

Gay Flames

ISSUE TWO

A BULLETIN OF THE HOMOFIRE MOVEMENT

SEPT. 11, 1970

Gay People Help Plan New World

Gay Flames went to the Plenary Session for the Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia this weekend. The Convention was sponsored by the Black Panther Party in hopes that all oppressed people in the US can join together.

About 30 men from New York Gay Liberation Front went down. Many women, from Radical Lesbians and from GLF, went too. We went by car, bus, and train. We pooled our bread so everyone could go if they wanted to.

When we got there, the women and men each got a place where they could stay together and be with gay people from other cities. Some of the men dressed in drag the first night and rapped to some Panthers who came over; others went to bed early to get ready for the heavy day ahead.

Saturday morning, Panther Michael Tabor of the NY 21 -- accused of plotting to bomb the tulips at the Bronx Botanical Gardens! -- spoke. He's got this really deep, beautiful voice, but doesn't come on like a super-butche at all. He said a lot about how we're all in the same boat when it comes to facing the power of the pigs. He talked about the oppression of gays and women, but it was clear that his understanding of our fight is not yet right on. It appears however that he is moving in the right direction.

That night, we tried to get in to Huey Newton's speech, but only a few of us made it. About 13000 people came and the hall could hold only 6500. We went on back to the church. Before we went to sleep, we were treated to the vision of two brothers fucking on top of the church's silk American flag.

We got up and worked on our statement the next morning. The most important discussion centered around the Third World (term used to describe the four-fifths of the world's people who are not European or North American "whites") Gay male statement. They confronted the gay whites on our racism, specifically on our willingness to criticize the sexism of black men but not that of white men. They asked us to recognize Huey Newton's recently stated position in favor of Gay Liberation as being a tremendous advance in the revolution and that the Black Panther Party holds the most out-front position in terms of the struggle to give power to the people. They condemned the middle-class, collegiate viewpoint that is still too often seen in GLF as well as the anti-homosexual attitudes of both 3rd World and white radicals.

The discussion that followed was deep and involved. In the middle of it, Afeni Shakur of the NY 21 came and took part. She helped to explain a lot about the Black Panthers to all of us. She said that all she wanted was a farm with lots of trees and grass and a place to grow cabbage, but that to get this for herself and her people, it would be necessary to fight. Most of us were convinced by what she had to say.

We therefore decided to include in our statement that gay men at the Session recognized the BPP as being presently the vanguard of the peoples revolution. By this, we meant that the party is the clearest of all US radical groups in its understanding of the nature of the fight of the peoples of the whole world.

We went on to prepare the following statement and demands, which we read to the people that night. They are meant to become part of the new constitution which we (and you, if you want to) will write in November:

STATEMENT OF THE MALE HOMOSEXUAL WORKSHOP

All power to the people!

The revolution will not be complete until all men are free to express their love for one another sexually. We affirm the sexuality of our love. The social institution which prevents us all from expressing our total revolutionary love we define as sexism. Sexism is a belief or practice that the sex or sexual orientation of human beings gives to some the right to certain privileges, powers, or roles, while denying to others their full potential. Within the context of our society, sexism is primarily manifested through male supremacy and heterosexual chauvinism. Since in the short run sexism benefits certain persons or groups, in the long run it cannot serve all the people, and prevents the forming of complete social consciousness among straight men.

Sexism is irrational, unjust and counter-revolutionary. Sexism prevents the revolutionary solidarity of the people.

We demand that the struggle against sexism be acknowledged as an essential part of the revolutionary struggle. We demand that all revolutionaries deal individually and collectively with their own sexism.

We recognize as a vanguard revolutionary action the Huey P. Newton statement on gay liberation. We recognize the Black Panther Party as being the vanguard of the people's revolution in Amerikkka.

No revolution without us!

An army of lovers cannot lose!

