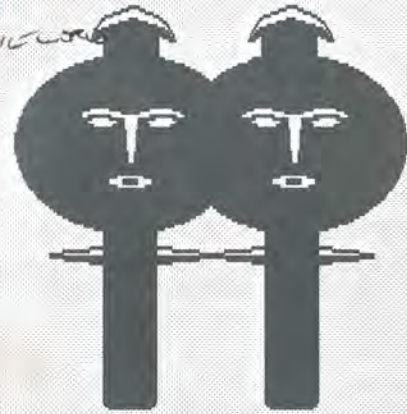


GENEROUSLY  
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# Black Lesbian & Gay Centre Project

BM Box 4390  
London WC1N 3XX  
Tel: 081-885 3543

Newsletter: October/November 1990



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### ENCUENTRO UPDATE

Since the last article appeared (August/September issue) detailing the repressive conditions under which the 2nd Latin America and Caribbean Feminist Conference was held in Costa Rica, further information has reached us.

The Encuentro was concluded with the following commitments:

1. To create a network of lesbian groups from Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. That in future lesbians from all over the world would be able to be participants in the Encuentro.
3. That the next Encuentro be held in Puerto Rico.

As a direct result of the press conference organised by women attending the Encuentro to protest at Government and media hostility, a major TV talk show dedicated two of its programmes to homosexuality and lesbianism. For the first time in Costa Rica, lesbians had the opportunity to talk about their lives, rights, needs and problems on prime time TV. A credit to the courage of all the women who attended and facilitated the Encuentro.

As one lesbian said "If anything, that was the first time I had seen the word lesbian in a newspaper headline (in this country)".  
Info from *Off Our Backs*.

### TAIWANESE GROUP

Lesbians in Taiwan have started the country's first group with the aim of "organising the community beyond the social circles that currently exist".

Eventually they hope to set up a phone line, a lesbian centre and a political action group. They welcome lesbian visitors and information. Send details to *Wo-men zhijian*, C/O *Thamora Fishel*, Hoping East Road, Sec.2 - Lane 76 - Alley 17, No.7-2/2Fl, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

### ASIAN LESBIANS ORGANISE

Now *Angaree*, a Thai lesbian group is organising the first regional Asian Lesbian Conference in Thailand.

The Conference is scheduled to take place on 7th-10th December 1990 at a town outside Bangkok. The Conference will be the first of its kind in Asia and aims to bring together eighty lesbians from at least eleven countries in the region.

The planning group hope it will be "an opportunity for Asian lesbians to meet each other, apart from other things and offer proof that we exist and are not alone". The Conference aims to provide an opportunity for Asian lesbians "to meet, share our history, situation and experience, address lesbian rights issues in Asia and develop future perspectives and strategies for the Asian Lesbians Network (ALN)". The ALN, far from being a new initiative, was born out of the 1986 International Lesbian Information Service conference, where a number of Asian lesbians discussed the idea of a network. Although slow to take off, contacts grew and the network increased its numbers.

The ALN has asked for vital financial support and publicity to let the world know that Asian lesbians exist in the region and are organising. They'd also like contributions of printed and media materials.

If you want to send money, or information, contact ALN, PO BOX 322, Rajdamnern, Bangkok 10200, Thailand.

### OUT IN PERU

*Contramano* has been formed in Lima, Peru to work for the well being of the city's gay community. They would like to make contact with similar groups all over the world. Send info to Apdo Postal 11 - 0541, Lima 11, Peru.

### SA BAR GOES

The only bar in South Africa serving the black lesbian and gay population of Soweto has gone straight, following a police raid. Known as *Glowbar*, the pub had been home to the Lesbian and Gay Organisation of Witwatersrand (GLOW), the group founded by black gay rights activist Tseke Simon Nkoli. GLOW's ground-breaking work has been central in the struggle of South African black gays and lesbians for visibility and rights.

According to Nkoli, police raided the club and charged the owner with possessing an unlicensed shotgun and two bar staff for their knowledge of the offence.

Management of the club has since been taken over by a white man from Johannesburg, who is anti-gay and has lost no time in making it clear that the bar is no longer open to lesbians and gays. GLOW is now in the process of looking for a new space to meet and socialise.

Info from *BLK*

### INDIAN FIRST

*Bombay Dost*, a private circulation newsletter for lesbians and gay men published its first issue this year. It aims to "provide a platform for people interested in alternate sexuality..", to organise a lesbian and gay community in India, "to encourage self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem", to provide counselling, information and work for legal reform, and to create a resource base for students.

The first issue, in Hindi and English is available from *Shakti Khabar*, BM BOX 3167, London WC1N 3XX.



**ARGENTINE CRACKDOWN**

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After years of government by dictatorship, in the form of a military junta, Argentina began its 'return to democracy' in 1983. The Argentine government continually walked a tight rope between addressing human rights issues and the fear of irritating the still powerful military. At the same time severe economic measures, including wage limits on an already impoverished country, have resulted from ludicrous conditions set by the Western controlled International Monetary Fund, agreed in exchange for large cash injections into the country's sagging economy. The USA and Britain still herald Argentina as one of their trophies in the push to 'democratise' Latin America, but recent events have shown again, that no matter how much veneer is used to cover violations of basic human rights and freedoms, they will out in the end.

In the midst of constant police harassment of the lesbian and gay community, the Federal Court in Buenos Aires has outlawed the country's only national lesbian and gay organisation and its Vice-President has been sacked from his job.

Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA) can now no longer rent or own property, raise funds, open a bank account or conduct any formal activities. The ruling has shut down CHA's Stop AIDS Campaign

and Civil Rights Campaign, as well as its campaigns to abolish anti-gay legislation or laws which have been used to discriminate against lesbians or gay men. The Federal Court sentence made it clear that lesbians and gay men could not organise as a group through CHA because the group was trying to make homosexuality "morally acceptable". Since homosexuality was a "pathology or a negative value", the court said, CHA's existence damaged the national wellbeing and the common good. Within the course of the week CHA's Vice-President, Rafael Freda, was sent a telegram firing him from his job as translator at TV Liberty, Channel 9. The termination of his contract came the day after he had appeared on the channels talk show discussing the court ruling on CHA.

Members of CHA had attended the International Lesbian and Gay Association conference in July to call on the international community to condemn the repression of lesbians and gays in the country.

In Buenos Aires, an average of 30 men are arrested every night under the "Law for Search of Records", which allows the police to detain someone for 24 hours, or charged as suspected of "Incitation to the Carnal Act". The harassment continues in custody;

gay men have been denied food and water, threatened, humiliated and sexually assaulted. Detainees, families and employers have then been informed of the man's sexuality.

It is no coincidence that the ruling on CHA follows so shortly after the group's active role in internationally publicising the situation in Argentina.

CHA now hopes to appeal against the ruling to the Supreme Court, but if, as seems likely, the Court refuses an appeal, CHA's only recourse would be to take the case to the Inter American Court of Human Rights in San Jose, Puerto Rico.

But as Rafael says "the costs and fees for this appeal are out of reach for CHA. We have to appeal to groups and individuals overseas".

Despite the West's celebration of Argentina's so-called democratisation, the repression continues. Help publicise and financially support CHA's right to exist. To fight their case CHA needs \$8,000; as its legal existence has been denied, the organisation cannot cash cheques - CHA has issued an international plea for organisations to send money orders or cheques made payable to CHA's president **Alejandro Zalazar at Catamarca 469, PB "A", 1213 Buenos Aires, Argentina. Fax no. 541 46 7433 Tel: 011 541 362 8261. A.K.**

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**RCN INITIATIVES**

A new initiative to tackle black and ethnic minority issues has been established by the Royal College of Nursing.

Jennette Golding, RCN Regional Officer, is being seconded to work with and advise General Secretary Christine Hancock, on how the College can address equal opportunity issues relating to black people. According to Jennette Golding, the RCN has to identify ways in which the entire membership can be made aware of issues relating to black and ethnic minority people. "We must fight for equal opportunities for this group within society at large, but we also need to urgently address racism within nursing and the health services," she said.

She's sceptical about the health services' equal opportunities policies and whether they in fact translate into practice. Ms. Golding will be reviewing health authority and board policies and liaising with external expert organisations as part of her role. **BLGC Newsletter Page 2**

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**NATIONAL NEWS**

For the last two and a half years a number of members of the RCN have been campaigning to get the College to recognise that lesbians and gay men suffer from discrimination both as nurses and as patients. As a result, the RCN have asked one of the campaigners, Hazel Platzer to set up a working group to look at the issue of discrimination by nurses against lesbian and gay patients, to set out the needs of lesbians and gay patients, and to make recommendations about how any such problems could be addressed.

Hazel is keen to ensure that this small working group should have representation from the black lesbian and gay nursing community. If anyone is interested either in joining the working group, or has useful contacts or networks they are willing to share (for research purposes contact:- **Hazel Platzer, C/O Margaret Lee, RCN Headquarters, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1M 0AB or telephone BLGC.**

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**S28 GOES TO COURT**

The Labour controlled London borough of Waltham Forest's policy of placing children with gay or lesbian foster parents is facing legal challenge under Section 28. If successful, this will be the first time the Section has been legally invoked since it became law over two years ago.

In common with many local authorities, Waltham Forest has regularly placed children with gay and lesbian foster parents. At a council meeting on August 2nd, councillors voted overwhelmingly to endorse a specially commissioned report on the subject, intended to formalise the borough's policy.

The report, prepared by the council's Social Services department, was careful to state that gay men and lesbians should not be recruited in preference to "any other group of potential carers in the community", but suggests the council should make welcoming statements to potential lesbian and gay foster parents in its recruitment



## NATIONAL NEWS

literature and at open evenings. Tory Councillor, Laurie Braham criticised the decision saying "homosexuality is an abomination" and suggested that placing children with gay male foster parents would "put them at risk of becoming HIV positive". Chingford Young Conservatives have drawn up papers for the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) and are demanding the policy be overturned. However the Young Tories appear to be ill-advised as well as bigoted. The correct legal procedure would be to send the papers for Judicial Review as this would be a civil law case and not to the DPP who are only concerned with criminal prosecutions. And to think these people could be our future councillors and MP's. Comforting thought, eh?  
AK

### OH WHAT A BASTARD!

To save money for the government and promote its 'pro-family' policies, the Department of Social Security is to put more resources into getting maintenance payments out of absent fathers. In this country, two-thirds of lone parents are on income support. This is not surprising because of the lack of job

opportunities for mothers. Even in the past, an unmarried mother who was unwilling to name the father of her child would often be put under pressure by DSS officers to do so, so that he could be forced to pay for the child's upkeep.

In Australia, absent fathers are traced through the tax system and maintenance payments taken directly from their wages. Mothers who refuse to name the fathers of their children (unless they can persuade officials that this will put them at risk) can have their benefits reduced or even withdrawn. British government ministers are thought to favour setting up a similar system here.

