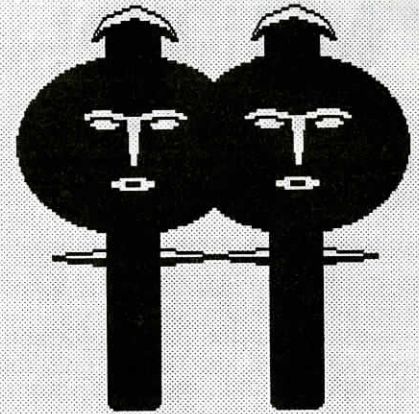


Black Lesbian & Gay Centre Project

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Newsletter: June/July 1992



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

CHA VICTORY

The Comunidad Homosexual Argentina, a national lesbian and gay organisation, was given official recognition by the executive branch of the Argentine government in March, despite a ruling in November last year by the country's Supreme Court which denied the group legal status.

Without official recognition, CHA, which was formed in 1984, was unable to open bank accounts, rent premises or undertake public action as an organisation. Individual officers of the group had to take personal responsibility for these functions, leaving themselves open to prosecution.

The government of President Carlos Menem was subjected to intense pressure by the international lesbian and gay community.

"Now we can exist as an institution," said Monica Santino, co-president of CHA, "but it doesn't mean that it is the end of the fight. Now we're going on to fight for our human rights, for individual liberties, and against discrimination towards homosexuals."

Info from Capital Gay

NO PRECEDENT

A gay Uruguayan man has been refused refugee status in Canada and deported, in spite of his claims that he faced persecution in Uruguay because of his sexuality.

Fernando Sanz had hoped to be allowed to remain in Canada because of the precedent set by the case of Jorge Inaudi, an Argentinian who was granted refugee status in January. (See April/May Issue)

Unlike Inaudi, Sanz did not flee directly to Canada from the country where he was persecuted. He stopped off in Argentina where, like many other lesbians and gay men, he also suffered "systematic persecution".

Because of this detour, and because he was able to liquidate his assets and plan his trip to Canada, Sanz's claim for refugee status was turned down. His case was also

not helped by the fact that he did not apply for refugee status until he was arrested for being in Canada illegally.

Like many refugees, Sanz had no documentation to support his claim of police brutality towards him.

In an effort to avoid returning to Uruguay, Sanz applied for asylum from a number of embassies including the Netherlands, Denmark, France, and Germany. He told Xtra, the Toronto lesbian and gay newspaper, that he received the same response from all the embassies: "Canada takes everybody. What have you done?"

Info from Gay Times

BLK SUSPENDED

Publication of BLK, a monthly African American lesbian and gay magazine will be suspended until a new editor can be found to replace Alan Bell, who was seriously injured in an automobile accident near California on April 12th. Bell had been doubling as both publisher and editor.

Bell sustained multiple abrasions and broken bones when his car was struck head on by a vehicle which had swerved into oncoming traffic. Neither his passenger nor the other driver were injured. Bell was freed from his car by emergency crews and was airlifted to a nearby hospital, where he underwent a total of eleven hours surgery.

"All I remember is opening my eyes and realising that I was pinned down," recalled Bell, "and that the car was on fire." But passers-by fought the flames by throwing dirt on the car until Bell could be pulled free of the wreckage.

Doctors expect Bell to undergo a lengthy period of rehabilitation. In addition to suffering concussion, contusions and heavy blood loss, his arm, leg and both ankles were broken.

BLGC would like to wish Alan a full and speedy recovery, whose work informing the Black lesbian and gay community doesn't go unnoticed. Stay strong!!

NATIONAL NEWS

SMEARS?!

For those of us, in London, fed up with pussy-footing round our doctors' inevitable sexual partners' questions each time we want a smear test, our prayers/expletives have been answered.

In April the Bernhard STD Clinic opened at the Charing Cross Hospital. Named after American showbiz lesbian Sandra Bernhard, the Clinic, on a three month trial period, is the result of work by Dr Jayne Kavanagh, herself a lesbian, and health adviser, Sandy Nelson. They wanted to provide lesbians with "an environment where they can feel safe and which is specifically geared to meeting their needs."

The Clinic, staffed by women, provides cervical smears, breast screening, HIV antibody testing, as well as information on safer sex, screening for sexually transmitted diseases and free dental dams!

Sandra Bernhard's stage show in March provided the inspiration for the Clinic's name, as Kavanagh was "so impressed by the positive image she portrayed for lesbians that I immediately contacted her." Bernhard was delighted to give her support and plans to visit the Clinic when she returns to Britain in August.

The Sandra Bernhard Clinic is at the Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road, London W6 and is open every Wednesday afternoon between 2pm and 5pm. For appointments phone 081 846 1576/1577.

ANTI-RACIST ANTI-FASCIST CONTINGENT

A Committee for an anti-racist/anti-fascist contingent on Lesbian and Gay Pride 92 has been set up. It has called for the name 'EuroPride 92' to be changed to 'International Lesbian and Gay Pride 92 - Fighting Racism and Fascism' and for the anti-racist anti-fascist contingent to lead the march after people with disabilities,

NATIONAL NEWS

ANTI-RACIST ANTI-FACIST CONT.
FROM PAGE 1.

people living with AIDS, pregnant women and people with young children in order to set the pace of the march.

In a statement, the Committee links the spread of racism and fascism in Europe with the economic crisis: 'Lesbians and gay men, black and ethnic groups, youth and the working class as a whole are blamed for the crises that hurt us most. We can only defend our rights and fight for our liberation if we unite in our struggles, understanding that it is the same class society that oppresses us all.'

Pride - which started with militant demonstrations when the Stonewall bar was attacked - should be 'a political as well as a fun event and not profit-making', the Committee urges, and calls for racism and sexism in all forms in and outside the lesbian and gay community to be challenged.

There will be a planning meeting on Wednesday 17 June at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. The Committee is sponsored by several organisations including Lesbian and Gay Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, NALGO (London District Committee), Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, Wages Due Lesbians, Revolutionary Internationalist League, Anti Fascist Action and Black Experience.

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.

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.

OH PP - LL - EASE !!!

Yes we're back this issue with another set of snippets guaranteed to get you on the intercom demanding that Scottie beam you up!!

For 3 years there's been local and national pressure put on Bexley Council in London - home of a series of racist checks, including the murder of 16 year old Rolan Adams - to take action against the British National Party (BNP) headquarters situated in Welling. Their reason? 'There's no legal measure we can take to remove the BNP from Welling.'

According to the Sunday Times (18th May) these products carry a 'gay-friendly appeal' :- Brooks Brothers, Remy Martin, Armani, Reebok, Coke, and Pioneer. What I want to know is where are all these lesbians and gays in BB suits, Reebok trainers, wearing Armani eau de toilette, listening to Pioneer sounds and quaffing brandy and Cokes?? WHY? Cos I want to make sure I avoid them like day-trips to Welling.

Europride - Otherwise known as 'lets schlepp round London all day trying to find the festival!' The saga continues. The march, for those who are interested, was due to go to Kennington, then Clapham, then Hyde Park, then Brockwell Park, and now it's Hyde Park AND Brockwell Park!! Not only that, but BR have announced there aren't going to be any trains to Herne Hill, the nearest BR station. And if all that's not enough to put you off there's two dogs on the front cover of the programme. So that's who goes to Sadie Masie....!

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.

PROJECT UPDATE

The first stage of building work on the new premises in Peckham has almost finished - a front door and windows, a partition dividing the front from the back of the building and some lighting. The arch's lining makes it difficult to attach anything to the walls, one of the problems with which the architect and builders have been struggling. The Black Lesbian and Gay Centre is taking shape. The space is impressive, but the concrete-floored interior is still stark.

