

come out!

25c

a liberation forum for the gay community



GAY LIBERATION FRONT

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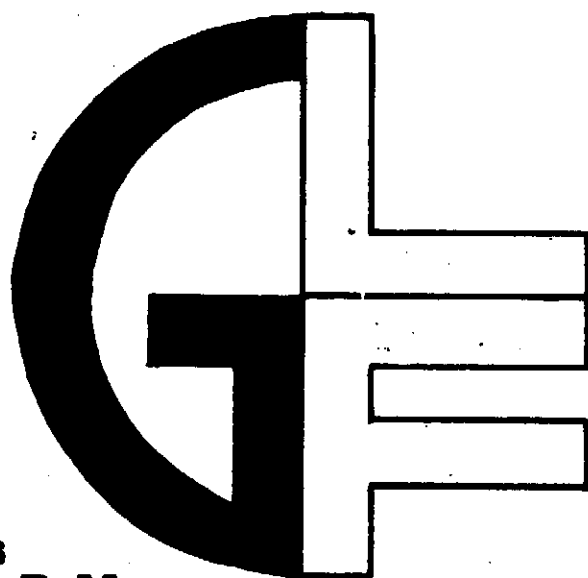
LIBERATION DAY

CHRISTOPHER STREET
LIBERATION DAY
JUNE 28, 1970

LIBERATION DAY



GAY LIBERATION FRONT



OPEN MEETINGS
SUNDAYS - 8:00 P. M.
CHURCH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES
300 9TH AVENUE AT 28TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

OUR LETTERS

607 East Park Avenue No. 1
Tallahassee, Florida, 32301
April 20th, 1970

Dear Gay Friends,

Thank you for your paper and for your efforts to unite us with each other and with those of other oppressed minority groups in our pursuit of common goals. I like your political stand, I like the underlying philosophy of your paper which insists upon homosexuality as a potentially valuable form of human sexual expression, I like your business stand which refuses to succeed by displaying irresponsibly erotic materials (assuming there is a responsible eroticism), and I like those of you who have revealed themselves personally in the pages of COME OUT.

So, here's a check in the amount of \$10.00 for 25 issues, or to help you stay in business. Or, even better, put me on the list for \$5.00 worth of papers, and keep the other \$5.00 as a donation to your (our?) center.

I think you are reaching the good people and helping them find the inner strength to put themselves on the line for homosexuality. So cheers and keep pushing!

Love - Judy Fee
Doctoral Student
Florida State Univ.

17230 Mayfield
Livonia, Mich. 48152

To Whom it May Concern:

Please send me a sample of "Come Out."

Needless to say I am not a homosexual. In fact, I can't even think of another woman touching me. It makes me want to puke. If any of my children (five) turn out to be a homo - I will accept it with the feeling of love that I feel toward them today.

Hooray! for love and understanding. And piss on what narrow minded people think. Thank you for letting me express myself.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Helen Drouillard

P.S. I wish that I were rich so that I could support your cause.

COME OUT!

COME OUT is published by an open GLF Collective. The basic Staff - editors, layout, co-ordinators, etc. - is drawn by lots and changes with each issue. Open contributor's Meetings are held regularly and EVERYONE is encouraged to submit articles, features, artwork, ideas, and criticism. COME OUT - a liberation forum for the Gay Community - is YOUR Newspaper.

Ellen Bedoz
Suzanne Belier
Perry Brass
Ellen Broidy
Steve Danksy
Diana Davis
Sandy DeWine
Mark Giles
Donna Gottshalk
Lois Hart

Bob Kohler
Bernard Lewis
Pat Maxwell
Milani
Linda Rhodes
Martha Shelley
Marty Stephan
Kathy Wakeham
Alan Warshawsky
plus many contributors

Gay Liberation Front is a revolutionary homosexual group of women and men formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished. We reject society's attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of our nature. We are stepping outside of these roles and simplistic myths. We are going to be who we are. At the same time, we are creating new social forms and relations, that is, relations based upon brotherhood, cooperation, human love, and uninhibited sexuality. Babylon has forced us to commit ourselves to one thing... revolution.

COLLECTIVE

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Dear Contributor:

We shall welcome your contribution to *COME OUT* because you understand the American Sexual Code of Conduct is a large and necessary part of the apparatus which perverts the creative powers of the majority into wars, occupations, agencies and toils to increase the powers of a diseased minority who wish either to rule over many others or to wallow in the wealth they steal from the lands and people who produced it — and because you are an artist, whether your artistry takes the form of political analysis, reportage, Rock, alexandrine sonnets, cartoons of social comment, or has heretofore consisted in raising gentle children, or trying to dignify the ones imprisoned by delusions of American parenthood or The Affluent Society's slums of crowd and scarce; or even if you had, before you recognized the evil of manipulating humans into ravenous masses, perverted your birthright selling your creativity to the sales promotion scum which floats upon the swelling cesspools of consumerism blighting America from Madison Avenue to Wilshire Boulevard; or if you have been that purest form of artist, making the music, the poetry, of your thoughts, your visions, drawings, photographs, or of your own holy body and presence wherever you happen to be, for any who happen along, and have come to understand that intercourse with other artists, over such circuitry as *COME OUT* hopes to provide, may be the only way to generate force enough to repel the psychic virus of greed and malignant sexual sublimations which have made America an empire as predatory and hypocritical as any yet to mar the planet.

We shall welcome your contribution because you have come to understand that such as photographs of undraped human bodies loving, being loved, or simply being, are expressions of the dignity which our species can radiate when freed, and hence your art subverts the purposes of this society in which nudie-photos become a high-profit substitute flesh-trade, spawning glossy centerfolds in pseudo-sexy magazines of being "In," a society in which profiteer elitists consider the less aware no more than a mass to be bilked and brutalized, a herd of body-cavities to be glutted with low-quality blueberry cheesecake mass-produced at high profit rates, to be deceived into thinking they are like supposedly beautiful people who gamble in gowns and cut-aways on cruise-liners outside the three-mile limit, or like youthful generations somehow superior as they thoughtless stand, suntan-oiled and nursing bottles of soda-pop on sandy beaches — when in reality most of them are the bloating slaves of the consumerism of a bloating empire, trying to satisfy their yearnings for human communion with credit card contacts or profitmaking or by munching the garbage produce of the snack-food industry while they sit, hour after degraded hour, in their imitation aristocratic furniture, before their televisions, watching such as an empty-headed astronaut competing unsuccessfully with a genie-girl in persian pajamas who sleeps in a bottle and not in his bed — nor in any other's, presumably — and

never peeks while he showers to purge himself of all possibility of body-odor carelessness and of his erotic humanity.

Because you know that artists do sell themselves to the vilifiers — that a superb film editor, for example, could use her talents to produce a movie portraying the Nazi rise to power as a beautiful revolution — we shall welcome your observations of the mass media in America today, your reviews of books, movies, plays and television features, particularly those which purport to define and celebrate The New Sexuality, The Liberated Generations, The New Freedoms, because you understand the profiteer manipulators are capable of perverting the desperately quickening need of humans to get back to loving each other — and finding sexual expressions of their love, for their own as well as the other sexes — into such as the moneymaking mass-minded pseudo-togetherness of Rock'n'Roll bivouacs or manifestoes advocating spontaneous revolution and the creation of utopian nations stoned into a docility which is nothing if not premature, given the war-machine economies of Western Civilization — and because you want to share with those awakening politically within the Gay Community, as well as with all other groups dedicated to transforming this inhuman society, your knowledge of any work of art which is to say any genuine expression of rebellion — which exposes or transcends the chicaneries of the American Empire, and thereby helps point the way out of the job-and-television emptiness and napalming madness dreaded by all except the schizoid role-players and the power-addicts who dominate them.

We shall welcome your contribution because you understand that every human born, if the planet is much longer to endure in tolerable form, must be allowed to become not only an artist, but an artist who has learned that none of us is free until we all are, until we have gone far beyond societies which consider sexual expressions of love of one's own sex queer and military service manly.

Because you understand that all art intimates, however fleetingly, the dignity which all humanity could reach — as much when it condemns societies which rob us of our dignity as when it vibrates with the freedom which is our birthright; that art grows out of our sense of unity with all the life and natural beauty of earth, which the managerials industrialize out from under us even faster than it is defoliated and bombed away by militarists; that art will be supreme in societies based on genuine cooperation and mostly degenerates to mock-heroics and television commercials in the cultures of competition, which are born of terror, of men's having to mistrust other men's motives, cultures in which innocent sires pay heavy premiums because they fear other men might harm their children if they died untimely — in the very cul-

tures they so desperately praise and defend from change — we shall welcome your contributions which encourage all our brothers and sisters, wherever they are, whatever their ages, to struggle for their sexual freedom, their right to love one another without feeling barred by sex or class or which must win, because to do so is to affirm that all of us can live together peacefully, once the profiteers and powermongers have been eliminated, that we can all accept responsibility for the orphaned, hungry, sick and lonely, inspiring them to become artists and thereby wholly human, and to resist all attempts to coax or coerce their creative powers into policing, power-broking, pronographing, profiteering — because the struggle to liberate us all from the degradations of offices, assembly lines, beast-of-burden days in mines and on subsistence farms — and because not to struggle is to lapse into the inebriations of mafioso bars, class-conscious clubs and spiteful cliques, making money, earning money, or toiling without any why at all, until we are the slaves of totalitarianism triumphant, too bereft of grace to cease metabolizing.

Because you understand that all liberating art is given love and all hate perverted, purchased love, *COME OUT* will not — so long as those of us now on watch for you remain here — insult you by offering you payment in money for your contribution, even in the unlikely event that we receive any money; it will go toward a community center, and improving the circulation, through *COME OUT* of as many of your contributions as we can reproduce within the limits budget and production and reception impose on any medium, be it, underground newsprint or videotape, and we shall hope to greet you one day soon within the stately walls and rocking music of our community centers, or along the trails we trust will twine out infinitely from the mingling of our minds, our souls, our liberating artistry.

Because we understand, we, most probably a little more than most, the beauty of the human body is an intimation of the inner grace attainable by all who live upon our planet, after liberation from all toil which doesn't lead directly to the end of toil for all, when all mankind becomes the fullest, final work of art, singing, playing instruments, photographing, sculpting visions, making love and being poems, teaching and learning and sporting, tossing basketballs and other balls, like dolphins in the freshened waters, beneath a clarity of purifying breezes — and even then we'll welcome all your contributions.

Because we have a heavy contribution we could make to all that's gonna soon be going down.

Your *COME OUT* watch, as of Spring, 1970, looking, with your help, beyond the springs of twenty seventies.

your Staff

***** NEWS *****

COME OUT/AND THE GAY PRESS. Members of the *COME OUT* Collective confronted the audience at a meeting of The West Side Discussion Group when all efforts to be included in a symposium on The Gay Press failed. One man had arbitrarily decided that the Gay Press consisted of only two Newspapers and GLF decided this ruling should be brought before the people. The Collective members presented themselves and their case to the general membership on Wednesday, April 8, and asked for a vote on the ruling. The vote was overwhelmingly in GLF's favor and *COME OUT* was seated on the panel.

THE GUARDIAN. The *National Guardian*, a Left weekly, was liberated by a group of former employees, Media Workshop people, and two GLF members — Martha Shelley and Dan Smith. The action was a result of a strike by *Guardian* Staff members who demanded a restructuring of the paper and a policy more responsive to the Movement. The building was cleared the next day and no arrests were made. GLF demanded and received space in the new *Liberated Guardian* which is now being published by a newly-formed collective.

GAY ORGANIZATIONS: GLF participated in a symposium on Gay organizations sponsored by WSDG. Arlene Kisner and Steve Dansky, representing GLF, discussed its goals, accomplishments, and politics.

LIBERATION IN THE SCHOOLS: GLF participated in a discussion with High School students at The Washington Square Peace Center. Two representatives from Women's Liberation and Bob Kohler from GLF conducted an open forum with approximately fifty students.

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NEW HAVEN — MAY DAY: A contingent from GLF went to Yale in support of The Panther 21. The following is a speech made during the New Haven Rally speeches by GLF's Jim Fouratt:

"The proud, strong homosexual brothers and sisters who are in New Haven to show support for the Black Panther Party and its struggle, and to identify with Bobby Seale and all the prisoners that are being held, bring you greetings.

The homosexual sisters and brothers who are in this crowd have a complaint to make. The very oppression that makes us identify with the Black Panther Party and all oppressed people, which makes us revolutionaries, which makes us work for a society and vision which is far beyond what we live in today, we find that oppressiveness pervading this so-called liberated zone. It is that very oppressiveness that is stopping us from organizing our community, which is stopping us from making a revolution, and we call upon every radical here today to Off the word faggot, to Off the sexism which pervades this place and to begin to deal with their own feelings about the homosexual brothers and sisters.

We demand that you treat us as revolutionaries. We demand that you no longer look upon us as sex objects, that you judge us in the total integration of our humanity. We are on the barricades. We are submitting ourselves to the discipline that we see in the vanguard leadership here and there will only be a revolution when all oppressed people work together.

No elitism. No sexism. All power to Gay people. ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

MAY 10 — SUNDAY: GLF held its first GAY-IN in Central Park. This event was deliberately under-played by GLF in deference to the murders at Kent State, the Student Strike, and the general feeling of anger that engulfed the Movement that week.

EARTH DAY: The Planned Non-Parenthood Cell of GLF handed out the following leaflet to thousands of receptive and uncommonly enthusiastic people on Fourteenth Street: "Homosexuality is the only answer to the problem of over-population."—Pope John XXIII. EARTH DAY announces with great pride . . . a citation for exemplary and meritorious conduct awarded by the UNITED NATIONS, RED CHINA, and THE MARGARET SANGER CLINIC (a sister organization of the DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS). This citation is being accepted by the Planned Non-Parenthood Cell of the GAY LIBERATION FRONT in the name of all those homosexual women and men through history who in couples and small groups turned for warmth, sex and friendship to members of their own gender, thereby providing the human race with an affirmative and joyous alternative to the problems of population explosion. These fortunate men and women are the vanguard of the revolution forging life-styles that liberate energies and love for the formation of the NEW HUMANITY and the salvation of PLANET EARTH.

HOMOSEXUAL WOMEN AND MEN, WELCOME TO EARTH DAY!
SALUTE YOU!!!!

BE GAY! GIVE EARTH A CHANCE!

