

GAY MAN IN PHILADELPHIA

Many of the ten thousand people, who gathered in Philadelphia over Labor Day weekend to attend the plenary session of the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention, were Gay sisters and brothers, both Third World and White, working in the movement. Unfortunately, not all of them had come out. But there were those of us who had gone specifically to relate to the Lesbian or Male Homosexual workshops, realizing the importance of Gay Liberation in the struggle to create a new humane society for all people.

I was there with some twenty of my gay brothers from Gay Liberation New York. We arrived late Friday afternoon at the Church of the Advocate and were searched for weapons before entering the courtyard. We had to wait quite a while to register while folding chairs were being passed into the church hall where movies were to be shown early in the evening.

After registration, I got into the food line for a plate of fried chicken, peas, salad, bread and a cup of orange drink. Then I began the long wait for housing; Philadelphia GLF had promised to find a place where all the gay men could be together. I looked through current issues of the Plain Dealer and Free Press, two Philadelphia underground papers being distributed free; both had articles on Gay Lib. We had a long wait. Finally, around ten o'clock, we had a place to stay and transportation to get there. A couple of Black Panthers drove four of us to the large house in Germantown that was to be used by GLF men.

Saturday morning we went to Temple University to hear the keynote by Michael Tabor, one of the New York Panther 21. It took a long time to get into the gym because each person, who passed through one of the four doors that were open, was carefully frisked. At noon, the place was just beginning to fill up and there were still a lot more people waiting outside.

I recognized some of the Gay sisters from New York and went to sit with them. As we were waiting for the speaker, a man sitting a few rows behind us suddenly jumped up and started screaming at the women. "Get out of here, you freaks!" I didn't understand what was going on at first. He shouted even louder. "Get away from here, you sex freaks!" We all got up and turned around. One of the Panther security guards standing nearby told him to sit down and be quiet. The man looked freaked-out and continued shouting. Three Panthers grabbed the man and he was told to sit down or leave. Soon after that, both he and his group left.

The Gay sisters went across to the other side of the gym to meet another group of women. I thought they were coming back but that was the last time I saw them that weekend.

The morning program was four hours late in starting. When Tabor finished speaking, it was already way past the time scheduled for lunch. An announcement was made that the afternoon workshops were being cancelled

and everyone was urged to return to the gym by six for the speech by Huey P. Newton and a Third World sister at eight that evening.

The Gay men at the gym decided to go to the Germantown Presbyterian Church to eat and when we got there we found the Male Homosexual workshop in progress. Most of the men there had not attended the keynote session and were unaware of the cancellation. The group continued with its work but recessed early to allow people enough time to back to Temple for the evening program. Before leaving, it was decided that we would all stay in the church for the remainder of the weekend.

A crowd estimated at fifteen thousand, which included many people from the surrounding community not directly involved in the plenary, came to McGonigle Hall for Huey's speech but less than half that number could be accommodated in the gym. I stood outside for two and a half hours, squeezed, pushed, jostled until I left disappointed at not being able to get in.

As I lay awake on the floor of the church that night, I thought about the day which seemed like such a waste. A continuation of the endless waiting that began the day before. Riding back and forth in cramped cars and vans. Someone has told me that the Monday session was being cancelled. I couldn't imagine how we would accomplish three days of work in the one day remaining. I was ready to leave Philadelphia. I felt that we were being used, that it was just a Black Panther rally, that we were merely there to show support for the Panthers rather than to struggle with proposals for a new Constitution. I was tired, cold and hungry, but somehow I managed to get a couple of hours sleep, using my fist as a pillow.

The workshop for Male Homosexuals resumed Sunday morning after breakfast on the grass behind the Presbyterian church. It was a beautiful, sunny day. First, the statement of the Third World caucus was read and discussed. Then each proposal presented the previous day was carefully considered and all reformist measures were eliminated.

There was a rumor that two of our people had been picked up by the pigs. Someone called the police station and verified the story. We got hold of a lawyer and started to send a small delegation down to the station but were told we should wait. The two were released after a long period of questioning and returned while the workshop was still meeting.

Afeni Shakur, another of the Panther 21, came to talk to us about her own involvement in the revolutionary struggle. She spoke of her desire to live quietly on a farm with lots of grass and trees, something she could not do knowing that her people were oppressed. When Bobby Hutton was killed, she did not feel like being strong; she was hurt by his death and wanted to withdraw from that sorrow. And when Fred Hampton was murdered by the police, she did not feel

like being strong but had to in order to survive. She talked about the changes within the Black Panther Party, how it had gone from a local self-defense organization to an international organization concerned with the struggle of all oppressed people around the world.

