homosexual box on the draft questionnaire. I started working in a boutique — too naive then to realize the heavy gay traffic in customers and clerks, but being eased slowly out of my uptightness by just being around Gay people for the first time. And I had my first sexual experience — a guy from the store made an advance — copped-out on by the excuse of mere horniness — for which I was very grateful, seeing the very practice of homosexuality as something still distant from my experience.

That first sex introduced me to new areas of misunderstanding and denial. I felt that what was happening between us was good and expressed much — but he refused to incorporate or even acknowledge it in the daytime part of his life. He told me that Gay might be good for some people, but that he wanted to be straight. And it was such a lie to say that — such a contradiction to the good things that were happening when we were together, away from all the peer-group pressures he gave into on the street. Such good things for the two of us then, particularly the first experience for both of us, as yet not conditioned to the subcultural values attached to bedroom performance and ultimate orgasm. But he hung onto his straight facade, would come no further out of the closet with me, and a couple of years later when I saw him, he was still freaking on the same dilemmas. I want him to be happy now too, but know that only his determination can make him come out.

I read about the Gay Liberation Front, and tried to get my friend from the boutique to come with me to one of

their meetings. He wouldn't, so I was again, still, on my own. Train rides back and forth from Philly to New York, several Sundays trying to find Washington Square Church, walking all over the Village, then finding that the location had just been changed. The first time I went to the meeting on Ninth Avenue, I was sure all the people on the bus knew where I was going, so I got off several stops early, and walked blocks on the opposite side of the street before crossing over to the church. And then circling around, afraid to go in, preparing all kinds of "interested student" cop-outs to offer as identity to the still-frightening unknowns at the meeting. Once inside, frozen on my chair, I was confused by the battle that raged on the floor — a condemnation of the very paper that had informed me of GLF's existence. And awed by the people around me — never before had I seen such enthusiasm, such life, such an exciting sense of birth. Never before even, had I seen guys my age with their arms around each other's waists — one suggesting a sewing circle for the Gay males to make clothes to wear to the dances. And the arguments, which seemed so distant at first, but which I felt such an energy contact with, people talking about ideas I'd shelved for years in the unspoken back of my head, here being developed and attempted.

Thank god for the few people who came up to talk to me at those first few scared meetings — for Bob Kohler, who I called during the weeks before moving to New York, asking him some of my hundreds of coming-out questions. The GLF newsletter and he told me about the consciousness-raising groups, just starting, where I was able to sit down to an evening with a dozen or so new people like me, and we would rap about some of those experiences and lonely feelings that had been bottled up inside for so long. In those early months, I met the first real friends of my life, and things were thought out in those groups that have become, in the couple of years since, so central to my identity, that I can't imagine surviving through that time without those groups.


People I met and loved then have become so much a part of me — we participated together in the birth process of our Gay-self realization. They are my brothers and sisters. They're the initial parts of the Gay community that is still piecing itself together, that I feel whenever I go to a dance or meeting now, and can feel that shared experience coming through — an identity of a people hidden so long from each other, but finding ourselves now, and sticking together.

AND HERE HE IS, FOLKS, THE CANDIDATE!
WITH HIS LOVELY WIFE, SAY "HI" TO
THE AUDIENCE, MRS. CANDIDATE!
AND ALL HIS CUTE KIDS. WOW!
EIGHT KIDS, POIEN! AND A VETERAN.
NEVER TOO EMOTIONAL... COOL... A REAL
MAN. VOYE
FOLHIM!

DOCTOR, BILL AND I
ARE WORRIED ABOUT
OUR JOSHUA.

THEY'RE JOINING
THE JOURNAL
LIFE TAKES
WHAT IT
YOU HAVE





LOOK MAN, I'M NOT DUMPING
ON YOUR GAY LIB. WE JUST
GOT DIFFERENT PRIORITIES.
IT TAKES ALL KINDS TO MAKE A REVOLUTION.

WHY CAN POWER?
AREN'T THEY ALL
PEOPLE HOMOSEXUALS?
SUPPOSED TO BE IN JAIL?

THE ORDERLY

By ROBBIE SKEIST

These are some scraps of writing I did connected with homosexuality while I was working as an orderly in a private mental hospital in Chicago. I changed the names so the patients and the staff won't get hassled.

The French Kiss and the Pinch

Today's crisis came when Lenny, a patient around 15 years old, gave me a French kiss. Just before, Michael—who was discharged from the Army when they caught him making love (not war) with another soldier—had smiled, hugged me, and given me a smack of a kiss on my cheek. I thought Lenny was about to do the same, but instead he went for my mouth.

His lips were wet. He put his tongue in and moved it around. It was a good kiss and I couldn't tell him to stop. Still, the head nurse was standing about seven feet away watching, quite surprised, so I couldn't respond. I stood there. He kissed me. After a while, maybe four or five seconds—the nurse came running out and screamed "Lenny! Stop that!" I think she pulled his arms from around me and scolded him. He asked if she would be as upset if he were kissing a woman. She muttered something about "You know the rules."

Three hours later, Mr. Waller, a licensed Practical Nurse, pulled me over and said he was told to have a "fatherly talk" with me. The head nurse told him to tell me she was upset that I had just stood there when Lenny kissed me. I told him I was stunned so I didn't react, which was misleading because I didn't explain how nice the stunning kiss was. Mr. Waller said if it happened again, I should push Lenny away and insist that he stop.

At the end of his little lecture, Mr. Waller gave me a little pinch on the side of my stomach, gathering a little roll of my fat between his large thumb and forefinger. It felt good.

Holding Hands and the Confession

Jacob is a social worker who cracked up and committed himself. He wanted a rest and some therapy. They're giving him insulin shock treatment—a procedure which scares me and which none of the staff wants to explain to me.

Yesterday they gave him shots, drained out some blood, put him in a coma and got him out of a coma. Today he was sweating and tired and scared. He was strapped to his

bed and looked like a cornered puppy. They had to give him another shot to return some essential fluids to his blood stream, but he was fighting them off and the doctor had scratched him twice with the needle.

They called me in to hold him down and they were going to call the other orderly, too. This was upsetting me and I gave them a line about "You just leave me alone with him for a few minutes and I'll get him ready for you." They agreed to let me try.

For ten minutes, Jacob and I held hands; his deep brown eyes pleaded with me. I told him that no matter how much he disliked the insulin shock treatment, he needed that particular shot to recover from the last few hours. We sat quietly. The nurse and the doctor came in and easily gave him the shot.

I stayed in the room, sitting on Jacob's bed, holding his hand, talking quietly. All sorts of things came out. He put down the hospital, cried for his parents, talked about his girlfriend, blurted out "Sometimes I'm a little queer," squeezed my hand.

Today, two nurses and an orderly told me not to spend so much time in a patient's room, not to sit on a patient's bed, not to hold a patient's hand.

Shaving, and the Unexpected Mole

I'm 23. I'm 80. Harold's 80 and I just helped him shave, just shaved him, and it took a while. It took two hours or maybe 23 minutes. Twenty-three minutes out of 23 years. I'm 23. I'm 80. Harold's 80 and I just helped him shave, just shaved him, and it took maybe 23 minutes.

He's an old man. An old Jewish man. An old Jewish lonely man. An old lonely Jewish man named Harold. A man named Harold Foner. An old lonely Jewish man named Harold Foner. It's quite clear in my memory and in my fingers that I shaved him.

I could hold my life together with a little string of holy acts like that. The place does him no good: He gets lonelier and more confused.

Yesterday, at the side of his bed, the right side near the foot, as he lies on his back, I say on the floor there he had his left shoe and his right slipper. Or perhaps it was his right shoe and his left slipper.

Shock, hurt, why choose a word. He didn't like it. I found the other shoe and the other slipper on the floor in

the TV room where the teenagers sit and smoke L&M's and play old 45's. Harold didn't know how they got there (the shoe and the slipper *or* the teenagers).

Well, today he was having trouble shaving. The way to say it is it was impossible. He just couldn't do it.

From one way of looking at it, shaving is really an unnecessary activity. But at that moment, from what his eyes, little sounds, and twitches told me, it was the focus of whether he would survive or give up.

It took a long time. Maybe an hour—did I say 23 minutes a while ago? His skin sags in many places, it has wrinkles and folds. And whiskers. The hairs were grey—whitish grey, plain grey, brownish grey—a lot of hairs. Tough, strong, wire-like. I used water mixed in the lather, it was better. I did it patch by patch. A few times he bled.

One unexpected time was caused by a mole the same color as his skin, near the left end of his left nostril.

Morning, and Harsh First Words

Welch, when I woke you that morning, I put my hand gently on yours, cupped your hand in mine and gently squeezed it. Your sunshine eyes were clouded over, grey and stormy. When you woke, it was with some shock and the words came harshly, "Why did you touch me like that?"

The Rumor

One morning I got to work at 7:02 A.M., stepped out of the elevator and started walking down the hall to put my coat and purse in the staff closet. I had a Gay Alliance newsletter and the February issue of "Gay Sunshine" from San Francisco GLF in my bag to give to Michael.

I passed Welch, the patient (or prisoner) I was closest to and his eyes were upset, his forehead was scowling. Have you heard? Heard what? You haven't heard? Heard what? Dr. Schmuenbacher says you're going to be fired. The Shrink had told the patients I would be fired.

I was scared. I picked up a few rumors from the dust and the corners—the doctor found out I had brought gay liberation literature to Michael a few weeks ago. A patient's mother I spoke to on visiting day told the doctor she was afraid I might molest some of the younger boys. The nurse didn't like my hospital corners. I didn't keep discipline. I was "too personal" with the patients. I had held Jacob's hand.

A shiver ran through me. I remembered GLF literature about how gay people who take a step or two outside their closets lose their jobs. "Their" jobs? *My* job. I knew I wouldn't starve, could find another job. . . still, "No more paychecks" was a shock. I knew a lot of people thought that one guy who touched another is a sex fiend. . . but *me* a child molester? I knew there were "proper ways" for orderlies to act, but couldn't they see how I had calmed Jacob by holding his hand and talking softly that afternoon? I hadn't worn any buttons, I had just tried to act as though I and the "patients" were human. I felt dizzy, a little wobbly, a little scared.

Angry, too. But that took a while. It helped when Welch told me he argued with the shrink that I had helped him. I called Renee, who is a lawyer, and she gave me some advice and reassurance that I won't forget.

Will I be fired? Well, I was called to the office twice and Mrs. Fiend sent the message that she didn't have time to talk with me.

. . . And my Departure

I wasn't fired. Some of the staff, certainly the doctor, gave me looks that hurt. I guess they were short-staffed and decided to keep me, or else an orderly is so unimportant to Mrs. Fiend that she forgot—it slipped her mind that she was going to fire me.

A couple of weeks later I stopped going to work. I was exhausted. I had problems at home, too. I had trouble waking up at 5:30 A.M., more trouble than before. One of the patients kept bugging me every day with quotes from the Bible about how only heterosexual sex is O.K. I was hurt, scared, tired, and I just lay in bed whimpering for a few days and realized I couldn't go back.

Regrets? Of course. Maybe next time I'm at a place like that you'll be there, too, and we'll help each other survive.

Post-Script—6 months later

It was impossible for patients or staff in that mental hospital to deal with homosexuality in a healthy way. Patients who were known to be Gay were harassed by the other patients and joked about by some of the staff. Patients who were trying to understand homosexual desires they had never acted on, were made to feel ashamed. Women on the staff who wore pant-suits, didn't flirt with the male staff members and were in general "unfeminine" were made fun of by some of the patients and ostracized by some of the staff. Men who wore jewelry, carried shoulder bags, and preferred to be gentle rather than tough got a similar treatment.

An environment which would *really* improve people's mental health would *encourage* patients and staff to look honestly at their desires for love and physical involvement. This would be an environment where the idea that "a man should act and love only in ways A-B-and-C, and a woman should act and love only in ways D-E-and-F" would be thrown open to the widest challenge!

Perhaps some of you reading this have had experiences as patients or staff in mental hospitals and have some insights about how homosexuality is dealt with there. If so, I would love to get letters; eventually a group of us in Chicago will put together a collection of articles about Gay people and health care.