MORATORIUM DAY. A GLF contingent marched under The Gay Liberation Front banner from Washington Square to Bryant Park, shouting "Out of the Closets — Into the Streets" and "Say it Loud — Gay Proud." At the Park, GLF confronted the Speaker's platform, along with other radical groups, and demanded to address the rally. For over twenty minutes, during a confrontation between liberals and radicals, the GLF banner completely obscured the Speaker's platform. The area around the platform became a battleground as people pushed, yelled, and fought. In the bedlam, the GLF banner was torn to shreds and the rally abruptly cancelled.

glf gay-in

photo by Ellen Bedoz



HEY MAN

by steve dansky

Every man growing up in this culture is programmed to systematically oppress, dehumanize, objectify and rape women. A man's cock, a biological accident, becomes the modus operandi by which a male child is bestowed with power by this culture. A mere couple of inches of flesh places this male child in a position above half the human race and there is no man who does not benefit and glorify in the power inherent in this birth right. Every expression of manhood is a reassertion of this cock privilege. All men are male supremacists. Gay men are no exception to the maxim.

The ability to express homosexuality, however, carries with it a severe penalty in our culture because of the nature of the taboo placed upon homosexuality by this male-dominated heterosexual society. Straight men abhor homosexuality because of their inability and inadequacy when it comes to expressing love for another man. Heterosexual men are driven to abuse women because they can't directly express the love they have for each other. They literally fuck their friends' women because they are unable to fuck their friend. This observation has been born of the experience of most women in the communal situation in the hip counter-culture.

Homosexuality is a manifestation of the breaking down of male roles. This "unacceptable" affront to conventional manhood forces male straight society up against the wall; so much so that they must suppress, repress and oppress all signs of a life-giving homosexuality and force it into their warped death-dealing definitions. Their task, then, becomes a bludgeoning of homosexuality into parodistic expressions within this culture. Gay men are violently driven toward a false goal: the mutation of homosexuality into a male heterosexual personae. This results in the constant struggle of gay men to fit themselves into a heterosexual ideation of manhood. The gay man is asked to love, emulate, and worship his oppressor. The oppression gay men suffer has shown the validity and absolute necessity for a struggle for gay liberation. We have begun in our struggle for liberation to reject the internalization of this male heterosexual identity. Gay men must examine all forms of their homosexuality and be suspicious of all of them because the ways we express homosexuality have been molded by male supremacy. The gay liberation struggle will not reach beyond the civil libertarian goals of the homophile movement until it can see how deeply ingrained and oppressive is this idealization of male heterosexuality within each of us.

As was suggested by both Robin Morgan and Rita Mae Brown in their RAT articles, Gay Liberation Front men have avoided the questions of male supremacy, as if they were exempt. Indeed, it is the most crucial question relevant to any struggle for gay liberation. Male homosexuality could be the first attempt at the non-assertion of cultural manhood. It could be the beginning of the process by which we can reach a gender redefinition of Man: the "non-man." Homosexuality from this standpoint is the first step in the process of "de-manning." The men of G.L.F. have instead consistently asserted their manhood resulting in an attempt to stifle the struggle of women to free themselves from the shackles of male domination. What is worse is that G.L.F. men have further used the presence of women to legitimize their homosexuality. An examination of G.L.F. results in the conclusion that the gay men are no less afraid of each other than are straight men without "their women." What is pervasive in G.L.F. is a resistance to examining our sexual repression, inhibition and puritanism. If sexuality is expressed it is done behind closed doors. G.L.F. men have dutifully continued to use The Man's exploitative institutions, which are designed to keep us in our oppression. To be blunt, we have accepted The Man's roles and go to him to get laid. One of the goals of G.L.F. is the establishment of a community center. The community center is proposed as an alternative to these exploitative institutions. But haven't we avoided the alternative which already exists in each of us? We can't wait for a building as if it, a pile of bricks, was the answer to our oppression. We have been kept in isolation, we have been oppressed, exploited, and our identity has been taken from us. We have been told how to be gay and where to go to express it. It is no accident that we have been forced into the Gay Liberation Front to fight. Our homosexuality can be a revolutionary tool only if we abandon our self-destructive attempts to fit the warped roles given us by the male heterosexual system. The fear that one might be thought homosexual by another man — this fear is a powerful goad keeping men, both homosexual and heterosexual, in line as the oppressors of women. It is one of the many ways that men hold on to their privileges derived from oppression. Our task lies before us: our goal is stopping the propagation of the male heterosexual ethos by any means necessary.

Another project of Gay Liberation Front is the holding of dances. This is supposed to be an alternative to the bars. At the dances we have used women as pawns, rejoicing in our heterosexual experimentation. We are not proud of the fact that women don't feel like sex objects around gay men. Our omnipresent male flesh and how we throw it around have made women see the necessity of having separate dances. Gay men, you can fuck women. It's male straight society that categorizes you, and tells you what you can and cannot do. But that's not the point. We are sexual beings, but at present, male sexuality is the means by which we both fuck and fuck over women. At the dances G.L.F. men have tolerated the presence of straight men who have come with their tongues and cocks dangling, ready to show G.L.F. women that all lesbians need is a good lay. All the pornographic material certainly suggest that heterosexual men, believe it or not, get a charge out of female homosexuality. Playboy even promotes what they call Bisexuality in women — but not in men.

G.L.F. men have subverted the obvious: that is lesbianism in practice is exclusive of men. That puts men uptight, whether they be gay or straight. G.L.F. men have forced themselves upon lesbians, who because of the oppression they suffer from men, have realized that the only possible means of obtaining equality is in relationship with other women. That is why women, from G.L.F., from the women's bars, or the women's movement, don't come to our male dominated G.L.F. dances — they are overwhelmed by our male presence and either leave at the door or are forced to elbow their way through attempting to find other women.

G.L.F. men have either avoided or attacked the most important movement in the world today: the struggle for the liberation of women. Any organization which does not recognize this struggle is objectively counter-revolutionary. We have fought male supremacy in every one of our relationships with men. We should know what women are talking about. In order to join the struggle for women's liberation, we as gay men must relinquish all power in G.L.F. to the women. We must give them final veto power. Until G.L.F. men join the struggle we will either drive the women out or continue to subvert them, thus becoming the young, hip, counter-culture version of the Mattachine Society. It is in the interests, however, of G.L.F. to join this struggle. Combatting male supremacy, in ourselves and in other men, is in fact at the very heart — or should be — of our struggle against our oppression.

The commitment needed for a struggle for liberation carries with it heavy demands. We must begin to make demands on each male G.L.F. member. G.L.F. must demand the complete negation of the use of gay bars, tea rooms, trucks, baths, streets, and other traditional cruising institutions. These are exploitative institutions designed to keep gay men in the roles given to them by a male heterosexual system. The use of

these institutions by G.L.F. men must beseech as copping out to The Man's oppression of homosexuals.

In order that we fight our oppressor we must band together in living collectives. It will be the task of each Revolutionary Male Homosexual (RMH) collective to examine and confront the romantic notions with which we have been programmed to accept. Each RMH collective will have at least three men but no more than twelve. Within the RMH collective we will reject our parody of male heterosexual society's pairing off. We will instead begin to remould our homosexuality by developing a communistic sexuality of sharing, cooperation, selflessness and total community. Our commitment to fight for gay liberation will be the means by which we can devise the necessary tactics for the destruction of all exploitative gay institutions and of all male supremacist institutions. Our recognition of male heterosexuality as our oppressor will mean that we will have to confront every male heterosexual with whom we come into contact.

The RMH collective will take on the responsibility of adopting and raising male homeless children. We will attempt to raise these children so that they do not acquire the male supremacist ideation of manhood. The RMH collective will fight all brutalizing versions of homosexuality as existed in other cultures such as Athens or Rome; that now exist in prisons. We will stop the army's exploitation of homosexuality, natural to men, as a means of making men kill. We will stop the brutalization of gay men by straight trade.

At the G.L.F. dances we have danced the circle dance as a show of community. Our circle dance is the ritual — an orgy of discharged energy — before we enter the struggle. We in our circle dance have felt our sensibilities surge close to the surface. With acute aggressiveness we have encircled ourselves with protection against our oppressor. The time has now come to move out. Gay people will no longer be oppressed. We are angry at the theft of our identity. WE will collectively recapture what we know is ours and has been taken from us.



We are backed to the wall. There is no turning back. Our rage will no longer eat at our bowels. We have seen who has done it. We can feel him; identify him. At the Firehouse old RAT men called a meeting with the community to devise with community support, tactics by which they could sabotage the RAT women's collective. At the Firehouse I met my oppressor. I met The Man. My "brothers" in the movement. They pleaded: "Don't be divisive. Work with me for the revolution." But it is a revolution born of their discontent: it is a Man revolution. The Man revolution with women to fuck, bear their children, lick their wounds, and cook their meals. Faggots to be put away. They are the same men who put me behind barbed wire in Cuba. They watched me peek out at what I had fought along side of them for; what I had died with them for. They are the same white supremacist who told blacks they had gone too far. They didn't give up their white skin privileges. Instead they waited for blacks to come home. But blacks didn't come home to Mastah Man and neither will women. That night RAT men called the women fascists and spelt the women's Rat collective with a K. But RAT men we know you are Amerika. You are not revolutionaries but the capitalist ideal of rugged individualism. Women and gay people will stop your revolution: it is male counter-revolution.

I don't want your help, understanding or sympathy. I can recognize that, your male supremacist jive. Your love is oppression; it means bondage. I will fight the capitalists, that is inevitable. Capitalism is another word for male supremacy. You, movement heterosexual man...Man, you are the ruling class. Hey Man, are you fighting to keep your inherited power. Listen Man, give it up or go under. Your universe is being smashed. Your fantasy is being challenged. My soul won't be cast-ironed-out by your drunken raps. A timing of barricades will come: on which side will you be?



Mira, Young Lord

Mira la nena,
estándose linda delante,
bailándose pasos de gracia delante,
de miras mirando de por dentro tu alma.

Mira la nena. Evita los lios,
armadas, y guerrillas que gritan —
“¡Machos! ¡Mire los machos que somos!”
— delante del mundo que quieren amar.

Mira la nena, que a tí representa,
las alas colores de coñac y castanas
de tus sueños con sexos por ratitos unidos,
con el mundo despues de las liberaciones.

Camaradas caídos nacen de nuevo.
Penínsulas tristes no van a quedar
ni criadas de bancos, ni de soldados
creyendose machos al herir Mozambique.

Mira la nena, caballero de antes,
conquistador de aquel tan lejano entonces,
hecha por fin revolucionaria
por tierras podridas que crecen caudillos,

corporaciones, y mentiras de ricos
con derechos de organizar a muchísimos otros
en masas obreras, diciéndoles — “Miren
Ustedes. Sus esfuerzos harán un país muy fuerte.”

MILANI

Mira la nena, contestándoles — “Miren
Ustedes tambien. De planetas no hay mas de uno
para nosotros, hijos de tierra, y a todos
pertenece, y a toditas tambien.

Lucharemos en contra de todo trabajo
que no contribuye al fin del trabajo:
el gozar permanente del planeta entero
por todos los nenes nacidos, y a nacer.”

Mira la nena, cabalgando ahora,
detras del jinete de sombra almizclena,
del gran castellano, hincando, volando,
llevando los cambios por todo el mundo.

Y la mira la luna, la mira y mira,
besando el cuello a su libre infante,
con su lengua que dice — “Vente. Si, vente.
A menudo, si quieres. De nuevo, de nuevo.

Hay camaradas aqui, bastante
para cantarte, por cien mil visitas,
lecciones de luchas ya fracasadas,
visiones de gozos del gran porvenir.”

Mira tu nena, mi joven infante.
Baila con ella, tu majestuoso idioma,
— depurado de ricos y de generalitos —
hecho río sonoro de la liberación.

A TIME TO DANCE, A TIME TO MOURN

In the past few weeks, events have occurred in Amerika — actions, reactions, words, demonstrations. We have been witness to the continuing destructiveness of the two wars in which we are engaged; Southeast Asia and the very real war in the streets of this country. Somehow the deaths of four white university students have brought a message home to the people that Fred Hampton, Diego Vinales and countless other victims of Amerikan “justice” have failed to do.

Were it not for the fact that in our very beings we are political, it would be almost improper to hold a dance, a “social” function at this time. But women, by virtue of being gay women, are oppressed by the same system that is oppressing people throughout the world. If we really come to understand our own oppression we will see that it, like the illegal wars and wholesale slaughter, does not exist in a vacuum. We are all victims of a common enemy, whether it be wearing the garb of imperialism, racism, or sexism.

The ties that we as women have with other oppressed people are becoming increasingly more visible. And this dance, held in a period of mourning, contemplation and revolution, is a direct outgrowth of how and why we're oppressed. We're here together, dancing, touching, re-

lating, and we're here together outside of pre-defined roles, outside of convention, and most importantly outside of someone else's conception of morality. What this means is freedom — and freedom is radical. We are existing for each other in a world we are remaking for each other. In a sense, dancing together is one way in which we are fighters — a small part of our contribution to freedom and revolution. People have died, but we are alive and must keep in mind, along with rhetoric and ideology, that our solidarity hinges as much upon our being able to be together in times of anger and mourning as well as in times of victory and elation.

—Ellen Broidy

leaflet for women's dance—week of Kent State massacre



photos by Ellen Bedoz



lesbian oppression

—Kathy Wakeham

BOB KOHLER

A PARADE IN TOWN: Thousands of Homosexuals are expected to march through the streets of the Village on June 27th.

I see flags. I hear bells. There's a parade in town.

I hear crowds. I hear yells. There's a parade in town.

They will, I presume, be remembering the Stonewall and the Street Queens. The Stonewall, as most of us know, was an illegally-run and Mafia-owned private club catering to under-age Hustlers and over-age Johns and reputed to have been one of the largest Dope Drops in the City. The Street Queens were something else! A source of irritation to Straights and Gays, alike; things that went screech in the night, roaming the streets in outlandish costumes, panhandling quarters, sleeping in the Park and doorways. To Straights, they were to be scorned, ridiculed, and beaten. To Gays, in our infinite mercy, merely scorned, ridiculed, and avoided.

I hear drums in the air. I see crowds in the Square.

I see marchers marching, tossing hats at the skies.

A handful of Homosexuals rioted when New York's Finest raided the Stonewall on June 27th.

Did you hear? Did you see? Is a parade in town?

Are there drums without me? Is a parade in town?