From London Advice Services Alliance Review

### NOTHING NEW

Despite ten years of equal opportunities employment policies, one-third of all private employers discriminate against black people at job interview stage, let alone on the job, according to a recent survey by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

As a result far fewer jobs are going to black workers. Just 4% of Britain's 450,000 civil servants are black. The highest echelons are exclusively white, and most black employees are on the two lowest grades. In Cardiff only 2.8% of employees working for private firms are black. In Sheffield it is 2%, despite 5% of both local populations comprising members of ethnic minority communities. So tell us something we didn't already know!

### AT EVERY LEVEL

Speaking at the "Criminology into the 1990's" conference this month Black barrister, Peter Herbert slammed the legal profession.

Despite the fact that Coventry and Liverpool house the oldest black communities in this country, neither city has a single black barrister. Around 70 per cent of black barristers are concentrated in only 19 of the country's 300 chambers, and most are based in London. The legal profession, Peter Herbert stated "is failing black people and this is not happening by accident."

Info from the Voice.

## ROTIMI'S WORK

Rotimi Fani-Kayode died in December 1989, aged 34. His photographs spoke to many people in many ways. His vision was fresh, challenging, sometimes irreverent. So that Rotimi's innovative style and content should continue to remain accessible to a wide audience, a group has come together to form the Friends of Rotimi Fani-Kayode.

A retrospective exhibition will take place in December 1990, at the 198 Gallery, Herne Hill, London. The show will open a full year after his death.

Friends of Rotimi Fani-Kayode have been unable to secure any public funding for the exhibition and the series of related events, planned to coincide with the show.

The group is therefore in urgent need of financial support. They are suggesting that individuals make a donation of ten pounds and organisations thirty pounds. All contributions will be acknowledged in the exhibition catalogue, they will need to receive your donation by the end of October. The Friends of Rotimi Fani-Kayode are compiling an appreciation of Rotimi

and his work by those who knew him. If you would like to write a short paragraph, please submit this along with your donation to Friends of Rotimi Fani-Kayode, BM Box 7514, London WC1N 3XX.



"I Believe that Children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way...." Marvin Gaye

## Greetings

Calling all Lesbian and Gay People of Colour to a meeting on the 12th of October 2-3pm at 40 Theobalds Rd, London WC1, to organise Workshops for 'our children' for the duration of the International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour Conference 2-4 November 1990 in London.

We have already done a large amount of necessary fundraising for our Children. We need committed people to organise and facilitate workshops. Let us make our Children an integral part of this conference.

Interested ??

CONTACT ILGPOCC 081-885 3543

See poster on page 7 for more details on the conference.



# AFRICAN - ASIAN

About four hundred people took part in the African-Asian Conference UK 1990, held in Liverpool from 14 to 16 September. It was a memorable event, with moments of warmth and solidarity as well as frustration and heated debate. Vital issues were raised, thought-provoking questions asked - though there was not enough time to follow these through.

Of the delegates - from community organisations, local authorities and businesses, mostly from Britain but a few from abroad - four represented lesbian and gay groups. Wesley and I were there on behalf of BLGC, and there were two delegates from Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights. Other black lesbians and gays, with varying degrees of 'outness', were dotted about. There was hardly any open hostility, though a few of the other delegates were rather wary.

Many forceful women took part, but there was little deliberate sexism from the men. Also it was clear how much the different black communities had in common and there was a high level of African-Asian unity among the delegates. However there was tension between (mainly older) 'community leaders' - including the organisers - and their supporters on the one hand, and (mainly younger) activists into a less rigid, more democratic style of working on the other hand. At times this led to chaos!

## SEXISM

According to the crowded agenda, the first day was meant to concentrate on the past; the second would deal with the present, the third with the future. Before the speakers began, there was a long debate about the presence of a handful of white people: who were they and what were they doing at a black event? In the end they were asked to leave.

'Pan-Europeanism and Racism' was the topic of a paper by Vince Hines, director of the National Federation of Self-Help Organisations and one of the chief organisers of the conference. It drew an alarming picture of an increasingly racist Europe, in which extreme right-wing parties like the National Front in France and Republican Party in Germany had become mainstream and 'non-whites' were under threat; and warned that 'Western liberalism cannot be guaranteed in the future, especially on the issue of race, gender, religious practice and sexuality.'

Later, delegates from the Netherlands and East Germany spoke - a reminder of the urgent need for greater unity among black people throughout the European Community as 1992 approaches. The black community in Germany is now living in terror: there has been a drastic rise in racist violence in recent months.

The speakers on Friday varied in background and approach. A few were academics, but most represented organisations such as the West Indian Standing Conference, Lothian Caribbean Organisation, the National Federation of Black Housing Organisations, Indian Workers' Association, National

Black Caucus and Asian Business Association.

They talked of the treatment of young black people in schools, and of how many ended up in institutions such as prisons; of the refusal of the British state to take the demands of black organisations seriously; of the discrimination faced in different areas of life. Though many black households owned their own homes, this was often because they had been refused accommodation at a reasonable rent; while a number of black people set up their own businesses, a high proportion quickly went bankrupt. Much was said, too, about the community's resistance, from campaigns for better services to setting up black housing associations and co-ops.

## HEALTH

There was a lively talk by Josephine Khwali and Chris Mullard of Focus Consultancy, on upward mobility. They held a conversation on stage where - instead of praising this as the way forward - they talked of its problems. The few black people who have struggled upwards have certainly worked for their success, but often find themselves stuck in white institutions where they cannot do much for others in the community - especially other women. Community struggles and networking can do more than individual high-flyers.

That evening in the main hall, there was a social, with South Indian dance and a local reggae band.