For a 2,000 sq ft railway arch, even one in good condition, basic building work is costly. Much remains to be done, including the widening of the back exit, the fitting of ramps and the building of a wheelchair-accessible toilet, for which money has yet to be found. In addition heating will be needed: the partition will make it easier to keep the front area warm but by autumn something more than a couple of small portable heaters will be required or staff and volunteers will be left shivering! Fortunately, though the office will probably move from Tottenham to Peckham in July, the premises are so large that the furniture and equipment BLGC has at the moment can fit in a small corner, so building work can go on.

Tiles or carpets, extra lighting, tables, soft chairs, bookcases, play equipment - these and more will have to be found over the next few months.

Raising the funds for the first stage has taken up much time and energy. Fundraising for the next stage is now a high priority. Offers of help from volunteers have begun to trickle in; more will be needed if the centre is to develop into a safe, welcoming and comfortable space. If you are able to organise a benefit or have other fundraising skills, or know anyone who does and can persuade them to

help, please contact the office on 081-885 3543.

Kim left in April. BLGC has been working to recruit a new administrator and a volunteer coordinator (female): job descriptions and person specifications have been finalised, advertisements typeset and sent to the press, notices sent out to individuals and organisations, information packs with application forms supplied to enquirers, completed forms received and shortlisting done. The post of volunteer coordinator has had to be readvertised. Hopefully, however, the new staff will start work later this summer. Meanwhile Clarence will become the volunteer coordinator (male) and Savi will take on outreach and development as a whole. Ann, as Finance and Fundraising Worker, is taking on increasing responsibility as the project expands and moves away from reliance on one source of funding. To assist in coping with such rapid and large-scale change, a facilitator was called in to help the Management Committee and staff discuss what was happening and plan for the future. A new equal opportunities policy has been drawn up and work is being done on other policies for the centre.

In the midst of all this, the usual work has gone on, including producing the newsletter and supporting isolated Black lesbians and gays and raising the project's and community's profile in the mass media (this ranges from writing to newspapers which refuse to include Black lesbians and gays in their listings to being filmed for television!). Only a handful of people attended a recent helpline training session on HIV and AIDS, but everyone who went found it very useful and the notes are to be circulated to those volunteers who were not there.

The run-up to Lesbian and Gay Pride tends to be a particularly busy time of year for BLGC. This year workers have been making preparations for a gathering on 19 June at St Pancras Library on Euston Road, to which all Black lesbians and gays are invited, to discuss the way ahead for the community, and liaising with other groups, especially InterNations which is holding a Festival Launch on 21 June at the Oval House with workshops, performers and music, as well as getting ready for 27 June. There will be a BLGC banner on the march and a stall at the Shegun tent in Brockwell Park.

FURTHER CRACKDOWN ON REFUGEES FEARED

The asylum bill, dropped when the general election was announced, is to be reintroduced. This will make it even more difficult for refugees to enter and settle in Britain.

Black lesbians and gays are among the numerous people forced to flee from their homes every year because of war or persecution. Some are targeted on the grounds of their sexuality - in some countries lesbian or gay sex may be punished by death - or risk severe penalties if they come out. Others are victimised for other reasons, such as their political beliefs or race.

European Community countries have been getting increasingly harsh in their treatment of people seeking asylum. The UK, among others, fines airlines for each passenger without the correct travel documents. Refugees who are trying to escape in a hurry, or who cannot use their own names in case they are arrested, may be stopped from even getting on a flight.

For those who reach the UK or another EC member, the ordeal is not over. Here, they may be forced to wait for years before a decision is reached as to whether they will be allowed to stay.

The bill aims to speed up this process, a much-needed change. But this is likely to be done largely by turning applicants down without giving them the chance to argue their case properly. Refugee organisations are urging that everyone whose application is refused should be given the right to appeal. Another controversial measure suggested is the fingerprinting of all asylum seekers, as if they are criminals.

Again, the bill may seek to take asylum-seekers offhousing waiting lists. A lesbian and her children who have fled persecution may end up on the streets while they wait for a decision.

However the government has dropped its earlier plan to withdraw legal aid from asylum-seekers. This had aroused widespread protests.

Numbers fall

One of the reasons given by the government for its treatment of asylum-seekers is that, if too many enter, racism in this country will worsen. In practice, the crackdown on refugees in Europe in recent years has not improved race relations: far from it. In treating Black people as a group whose

presence is a problem and whose basic rights may be denied, these governments have fuelled prejudice.

Last year, about forty-five thousand applications for asylum were made to the Home Office - a record figure here (though maybe not so high for a country of sixty million inhabitants). This year, the rate of applications has dropped drastically. This is partly because, since last November, asylum seekers have had to apply in person rather than by post. This, it was claimed, was to stop benefit fraud.

Some newspapers allege that many or most refugees are lying when they claim they are at risk and are simply seeking a higher standard of living. Extreme poverty does indeed cause many people to migrate. But those seeking asylum tend to come from war-zones or countries notorious for severe human rights violations, including torture and murder by the armed forces. Many have been forced from their homes, harassed or held in detention, while others have avoided persecution only by hiding who they are or what they believe.

Most find refuge in nearby countries. It is ironic that, while prosperous Western nations claim they are unable to cope with the "flood" of refugees, in places such as Malawi and Jordan with a much lower standard of living a far higher proportion of the population are refugees.

But crossing borders can be extremely dangerous, and nearby nations are often unsafe. Sometimes people will use up their life's savings or sell their land to escape to safety thousands of miles away or to allow someone they love to do so.

Many refugees never reach their destination. For those who do, the suffering is not over.

Targets

Some refugees are detained. This may be particularly painful for those who have been held in custody before and perhaps ill-treated.

Others leaving ports of entry such as Heathrow find themselves the targets of discrimination, violence and exploitation, not only by white racists but also sometimes by other Black people.

They often end up paying high rents for low-standard accommodation. They may be refused welfare benefits completely until they have attended an "identification

FURTHER CRACKDOWN ON REFUGEES FEARED *cont.*

interview", in which their travel documents are checked and they are asked about how they got here, and been given a Standard Acknowledgement Letter. This may take months. In any case asylum-seekers are only entitled to $\frac{9}{10}$ of basic income support while the Home Office is considering their request to stay. In some areas they are unable to get on to doctors' waiting lists. As a result of cuts in education spending, some councils provide fewer English classes, leaving refugees with language difficulties at a loss.

Relatives, friends and voluntary organisations help out in some cases, and refugees may rely on their support. Coming out may be very difficult indeed.

In the end, some are acknowledged as being in real danger if they return or granted leave to remain for other reasons. But the people who make the decisions often seem to have little understanding of the situations from which people flee and little sympathy for those who are trying to escape persecution. For instance a dissident from Zaire bearing the physical and mental scars of torture was recently sent back. No Black lesbian or gay can be certain of being allowed to stay here, whatever the grounds on which asylum is being sought and however strong the evidence that they will be in danger in their country of origin.

Defending the rights of refugees

When the asylum bill first appeared, before the election, it was criticised by many including community and religious organisations, the Bar Council and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Home Secretary seems likely to try to sort out disagreements with some of the bill's critics before it is reintroduced. Also, the government has a much-reduced majority in the House of Commons. So by lobbying it may be possible to block, or at least soften, some of the measures in the bill.

Black people who have been settled in Britain for some time may be angry at the unfair treatment of refugees but are often too caught up in trying to survive racism themselves to do much about the issue. Indeed some have absorbed the mainstream view and are hostile to "outsiders", though in the long term allowing racism to go unchecked affects the whole Black community. The lesbian and gay media and campaigning organisations, meanwhile, often seem too optimistic about the improvements the Single European Market might, in future, bring to worry about the grim fate of thousands of lesbians and gays currently trying desperately to get to safety in European Community countries, and the erosion of civil liberties which in the end may affect white people too. But it is

possible that the asylum bill may, in time, be taken up more widely in the Black and lesbian and gay communities.