It is assumed that the Street Queens rioted against the Police. I wonder if that is not an extreme over-simplification. No matter — but Oh, what great matter! — they did riot. As tourists flocked to the Freak Show, punks flocked for a piece of the action, and police harassment was stepped up, Homosexual organizers fell over one another passing out leaflets, coining slogans, and forming committees. Quicker than you could say "Poof! You're a malted!" the Lepers had been cleansed; the Street Queens had become Folk Heros!

Cause I'm dressed at last, at my best, and my banners are high.

Tell me! While I was getting ready, did a parade go by?

The kids wallowed in their new-found Stardom. Some of them even forgot how hungry they were.

Did you hear? Did you see?

Was a parade in town

Marches and rallies were planned, there would be Gay Dances and Community Centers, there was even talk of bail funds, clothing and free meals. Some of the kids went to meetings of new organizations. Others went to meetings of old organizations. They manned tables, distributed literature, participated in the Gay Power rally, the Village Voice zap and the November Moratorium. But, it's a long, long time from June to November and they were starting to get us uptight. We couldn't control them. They were too loud and too obvious. They were fucking up our image! They were heavy — they had to go! Confused and discouraged, they began drifting back into the safety of the Park.

Were there drums without me?

Is a parade in town?

I doubt very much if I'll march on June 27th. I think I'll just sit in the Park with my brothers.

Cause they're out of step, the boots are squeaky, and the banners are frayed.

Any parade in town without me must be a second-class parade!

A PARADE IN TOWN — Stephen Sondheim

I CAN'T HEAR YOU — I HAVE A CARROT IN MY EAR! I seldom go to Gay Bars, they are just not my particular glass of tea. I am, nonetheless a little bugged by the Witch Hunters who keep crying 'Mafia Exploitation' with such overbearing and monotonous regularity. There is without doubt Mafia control of Gay Bars just as there is Mafia control of Banks, Unions, Supermarkets, Industries, Drugs, and much of the air we breathe. Exploitation — like oppression — is a peculiar word; over-used and rhetorical.

The other night, the world — my own private world, I guess — got a little close and I went to a Gay Bar. I was asked for a dollar at the door and was given a chit entitling me to two beers. They were showing an old Bette Davis/Mary Astor movie, THE GREAT LIE, and there



photo-Vector

was a general feeling of good, campy fun in the whole place. The fact that I had to make my way through a density of bulging Levis and leather assesto get to the bar in no way detracted from that feeling. I watched the movie, grabbed some ass, talked with a few people, and laughed a little.

I didn't stay for the second feature but, instead went to one of the new Fuck Bars. Here, I paid three dollars at the door which, again, covered two beers. The Bar was well-appointed, well-lit, and well-peopled. The Fuck Room was exactly that! No games, no bullshit, no hassles — just simple, direct, down-to-the-nitty, old-fashioned sex! It is not my intent to weigh the pros and cons of 'anonymous' sex; I leave that to the tight-sphinctered Shrinks. I will only say that no little blue pill could come close to relieving the nervous tensions that my two hours in that room did. I touched, I communicated, I related and I loved. (Do I touch differently on a park bench? Do I communicate better in a lighted room? Do I love more freely in Sheep Meadow? Who would presume to count the ways I love?) I also met someone and we went home together.

Check it out: I had four beers, saw a movie, was screwed, blewed and tatooed — layed, relayed and parlayed — and I found a friend. All of this cost me exactly **FOUR DOLLARS.**

I am not making a case for Gay Bars. I am simply asking that we get our priorities together and dig the fine, almost invisible line between Oppressed and Oppressor. The times they are a changin' — There's a new world comin' — and Love is just around the corner. OFF THE RHETORIC! I have no alternative to Gay Bars and I can promise none. The GLF dances and the Sunday night get-togethers are miniscule and token offerings, barely touching the surface. I cannot — I will not — judge my Brothers and Sisters and/or their needs. I can and will try to offer counter-cultures and life-styles when and if I am able, making sure the Left hand keeps careful watch on the Right hand. When I housebroke Magoo, I trained him first on paper. I left the paper down as I re-trained him to go in the street. For a while he went both on the paper and in the street. One day he decided enough with the paper — not because I told him not to shit on the paper anymore but, because he decided he would rather shit in the street. I hope that I could extend the same freedom of choice to my fellow-humans.

The gay woman is a person who is very often overlooked within radical liberation circles. Her oppression is two-fold — female and homosexual (if she is non-Caucasian, her oppression is three-fold).

Her two-fold oppression brings forth looks of resentment, feelings of uptightness, and cries of ignorance. She encounters social, political, and economic oppression. Her oppressors are of no particular class, race, structure, etc. Yet, they are identifiable, as most oppressors are identifiable to most of the oppressed.

Well to ramble on about oppression would fill a book; I only want to exemplify an oppressed happening in a short article. On a social level, gay women want to meet other gay women; on an economic level, they frequently pay to do so at most encountering places. (Their economic oppression also includes job discrimination as well as social exploitation; but right now, that's the written subject). These encountering places are gay bars. The gay bars are exploiters of gay women (and of gay men, too).

A typical bar on a typical weekend: \$3.00 for entering (which includes two drinks), \$1.00 for a can of beer, if you don't like watered-down mixed drinks, \$1.00 every time the proprietor sees you without a drink (you cannot stay unless you are with a drink), \$.25 coat check, crowdedness, occasional heterosexual male googlers, Mafia guardsmen at the door.

Straight bars do not exist in this web of social harassment.

This is oppression. Where are gay women going to meet other gay women if they feel oppressed by the above condition? An alternative is needed. An alternative was made. The Gay Liberation Front has held mixed (gays of both sexes) dances that were predominately male. The women of GLF felt that their sisters might want an all women alternative, instead.

On Friday, April 3, GLF sponsored an all women's dance which was held at Alternate U. The purpose of the dance was to give our sisters an alternative to the oppressive Mafia-controlled gay bars. In the general locale of the gay community in the Village, only two bars exist predominately for gay women. The GLF dance was held within a four-block radius of these two bars.

Two weeks prior to the dance, six GLF women were threatened by the owner of one of these bars while they were giving small calling cards advertising the dance to other girls in the bar. The owner approached the GLF women with the cards; and she told them if they continued advertising, they wouldn't have a dance or an organization.

At 3:15 a.m., the night of the dance, the first attempt was made to carry out this threat. Three stereo-type (big, broad, and mean) mafioso forcibly pushed their way into the All Women's Dance. When questioned repeatedly as to their identity, they answered by threatening to arrest the sisters for unlawful assembly. The dance was held in a hall which GLF had legally rented for the evening. They then threatened the GLF women with arrest on the basis of not having a liquor license and rapidly quoted prices that neighboring bars have paid them. The dance did not require a liquor license because donations and *not* prices were *suggested* for admission and refreshments (beer and soda). After much verbal and physical harassment (a woman who tried to leave was pushed toward a wall, another woman was grabbed by her coat collar and had her coat snatched from her back as she fearfully dashed down the stairs to escape the harassment of these imposters; they physically refused exit to any of the women), they showed the women a badge which was later suggested to be phoney by uniformed policemen who appeared twenty minutes after these men left. Before they left, the three were questioned as to who sent them. "Gianni's, Kookie's?" They laughed, snickering, "who's that, never heard of them." "Oh they're just characters out of Zap Comix." Why bother hassling with reason when they knew Gianni's and Kookie's are just two of our gay tavern-owner oppressors.

The uniformed, legal law-enforcing police were called by the women to verify the identity of these three. The uniformed police stated that no call was made with any precinct to check-out the dance, that the dance was legal, and that these three men showed invalid identification.

This threatening incident is another example of oppression of gay women by an exploitative system. The system tried to scare us but did not succeed. Instead, they brought their oppressive acts to light where they will be dealt with as gay sisters are now more ready and determined to come out and deal with the oppressors.

LESBIANS AS BOGEY WOMEN

Any form of behavior that doesn't fit into the image that television and *Reader's Digest* believe the American people should be like, is usually categorized as either subnatural or supernatural.

The myths about homosexuals fall into both categories, depending on how close it is to being you.

Lesbians are subnatural when they live next door and supernatural when they live in Paris and write books.

Most people's ideas about lesbianism come from pornographic films and magazines, all of which are produced for and by men. It's a very strange thing to find your existence defined as a part of somebody's pornographic fantasy library — sex episode No. 93.

One night at my regular women's liberation group meeting, one of the women said, "You know, the first night you told us you were a lesbian, I sat in terror for the rest of the meeting, waiting for you to attack me or something."

Men who are obsessed with sex are convinced that lesbians are obsessed with sex. Actually, like any other woman, lesbians are obsessed with love and fidelity.

They're also strongly interested in independence and in having a lifework to do, but other than that lesbians are not extra ordinary.

I once met a lesbian who had built her own house, with her own hands, to her own specifications. (She was about 4'11" tall.) But I have no doubt that any woman who wanted to build a house could — except she probably married an architect or a carpenter instead.

Homosexuality and other "bizarre" characteristics are associated with art and artiness partly so artists can be considered that much more supernatural. This keeps people in general from considering themselves as artists; they're not kooky enough. If you can't chop off your ear, you can't paint.

Gertrude Stein didn't write well because she was a lesbian: she wrote because she wanted to, and she had a disciplined, sensitive mind, and she didn't have to work in a dime store eight hours a day.

The women in history who were the less fortunate counterparts of Gertrude Stein, unable to retire on papa's money, cut off their hair and joined the merchant marine; or sneaked out west for a life of adventure as cowboys. Some were never discovered until the local mortician . . . all astonished . . . came running out of the funeral parlor . . . "My God, guess what I just found out about old Harry Willits . . ."

And as a matter of fact, old Harry may never have thought about loving another woman in her life; but she still goes down in history as a lesbian. Every woman who steps out of line gets assigned a sexual definition — lesbian, whore, nymphomaniac, castrator, adulteress . . .

Lesbians who dress and act in a particular manner, do so as a means of mutual recognition — that's how they know who is eligible to fall in love with, since you're not allowed to just ask.

If anybody was allowed to fall in love with *anybody*, the word "homosexual" wouldn't be needed; it's used now only to set people off in separate categories, artificially, so they'll know who to be afraid of — each other.

Bogeymen and bogeywomen function to keep people off the streets, and home watching television and reading *Reader's Digest*.

Lesbianism isn't something you *are* . . . it's something you *do* . . .

Specifically, it's the love you give somebody who happens, also, to be female.

Reprinted from Gay Women's Liberation, San Francisco.

for ourselves

Must we pay for celebration of life and love
With laceration? Life and love
are atrophied for us. The center comes apart
It cannot hold. Let go, Let go, Let go.

Must we throw ourselves on the great mandala,
Make it grind to a halt and let the healers
Take scalpel to that which could have been healed long ago?

What balm can assuage the guilt cast
upon us?
What gauze is thick enough to cover
our wounds?
What cord strong enough to bind up
our rage?

(On the afternoon of that day the moon passed the sun.
Millions watched, catching fleeting glimpses,
and paying prices of vision yet to be told.
Our trinity of planets intersected
for moments. Belying their obeisance to any natural law,
That all might see law made manifest, theory bodied forth.)

Something rustled in the dead leaves at Sheridan Square.
A bronzed general watched the armies of the night.

A mother cried for a son who could not reveal himself,
Who cried out in a foreign tongue of why he was forsaken,
And took him down from his pinnacle.

The deposed St. Christopher of that street,
Of infinite numbers of travellers,
Relinquished his place, for St. Sebastian of the slings and arrows.
Let down the child from his back, giving birth
To an unfolding of hands, a clenching of fists.

How much more blood of strangers is required,
To impassion us, to push us to take the leap
to faith,
In ourselves, and the gods we might become?

STANDING ROOM ONLY

It's spring again in New York City: my very first.
My peacoat is beginning to feel stuffy, and I'm
trying to think of buying a new shirt. Walked
down to The Marlboro Bookstore in the Village,
then to a smaller bookstore, where I asked for a
copy of *The Well of Loneliness*. I'm writing an
article about it. Young hippy bookstore clerk:

Yes, we have a LOT of people asking for it. . .

We don't carry it!

Well, what about GET OUT!, our local gay
ghetto paper?

Noooo. . .

With a sarcastic smile.

On my way over, 2 teen-age girls were running
down the train platform:

Hey, How in the World do you get out of this
place? Is there a Way Out??

Six months ago, I was asking the same thing.

And, coming up the steps from the subway, I
KNEW that it was spring, because two young
men were sitting at the top. The younger one
was rapping about:

. . . And then, when THAT happens, you
really start to think - Maybe There ISN'T
a God. . .

Then, on 8th Street:

Spare Change??

WE WERE VERY TIRED,

WE WERE VERY MERRY. . .

-Sandy DeWine

THINKING BACK LESBIAN

If i were to call upon the phoenix
to recover my late ashes
would i have come from the 'mysterious'
island of Greece?

Far flung as time through space
follows relativity must only be a wink
in that lady's eye -

The love of the arts was worth more
to her than the sharpness of Diana's
darts.

But i suppose we are all sisters of
some nature of those reincarnations. . .
But to them we are probably just incantations.

However, Sappho you must have been
a 'Right On' woman.