Health was one of the subjects touched on in the Saturday morning session, in which a speaker from Lambeth Sickle Cell Project reminded delegates of the risks of sickle cell and thalassaemia, and the tendency for people to close their minds to the possibility that they may be carriers. Around me, minds seemed to be clanging shut as the next speaker came on to the platform: Mita Hiremath of the Black HIV and AIDS Network. She spoke clearly and movingly about the achievements of black people living with and affected by HIV, who were not just passive victims, despite racist myths around HIV; and BHAN's work in giving non-judgmental support to people with HIV and carrying out education within the black community.

## AIDS

After each talk, there was barely time for a couple of questions or comments from other delegates before the next. Intriguing issues were raised: for instance, could injustice to black workers by white bosses be effectively tackled without challenging the appalling way in which some black businesses treated their employees? But there was no opportunity to discuss these properly. Although one of the speakers, Rudy Narayan of Civil Rights (UK), gave up his scheduled slot so that younger delegates could have their say, the time was swallowed up in yet more speeches from the platform.

It is not surprising that people grew restless, and it was decided that there would be workshops on Saturday afternoon.



# CONFERENCE'90

These covered the family; civil rights and justice; under-resourcing of the new voluntary sector; and religious freedom for non-Christians.

The workshop on religion, to which I went, was fascinating. Most people in it were Muslims, with a sprinkling of people of other faiths or none. Though Britain may appear to be a secular society, it was pointed out, in fact non-Anglicans - and above all non-Christians - face unfair treatment. There is a need for greater freedom (for instance employers do not always allow Muslims to pray at the set times). However, there were differing views on what the main obstacles to equality were, and how they could best be challenged. A bill of rights might be helpful, but how effective are laws against discrimination? Should the Christian bias in today's schools be replaced by a multi-faith approach or by taking religion out? Should the law on blasphemy be extended to other faiths or abolished altogether? (I pointed out that the prosecution of Gay News years ago had divided Christians and shown it was near-impossible to agree on what was blasphemous.)

Wesley took part in the workshop on the family. This, touched on such issues as the debate over placing black children in care with white families, the strength of the extended family system and the need to take into account the oppression of gays and lesbians in some families. One suggestion was a forum where black people could discuss issues around the family and come up with demands.

## POLICE

Black people who are mistreated by the police should take action through the civil courts instead of relying on the complaints procedure, the civil rights and justice workshop advised. People should be made aware of their legal rights, and deaths in custody documented.

In the workshop on the 'new' voluntary sector, there were fears that, after 1992, priority would go to funding groups for white minorities, making it harder for black organisations to get grants. On the positive side, it would be easier to apply for money to funders in other countries.

That evening, the conference organisers had arranged for delegates to go to the Ibo Club in Toxteth. When Wesley and I arrived, quite early in the evening, it was quiet, so we decided to investigate Liverpool's scene! The pubs and clubs we visited seemed friendlier and more mixed than those in London but rather small - and very white.

Local lesbians and gays were quite welcoming, though, and one pub employed a black barman. He was the only black person employed by a white institution I noticed anywhere in Liverpool. I do not know if there are any black staff at the university halls of residence where the conference was held.

When we returned to the Ibo Club - not very far from the city centre - the scene was completely different. Most of the customers were black. A reggae band performed (the same one that had played the previous night) and there was a disco. One day, perhaps, Liverpool will also have a venue where black lesbians and gays can meet one another. In the plenary session on Sunday, it was decided that separate votes should be taken for delegates from community organisations, local authorities, businesses and overseas, to show that any resolutions passed were supported not just by individuals but also by groups. The first resolution, drafted by the Union of Muslim Organisations UK and Eire and slightly amended, was far-reaching. It stated that the racial, cultural and religious minorities in the UK did not receive equal treatment under the law - including on the basis of gender and sexuality - and called for a bill of rights and anti-racist protection in the European Community's Social Charter. This was passed almost unanimously!

## DEMOCRACY

But there was a lot of controversy over a set of previously prepared resolutions. The organisers had planned to win the backing of delegates in setting up a Standing Conference of African and Asian Peoples in Europe, led by the Steering Committee which had organised the conference and co-optees.

I put forward an amendment to make the Steering Committee more representative: it should contain equal numbers of women and men and should seek to represent young as well as older people, people with disabilities, lesbians and gay men.

The question came up of whether the Steering Committee should remain self-appointed or be elected, and if so when and how. By this stage some delegates had left, and others were milling about. In the end, the conference could not reach a consensus.

The organisers had originally hoped for a smoothly-run event with little open disagreement. What actually took place was less clear-cut and ordered, more thoughtful and honest. It is clear that black people need more time to discuss the urgent problems the community faces, and how to respond to them; and to carry on exploring ways of sharing information, debating issues and organising which are broadly based and democratic.

Savi

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## URGENT

Has anyone got pictures of the BLGC banner, BLGC events or Black lesbians or gay men which we could include in a BLGC poster. If so then can you contact the office, thanks.



# AIDS UPDATE

## AIDS - HIDDEN SUFFERERS

Increasing numbers of elderly people are discovering they have AIDS. In the USA, one-tenth of all AIDS cases reported have been in the over-50 age group. Similarly, in Europe 11% of people known to have AIDS are over 50. In fact, 5% are over 60.

What is more, according to a report in *Geriatric Medicine*, current data from the UK and USA almost certainly underestimate the number of elderly people with HIV and AIDS. Often doctors will not consider diagnosing HIV - especially in a patient who is thought to be 'low risk' - until late in the course of disease. Misdiagnosis is common: for instance HIV encephalitis (a neurological disease) is sometimes mistaken for Alzheimer's disease.