Robbie Skeist
1918 N. Dayton, rear
Chicago, Ill. 60614

(Reprinted from *Chicago Gay Pride*)



**Feeling
Free
Enough
to
Be
...**

Ourselves





*Michael, wake up! I'm
thirty today, and they've
turned on the heat in the
hotel for the first time
all winter! Pssst goes the
little radiator in the corner!
Cunning contrivance! So
utterly useful! It surprises
us, like a steaming silver
tulip in January. But the warmth
from your body is lovelier.
Grumpy hairdresser, it makes
me want to whisper pssst! in
your delicate ear. Don't mind
the rain falling in coils down
Larkin Street. I'm thirty
today. Overnight a forest of
blonde hair has spread upon my
pillow. At your side my penis
wobbles like a newborn fawn.*

—JAMES MITCHELL

TESTAMENT

*Troy I'd love to walk across the public mall
among the hippies and happy couples
and men in business suits
with my arm around your beautiful waist.
That would be a memorable sight.
Except that I've done the same with others.
I'd be ashamed.
For people to see a man who loves men, and makes no bones about it
is good, and I'd be willing.
But every month a different man?
That's my misfortune, not my will,
but the witnesses wouldn't know.
I've loved you each and every one, and well, I think.
But like a whore to parade the men I've had?
I refuse to wear you like a string of pearls!*

—BENNY McADAMS

In America, All Men Were Created Straight

By PERRY BRASS

I've been trying in the past few weeks to come to some sort of understanding about the process of my identification as a Gay male. I feel that I have been going through an identification process. Processes are not results, not products, but are acts, groups of experiences, all about being Gay and developing a consciousness of myself as a Gay person. When I use the word "Gay" though, I don't mean it as just a synonym for homosexual, although I think that being Gay starts in being homosexual. Being Gay is rejecting the male privileges of oppression whose product is the sterile, alienated society of today. Being Gay is sharing love on an equal, roleless basis. It is releasing outrage and energy from the direct source of our sexual feelings without fear or uptightness. Being Gay is not limiting my feelings to one person, nor being afraid to commit my feelings to one person many times over; being unafraid of intimacies with many people, being unafraid to share many intimacies with one person. I want to love many people yet I don't want to own any of them. I want to care for many people and I don't want to be afraid to care for them for fear of being hurt. Gay love must not be defensive or calculating or fearful, but open and trusting. Very few people have reached what I want out of being Gay, including, obviously, myself, because I, too, live in this society in which love is always being afraid and closed, defined by pop songs as brutal and doled out in all of its roles of boy-girl, man and chick. But I want to struggle and grow to be Gay. I want to be aware of myself and my brothers without being afraid of myself and of them and I want to be Gay.

What's so Heavy About Being Gay?

When I was in Cambridge in the middle of the summer visiting my sister, Nancy, I sat in on a meeting of a Men's Liberation Group. I was very puzzled and pleased by the idea of men, basically straight or straight-identified, getting together and trying to "deal with their sexism." My first reaction to straight men has almost always been fear mixed with hostility, and lately, as I became more aware of myself as a person struggling against a culture of male domination, it has been more hostility. Homosexuals are persecuted even unconsciously in a tremendous number of ways. I have

often been accused of being a Gay chauvinist, which to a homosexual person is too easily confused with pure male chauvinism. Take the point of the constant ads in so-called hip newspapers: to be a Man is to be a Man who fucks lots of groovy women really *well*. Therefore I feel that at this time in the development of a Gay culture, one Gay chauvinist will not be too many. Most homosexual men have been too good at absorbing all of this heterosexual chauvinism. Too many homosexual men still hate each other. And themselves. They still call each other and themselves faggots. They are still too powerless to direct this rage against their real oppressors: the straight men who have put them in dark alleys, and who have made them as afraid to walk down the streets at night feeling as free as they would like to, as many women are so afraid. It will be a long time before Gay males direct their Gay chauvinism to seriously intimidate oppressive men. Very few straight men are afraid of walking down the street "cause Gay Power's gonna get them."

But again I started feeling very hostile and frustrated talking to those men in Cambridge. It was all so painful, listening to them talk about having feelings that might even be Gay. How could they explain those feelings to their "friends," to their parents? How could they relate to women they could no longer "relate" to (or possibly direct)? They talked about women with a tremendous mystery. How could women involved in Women's Liberation do the things they did, like lead their own lives when they, as men, were still so dependent on them?

They talked about how difficult it was for them to break out of their roles as men with all that "macho shit" (the responsibilities towards keeping up the facades of the cult of masculinity) hanging over their heads, all "that heavy macho shit." It was all so goddamn "heavy." Everything was! I was tired of hearing how "heavy" it all was. The whole wide world really depends upon straight men getting themselves together and they know it. (So maybe it *is* really all very "heavy," especially since straight men know how important they really are and how necessary it is to stay important. It is a straight man's privilege to be heavy and to take himself very seriously.)

We homosexuals started out as a small explosion in the so called 'Movement'.

Straight white men have a lot of privileges. Besides the privileges of not being a woman and not being Black, they have the privilege of not recognizing the existence of Gay men. They will constantly affirm their manhood which is defined in terms of their power over women and their heterosexuality, but they will totally deny my experience and existence. They will joke me out of existence—or at least try. I will not even be worthy of being taken seriously. Their fears of me will logically lead to my denial. "How can he be queer? We've known him all of our lives. He's just like one of us" or "Of course he's Gay, but he's still just a little faggot, he doesn't count; all people in that profession are that way, we will just ostracize him and then deny that he exists." So therefore on a conscious, day-to-day level, their feelings are not so much that I might be around and be Gay, but that they are *not* Gay. They are straight, the majority, and therefore only acceptable to themselves. In actuality straight men are always thinking about Gay males just like they are always afraid to touch one another. But straight men have privileges like walking down the street and *knowing* that in actuality—deep down where it counts—they aren't any different than anyone else they see.

In America, All Men Were Created Straight

If men aren't married, then they're just bachelors. And if they are married, they're card-carrying heterosexuals. Everybody knows that if you have long hair, you can still be an all-right guy and even be the boy next door. Straight men have the privilege of just walking by without even flinching when the pig down the block shouts "queers!" and whistles at you because he thinks that you are acting like a "girl." Straight hip men have never had to face their parents with one more incredible hassle after they already know that you smoke dope, have taken LSD... "and now this!" They have the privileges of never having to lie about where they are going for the weekend or where they have been or what bars they go to (and some of our Gay brothers are not even lucky enough to find Gay bars or each other) or why they were beaten up walking down a certain street at three o'clock in the morning. It is the American ethic that *all* straight men are the *center* of the universe. In our heterosexual-capitalistic culture, they were born to become that, to defile and pollute the earth and make a lot of money doing it. The Boy Scouts and the Army make every kid into a Man, a leader. No wonder they cannot understand being left out of anything when white

We have done this through sheer shit-power: The power to see through the shit of our oppressors.

We have become a larger explosion.

straight men have been the ones who have decided who was going to be left out for so long. They can't bear the idea that anyone could actually do without them, the way Blacks can do without whites, or women in Women's Liberation can do without men, and the way that I can live very happily without straight men in my life. They tell me my life is incomplete. That it is unrealistic. This is of course without wondering that if their lives are so complete, why must they be the centers of the universe, the ones who will decide who will live and who will die, who will be cool and desired and who will be undesired and ostracized? My life may be "unrealistic," but I was not even a part of the "real" life of straight men, I did not even *exist*, until I had to be seen and dealt with as a Gay male because of my involvement in Gay Liberation.

"Straight men don't even become alive until a woman walks into the room," one of my brothers in Gay Liberation discovered after a weekend with straight Movement people in upstate New York. I realized how true this was. They have two ways of talking: the way they talk to other men, monotonal, no emotion, no feeling, no caring; and the way they talk to women, which is usually spiced with some pseudo-babytalk because women are people you care about, the way babies are cared about—by directing their lives. I get so frustrated when I'm with straight men. I feel like the only people they are capable of caring for are the women they are fucking. Or their cars.

"Sure, man. You want a ride to Atlanta with me.

Sure, man, I don't care. Sure, who gives a shit. Just as long as you pay for half the gas and stuff, I don't care."

Listening to this telephone conversation between a straight white male I know talking to another male friend of his about sharing the driving on a trip from New York to Atlanta, I wondered how someone could not care about sharing the front seat of a VW for a thousand miles from N.Y. to Atlanta, simply because that other person happened to be of the same sex and therefore unfuckable. But how can you care about someone that you can't touch,

Homosexuals are still aliens in a straight culture, no matter how hip it professes to be.

The straight hip culture is not the Revolution.

either physically or emotionally. I can't care about someone who will make me afraid of the warmth and closeness when something is shared between two people

Another conversation between two Gay males talking about a straight man:

"I felt so close to him when he said that. I wanted to run up and kiss him."

"Why didn't you?"

"I would have felt stupid."

But I can't hack that kind of shit. I need more emotional support from people and I want to give it, to risk it even, and I don't want it half way. I know that we're all "human" and we all have "human" problems. I know that many Gay men have been and still are absorbed into the straight death culture. They still put each other in the roles set up by that culture with one of them taking all of the support and the other one giving it. As one of my brothers complained, "I'm tired of feeling like John's girlfriend, supporting him, telling him that it's all right. He's still attractive. So attractive that I couldn't think of looking at anyone else, that just because he's Gay doesn't mean that he's any less of a *real* man." All that is the kind of oppression that women have had to go through with their straight "boyfriends" and that their boyfriends have put on my Gay brothers until they are as immersed in straight death culture as that whole society of solid, respectable people out in suburbia. I cannot conceive of my life as a Gay male or even as a homosexual being a parody or Gay version of that culture, limited and defined by straight oppressive values. I don't want equal rights with the death culture.

Except for the obvious tax and legal benefits (such as inheritance, or adopting or keeping children), I think Gay marriages are as ridiculous as Gay divorces. I don't want to be liberated over to this heterosexual form of oppression with its guilt-anxieties about promiscuity. Neither do I want to want the freedom to preserve the old institutions of homosexuality that some Gay activists think we should fight to save: cruising, objectifying people until

It "revolutionarily" oppresses gay people caught up in the straight hip culture. Just listen to Lyrics of straight rock songs and realize how.

The straight hip culture wants to keep on smoking it's dope, oppressing it's women, hiding from the fear and hatred they feel towards members of the same sex and our upfront sisters and brothers who are the vanguard of the Gay Revolution.

they become mannikins, the "youth hangups," evil bitchery of self-hatred that sometimes passes for campiness, the stand-up-and-look-pretty bars. I don't want these institutions any more than I want Gay going-steady or Gay dating. When homosexuals are driven to these things, they do indeed become what straight society has wanted out of them—they become "queer"—they are copying the oppressive institutions that heterosexual society should have thrown out years ago. But male-dominated heterosexual society wants to keep us "queer," just like it wants to keep women locked in marriages and kitchens and out in the suburbs with the kids and the television set. This is all part of the "fabric of society," i.e. morality, and it must keep women and Gay males pattering around somewhere out of sight, out of mind, "a bunch of dumb faggots and dumb women."

Respectability and Self-Respectability

For straight men, the scene is to be beyond reproach, to be admired for their strength and ingenuity, to never get into an awkward, trying situation, to look as effortless and always in fashion as a button-down shirt. Emotions are awkward. They're messy. Men are allowed certain emotional responses. They can slam the door in someone's face as long as they don't have to open it and start crying. They can hit above the belt as long as they are assured that they will knock the other person's teeth out. I still remember getting into fights with bullies at school who used to repeat over and over again, "I don't want to hurt ya now. I just want to show ya. I don't want to hurt ya none. Jus show ya who's boss." He meant that he just did not want to be responsible for caring about hurting me. He did not want to be responsible for the pain that I was going through. But actually he wanted to rip my body to shreds and spread my guts across the playing fields. He wanted to be a *Man* and

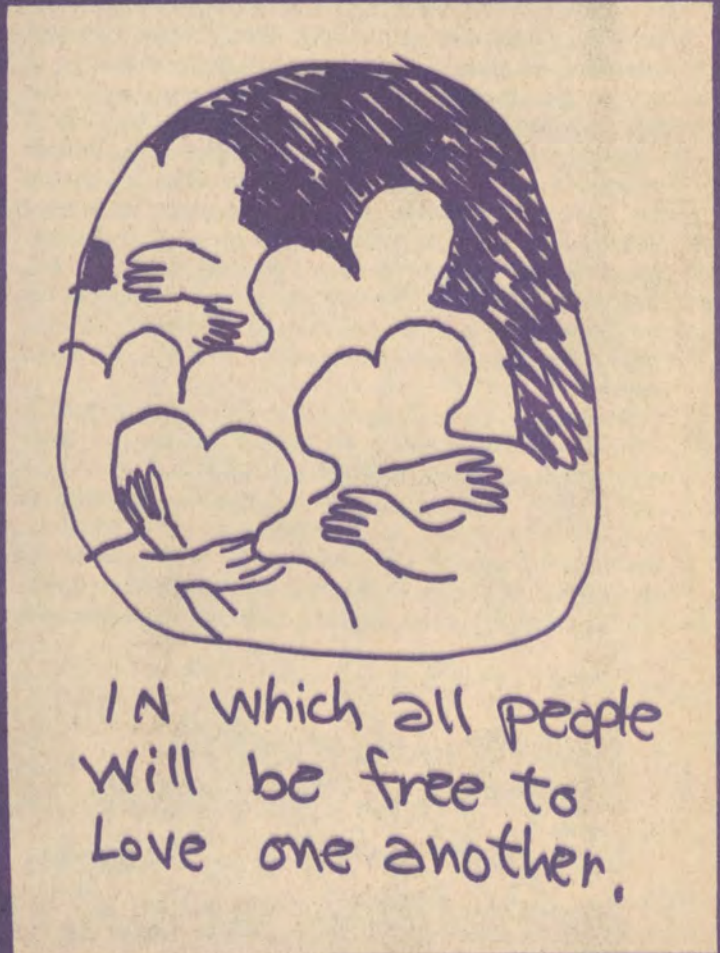
Only by throwing off all guilt, all fear and facing our straight oppressors will we make a truly Liberated GAY CULTURE.

show me that he was a *Man*, just as American straight men are showing the Vietnamese. "How could we do this?" they say. "We didn't mean to do this. We had no idea those bombs could rip out intestines like that. We didn't want to hurt them. Just kill them. So that they would know who's boss."