-Sue Schneider

-Mark Giles

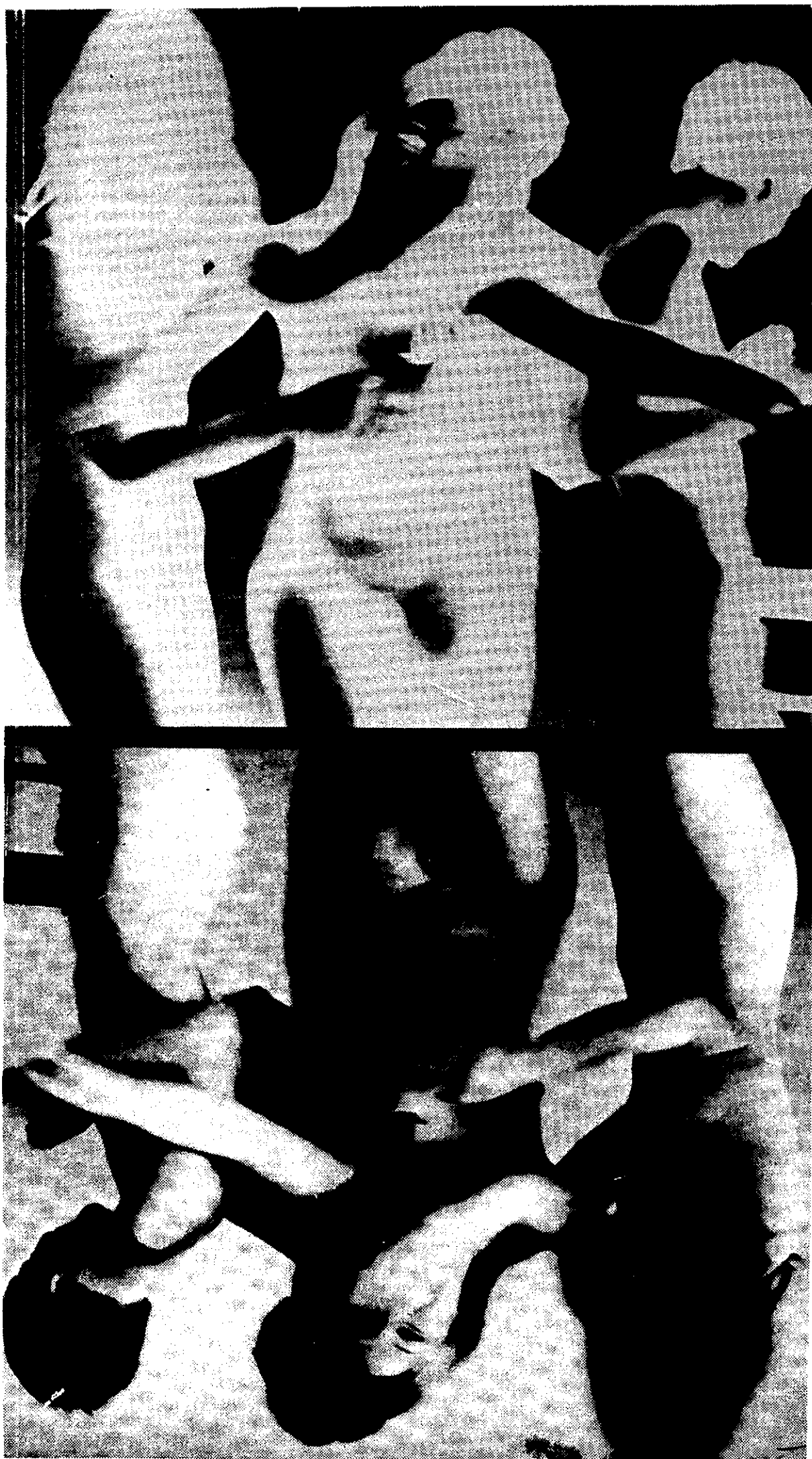
The Woman-Identified Woman

WHAT IS A LESBIAN?

What is a lesbian? A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion. She is the woman who, often beginning at an extremely early age, acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and freer human being than her society — perhaps then, but certainly later — cares to allow her. These needs and actions, over a period of years, bring her into painful conflict with people, situations, the accepted ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, until she is in a state of continual war with everything around her, and usually with herself. She may not be fully conscious of the political implications of what for her began as personal necessity, but on some level she has not been able to accept the limitations and oppression laid on her by the most basic role of her society — the female role. The turmoil she experiences tends to induce guilt proportional to the degree to which she feels she is not meeting social expectations, and/or eventually drives her to question and analyse what the rest of her society more or less accepts. She is forced to evolve her own life pattern, often living much of her life alone, learning usually much earlier than her "straight" (heterosexual) sisters about the essential aloneness of life (which the myth of marriage obscures) and about the reality of illusions. To the extent that she cannot expel the heavy socialization that goes with being female, she can never truly find peace with herself. For she is caught somewhere between accepting society's view of her — in which case she cannot accept herself, and coming to understand what this sexist society has done to her and why it is functional and necessary for it to do so. Those of us who work that through find ourselves on the other side of a tortuous journey through a night that may have been decades long. The perspective gained from that journey, the liberation of self, the inner peace, the real love of self and of all women, is something to be shared with all women — because we are all women.

It should first be understood that lesbianism, like male homosexuality, is a category of behavior possible only in a sexist society characterized by rigid sex roles and dominated by male supremacy. Those sex roles dehumanize women by defining us as a supportive/serving caste *in relation to* the master caste of men, and emotionally cripple men by demanding that they be alienated from their own bodies and emotions in order to perform their economic/political/military functions effectively. Homosexuality is a by-product of a particular way of setting up roles (or approved patterns of behavior) on the basis of sex; as such it is an inauthentic (not consonant with "reality") category. In a society in which men do not oppress women, and sexual expression is allowed to follow feelings, the categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality would disappear.

But lesbianism is also different from male homosexuality, and serves a different function in the society. "Dyke" is a different kind of put-down from "faggot," although both imply you are not playing your socially assigned sex role... are not therefore a "real woman" or a "real man." The grudging admiration felt for the tomboy, and the queasiness felt around a sissy boy point to the same thing: the contempt in which women — or those who play a female role — are held. And the investment in keeping women in that contemptuous role is very great. Lesbian is the word, the label, the condition that holds women in line. When a woman hears this word tossed her way, she knows she is stepping out of





line. She knows that she has crossed the terrible boundary of her sex role. She recoils, she protests, she reshapes her actions to gain approval. Lesbian is a label invested by the Man to throw at any woman who dares to be his equal, who dares to challenge his prerogatives (including that of all women as part of the exchange medium among men), who dares to assert the primacy of her own needs. To have the label applied to people active in women's liberation is just the most recent instance of a long history; older women will recall that not so long ago, any woman who was successful, independent, not orienting her whole life about a man, would hear this word. For in this sexist society, for a woman to be independent means she *can't* be a woman — she *must* be a *dyke*. That in itself should tell us where women are at. It says as clearly as can be said: women and person are contradictory terms. For a lesbian is not considered a "real woman." And yet, in popular thinking, there is really only one essential difference between a lesbian and other women: that of sexual orientation — which is to say, when you strip off all the packaging, you must finally realize that the essence of being a "woman" is to get fucked by men.

"Lesbian" is one of the sexual categories by which men have divided up humanity. While all women are dehumanized as sex objects, as the objects of men they are given certain compensations: identification with his power, his ego, his status, his protection (from other males), feeling like a "real woman," finding social acceptance by adhering to her role, etc. Should a woman confront herself by confronting another woman, there are fewer rationalizations, fewer buffers by which to avoid the stark horror of her dehumanized condition. Herein we find the overriding fear of many women towards exploring intimate relationships with other women: the fear of being used as a sexual object by a woman, which not only will bring her no male-connected compensations, but also will reveal the void which is woman's real situation. This dehumanization is expressed when a straight woman learns that a sister is a lesbian; she begins to relate to her lesbian sister as her potential sex object, laying a surrogate male role on the lesbian. This reveals her heterosexual conditioning to make herself into an object when sex is potentially involved in a relationship, and it denies the lesbian her full humanity. For women, especially those in the movement, to perceive their lesbian sisters through this male grid of role definitions is to accept this male cultural conditioning and to oppress their sisters much as they themselves have been oppressed by men. Are we going to continue the male classification system of defining all females in *sexual relation* to some *other* category of people? Affixing the label lesbian not only to a woman who aspires to be a person, but also to any situation of real love, real solidarity, real primacy among women is a primary form of divisiveness among women: it is the condition which keeps women within the confines of the feminine role, and it is the debunking/scare term that keeps women from forming any primary attachments, groups, or associations among ourselves.

Women in the movement have in most cases gone to great lengths to avoid discussion and confrontation with the issue of lesbianism. It puts people up-tight. They are hostile, evasive, or try to incorporate it into some "broader issue." They would rather not talk about it. If

they have to, they try to dismiss it as a "lavender herring." But it is no side issue. It is absolutely essential to the success and fulfillment of the women's liberation movement that this issue be dealt with. As long as the label "dyke" can be used to frighten women into a less militant stand, keep her separate from her sisters, keep her from giving primacy to anything other than men and family — then to that extent she is controlled by the male culture. Until women see in each other the possibility of a primal commitment which includes sexual love, they will be denying themselves the love and value they readily accord to men, thus affirming their second-class status. As long as male acceptability is primary — both to individual women and to the movement as a whole — the term lesbian will be used effectively against women. Insofar as women want only more privileges within the system, they do not want to antagonize male power. They instead seek acceptability for women's liberation, and the most crucial aspect of the acceptability is to deny lesbianism — i.e., deny any fundamental challenge to the basis of the female role.

It should also be said that some younger, more radical women have honestly begun to discuss lesbianism, but so far it has been primarily as a sexual "alternative" to men. This, however, is still giving primacy to men, both because the idea of relating more completely to women occurs as a *negative reaction to men*, and because the lesbian relationship is being characterized simply by sex which is divisive and sexist. On one level, which is both personal and political, women may withdraw emotional and sexual energies from men, and work out various alternatives for those energies in their own lives. On a different political/psychological level, it must be understood that what is crucial is that women begin disengaging from male-defined response patterns. In the privacy of our own psyches, we must cut those cords to the core. For irrespective of where our love and sexual energies flow, if we are male-identified in our heads, we cannot realize our autonomy as human beings.

But why is it that women have related to and through men? By virtue of having been brought up in a male society, we have internalized the male culture's definition of ourselves. That definition views us as relative beings who exist not for ourselves, but for the servicing, maintenance and comfort of men. That definition consigns us to sexual and family functions, and excludes us from defining and shaping the terms of our lives. In exchange for our psychic servicing and for performing society's non-profit-making functions, the man confers on us just one thing: the slave status which makes us legitimate in the eyes of the society in which we live.

This is called "femininity" or "being a real woman" in our cultural lingo. We are authentic, legitimate, real to the extent that we are the property of some man whose name we bear. To be a woman who belongs to no man is to be invisible, pathetic, in-authentic, unreal. He confirms his image of us — of what we have to be in order to be acceptable by him — but not our real selves; he confirms our womanhood — as he defines it, in relation to him — but cannot confirm our personhood, our own selves as absolutes. As long as we are dependent on the male culture for this definition, for this approval, we cannot be free.

The consequence of internalizing this role is an enor-

mous reservoir of self-hate. This is not to say the self-hate is recognized or accepted as such; indeed most women would deny it. It may be experienced as discomfort with her role, as feeling empty, as numbness, as restlessness, a paralyzing anxiety at the center. Alternatively, it may be expressed in shrill defensiveness of the glory and destiny of her role. But it does exist, often beneath the edge of her consciousness, poisoning her existence, keeping her alienated from herself, her own needs, and rendering her a stranger to other women. They try to escape by identifying with the oppressor, living through him, gaining status and identity from his ego, his power, his ac-

complishments. And by not identifying with other "empty vessels" like themselves. Women resist relating on all levels to other women who will reflect their own oppression, their own secondary status, their own self-hate. For to confront another woman is finally to confront one's self — the self we have gone to such lengths to avoid. And in that mirror we know we cannot really respect and love that which we have been made to be.

As the source of self-hate and the lack of real self are rooted in our male-given identity, we must create a new sense of self. As long as we cling to the idea of "being a woman," we will sense some conflict with that incipient self, that sense of I, that sense of a whole person. It is very difficult to realize and accept that being "feminine" and being a whole person are irreconcilable. Only women can give each other a new sense of self. That identity we have to develop with reference to ourselves, and not in relation to men. This consciousness is the revolutionary force from which all else will follow, for ours is an organic revolution. For this we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement. Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backwards towards our oppressors. As long as women's liberation tries to free women without facing the basic heterosexual structure that binds us in one-to-one relationship with our own oppressors, tremendous energies will continue to flow into trying to straighten up each particular relationship with a man, how to get better sex, how to turn his head around — into trying to make the "new man" out of him, in the delusion that this will allow us to be the "new woman." This obviously splits our energies and commitments, leaving us unable to be committed to the construction of the new patterns which will liberate us.

It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution. Together we must find, reinforce and validate our authentic selves. As we do this, we confirm in each other that struggling incipient sense of pride and strength, the divisive barriers begin to melt, we feel this growing solidarity with our sisters. We see ourselves as prime, find our centers inside of ourselves. We find receding the sense of alienation, of being cut off, of being behind a locked window, of being unable to get out what we know is inside. We feel a real-ness, feel at last we are coinciding with ourselves. With that real self, with that consciousness, we begin a revolution to end the imposition of all coercive identifications, and to achieve maximum autonomy in human expression.

RADICALESSBIANS

the LAVENDER MENACE STRIKES

On Friday, May 1st, at 7:15 P.M. about 300 women were quietly sitting in the auditorium of intermediate School 70 waiting for the Congress to Unite Women to come to order. The lights went out, people heard running, laughter, a rebel yell here and there and when the lights were turned back on those same 300 women found themselves in the hands of the LAVENDER MENACE.

"Lavender Menace," a taunt of the white male press rose incarnate in the persons of the Radicalesbians of New York who because of the discrimination and sexism with Women's Liberation took matters into their own hands to bring their affirmative and compelling awareness to the women at the Congress. For the first time since women's liberation began, the subject of lesbianism was brought into the open. Significantly the only way this could be done was forcefully, transcending established format — but although the take-over was decisive it was done with good feelings and humor.

Seventeen of the Radicalesbians wore lavender teeshirts with LAVENDER MENACE stenciled across the front. These women were the first wave of the action and the ones who took over the auditorium. The second wave of the action was vocal support from about twenty sisters who hid their true lavender selves and blended into the audience. What we didn't expect was a third wave which came out of the general audience. Women responded variously — a very few left, the planning committee made a few tentative efforts to restore the "program", some women were pleasantly questioning the action but what was so incredible was the enthusiastic acceptance of most of the women present who began demanding that the lesbian issue remain on the floor.

The action was so successful (we held the auditorium and the attention for two hours) because the issue is of such meaning and relevance at a gut level to all women and because the presentation was done in a humorous and non-threatening way. As the Menaces surrounded the audience and liberated the microphone, rose-colored signs sprang up on the walls and podium: SUPERDYKE

—2 Radicalesbians
LOVES YOU; TAKE A LESBIAN TO LUNCH; WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS A LESBIAN PLOT. Freed from a boring panel and able to come up to the microphone and talk to each other women asked each other questions, confronted each other and gave testimony. Perhaps the most significant communication came in the form of the enthusiasm and joy felt by those present. "Thank you for what you have done for us tonight." Our straight sisters were coming up to us with warmth and openness. "I really need to hear this tonight. And I thought I could put off dealing with my feelings for a woman for at least two more years." "Wow, thank you."