Some mainstream newspapers have been active in campaigning against refugee rights, and a spate of headlines about "bogus refugees" and Britain being "swamped" will probably appear when the bill is reintroduced. Challenging such myths, and raising awareness about why refugees come here, will make it harder for the government to bring in harsh measures against asylum-seekers. Indeed, many of the regimes from which people flee are deeply unpopular or in grave financial trouble, and only survive with the support of Western governments who then complain about the arrival of refugees from such countries!

Taking action

There are a number of things which you can do if you are concerned about the asylum bill. These are just a few possibilities.

1. When the bill appears, write to your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1, about it.
2. When you come across news reports on television or radio about the bill, if in your opinion they do not explain the issues properly ring up or write in to complain, and if they do get in touch to congratulate the programme-makers.

Spain Against Racism

Racism in Spain is on the increase, both from the government and other right-wing organisations. On the one hand new government legislation is being pushed through to control the movement of non-EC nationals, and on the other, the far-right is still strong and active, 17 years after the death of Franco.

To counteract this, Madrid, Spain's capital, has recently witnessed two demonstrations this month against racism and racist government policies. The largest demonstration occurred on 24 May, and was organised by a coalition of groups including SOS Racismo, (whose slogan is 'Hands off my mate' - the same as the French SOS Racisme), and was supported by all the major political parties, including PSOE, the party in power, and the Partido Popular, the right-wing opposition party. Over 5000 people marched through the centre of Madrid. The marchers carried banners from trade unions such as CNT,

the anarchist trade union. Other banners included one from a group against the celebrations of Columbus' 'discovery' of America. Their banner read '500 years later racism continues'. Other groups marching included 'Moroccan women against racism', and the 'Federation of refugees and asylum seekers', a group who are campaigning for the right of refugees to work and against expulsions. Ironically the march finished with a rally in the 'Gardens of Discovery', which contains a memorial to Christopher Columbus! One of the main issues highlighted was a new law the government is passing called the 'Ley de Extranjera' the 'Law of Foreigners', which forms their response to pressure from other European Community countries to curb immigration.

The second demonstration occurred two weeks previously and was organised by a lesbian and gay group called 'The Radical Gai'. The demonstration was organised to

highlight immigration and employment restrictions placed on non-EC nationals, especially people from the Magreb and Latin America.

The government, eager to join the cosy club of 'Fortress Europe' is making life as difficult as possible for non-EC citizens. Recently introduced legislation enables the police to stop and check the identity papers of anyone they so choose. This law is regularly being used against 'non-Spanish-looking' people, who are often arrested and if found without valid papers, immediately expelled.

The Spanish government sees the Magreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) and sub-Saharan Africa as a serious threat in terms of 'illegal' immigration, this notion together with other EC restrictions on immigration will help to fuel the racism and racist policies growing against Black communities in Spain.

Kim Mulji

LETTERS

Black is Back

Many grovels to P. Williams we 'lost' your letter and only recently recovered it!

Dear BLGC,

This is a full copy of a letter sent to Gay Times 21.9.91. The letter was printed in an abridged form, however the crude editing meant that it's effectiveness was lost. Comments on the invisibility of Black people in media reports, the choice and use of terms of identity and on the process of reclaiming words were omitted. The last is particularly relevant to the discussion on the use of the words 'queer' and 'faggot'.

Dear Editor,

In recent years we have seen the re-marshalling of reactionary forces. These forces have sought to re-establish a status quo that perpetuated the indirect and direct oppression of people in Britain. One such example is the "slippage" associated with the use of the word "Black". I am concerned that within the British media, there seems to be popular and uncritical use of the term "People of Colour". This term is in use in the media, in the main, by white middle class men.

Most commentators whilst making valuable contributions in the debate around AIDS fail to break out of their two-dimensional thinking when it comes to lesbian and gay issues which includes race. Indeed, instead of being an integral part of their commentary, statements referring to race and ethnicity are usually made in simple throwaway sentences. Examples of this were seen in articles on HIV/AIDS in Gay Times and City Limits last August.

In my opinion, flawed and potentially divisive essays such as Sunil Gupta's "Black, Brown, White" in 'Coming on Strong', do little to increase people's understanding or respect of Black people in Britain. Gupta's essay ignores the historic, political, social and economic realities of people in Britain who are: African, Asian, African-Caribbean, African-European, African-Asian and Asian-European; Black people with great and long histories, cultures and traditions.

The reclaiming of the word "Black" had associated with it an affirmation of identities. It gave rise to such phrases as: "Black is beautiful", "Black is power", "To be young, gifted and Black" and "Black IS". I am a British gay Black man, who is African-Caribbean. I am not "coloured", "negro", "brown", etc.

The term "People of Colour" which is in use in the USA is highly inappropriate in a British context. What is clear is that few people seem to be aware of how the term is defined or why it came into popular use in the USA.

I acknowledge that language and it's use is in a state of constant change and that people become more powerful when they are in charge of that change. Therefore it is for Black people living in Britain to define ourselves.

I hope that this letter will be published and that others will have the opportunity to contribute to the debate in your magazine.

P. Williams

"Normal Men.?"

I am not surprised that the press, so called "normal men", can't accept that Magic Johnson is totally so-called "straight". Real men can not accept anything emotionally or mentally that will stop them from being virile, macho men, who are strong.

Look at that creep in charge of the children's home. He, and three of his co-workers, molested and abused children for 25 years. Why? Because they could not accept responsibility and just didn't want to control themselves. Were they gay? No, but they were in positions of power and dominance so they took advantage of it. Men cannot accept anything that threatens them, intellectually or physically. They always have to put on a show or brag about whose pulled the most "skirt", who's a slag, who can out-piss, drink, fight or swear each other. Anyone who shows emotion is less than a man. But what is a so-called man? Does anyone know? I don't call being a man being dominant, saying "that's my point of view and it's right and you have to do everything I say, not because it is right but because it makes me look/feel good."

Men can't take competition, even from women. But where would they be without women? Who could they brag for, show off their sometimes non-existent muscles for, look intelligent for, do the one-upmanship for, beat up so that they can feel strong and invincible and good? Even if life, work, pressure gets to them they have always got someone who they can make feel worse so that they can feel better.

I don't call being a real man going down to the pub, drinking until you can't see straight, beating up or running over someone because you think you can still drive even after 20 pints.

How come so called "normal men" always scream that they are not gay, but they stay in packs, and don't allow women in easily? If a single woman walks into a pub she's seen as a slag or easy pick-up, open to ridicule and torment. Yet if a man gets a girl other men make him feel less than perfect if he gives up his Saturday nights to stay in with the "little woman", so he should go out drinking, fighting and spending all his money, just to prove he is still a man. So where does it end?

In *Bay Watch*, Saturdays at 5.25pm, the women

life guards are seen in flimsy clothes in scenes where the men are in sweats and trousers. The women always wear skimpy swim suits and sometimes shorts. In the action scenes the women look helpless or disappear miraculously so the men can beat the shit out of each other and save the day again.

Last year, in the old *Bay Watch* series, there was an earthquake and one of the women characters got stuck under a bookcase, with a broken pane of glass above her head. She tried several times to move it and failed. Another character's son, Michael Hasslehoff's actually (another macho man), came in and saved her. He is only supposed to be about twelve, I think, yet he managed to move this hulking great bookcase off a fully grown woman, so she could be safe. What kind of mentality is that, that a little boy is even stronger than a woman? So basically men are the dominant species? Bullshit. I can't believe it but I have to look at all the movies men idolise. I have been to a few myself but I have seen how men react to action battle scenes in *Die Hard* and *Die Hard 2*, *Terminator*, *Predator*, *Remo Unarmed and Dangerous*. The women lead characters just looked helpless even if she was a lieutenant in the US army. You don't get that far if you can't kick ass, as I have heard yelled at the screen by various men while the women just watch. Even during *Witness*, with Harrison Ford, Kelly McGillis, the men were yelling for more blood and various obscenities. In *Lethal Weapon*, the men cheered when the prostitute took her nose dive. I was there watching the film.