Gay males are always in awkward positions. Having sex gets awkward. Especially when your parents are in the next room and they think that you are just good friends in there. Walking down the street gets awkward. When it feels so good to be you, to be me, to be free, to be feeling the way I know I want to feel and suddenly some drip comes along and shouts at you (or at me) and picks at you (or at me) and you're wondering if you should just walk on or turn around and possibly get knifed. I'm sure women have these feelings constantly. Having violence done on you is awkward. And in America, land of Arthur Murray, we don't like awkwardness. That's why pigs will sympathize with each other. The cops will help your attackers before they will help you, my Gay brother. "Of course you got the shit kicked out of you. Look at the way you dress. Look at you. If you look like a faggot, that's what happens to you." Exchange the word "faggot" for "nigger" or "cunt" at the appropriate time when the cast changes.

Being in class gets awkward when the prof starts his abnormal psych lecture and you realize that he's talking about you. Gay oppression is institutionalized. Working in a factory gets to be awkward when all the "guys" get together and start talking about the queers down the street and you wonder if your act might be getting a little stale and you're going to be the next one to be talked about. Gay oppression can be quite informal. Of course you have the straight male privilege of keeping your mouth shut. Of just being one of the boys. Of doing a mental Sir Walter Raleigh and just letting the shitheads walk all over you. Or else you can get into one of those very awkward, un-American positions. And become what you are. *Be* what you are. Let down all those great male privileges that are choking you to death. You don't need them. You can't be a straight man with his privileges to oppress and be one of the oppressed at the same time. If you are to be my lover, you cannot be loved by that straight society that is choking our Gay people and still love me. Because it is for loving me openly and without fear that they will despise you. You will have to be awkward and hurt and open: Real, Complete, Human. All by yourself. A person unafraid.

And I want to be with you and be Gay.



I've Never Been to Majorca

Oh my god, downs at five in the morning,
unable to sleep from the fierce all-day heat
with no air-conditioning—and it's going to be
Blake's second birthday. I remember how he kept
turning his head aside in two hours of "transition"
that's supposed to last half-an-hour, refusing to put his head
head-on so that he could be born, so that when low forceps
were finally resorted to, this angry face stuck up
between Robin's bloody thighs, the blue eyes furious,
Robin awake, breathing and pushing, this whole time of
natural unnatural childbirth, and then their pulling him out
to go plop on her belly, although mid-air he kept kicking furiously,
his frowning eyes fixed on me with real anger that he was being so
god-damned inconvenienced. Those blue eyes in an honestly cerulean
blue face: shock upon shock—and watching Robin's episeotomy
being sewn up, a local anesthetic now giving some blockage of pain;
she couldn't see this matter-of-fact sewing up of a T-shaped gash
with strings of gore all down her legs onto a once-white sheet. God.
And Blake's lying in a plastic basinet and tracking a triangle with his eyes
a few minutes later. Seventeen hours of labor, seventeen minutes of
delivery. We cried about it for days afterwards, all of us.

But this was supposed to be about something different
than being forty, a father, and a faggot,
not having written on downs before, only on psychedelics.
Because I'm going to the hospital myself in a couple of days
to have my unusable rectum operated on, I who never was able
to offer it to the muscular men I desired like some kind of affliction
because of this thin-skinned rectum that bled at the slightest strain.
I wanted instead to tell about how I'm scared not so much at the operation
as at the anesthetic which they once clamped over you like a mask,
and I remember Susan Hayward being told to breathe deep
so that it would all be over fast in *I Want To Live*
and her asking this dolt how would he know, anyway.
And about how impersonal it will be, their carving up my rectum which is
ulcerated from a long history of hating and fearing my anality
since I was a child and was punished for getting my shit on the lid
of the big toilet and such things and holding it in rather than
going and shitting it out in great tearing convulsions.
Wow, and about wishing I knew how to love the beautiful person
in Michael who could possibly free me from being disgusted by my own anus,
my rightful possession disinherited by my Lutheran insistence
that all thoughts of grace be like a constipation, required to
suffer the pain of shitting out one's lack of good works.

Beyond that, I wanted to muse about Chopin and how my oppression as
a faggot forced me to hate him in my super-intellectual sophmoric phase
because he was pretty-pretty-pretty (they said)—this beautiful
man with such a small body and such frail hands that playing those
difficult pieces of his as astonishingly as he did was some kind of
willed magic. And I don't even know for sure if he was a fellow-faggot
but I know he was a fellow effeminist and that all the passion and
despair and ecstasy he packed into such a short life and all those
pieces of sheer you-name-it-I-can't have something to do with

how I've suffered as a faggot, being denied the right to be beautiful, to love beauty, to be called by my freedom name, Kenneth Pansy, without anyone daring to laugh at it. And those immortal Precludes he made on Majorca, coughing blood while George Sand, incipient feminist, was stoned by the villagers for wearing pants. Regardless of what her politics may or may not have been, she suffered the curse of being a whole suffering human being trapped in a female body and hated for that. And what I was saying about a love of Chopin like mine--how he put a skull on his piano, opened his windows to the Paris winter, and sat down in a winding sheet to fill the Marche Funèbre with his own consumption and death. Oh I love you, Chopin, all my faggot suffering wells up in my heart as I listen to the Revolutionary Etude, war-horse of war-horses, but Warsaw was burning and it even may be as in the ghastly movie where large-boned, muscled Cornell Wilde obscenely pretended to be beautiful you while Merle Oberon was required by some movie mogul to put down both herself and the valiant Sand by playing her for a dilettante--all so Chopin could die raising money for the revolution--it even may be, sans put-down, I have a revolution to die for, the same as yours. I have a skull, too, and it sits on a scallop table as I try to suffer through what I should do about releasing in men, that ugly species of cruelty and brute power, the sweet strain and power of the Chopin I love in Michael and every effeminist, the sweet Chopin I love in myself. They'll clamp some invisible mask to me and if I'm lucky I'll hallucinate polonaises and mazurkas about the possibility that men can love each other because the women they love are wearing pants again.

It rained the whole time on Majorca. Chopin and Sand were miserable then. Robin and I are miserable now. Her politics might well require us to leave each other after I live or die next week.

I don't care about everyone else howling at us that we don't have any right to be together. I don't care about everyone throwing stones at her for dressing like a man, while living with one that most people laugh at and say *isn't* a man. But even that's too easy--I'd love to be a Lesbian, then all these worries would be over (ignorant of what *those* would be). And Blake, our two-year-old baby,

he has no worries at all, yet, constantly playing with his penis while finger-painting and listening to Chopin and Aretha and watching the light screen and breathing the pot fumes in the air.

Then I think what a colossal failure I am. I knew Sylvia Plath when she was still alive, still unmarried to a male fascist who helped her succeed at her third suicide attempt, our looking at each other longingly. I might have made some greater difference than I did (though never enough, never mind total),

but all my poems were trying to curry favor with the Kenyon Review and other extinct areas of human sensibility when there was this rage in me that only now has exploded into the realization that my right to be sensitive, to love the art of any suffering people, was taken from me by their calling me faggot faggot faggot--and that all I have to do to reclaim that right is to realize how faggot is my salvation, whatever they called Chopin. Some people have made contact with a person in Robin's brain who says that to be consistent she should no longer struggle with me. All men, no men. Separate, clean. An end to effort. Her wasted effort, trying to humanize me. But right as they are and she is, I'll fight that.

I'll do whatever I have to do to do it, to kill the masculinist in me. Difficult, painful. Impossible? But I regret nothing, least of all a baby like ours who kept turning aside his head, refusing to be born, but once born opens wider eyes, brown now, more unashamed than mine at any color or shape he pleases. Once when Robin and he were splashing in the bathtub together among his floating toy boats and plastic birds and fish, he grabbed the swan and pointing it at Robin's genitals said in his puppeteer's falsetto, "Hi vagina, I'm swan"--never having heard of Zeus or Leda. We aren't consistent. Change isn't consistent. I may die next week because of some stupid anesthetist and

never know how to use a bobbed rectum in loving Michael. But my life has exploded now into too many fragments to care. Whatever Robin asks of me, I'll have to do, even living apart from her. Whatever Michael needs, I'll have to try to give, though it scares me, because what am I doing to these people? And whatever Blake requires, even my total attention for the next eternity, I don't care, even tired--oops, but I *do* care, because I'm not good for me or him or anyone when reduced (like any housewife) into a life-sustenance system for another person. So not quite total.

Not quite anything?

Crying comes easy, oh n-y inconsistent fragments. I dream--under the valiums I flirt with as though they were that anesthetic I fear--of meeting Chopin and taking him into my arms and telling him how much I love him, how much I love George Sand, how much I wish that my own life could be worthy of his. If Warsaw burned and Christopher Street burns and all I have left is my plastic glow-in-the-dark skull to clutch, I will at least open windows to the contagion of the night airs and compose one last elegy for having lived in this place and time, Robin dreaming uneasily in the next room of murder and suicide and madness and her own assassination by men and Michael lying a few blocks away, alone, mourning the black men he will never be able to love now because of his (our/my) racist sexism, not quite ever able to love me either, with my mottled skin, ugly mind suffering with the wish of being beautiful somewhere in my skull--and failing--because I can't escape all the parts they cut out of me and him and Robin, with more to be cut out next week. I don't even know what I mean anymore. What have they done to me? Something in me still thinks he is a boy like Blake, strong-limbed, lovely, unscarred by all the hate he will learn later in the school of the world, still laughing at the luxury of flesh touching. The dawn is coming. My skull glows in the dark. The day's heat begins, knives cutting away the ability to keep going, clockblades hacking out the minutes of all our lives.

Two years old. Famine. Revolution. My own palty death. Separation. Exile. Unable even to learn how to love another man or woman. Dying. Breathe deep. It will be over soon. They are pulling me out with low forceps, my eyes are blinking, slimed with blood, my blue flesh still doesn't feel a thing. Couldn't they have left me be? I am dying. Goodbye Robin, goodbye Blake, goodbye Michael. Maybe a century from now they wouldn't even have had to kill me for wanting to have loved all of you impossibly at once against all politics and all wisdom--but as all beautiful music whispers subversively: that we *can* have everything--though we constantly are forced to settle for the nothing we slowly become no matter how we hold our breath against the poison we have to end up breathing as the mazurka fades out and rain still falls on our impossible Coca-cola Majorca a century later, never having been there anyway, never having, never having been, never.

KENNETH PITCHFORD

Dethroning the king

By DAVID L. AIKEN

A few weeks ago, three of the men with whom I live in an all-gay male commune went to a new bar that had just opened in a predominantly black area not far from Capitol Hill here in Washington, D.C. At the door, they were asked for two identification cards, both with photos. None had more than one form of ID. They were turned away. They are black. They watched as a stream of white men walked in, casually flashed a draft card perhaps, and were admitted. When they asked to speak to the manager, he came over, listened for a couple of minutes, then turned away and said, "Better luck next time."

When I was talking recently about the possibility of gay people picketing that bar, a gay acquaintance of mine said, "It's too bad that gay people have to fight among themselves, when they should be fighting the oppressor." That's true enough, but we must not forget that for our black gay brothers, they *were* fighting the oppressor—both their oppressor *and* ours. White gay men are no less racist than the rest of white America and must, consequently, be confronted just as vigorously as any straight person when they exhibit racism. Gay people, as a group which suffers discrimination, prejudice, and mockery, must combat that oppression—but only with a continuing consciousness of, and concern for, the abuse suffered by other oppressed groups.

On a practical level, it is true that gay people must choose how to spend their energy, which is—of necessity—limited. Someone holding down a full-time job and also heavily committed to a gay group will have to fight the oppressor in *that* group, since there is seldom enough time left over to cook eggs for the Panther breakfast program, run down to a meeting of a peace group, or join in a march against the local polluter.

But I am not going to be talking about purely organizational ways of doing things. In this article, I'm not even going to talk so much about actions, such as picketing. I'm more interested in talking about peoples' attitudes, and changes in them. On this level, I believe, what a black person does to combat the sense of oppression he or she suffers, what a woman does, what a gay person does—all these efforts can work toward the same end. They will, in fact, topple the same oppressor, if their aim is right. So, you ask, just where is the target? Let's first figure out what the animal looks like; then we can fix on the vital spot that will let us get at him. To do this, we have to look at what we mean by "oppression." The oppression which gays face has often been compared to that of other groups, most often black people and women. Some say that gays aren't really oppressed, at least by comparison with such groups, because gays can "pass" for straight if they want. This ignores those of us who are considered by society to be so effeminate that passing—for us—is impossible. It also ignores the pain involved for those of us who can or try to pass—the horrible suffering of constantly lying about ourselves and our feelings. And then add to this the pain to which the transvestite and transsexual is inescapably

exposed. These people are just some of the gay people who feel shitty about themselves because society tells them they're shit.

Isn't the essence of gay oppression the gay person's feeling that he or she must shuffle back into the closet the moment a straight person comes around? Try to tell the person, troubled by feelings of homosexuality and fears of rejection, who is contemplating suicide, that gays aren't as oppressed as anybody else. Is there some kind of oppression worse than the feeling of worthlessness that makes a person want to commit suicide?

Yet various political factions go around making up just such rankings: the workers are the most oppressed, or blacks, or women, or Third World peoples. Some point to those relatively few gay people who are well off economically as a way of putting us at the bottom of the list as "less oppressed." This ignores the vast majority of gay people who are working class or who live marginal existences, just getting by, many of whom are in jail or who live as "street people" because they have no other alternatives in a sexist society.