So we really built some bridges Friday night — toward Women's Liberation and among ourselves. We learned that our straight sisters have less autonomy, are more unsure of themselves because they are more enmeshed in the debilitating sex role. And for ourselves, at the outset a random group of individuals, and now with a heightened energy and a sense of solidarity and group identification. With that in mind you know that the LAVENDER MENACE will strike again — anywhere, anytime, anyplace.

photo by Diana Davies



WOMEN COMING TOGETHER with WOMEN

Saturday, 5/2/70

The Lavender Menace (i.e., Radical Lesbians/G.L.F.) arrived at the school on West 17th Street at 2 p.m. for the workshop we announced at the general session Friday evening. We had been assigned a room to meet in and were given another interesting label, "Alternatives in Sexuality", which we changed to "Workshop in Lesbianism". The room became filled with women of all ages and special interests in relation to an exploration of lesbianism, female sexuality, women. We remained in Room 402, our numbers over 200 women, for over 2 hours. During that time, many women went through changes. There was a special kind of tension that came out of us being face to face with each other, confronting the fears and realities, and beginning to relate to each other as relevant and meaningful persons. Our "straight" sisters in the women's movement were not all totally straight, and there was agreement that in what we are trying to build, the labels would be meaningless but that we had to use them now in order to redefine ourselves as human beings without them and to examine why certain labels (i.e., Lesbian) are so threatening to women.

Is a lesbian a legitimate woman? In the way that the sex-role system is set up in this male-dominated society, if a woman is not fucking with a man, she is not a woman and these kinds of feelings put many of the women up-tight. Many of the women who came to the workshop were interested in exploring their own sex-

uality — I couldn't begin to label the various stages that women were at in this exploration — some were "out", some were "in the process of coming out", some wanted to know how to begin to relate to other women in a more complete, intimate way, and some women could relate what lesbian meant to them in only sexual terms and the consequences in this society of crossing the boundary of one's prescribed sex role (i.e., they would feel like men — aggressive, wanting, if they made love with women). I feel more like a woman today (in my own very best definition) than I ever have before today — solitary, open, vulnerable, welcoming, wanting, — having a definite outline and being moderately filled in the void.

I can feel all the women I've met this weekend and some of the feelings I've felt are incomprehensible to me in that I am changed in subtle ways that are scaring the shit out of me. I feel more alone and less lonely; also, good and more able to be together with others, really feeling touched by my sisters.

Sunday, 5/3/70

RESOLUTIONS FOR DEEP AND CONCERNED THOUGHT:

Be it resolved that women's liberation is a lesbian plot. Resolve that whenever the epithet "Lesbian" is used against the movement collectively or against any woman that it be affirmed and not denied. In all discussions of

birth control, homosexuality must be included as a legitimate method of contraception. All sex education curricula must include lesbianism as a valid, legitimate form of sexual expression and love.

The Lavender Menace/Gay Liberation Front Women/Radical Lesbians arrived at noon to meet with other women in smaller groups to further discuss aspects of lesbianism and women's liberation. We also related to the Congress in its attempt to make and pass resolutions. It was finally voted upon to no longer vote. The resolution making reflected our actual divisions but this is where we must begin because it is a reality. It is also a reality, as stated by the Class Workshop that, all women have knowledge of what it is to be a woman, and it is from this base that we must look at each other and begin moving towards one another.

A group of lesbians, black women and women from the class workshop was formed to talk about our experiences that were both common and related. There was a great feeling among us, as women who wanted to use their energies positively to reach out to each other — in working towards an end to class bias, sex/role definition, racism, elitism and many other aspects of liberation that we need to talk about with each other.

Arlene Kisner
A Radical Lesbian

LAVENDER MENACE DOES IT

Saturday at the Congress there was a sense of relaxation in my head and a feeling of acceptance — an almost totally unfamiliar sensation for me. People were watching for once, some with envy over the reality of physical contact with other women and what appeared to them to be a sense of unity and closeness among ourselves. My natural state of paranoia vanished with acceptance and the realization that I was being seen as a human being.

As the workshop increased in size my elation increased with it. In women's faces I detected a strain, a longing reflected in their eyes. As they made possibly their first attempt at understanding and union. First attempts are often painful, and an attempt to overcome artificial but intensely powerful and emotionally charged societal taboos is an immense and frightening step — and one that must be guided with loving acceptance.

Barriers dissolve into chaos with understanding and a reaching out toward another (who is really the self).

Questions asked pointed out the alienation of the women from themselves and therefore from their sisters.

Later on at the party, the initial mood was discomfort — most individuals were interested primarily in relating verbally and intellectually, but not physically. They insisted that the bright lights be kept on. This appeared to reflect a fear and a mistrust among the women of their gay sisters. They seemed to want to see every move the "Menace" made. Sitting in a chair is a comfortable way of maintaining distance and verbal communication is often times another.

TWO VIEWS

Women of GLF successfully confronted movement women on two successive weekends in April.

The Liberation News Service conference of women's caucuses on underground papers related strongly to the gay movement. About 150 representatives voted on the first day of the conference to break up into rap sessions and discuss the gay issue, rather than see a movie about Cuba.

They proceeded to two different rooms, with no one dropping off despite the late hour.

Two hours of rapping followed with discussion of personal attitudes toward the subject (frequently fearful ones, i.e., "Can I go back to men after a lesbian experience?"), to uncertainty regarding how to treat it in their papers ("Should we have straights writing on the subject?").

Their concern was a mixture of curiosity and growing respect which would not have been elicited without the organizing of the radical gay movement a yr. ago.

The workshops, which were continued the next day of the conference, lent a definite consciousness-raising effect. The realization that they are "sleeping with the enemy" brings some Women's Lib people into an exploration of Lesbianism, or at least curiosity about it, but they are hindered by forms of the very oppression leading them to it. One woman in a workshop related that she could not feel turned on by a woman's body, and another countered "How could you — it's used to sell everything from cars to toothpaste!"

Another related that friends of hers had found gay life as oppressive as straight life, leading GLF women to wonder how those with as yet superficial commitments expect some magical solution to problems which beset all of us. One GLF woman said, "My liberation won't be won by them solving their problems."

The Congress to Unite Women, broader in scope than the LNS conference, was more dramatically met on its first day, when the Lavender Menace struck! Tired of being labelled "a Lavender herring" in the women's movement, it was decided to do something strategic about it. Friday night of the Congress the lights dimmed prior to an expected panel discussion (which was abandoned with much relief from everyone except those who had planned it). Down the aisles strode GLF

As the evening progressed the fears gradually diminished and people relaxed, allowing themselves to have fun. They forgot the world outside for a little while. No male entered to remind them of it. And this this was good, for the entrance of any male, no matter how liberated would have stifled free expression and forced the emergence of false actions and acceptable distances. There is still a very powerful anti-type reaction against having a male call a woman a lesbian and this leads to an artificial woman. (No one seriously knows what it is to be a woman. Years of negativity, brainwashing, make-up and clown clothing have cut us off from the very core of our being.)

Invariably, in order to be born again into a new consciousness one must reach the center, die and be resurrected again in the light of an expanded consciousness.

Women are groping their way inward to this center — reaching for the time of emergence into the new realities of identity, personality and union.

When the Congress was nearly over and the auditorium was retaken by the Lavender Menace the reaction was almost entirely favourable. There was an instantaneous transformation in the women's faces — from tension to relaxation, anger to peace and from boredom to interest. They were expectant, they were anxious. It was as though they were looking to the Lesbians for an answer — a solution to their oppression.

But have we the answer? Have we any answer? I felt myself inadequate to the task. Who has solutions? Who is really more than a searcher? Learning and unlearning. Watching and waiting. Hopé.

—Judy Cartisano
Lavender Menace



photo by Diana Davies

women in lavender T-shirts with "Lavender Menace" across the front, and holding signs announcing "Women's Liberation is a Lesbian Plot," "You're Going to Love the Lavender Menace," etc.

Gay workshops followed on Sat. and Sun. afternoons and Sunday evening the Lavender Menace struck again. A plenary session was in progress, with much discussion of present resolutions drawn from the workshops. The gay workshop was not to be represented, it seemed, because it had been formed ad hoc, by force. So, dig it! The Lavender Menace seized the time once again, the women tacitly in charge at the time saying resignedly, "Here we go again."

The women presented resolutions beginning with "The Women's Lib movement will in the future affirm, not deny, that it is a Lesbian plot," and putting forth lesbianism as the most effective means of birth control. Three GLF black women attacked the WASP character of the Congress, and women from the recently-formed Class Workshop declared the need for consciousness of class oppression. In view of this it was decided to hold a multiple-group workshop upstairs.

There followed an unusual confrontation between blacks & whites, gay & straight, middle-class and working class. It was the most valuable meeting possible, in which movement groups, which may become insular, have one another's biases challenged. Curtailed after an hour and a half only by the closing of the building, the group of about 125 planned to meet again.

By the end of the Congress women were referring to the Lavender Menace in all seriousness, as a viable concern, and in transposition from negative to positive, in a politicized camp (and Susan Sontag said it couldn't be done!) it was a force to be reckoned with.

A spokeswoman proclaimed our weariness of stigmatization and demanded open discussion of the gay issue on the floor, as the throng of women covered the area in front of the stage. There was little opposition due to the light-hearted style of the action. As was observed, lesbian love is a uniting rather than dividing issue.

Even so the assemblage vacillated from confronting the issue lead-on to digressing entirely. Finally, though, people began coming up to the microphone to relate their experiences and impressions. The overall democratic-anarchistic process at work brought out many who would not have spoken otherwise, and whose sincerity was refreshing for everyone.

by Sandy

interview with JAMES BALDWIN

by Karen Wald (LNS)

[Editor's Note: The following interview with James Baldwin was done soon after his recent visit to Huey Newton, minister of defense of the Black Panther Party, in prison. Huey is serving a 2-15 year sentence for manslaughter — the state was unsuccessful in framing him up with a first degree murder charge for the killing of a policeman.]

Q: YOU WERE JUST DOWN AT THE CALIFORNIA MEN'S COLONY IN SAN LUIS OBISPO VISITING HUEY NEWTON. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT HIS TRIP WAS ABOUT?

J.B.: Huey is one of the most important people to have been produced by the American chaos. His fate is very important. And not one person in white America, if they read the mass media, knows anything about Huey, what produced him or what produced the Black Panther Party.

Black people have always played, in this country, a tormented role in the white man's imagination. They prefer to believe him to be King Kong, or whatever it is white Americans take black people to be. It's inconceivable to them, because it says too much about the republic, I think, that the Black Panther Party was originally called the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. And that it was produced as a reaction to, and I'm a witness to this because I was born in the ghetto, to the tremendous irresponsibility of the police force. It didn't come out of nothing, it didn't come about because Huey and his cohorts are some kind of weird anti-social monsters. It came out of the very real necessity to invest the black community with a certain kind of morale, which cannot be found in any American institution.

Q: HAVE YOU SEEN CHANGES IN HUEY SINCE YOU FIRST MET HIM?

J.B.: In much the same way that events of the last two years have caused everybody to re-think the situation, Huey has gone through some changes himself. I think that oppressors always make the same mistake. They think that they're going to break you by the degree and the nature of your punishment. But they always miscalculate, because you may be able to break ten people, but there's always one person or two people or three people on whom it doesn't work, who use it to find out something and to become, in a sense, more dangerous than they were before. More dangerous than if you'd left them alone — more dangerous, that is, to the status quo. I think Huey is changing that way.

Q: WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO COMMENT ABOUT SOME OF THE CHANGES YOU, YOURSELF, HAVE BEEN GOING THROUGH IN THE LAST TWO YEARS?

J.B.: I think that no one any longer can be fooled about the intentions of the American government because they've made it perfectly clear. And that may be the most healthy thing that has happened in this time. Nobody, after all, can say anything for the present administration. It represents the American illusion that it's a white country, that it's a white world and that they can make it a white universe — the moon is our first colony.

Q: ELDRIDGE ONCE SAID THAT THERE WERE BASIC DIFFERENCES CONCERNING THE ATTITUDE YOU HAD TOWARD DEALING WITH THE VIOLENCE OF THE WHITE OPPRESSOR — DO YOU SEE ANY CHANGES IN THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS?

J.B.: My enormous concern has been, and still is, that I don't want to see a generation go out into the streets and die. On the other hand, I was also forced to realize that it wasn't up to me. Nobody can answer for a generation except that generation itself. We don't have the helicopters, we don't have the tanks, the weight against us is tremendous — which demands of the people in the situation that they find a way to respond.

Some very respectable people in this country, respectable in the ordinary sense, are aware of what is happening. This has made very peculiar bedfellows — the position of Justice Douglass is not that different after all from the position of Huey Newton. Some of the people

are beginning to see what has happened to the civilization, what has happened here, as a result of the fantastic greed of the corporated system.

One of the reasons for the Nixon-Agnew business about the silent majority and the whole claim that people who are against the war are really murdering American boys, is in the hope that somehow they can unite the whole country around a series of really bloody contradictions. Which is not possible.

They can't put thirty million black people in jail in secret, and in any case there are many more than thirty million — black people aren't the only dissenters here. What this country does not really understand is something very simple. That Huey is right when he says that as long as there are black people, there will be Black Panthers. Malcolm was right when he asked about the numerical strength of the Black Muslims — anyone who knows won't tell you and anyone who claims to is a fool. The truth is, any black person in this country at the time when the Muslim movement was at its height, was a Black Muslim. Any black person in this country at this hour is in some way a Black Panther.

And even if he weren't, the fact is that the cop isn't going to ask me my name and address before he shoots me, and the only difference between me and any other black cat in this country is that if they shoot me my name would be in the papers. We all know many people have died, none of us knows how many, but I know that for every one of me there would be twenty people dead,



here in my own generation. But they don't understand about the Viet Cong. My brother puts it this way — we are the first Viet Cong.

Shooting people in their apartments in the middle of the night creates exactly what they would not like to happen, this does something to people who ostensibly don't care, wouldn't care — something begins happening to the American consciousness — it's not just happening to black people, it's also happening to me. When society becomes that anarchic, it's not only black people that are menaced, it's everybody else. So they create a resistance that wasn't there before.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE PANTHER 21 CASES IN NEW YORK OR THE SUPPOSED MURDER IN NEW HAVEN, WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THOSE CASES?