Reports from each of the workshops were read at the Temple University gym that night. While people were filling up the place, the brothers from Gay Liberation Front started chanting, "GAY POWER TO THE GAY PEOPLE! BLACK POWER TO THE BLACK PEOPLE! RED POWER TO THE RED PEOPLE! WOMANPOWER TO THE WOMEN PEOPLE! CHILDREN POWER TO THE CHILDREN PEOPLE..." "HO-HO HOMOSEXUAL! THE RULING CLASS IS INEFFECTUAL!" "POWER TO THE PEOPLE!" There were about sixty of us and our spirits were very high.

As I listened to the proposals from each workshop, I regained the hope I had had when I had first arrived in Philadelphia. What I heard was what this country could be so that all the people would be guaranteed the fullest life possible. I was elated. There were moments when I was moved to tears. Yet this was only the beginning step toward the eventual writing of a new Constitution.

When Steve, a Third World brother from Philadelphia GLF, stepped to the podium, we cheered. When he said he was from the Male Homosexual workshop, there were snickers from various parts of the gym. But our report was enthusiastically applauded. I think many people were surprised at our demands.

The representative for the workshop on the control and use of the military and police referred only to men in his report. One lone woman called out, "and women!" Again he referred to men and we joined the chant, "AND WOMEN, AND WOMEN, AND WOMEN!" He continued reading the report in a shaky voice. When he started to say men, he corrected himself, substituting a more general term which included both sexes. The crowd cheered.

The final meeting of the plenary session was held Monday afternoon at the Church of the Advocate. The chairman asked for additional proposals for the Constitution. A woman from Women's Liberation and a Gay brother from GLF both read statements which called attention to the absence of a Lesbian report, regretting the walk-out of the sisters and urging the inclusion of Gay women as anecessary part of a new Constitution. A long line of people waited their turn to announce proposals which they felt had been left out. The chairman remarked, "This is going to be the longest Constitution in the world!" He may be right, but it may well be that a lengthy document will be necessary to insure the rights of ALL people.

The next Constitutional meeting will be in Washington over Thanksgiving. Results in forthcoming articles.

WE DEMAND:

All power to the people! The revolution will not be complete until all men are free to express their love for one another sexually. We affirm the sexuality of our love. The social institution which prevents us all from expressing our total revolutionary love we define as sexism. Sexism is a belief or practice that the sex or sexual orientation of human beings gives to some the right to certain privileges, powers or roles, while denying to others their full potential. Within the context of our society, sexism is primarily manifested through male supremacy and heterosexual chauvinism. Since in the short run sexism benefits certain persons or groups, in the long run it cannot serve all people and prevents the forming of complete social consciousness among straight men. Sexism is irrational, unjust and counter-revolutionary. Sexism prevents the revolutionary solidarity of the people. We demand that the struggle against sexism be acknowledged as an essential part of the revolutionary struggle. We demand that all revolutionaries deal individually and collectively with their own sexism. We recognize as a vanguard revolutionary action the Huey P. Newton statement on gay and women's liberation. We recognize the Black Panther Party as being the vanguard of the people's revolution in Amerikkka. No revolution without us! An army of lovers cannot lose!

WE DEMAND:

1. The right to be gay, any time, any place.
2. The right to free physiological change and modification of sex upon demand.

3. The right of free dress and adornment.
4. That all modes of human sexual self-expression deserve protection of the law, and social sanction.
5. Every child's right to develop in a non-sexist, non-possessive atmosphere, which is the responsibility of all people to create.
6. That a free educational system present the entire range of human sexuality, without advocating any one form or style.
7. That language be modified so that no gender take priority.
8. That the judicial system be run by the people through the people's courts; that all people be tried by members of their peer group.
9. That gays be represented in all governmental and community institutions.
10. That organized religions be condemned for aiding in the genocide of gay people, and enjoined from teaching hatred and superstition.
11. That psychiatry and psychology be enjoined from advocating a preference for any form of sexuality, and the enforcement of that preference by shock treatment, brainwashing, imprisonment, etc.
12. The abolition of the nuclear family because it perpetuates the false categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality.
13. The immediate release of and reparations for gay and other political prisoners from prisons and mental institutions; the support of gay political prisoners for all other political prisoners.
14. That gays determine the destinies of their own communities.

15. That all gay people share equally the labor and products of society.
16. That technology be used to liberate all peoples of the world from drudgery.
17. The full participation of gays in the people's revolutionary army.
18. Finally, the end of domination of one person by another.

Of noticable absence at the Session were our Gay Sisters without whom there could be NO true people's constitution. The next day that abuse was at least recognized, if not corrected, by the gay men and the straight women there through the following statements: MALE HOMOSEXUALS: The Lesbian Workshop did not address the People's Constitutional Convention as scheduled. Therefore, the Male Homosexual Workshop summons the attention of all participating workshops to the fact that the Plenary Session is incomplete without the inclusion of a position paper from our sisters. WOMEN: The demands of the gay sisters were not read from the platform last (Sunday) night. The new constitution cannot be complete without these demands. The Radical Lesbians were excluded and ignored at the Workshop on Self-Determination for Women. We feel we have let ourselves and our sisters down. In the past and here at the conference, the women's movement has not recognized that the struggle of gay women is our struggle - all women's struggle. All women must be free to love one another. Free our sisters, free ourselves. Power to the People.

third world gay revolution.

THIRD WORLD GAY REVOLUTION

16 Point Platform and Program drafted November 11, 1970, to supercede the 13 Point Platform drafted September 9, 1970.

Our straight sisters and brothers must recognize and support that we, third world gay women and men, are equal in every way within the revolutionary ranks.

We each organize our people about different issues, but our struggles are the same against oppression, and we will defeat it together — Once we understand these struggles, and gain a love for our sisters and brothers involved in these struggles, we must learn how best to become involved in them.

The struggles of the peoples of the world are our fight as well; their victories are our victories and our victories are theirs. Our freedom will come only with their freedom.

Together, not alone, we must explore how we view ourselves, and analyze the assumptions behind our self-identity - We can then begin to crack the barriers of our varying illnesses, our passivity, sexual chauvinism, in essence, our inability to unabashedly love each other, to live, fight, and if necessary, die for the people of the earth.

As we begin to understand our place in this international revolution, and join with others in this understanding, we must develop the skills necessary to destroy the forces of repression and exploitation, so as to make it possible for a new woman and man to evolve in a society based on communal love.

While we understand that in the United States our main enemy is the socio-economic-political system of capitalism and the people who make profits off our sufferings, fights and divisions, we also recognize that we must struggle against any totalitarian, authoritarian, sex-controlled, repressive, irrational, reactionary, fascist government or government machine.

What We Want:

What We Believe:

1. We want the right of self-determination for all third world and gay people, as well as control of the destinies of our communities.

We believe that third world and gay people cannot be free until we are able to determine our own destinies. The system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

2. We want the right of self-determination over the use of our bodies: The right to be gay, anytime, anyplace; The right to free physiological change and modification of sex on demand; The right to free dress and adornment.

We believe that these are human rights which must be defended with our bodies being put on the line. The system as it now exists denies these basic human rights by implementing forced heterosexuality. The system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

3. We want liberation for all women: We want free and safe birth control information and devices on demand. We want free 24 hour child care centers controlled by those who need and use them. We want a redefinition of education and motivation (especially for third world women) towards broader educational opportunities without limitations because of sex. We want truthful teaching of women's history. We want an end to hiring practices which make women and national minorities

1. a readily available source of cheap labor
2. confined to mind-rotting jobs under the worst conditions.

We believe that the struggles of all oppressed groups under any form of government which does not meet the true needs of its people will eventually result in the overthrow of that government. The struggle for liberation of women is a struggle to be waged by all peoples. We must also struggle within ourselves and within our various movements to end this oldest form of oppression and its foundation — male chauvinism. We cannot develop a truly liberating form of socialism unless we fight these tendencies. The system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

4. We want full protection of the law and social sanction for all human sexual self-expression and pleasure between consenting persons, including youth. We believe that present laws are oppressive to third world people, gay people, and the masses. Such laws expose the inequalities of capitalism, which can only exist in a state where there are oppressed people or groups. This must end. The system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

5. We want the abolition of the institution of the bourgeois nuclear family.

We believe that the bourgeois nuclear family perpetuates the false categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality by creating sex roles, sex definitions and sexual exploitation. The bourgeois nuclear family as the basic unit of capitalism creates oppressive roles of homosexuality and heterosexuality. All oppressions originate within the nuclear family structure. Homosexuality is a threat to this family structure and therefore to capitalism. The mother is an instrument of reproduction and teaches the necessary values of capitalist society, i.e., racism, sexism, etc. from infancy on. The father physically enforces (upon the mother and children) the behavior necessary in a capitalist system, intelligence and competitiveness in young boys and passivity in young girls. Further, it is every child's right to develop in a non-sexist, non-racist, non-possessive atmosphere which is the responsibility of all people, including gays, to create. Therefore, the system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

6. We want a free non-compulsory education system that teaches us our true identity and history, and presents the entire range of human sexuality without advocating any one form or style; that sex roles and determination of skills according to sex be eliminated from the school system; that language be modified so that no gender takes priority; and that gay people must share the responsibilities of education.

We believe that we have been taught to compete with our sisters and brothers for power, and from that competitive attitude grows sexism, racism, male and national chauvinism and distrust of our sisters and brothers. As we begin to understand these things within ourselves, we attempt to free ourselves of them and are moved toward a revolutionary consciousness. The system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

7. We want guaranteed full equal employment for third world and gay people at all levels of production.

We believe that any system of government is responsible for giving every woman and man a guaranteed income or employment, regardless of sex or sexual preference. Being interested only in profits, capitalism cannot meet the needs of the people. The system must be changed. Socialism is the answer.

we meet every Friday at a.u. 6th ave. and 14th st. 8 p.m.



16.

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