But I think economism (the notion that all aspects of life are determined by economic factors) is false. The fact that gay people exist in every area of American society, even including (occasionally) the higher levels of business and government, should not obscure a more crucial fact: Gay people owe whatever job security they have to their ability to lead double lives—to mask their homosexuality. This may be called "passing" but it also can be called accepting one's oppression by hiding part of one's personality. There are some occupations which people ordinarily expect to be filled by gay men; but hairdressing, interior decoration, and the theater are not sufficient options for a people with all the human aptitudes and resources of any other group.

Of course, even some of those gays who work in one of the stereotyped occupations must be careful to be "discreet." I know a gay man, for example, who was fired from his job as a salesman in an interior decorating shop when he was flagrant enough to show up at work one day sporting a "Gay is good" button. There are gay people in all social classes, so oppression of gays consequently hits people in all classes. Interestingly, however, the Kinsey study of "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" (1948) found that homosexual activity is most frequent among working-class men who stop their education after high school—the very group which also shows the strongest negative feelings toward homosexuality.

There are, then, some ways in which gay oppression is similar to class oppression, in that those in certain professions have an easier time of being gay openly. This does not mean, however, that others in equally upper-class occupations are any more able to be open about their homosexuality. Likewise there are some aspects of the

situation in which gay people find themselves that are reminiscent of the historical situation of blacks in America.

As we struggle up from brutal persecution toward liberation, we also are met with violent hostility — but also with patronizing contempt, just as deadly, which requires us to shuck and jive, to internalize self-hatred, or even to perform as comical mascots or cute little “harmless” sissies. This, of course, is also intimately tied to the Masculine American trait, pervasive throughout our history and geography, of treating women as pets who need to be protected, on the one hand, and at the same time as objects who are around for the primary purpose of providing gratification to the men who possess/protect them.

Here, I think, we are getting to the common element in the situation of blacks, women, and gays alike: We are all victims of the high value placed on possessiveness and competitiveness. The personification of these traits is the all-powerful straight, white, aggressive, middle-class American male. To be really accurate, it is the attitudes from these men that are at the root of so many troubles. They cause the problem because they hold powerful positions at the helm of commerce and government.

The King is white, because whites have the power in America. Anyone black, red, or brown can just stand back a bit, please, and try not to get too pushy around His Majesty. The King is male, of course. Haven't men always run the important things of life, like killing each other and cheating each other in business, while women were relegated to such trivia as raising the next generation?

And the King is straight — heterosexual. After all isn't everybody, except a few neurotics? Watch the commercials for new Phallic sports convertibles, with high-torque V-8 engines to make them real hot rods. Do two boys ever drive off toward the beach together?

The ordinary definition of masculinity is tightly linked to the attributes of competition, possessiveness, and aggression and men who express them have traditionally been the most respected and admired. This goes deeper than the current John Wayne image — tough-speaking tough-fisted cowpoke who defends ‘What America Stands For’ with guns and guts (just before screwing the broad, presumably). It is a recurrent part of American mythology, from Paul Bunyan and Davy Crockett, who never show fear in their exploits, to the taciturn, self-reliant Yankee villager, who hardly shows any strong emotion at all — except perhaps anger at high taxes.

Consider though how this image of masculinity comes down on those who are supposed to personify it:

“The faces of men commuting on trains between affluent suburbs and their high level work in the big-time world of the city are blank and worn beyond their years. They don't seem like people in the flush of fulfillment, the inheritors of the earth, or for that matter like cruel, arrogant nobles gripped with the excitement of power. They sit on the train between battlefields wrapped in their newspapers, for a spell excused from guarding their titles, and they seem in this rare unselfconscious moment a tired, dreary lot. It would seem that rather than the possessors, they themselves are the spoils of kingship.”

That quote comes from an article titled “Gay is Good for Us All,” by Suzannah Lessard, (*The Washington Monthly*, December, 1970.)

The point of this is that, of course, the oppressor pays a price for the power and privileges he gains from our oppression. He is, in a real sense, dehumanized; for he must keep up the pretense of “manliness” whether he wants to or not. He cannot afford to let down the barriers, lest he appear soft, womanish, or faggoty. The barriers are many. Just to touch another man is usually taboo. Notwithstanding the efforts of touchie-feelie encounter groups, men in everyday circumstances will feel uneasy about expressing affection even to other men very close to them, such as their sons or brothers. I am talking about tight, long, hugs that really show affection. Not to speak of kissing. It is almost a revolutionary act to kiss another man in public!

This, I think, is where a movement based on challenging those hallowed, hollow images of manhood can work a very deep change in American culture and society. I think just one change in the way men act can have a profound effect in many spheres. That change would be for men to be gentle with other men, to show other men that they love them, to be able to cry, to be able to touch. There is really little reason why these forms of behavior are taboo for men except traditional role patterns. Margaret Mead says all research on supposed differences in body chemistry and hip size, etc., merely obfuscates the fact that the only really important difference between men and women is that women can bear children and men can not. This is



supported by findings of the California Gender Identity Center, which has found that it is a lot easier to change the physical gender of a person than to change the psychological identification that a person has as a male or female — or to undermine the power of King Straight White Male and the values he personifies.

Dethronement of the King will be made harder, I'm afraid, by the enticements of certain false strategies. One is to follow the notion that any one country now on the world scene is really all that much better for gays just because of its economic system.

I used to think, for example, that Cuba and North Vietnam probably offered the best present-day examples of countries that take all the people into the process of making decisions for themselves. Since then, I've found that one of those countries, Cuba, stringently and explicitly bars one important segment of the population from this right: gay people.

I and several other gay men, along with some women's liberation activists, were cut from a Venceremos Brigade in winter, 1971, evidently by the U.S.-based national brigade. Later, a Cuban party convention banned gays from positions of contact with youth.

Evidently, the remnants of the Latin traits of machismo have not been stamped out. This, combined with a sort of Socialist puritanism, arising perhaps from memories of homosexual prostitutes hanging around the hotels of Havana to service Yankee tourists, probably explains their attitudes. But explaining them doesn't do Cuban gay men any good.

Nevertheless, some of the ideals of socialism are vital elements in the struggle to unseat King White. There is one lesson I learned from the very first discussion I engaged in as part of a Men's Consciousness-raising group, a mixed group of gays and straights. That was the difference between a socialist conversation and a capitalist conversation. In the latter, each participant listens to the others only enough to gather ammunition for his own next chance to dazzle the audience, to demonstrate his wit or perception or profundity or whatever. Male supremacists, especially, spend time talking in this system, so they'll reap the knowledge that they've impressed somebody. In socialist conversations, on the other hand, participants offer their perspectives so that a common goal may be reached.

The mention of socialist vs. capitalist discussions brings up another pitfall to avoid. That is any organization in which people compete for titles such as president or chairman, and in which the winner of such contests is duly acclaimed as "leader" and "spokesman."

This type is frequently found around anti-war protest organizations, such as those which periodically put on "mass marches," and try to make them united fronts of all sorts of radical groups. Yet it's the very macho "leadership" attitude that many of these people demonstrate that we must combat before wars will end. For they in their little worlds of organizational politicking show plenty of competitiveness and aggressiveness.

It is these traits, I believe, that has gotten us into wars. Who is it, after all, who sits in the White House and watches football and John Wayne movies? The same man who declares that America shall never be a "pitiful, helpless giant" and would therefore never "accept the first defeat in its proud 190-year history."

Whatever anyone might think about the political effec-

tiveness or wisdom of large-scale peace marches, strong gay representation at the April 24, 1971 marches in Washington and San Francisco was very symbolic. If you put it in the perspective I've just been outlining, any challenge to straight white male supremacist attitudes can't help but raise consciousness about the root cause of the American war machine: the male supremacist ego. This is certainly not to say that oppressed groups who militantly resist an oppressor are open to the same criticism as their oppressor; but unless we keep in mind the cooperative, gentle, loving values for which we are fighting, we can all too easily slip back into resembling our oppressor and thus lose any hope of attaining our liberation.

One final hazard to be wary of is over-reliance on some magical "youth revolution" taking permanent hold and wiping away all the past prejudices we have known. I and many others would like to think that people in the generally under-30 bracket are a bit more open, a bit more relaxed about sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular.

But this is *not* true, I'm afraid. There are disturbing signs that a whole lot of "consciousness raising" has got to be done among people in the generation I belong to — about their ageism, as well as their sexism and racism. There are, for example, snatches of books by that self-appointed guru, Jerry Rubin, in which the most derogatory epithet he can think of for such figures as Richard M. Nixon is "cocksucker." A bit deeper, there are those who voice the philosophy that "It's your thing, man, you do as you like," while refusing to dig a bit deeper within their own heads, to open themselves up to any homosexual feelings they might have.

All these, of course, are courses to avoid. I wish I had a well-developed program to lead us toward the day when men can be gentle with men, when perhaps the whole fabric of aggression, face-saving, manliness, competitiveness that has brought us into war after war can be replaced with human concern.

The closest thing to a program is a concerted effort, in small groups, to help one another examine the competitiveness and possessiveness each one of us has. I have been through two such groups, one lasting about six months with about five other gay men, the other for about three months with a group of three gay men and five straight men. In both cases, I think real gains were made, by myself and others. Another article in this issue describes the consciousness-raising group in more detail, so I will not go into it here.

I feel, though, that the process it involves is much more important, more vital, than any formal organization, with or without chairman, treasurers, etc., could ever be. In fact, if more of the people indulging their egos with chairmanships and other such positions in bureaucratized organizations were to really deal with their competitiveness, there would be a lot less factionalism, parliamentary hassle, and empty argument in the gay movement and elsewhere, and a lot more effort to really live in an alternative way to the competition culture prevalent today.

Gay men, along with gay and straight women, can show that they can do just fine, thank you, without the habits of this dying culture. The more of this there is, the closer I think we'll be to bringing down the house of cards in which the Straight White Macho Male is king.

ON OUR OWN:

GAY MEN IN CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUPS

This article is a collective effort by a New York consciousness-raising group composed of nine GLF men. We have adopted the process of consciousness-raising from the Women's Liberation Movement.

Gays must organize because it is only way a class of people that has been cut adrift by society can deal with that fact. Everywhere we find hostility, prejudice and condescension, even amongst ourselves. Most gays accept, in self-defense, the straight man's mythology that says we're sick, immature, perverse, deviant, and thus should hide our love away in tea rooms, park bushes, on cruising streets, and in Mafia- or otherwise pig-controlled bars. Those who reject the mythology, developing positive attitudes toward their homosexuality are even more offen-

sive to straights. We all risk brutalization and imprisonment and have little alternative but to use the traditional oppressive cruising institutions. These myths and institutions keep us isolated and distrustful of each other. And don't expect any help from our straight oppressors in creating alternatives. We're on our own.

New York Gay Liberation Front's first attempts at coming together have been the large Sunday night meetings, which after a year produced few decisions and no policy. Since June '69, GLF had talked of a community center, but



A CR group is a serious and long-range effort. It is well to start with as many as 10-15 people, because members will surely drop out in the opening weeks. After the formative first weeks, the group constitutes itself and is closed to new people. The group usually meets weekly, alternating among the homes of the members.

The format of the session consists of each person's testimony on a given topic and a concluding discussion. Notes are kept from week to week. The topic chosen must be relevant to the members' life experiences and should be agreed upon by all. Usually chosen as a first topic is 'coming out,' one's first gay sexual experience. When giving testimony, a group member relates his personal experience and feelings about the topic, avoiding any tendency to intellectualize or to draw conclusions. Each person speaks to the topic for as long as he wishes, and can only be interrupted for questions of clarification. The order of testimony may be determined by the group, either rotating regularly around the room or randomly by 'spinning the bottle.' Giving personal testimony is difficult; it involves opening up to the other group members and beginning to trust them. Of course, testimony should not be discussed outside the group. After everyone has given testimony, the group compares the evidence of their experiences. The significance of the similarities and differences in people's testimony is considered. Generalizations about the condition of gay men in our society emerge. This format of CR ensures that the discussion and conclusions are rooted in the members' experiences and feelings.

The following is a list of some of the more important topics our group has used in the past months:

Series: Age 1-5, early formative experiences

- grade school, acceptance or rejection of 'male role'
- high school, pressure to conform to straight environment
- college, post high school — sexual repression or expression

Series on Sexual Relationships

- coming out (first sexual experiences, acknowledging oneself as gay)
- sex roles
- sexual objectification
- cruising and bars
- masturbation
- sexual experience with women
- S & M
- sexual fantasies
- monogamy

when prospects arose the body could never get together on the proposals. Only in November '70, over objections from the general meeting, did a small, independent work collective realize that goal. Similarly, attempts to formulate a GLF platform met with failure. The number of people at these meetings (from 50-150) made decisions impossible; discussions became arguments and, often, destructive personal attacks. Since a good part of the attendance varied from week to week, the past development of issues had to be relived each time they came up, retarding policy-making. In contradiction to GLF's basic structural principle of having no leaders, the de facto leaders were those men who spoke best in large groups. It was a replay of the competitive, hierarchical structure we wished to change; a few wielded power and the rest were dominated. This way of doing things brought out the 'man' in gay men. But most women left this 'male trip' GLF in disgust after half a year. Thus, the large Sunday night group proved ineffectual and oppressive.

