



COME TOGETHER

a journal for the gay community.....gay liberation..... issue 2

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The Gay Liberation Front adopts Principles

-----RIGHT ON

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GLF has adopted a list of principles, or guidelines, and has recognised the need for a more cohesive organisational structure. We recognised that the oppression that gay people suffer is an integral part of the social structure of our society. Women and gay people are both victims of the cultural and ideological phenomenon known as sexism. This is manifested in our culture as male supremacy and heterosexual chauvinism.

It is a recent concept developed by our sisters and brothers in the American women's and gay liberation movements. Sexism is such an insidious thing, that often its victims, women and gay people, are sexist in their attitudes towards themselves and their sisters and brothers. It is sexism that produces closet queens, the rigid exploitative butch and fem roles and the self hatred that many gay people are into. Of course most straights are also into rigid sexist roles. In fact many sisters and brothers maintain that straight men are just as much victims of sexism as are women and gay people. This is true only in the sense that sexism limits their true potential as human beings. But at the same time they do have a vested interest in sexist roles; they often use women as mere chattels and sex objects, and use gay people as scapegoats for their own sexual hangups.

Many of you may be disturbed by the fact that in our principles we support the struggle of social groups who themselves are prejudiced and use sexism to put down gay people. However it is important to see that no one single revolutionary change in our social structure can be achieved without the whole system being changed. We should not confuse legal changes with real structural change. Legality can always at some point be changed to illegality (witness the present government's attack on the trade union movement, and its legal attacks on the rights of colored immigrants). The legalisation of public gay activity, though something we should strive for, will not really alter the fact the fact that the deepest oppression of gay people is inflicted in the family, and is manifested in a gay person's psyche.

Gay activity is a direct threat to the existence of the nuclear family. Gay people in our judeo-christian culture have never been given a 'niche' as they have in many other cultures; they have always been regarded as pariahs and persecuted as such. The niche allotted to straight women has always been the family of which hers has been the pivotal socialising role. Gay people, by their rejection of the nuclear family, threaten the very reproduction of the wider society. Hence their repression.

Periodically capitalist nations in political and economic crisis have resorted to outright physical and ideological repression of the vast masses of the population. This classically takes the form of attacks on autonomous working-class organisation, the use of ethnic minorities as national scapegoats, and the enforcement of traditional familial, sexist roles (the woman in the home breeding babies and the man on the factory floor). Together with this idealisation of the traditional familial roles goes the open persecution of gay people. In nazi Germany many tens of thousands of gay people met their deaths in the gas chambers of concentration camps. In the camps, Jews were given yellow stars to wear, homosexuals were given pink tags and other national

cont. on page 4

THE GATEWAYS CLUB AND GAY LIBERATION

As part of our leafleting effort last Saturday week three girls went to the Gateways, London's best known lesbian club, to hand out publicity about the G L F dance. Two of us started to hand out leaflets - there was a lot of interest both in the movement as a whole and in the dance.

Suddenly as we were standing chatting one of the women who run the club, known as Smithy, came up and snatched our leaflets from us.

A long argument ensued as a result of which one of us was banned from the club for life. The other two were let off with a warning because we are old and untroublesome members who have never necked in the lavatories or knocked anyone out and also because it was our first offence so far as distributing GLF literature was concerned.

The interesting thing about the argument however was the attitude of the proprietors - themselves a lesbian couple of at least ten years standing. I was talking throughout to Smithy, the 'butch' one, but I gather her friend was saying more or less the same things.

Smithy's attitude is that they object to GLF leaflets because they are opposed to GLF aims and don't wish to be associated with our movement, but it went much further than this. Smithy said:

"When you come down to it, we are abnormal. We're a minority....I think everything is beautiful the way it is - we have a lot of freedom - two girls can walk down the street hand in hand if they want to - No, I don't think men should be allowed to hold hands and kiss in public, I think that's disgusting - men! - do you know why we won't have men down here? Because whenever we do if you go out to the toilets you'll find two men out there having a quick bash, and the next moment they're doing it with a girl - they just don't care what they have, it's just quick sex, they can't have relationships, it's disgusting....

cont.on p.3

LOVE YOUR BEAUTIFUL SISTERS AND BROTHERS BE PROUD BE GAY GAY IS LOVE

"I don't think the age of consent should be the same for men - men are supposed to be three years behind girls anyway aren't they? Do you think it should be legal for an old man to seduce a sixteen year old boy? I don't....well, I don't think a sixty year old woman should seduce a young girl either - would you like it if that happened to your sixteen year old sister? And I don't believe it's legal either - no, it is not legal."