How come even in films when the women are supposed to be tough the men don't want them to be? In cop, army, buddy movies the women always have to cry, lose their guns or need a man to help/protect them. Yet it is men who are doing the most violence. If a woman can't protect herself, then she shouldn't be there. So is that what "normal men" are saying? "You have to depend on me because I am a man." Yet men are the weaker sex because they can't accept that they can't have everything their own way and if something goes wrong in their lives it's their fault. You can't always shift the blame on to homosexuals, lesbians and women or children. Men, "normal men", have to rely on themselves, then they won't be so afraid of what they can't control, or don't want to understand because it shows that they are weak. Why are so called macho men afraid of homosexuals? Is it because gay men have got something heterosexual men want? If they can say what it is, maybe, just maybe, there is hope for the New Man yet.

E. Francis

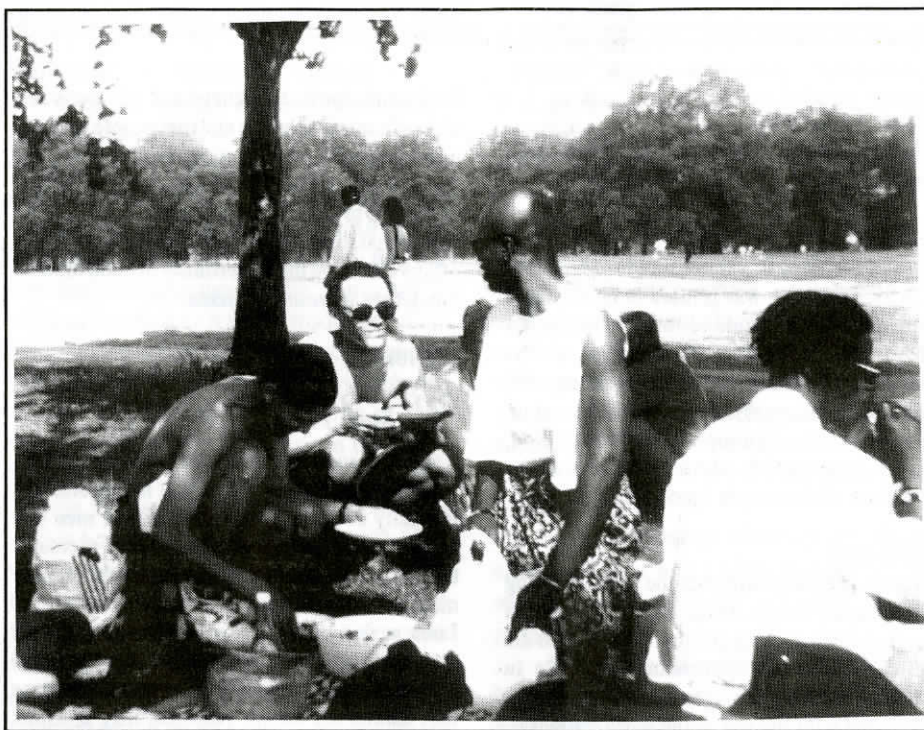
A STORY OF RAP

Once upon a time there was a time when gay parties had passwords and if you weren't in the know you weren't in. Once upon a time there was a time when the only moment you heard about a(nother) Black gay man was when people gossiped in the streets. Once upon there was a time when you had to walk past a club four times before the entrance was clear of passers-by. Thankfully those times have passed.

We have arrived at a point as Black gay men where our flyers and our publicity have those two words that are individually so important to our experience: *black* and *gay*.

We have come a long way but there is still some walking to do.

Yes, we have a greater choice of places where we can go to enjoy ourselves, without having to hide our sexuality. Black Experience's Time on a Thursday night and their occasional one-nighters, Abantu's regular events to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and health issues, more open house parties, to list a few. It is also encouraging to see more and more social discussion groups springing up around the country, outside London. There are Black lesbian and/or gay groups in Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle. Could this have happened ten, even five, years ago? It has been said that HIV/AIDS has pushed the Black gay communities into the closet but I believe the opposite to be true in that it has given us a chance to regroup to fight a common cause. As a result of working together we have been able to get strength from each other and give one another the



courage and confidence to be proud about our sexuality. From this pride more and more people who have come out are now helping others come to terms with their sexuality, through peer education and offering peer support.

Black Gay Men United Against AIDS (BGMUAA) is a group of Black gay men who meet regularly to change the focus of mainstream HIV/AIDS campaigns by endeavouring to produce culturally specific and sensitive HIV/AIDS prevention material for Black gay men. BGMUAA has a branch which organises the Black gay discussion group Let's Rap.

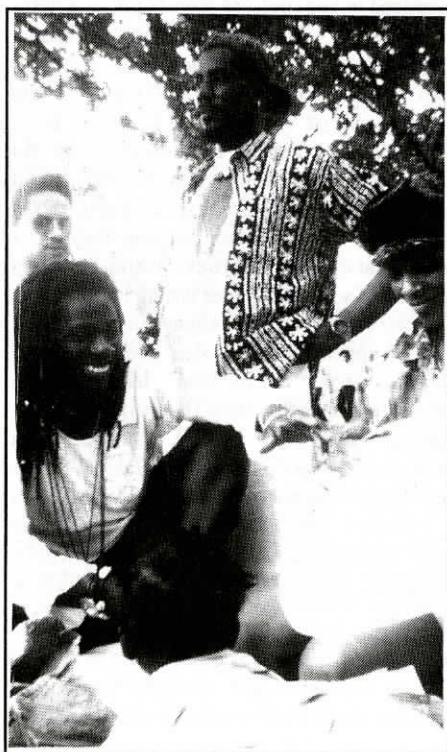
Let's Rap meets fortnightly in St Margaret's House, 21 Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green on Sundays between 3-7pm. The group has regular core members as well as new people who drop-in or who are passing through London. Let's Rap's success lies in its structure which allow individuals to join in and share in the running of the sessions. However to ensure that the sessions follow some order and do not go astray they are kept in check by group facilitators. Issues, such as coming out, relationships, safer sex, HIV/AIDS awareness, amongst others, that affect us as Black gay men in nineties have been aired honestly and openly. The constant complaint that there is not enough time seems to indicate the desperate need for such a group that allows Black gay men to get together and rap.

Part of the groups activities includes outings that allow Black gay men to do things that, as a group, we would normally not do. It was really exciting to see fifteen Black gay

men voguing on ice at Queens ice rink in Bayswater. A trip to the cinema was organised to see the lovely Denzil Washington in *Ricochet* (go see it, if only for the locker scene), as well as a visit to a bowling alley. The most recent event was the picnic in Hyde park (see photos) that took place on the Sunday of the second May bank holiday weekend. Thirty Black lesbians and gay men gathered for an afternoon of fun and frivolity in the sun. A serious game of makeshift volleyball was played which got heated at points and almost saw one side refusing to play. Baseball was also on the day's list of games and this too was fun until the sun dictated that we sit down and eat and drink. Members of the group brought food to share with one another and drink was in abundance, as well as quiche (in joke).

What is so inspiring about Let's Rap is that it has created, or catered to, a demand for places that give us Black gay men the opportunity to relate to each other and to talk to each other away from the pretensions of the club and the cliques of partys, which are venues that are not ideal for sharing information other than telephone numbers. It has caused men to realise that that stuck-up and catty man they saw on the High Road is really quite decent and has a lot of important and valid things to say. It is through groups such as Let's Rap that a basis for a strong and united Black gay community is founded. It is a place where our diversity is recognised and respected but, more importantly, where our similarities and unity is celebrated.

CA



FROM WHERE I STAND - an exhibition of Black Male Art at Brixton Art Gallery

'The first Black Male Art Exhibition on Brixton Gallery's nine year history...sees seven contemporary artists from various backgrounds disclose what life means to them. Hence the exhibition invites you to explore with each artist what they regard as important. The theme of the exhibition highlights the individualism of each man. The mediums used include photography, sculpture, jewellery, oil and acrylic paints.' So said the programme.

I must admit to having a problem when it comes to exhibitions of more than one artist. I suppose it stems from not wanting to have to say that I enjoyed one particular artist over another, which is something that I invariably end up doing. It also limits artists in space, and the full (or truer) scope of their work is not given the chance to be seen because of these limitations. So the artist is forced to choose what they believe to be their most striking, original or commercial work to 'compete' for recognition against fellow exhibitors.

It is not true to say that I did not enjoy the exhibition. The layout was excellent in that it took one from jewellery to photographs to paintings to sculpture to paintings to photographs, and, as a result, the eye did not become bored in the way mine did when viewing the overlong Gauguin exhibition. But as I have hinted earlier on I did not feel I was given enough information on the works of each artist. Maybe that was desirable. It is pro-active art. To get more you have to go and look for it. I would like to see more of certain artists.

It would not be true to say that the artists were bad, which is not only a personal comment but also is hard to define. But the majority of the works lacked anything new. It was all very safe, safe in that it did not create a new perspective that could/would show me something that related to my life, safe in that the images used have become clichés that people fear to criticise because of their current political correctness and acceptability, even becoming untouchable icons.

Yes, I do feel that 'African' pictures are important in that they show our history and our dignity but at the same time are we running the risk of them becoming as undervalued as the tacky and now laughable *Crying Boy*? I am afraid that we have become so romantic in our search for African deities that our eyes are closed to the experiences of our living in Britain today, our experiences as individuals and not as a homogenous group. Ian Flanders showed photographs of children, straightforward, simple portraits. But I felt it lacked any feeling, all these children staring full frontal into the camera, posed and static. It said nothing about the children, who they are, what they like doing, where they are from. It was almost uncomfortable to see these posed children looking so uncomfortable and blank.

For me, only one of the black and white photographs worked: *Giddion, Gidon and Gidell*. In this picture the three children appear to be showing different reactions to the camera. One smiles playfully, completely affected by the pleasure of being photographed, one looks positively wary of the implications of the camera, the third looks menacing at the camera, looking somewhat put out by the imposition of being photographed whilst framed in a doorway.

Flanders's colour photographs of children work better in that the beautiful complexions of the children are seen. They smile and seem more at ease with the camera, although there is still the underlying hint that maybe the children knew that they were to be snapped, which then took away some of the spirit that children exude, unknowingly, when photographed *in camera*.

David Emmanuel Noel works in acrylic and his pieces I found uninspiring in their lack of

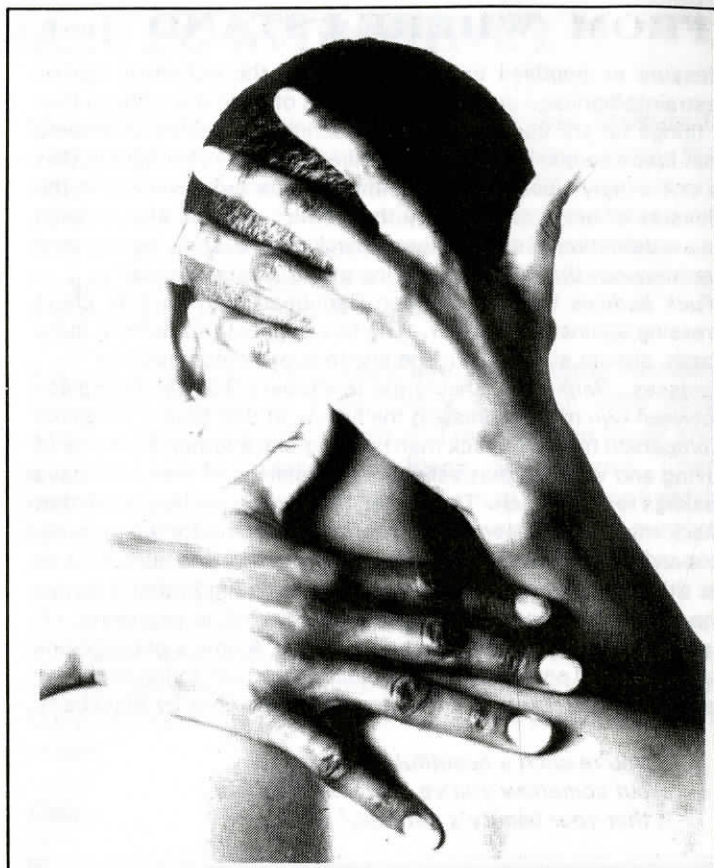


Photo by Ajamu

originality. *The Christian Messiah?* showed Christ depicted as a Black man. So what's new? The painting itself did nothing to challenge or force people to challenge the white western belief that Jesus was a blue-eyed blonde. His *African Family* of man, woman and child, or rather father, mother and baby as suggested in the title, seems to be harping back to an idealistic past, whilst transferring European values on to Africa. He seems to have ignored the fact that African families value the extended family as Europeans value the nuclear one. *Educator of a Nation*, a quasi-Pieta scene of a traditionally dressed African woman cradling a child to her breast, appears to be an indictment of machismo, recognising and celebrating the strength of women in the formulation of a nation.

It was pleasing to see a man, Anthony Russell, making jewellery, nowadays a craft so often synonymous with women. Russell's work consisted of well-crafted and wearable pieces in the shapes of mythical creatures, bugs, spiders and faces drawn with the unaffected simplicity of an African brush.

Paul Jones sculpture did not appeal to me in that it looked uncomfortable and for the greater part unusable. Maybe it says something about me as a child of the commercial age that makes me want to be comfortable in a chair as opposed to be affected by its beauty. Maybe I should become a Shaker and believe all things should be as functional as they are practical or vice versa.

For me, it was Ajamu's work that stood out. It said and is saying something that is not being said. It could be debated that the photographs do nothing more than objectify Black men in a way not dissimilar to white photographers like Tony Butcher and Robert Mapplethorpe. Is the photographer being Black a justification for objectifying Black men? I don't think the argument is valid in that I don't think that the men are objectified, and something about the men are revealed. They are not as homoerotic as Tony Butcher's, who uses Black men to highlight individual parts of the body, or as pornographic and questionable as Mapplethorpe's, who used his models to reiterate fabrications about Black male sexuality and its consecutive aggressiveness. There is a humour and a tenderness in Ajamu's photographs. *Invocation* is an image of a Black man wearing a leather harness, but the facial expression suggests

FROM WHERE I STAND cont.

pleasure as opposed to pain. Arguably the notion of leather restraints/bondage and the implications of sado-masochism that it brings up are questionable considering the history of slavery that Black people have had to endure. Here is a photograph that is not simply questioning the implications but revelling in the pleasure of being caressed by the leather. It could also be seen as a redefinition of our desires as Black people, showing one (and certainly not the only) celebration of our diverse sexuality.

Fuck buddies has two African Caribbean men back to chest pressing against each other. The title suggests something quite harsh, almost sinister, but the image is of tenderness and caresses. *Rafiki*, too, shows the tenderness that can take place between two men, expressing the beauty of that desire. *Longtime Companion* has two Black men hugging one another, an image of loving and warmth that validates the feelings of men who have feelings for other men. The title hurls water on the fiery myth that Black men cannot love Black men seriously and for a long time. It is an image of hope. *Nice Raas* is both pretty and humorous as its title suggests. Its composition is interesting in that it forces the viewer to question, voyeuristically, what is happening off camera. But for me the most powerful of Ajuma's photographs is *Unnamed*, a portrait of a blindfolded Black man trying to see his reflection in a mirror. It brings to mind some lines by Blackberri.

*You're such a beautiful blackman
but somehow you've been made to feel
that your beauty's not real.**

Here the beauty of the Black man has been so denied that we can no longer see it. The absence of a reflection in the mirror, too, reaffirms the invisibility of Black male beauty and its not being recognised save as a precursor to desire and lust. But the eight or so photographs by Ajuma demonstrated that Black men are beautiful in their own right, period.