J.B.: I see all those cases as harassment, as intimidation. Even if I were a very different person than the person that I am, there is no way for me to believe what the police or the government says. Unless I am really in a position to check it out myself. I've seen too much, I don't care what the white press says about the exaggerations of police brutality, I've lived with it all my life. I know, whether the New York Times wants to believe it or not. I was there and the New York Times was not.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS THAT THE NEW YORK AND NEW HAVEN CASES ARE FRAME-UPS?

J.B.: Until it is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt, preferably in the halls of the U.N., that it is not a frame-up, I will believe that it is a frame-up, because I am part of a people who have been historically framed-up.

Q: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ABOUT THE CONSPIRACY TRIAL?

J.B.: I think that is simply too obscene to be discussed.

Q: WHY DO YOU THINK THEY INCLUDED BOBBY SEALE, WHO HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THE DEMONSTRATIONS, IN THE CONSPIRACY?

J.B.: Quite apart from all the illegality involved, Bobby is a bad nigger. Same reason Mohammed Ali, formerly Cassius Clay, was stripped of his title. Same reason Malcolm's dead. One of the historical facts about this nation is that you always take a bad nigger and hang him publicly, as an example to all others who would be bad niggers.

Q: HAVE YOU OUTSIDE OF THE YOUNG BLACK AND WHITE MILITANTS YOU'VE TALKED TO, A STRONG REACTION TO THE MURDER OF FRED HAMPTON AND MARK CLARK IN CHICAGO?

J.B.: I don't know how to answer that, you put it the wrong way — Hampton and Clark are only the latest examples. The show has become monotonous.

Q: WASN'T THAT SO MUCH MORE OBVIOUS?

J.B.: It's amazing to me how difficult it is for people to see when they don't want to see. Black people see, but how many parents of white children see it, that's another question. The difference between my experience and that of white America, even the very best of white America, is that they have difficulty believing that the country can act this way. And that is not my problem at all, I've always known it could, it always has in my experience and I'm no longer young.

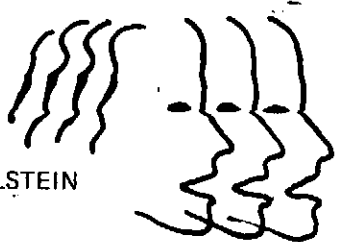
Q: WHY IS IT THAT GROUPS LIKE SCLC, NAACP, URBAN LEAGUE, AND GROUPS LIKE THEM ARE JUST BEGINNING TO COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE PANTHERS?

J.B.: The whole black situation in this country from the start has been very complicated. The battle between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington was almost the battle in microcosm. There's always been something very closely resembling a hoax, the very heart of the American dream. And it applied to black people in great force, because for a while it was very useful to what is called the power structure to have certain niggers in the window. To prove to Americans that they were really what they said they were, and to prove to black people that they were what they said they were. And the nature of the bargain was that the nigger in the window could wrest some concessions from the status quo, in return for the tranquility of the natives.

But the table on which these people operate has vanished. Once Martin Luther King was shot, though some people think it was so long before that, it was perfectly clear that there was no way to be a good nigger. And that's not even pejorative because Uncle Tom played a very important role historically. But the role that he played is no longer possible to play. The defenders of the status quo have in effect given as much as they can give. And now even the most respectable black cat is very much, whether or not he likes it or whether or not he wants to admit it, no matter what his age — he is also part of the target no matter how famous or how rich he is.

We are all the Viet Cong, none of us can really be trusted from the point of view of the defenders of the American power. Not even the most agile Uncle Tom can hope to have any meaningful discussion or dialogue with Attorney General John Mitchell.

GAY YOUTH LIBERATION



IAN EDELSTEIN

Gay Youth began in late February in response to the desire expressed for an alternative to predominately adult Gay groups. Those who suggested the group's formation felt distinct differences between their attitudes and those of older Homosexuals on various sexual, social and political issues. One prime guideline is the avoidance of rhetoric and the constant view of Gay Liberation unobscured by various, and often conflicting, political ideologies.

Gay Youth's functions began with a mixer on May 2nd. Over 50 people came to enjoy dancing, food and refreshments in an atmosphere free of drugs, alcohol and adult control. Such mixers will be continued throughout the summer.

Gay Youth invites all young Homosexual men and women to join.

MEETINGS: every Sunday, 6PM; 300 9th Avenue.

GAY YOUTH LIBERATION PAPER

In our high schools for years we have been ('socialized') indoctrinated by teachers maintaining bla-

tantly sexist attitudes towards Homosexuals. I can remember very recently discussing a book with allusions to someone's Homosexuality and the teacher blurting out in laughter, '...with all these references to boys you know what he was. Well this is getting too risqué, let's go on...'

But these sexist views are not fed to us only in high school. Since sexist attitudes are profitable to society, they are carried out into the family, the schools and other institutions. They are part of the dogma that these institutions fill our heads with. The institution's function is to perpetuate the views which turn the wheels of society. Our sexist attitudes are the qualification for good citizenry in our society (sodomy laws) and a way of supporting commodities of our society (masculinity and femininity).

I'm tired of being used as a symbol of the guilt and fear of society. No more of this shit! Confront and recognize your problems. The fact that you are oppressing me is a symptom of the repression and fear of the Homosexuality in your own bodies.

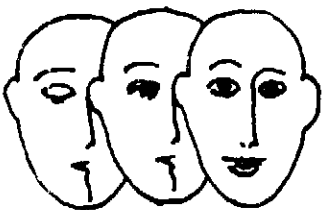
By not being easily identified by the superficial roles of society we threaten this society. Putting people up-

tight about their own assigned identity. Smashing that trick mirror which reflects the beauty of the society 'they' have structured.

As a radical Homosexual I no longer demand tolerance or acceptance. I don't like shit that goes 'you can do what you like in private.' Proud of my identity, I wish to introduce my lover as my lover. And no more of that shit that goes, 'well you can do what you like' while secretly saying to yourself 'what a relief that I don't indulge in such things.' That attitude which implies how superior you feel that you don't do that kind of thing is being shattered. The people who maintain that view are in for a rude awakening.

We are demanding understanding; an understanding of your Homosexual feelings. And the ridding of society's fantasies and distortions, getting down to your own human nature.

You will have to confront us. No longer can you reject Homosexuals or Homosexuality. We reproduce within you, you can't be rid of us. An awakening is inevitable.



REPORT: CHICAGO GAY LIB

by Martha Shelley

The City of Chicago is covered by a giant glass bell which makes even the brightest day seem slightly grey, and the air always slightly stale. A news blackout contributes to the strong impression of peasants-under-glass (all of us — I am not trying to imply that Chicagoans are more provincial, but that we are all peasants under the ruling class); and the New York Times seems like radical journalism out there. Mayor Daley keeps the city clean (except for the ghetto) and, I'm sure, makes the trains run on time.

I was in Chicago on April 16 and 17, a guest speaker at a rally in Grant Park called by University of Chicago Gay Liberation. Two hundred fifty people attended, and though we didn't have a permit, the cops seemed indifferent to us. There were four speakers — a fellow from A.C.L.U., the President of Mattachine Society Midwest, Lee Weiner of the Conspiracy Eight, and myself. Lee Weiner called himself a certified member of the Freaking Fag Revolution, but didn't seem too aware of what gay oppression is all about, though it was clear to him that we are oppressed. I don't remember what the other fellows said, as I had just been let out of jail and hadn't had sleep for three days, and I'm sorry about that. I did rap about what GLF was doing in New York, and about the jail experience, and the common bond of oppression that unites Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation.

Then we all marched down the street, chanting "ho, ho, homosexual" and "out of the closets, into the streets" and singing "we're here because we're queer..." and generally freaking out the solid citizens of Chicago. We marched to the jail, where one of our men was being held for solicitation or some other ridiculous charge, and chanted in front of the jail. A fair-haired young cop was there, officer manly (dig it), a member of the vice squad whose favorite vice is queer-beating. People sang out, "Yoo-hoo, Officer Manly" embarrassing the hell out of him. Guess he doesn't want people to know that we know him.

Afterwards, we went home, talked and talked, and I was finally allowed to pass out. The next morning we talked again, and ran around trying to get insurance to cover the rental of a hall for a GLF dance.

GLF in Chicago has somewhat different problems than GLF in New York. Chicago is a city of neighborhoods, with no central area like the Village, so there is a north side GLF and a Hyde Park GLF, and GLF's on every campus in northern Illinois. Since the left is so small there, the GLF's are well-integrated racially. There are divisions between men and women.

Gay life is pretty tough there, and the few mafia bars don't appeal to most gays, so a GLF dance attracts as many as three thousand people. The dance we were trying to insure was being held in a convention hotel —

and the only company that would insure us was a black company. The only medium that covered the demonstration was the black radio station.

As in New York, GLF's in Chicago are leaderless groups counting on workers, not on elected officers. However there is still a hang-up on the star system, and I got treated as a star, partly because some people there had read some stuff I wrote, partly because I was from New York, and partly because people there were so hungry for news from the outside world. This was not only embarrassing, it was exhausting. I tried to talk about consciousness-raising as a technique for developing one's political awareness and strength. A revolution can't wait for messiahs — it succeeds or fails according to the degree of development of everyone involved in it. We must all liberate ourselves; we are all the heroes of history.

It seemed to me, coming back, that what we need is a GLF clearing house so we can get information rapidly, instead of waiting for travelers to report what the overground media won't tell us. Our communications now are slower than pony express. Perhaps a nation-wide GLF clearing house could be handled through *Come Out*.

We ran into a little trouble with some cops who wanted to bust a sister for her manner of dress — and when I asked if she were actually under arrest, they threatened to bust me too. In Chicago, the pigs will bust you for asking questions — but GLF will bail you out and give you hospitality.

BANDERSNATCH'S AGAIN

by Lois Hart

Ya gotta DO IT — read Jerry Rubin's handbook of social revolution and world change. He is a shitty, fuckhead heterosexual-chauvinist pig supremacist and he hasn't looked around to see the revolution that's nipping at his tail — but it's O.K. cuz it's a dynamite book that delivers the viewpoint and attitude that is going to do all the things we have been talking about doing. Really rips through alot of clinging mystifying illusory stuff that keep us in the clutches and postures of the MONSTER CULTURE. If you haven't seen the show from where he's standing you are still in the woods and besides it's a good guide to the guerrilla warfare for the public mind and you might get some good ideas for some actions. So DO IT STEAL IT READ IT only bear in mind you will be choking over the biggest-ass sexist on the scene. He sees a world for men to be children in and women are to deliver the chicken soup (Nancy, for godssake!?!?)

Gay Student LIBERATION!

We of GSL/NYU actively support the 3 resolutions of the Student Strike:

1. U.S. out of LAOS, CAMBODIA, VIETNAM NOW
U.S. out of HOMES, UNIVERSITIES, PEOPLES PARKS, BEDROOMS and OUR LIVES
2. Free all Political Prisoners
Free all Prisoners of Crimes without Victims (Homosexuals, Prostitutes)
3. War Machines Off Campus
ROTC and ARMY Who Chose Who is Moral Enough to Kill — Get Off Campus

WE SUPPORT THE STRIKE! WE DEMAND THE RIGHT TO LIVE AS WE CHOOSE!
FREELY AND OPENLY!!



THE TRANSVESTITE IN AMERICA

by Laura McAlister

The homosexual community and women's liberation groups at long last have started demanding the rights and privileges the rest of America enjoys. They have begun to achieve a small degree of success. One oppressed group, however, has not yet launched anything resembling a demand for recognition and acceptance — the transvestites. Transvestism, unfortunately, is a practice frequently misunderstood by nearly everyone, including gay people, and this misunderstanding has bred much intolerance. The time has now come to change this.

First of all, the psychiatric profession generally agrees that transvestism, in all its various forms, is a phenomenon occurring almost as frequently as homosexuality. Nevertheless, very few people know much about it and informative literature on the subject is rare, generally unavailable to the wide reading public, and frequently these sources are full of unhealthy assumptions and prejudices. There are very few books that contain the knowledge and understanding of Dr. Harry Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. In addition there are almost no popular publications on the market about transvestism; even Times Square, that remarkable repository of exotic books, has only one bookstore that regularly carries books and magazines on the subject. The quality of these productions is generally quite poor, except for *Transvestia*, and its future is very doubtful right now.

Socially, transvestites do not fare much better. Aside from a few private social groups, and the occasional correspondence club whose chief aim appears to be that of fleecing people for a few dollars, there are no permanent organizations to help and enlighten transvestites either socially or politically.

The result of all this is mass ignorance on the subject, which in turn has produced enormous anxieties, guilt feelings, and a terrible sense of isolation in many transvestites, and has also given rise to oppressive laws and attitudes in our society. In short, this is the familiar profile of all oppressed minorities.

To better the situation in New York by providing some information on the practice of transvestism, a series of three discussions took place in October and November at the Christopher End Cafe. The West Side Discussion Group also featured an excellent program one evening in January on the topic of transsexualism. (This same topic was also treated fairly well in the January 27, 1970 edition of *Look*.) Unfortunately neither of these discussions was intended as a permanent forum on transvestism, so most of the people they drew soon melted back into their closets. Nevertheless, the information revealed during these discussions appeared to confirm some general theories explaining and describing the phenomenon of cross dressing.

There seem to be two essentially different categories of people who dress as members of the opposite sex:

transvestites and transsexuals. Transsexuals are those who so completely feel as if they are members of the opposite sex that they remain unhappy until their genders are changed physically. To simply dress like the other sex is unsatisfying and frustrating for them. Transvestites, however, are those who receive a psychic and physical thrill from wearing the clothes of the opposite sex. But the variations of attitudes within this group are quite numerous and complex. Many are heterosexually oriented and these are the ones who seem to receive the greatest thrill from the clothing itself; it is to these persons that the word "transvestite" is most appropriate. Some cross dressers are homosexual and they are frequently called "drag queens." Their interest in cross dressing is a desire to complete a basically feminine attitude towards things and to be treated in a special manner by men.