WE DEMAND:

1. The right to be gay, any time, any place.
2. The right to free physiological change and modification of sex upon demand.
3. The right of free dress and adornment.
4. That all modes of human sexual self-expression deserve protection of the law, and social sanction.
5. Every child's right to develop in a non-sexist, non-possessive atmosphere, which is the responsibility of all people to create.
6. That a free educational system present the entire range of human sexuality, without advocating any one form or style; that sex roles and sex-determined skills not be fostered by the schools.
7. That language be modified so that no gender take priority.
8. The judicial system be run by the people through people's courts; that all people be tried by members of their peer group.
9. That gays be represented in all governmental and community institutions.
10. That organized religions be condemned for aiding in the genocide of gay people, and enjoined from teaching hatred and superstition.
11. That psychiatry and psychology be enjoined from advocating a preference for any form of sexuality, and the enforcement of that preference by shock treatment, brainwashing, imprisonment, etc.

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my Gay soul

A few weeks ago a Gay brother and I interviewed B.J. Beckwith, a lawyer who is sort of the Terrence Hallinan for the Gay community in San Francisco—when homosexuals are busted a lot of people hire him to defend them.

I asked Beckwith if he is Gay (he obviously is, but that's just my slanderous opinion—I can't prove it). He said, "If you're trying to get me to say I'm queer, I won't do it. What I do in bed is nobody's business."

I wanted to scream, "Honey, I don't care what you do in bed, I just asked if you are Gay."

A few days later I was in a rap with some women who are heavy into Women's Liberation. "You zero in or sex, you always zero in on sex," they said.

I've been told the same thing by liberal homosexuals and straights alike, "what you do in bed is your business, do your thing." They are saying that Gay means SEX, nothing but sex.

Well, I am tired to the bone of being told what I am. I am Gay. Yes, yes my cock, my mouth and my asshole is Gay. So is my fingernail, my big toe, my nose and my brain. I am not Gay because of where I put my cock or who I sleep with. I am Gay because everything about me is Gay, because I am part of a Gay community.

I was Gay long before I admitted my homosexuality to myself, long before

I ever had sex, long before I knew what sex was.

When I was 10, I played paper dolls with the girls and dug it; when I had to, I played baseball with the guys and didn't dig it.

When I was 13 a gang of four or five guys tormented me—all through junior high school. They called me a cocksucker. I didn't know what it meant, but I knew it was the worst thing a guy could call another guy. They called me MRS. Alinder. They probably had homosexual fantasies and wanted to relate to me physically and the only way they could sense to do it was to provoke me to fight them. But I didn't. I was scared shitless.

There were five of them and I was alone.

I grew up on a farm in southern Minnesota and there you proved your masculinity in competitive athletics. I had too much self doubt to be any good in that. In high school I earned a bit of respect through journalism, theatre and art. But I was never the man I was supposed to be.

Don't get me wrong, I was not

exactly a flaming faggot. I drove a tractor, plowed the fields, tossed bales of hay into the hay loft and joined the Future Farmers of America.

I went to a small liberal arts college near my home for two years. It was a parochial, superstraight middle class place, everything based on a social pecking order of fraternities and sororities. Even the lowest fraternity—a bunch of creeps—didn't want me. Did I have B.O.? Bad breath? No. I was hipper and in some ways more together than they were. But I couldn't censor myself enough. My Gay self was showing through. And my Gay self was me. And every response I got from the world told me my Gay self was despicable. So I censored myself more, built higher and thicker walls around my soul and retreated deeper into my closet.

I had friends, other guys at the bottom. I was afraid to be seen on campus with them. I thought I would slip even lower. We were all Gay, but that could never be talked about, never be acted out. We were the outcasts but we were not together.

Two years later a good friend came out. At first I played straight; finally I admitted that I was Gay too. We had been friends since we were seven years old. But it was not until we were 22 or 23 that we could deal with what brought us together. Since then—although we live far apart—I've felt very close to that friend. We've been through a lot.