As a result elderly people with HIV may die prematurely.

Clearly, HIV is widespread among elderly as well as younger people.

From HIV News

## ASIAN HIV/AIDS SEMINAR

The first seminar on HIV/AIDS in the UK specifically focusing on South Asians took place on August 29th in London. Some 70 Asian women and men attended the seminar organised by SHARE (Shakti HIV/AIDS Response) and SHAKTI.

The day's programme included discussions on the various myths surrounding AIDS, racism and AIDS, sexuality and the Asian communities and the current resources available to Asians who are living with HIV/AIDS. There was a tremendous demand for future workshops, which should be much more specific and concentrating on single issues. SHARE is now in the process of organising a series of these workshops, the first one being a design workshop to produce posters and leaflets for the Asian communities on HIV/AIDS and safer-sex. A seminar report will shortly be available. If you would like a copy of the seminar report or would like to attend any of the future workshops then please write to SHARE, BM Box 3167, London WC1N 3XX.

Info from Shakti Khabar

## MALAY CRUCIAL COUNSELLING

Three nights a week in a room in Kuala Lumpur's red light district, counsellors from the organisation Pink Triangle take calls from gay men.

In Malay society, where the legal and social sanctions against homosexuals keep most gay groups underground, telephone counselling is crucial. Official attitudes towards the organisation have softened in the past few months. When Pink Triangle started in April 1987, it registered as a private business, the chances of registration as a society for gays were nil. Now its spokesmen are interviewed on government TV and in the established press. Sympathetic liaison with the Ministry of Health is growing, although the three letter word "gay" is never mentioned in public!

As well as its thrice-weekly hot-line, Pink Triangle has developed a buddy system for HIV-positives, arranges free and confidential blood testing for clients and stands by when they get the results. If the test is positive, the Health Ministry gets a statistic, not a name. Strictly speaking, that's against official policy. People who want free blood tests are supposed to announce their high-risk status to the front desk at Outpatients and doctors are required by law to send details on to the Ministry. In the past this has led to horror stories like Wan's. After he was diagnosed and discharged from hospital, a health official turned up in his village telling neighbours he had to contact Wan as he had AIDS. Consequently everyone from the local police to the guy on the hamburger stall knew and he was fired from three jobs. Pink Triangle also stage a variety show explaining the message of safe sex, in a bar called the G Club. It's explicit, outrageous and funny and condoms are distributed to the audience. This is vitally important considering that in Malaysia TV trailers on AIDS are not allowed to mention condoms and Islamic fundamentalists call for the execution of prostitutes and homosexuals in order to combat the disease.

Fear of reprisals mean that Pink Triangle does not operate outside the capital.

\*AIDS is growing exponentially. When it reaches Thai figures - officially around

1,000 HIV positives - the government will have to confront the religious obstacle", says a Pink Triangle counsellor. "We're a grassroots organisation, we can't beat about the bush. We're in the business of saving lives, not souls."

Info from World AIDS News

## SA TAP

The Township AIDS Project (TAP), founded by Tseke Simon Nkoli and other black activists, has opened its first office in Inpelegeng community centre in Soweto. In opening ceremonies, TAP chair Peter Busse thanked the government of Norway; British, US, French and Swedish diplomats; and Scandinavian gay groups for their financial and moral support. The British consulate donated computers, while the US consulate funded AIDS educational materials. Perhaps we can now expect the same level of support and funding from these governments for the black communities in their own countries too!

Info from BLK

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The BLGC Newsletter is published bi-monthly and aims to provide information on international news, as well as events and campaigns nationally, of interest to Black lesbians and gay men. News items, articles, letters (all written in simple language) or photographs and cartoons are always welcome. Deadline for December/January issue is 23rd November.

In line with BLGC policy, we will not publish material that is racist, sexist, ableist or assumes readers are without childcare responsibilities, or of a certain social class, cultural/religious/British-born background. Individual articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the BLGC. Volunteers for the production of the newsletter are always welcome. Tel: 081 885 3543.





Middle east to China, including the Pacific nations); and Latin America

Lesbians and gays of first Nation/Third World descent, i.e. lesbians and gays descended from Africa, Asia (i.e. the

Third world people); and lesbians and gays descended from the original inhabitants of Australasia and North America

INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY  
*People of Colour* CONFERENCE 1990