One piece by H.U. Davies entitled *Culture Transition* was quite striking in that it depicted, on the same canvas, a semi-realistic and a cubist nude. It appears to be demonstrating the movement of art from Africa to Europe. Here is a "realistic" representation of a woman and its representation in the style of cubism, an art movement Picasso admitted was stolen from the countries of Africa. The transition of this artistic expression was so great that cubism is now seen as an European art movement. The painting seems to be trying to redress this.

The exhibition as I have said was not bad but if it were not for the works of Anthony Russell, a few photos by Ian Flanders and Ajuma I would have felt cheated that, as a Black person, representations of us seem to have hit a static low, where we are using the same, tired images to express ourselves and our experiences. Thank the gods that we can still be saved.

Clarence Allen

* *Beautiful Blackman*, Blackberri. From *In The Life* edited by Joseph Beam. (Alyson Publications)

The Black Lesbian and Gay Centre

is seeking a

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR (FEMALE)

17.5 hours per week

Salary £6,694 per annum

To liaise with co-workers to arrange the recruitment, training and support of volunteers involved in all areas of the Centre's activities, and help coordinate the drop-in, advice, information and counselling services.

Funded by

Consortium for Opportunities for Volunteering.

BLGC has a commitment to equal opportunities.

Sections 7(2)(E) Sex Discrimination Act and 5(2)(D) Race Relations Act apply.

Closing date Friday 19 June.

For job details and application form phone 081-885 3543

or write to BLGC, BM 4390, London WC1N 3XX.

This is a readvertisement.

Previous applicants need not reapply.

DESPERATELY SEEKING MC MEMBERS

Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights (LAGER) is looking for new MC members for their Management Committee. They were set up in 1982 with the aim of giving advice to lesbians and gay men who were experiencing trouble at work due to discrimination. Current work includes research about discrimination faced by disabled, Black lesbians and gay men, and people affected by HIV.

LAGER especially needs MC members with knowledge of the voluntary sector and skills in the areas of finance/fundraising, although training can be given. Above all they want people who are committed to challenging all forms of discrimination and who have an understanding of equal opportunities.

If you want to get involved or want more information contact them on 081 983 0694 - lesbians or 081 983 0696 gay men or write to LAGER, St.Margaret's House, 21 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PL.

WHY IS JUSTIN FASHANU SO ATTRACTIVE?

Justin Fashanu never fails to amaze me. I must admit that he fascinates me intensely, and it is not solely to do with the muscular definition of his thighs. It has a lot to do with his being a famous, out, Black gay man, who is challenging stereotypical notions of masculinity and what it means to be gay.

However there are a lot of times when I feel irritated by his actions or what he says, especially around topics as important as sexuality, as I feel he has some responsibility to other Black gay men as he, whether he like it or not, is going to be seen as a speaker for the Black gay community. How many interviews has he had that have not asked him about homophobia in the Black communities? At the same time I feel sorry for him in that he is expected by everyone (myself included) to be the perfect Black gay man, confident about his race and his sexuality.

His decision to vote Tory angered me as a Black gay man because the conservatives have done little to help the Black people in Britain and has done even less to further gay rights. Yet I can understand what I believe to be his political naivety as his family are conservatives.

The religious aspect to Fashanu's life also fascinates me in that it perplexes me, not because I don't believe gay Christian exist but because of the confusion that he seems to convey about his religion. One moment he is talking about a "spiritual world" and claiming that the church is not a good ambassador for getting across spirituality to people who need it, and his being a member of his own church, the next he's professing to be a "good Christian boy" who doesn't have orgasms but who arrives.(?) It all seems very mixed up and maybe I am being unfair to expect him not to be simply because he is well-known.

Yet I sense that he is not assuming all the hype about his sexuality to be as important as others want it to be. Yes, he is Black. Yes, he is gay. Yes, he is out. With a sense of flippancy I can hear him ask, "So what?" But what is important is affirming these things, to put it in everyone's faces that Black gay men *exists*. It could be argued that a fuss should not be made because homosexuality crosses race, culture and class boundaries, which everyone knows. But knowing is one thing, acceptance and recognition are two very different things.


The great Sidney Poitier said that he wants to be seen as an actor rather than a Black actor and it seems that Fashanu wants to be seen as a footballer, not as a Black gay footballer. But why negate something as important as your colour and your sexuality?

On *Open to Question* Fashanu seemed to be giving the suggestion that he was not sure if he would be gay for the rest of his life. This brings up a whole batch of problems for me who had to spend time explaining to my family that my gayness means that in my life I only have sexual relationships with men. I can deal with bisexuals. It is when they use 'gay' to describe their feelings that I

become upset as the term 'gay' becomes confused. Opponents to homosexuality casts doubts upon the experience of gay men, asking if we are 100% sure that we will always be gay, without asking the question about their own heterosexuality. A young man coming to terms with his gayness hardly needs the un reassuring comment that it is only a phase hurled at them.

It is not easy to be in the public eye and do what Fashanu has done. I know of many Black gay men who have adopted Fashanu as their hero and mentor, the be-all and end-all of what it means to be Black, gay and out. I can understand why. Here is a Black gay man having to live his life in Britain, in the way that these men have to survive here. He is not Essex Hemphill or Marlon Riggs who are both out, Black, gay men but who are American. So it is easier to relate to him. But I find it hard to have respect for someone who does not make use of his opportunity to highlight the lack of funding for Black HIV/AIDS organisations. But I find it equally hard not to admire his broad, powerful chest!

Callen.



**Are you a lesbian
black or white
between the ages of
16 and 18^{1/2}?**

**And looking for
Safe Women Only
Accomodation,**

which will lead
to your own
self-contained flat

GAP ♀
HOUSE

If so Contact
GAP HOUSE
on

071 383 4103

EVENTS EVENTS EVENTS

Sat 13 June

WOMEN ONLY EVENT

9pm-2am

Mechanics Institute, Princess St. Manchester.

Zami Manchester Black Young Lesbian Group presents Storme Webber plus disco DJ'. Angela, Willow and Leslie. Liftt accessible. Help available. Signer.

2.50/ 3.50

More Information Tel: 061 834 8819

BLACK LESBIAN ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

11am-5pm

Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

Led by Linda King. Basement, down steps. No loop.

For information/booking ring

Dorothea at Centerprise on 071-254 9632.

WOMEN LOVING WOMEN

7pm-6am

London Women's Centre (SEE PANEL).

From Abantu, a night of poetry, rap, Afro jazz, movement dance and more. Ragga D and Yvonne. Bring your own drink. Limited creche space. £5/£3. Proceeds go towards promoting awareness about HIV/AIDS and related issues.

More information on 071-831 6946.

Sat 13-Sun 14 June

BLACK GAY MEN'S ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Led by Dirg Aaab-Richards and Dennis Carney. £20/£15 unwaged or Hackney resident. Wheelchair access.

For information /booking ring Dorothea (see 13 June).

Thu 18 June

THE GILDA STORIES LAUNCH

7pm

Black Art Gallery, 225 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

Jewelle Gomez from the USA to launch her book recounting the adventures of Gilda, a Black lesbian vampire. All welcome. More information from Sheba Feminist Press on 071-254 1590.

Fri 19 June

BLACK TO THE FUTURE

7.30-10pm

St Pancras Children's Library, Euston Rd, London NW1.

(Underground Euston, Kings Cross.)

Presented by the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre project, an evening to explore where the Black lesbian and gay community is going. All Black lesbians and gay men welcome.

Refreshments. Wheelchair access. Help

available. If induction loop or sign-language interpreter required please contact BLGC in advance.

Free.

Information from 081-885 3543 or BM 4390, London WC1N 3XX.

Sat 20 June

PICNIC BY THE SEA

Leave 9am

CLC/BLG Tel: 071-383 5405

in Brighton for lesbian mothers/carers and their children.

PRE PRIDE COSTUME BALL

9pm-5am

London Women's Centre (SEE PANEL).