What separates me from the straight boy is not just the things we do in bed, but what our lives have been. When I meet an upfront Gay brother, I make a connection. I already know a lot about him.

I need to be together with other Gay men. We have not been together—we've not had enough self respect for that. Isolated sex and then look for another partner. Enough of that, that's where we've been. Let's go somewhere else. Let's go somewhere where we value each other as more than just a hunk of meat. We need to recognize one another wherever we are, start talking to each other. We need to say "Hi, Brother" when we see each other on the street. We need consciousness raising groups and communes.

Our Gay souls have nearly been stomped to death in that desert called America. If we are to bloom, we can only do it together.

I need you brother, because brother you are all I have.

Gary Alinder



Away from the shuddering ecstasy of his latest lover's lusty loins, Butch is a man of few words when it comes to feeling good....

When what to his wondering eye should appear but a vision of Earthly Turf, spokesman for Christian hypocrisy & misguided Pharisee — come to force the Shackles of Shame upon Butch's manly wrists....

WRITTEN BY: Richard Jones
DRAWN BY: John Perry

When LOVE is a crime, only the hateful shall walk FREE!

Oh, My son! Every night I soak my pillow in tears of prayer that someday you'll do the RIGHT THING and settle down with a good wife, a two-car garage, and three NORMAL children!

Oh, mama! I'm so ashamed

I don't sell fried chickens to cock-suckers!



Section 288a of the Penal Code

YOU QUEER! What decent law-worshipping citizen dare name your CRIME!

What shall I do?

More than a million or the clever prison that will cope with your soul!

IN DEATH! Butch, my boy, IN DEATH!

Even the sea will vomit up your pussy flesh

FAGGOT!



No Christmas presents for you!

where shall I go?

Woe to the citizen of Sodom & the corrupted children of Gomorrah! The GUILTY shall be JUDGED!!!

guilty? Judged?

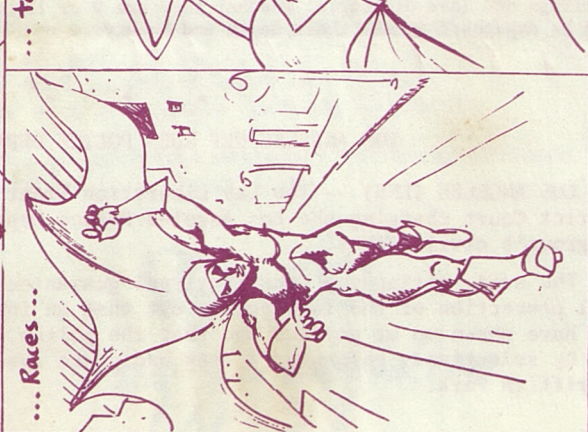
Meanwhile, the Lavender Kid, Paragon of Homosexual virtue, Liberator of the Oppressed & Keeper of the Faith....

My dear! Do I sense a gay brother succumbing to the des-

Meanwhile, the Lavender Kid, Paragon of Homosexual virtue, Liberator of the Oppressed & Keeper of the Faith...



Haunted by the Phantoms of Society, driven to the edge of despair, Butch faces the currents of the murky depths below.



And as our two new-made friends walk off together, ... arm in arm ...



... to deliver a blow for the GAY and the GOOD!

... Races...

"A THOUSAND TIMES, NO!"

Gay is good! Gay is proud! Have I really been saying these things, not just saying them but chanting them in the streets? Do I really mean it? I think I can honestly say that I really do mean it, finally, or at the very least I'm beginning to develop a sense of pride in my homosexuality, a sense that gay is good. The very fact that I must go through this awesome process is the essence of gay oppression. While our bodies tell us "yes," the world around us shouts (or whispers), "No, no, no, a thousand times, no."

When did I first hear that "no"? I can't really remember, but I think it is something I first felt at a very early age. Recently at a gay men's consciousness-raising session, I recalled an incident which proved to me that my awareness of the taboo against homosexuality was deeply ingrained in me at least by the age of 13.