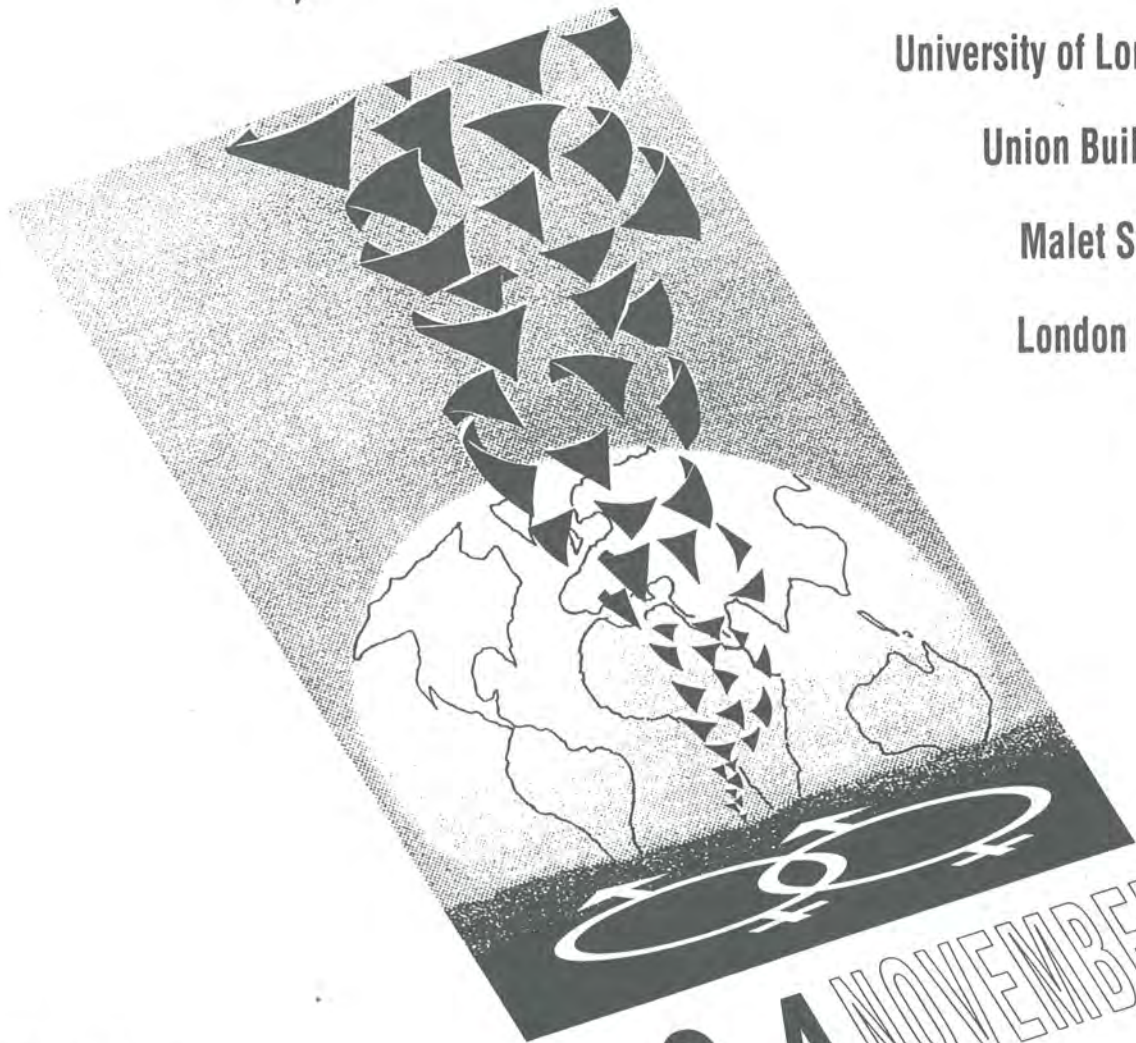
Venue:

University of London

Union Building

Malet Street

London WC1



2-3-4 NOVEMBER

**Workshops  
to include:**

- ▼ International AIDS Crisis
- ▼ Violence – Child Abuse and Rape
- ▼ Writers, Artists and Performers
- ▼ 3rd World Struggles – Recent Developments

THE FEMINIST LIBRARY  
AND INFORMATION CENTRE  
5-5a Wellington Square Road  
London S.E.1  
Telephone: 01-928 7789

Details from : International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour Conference 1990

Planning committee. BM BOX 1992, London WC1N 3XX

Telephone : 081- 885 3543

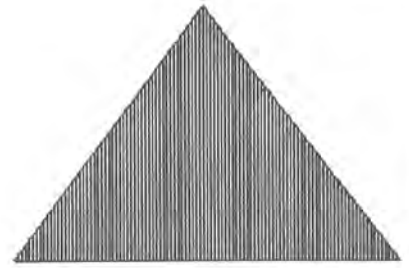
Please support this conference by donating your time or money



# STRONG



# AND



# PROUD?

The annual Lesbian Strength and Gay Pride festival is an important and exciting occasion for many black lesbians and gays. It gives us a chance to celebrate our sexuality and assert our right to love. For some - especially those who are just coming out - it is a scary but exhilarating time. But is that all it is about?

The festival marks the anniversary of a riot sparked off by a police raid on a gay bar in New York. The Stonewall riot was not an isolated incident. At the time, people were protesting against sexism, against racism in the USA itself, against the war in Indochina. Many paid a heavy price: they were ostracised, locked up, beaten, even shot. But there was a sense that injustice could be challenged and the world changed.

## RACISM

The situation of black lesbians and gays in Britain in 1990 is quite different from that of those in the USA in 1969. Some of their experience, though, strike a familiar chord.

Today, increasingly, those who believe that women exist mainly to marry, please their husbands and have children - and that those who do not should be punished - are not ashamed to state their views in public. Racism is intensifying, and will probably get worse as 1992 approaches. Virulent hatred of lesbians and gays, too, is becoming more open. Harsher immigration laws, Section 28 and bigoted statements by politicians of various parties have encouraged these.

Some police officers are attempting to prevent racist and homophobic violence. This is balanced by a trend of thought in which downtrodden communities are the source of society's ills, and need to be watched and controlled. Every year

thousands of black and gay people are being labelled as criminals. Sometimes even parties where most guests are white and heterosexual but where the wrong kind of music is played, are raided.

Britain is not directly involved in anything quite like the Indochina war (tactics in Northern Ireland may be rough, but large scale defoliation and dropping napalm are impracticable). Some of us, though, are from regions much of which have been pulverised by armed forces backed and sometimes trained by the British government for its own ends.