(There followed an argument about what the age of consent is, Smithy convincing herself more and more firmly that it is eighteen. When all other arguments failed she flexed her muscles and said, "Well, I'm a bigger lesbian than either of you will ever be.")

She continued: "I'm opposed to your aims because I don't think changing the law can alter attitudes. You won't change anything, baby - no you will not. You want to force it down people's throats....you want to change everything - the whole of society - but you won't - no - because people don't want to change - things are all right the way they are....I think the whole idea of kissing in public is horrible - why can't you do it at home, in privacy? If you have a steady girlfriend you don't need to kiss in the streets. Why parade yourselves?

"You think you're going to change the world, love, but let me tell you all you're going to do is bring people down on us and we'll all end up worse off. That's all you're going to do."

Although we tried to argue with her it was obvious that she simply could not listen or take in anything we said - that's how rooted her attitudes are. The really sad thing is her negative attitude to her own lesbianism; she came back many times to the statement 'We are abnormal.' I would include as part of her negative attitude and distorted self image the rigidly sex defined roles she and her girlfriend feel compelled to play - 'butch' and 'femme' as

DO IT IN THE STREETS DO IT IN FRONT OF THE STRAIGHTS IF YOU DIG IT DO IT

among the most traditionalist heterosexual couples. This is not a personal attack but it is another indication of the unliberated state of this as of very many other lesbian couples in which one partner plays a submissive 'feminine' role, as exploited as many married women.

I don't think the Gateways management intends to exploit lesbians, but on the contrary believe they provide a relatively pleasant and unsordid locale in which lesbians can meet, talk and dance.

But what is to be done about attitudes like this?

Elizabeth.

cont. from page 1.

were given different colored tags. Now it is a known fact that not one of the memorials to the concentration camp victims say anything about our sisters and brothers who were butchered. The colors of the Jews and other nationalities and political victims are represented, but somehow the color pink gets forgotten about. Does this mean that the people who erected the memorials think gay people deserve to be put to death for being gay or what?

Why did I mention this? Could it happen here? Well, we can see that our government is carrying out racist policies towards our black sisters and brothers (- the immigration acts - new pass laws etc.) and is in the process of putting through anti-working class activity in the form of the IRB. Who will be the next victims of "law and order"? Gay people, by their very existence, threaten hallowed social institutions and ideology. Perhaps it could be us..... Hence the need for an independent Gay Liberation engaged in militant activity and lending its support to other sections in struggle. In return these other social sectors will lend us their support in our struggle.

Events

GLF Peoples dance.....Kensington Town Hall

next meeting.....Dec 30th. at the Arts Lab

GLF groups include a media workshop to put out Come Together; a psychiatry study group to attack the myths put out by bourgeois psychiatry; a demonstrations group; a group just for sisters; an education group; a schools group.

If you feel the need start an awareness group in your locality or even a local action group.

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".....You get sort of homosexual animals and things, don't you....
it's natural really, It's not unnatural ...well, it is but....."

.....AN INTERVIEW

By Martin Grant

A couple of weeks ago, when we were leafletting the West End, I recorded a number of interviews, on a portable tape recorder, with passers-by. The following is an accurate transcript of one of the interviews. I have chosen this one in particular because the young woman in question was intelligent, amiable, and fairly "socially conscious". She had some interesting views and for much of the time she talked common sense. She also talked a lot of shit: not because she meant to, but because she was simply ignorant of the facts. She, too, became muddled and confused halfway through and was relieved to get away, although she left a good deal wiser than when she met us. I shall attempt to reproduce every word and hesitation in order that an impression of the girl's thought pattern can be correctly conveyed. Occasionally there were remarks from another of our party, and I shall include these also.