I was 12 or 13 when I first discovered the joys of masturbation. And even though I was never subjected to some of the worst lies about masturbation ("it'll give you warts"... "it weakens your heart"), I did have some sense of its being wrong -- hardly something to rap to my parents about over dinner, even though it was one of my most important activities at the time.

Back then, I remember clearly masturbating to a dual set of fantasies. I had found some pictures of naked women in a tool chest at home. I hid them away in my room, bringing them out to use for masturbation. But that wasn't all. Much of the masturbation, perhaps most of it (I really don't remember), was based upon locker room fantasies from gym class, visions of boys and their cocks to look at and to suck. After some months of rather intensive masturbation with this dual set of fantasies, I began to feel overcome with guilt and fear. One day, I tore up the pictures of the naked women and flushed them down the toilet. (If I could have done the same with those locker room visions, I would have, but they were to stay with me forever, in one form or another.) A short time afterwards, I broke out with tears and sobs in my bedroom. I called my father, ready to confess my sins to him. I didn't even tell him about the masturbation, however, only hinting at it, and I blurted out something about "dirty pictures" of naked women. As for my homosexual feelings -- expressed in those pleasurable thoughts of boys and their cocks -- I knew I could never tell my father about them. A small measure of guilt subsided, but most of it stayed with me for another ten years, at least.

It was gay oppression and heterosexual chauvinism that enabled me to tell my father about the pictures of women, but not about my attraction for other boys. I know now -- as I didn't know then -- that this was not a personal problem, nor a sickness, nor even a hang-up. It was the result of a system of oppression, of a society which will not accept and which actively condemns the love I feel for other men. Right now, there are 13-year-old boys going through the same thing I went through then. Even now, I feel their pain.

Gay liberation means a lot of things to me, including socialist revolution. But the revolution I am fighting for, if it is to be complete, means that the feelings and love of people, whether they are 9 or 13 or 20 or 30 or 50 years old, can be expressed in all their depth and beauty.

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LOS ANGELES GLF SUES POLICE DEPARTMENT

LOS ANGELES (LNS) -- The Gay Liberation Front has filed a suit in U.S. District Court charging the Los Angeles Police Department with violation of the group's civil rights.

The suit, citing the Constitutional guarantees of free assembly and equal protection of the law, points out that an inordinately high number of pigs have shown up at gay-ins and that the police have discriminated against gays by selectively enforcing a city ordinance against distributing leaflets in Griffith Park.

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12. The abolition of the nuclear family because it perpetuates the false categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality.
13. The immediate release of and reparations for gay and other political prisoners from prisons and mental institutions; the support of gay political prisoners by all other political prisoners.
14. That gays determine the destiny of their own communities.
15. That all people share equally the labor and products of society, regardless of sex or sexual orientation.
16. That technology be used to liberate all peoples of the world from drudgery.
17. The full participation of gays in the people's revolutionary army.
18. Finally, the end of domination of one person by another.

*Gay power to gay people!
All power to the people!
Seize the time!*

* * *

At the convention floor, we really made people feel the significance of our presence as they/we the people unified by the same crushing weight on all of our necks by the same pigs for the same design of keeping us all down. We chanted Gay Powerful chants. We screamed, shouted, stomped, and clapped. About 60 gay male delegates together with others scattered over the audience screamed together louder than anyone there. "Right Ons" for everything anti-sexist. We just generally turned on everyone to our pride and defiance for our way of life and solidarity with everyone's own goals. It was beautiful, we were beautiful, and we knew it.

Of noticeable absence were our Gay sisters without whom there could be NO true people's constitution. The next day that abuse was at least recognized, if not corrected, by the gay men and the straight women there thru the following statements:

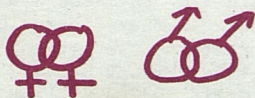
MALE HOMOSEXUALS: The Lesbian Workshop did not address the Peoples' Constitutional Convention as scheduled. Therefore, the Male Homosexual Workshop summons the attention of all participating workshops to the fact that the Plenary Session is incomplete without the inclusion of a position paper from our sisters.