In Britain itself, social divisions have been widening. As the welfare benefit system and public health service disintegrate, sizeable numbers of black lesbians and gays become reliant on their families or charities, and risk a great deal if they come out.

When we celebrate Strength and Pride, often there is little sense that we are part of a struggle for social justice in all areas of life (even though members of our community are active in various movements for social change).

We are perhaps influenced by the trend in the black and lesbian/gay media to stress the achievements of those who have 'made it' as high-ranking professionals, business people or politicians. Of course there is no reason why we should not be represented at all levels of society, and it is encouraging when anyone overcomes discrimination to achieve what they have set out to do. But in the end, 'successful' individuals achieve little for their communities unless they are involved in work at grassroots level.

## HOMOPHOBIA

In some ways, black lesbian and gay culture is flourishing. Sometimes, however,

it seems to exist in a vacuum. During the festival, some of us enthused about the growing volume of erotic images of black lesbians and gays in poetry, photographs and elsewhere. At the same time, a growing number of our sisters and brothers were becoming homeless, often losing the chance freely to enjoy their own bodies and develop relationships on equal terms.

## JUSTICE

Among us creativity is valued, and rightly so. But if artists become detached from the experience of the community which first inspired them, they can easily end up catering for those who are nostalgic and for curious onlookers (like craftspeople in tourist resorts).

Also the norms of this society can creep into the way we think of and treat one another. To exploit other people, to be dominant, even violent, to be contemptuous of those who do not fit in, not to care about anyone but oneself and one's family and friends - such behaviour is often regarded as natural. But we do not need to accept this.

Movements for justice would never have achieved anything if large numbers of people had not rejected the values which they had been taught - and been aware that the world could be changed. We can, if we choose, respect and show solidarity with one another and with others who are unfairly treated.

Every June, as we celebrate Lesbian Strength and Gay Pride, it is worth reminding ourselves that we are proud of who we are, people who are able to be ourselves and to love despite all we face: we have no need to imitate those who oppress us; and that we have the strength to challenge injustice.

Savi.





## AFRICAN SISTERS GATHER WITH LUISAH TEISH

Luisah Teish is a writer, performer and ritualist and is an initiate of the Yoruba Tradition of West Africa. She is known internationally for her performances of African, Afro-Caribbean and Afro-American Folktales and lectures extensively on culture, spirituality and women's myth and ritual. She is also the author of the witty and provocative *Jambalaya* which has been described as "A gift of stories and celebration from the voice of a strong and wise black woman." 21 and 22 November, 1990. 10am-6pm. London Women's Centre, 1st Floor conference room, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, off Kingsway, London. Tel 071-831-6946. Waged £30-£50 Unwaged £15 (limited places). This event is non profit making and sponsors for unemployed women are welcome. To book your place on this gathering please send a postal order/cheque to: J. Ennis Cole c/o 460 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3LX. Tel: 071-622 9208 Open to African sisters only.

### "Ask me no Question .... I tell you no lie"

An exhibition of painting & sculpture dedicated to the memory of Jo Olubo featuring a selection of work by both new and well-known artists. To 20th October.

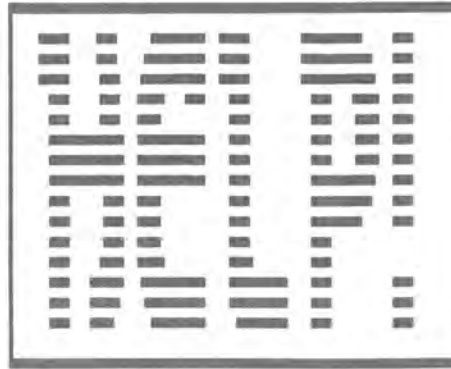
At *The Black-Art Gallery*  
225 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.  
Tel 071-263 1918

Open: Mon-Fri 10-6pm/Sat 12-5pm.

**ADMISSION FREE!**

Nearest tube: Finsbury Park

Disabled Access.



## ACCOMMODATION

### DESPERATE!

Black single parent, with 9 year old boy looking for shared accommodation, preferably with other mothers, but willing to share with other women. Tel 071-738 4925.

### ROCK OCTOBER Women's Trust

Four years ago a group of lesbians met on a regular basis to construct a legal framework to provide housing for older lesbians in order that they may retain their lifestyles in their old age. The legal framework is virtually completed and they now wish to expand the group to build on the work achieved so far. If you have any energy, time and above all, commitment then they would love to here from you. If you would like to come to the next open meeting then write to **ROCK OCTOBER (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope) C/O 249b New North Rd, Islington, London N1 7AT.**

### STONEWALL HOUSING

#### ASSOCIATION

17-25? Single? Looking for accommodation?

Contact Stonewall Housing Association for housing information and advice.

We are currently looking for people to join our management committee. If you are interested in being involved and have any experience in being involved in lesbian and gay housing issues and have any legal, financial or housing experience, contact Peter at the above address or phone for more information. Telephone: 081-885 2305

### FLAT TO RENT

2-Bedroom flat in Brixton (near tube) with kitchen, living room, balcony. £100pw+small deposit. 6-month let, renewable. Contact Carl on 081-692 9477.

*Camden Lesbian Centre  
+  
Black Lesbian Group*

Urgently require

A BLACK LESBIAN LOCUM WORKER

to join the collective as:

**Administrator/Centre  
organiser**

to 31st March 1991,  
35hrs.p.w.

Salary: SCP26 @ £14,519 pa  
inc of London Weighting.

to be responsible for maintenance of Centre equipment, supplies and office systems, co-ordinating meetings, responding to enquiries, and the general day to day running of the centre; to support the Outreach worker in developing the Black Lesbian Support Group. An understanding and commitment to collective working is essential.