ME: Good Afternoon. We're campaigning on behalf of the GLF. May I ask you what you think of society's attitude to homosexuals and homosexuality?

GIRL: It's very unfair...but I do think that people who are like that would want to keep it to themselves anyway, not because it's unnatural or because other people don't agree with it but... it's a personal thing. Your sexual views or your ideas or anything are personal. You're sort of going all contrary about the whole thing. Slapping it under peoples noses and...you want to...I don't know...

ME: Do you think that the homosexual is discriminated against?

GIRL: Yes.

ME: One of the clauses here on our leaflet demands that gay people should be free to hold hands and kiss in public, as are heterosexuals. If these guys here now were to do this would you be embarrassed?

GIRL: Er, not really, People would be embarrassed at first but I mean if you're going to do that, fair enough, do it. Don't talk about it. Don't write leaflets about it. DO IT!

ME: Yea. And get arrested.....

GIRL: You wouldn't get arrested.

ME: No?

GIRL: ..because it's legal between consenting adults.

PAUL: We wouldn't be arrested for the act itself, but we would be arrested on some other grounds. We're going to do it, but we're going to do it en-masse.

GIRL: But then, ah, that's what I mean. This is where you're asking for trouble. If you just sincerely want to act like other people and express your own feelings, do what you want when you want and with whoever you want, fair enough. But your going to do it all en-masse so**** to the lot of them - well, that's just silly.

ME: You know of course that heterosexuals can advertise for girlfriends and boyfriends, but homosexuals cannot do this.

GIRL: You do, as well I thought in IT.

ME: Not any more. The IT trial has just finished and they have been fined a lot of bread for running that column.....

PAUL: Accused of depraving and corrupting minors. That's how they found them guilty.

GIRL: That's silly. In heterosexual relationships you have kinks that go around interfering with kids as well. That's just the extremists which muck everything up for the others. And with you they blow that up and emphasise it. You can understand that.

ME: I can't.

PAUL: See, like, we're not after just getting it straight for ourselves. I, personally, feel free to do what I want in the street. But, like, I'm trying to get freedom for everybody else too, the people that can't get together to do that. People who are suppressed and locked in their cupboards at home. /Continued...

Grant Interview Continued..... - -6

GIRL: Yea but all they want is a little bit of sort of... that is, um, it's a sort of a lack of self courage.....

PAUL: Yea, well it's not surprising when there are so many people around them battering them down all the time.

GIRL: I tell you, you are'n't going to liberate anybody or anything. All you can do is get yourselves into trouble. If ...you can't..... this is exactly what you're saying...it's bad that people go around saying what you should do and what you should'n't. You've got to respect that everybody is different..and...andwell, you're just showing how different you are.

PAUL: I'll respect them - if they respect me.

GIRL: I mean other people may want to keep it personal. I mean I'm not sort of shy or anything but I wouldn't go around snogging with my boyfriend in the street...you know what I mean? Because I think it's personal.....

ME: The point is that most heterosexuals can and do.

GIRL: But even so....you notice it's from certain...certain sections of the public...they give them dirty looks as well. any display of physical anything is...well, you know.

ME: Not nowadays, for heterosexuals surely? But for homo's, yes.

GIRL: Oh, I think to a certain degree the older bit...the older bit do look down.....

ME: Tell me, how do you think we should try to educate people in general that there's no need to be embarrassed by homosexuality?

GIRL: I should think that instead of making yourselves look a load of fools by having a mass orgy in Trafalgar Square or wherever.... you should do it quietly, with dignity, and retain some respect. This is the thing you haven't got. You're sort of despised.....well not despised, but.....

PAUL: Yea, despised.

GIRL: ...Contemptuous....a bit sort of, well, because they don't know that um, well, ..even I... you get sort of homosexual animals and things, don't you....so it's natural really, it's not unnatural.... well it is but....I don't know what I'm talking about....Look, just DO IT! If you want to, just do it. Other people might not, so they won't. But I mean you're creating a big Fight, and you're getting all hung-up and pissed-off about it.....