In our consciousness-raising group, we have been trying to step outside the straight man's myths and institutions, to suspend the limited ways we deal with each other, and experiment with new ways of relating. Everyone's feelings are considered in consciousness-raising (CR), and instead of shouting each other down, consensus, a solution, that is to each person's interest, can be reached. If people are silent, they are asked to contribute. This is part of the collective process. We as men are struggling with our eagerness to dominate and ego-trip by being aware of the needs of others in the group, and struggling with our tendency to intellectualize by speaking from our experience. We are also learning what has been forbidden us — to relate to one another with respect and love. CR provides a format in which this potential can develop and operate. We use it to discover our identity as gay men, to recognize our oppression in a straight society, and to seek collective solution to mutual problems. We as gays must redefine ourselves *in our own terms*, from our own heads and experience, because no political philosophy designed by white heterosexual men can be adequate for use. Thus, we use CR to arrive at policy and positions, to plan actions and projects — to evolve a politics out of our experience.

In New York at this writing there are 10 to 12 gay men's CR groups, some new, some months old. Gays who have not related to GLF have been involved by this small group process. It has been decided, in order to encourage the restructuring of NYGLF, that each of these groups will send a representative, on a rotating basis so all eventually participate in the Sunday meetings. These representatives will constitute a caucus and function collectively.

jealousy and possessiveness
domination or passivity in relationships
what kind of men we're attracted to
how do we approach men and how do we react to
approaches from men
sex acts - sucking, fucking, being fucked, etc., - ex-
periences with and feelings about

Series: General

parents
siblings
reaction to the terms "faggot" and "queer"
relations with women
relations with straight men
racism
class background and prejudices
ageism - the pressure to be young
religious training and background

The group must give priority to dealing with a member's pressing immediate situation, using whenever possible the CR framework. Periodically, sessions should openly examine and confront personality conflicts and feelings among members.

All groups must constantly struggle with resistance to CR. There always seems to be a thousand other things to do, especially on the night of the group meeting. However, only a major reason should cause a member to miss a session as the group process is at stake. Once the group is assembled, people tend to put off the serious business of CR. For example, they will socialize and gossip for hours to delay selecting a topic. They may often get hung-up in debating a potential topic. During testimony, resistance frequently takes the form of intellectualization and the expression of abstract ideas, negating concrete experience and feeling. Both during testimony and discussion, resistance to CR manifests itself as straying from the chosen topic. The manifestations may all be symptoms of the fear that people feel when they come in contact with their own oppression and begin to realize that they must make changes in their lives to deal with it. Of course, leaving the group is the ultimate resistance.

CR is often confused with other small group efforts such as group therapy, encounter and purely social formations. We must also distinguish it from all other political organizing processes. CR and psychotherapy are poles apart in their methods and purposes, and in their basic assumptions. Psychiatric theory defines the gay person's situation as that of individual sickness, while CR substitutes the perspective of gay people as collectively oppressed by society. In therapy, there is always a leader and a body of psychoanalytic thought, while the authority of the

CR is without leaders and brings people together around their common experiences. On occasion, we in CR borrow the techniques of encounter groups to help us express our feelings when we have problems relating, but encounter does not analyze the social causes of our alienation. CR is distinct from other political organizing processes in that it begins with no preconceived ideology or strategy for gay liberation. We do not deal in abstractions or rhetoric, but draw ideas from our real-life situations.

The results of our CR meetings have been many. While we began as nine isolated, alienated people, we have become a group politicized by the study of our personal experience. We found that our problems are not individual illnesses, but are generated by our oppression as a class of people. This discovery negated one of the most effective weapons of our oppressors - the false division between the personal and the political. Whether or not we'd had any previous political involvement, none of us saw homosexuality in political terms. The sharing our experiences has brought us to a collective consciousness as gay men. We have begun an analysis of gays as a class exploited by the white straight man - the sexist who rules our society. Gay consciousness for us now means gay anger as well as gay pride. While the pornographers, the psychiatrists, and the bar owners get rich exploiting us, we are kept socially and economically fragmented, separate amongst ourselves and from the other exploited classes of society: Blacks, workers, poor people, women, and the populations of third world nations. Those in power in America keep all of us down via the policy of 'divide and conquer.'

In our CR group, we have been finding new ways of relating to each other. We approach a true functioning democracy with no leaders, providing support for one another in our attempts to change our role-oriented behavior. Gays need not be isolated; strength comes from the fusion of consciousness.

Four months ago, a radical male homosexual living collective was formed by five members of the group. This commune is an extension of our CR process into a total living situation. The entire CR group of nine holds weekly orientation meetings to introduce gays to gay liberation and to organize new groups. We have opened a weekly coffeehouse where our community can get together and rap. We are the switchboard for NYGLF men. We organized the August mass demonstration to protest police harassment on 42nd Street and on Christopher Street.

The CR group is our 'movement.' It is the focus of our political activities, and the basis of our struggle to free ourselves and to smash sexism.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY BROTHERS FROM THE PAST

*When I think about my brothers from the past,
I cannot help but wonder, amazed
that they ever broke through the jungle
of American male-chauvinism, that desert
called American culture, that wilderness
that spans our free country with loneliness from
shore to shore,
that they broke out to seek their own way
and often found it in dark alleys of guilt
and fear, of pain and shame.
And where are they now, my Gay brothers of the past—
a thousand bachelors and unmarried men.*

*I wonder why Fred never married. He's such a beautiful guy.
Maybe he's shy.
Maybe he never found the right girl.
I don't think he could ever leave his mother.*

*When I think about my brothers from the past
I hate all of you in my own rage,
the rage of women who bite their knuckles
and rip up the arms of old chairs—
how can I let it all out!
But right-on to the Revolution and if
you could only see the pain of a long time's bearing
and a long time's hiding
then you would not have to ask anymore questions
about why are your Gay brothers so very
together and frivolous
and funny and bitter
and happy
and glad*

—PERRY BRASS



*I do not want to be alone.
I want to touch a thousand souls
with my light
I want to tickle the stars with my fire
to dance and sparkle and glitter
in the end we will know who we are,
a fire cannot hide from our sparks
in fire the charge of ecstasy:
Gay is energy.
if only you will come with me
and forget the culture
waiting to die outside*

—PERRY BRASS

FOR STERLING WITH LOVE AND RESENTMENT

*Curled up next to me on the bed
(But you're too bulky to be curled up)
Falling asleep and mumbling that you are so tired
Because you hadn't been able to fall asleep without me the
night before
And so here we are and you say 'now I can sleep'*

*But what about me? I had no sleep last night
that is my own common problem and was it because I wasn't with you
Sometimes that has been it, but there are so many other phantoms
to haunt me awake*

*And now yes, I am glad to be with you and it is nice to watch
You sleep
Predictably like a little boy
And I know you are dreaming and I am watching you and so
I let you direct the scene and would even be glad to*

*But I fidget for a book. After two or three false starts find one
And make a cup of tea then place myself around you on the bed
And read it
It is my scene now and I pause to watch myself
But soon forget
Reading Sylvia Plath murmuring dead
She takes me back to myself*

*Where I was the other night when I laid next to you and mumbled
Something about feeling safe to sleep and watched me
Did you know that braced against your body, I saw myself
Burning and body's flesh bubbling in the reflection of shiney
Metal of jet planes crashing
Three times from the sky, before you woke me
To say some loving thing.*

—CHRIS DOUGLASS

surviving psychotherapy

by JAMES COLEMAN

Through such actions as the disruption of last summer's American Psychiatric Association convention, the Gay Liberation movement has focussed attention on psychiatrists' treatment of homosexuality. Some writers have criticized Freudian and neo-Freudian theories of homosexuality; others have exposed barbaric clinical practices such as the use of electroshock "therapy." Little has been written, however, about the experience of psychotherapy itself.

My own experiences were not dramatic: I never had shock treatment, I never encountered the gay analogue of the hair-raisingly male-chauvinist statements reported by some Women's Liberation activists who have had psychotherapy.

My therapists—there were three over the years—were all intelligent, somewhat sensitive men. I cannot even claim that they tried to convince me that homosexuality was an illness: product of an orthodox upbringing, I was convinced before I ever consulted them. All I can claim is that their treatment contributed nothing to my awareness of myself and even retarded it; that this was connected to their view of homosexuality as an illness; that my self-understanding eventually grew from quite different sources.

I first applied the term "homosexual" to myself when I was fourteen. If I wasn't then an irreversible homosexual, I was fast becoming one: almost all my sexual feelings were toward males, virtually none toward females. I sought psychotherapy when I was seventeen, basically because I desperately desired to be heterosexual. I was in therapy in my last year in high school and for four years in college. Nothing changed—though I did gain insight into various personal and especially family relationships. For two years after college I was a teacher—then I was fired for a homosexual affair with a student. Beginning graduate school, I also began therapy again, and continued for five years on a once- and twice-weekly basis.

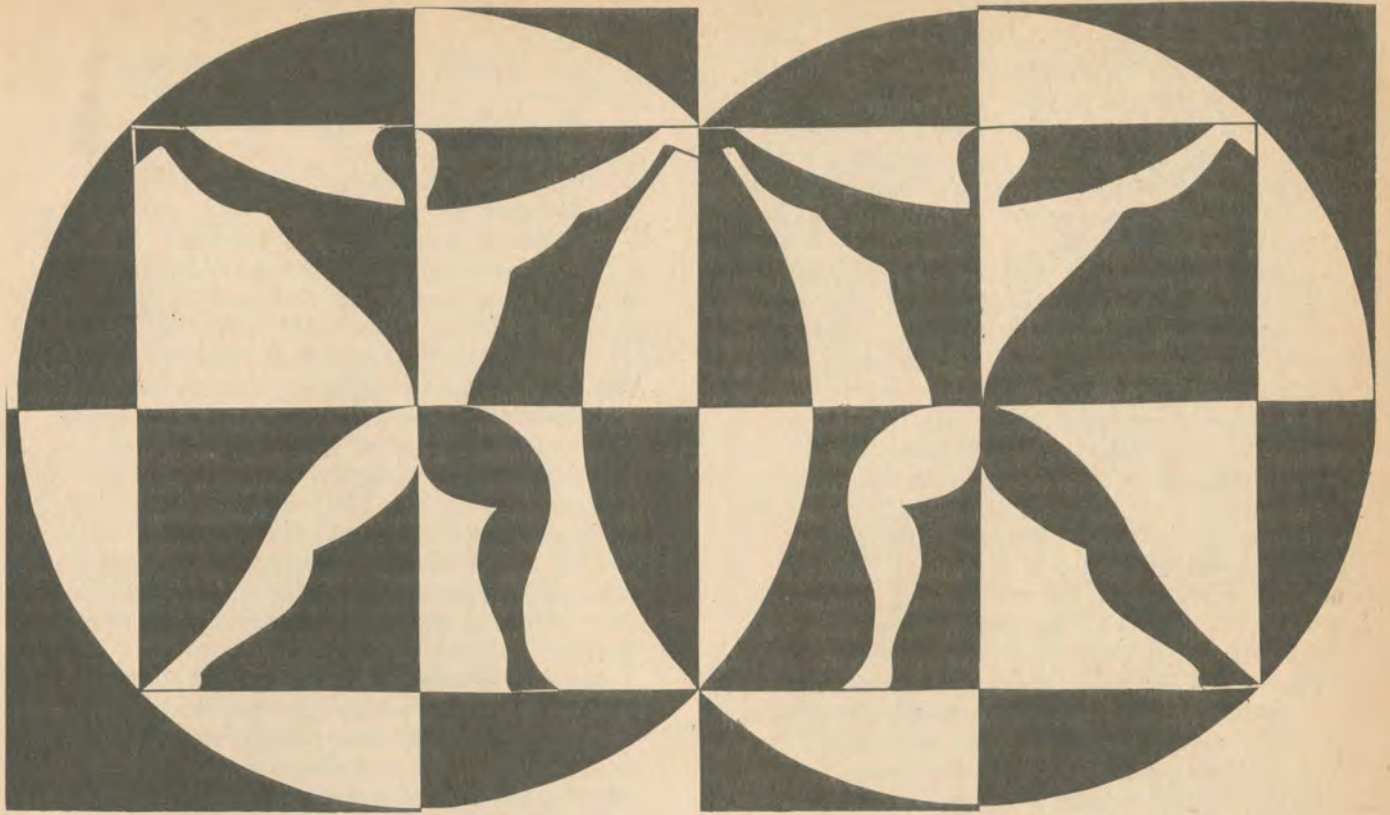
In my teens I tried actively not to be homosexual. Even when I stopped trying, at 22, I didn't accept being gay—I merely decided to express it *until something changed*, because I realized that in trying not to love men, I was losing the ability to love at all. Not until I was 25 did I begin to see homosexuality

as something that shouldn't be despised, and not until I was 28—less than two years ago—did I "come out" in the sense of beginning to live openly as a homosexual. Only then, moreover, did I actively step into gay life and begin to meet other gay people. During those fourteen years, from 14 to 28, I had almost no sexual contacts and was, naturally, unhappy, frustrated, and confused. If my entry into gay life seems unusually late, I am convinced this isn't so: while manning a Gay Liberation telephone earlier this year, I talked to many more like myself.

During those fourteen years of waste and unnecessary grief, my psychotherapists exposed none of what was really wrong. Please note: this means, what I now believe was really wrong. Biased, yes—but true in my experience; I will stand on my judgment and on that standard so regularly invoked by psychotherapists themselves, success. In my opinion, I am healthier now.

I was not the happy homosexual who doesn't enter Dr. Socarides' office (and doesn't enter his statistics). There I was—in my teens, guilty about masturbation (my only form of sexual expression) and about homosexuality; occasionally thinking of suicide; drawn into passionate friendships with "straight" males and either guilty about the sexual element or blind to it; infrequently but persistently revealing the truth to certain friends (but only in conversation) and sometimes, very infrequently, making tentative sexual advances—usually rejected. In later years, fewer self-revelations (I had control of myself now, achieved with the aid of my psychotherapists: my new rule, the self-isolating rule of every "closet queen," was that I never told anyone unless it was necessary) and more frequent advances.

In therapy, I looked for the factors which had caused my homosexuality. It did not occur to me that no one asked what caused heterosexuality, or that the two questions stood on a par. None of my psychotherapists ever pointed this out. When discussing my urge to self-revelation, my therapists and I explored the dynamics of this "Dostoevskian" manifestation—guilt, eagerness for punishment combined with eagerness for acceptance, etc. All this, I must make clear, was true—I *was* guilty, eager for punishment, and eager for acceptance.



But while exploring this (and, as I mentioned, helping me master the urge) none of my therapists exposed to me the simple, blinding underlying truth that in a society which condemns homosexuality and hence forces it to be secret, the homosexual will wish to break out of secrecy by telling someone—and hence that what needed to be explored was not my urge to confide, but the question why I confided rather than making sexual advances, or seeking gay society where I could find company and sex with less risk. That this was the real question I had to figure out myself, at 28.

Similarly, my therapists spent much time trying to discover why my relationships with straight friends were so passionate—rather than asking me why I formed these passionate relationships *with straights*. Similarly, after the homosexual affair which lost me my teaching job—a very warm relationship which has continued, intermittently, to this day—I brought to my next therapist the datum that while in bed with my lover, I felt completely harmonious and “natural,” not “sick” at all and not even guilty.

Although this contradicted the very basis of the feeling which led me to psychotherapy, my therapist never took the initiative in exploring the contradiction. It was left to me—because of this and because of other factors—to begin wondering exactly how sick I would feel if there were no stigma attached to being gay.

The failure to ask such questions might be thought to result from the “non-directive” quality which is supposed to characterize psychotherapy. But elsewhere, my therapists *were* “directive.” Very late, actually while I was “coming out” through Gay Liberation, I had a sexual affair with a woman (also a warm one, interrupted only by circumstances). To this my therapist’s response was positive: with a little smile, “Well—I see *something* has ‘come out.’”

The therapist’s cues revealed clearly enough the idea of a repressed heterosexuality which *should* be “brought out,” and though Freudian theory assumes an inborn bisexuality (an assumption I don’t share, not regarding *any* particular form of sexuality as inborn), this theory assumes that repressed *homosexuality shouldn’t* be brought out, but should be sublimated. Thus psychotherapy, in my case, was directive indeed.

Rather than from “non-direction,” the omissions of my therapists seem to me now, to have resulted from their own assumption that I was, by definition, sick—that homosexuality (but not heterosexuality) is a pathology. It did not occur to them to question my own identical preconception. Questions which might have been suggested by a skeptical view on this point never occurred to them.

And so the therapists failed to help me understand my situation—to overcome my own lack of understanding. Even from a viewpoint assuming homosexuality to be a pathology, I would think, it would remain true *in fact* that my urge to self-revelation was related to my *social* isolation as a homosexual, and was self-preservative, although neurotically so—that what was self-destructive was my confiding in the wrong people.

But my therapists never helped me to understand this. To have done so would probably have “directed” me toward gay life. And, if I hadn’t already been moving away from psychotherapy, after my heterosexual affair (if it had occurred at all) my therapist would have encouraged me to mull over that experience, to try to cultivate my heterosexual impulse. . . and to waste another 10 years on top of the 14 I had wasted already.

The therapists’ theory made them incapable of viewing my situation as I now would view it. If I understand it, their view was that the conflicts in my mind about

being homosexual indicated a very strong heterosexual impulse being checked subconsciously. In my view today, they indicated a very strong socially-conditioned dread of being gay, combined with certain patterns—such as the tendency to be attracted only to straight men—which were related to the inability to think of myself as gay and which created impossible (and, I would now add, unnecessary) conflicts between my sexual impulses and my need for ordinary friendship. (Only in the last year has this conflict become unnecessary: until now, gay people have either had to repress their gay nature while with straight friends, or to make their entire social life among gay people. I wonder how many psychotherapists, exploring this conflict with thousands of gay patients, have tried to expose the *socially-conditioned* nature of this conflict.) *In short, psychotherapy could not help me to understand my situation because it did not—and given its theoretical basis, could not—encourage me to think of my conflicts as resulting from being gay (and unsure about it) in particular social conditions.*

In more than five years of on-and-off psychotherapy, none of my therapists ever voiced so much as a suggestion that the pain, loneliness, self-doubt and self-destructive feelings which so many homosexuals experience was a *social* problem; that psychological symptoms experienced by so many individuals might stem from a common social situation. Today, this seems to me, if not self-evident, at least more plausible than the psychiatrists' contrasting view that the symptoms reflect a universal psychology of homosexuality—on whose features none of them can agree. But I had to figure this out for myself.

How did I come to do so? Although therapy did help me to understand many side issues, my understanding of being gay comes from social movements. My first step toward health—oh yes, I was sick: I was unable to view myself as I was—came when I was 22, in my determination to find love where I could. This step of simple human survival, never suggested by any of my therapists, left me still viewing myself as an inferior creature. The first suggestion that homosexuals were unhappy not because we were sick but because we were oppressed, came from a friend, who *not* coincidentally was a revolutionary socialist, who influenced me as I got deeply into the student radical movement at the late and lucky age of 25.

My first real understanding of my oppression, however, came from the women's liberation movement. Some of my political acquaintances were very active in it. The movement's critique of the social stigmas attached to being a woman, of the myths of female personality type and the role of psychoanalytic theory in perpetuating those myths, of the role of social factors in producing the *real* personality disfigurements women suffered—and most of all, the critique of the psychoanalytic treatment of all this as personal neurosis demanding personal therapy rather than as social oppression demanding a collective struggle—all this gave me my first real understanding of myself.

Further, my fear and dislike of women, which my therapists and I had spent much time discussing, began to change as I saw—from the movement, not from my therapists—that women were not to be related to

primarily sexually, something I had always felt unable to do. Simultaneously I began seeing women and myself as human beings.

Finally gay liberation. . . but it shouldn't be necessary to describe how *this* changed my view of myself. It did, however, change the direction and content of my life.

My break with psychotherapy came gradually. Women's liberation made me take seriously the critique of psychoanalytic theory as regards women, but this was tangential to my own therapy. Very late, relations with my therapist became strained when, discussing my mother and her ambitions for me, he referred to her using me as "her penis." I saw that what women's liberationists had been saying was true: my mother's ambitious and successful life, in which she had always had to struggle against the limits placed on her as a woman, was to my therapist a manifestation of the desire for a penis rather than a rebellion against constraints which warred against her great abilities. Had it not been for the women's movement, I might have accepted this "analysis"—and found a new, apparently objective way to despise my mother, rather than coming to understand her.

Instead, I asked myself how this therapy, which regarded women so barbarically, regarded me. And I asked my therapist. His reply, which covered several sessions and touched on both women and homosexuals, was roughly that homosexuality could be regarded as a pathology (and heterosexuality could not) because in this society the family with male occupying a dominant role, female a subordinate role, and the child's identification *with the roles* of the parent of the same sex, was the dominant pattern (he said "norm"). We agreed that in terms of this pattern both an "aggressive" woman, such as my mother, and a homosexual child were deviant cases.

We differed in that he insisted that this deviance be viewed simply in terms of its psychic determinants, a position which I maintained, and he denied, was equivalent to refusing to seriously question the psychic costs of the dominant pattern, refusing to ask whether alternative patterns might rationally be preferred, and refusing to consider whether a *social* struggle, which might make alternatives possible, was a possible solution to "personal" problems.

I insisted that if no positive value were placed on the dominant pattern, then the deviant manifestation had to be viewed not as a psychopathology, but as a manifestation of a pattern which might, in the absence of social pressures, be as fulfilling or more fulfilling than the dominant one, but which was socially disapproved. Thus a woman or a homosexual should be encouraged to see social norms as *part of his or her "problem."* This my therapist denied.

In the midst of this argument, I travelled to another city. Since I was now active in Gay Liberation, I asked the person I was visiting to ask whether a Gay Liberation group existed there. None did, but as a result of his queries, I was telephoned at his house by a man who said he was gay. He asked about Gay Liberation, but refused to come see us. He also refused to give his last name, but he told me his profession—psychologist.

It was clear to me that a profession whose homosexual members had to conceal themselves could not

adequately counsel homosexuals. Returning home, I related the incident to my therapist. His reply was that my caller had been a psychologist, not a psychoanalyst. Suppose he had been one? My therapist replied that there were no homosexual psychoanalysts. In fact, he repeated this three times, as I twice assumed that I had heard him wrong. Some psychoanalysts, he added, did "decompensate" and become active homosexuals—but they "stopped being psychoanalysts."

It may be true that psychoanalysts found out as gay are forced to give up practice—but my therapist had claimed much more. If homosexuality is a pathology, *there can be* no homosexual psychoanalysts. (Every prospective analyst must be analysed; an analysis whose subject remains homosexual is, by definition, unsuccessful.) The conclusion was that *my therapist's theoretical outlook had so stereotyped his perceptions as to lead him to deny reality.*

This particular incident led to my terminating therapy, but in fact I had been moving in that direction for years — every step I took toward living my life as a homosexual, toward being less concealing, toward being, finally, openly and proudly gay, was a step toward ending a "therapy" which encouraged none of this. Even during the few weeks in which I was making the decision to join Gay Liberation, my therapist, while not actively attempting to dissuade me, cautioned me — it was another of my comrades in the revolutionary movement who, viewing my condition as one of oppression, urged me toward this step.

I, of course, chose on the basis of my inclinations, and I have only my life to offer as evidence that my choice was correct. The last year has been not so much one of the happiest of my life, as one of the *few* happy years in my life. Not that I have found bliss — exactly the contrary, I am aware of enough real problems to be confident that the happiness too is real.

I do not believe this happiness would have been predicted by my therapists. (Similarly the experience of several Gay Liberation activists who, with relatively little psychic strain, "came out" as homosexuals for the first time *after* several years of well-adjusted heterosex-



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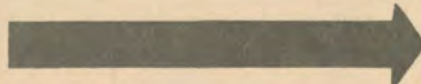
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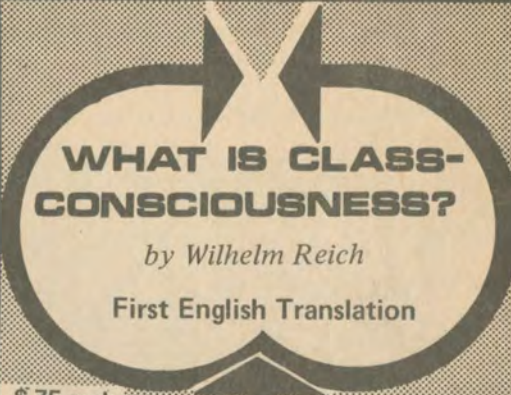



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ual life, would not have been predicted by psychoanalytic theory. Their "coming out" so clearly represents an expressing of previously unexpressed sides of themselves, rather than a running from the problems of maturity; and their lack of strain is so clearly conditioned not by an inner dynamic, but by the availability of a social alternative.)

At the same time, my happiness is all too plainly conjunctural — had I been born 20 years sooner, I would have reached this point, if at all, at 48 rather than 28, that is, in 1970 or 1971 as I did in fact — for it was *Gay Liberation* and not psychotherapy which led to my happiness. And had circumstances not led me into the radical movement, into close touch with Women's Liberation, into an environment in which the step into *Gay Liberation* was a fairly easy one, encouraged by my comrades — I might never have made this step.

Finally, had I entered gay life in my teens, ten or twelve years ago, I would have escaped from total isolation into a closet society of my kind — but I would not have found a truly healthy gay society: this could not have existed then, could not exist until the gay movement began. And it still will not exist, for the mass of gay people, until the society as a whole is changed — and not by psychotherapy, but by the winds of social revolt.

My personal happiness, unfinished as it is, required a social movement as its prerequisite. And all over the United States there are thousands in psychotherapy, and millions more under the pervasive influence of psychiatric dogma, who will never take the same steps until they are reached, not by doctors, but by the idea that it is possible to change their circumstances through struggle. As Trotsky said of his comrade Adolf Yoffe, several years in analysis and later an outstanding Bolshevik diplomat, "The revolution healed Yoffe better than psychoanalysis of all his complexes."