It is essential to realize, though, that these categories are at best tentative, for there can be a lot of movement by an individual within this entire range. Many transvestites in the heterosexual group have found that they grew to be asexual or transsexual as time went by. Many find themselves increasingly attracted to the idea of taking hormone injections to alter the secondary sexual

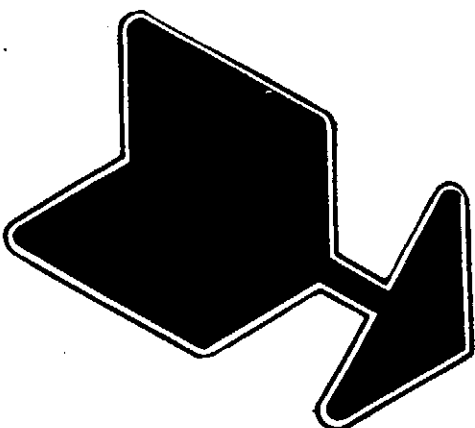
characteristics. The reverse of this occurs when persons who have undergone the sex-change operation suddenly find they are very unhappy with the change and wish they had not done it; these are frequently people who were not genuinely transsexual but were confused by the maze of feelings they had and the variety of opinions on the subject. Many true transsexuals never have the operation, though, because of the expense and danger involved.

Also, the varieties of personalities among transvestites and drag queens are quite diversified. Transvestites tend to be introverted and quiet, although many are quite the opposite while drag queens tend to be more exhibitionistic. Both groups have their fair share of neuroses, and all individuals involved in cross dressing undergo great changes in personality as well as appearances when in drag.

Theories explaining the origins of the transvestite personality are as elusive as those explaining homosexuality. In fact the theories are very similar. So in the final analysis the transvestite is left to his own wits to try to find some relative happiness and understanding in life. This is a difficult task when such persons feel alone, so mystified by their own natures, and harassed by the law and society as well.

Solutions to some of these problems will be difficult but some things clearly can be done now. Political pressure groups such as those within the homosexual community are probably vain wishes for the transvestite right now, but at the very least some strong social organizations must be started so that a sense of identity can be established. From this, political action could be started. It is likewise time for everyone else to begin realizing that transvestites, homosexuals, blacks, women, etc. must be taken as the various components of society at large and must be allowed the same rights and dignities as the "middle American."

Anyone interested in information on the possible development of a discussion group for transvestites in the N.Y.C. area, please write to the author of this article in care of COME OUT.



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SEPTEMBER SONG?

Yury Olesha, the well-known Soviet writer in his *Not a Day Without a Time* recalls walking down the street one day and turning around when someone calls out: *Boy!* He goes on to say he did not know to whom this was addressed but he turned around anyway. He wonders, however, whether he would turn around now if someone called out: *Old man!* Probably not. Why? Because he would not want to? No — simply because of his disbelief, his astonishment that it has come so soon... Has it really come?

Getting older is really a very dialectical process. From quantity to quality. Like water put over heat reaching its boiling point seemingly in one quick second and turning into steam. The years go by, truly seem to rush by — and there you are getting older, old. It is sad to realize that though your desire remains (and often very strong, very physical desire), your desirability has gone. But it is surely a lot sadder not to realize this. But of course all of us, men and women, homosexuals and heterosexuals, share the same common problems of "aging": Does anyone need you; have you reached a point of non-productivity, non-creativity; are you suddenly without emotional, physical, economic security; is time only a looking backward, not a looking forward anymore?

I am made most conscious of age when I go to places frequented by homosexual men of all ages, — bars, dances, parties — all social centers of a kind. I look around and see so many men my age (or even younger, seldom too much older) trying so hard to look young, to act young — dressed in the latest hippy fashion, even sometimes too hippy. They look so doomed and gloomy — searching, searching, searching — alone, occasionally in twos or threes, but so alone, so lonely — hoping someone will want them, go home with them, but ending up alone or with a hustler. What about all the human reaching out, touching one another in ways other than physical?

I do know from my own experience that you cannot prepare for this aging — partly because you don't believe you will ever change. Maybe everyone around you — but not you. If your life has been full of interests, excitement, activity, outside your own very personal needs; if it has been full of meaningful, lasting relationships (not necessarily only physical ones); if love, for you, means loving yourself, of course, but more, loving people; if the world and everything and everybody in it is important to you and you are concerned about it and involved in making it a better place for yourself and everyone else and are committed fully to a life of doing, and if added to all of this you are even earning your living in a way meaningful to you — then I think it is possible to continue living a full and meaningful life through all your years. You relate to other people because you are involved in common labors for a common cause with them.

Memories are good and it is sad not to have good

memories but it is unhealthy, I think, to live in your memories of times gone by. It is better, to my mind, to just let your memories take their place in the warp and woof of your life, your being. You are who you are and what you are because of your experiences. But you can cross the bridge from generation to generation, I am convinced, only through working and doing.

1970 is a wonderful year, and that despite all of its many problems, for a homosexual man (I leave it to the older — and younger — homosexual women to speak for themselves) to be living in — and in the USA, and in N.Y. Though we are far from having reached a homosexual millenium, so many positive changes have come about in our personal and in our group living in these days. There is so much more to read, to see, to hear, to do in daily living, in personal entertainment — so much more, and so much better. And so many organizations, groupings have developed in these past very few years. No matter what your political convictions, your social attitudes, your organizational needs — there is a group for you to join and in which to work. For old time political rebels like me it is the GLF that is the center of activity. Here we find possible a unity of the struggle for homosexual liberation (in the context of the liberation of all oppressed groups) and the fight for the radical change in our social structure without which we understand that no deep, lasting change is possible. The gay liberation movement is made up of us, however, and can be no better than we, its constituent parts, make it through our work, our activity. Some of the things that have to be done are plain old Jimmy Higgins jobs: Cleaning up after a dance, walking in demonstrations and picketing, selling *Come Out*, passing out leaflets, attending meetings, propagandizing both gay and straight people so as to widen our dialogue. These are tasks that can and must be carried by men and women of all ages. And it is important, too, to keep in our consciousness that everyone of these tasks, even in and of themselves, represents a form of "coming out" in some small but not unimportant way.

Although my own personal memories are good, rich in loving and living and meaningful political activities, still my memories, going back as they do to the thirties (when I was already adult), rich as they are in a personal way and in a political way, are empty of one important element — a relationship between my being a proud, happy (always trying to be so, at least; not always succeeding) homosexual and my being engaged in a full, left-wing political life. This dichotomy, though not always a conscious one, did make it difficult to be a total human being under all and any conditions. Often now I feel I have to double, triple my activities to make up for these past divisions in my daily living. To do this, I have discovered that strangely I have to fight these two parts of my life — not within me but outside of me. My older homosexual friends cannot see the reason for political involvement in the struggle for homosexual lib-

eration (a struggle they, on the whole, do acknowledge, but only insofar as it affects their lives as homosexuals). My older political heterosexual friends cannot understand why it should be hard for me to be just me, Bernie, inside the left of which I have always been a conscious part. Always — that is from the age of five when I was first involved in political action. Even though that left persists in its reactionary attitude towards homosexuals? It is only my continued involvement in GLF that convinces them of the importance I give to this unity of thinking and doing. Then because their love for me brings such acceptance, they are inevitably, though grudgingly, brought closer to an understanding of its wider necessity for people like me. In a way I have been preparing all my life for today, the day of the reality of a Gay Liberation Front. Just as I have to struggle for personal integration as a homosexual with my friends on the left, just so do we all have to fight together for total group integration in the movement for revolutionary change on all age levels, bridging the generations through this common work.

I am profoundly aware, of course, that reactions, needs, vary greatly. To get back into the personal picture and speak about me in the particular rather than in the abstract — I need emotional, intellectual, physical (sexual) unity. I have had three great loves in my life and I find I still relate to other men on all these levels. Maybe such mutual relationships are more difficult as you get older. I'm not even sure I want to stop to think about that, and dwell on the "problem." Life for me is too full, too busy. My old loves all ended for objective reasons. I find I can still fall very much in love — but love is a two-way street. When does one give up the hope of making fulfilling, complete relationships in one's life? It is always important what you feel inside — this gives an outer glow to you. Even an older man or woman can give off a glow of beauty and appeal. It is important to accept yourself first as you are — for others ever to accept you. I find it is still good to know I can respond fully — physically, emotionally to a beautiful man and enjoy just still being able to respond. If you fill your life with work activity, friendship — not as a substitute for or sublimation of the need for a profound relationship of love — but because life is made up of many things and although the physical, the sexual is a most important element in relations between people, homosexual or heterosexual, it is not the *only* element. Friendship is important too and the act of friendship continues through life. Friendships continue. I love people — men and women. I find joy and fulfillment always in my friendships, as well as in my loves, in living and working with people...

It has been hard to find time to think this all out in any sequence, let alone write it down. Who has time? Maybe when I get real old, like say, 100, there will be time for retrospection. Maybe. **BERNARD LEWIS**

tea & sympathy revisited

It was one of those nights too late and too rainy to go out for the *Times*, when you wish that you had a box if only to watch the late show and when you're too tired to go out and too bored to go to sleep. I reached into my paperback book shelf which is composed of things I've found in used book shops or endless swappings and borrowings from friends and found a book of Best Plays from the 1950's. One of the plays in it was *Tea and Sympathy* by Robert Anderson. I started reading it again and it was like looking at the face of an old friend whom I hadn't seen in years. It was almost exciting rediscovering it at first, remembering the characters as they came back into place. Then I started to remember how I had come to read it in the first place and then I realized how extremely ugly the play seemed to me; not that the play was an ugly play, it was a beautiful piece of theatre for the time it was written (1953), but that I had changed and not this old friend.

When I was fourteen, in my first year of high school, a very sensitive English teacher of mine recommended that I read the play and write a book report on it. We were reading plays at that time in her class and even though this was the sort of play that could have got her fired in Savannah, Georgia at the beginning of the sixties, she thought that I should read it. She made me promise though not to show the copy of the play, which was hers, around the school. I did read it and the effect it had on me was so strong that I did a report on Auntie Mame instead because it was easier to talk about Mame Dennis than Tom Lee, the main character of *Tea and Sympathy* who is accused of a homosexual liaison with a teacher at a New England boarding school. He redeems

himself in the last act by going to bed with the compassionate wife of one of the housemasters. The play was easily one of the most shocking plays of the early fifties, first because the housemaster's wife accuses her All-American husband of having more than academic interest in the boys he spends every weekend with climbing mountains, and, second, because it revealed that genuinely heterosexual males in America could also be sensitive and tender, as the boy Tom Lee is. The whole play absolutely reeking with a kind of liberal compassion that telegraphs every punch and shows just how far we have come since *Tea* was written — all the 'straight' men are overbearingly straight, Tom is sickeningly pure and innocent for a boy of eighteen, the housemaster's wife seems like one of those Hemingwayesque nurses who give themselves to dying men in hospitals. It is this type of dreary compassion — knowing that the right are going to come out alright, that there will be no homosexual 'offenses' committed by the good people, that the bad people are really just dirty old All-American latents and will their just rewards in the end (!) that infuriates me at this time. And yet I know that all of us at one time or another had to go through the ordeal of 'proving' his or her 'normalcy', his conformity, his straightness to a world that is really very willing to accept it. Because the world wants to believe that deep down inside you are just like everybody else, that is, you are a good boy and a 'regular' fellow. Tom's father only wishes that his son were not such an intellectual, such a creative person (he even plays tennis like a fox instead of like a bear) and were more of a 'regular guy'. And in the

end of the play, Tom does prove that deep down inside he really is a regular fellow, a regular heterosexual, even though he does act like a 'fairy', that is, he likes classic music, plays the guitar, and refuses to wear a crew cut. In the fifties this last non-conformity alone could make you a commie neurotic.

After eight more years of living behind the velvet mask that homosexuals have to wear most of their lives — no matter how liberated I might think I am, eight more years of America's holy enlightened liberalism which says that now it's alright for homosexuals to be creative (that's what we're here for) and now even heterosexuals can stop acting like John Wayne just so long as they know that deep down inside they're all men (and don't you forget it), I have very little sympathy with *Tea and Sympathy*. In its own way it is the forerunner of *The Boys in the Band* because the good people always win out and the bad people always lose out and everybody knows that's the way life is. If *Tea and Sympathy* shows that a creative young man 'accused' of homosexuality can prove his 'masculinity' by taking the housemaster's wife to bed and if *The Boys* shows that gay life is a dreary Freudian shit pile as opposed to heterosexual life which is stable and honorable, then the mask is right back there where it's always been. It is the velvet mask. It feels very good to the touch. It is just what the bourgeois want to see — that although you might be an artist and a creative, sensitive person, you might have long hair and play the guitar, at least deep down inside you're a regular guy, just like they are.



EAT your HEART out - rita mae brown



Bread lines were strung out through the country. The famished stood in chorus lines of hunger. Starvation became three dimensional, a visual spectacle not unlike Busby Berkely's choreography, at least in form. People ate dust and it dried up their dreams. Out of this Great Depression came the celluloid dream, the musical extravaganza, the fantasy of a generation. The movies were a phantom feast where the screen could say, "Eat your heart out," and Amerika did just that. The women were too, too glamorous. There were unending lines, circles, geometric festivals of beautiful (by thirties standards) women. Add to the pulchritudinous pyramids of pulsating flesh the convention of Dick Powell, plus a highly contrived plot, and you have a 1930's musical.

Gold Diggers of 1935 and *Footlight Parade* are two of the finest examples of this type of film. *Gold Diggers of 1935* is a good Women's Liberation movie. The central theme of all the Gold Diggers series was that a woman must go through a man to get ahead. Either you could take him for his money (remember this was the depression) and gain power, hence the theme of gold diggers, or you could fall in love with a nice boy, always Dick Powell, and find happiness and fulfillment in a subservient adored role. *Gold Diggers of 1935* is especially interesting from this viewpoint. We find ourselves at the Wentworth Hotel, an exclusive resort for rich white folks where lots of whistling black folks polish brass signs and sweep the sidewalks. Into this "desirable" atmosphere comes Mrs. Prentiss, worth millions — her husband was the "Flypaper King" in case you wonder where the green grew. Daddy has dropped out of the nuclear family and there remains his tightfisted widow, her lovely daughter, Gloria Stuart and her demented heterosexual son, Humboldt, who'd screw a female dog if it shook its ass right. It all gets pretty complicated what with Gloria Stuart engaged to the Sultan of Snuffboxes, a blithering idiot, and Dick Powell hired (believe it) to escort Gloria before her marriage, and Glenda Farrell as a slick secretary out for gold, and Adolphe Menjou as a con man etc. etc. ad enjoyment. All of the women in the movie are in one way or another exchanging one form of slave status for another. The assumption is, of course, that none of them have any identity without a man.