PAUL: You don't understand. If you were homosexual you'd understand why people can't do it "quietly" as you put it...how they're battered down from all sides, all through their lives, by Parents, by Teachers, the Army, or whatever it is they go through...so like, it's up to us to help them get themselves together.

GIRL: But then really.....really, I mean, apart from the clothes and everything, you're... all quite normal. There's nothing freakish about any of you, you know what I mean?

PAUL: What's abnormal about homosexuality?

GIRL: Because...the way you see them on television, well, you know, the way people take them off, the jokes you hear about them, you think they're all sort of weird. But I think you're all lovely, you're all nice... so what I mean is, instead of saying "Look we're different, so what are you going to do about it?" just say, It's not unnatural. It's us. We're being us. Why create a big thing about it.

PAUL: Look, I'm not out to liberate only homosexuals. I'm out to liberate. Period. Like, people, you know. Free the people.....

GIRL: I know but some people don't want to be. This is it. You're too caught up with the ideal of it. Some people just don't want to know. Some people are quite content to have their own little bit of life and let everybody else go their own way, You've got to respect that they don't want to. It's no good saying that they probably would if we woke them up to it - which they probably would - but you can't do that to people. No more than if someone were to come up to you and say "We're going to liberate you because you're thinking wrong. You should be like us." You wouldn't take it.

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Grant Interview Continued,.....

ME: But by it's attitude society is saying that to us right now. This is why we are standing here talking about it. Society discriminates, and this is what we're out to change. Seems to me you have a mental image that all homosexuals are drag queens and effeminate exhibitionists.

GIRL: Well, no but,....I think you are all really nice guys, you know....

PAUL: If we were all walking our separate ways around here, without any leaflets or anything, you would'nt assume that we were homosexual right?

GIRL: Right.

PAUL: Right, so we've achieved something. We've shown you that We're not all like Danny La Rue, Kenneth Williams, and so on. This is what we are trying to do. Change people's attitude.

GIRL: Yes but you're saying you want to be like normal people..... like heterosexuals.....

PAUL:(With some vehemence) I don't want to be "Like normal people", I am Normal.....!

GIRL: Yes but you're saying you want to have the same rights.....

PAUL: I do have the same rights...inherently, as a Human Being, I have the same rights.....

GIRL: But you don't, let's face it, you don't. Theoretically you do, but practically you don't.

PAUL: Right. And that's what we're trying to change.

GIRL: Well, nobody could really properly arrest you if you are genuinely sincere about it. But you're going to get into trouble if you have a big.....Mass Scene.....

PAUL: We could do, but in this society you get into trouble whatever you do, homosexual or otherwise, if you have certain ideals & certain ways you want to live your life, you're going to get into trouble anyway.....

GIRL: Yea, but....just....well, you know.....do it. But, well, I must go now.....I'm starving.....

HOMOSEXUALITY AND THERAPY

By Martyn - A Registered Mental Nurse.

Most of us are in the fortunate position, whereby we can fight for freedom from oppression. Many of our brothers and sisters however, are not even in a position to protest.

For instance, I remember only a few years ago, when I was working in a mental hospital, a young sixteen year old boy who had been committed to us by order of the Courts, was admitted to a locked ward, along with patients whom the hospital had found to be most disturbed or who were considered dangerous. When I asked about his diagnosis, I was told that he was "another fucking queer". Apparently he had been caught "Indulging in a homosexual relationship", and had previously been suspected of stealing some of his sisters clothes. Once in the hospital, he was subjected to the usual ridicule of the staff and was made to feel abjectly guilty and despicable. One of his daily tasks was to clean the ward lavatories. This presumably, being considered suitable 'occupational therapy'. The patients were woken at 6a.m. , Sundays and Christmas included, and his first job was to clean the toilets. This is not an incredibly unusual situation!

We are nowadays told that we are 'sick' and in need of treatment. The treatment consists of breaking down the individuals pleasurable response to someone of the same sex that he/she might feel drawn to emotionally and physically, and substituting an aversion reaction.

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Homosexuality and Therapy Continued.....

This is achieved by means of electric shocks or emetic drugs, given when the patient responds favourably, so that the unpleasantness of being violently sick or receiving an electric shock is associated with the photograph of the desirable person. I would like to emphasise that in-patient psychiatric treatment, and private psychiatry often differ radically. If one is able to enjoy the benefits, of private help, emotional support and sustenance is very likely to be offered, I have not seen this occur often in mental hospital treatment regimes. There are, and indeed have been, very many ethical objections to the use of such a form of therapy. However, my main concern at this particular juncture is that the person who administers the emetic drug or electric shock, is almost invariably a psychiatric nurse. I object strongly to this situation for several reasons. Not the least of which is that this is destroying a potentially supportive relationship. One may reasonably ask why nurses let themselves become involved in a procedure such as aversion therapy. Why didn't some of the nurses object to the locking up of a sixteen year old boy in an adult disturbed ward? The majority of psychiatric nurses are men. To challenge, question, or protest about the treatment meted out to a homosexual patient, renders one 'suspect'. Men depend upon their jobs to earn a living, even men nurses. 'Suspected' men don't seem to get promotion, or alternatively seem to be prone to 'unsatisfactory' work records and are dismissed. In the same hospital, a colleague of mine, a young skilled, and compassionate, ward sister, was dismissed when it was discovered that she was having a love affair with one of the female student nurses. (After all, she might assault the patients). Doctors and nurses are subjected to statutory disciplinary committees. They are liable to be deprived of their livelihood if found to be homosexual, even if no illegal activity has occurred!

"...The council have power to take disciplinary action against a registered nurse if it is brought to their attention (whether through the courts, employing authorities, or individuals,) that the nurse has been guilty of a felony, or misdemeanour, OR OF ANY MISCONDUCT WHICH WARRANTS CONSIDERATION AS TO WHETHER HER NAME SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE REGISTER.." Functions, Procedure and Disciplinary jurisdiction of the GMC. (page 4).

What would you do? What WE can, and must do, both for the protection of our brothers and sisters in the medical and nursing professions, and most important, for the patients, is this:-

We must strengthen the position of the doctor or nurse, so that they will not be in a vulnerable position if they wish to object to 'treatment' policies. To achieve this, we must write to the appropriate statutory bodies and demand that no doctor or nurse be deprived of his/her livelihood because of their sexual orientation.

These are : -

Royal Medico Psychological Association, General Nursing Council for England & Wales, 22, Portland Place, London, W.1., General Medical Council, 44, Hallam Street, London, W.1.,

We must press the Medical Defence Union, and the Royal College of Nursing to support any doctor or nurse who is victimised because he/she is homosexual. We must demand that a nurse has the right to refuse to participate in aversion therapy if he/she feels that this is unethical, (a similar agreement was reached regarding the Abortion Act.)

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Homosexuality and Therapy Continued.....

Addresses to write to on this are :- Royal College of Nursing, 1A, Henrietta Place, London, W.1., and Medical Defence Union Ltd., Tavistock House, Sth. Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

We must write to the medical and nursing press and make point four of our manifesto quite clear, - that we stop being treated as 'sick' people :- Nursing Times, Little Essex Street, London, W.C.2.R. 3L.F. Nursing Mirror, Dorset House, Stamford Street, London, S.E.1.

By changing the attitude of society at large, we will eventually modify the attitudes of potential medical and nursing students, and thus reduce the risk of patients being traumatized by psychiatric 'help'.

WHAT IS A HOMOSEXUAL ?

By Paul Daniel

O.K. So what IS a homosexual in the eyes of the straight public? a flamboyant queen, limp wrists, fluttering hands, make-up, mincing steps, dyed hair, affected voice and lisping. Any one, or combination of these and immediately you're a 'fucking queer'. And how are straights to know better?