Mistress of Ceremonies Queenie, DJs Jo Purvis, Ritu, Mazz, Egyptian dance show and more. Late bar and food. Women only. £10/£7/£6. Benefit for equipping London Women's Centre cafe/bar.

Information from 071-831 6946.

PRIDE VAMPIRE EVENING

11.15pm

The Rio Cinema, 107 Kingsland High St, London E8.

Jewelle Gomez reading from *The Gilda Stories*, followed by *The Mark of Lilith* and *The Hunger*. Come dressed as vampish as you dare.

Women only with men as guests.

£4/£3.

Information from Sheba (see 18 June).

Sun 21 June

BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY PRIDE FESTIVAL LAUNCH

3.30pm-2am

Oval House, 54 Kennington Oval, London SE11.

Presented by InterNations, the Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee.

3.30pm workshops for Black lesbians and gays only on safer sex and other topics. Stalls. Creche.

6.30pm Adeola, Martin Patrick and other performers - bring your own creative writing to share. 8.30pm dance - DJs Ritu, Ragga D, Levi, Super Don and Clayton G. All lesbians and gays welcome.

Food and soft drinks on sale.

Wheelchair access inc toilets. Induction loop. Help available. Full access details 071-582 0080.

£4/£2.

More information from BLGC (see 19 June).

Mon 22 June

THE GILDA STORIES

7pm

Centerprise (see 13 June).

Jewelle Gomez reading. All welcome.

Free. Ground floor. Wheelchair access inc

toilet. No loop.

Information from Dorothea (see 13 June) or Sheba (see 18 June).

Tues 23 June

JEWELLE GOMEZ READING

6.30pm

Compendium, 234 Camden High St, London NW1.

Women only. Ground floor with ramp wheelchair accessible except toilet. No loop. Information from Sheba (see 18 June).

Wed 24 June

BLACK LESBIAN WRITING WORKSHOP

11am-4pm

Centerprise (see 13 June).

Led by Jewelle Gomez. £8/£4 Basement, down steps. No loop.

Limited places: to book ring Dorothea (see 13 June) or Sheba (see 18 June).

Sat 27 June

PRIDE MARCH

Assemble 11am-noon

Embankment underground station, Victoria Embankment.

Black lesbian and gay groups will be marching together, with the anti-fascist/anti-racist contingent. To Cumberland Gate, Hyde Park.

Many local dial-a-ride services running special Pride services, also transport available from Hyde Park to Brockwell Park.

Fri 3 July

WORD-UP WOMEN'S CAFE

7.30pm

Centerprise (see 13 June).

MC Michelle Warsama introduces Sherron Casmin Brivett, Jackie Roy, Zena Edwrads. Black women only.

Food and soft drinks on sale.

Ground floor, wheelchair access inc toilet. No loop. £3/£1.50.

Sat 11 July

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

10pm-late

London Women's Centre (SEE PANEL).

Suli Cultural Productions presents a revival dance for Black women and their friends who remember. Look out for details.

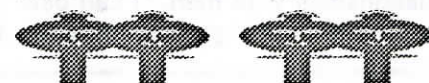
Thu 23 July

BLACK LESBIAN SOCIAL

7-9pm

CLC/BLG (SEE PANEL).

Information Tel: 071-383 5405.



BOOK BITS

OUT OF THE MARGINS

We are 3 lesbians of South and South East Asian descent, all of mixed heritage. Although we form the 'editorial', we hope that the evolution of this book will be a shared journey.

The theme of this book is our experiences of marginalisation as Black lesbians, using prose, poetry and essential photographs to provide a visual background and text of our roots, real families and family of origin; visibilising us as Black lesbians. Judging the whole process to take approximately 12 months, we have chosen a mid-July deadline for completed submissions of mid-September.

The layout should be double spaced and typed on single sides of A4 paper. If possible please try and send black and white photos, a maximum of 6. Include a short biographical note, 50 words maximum for the contributors notes.

Our terms of reference for Black are the same as the BLGC definition.

Even though we are all of one race we have chosen to use the term mixed race, rather than mixed heritage or parentage because we feel it is more powerful as a term.

We are looking for a number of contributors, but the ultimate decision about them will be made by the editorial with as much sensitivity and discussion as possible.

Send contributions to:- **Out of the Margins**, C/O BM BOX 4390, London WC1N 3XX.

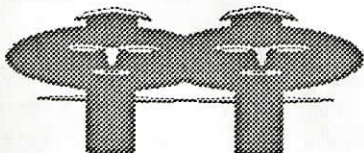
CIVIL SERVICE LESBIANS AND GAYS?

Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights (LAGER) have recently produced a report on lesbians and gay men working in banking. Following this, we are now aiming to produce a report on the experiences of lesbians and gay men who work, or have worked, within the Civil Service.

We would like to hear from lesbians and gay men about any difficulties encountered in your job related either directly or indirectly to your sexuality. What do you feel are the major obstacles to you being 'out' at work? If there are issues which you would like to raise, LAGER would be interested to hear from you.

All replies treated with strictest confidentiality.

Please contact Maggie at LAGER, St.Margaret's House, 21 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PL. Tel:081 983 0694/081 983 0696.



ACCESS CODES

A-PARKING

1-Outside entrance 2-Less than 50 yards away 3-More than 50 yards away

B-PUBLIC TRANSPORT

1-Tube 2-Bus 3-Rail 4-Less than 50 yards 5-More than 50 yards 6-More than 1/4 Mile

C-ENTRANCES

1-Level 2-Ramp without rail 3-Ramp with rail 4-Steps without handrails 5-Steps with handrail 6-Steep steps 7-Shallow steps 8-Curved steps

D-DOORS

1-Width 2-Heavy 3-Light 4-Revolving 5-Opens inwards 6-Opens outwards

E-INSIDE BUILDING

1-Level 2-Steps without handrail 3-Steps with Handrail 4-Steps steep 5-Steps shallow 6-Steps curved

F-LIFT

1-Dimensions 2-Controls high 3-Controls low 4-Controls flush 5-Controls protruding 6-Handrail 7-Seating 8-Smooth 9-Jerky 10-Doors automatic 11-Doors manual heavy 12-Doors Manual light 13-Doors concertina 14-Doors straight

G-TOILETS

1-Dimensions 2-Doors open inwards 3-Doors open outwards 4-Rails 5-Air driers hand operated 6-Air driers foot operated 7-Air driers automatic 8-Taps hand operated 9-Taps foot operated

H-DIMENSIONS OF PREMISES

1-Large building 2-Small building 3-Corridors

J-FLOOR SURFACES

1-Smooth 2-Carpet 3-Slippery

K-LIGHTING

1-Bright 2-Dim 3-Flexible(eg.movable)

L-SEATING

1-Hard 2-Soft 3-High 4-Low 5-Plentiful 6-Static 7-Movable

M-HEATING

1-Warm 2-Cool 3-Variable

N-PARTICIPATION

1-Braille 2-Tape 3-Large print 4-Signers 5-Induction loop 6-Finger spelling 7-Lip speakers 8-Note takers

P-HELPERS

1-Transport 2-Meeting & escorting 3-General help

Q-CRECHE

1-Run by men 2-Run by women 3-Run by both sexes 4-Facilities for children with disabilities 5-Under fives only 6-Up to 12 years only 7-Girls only 8-Mixed

R-FOOD & DRINK

1-Drinks only 2-Vegan 3-Vegetarian 4-Non-vegetarian 5-Self service 6-Table service 7-Licensed bar 8-Specific alcohol free areas 9-all space alcohol free

S-SMOKING

1-Not allowed 2-Allowed 3-Specific areas 4-Specific times

T-STRUCTURE OF ACTIVITIES

1-Formal meetings 2-Informal 3-Continuous 4-Frequent Breaks

U-TELEPHONE

1-In an accessible area 2-Private phone 3-Call phone

CLC/BLG

(Camden Lesbian Centre/ Black Lesbian Group)

54-56 Phoenix Rd, London NW1 1ES

TEL:071-383 5405

ACCESS CODES

A single yellow line outside entrance B1 ,3, 5 Kings' Cross/St Pancras, Euston 2, 5 no's 14,14a,18,30,73 stop on Euston Road, near Shaw Theatre. C1 Dmain door-32.75", 3, 5 fire exit door 31.5",wide, 5 other doors-31", 3 Eground floor building,1 Fnone Gtwo toilets-door to 1st is 30.5",3-dimensions 5.75'x4.5', turning distance 3',door to 2nd is 29.5",light,3,dimensions 3'x5.5', turning distance 2', 8 H2 front door to meeting room 8', meeting room to office 7', meeting room to large WC 11.5', meeting room to other WC 22', Meeting room to creche is 18'. Crech to fire exit door 13.5'. J1 K1, 3 in meeting room, creche & office. L1, 2, 4, 5, 7 M3 Nnote takers, some information on tape & large print, BSL stage 2 communicator. minicom. P3 Q2, age limit 11yrs, mixed. Rnon-alcoholic drinks available. S3 T1, 2, 4 U1, 2, minicom in office.