(Reprinted from *Gay Liberator*)

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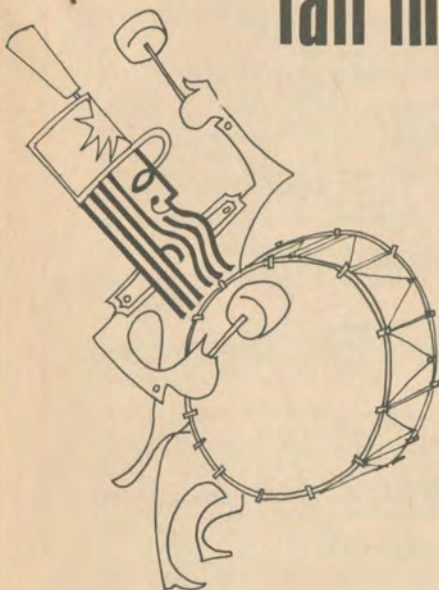
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Gay Liberation Front, Phoenix
% Alan Butcher, GSA
1842 North 12th St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85006

Gay Liberation Arizona Desert
(GLAD)
P. O. Box 117
Tempe, Arizona 85281

CALIFORNIA

Northern

Gay Women's Rap, Berkeley
2524 Grant Street
Berkeley, Calif. 94703

Students for Gay Power
Eshelman Hall - 3rd Floor
University of California
Berkeley, Calif. 94720

Gay Liberation Community Syndicate/
Committee of Concern for Homosexuals/
Radical Gay Christians
Gay Switchboard, Berkeley/
Gay Liberation Front, Berkeley/ and
Third World Gay People
P. O. Box 4089
Berkeley, Calif. 94704

Homosexual Action Forum
2728 Durant Ave.
Berkeley, Calif. 94705

Gay Students Union, UC Berkeley
% Dave Kleinberg
2836 Ashby Ave.
Berkeley, Calif. 94705

Gay Women's Liberation
University of California
1634 Milvin No. 2
Berkeley, Calif. 94709

Graduate Theological Union
Gay Seminarists
2441 LeConte
Berkeley, Calif. 94709

Gay Women's Liberation, Oakland
2420 Grande Vista Ave.
Oakland, Calif. 94601

Gay Rap, Hayward
530 - 41st Street, Apt. 10
Oakland, Calif. 94541

Gay Liberation Front, Contra Costa
% Gary Allen
1894 Farm Bureau Road
Concord, Calif. 94520

Gay Student Union, Stanford
P. O. Box 9376
Stanford, Calif. 94305

Gay Liberation Front, San Francisco
265 Central Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94117

"Sisters"
1005 Market St., Rm. 208
San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Society for Individual Rights
SIR Community Center
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San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Council on Religion and
the Homosexual/
National Sex and Drug Forums
% Glide Urban Center
330 Ellis Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94102

Vanguard Publications:
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% Keith St. Clare
203 Clayton Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Gay Liberation Front, S.F. State Coll
% Gerald Jacks
195 Alhambra Street, No. 9
San Francisco, Calif. 94115

Gay Teenagers, San Francisco
1055 - 56th Street
Oakland, Calif. 94609

San Francisco Gay Rap
2729-B Calif. Street, or
2012 Pine Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94115

Native American Gay Rap Group
605 Brunswick Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94112

Daughters of Bilitis (Natl. Hdqts.)
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San Francisco, Calif. 94103

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348 Ellis Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94102

Spanish Speaking Gay Rap Group
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San Francisco, Calif. 94112

Gay Activists Alliance, S.F.
P. O. Box 1528
San Francisco, Calif. 95101

Tavern Guild of S.F.
% William Plath
83 Sixth Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Gay Women's Liberation
% Women's Center
317 Sanchez
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Gay Liberation Front
War Resisters League
833 Haight
San Francisco, Calif. 94117

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University of Calif. at Davis
Student Activities Mem. Union
Davis, Calif. 95616

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20-B Eucalyptus Street
Petaluma, Calif. 94952

Gay Liberation Front, Riverside
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3631-A Comer Street
Riverside, Calif. 95206

Gay Liberation Front, Modesto
% Vanich Shatley
1711 Dallas Street
Modesto, Calif. 95351

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Sonoma State College
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Rohnert Park, Calif. 94928

GLF, San Francisco St. College
% Charles Thorp
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San Francisco, Calif. 94115

National Transsexual Counseling Unit
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San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Lesbian Mothers Union
651 Duncan
San Francisco, Calif. 94131

Emmaus House Info. Center
1488 Vallejo
San Francisco, Calif. 94109

Gay Women's News Service
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Gay Liberation Front, San Jose
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San Jose, Calif. 95112

Gay Women's Liberation
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San Francisco, Calif. 94115

Gay Liberation Front, San Francisco
Box 40397
San Francisco, Calif. 94140

Gay Student Union
Calif. State College
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Hayward, Calif. 94542

Sodom Radical Bisexual
Free Communist Youth
Box 4132
Hayward, Calif. 94544

Gay Freedom Alliance
Box 3935
Hayward, Calif. 94544

Gay Liberation Front, Sacramento
% Edgar Carpenter
2215 "P" Street No. 2
Sacramento, Calif. 95816

Nova
Box 6184
Albany, Calif. 94706

Gay Encounter
Box 15765
Sacramento, Calif.

Southern

Gay Liberation Front,
Occidental College
P. O. Box 41035
Los Angeles, Calif. 90041

One Inc. (Natl. Hdqts.)
2256 Venice Blvd.
Los Angeles Calif. 90006

Homophile Effort for
Legal Protection (HELP)
P. O. Box 3007
Hollywood, Calif. 90028

Gay Community Service Center
1614 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90017

Brotherhood of David
(Gay Fellowship in the Arts)
701 S. Gramercy Drive No. 120
Los Angeles, Calif. 90005

Gay Women's Service Center
1168 Glendale Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90026

Lesbian Feminists
1027 South Crenshaw Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90019

Gay Liberation Front, Venice
577 1/2 North Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004

S. Calif. Council on Religion
and the Homosexual
3330 West Adams Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90018

Daughters of Bilitis, L.A.
D.O.B. Center
1910 South Vermont Street
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Dignity (Gay Catholics)
P. O. Box 6161
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And More Groups...

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Isla Vista, Calif. 93027

Orange County Homosexual
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P. O. Box 1876
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P. O. Box 2882
San Diego, Calif. 92112

Gay Liberation Front, Fresno
% Art Lopez
2240 North Van Ness Ave.
Fresno, Calif. 93407

Peninsula Gay Switchboard
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Mountain View, Calif. 94040

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Revolutionary Lesbians
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Venice Calif. 90291

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Peninsula Gay Women's Switchboard
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Portola Valley, Calif. 94025

San Gabriel Valley Gay Liberation
Altadena Community Church
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Daughters of Bilitis
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Daughters and Sons of Society
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Society of Anubis
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Azusa, Calif. 91702

Gay Liberation Front, Long Beach
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% Jim Lahey
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Boulder, Calif. 80302

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Gay Liberation Front, New Haven
% Hank Major
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New Haven, Conn. 06519

Kalos Society/GLF of Bridgeport
786 Grand Street
Bridgeport, Conn. 06604

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New Haven, Conn. 06520

N.A.C.H.O. Historical Archives
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Hartford, Conn. 06103

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New Haven, Conn. 06511

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George Washington Univ.
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Washington, D.C. 20006

Gay Activists Alliance
P. O. Box 2554
Washington, D.C. 20013

Mattachine Society of Washington
P. O. Box 1032
Washington, D.C. 20013

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Washington, D.C. 20008

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% Center for Dialog
2175 N.W. 26th St.
Miami, Fla. 33142

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Miami, Fla. 33142

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Gainesville, Fla. 32601

Gainesville Legal Collective
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Gainesville, Fla. 32601

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Gay Liberation Front, Atlanta
% Great Speckled Bird
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Atlanta, Ga. 30308

HAWAII

Gay Community Alliance
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Hemenway Hall, Univ. of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Gay Students Union
Univ. of Hawaii
% John Moore
1545 Piikoi No. 302
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

ILLINOIS

Gay Liberation Front
Northern Illinois University
Student Activities Office, Box 74
DeKalb, Ill. 60115

Gay Liberation Front, Dekalb
% News of Nowhere
P. O. Box 501
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Daughters of Bilitis
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State University of Illinois
Student Activities Center
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Chicago, Ill. 60614

One in Chicago
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Chicago, Ill. 60690

Chicago Gay Alliance
%GCC - 171 West Elm St.
Chicago, Ill. 60614

Northwestern University, GLF
Scott Hall Activities Office
Evanston, Ill. 60201

GLF, Loyola Univ. Campus Ctr.
6525 N. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, Ill. 60626

GLF - Chicago
% Skeist
2034 N. Halsted
Chicago, Ill. 60614

Homophile Lib. Alliance
% Richard Chinn
343 S. Dearborn No. 1416
Chicago, Ill. 60604

GLF - Roosevelt Univ
Student Activities Bureau
430 S. Michigan
Chicago, Ill. 60605

GLF - Univ. of Illinois
Circle Campus
% Chicago Circle Ctr.
750 S. Halstead No. 312C
Chicago, Ill. 60607

Chicago Committee on
Gay People and the Law
5801 S. Harper
Chicago, Ill.

Homosexuals Organized for
Political Education (HOPE)
P. O. Box 310
Chicago, Ill. 60690

And More Places...

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Gay Liberation Front
% Jim Doherty
415 E. Smith St. No. 2
Bloomington, Ind.

Indianapolis Gay Liberation Front
2126 N. College Ave.
Indianapolis, Ind. 46202

IOWA

Gay Liberation Front, Iowa City
Activities Center
Iowa Memorial Union
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Gay Cell
% Ain't I a Woman
Box 1169
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

KANSAS

GLF, Lawrence
P. O. Box 234
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

The Liberties
P. O. Box 3012
Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66203

KENTUCKY

Gay Liberation Front, Louisville
P. O. Box 175
Louisville, Ky. 40201

LOUISIANA

Gay Liberation Front,
New Orleans
P. O. Box 19001
New Orleans, La. 70119

MARYLAND

Gay Liberation Front
3028 Greenmount Ave.
Baltimore, Md. 21218

GAA - Baltimore
P. O. Box 183
Baltimore, Md. 21203

Homophile Social League
5601 Longfellow St. No. 301
Riverdale, Md. 20840

Student Homophile Association
Gay Students Association
University of Maryland
3rd Fl. Attic, Student Union
College Park, Md.

MASSACHUSETTS

Daughters of Bilitis, Boston
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Gay Liberation Front, Amherst
RSO-378
Student Activities Center
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Cambridge, Mass. 02140

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Boston, Mass. 02114

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Student Activities Office
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Boston, Mass. 02215

Homosexuals Intransigent
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Amherst, Mass. 01002

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MICHIGAN

MSU Gay Liberation Front
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Michigan State University
E. Lansing, Mich. 48823

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% James Toy
722 Arbor Street
Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

Gay Liberation Front, Detroit &
gay student union, Wayne St. Univ.
P. O. Box 631-A
Detroit, Mich. 48232

Gay Youth
3025 E. Grand Blvd. apt. 209
Detroit, Mich.

One, Inc.
P. O. Box 7926
Kercheval Station
Detroit, Mich. 48215

Gay Liberation Front, Port Huron
P. O. Box 472
Port Huron, Mich. 48060

Revolutionary Lesbians
Box 305
Ann Arbor, Mich. 48107

Daughters of Bilitis
Box 244
Greenfield Station
Dearborn, Mich. 48120

Western Michigan Gay Alliance
% Hillary Bissell
Route 3
Middleville, Mich. 49333

Kalamazoo Gay Liberation
Student Services Bldg. Box 291
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Mich. 49001

MINNESOTA

Free: Gay Liberation of Minnesota
Coffman Memorial Union, B-67
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn. 55455

Gay House Inc.
216 Ridgewood Ave.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55404

Minn. Council for the Church
and the Homosexual
122 W. Frankling, Rm. 508
Minneapolis, Minn. 55404

Gay Liberation Front
% Kathy Kerr
Carleton College
Morthfield, Minn.

MISSOURI

Gay Liberation Front, St. Louis
% Mike Yore
4530 McPherson St.
St. Louis, Mo. 63108

Homosexual Underground Action Comm.
3800 McGee St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64111

Gay Liberation Front
Washington University
P. O. Box 1128
St. Louis, Mo. 63130

Gay Women's Liberation Union
3800 McGee St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64111

National Homophile Center
Graduate Inst. for Behavior
420 E. 37th St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64109

Mandrake
P. O. Box 7213
St. Louis, Mo. 63177

MONTANA

Gay Liberation Front, Billings
Box 97, Rocky Mountain College
Billings, Montana 59102

NEBRASKA

Gay Action Group
333 North 14th St.
Lincoln, Nebr. 68508

Lincoln-Omaha Council on Religion
and the Homosexual
Station "B", P. O. Box 2323
Lincoln, Nebr. 68502

NEVADA

Daughters of Bilitis, Reno
Washington Station, Box 5025
Reno, Nevada 89503

NEW JERSEY

GAA-Bergen County
% 32 Bridge St.
Hackensack, N. J. 07601

Daughters of Bilitis, N.J.
P. O. Box 62
Fanwood, N.J. 07023

Student Homophile League
of Rutgers
R.P.O. 2901
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

Gay Liberation Front of N.J.
P. O. Box 845
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901

Task Force on Gay Liberation
% Israel Fishman
Upsala College Library
East Orange, N.J. 07091

National Committee on Sexual
Civil Liberties
% Arthur Warner
98 Olden Lane
Princeton, N.J. 08540

NEW MEXICO

Gay Liberation Front, Albuquerque
1524 Lead Ave. S.E., apt. 3
Albuquerque, N. M.