Colourful articles such as appeared in the last issue of "COME OUT" covering the Highbury Fields thing are not going to help any - either in the form of description nor the activities described - i.e. holding hands, kissing, arm in arm etc. What is needed is to show that we are ordinary 'normal' people, with the same thought processes, interests, attitudes, politics and activities, no different from the straights themselves, except in one preference. Anyone stumbling on the last meeting of GLF (2 Dec) would have found it hard to believe that the large group of heads, freaks, coloureds, chicks, etc. were almost one hundred per cent homosexual.

There were many ideas for rallies, marches, demo's, put up, but what for? what against? And what a laughing stock if we held a meeting in Trafalgar Square or wherever for the vast gathering of three or four hundred. For demo's wait until we're sure of thousands turning out not mere hundreds. Cool - it, where's the rush? Same goes for 'Gay-Ins' in Hyde Park (in this weather, yet!).

The culminative idea came at the end of a meeting from a girl called Sue, she really had the handle, and it was worth waiting through two hours of mainly bullshit for that one constructive suggestion. A group of two or three hundred outside a Fleet Street news office is just the thing to start with. a vast number of persons is not needed to attract attention (stop the traffic also). Doubtful if there would be papers not printing reports - it would be happening right on their territory. There is a specific person for focal point, and a specific article for fuel. There would be press men and photographers to show it was'nt a group of screaming queens, and to be surprised at the number of chicks there, and in one go GLF would have it's advance publicity - and free at that.

It's very much up to young heads, etc. like me, who have little or nothing to lose, and are not ashamed, or afraid, or too proud, conceited or just plain lazy to show the straights that they are not so special by just being straight. I'm not fighting for, or prepared to fight for, the queens, - they kill themselves (and everyone else) first time out.

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What is a Homosexual Continued.....

It's the others who count - the people the straights wouldn't believe were homosexual even if you pointed out that they sat next to them on the tube, worked at the next desk, ate supper with them, were driven in taxis, buses by them, even were related to them (and how can you tell?). And particularly the older people unable to do anything because of families, positions, children etc., but who would like, and need to see the laws and attitudes changed.

WORLD'S FIRST GAY COMMUNITY ?

The Gay Liberation Front of America, with branches in many cities throughout the United States, is determined to break through the barrier of hatred and hostility which it says, makes homosexuals 'the world's most persecuted minority'.

Letters from supporters in Britain and other countries has encouraged the GLFA to persist in its plans to set up an international refuge, which would be a community where gay people could feel at home.

With this in view, GLFA members have decided to 'liberate' a territory which would be their own. Don Kilhefner, the American Front's organiser said, "We have lived too long with the fear of losing our livelihood, fear of ridicule and ostracism, blackmail, police brutality and prison. We can't be honest in a society in which we have to hide our feelings. This way we obey Nixon's injunction to 'work within the system'."

The idea of a 'liberated' territory became possible when California's Supreme Court recently cut the residency requirement for voters from one year to 90 days. GLFA members decided, after scanning maps, that Alpine County, an area of isolated peaks and forest land north-east of San Francisco, would meet their needs, especially as the population of 430 included only 384 voters, which could easily be outnumbered at the polls.

A campaign to oppose the GLFA at the polls has been called for by Dr. Carl McIntyre, the head of the International Council of Churches, "Homosexuality must be met head-on with the Bible" says McIntyre who recently invited Saigon's Vice President to speak at his Washington 'March for Victory'. He intends to move in a missionary task force by caravan to register as voters and to work for the conversion of "these men who are shaming America before the world".

The GLFA says it will try to convert McIntyre to Christianity. Meanwhile, the number of GLFA supporters signed up to move into the territory has swollen to 1,179. Not all of them are GLFA members. The Front is only the radical spearhead of a nation-wide Gay Liberation Movement which involves men and women of all political views.

This GLFA vision of 'A peaceful counter-culture, with the world's first museum of gay arts, sciences and history in a sanctuary of our own' has wide support and they are now raising funds throughout the United States. We in the British GLF wish them good luck and look forward to the day when maybe we will have a gay liberated territory in some part of Britain.