Hang on through all this for the third reel which contains the big numbers. The first blow out is a pianist's nightmare. There are hundreds of pianos — I know it sounds unreal but see it — sliding all over the screen. The uses of motion are startling and wildly inventive. The section with the pianos sliding and undulating are beautifully executed and actually tasteful, save for the intrusion of three two-ton graces whose costumes suggest severe calcification of the shoulder bone. Aside from the three heavies, there is a wonderful feeling of lightness and gracefulness.

This is followed by the incomparable "Lullaby of Broadway." This piece is the height of Berkeley's genius — sexist though it is. It is lyrical, perfectly paced, concise and with smooth transitions. It has a definite beginning, middle and end. A love poem to Manhattan and a moral indictment of women, it is both chauvinistic and one of film's most exciting and overwhelming achievements. The sexism involves the punishment delivered to a "free" woman, Wini Shaw (later the famous Lady in

Red). In the sequence she is a woman of what was termed "loose" morals. She is taken to ritzy places and lives a life of pleasure although she sleeps the day away in a modest one room flat. The fantasy of those bedraggled depression women was being acted out by Wini Shaw. When she sat up on that high block in the night club with hundreds of singers and dancers begging her to "Come on and dance" — those women must have ached, lusted, longed to be Wini in her fine clothes with all of Manhattan at her feet. And how does the sequence end — with the fantasy smashed from a high building — Wini has to die for her life of pleasure. Why isn't the rich man who takes her to these places killed? He's the real pig. Why does the woman pay for sensuality, for beauty, even in this case, for freedom as capitalists envision it? "Lullaby of Broadway" is a powerful piece of film for anyone who loves the medium — for a woman with a Women's Liberation consciousness it is a real down — our mothers fell off that skyscraper with Wini and we're left to pick up the pieces.

As a total film, *Footlight Parade*, is a better movie. The plot is more together, the characters are more interesting, the dialogue flies and is very funny, and Joan Blondell gets great lines. The whole movie builds to a hilarious finale in which the chorus girls are bussed to three different theaters to work their show. The first number is Honeymoon Hotel. Picture a platoon of prostitutes in Jersey City singing in the halls of Honeymoon Hotel — Great Gawd Almighty. There is also a funny short piece early in the movie with two of the men singing a love song to each other, a sly swipe at male homosexuality but not nearly as offensive as what goes down today. The second big number is a water wonderland with Ruby Keeler as chief nymph. The aquatic acrobatics prepare you for tiers of semi nude female bodies (making money off our meat again) that turn into incredible kalidescopes of flesh. It'll blow your mind. The final number is a loving tribute to U.S. imperialism and it's called Shanghai Lil. This is absolute must for the John Birch Society.

After forty years, we see only the head and camp aspects of these movies. The bread lines for most of us were a threat our parents hurled at us so we would clean our plates out of gastronomic guilt. We look at these musicals and explode with laughter. Our parents, especially those of us who came up poor, looked at these movies and drooled. Not only did they want to escape from the hunger into a singing land of silver, gold and white, they wanted to believe it was *real*. It is the desperate fantasy of that generation that provides us with our superior, mocking attitude of camp.

Camp is part of the protective coloration for the homosexual intellect. It has by now been vulgarized and passed into the heterosexual "beautiful" culture but I'd like to concentrate on its centrality to homosexuals. Most homosexuals live in a world of stylized, unreal communication. We artificially posture our way through alien territory. We are pseudo-heterosexuals. If we didn't work this show there would be a renaissance of bread lines because most of us would get fired. The effort to present yourself honestly to your oppressor is rewarded by rejection. Within this rigidity we have become

masters at picking up the undercurrent, the vibration of realness underneath the facade. The survival of oppressed peoples is dependent upon being able to pick up these undercurrents. We can seize the counter content that lurks behind the stereotyped form. Camp is part of that process for the homosexual. It is our unique fantasy, our feast amid the heterosexual famine. And we too, want it to be real.

Go to those two movies and really watch them. The body conventions are planned, the relationships are highly stylized, the acting is stagey, the make-up is frightful, the clothing has nothing to do with the human body and there are orgies of reducing human beings to opulent designs. Well, we live in something very similar to those Busby Berkeley musicals. Our lives are highly stylized. We perform all the meaningless (to us) conventions of sacrosanct heterosexuality and we know the dreary dialogue by heart. Why not groove on those movies where no one really relates to anyone else, where we all know the ending before it begins and where we can laugh at the tragically transparent dreams of our parents — we all had straight parents, dig? Aside from that those movies are beautiful tributes to the area of this fucked up culture that the straights have left to homosexuals — dancing, theater, fashion — in short, the arts, major and minor. Well our homosexual "parents" of the 1930's took what your parents discarded and made it into a celluloid dream for Amerika to choke on. They caught the undercurrent. They crystallized the real sickness and the real needs of the time and made the musicals. They forced the age to mock itself. Behind the glitter of Gold Diggers is the dust bowl, the bread lines, the threat of facism. The facade is funny precisely because it is so *unreal*.

Camp is our fantasy today because it allows us to be superior. It's one thing to look at an unreal movie, feel superior, in control and laugh — it's another to look at your own life and laugh. That's where camp can be a double edged blade. You can cut yourself while you cut the culture that has forced you into this unreal situation. We mock ourselves. We don't take ourselves seriously. We attempt to transcend our oppression rather than confront it. We call each other "Superdyke" or "Fairie Queen" instead of facing the heterosexual and calling out loud and clear, "Oppressor." We have internalized the staight culture's values and act them out in elaborate rituals of self mutilation. We glide past each other in frozen postures just like those manipulated women in Berkeley's movies. And in the passing we make fun of each other and ourselves as we make fun of the whole insane society. If we keep accepting heterosexual definitions of homosexuality we are killing ourselves. Eat your heart out. With camp we can keep the unreal values of this world at arm's length and escape into the more stylized unreality of The Pines. But behind the glitter and our summer costumes lies the hunger in Appalachia, the anti-lesbian backlash in Women's Liberation and the creeping facism that masquerades as patriotism.

Footlight Parade is pure camp and so are the grade zlich flicks called The Great Society, Law and Order, The American Way, The Nuclear Family, The Well Adjusted Woman, and The Damned subtitled Watch the Deviants Dance. It's time that we turn the lights on and eat their hearts out.

The Boys in the Band - one more time...

Dana Gillespie

I can't get over the abundance of guilt and anxiety expressed in *The Boys in the Band*. It's terribly depressing. But I'm part of the oppressed minority it ridicules and the story is not meant for my enjoyment anyway. It's for suburbia; for mid-America; for the Upper East Side Swingers. I can picture them at the Cine-Malibu-Eros-Embassy-East Theatre on Third Avenue and 58th Street having all their conceptions of gay life confirmed. They suck up all that limp-wristed, swishy, Hairdresser-Interior Decorator bullshit as gospel and get their laffs as well.

Crowley presents homosexuals as security-starved people with a sort of revulsion for their own way of life. Revulsion and tremendous guilt. It takes shape in Michael in the form of the icks. Many homosexuals suffer from incapacitating feelings of shame, guilt, bitterness, and self-hatred. Some are unconsciously driven to destroy themselves. That's some, certainly nothing of any appreciable size. Crowley paints a distorted picture. Every one of the characters is screwed up somehow. If it's not a shrink, it's pills, or liquor, or some similar crutch. They're portrayed as emotional cripples. Tragic-comedy?

Homosexuals have it instilled in them. They're sick. Evil, criminal, sinful. Sinful — there's a good one. You're fourteen years old and you've just gone down on a friend. As you walk home alone through dank, dismal

back streets, you turn things over in your mind. You remember what Father O'Hoolihan said last Sunday, and especially what your old lady's been drumming into your head since the year one. All that fire and brimstone shit. You can visualize thunder and lightening and the Virgin Mary descending from heaven in a flaming chariot. It's pretty gruesome. How can you adjust to your homosexuality with such oppressive attitudes all around you, and now, after this play reinforces?

The really sad aspect of the whole situation is how the mass media have reacted to *The Boys in the Band*. Of the stage version, the *Times* said: "...uncompromising in its honesty..." How can this view be honest? What of the vast majority of homosexuals who cannot see themselves vicariously in the play? We're portrayed as stereotyped mincing swishes, and the *Times* feels it's honest. I wonder if Rex Reed is gay.

The Voice of Male Chauvinism said *The Boys in the Band* is honest, with "...no obeisance to the expectations of the heterosexual world." Are they serious? The image of the homosexual in the play is just what Hefner and his gang of Supercocks have been helping to perpetuate for years. They're among the worst offenders.

Some of the comments are truly stomach turners. From the *National Observer*: "The frankest and funniest homosexual play ever put on the stage..." Said the *Publishers' Weekly*: "It's all ripples and hilarity." And

from *Life Magazine* (known for its profundity regarding homosexuals): "...you don't have to be a homosexual to enjoy it..." That one *has* to take the cake.

The reviews of the film version are a little more depressing. In the *Times* this is so, probably because of its truthfulness: "There is something basically unpleasant, however, about a play that seems to have been created in an inspiration of love-hate and that finally does nothing more than exploit its (I assume) sincerely conceived stereotypes."

The *Daily News'* review, keeping with true *News* tradition, was very moral about it and objected, first off, to the use of "...vile, repellent language."

"The most pathetic of them all is the host, who is still fighting his homosexuality, as if he hoped that it was a nightmare that would someday go away." The paper is just reflecting the bullshit the Crowley has displayed for them. The *News* goes on: "There is much truth and compassion in this film..." They really eat that shit up. It's everything they've ever wanted to believe about us. The next quote from the *News* is the sum total of the unbending ignorance of staight society: "Crowley's writing tells it, I believe, like it must be for the homosexual." Crowley should be shot.

IS GAY GOOD?

Here, at last, is a novel that dares to be completely honest about homosexuality. There is no sensationalism, no subterfuge, no apologies. There are no stereotyped flaming faggots. The "sexual offenders" do not commit suicide at the end. *The Lord Won't Mind* is, if you will, a love story—a happy homosexual novel. It is also the most outspoken, most extraordinarily graphic book on the inner workings of the gay world ever written.

There will be some who bitterly condemn *The Lord Won't Mind*. There will be others who applaud its publication as a landmark in the continuing fight against literary censorship. No one—but no one—will be neutral.

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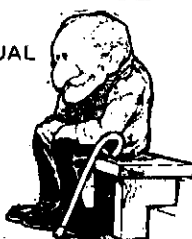
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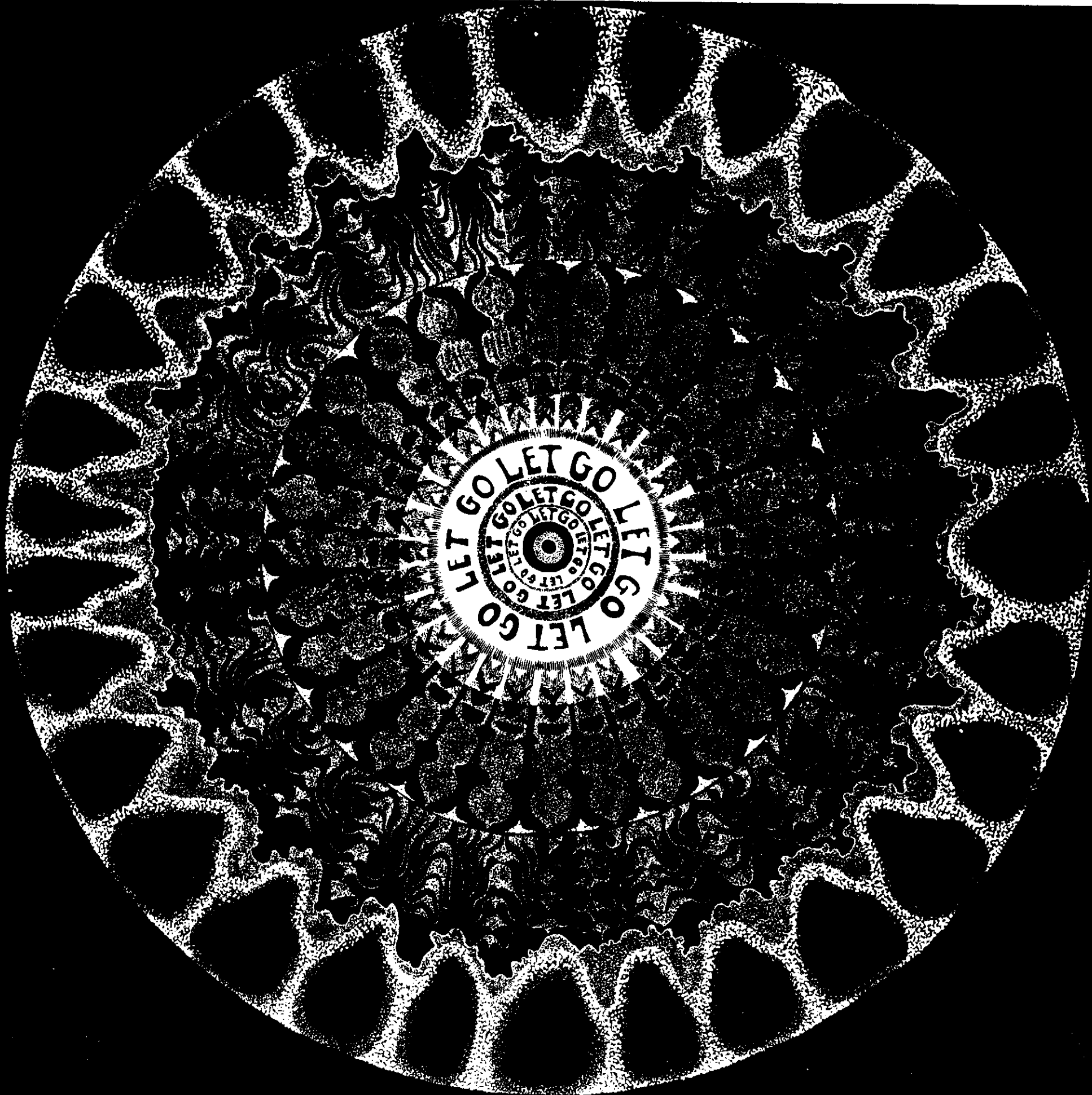
2 eggs
dash of salt and msg
2 tablespoons of corn
1 teaspoon marijuana

tonnaey lightfoot

Get out your whip and beat the shit out of the eggs; add all the other ingredients except marijuana, butter your frying pan, pour eggs in, top with marijuana, stir until you can't stand it any longer, then eat 'em.

HO HO HOMOSEXUAL





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