ACCESS cont.

LONDON FRIEND

86 Caledonian Road, London N1
Tel: GENERAL 071-837 3337
WOMEN'S HELPLINE 071-837 2782

ACCESS CODES

A1 B1-Kings Cross-, 5 B2-no's 17 & 221, 4 B3-Kings Cross, 5 C4/7(1 step) D1-90cm E3/4 - one set of 2 steps, 3, 4 one set of 13 steps, 3, 4 Fnone, ramp for ground floor access only G1/4-one toilet 214cmx207cm with two handrails + sliding door, 8 one toilet 87cmx207cm, 2, 8 H2,3-one corridor 312cm J1-kitchen, toilets & entrance vinyl floor, 2-remaining rooms & corridor K2 L1, 5, 7 M3 Nnone P3-if prior notification is given Qnone-contact them as arrangements may be made R1 + crisps S2 T2-but structured U2-not for general use

•••••

VENUS PROJECT

The Old Laundry
Hornsey Rd, London N7 7QT
Tel: 071-281 2121 or 071-272 8467

ACCESS CODES

A2 B1 Finsbury Pk 6 B2 nos 4, 14A, 19, 29, 221, 253 4/5 B3 Finsbury Pk C2 Dmain 5, interior varied E1 Fnone Gone wheelchair-accessible H2 J2 K1 Larmchairs, canvas folding chairs M3 Nnone P3 Qnone Rnon-alcoholic drinks S3 T2 Unot for general use

•••••

WEST HAMPSTEAD WOMEN'S CENTRE

55 Hemstal Rd, London NW6 2AD
Tel: 071-328 7389

ACCESS CODES

A1 B1 W Hampstead 5 B2 nos 8, 16, 16A, 28, 159 5 B3 W Hampstead 5 Cto ground floor low ramp, door 30" opens inwards, to lower ground floor along side alley low ramp, door 30" opens inwards Estairs between floors but each accessible from outside Fnone Gtwo wheelchair accessible, on ground floor left hand rail, basin, mirror, on lower ground floor right hand rail, movable rail left hand, low basin, long mirror set low, alarm H2 K3 Loffice type, upright chairs, directors' chairs, floor cushions M3 Nnone R1 Sif group agrees T2 U1

•••••

LONDON WOMEN'S CENTRE (WESLEY HOUSE)

4 Wild Court, London WC2

ACCESS CODES

A1 B1 Holborn 5 B2 nos 5, 68, 77A, 168, 172, 501 5 C2 Dmain door 75cm, 2, 6, other doors 70cm, bar handle 1m from ground Eground floor ramped corridor 55m to lift/reception F1.2mx1.6m, 6, controls 1m from floor, braille signs, doors 76cm, 10 G2nd/3rd floor 8m from lift, 167x234cm, doors light, folding, 4, 5, 8 H1 J1 K1, corridors 2 L1, 5, 7 M1 N5 U1, 3

REGULAR GROUPS

LESBIANS AND GAY MEN

SHAKTI LONDON - South Asian Lesbian and Gay Network. The group meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month from 3-6pm at LONDON FRIEND (SEE PANEL BOTTOM LEFT). A Bhangra disco for lesbians and gay men is held on the 1st Friday of the month at the LONDON LESBIAN & GAY CENTRE, 67-69 Cowcross Street, London EC1, from 10pm. (Wheelchair access. For details ring 071-608 1471). The group produces a quarterly newsletter. There are other Shakti groups forming around the country. For more information Tel: 081-993 9001.

SHAKTI BRADFORD - Tel: 0274-723802 /722206.

SHAKTI BIRMINGHAM - Tel: 021-622 7351. Ask for a Shakti contact.

SHAKTI MANCHESTER - Tel: 061-274 3814.

MANCHESTER BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY GROUP - Meetings 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month at Manchester Gay Centre. Further info from: PO Box 153. Manchester M60 1LP.

ORIENTATIONS - Chinese and South East Asian lesbian and gay group meet at LONDON FRIEND (SEE PANEL).

CYPRIT LESBIAN AND GAY GROUP meets on the 1st Sunday of the month 2.30pm-5pm at LONDON FRIEND (SEE PANEL). Ring for more details.

LEICESTER BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY GROUP Support/Socials/Meetings, for details write to c/o Michael Wood Centre, 29 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TE. Tel: 0533-559995.

BIRMINGHAM BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY GROUP (KOLA) - Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. Tel: Clint on 021-506 0222 or Friend 021-622 7351.

BLACK LESBIANS AND GAYS AGAINST MEDIA HOMOPHOBIA (BLAGAMH) - For more information write to BLAGAMH, FREEPOST, London SE8 5BR. (No stamp needed.)

BLACK LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL GROUP - Meets every Monday at The Venus Project. (SEE PANEL) Information, advice, resources, counselling for 16-25 year old people. Tel: 071-281 2121 or 071-272 8467.

LESBIANS

CAMDEN BLACK LESBIAN GROUP runs socials, discussions and workshops for Black lesbians. For details contact CLC/BLG (SEE PANEL).

LAS DIVINAS - Latinamerican Lesbian Group, We meet the last Friday of every month, 7pm at CLC/BLG (SEE PANEL THIS PAGE).

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

NOTTINGHAM BLACK LESBIAN GROUP - Meets first Friday evening of the month in Black Lesbian Room, Nottingham Women's Centre, 30 Chaucer Street, Nottingham, NG5 1LP. Tel: 0602-411475.

BLACK LESBIAN IN SOLIDARITY - Fortnightly meetings every other Sunday. At Southwark Women's Centre, 6 Peckham High Street SE15. Or write to PO Box 11, 124 Vassall Road, SW9 6JB.

ZAMIMASS (group for working class black lesbians) - Meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at 7pm at CLC/BLG (SEE PANEL THIS PAGE).

OLDER BLACK LESBIAN GROUP (over forty) meets 1st Sunday of every month between 3-6pm at West Hampstead Women's Centre (SEE PANEL) Tel: 071-328 7389.

ZAMI (MANCHESTER BLACK YOUNG LESBIAN GROUP). First meeting Thursday 9 April 7-9pm. To get Black women together so that they are not alone. Advice, counselling and support. For more information tel: 061 834 7256 or 061 236 6205 Mon-Thurs 6-9pm.

GAY MEN

LET'S RAP - Black gay men talking to Black gay men. London group meets every fortnight on Sundays from 3-6pm. At St Margaret's House, 21 Old Ford Road, E2. Tube: Bethnal Green. Buses: 15, 106, 253. Tel: 071-737 3881 or BLGC office.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE BLACK GAY MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP - contact 091-233 1333 before 6pm or 091-261 7768 after.

LONDON BLACK MESMAC GROUP - For African and African-Caribbean gay or bisexual men under 25. Meets Thursday evenings. Tel: 071-831 2330 for venue.