Circle of Loving Companions
% Henry Hay, P.O. Box 8
San Juan Pueblo, N. M. 87566

NEW YORK CITY & Long Island

Gay People at Columbia
Earl Hall - Rm 105
Columbia University
N.Y., N.Y. 10027

Radicalesbians, NYC
141 Prince St. Loft 2
N.Y., N.Y. 10012

Gay Students Liberation
% Religious Center
New York University
2 Washington Sq. North
N.Y., N.Y. 10003

Gay Activist Alliance
99 Wooster
N.Y., N.Y. 10012

Gay Women's Liberation Front
% Women's Liberation Center
36 West 22nd St.
N.Y., N.Y. 10016

Daughters of Bilitis, NYC
141 Prince St. Loft 2
N.Y., N.Y. 10012

Mattachine Society of NYC
% Michael Kotis
243 West End Ave.
N.Y., N.Y. 10023

And More Things...

Gay People at City College
Findlay Student Center
College of the City of N.Y.
Convent Ave. at West 135th St.
N.Y., N.Y. 10031

Homosexuals Intransigent
% Craig Schoonmaker
127 Riverside Drive
N.Y., N.Y. 10024

Queens
% Lee G. Brewster
626 East 14th Street
N.Y., N.Y. 10009

West Side Discussion Group
Cathedral Station, Box 502
N.Y., N.Y. 10025

Gay Liberation News Service
% Michael Brown
324 E. 13th Street
N.Y., N.Y. 10003

Gay Counseling Collective
(Tues.-Fri. eves.-6-10 p.m.)
% Calvary Epis. Church
61 Gramacy Park (21st & Park Ave. So.)
N.Y., N.Y.

A New Place
Brooklyn GLF Coffeehouse
(Wed. & Sun. eves.-8 p.m.)
323 Baltic
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Gay Liberation Front
% Polity
SUNY at Stonybrook
Stony Brook, L.I., N.Y. 11790

Gay Caucus of Vietnam Veterans
Against the War
% Vince Muscari
25 W. 26th St.
N.Y., N.Y. 10010

Gay Revolutionary Party
Old Chelsea Station
P. O. Box 410
N.Y., N.Y. 10011

Oscar Wilde Mem. Bookshop
291 Mercer St.
N.Y., N.Y. 10003

Gay Activist Alliance of L.I.
Box 493
Valley Stream, L.I., N.Y. 11580

Gay Youth
Mark Wald
% GAA of L.I.
Box 493
Valley Stream, L.I., N.Y. 11580

NEW YORK STATE

Gay Liberation Front, Rochester
Todd Union - Univ. of Rochester
River Campus Station
Rochester, N.Y. 14627

Gay Liberation Front, Binghamton
Box 57, Harpur SUNY
Binghamton, N.Y. 13901

Gay Liberation Front, Tri-Cities
P. O. Box 131
Albany, N.Y. 12201

Gay Liberation Front, Bard
Bard College
Box 87
Annandale-on-the-Hudson, N.Y. 12504

Gay Liberation Front, Buffalo
180 North Pearl Street
Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

Gay Liberation Front, Syracuse
% Gregory Charles
122 Erie Street
Syracuse, N.Y. 13205

Radicalesbians, Cornell
24 Willard Straight Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Gay Liberation Front, Utica
% Ronald Denning
613 Nichols Street
Utica, N.Y. 13501

Mattachine Society of the
Niagara Frontier
% Lee Tracy
252 Dart Street
Buffalo, N.Y.

NORTH CAROLINA

Triangle Gay Alliance
412 Kinsey St.
Raleigh, N.C. 27603

OHIO

Daughters of Bilitis, Cleveland
P. O. Box 20335
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

Gay Liberation Front, Columbus
% Bruce Seiple
50 West 10th St. No. 1
Columbus, Ohio 43201

Society for Individual Rights
P. O. Box 9761
Columbus, Ohio 43206

Cleveland Mattachine Society
10404 Clifton Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44102

Cincinnati Mattachine
P. O. Box 625
Cincinnati, Ohio 45201

Gay Liberation Front, Oberlin
% Pat Broome
157 N. Professor
Oberlin, Ohio 44074

Cleveland GAA
Box 91343
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

Personal Rights Organization
Old West End Station, Box 4642
Toledo, Ohio 43620

Personal Rights Organization
Box 2522
Youngstown, Ohio 45507

Gay Liberation Front-Antioch
% Jonathan Klein
Antioch College Union
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

OREGON

Gay People's Alliance
% Ted Edwards, Findrack Station
Rt. 1, Box 501, High Pass Road
Junction City, Oregon 97448

Gay Liberation Front
215 S.E. Ninth
Portland, Oregon 97214

Gay Liberation Front, Males
% Ken Allison
3749 S.E. Yamhill
Portland, Oregon 97214

Daughters of Bilitis
P. O. Box 8857
Portland, Oregon 97208

Portland State U. Gay Liberation
19235 Pilkington
Lake Oswego, Oregon

PENNSYLVANIA

Radicalesbians
P. O. Box 1943
Philadelphia, Pa. 19105

Homophile Action League
256 S. 45th Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19139

Gay Liberation Fellows
P. O. Box 13023
Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

Task Force on Religion
and the Homosexual
% Metropolitan Christian Council
211 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

Mattachine Society, Pittsburgh
Shadyside Station, Box 10144
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232

LE HI HO
Moravian Station
P. O. Box 1003
Bethlehem, Pa. 18018

Homophiles of Penn. State
P. O. Box 218
State College, Pa. 16801

Homophile Action League
928 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

Philadelphia Action Committee
for Equality
% Jay's Place
1511 Pine Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

RHODE ISLAND

Gay Liberation Movement
% Chaplains or Student Act. Offcs.
Brown University
Providence, R.I. 02912

G. I. Gay Liberation
% Potemkin Bookshop
47 Farewell Street
Newport, R.I. 02840

Brown University Gay Liberation
% Tom Littler
382 Brooks St.
Providence, R.I. 02920

TENNESSEE

Gay Liberation Front, U. of Tenn.
% Kyle McDaniel, Jr.
409 Brown Street
Maryville, Tenn. 37801

Gay Liberation Front
% Jack Johnson, Jr.
121 East Trigg Street
Memphis, Tenn. 38106

GLF-Gary R. Drum
University Station, Box 8607
Knoxville, Tenn. 37916

Gay Students Union
Univ. of Tennessee
% Merle DeVault
P. O. Box 8163, Univ. Station
Knoxville, Tenn. 37916

TEXAS

Purple Star Tribe
P. O. Box 19433
Dallas, Texas 75219

Austin Gay Liberation Front
& U. of Texas Gay Liberation
Box 8107
Austin, Texas 78712
(or in care of The Rag
2326 Guadalupe Ave.
Austin, Texas 78705)

Dallas Council on Religion
and the Homosexual
3133 Inwood Rd.
Dallas, Texas 75235

GLF of San Antonio
% AFSC
109 W. Durango Blvd.
San Antonio, Texas 78204

Circle of Friends
P. O. Box 35852
Dallas, Texas 75235

Our Community
P. O. Box 35852
Dallas, Texas 75235

The Nuntius
4615 Mt. Vernon St.
Houston, Texas 77006

University of Houston
Gay Liberation
University Center
Houston, Texas

Gay Liberation Front, Houston
Box 53221
Houston, Texas 77052

WASHINGTON

Seattle Gay Community Center
102 Cherry
Seattle, Wash. 98104

Dorian Society of Seattle
318 Malden Ave. East
Seattle, Wash. 98102

Gay Liberation Front, Spokane
P. O. Box 1276
Spokane, Wash. 99210

GLF Washington St. Penitentiary
% Roger Benson 118689
Box 520
Walla Walla, Wash.

GLF, Seattle
2057 - 24th Ave. E
Seattle, Wash. 98112

And Still More...

Gay Women's Resource Ctr.
4224 Univ Way N.E.
Seattle, Wash. 98105

WISCONSIN

Gay Liberation Front, Madison
U. of Wisconsin Gay Liberation
10 Langdon St.
Madison, Wis. 53703

Radical Queens
P. O. Box 5457
Milwaukee, Wis. 53211

Gay Liberation Organization
% Joseph Feldhausen
1155 N. 21st Street
Milwaukee, Wis. 53211

FOREIGN NATIONS

CANADA

York University Homophile Assn.
CYSF Office - Rm N-108
Ross Bldg, York University
Downsview, Ontario, Canada

Community Homophile Assn.
of Toronto
6 Charles St. East
Toronto, 285, Ontario, Canada

Univ. of Toronto Homophile Assn.
12 Hart House Circle
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Gay Liberation Front, Vancouver
511 Carroll Street
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Canadian Gay Activists Alliance
1320 Bute St. No. 1604
Vancouver 5, B.C. Canada

International Sex Equality Anonymous
CP 145, Station G
Montreal 18, Quebec, Canada

GLF, Vancouver
P. O. Box 15, Station "A"
Vancouver 1, B.C. Canada

Univ. of Guelph Homophile Assn.
The Ontarian Office
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Univ. of Western Ontario
Homophile Assn.
141 Old Post Rd.
London, Ontario, Canada

Univ. of Waterloo Homophile Assn
Univ. of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

UNITED KINGDOM

London Gay Liberation Front
% Aubrey Walter
329A West End Lane
London NW 6, England

Gay Liberation Front
% Warren Hague
Compendium Bookshop
240 Camden High St.
London, NW 1 England

Committee for Homosexual Equality
28 Kennedy Street
Manchester M2 4BG, England

HOLLAND

C. O. C.
14 Frederiksplein
Amsterdam, Holland

FRANCE

FRONT Homosexuel
d'Action Revolutionnaire
% Tout
73 rue Buffon
Paris 5, France

SWITZERLAND

Minerva Club
Case Postale
1211 Geneve
16 Gran-pre
Switzerland

AUSTRALIA

Daughters of Bilitis - G.P.O.
Box 2131 T
Melbourne, 3001, Australia

Camp, Inc.
Box 5074-G.P.O.
Sydney N.S.W. 2001, Australia

GAY CHURCHES

Metropolitan Community Church
National Headquarters
2201 South Union Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

IN UNITY Magazine
Metropolitan Community Church
2201 South Union Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Metropolitan Community Church
% Chollas View Methodist Church
906 N. 47th St.
San Diego, Calif. 92102

Metropolitan Community Church
Christ Chapel
1259 Victoria St.
Costa Mesa, Calif. 92627

Community of the Love of
Christ/Confraternity of
the Beloved Disciple
P. O. Box 40625
San Francisco, Calif. 94117

Metropolitan Community Church
California Hall
625 Polk St.
San Francisco, Calif. 95816

Metropolitan Community Church
Harmony Mission
2500 Pali Highway
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Psychedelic Venus Church
Sather Gate Station
P. O. Box 4163
Berkeley, Calif. 94704

Metropolitan Community Church
Oakland Mission
440 Santa Clara Ave.
Oakland, Calif. 94609

Metropolitan Community Church
of Denver
Box 11303
Denver, Colo. 80211

Metropolitan Community Church
Phoenix Mission
401 E. Roosevelt St.
Phoenix, Ariz. 75222

Metropolitan Community Church
Dallas Mission
P. O. Box 5944
Dallas, Texas 75222

American Assn. Religious Crusaders
Rev. Billy Hudson
General Delivery
San Houston Station
Houston, Texas 77052

Metropolitan Community Church
New Orleans Mission
P. O. Box 19001
New Orleans, La. 70119

Metropolitan Community Church
Good Shepherd Parish, Chicago
3342 North Broadway
Chicago, Ill. 60657

Metropolitan Community Church
Milwaukee Mission
% MCC Chicago
3342 North Broadway
Chicago, Ill. 60657

Metropolitan Community Church
Columbus Mission
% St. John's Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 9761
Columbus, Ohio 43206

Metropolitan Community Church
Miami Mission
% St. John's Lutheran Church
180 SW 9th St. apt. 7
Miami, Fla. 33101

Slavonic Orthodox Church
% Rev. Richard Drews
P. O. Box 4893
Miami, Fla. 33101

Church of Beloved Disciples
% Fr. Robert Clement
300 - Ninth Ave.
N.Y., N.Y. 10001

Metropolitan Community Church
705 - 7th St., SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

Chapel of St. Francis and St. John
Evangelical Catholic Communion
1620 "S" St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

GAY PUBLICATIONS

Come Out!
(Gay Liberation newspaper)
Box 233
Times Square Station
New York, N.Y. 10036

Fag Rag
(Gay Male newspaper)
% Red Bookstore
91 River Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

The Ladder
(Lesbian magazine)
Box 5025
Washington Station
Reno, Nevada 89503

Gay Sunshine
(Gay Male newspaper)
P. O. Box 40397
San Francisco, Calif. 94080

Manroot
(poetry magazine)
P. O. Box 982
South San Francisco, Calif. 94080

Mother
(Gay Women's newspaper)
P. O. Box 8507
Stanford, Calif. 94305

Spectre
(revolutionary white
separatist lesbians)
P. O. Box 305
Ann Arbor Mich. 48107

Gay Liberator
(Gay Male newspaper)
P. O. Box 631-A
Detroit, Mich. 48232

Sebastian Quill
(literary magazine)
3345 - 17th Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94110

The Effeminit
(Gay Liberation newspaper)
P. O. Box 4089
Berkeley, Calif. 94704

The Furies
(Lesbian-Feminist newspaper)
P. O. Box 8843
Southeast Station
Washington, D. C. 20003

The Body Politic
(Gay Liberation newspaper)
% 65 Kendal Avenue
apt. 8
Toronto 4, Ontario Canada