WOMEN: The demands of the gay sisters were not read from the platform last (Sunday) night. The new constitution cannot be complete without these demands. The Radical Lesbians were excluded and ignored at the Workshop on Self-Determination for Women. We feel we have let ourselves and our sisters down.

In the past and here at the conference, the womens' movement has not recognized that the struggle of gay women is our struggle -- all womens' struggle. All women must be free to love one another.

Free our sisters, free ourselves. Power to the People.

Gay Flames hopes to print the statement now being produced by the Radical Lesbians in our next issue.



*Gay Liberation
Now!*

Views

The convention was an important step for gay people because, for the first time in the history of the nation and of the world, we were being recognized both for our oppression and for our potential power. We don't need straight people to legitimize our struggle, of course, but it is significant when our fight can begin to become the fight of a popular political force. No Democratic or Republican convention is about to give gay people the kind of forum we got in Philadelphia. Our struggle with the Panthers and other straight radicals has very far to go, however, and we will not rest. Our gay sisters, for example, were virtually ignored by the convention, and they have been critical of Huey Newton's statement on gay liberation for its inadequate consciousness about lesbians.

* * *

Have you ever heard people say to radicals, "You just want to tear things down, but what do you want to replace it with?" The gathering in Philadelphia was designed to get all oppressed peoples together to answer that question. The new America, as spelled out by the various workshops, is a real turn-on. Not only will there be full freedom for homosexuals and all women, but our new nation will provide for free education, free housing, free medical care, community control of police (with no national police, no secret police and no plainclothes police), no standing army, legalization of psychedelic drugs, equitable distribution of the world's natural and man-made resources (we mustn't forget that the U.S. has taken much more than its fair share of this wealth for many decades), and much more. (Radical papers such as the Black Panther paper and the Liberated Guardian will provide more detailed accounts of the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention.)

Community Bulletin Board

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EVENTS: Gay Liberation Front business meeting every Sunday, 8 p.m., Church of the Holy Apostles, 28th St. and Ninth Ave. Men's meetings and women's meetings held every Wednesday at 8 p.m. -- for location of these meetings and of special orientation meetings for new people, and for other information about GLF, call: GLF-Men: 864-6487; GLF-Women: 924-1834. Starting Fri., Sept. 18, every Friday will be Gay Night at Alternate U -- people defining themselves as "straight" will not be admitted to Alternate U on Fridays. People from the gay community will get together to rap, dance, be together. Alternate U is located on the northeast corner of Sixth Ave. and 14th St. Every Sunday, 4 p.m. to 1 a.m., the People's Coffee Grounds, 210 W. 82 St., betw. Broadway and Amsterdam, is reserved for gay people. Come to the coffee house -- no admission, stay as long as you like. ...We're trying to get together a gay karate class; self-defense is basic to our survival. If you can teach karate, if you know someone who can teach karate, call 691-0166....FLASH: Gay Dance, Alternate U, Sat., Sept. 12, 9-3, all welcome.

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PUBLICATIONS: Come Out!, a liberation forum for New York's gay community, will be on the streets with its new issue within a few days...Gay Sunshine, a new publication of the Berkeley Gay Liberation Front, is good reading, too. This issue of Gay Flames contains two items re-printed from Gay Sunshine -- the cartoon and the article entitled "My Gay Soul." Send \$3 for 12 issues to Gay Sunshine, Box 4089, Berkeley, Calif. 94704....From the first issue of Gay Flames: "Gay Flames is meant to give the gay community news of itself which it can't find in other places. We plan to publish weekly so as to give you the news and our views on it as soon as possible. The Gay Flames people are all Gay Liberation Front males, but we do not represent GLF in any way. We speak only as one group within the organization. We are directed basically toward gay males, although we hope to be relevant to females as well....We need your help, call us at 691-0166.