All Lesbians descended from Africa, Asia, original peoples of North America, Australasia and Latin America are welcome to apply.

Section 5.2(d) of Race Relations Act and Section 7.2(e) of Sex Discrimination Act apply.

Application by CV, for more details contact CLC/BLG, 54-56 Phoenix Rd, London NW1. Tel:071-383 5405

Closing date: Wednesday  
17th October.

Interviews week beginning  
22nd Oct.

Would you like to represent  
our community on the BLGC Management Committee?  
If you have the time and energy then please ring the office for more details.



## REGULAR GROUPS

**SHAKTI**-South Asian Lesbian and Gay Network. The London group meet every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 3-6pm at London Friend, 86 Caledonian Road, London N1, (Nearest tube: Kings Cross). Full Disabled access. A Bhangra disco for lesbians and gay men is held on the 3rd Friday of the month at LLGC, 67-69 Cowcross Street, London EC1, from 10pm. For more information ring:081 993 9001. There are other Shakti groups forming around the country, so call the above numbers for information.

**AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN BLACK LESBIAN GROUP** meets Tuesdays 7.30-9.30pm at the Hackney Women's Centre, 20 Dalston Lane, London E8. Partial disabled access. Details on 071 254 2980.

**LONDON LESBIAN AND GAY BLACK GROUP** meet Fridays at 8pm at 40 Theobalds Road, London WC1. Wheel chair accessible.

**ONYX** (group for Black lesbians) meets on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month at 6.30pm at London Friend, 86 Caledonian Road, London N1, (Nearest tube: Kings Cross). Full Disabled access.

**YOUNG BLACK ZAMIS** (for black lesbians 16-25 yrs) meets 6.30-9.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month at the Camden Lesbian Centre, 52-54 Phoenix Road, London NW1. Access good.

**LEICESTER BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY GROUP** (Support/Socials/Meetings) for details write to C/O Michael Wood Centre, 29 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TE.

**ORIENTATIONS** (Chinese and South East Asian lesbian and gay group) meet at London Friend, 86 Caledonian Road, London N1, (Nearest tube: Kings Cross). Full Disabled access. Details on 071 837 2782.

**BIRMINGHAM BLACK LESBIAN GROUP** Details from Sandra on 021-773 6952.

**PECKHAM BLACK LESBIAN GROUP** back after a break on 19th October and fortnightly at Peckham Black Women's Centre, 69 Bellenden Rd, London SE15. Tel.071 358 1486.

**YOUNG BLACK LESBIAN GROUP** at Lewisham Young Women's Project meets the last Wednesday of every month 7-10pm at 308 Brownhill Rd, Lewisham. For further details ring 081 698 6675.

# COURSES

## Black Women's Health Course

This course is designed for all Black Women interested in health and health-related issues, and for those who are already working in this field who simply wish to develop their self-awareness further. This is a two term introductory course looking at health concerns of particular relevance to Black Women's experience.

*Autumn Term (Starts 18th Sept for 10 weeks): Tue 9.45-11.45*

*Spring Term (Starts 8th Jan for 10 weeks): Tue 9.45-11.45*

Creche available,  
At **Thameside Adult Education Institute Greenwich Park Branch**  
Royal Hill, Greenwich SE10  
Tel Kate Askew on 081-858 2111

## WOMEN, DRUGS AND HIV

A workshop for women working in the community, who have an interest in drug use/HIV and how these issues specifically affect women.

17-18 December, 10am-5pm at IVAC, 322 Upper St, London N1 2XQ.

The course is free to Islington Council staff and workers at the Angel Project, otherwise £20 if your organisation is paying or £5 for individuals.

For more information contact Eileen MacDonald, Angel Exchange. Tel 081-359 4644 or Ann Rathbone, Islington HIV Unit. Tel 071-226 1234 x 1234.

## BIRKBECK COLLEGE

are running a series of courses of special interest to Black Women:

Two courses at:  
Lambeth Women and Work Project  
460 Wandsworth Road  
London SE8 3LX  
Tel 071-622 9208

## COUNSELLING FOR BLACK WOMEN:

Friday 10am-1pm from 12 Oct for two terms

## BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY WORKSHOP

Thursday 10.30am-12.30pm from 27 Sept for two terms

Two centrally run courses, please apply to:

Virginia Peters, Centre for Extra-Mural Studies  
26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ  
Tel 071-636 8000 x 3853

## MAKING VISUAL HISTORIES

Tuesday 10am-12pm from 8 Jan '91 for one term.

32 Tavistock Sq, London WC1.  
Fee £30/£10 concs.

## BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

Wednesday 7-9pm from 26 Sept for one term.

London Women's Centre  
Wild Court  
London WC2  
Fee £30/£10 concs

## OCTOBER WORKSHOPS AT THE WOMEN'S THERAPY CENTRE

Post-abortion workshop  
Workshops for women with disabilities  
Intro to transactional analysis  
Black women as single mothers  
Social phobias  
Weekend assertion training for Black women  
Older lesbians  
Intro to counselling skills

Ring 071-281 7879  
Tue 10.30-11.30am  
Mon 2-3pm  
Fri 2.30-4.30pm

## BLGC DEFINITION OF BLACK

All lesbians and gay men descended (through one or both parents) from Africa, Asia (ie. the Middle East to China, including the Pacific nations) and Latin America, and lesbians and gay men descended from the original inhabitants of Australasia, North America and the islands of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean.