

The Staff,
COME OUT,
P.O. Box 93, Village Station,
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Come Out Staff:

We are writing to protest against COME OUT's attempt to link the homophile movement to communist revolution and support of totalitarian anti-homosexual political systems.

Even you claim not to be politically biased the last seven of the nine articles in COME OUT's manifesto against free political and economic institutions and support those (such as the Black Panthers) who advocate authoritarian collectivism at the expense of the legitimate goals of the homophile movement.

COME OUT's support of the Castro dictatorship in Cuba (complete with photographs of so-called "liberated" women lugging heavy wheelbarrows, toting rifles and lining up in staves with empty shelves) is particularly authoritarian and offensive. Women in Cuba today, far from being liberated, are conscripted for forced labour under threat of execution (see the text of Castro's 1969 "Christmas Message") and their children subjected to the total physical and intellectual control of the state. And acceptance of homosexuality is not out of the things they are taught!

After Castro's revolution, the pri-

viously large homosexual community in Cuba was systematically rounded up and imprisoned. Now, no homosexual social life or organizations are allowed, and homosexuality is officially non-existent - considered a product of the decadent, bourgeois-capitalist system which has been superseded.

If you doubt the truth of this, you need only to read the newspapers, if you don't believe them, read Dr. Castro's speeches.

I think it fair that the Black Panther terrorists of whom COME OUT is so fond are notoriously anti-homosexual, as a reading of their spokesman, Eldridge Cleaver's book, SOUL ON ICE, will make very clear.

One of your writers, Jim Fouratt, recognizes this about Abbie Hoffman as well as Cleaver, but doesn't connect their sexual attitudes to their destructive violence and political totalitarianism. Hannah Arendt, in her extensive study of the nature of totalitarian political systems, points out that even through some groups of "revolutionaries" may see homosexuality as part of their present spiritual society, they are always among those who suffer most under communist and national socialist regimes.

"Red Buttefly" in its rather incoherent article, claims that homosexuals will not know "freedom, justice, and happiness" until "the root evil of

our society has been destroyed - Capitalism." Most of your other contributors seem to share this view and the consequent advocacy of a communist state. They would do well to consider a few facts: it is the free market that has enabled state restrictions (and even the results of individual practices) against minority groups - Jews, homosexuals and others - to be as small as they are. Furthermore, "there is an economic incentive in a free market to separate economic efficiency from other characteristics of the individual." (Professor Milton Friedman in CAPITALISM AND FREEDOM, P. 109.)

By contrast, in communist states, by definition, the government has a monopoly on all spheres of human activity - not only on employment, but on such things as health, leisure and travel as well. In such a system, any individual who voices his disagreement with the government can very easily be silenced.

Remember that homosexuality is illegal in almost all communist countries, is suppressed in all of them, and is not even officially considered to exist in any. When Allen Ginsberg visited Cuba and Czechoslovakia he was thrown out of both countries for lacking a visa and practicing homosexuality. In the United States, even though most states have anti-homosexual laws, Ginsberg and

others, including the writers of COME OUT are free to say what they think in public as well as in private, to challenge the unjust laws and to work to change them. (In Canada, if no essential relations are legal for citizens, no adults.)

Legal and unwarranted linking of the human rights movement with political systems that are not only oppressive generally but utterly totalitarian, through the homophile movement and through all self-styled supporters who believe in human freedom.

Do stop stop digging your own grave!

Sincerely,

Ian Young
Charles C. Hill
Rene Rivard
Wayne Bryant
Richard Swanson
Paul Bristol
Dennis Cortright
G.A. Spaul
Marjorie Kubus
Lana Corizza
Bill McKee

Members of the University of Toronto
Homophile Association.

DIALOGUE

Dear sisters and brothers,

We have seriously considered your letter of January 13 since we recognize that you have written out of your own deep concern and this we profoundly respect. In part your points were relevant & justified, tho you also include distortion and error which you try to pass off as fact. For some of us, your letter served as a nucleus around which to crystallize our thoughts about homosexual liberation.

From your letter it seems you believe that human freedom and capitalism are compatible. You laud the capitalist as the protector of the homosexual minority; you praise the free market system for separating efficiency from "other human characteristics". We ask that you step outside of a society defined by capitalism to examine what it has done to your humanity. From such a perspective we think you will see that capitalism creates minority groups. In a competitive class structure some group must be on the bottom. Hence we are all insecure about losing our position of relative privilege: out of this insecurity comes fear and blind prejudice and the creation of scapegoat groups. That is why this society is so hung up on its minorities: (It needs them). Our vantage point outside of capitalist conceived society further reveals that it is precisely the schism between efficiency and "other human characteristics" that has rendered us dehumanized efficiency machines. To be human is to function in all our manifold richness. A system which gives primary value to efficiency, fragments and desiccates our lives. It shocks us that you embrace a system which cuts you off from realizing your full humanity. Our ideal society is one in which sexuality and love are not divorced from our work functions but are an interwoven, complex, mutually enriching totality. We feel that we can only realize this ideal within a coop-

erative rather than competitive framework.

Concerning Cuba, you are right in your criticism of the *Come Out* essay to the extent that you say we must not take an uncritical position and ignore the crimes and stupidities directed at us. However, in spite of some important failings that especially concern us, we feel that the Cuban revolution is a source of hope to all oppressed people. To appreciate what it has accomplished one only has to compare conditions in Cuba 10 years after the revolution with conditions in the other Latin American countries where disease, illiteracy, high mortality rates and malnutrition are rampant, everyday facts of life: where people live without hope. This does not change the fact that Cuba has denied basic rights to homosexuals, including the right to dignity and self fulfillment.

We hope eventually out of our own dialogues, actions, and readings to work out an analysis of how we in Gay Liberation Front can relate to Cuba through both criticism and emulation.

On the other hand, you overstep the bounds of truth, justice and honesty by presenting material on the draft of Cuban workers for cutting sugar cane. You discuss it as if there were an official order for women workers that presents a choice between work and execution. This is completely untrue. Yes, there are criticisms to be made concerning the role and the position of women in Cuba. A very immediate thorough and compelling analysis of women's liberation in Cuba is in order and this we hope to accomplish also - not to deny that the revolution was a success, only to indicate where the struggle must still be waged. As you must know, 20 out of every 100 workers in plants, factories and other enterprises are drafted to cut sugar cane along with government employees, soldiers, students and even Premier Fidel Castro. Women, who now

share to a great extent in Cuba's decisive effort, are included in all these categories. The hope of the country is a 10,000,000 ton sugar crop this year (2 billion tons have already been harvested). There are also many foreign volunteers cutting cane, including several hundred American women and men of all ages in the Venceremos Brigade. Among them are some American homosexuals.

To point up some of the contradictions in Cuba we want to mention the Cuban writer Jose Lezama Lima who holds an important position in the Cuban Ministry of Education (he is about 45 years old), is the author of the very well-known novel on a homosexual theme *Paradise* (1969), and who himself is known as a homosexual. (Have there been any top level govt. administrators in the U.S. who were known homosexuals?) It would seem that the relation between the homosexual and the Cuban revolution has not yet been thought through and is currently dictated by a reaction against the pre-revolution homosexual scene in Cuba (prostitution & exploitation), prejudice, provincial morality, and the social blindness of machismo.

As you certainly must realize, conditions vary greatly from one socialist country to another. In the Soviet Union and other "communist" countries (in 1970 they are all still really socialist) the laws on homosexuality are truly harsh. However, this does not destroy, though it immeasurably harms the positive aspects of those developing societies. Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, however, have no anti-homosexual laws. In these two countries, homosexual acts between consenting adults are considered a private affair. And Poland as of January 1 of this year, has removed all legislation on homosexuals from their legal code, on the strange basis that they have no

homosexual problem in their country.

We are also painfully aware of the anti-homosexual allusions in Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, concepts we know to be found among some Black Panthers. Here again we say that what leads us to support them and work with them is the understanding of the justice of the cause for which they are fighting, for a homosexual group (which has probably been fighting the use of crippling descriptive adjectives "deviate," "pervert," etc. applied to homosexuals) to thoughtlessly apply the word "terrorist" to the Panthers as you did, indicates you know little of their work in the black communities. Moreover, it demonstrates an inability to generalize, from the fact that the slanderous journalistic techniques of the establishment media are not focused on one, but on all oppressed groups with a radical voice (homosexual, black, brown, women, students). It may interest you to know that we have found individual Black Panthers to embrace us and our cause after we worked, demonstrated & picketed with them. And it is, in just this way, through working together with others on common causes that we can bring our cause to a realization of the wider support it must have to be successful.

We have been deeply committed to the struggle for liberation of the homosexual male and female in America within the context of the liberation of all oppressed people... Collectively we have come to the consciousness that only a social change that involves the liberation of all, can also guarantee our own freedom. Of course in this fight, we try not to overlook the many mistakes made both at home and abroad in the American homophile movement and in the American homophile movement. But this does not invalidate the movement. Change must come but it will not come of itself; it will come only if we work an work all of us together for the change.

Ellen DeGuz
Bernard Lewis
Alan Wachowsky

You Can Go HOME Again.

by Martha Shelley

Shortly after I joined GLF, I found myself plagued by what I called irrational impulses. Mainly, I kept having an urge to tell my parents about my homosexuality. But every time this urge came to the surface, I said to myself, "Oh, come on, you're going through changes — intense anxiety reorganization of your life-style." And I would call up a friend and get my friend to persuade me not to call my parents (sort of like Alcoholics Anonymous).

Why hadn't I told them previously, even though my friends and employer knew? Some background will explain — I left home seven years ago, and have had almost no contact with my parents since. My father is a career employee for the Defense Department. My mother is almost a prototypical Jewish Mother. As a result, my adolescence was a continuous hassle — my need for independence VS my parents' desire to control me, to marry me off to a Nice Jewish Boy (a doctor) and deliver me, virginal and tied in pink ribbons, to Scarborough.

The day I left home was the occasion of a fight, one which represented the climax in this struggle. My mother had found my diaphragm. I saw no need to enlighten her as to my other activities and impulses. . . . At any rate, I was convinced that communication between me and my parents was impossible and convinced that my impulse to call them could only mean one of two things:

- 1) I still bickered after their approval.
- 2) I wanted to start a fight with them, to hurt them and to make myself miserable and depressed.

About a month ago, I received a letter from my kkk sister, telling me she was going to be married. She also chastised me for avoiding my family, and asked me if I were staying away because I was ashamed of my homosexuality (I did tell her and my kid brother), I was annoyed at this accusation, and phoned home to defend myself to her — and also, come to think of it, to find out who she was marrying.

My father answered. After some casual conversation, I surrendered to the impulse:

"Dad, I have something to tell you."
 "You're not in trouble, are you?"
 "No, it's something personal."
 "Well, it can't be anything that new to us. We are your parents."

"Dad, I'm a homosexual." I was expecting shock, silence, and anything but what followed:

"Well, yeah, Martha, we know about that."
 It was my turn to be shocked and silent. Yes, they knew. It seemed that I had left some gay novels around the house — and some of my drawings were more obvious than I was aware of. That my father had paid any attention to the contents of my drawings was also a surprise. And all he wanted to know was if he or my mother were responsible for my homosexuality. And I said no.

"It's just an aptitude, Dad. Like an aptitude for math. . . or music. . . or poetry." How could I tell him, yes, you *hate* me a homosexual and I love it. Thank

you very much!

So, after seven years, the prodigal daughter accepted an invitation to come home for dinner. It wasn't the most comfortable evening in the world — but it wasn't a hassle, either. My parents are still unhappy that I'm not trying to claw my way up into the Establishment. On the other hand, they didn't try to impose their ideas on me. . . nor did I feel it necessary to challenge every word out of their mouths.

Mom has become an adamant supporter of the National Minimum Income. As she put it, "Everyone has a right to eat!" Dad is burned up about the war in Vietnam. After 25 years with the Dept. of Defense, he has decided that if my kid brother gets drafted, he will send the boy to Canada and support him there until he gets a job.

I called an old friend of mine, a guy named Bill, who had helped me in the process of leaving home and getting my head clear of the hang-ups my family had imposed on me. "I guess even people over 30 can change," he said.

Last week, I saw them again. Dad was reading the *Time* article on homosexuality. He showed it to me and said, "This is the first time I realized that homosexuals are an oppressed minority — that people have been telling lies about you."

"Yeah, Dad. Like we eat Christian children for Passover."



GIANNI'S



One Friday night in January, two women were dancing in Gianni's, a lesbian bar, when three of four straight men followed one of the women into the ladies' room and grabbed her. Her girlfriend asked them to leave her alone; whereupon one of the men turned and knocked her out. No one in the bar did anything about it, immediately afterwards, the four men left.

Mark, a GLF woman, charged down the street with nine or ten other women. They ran a block, thought better of it, and stopped — but Mark was out front and, at the end of the second block, found herself facing the men alone. She veiled to the other women for help, but they turned around and went back into the bar.

She covered her face as they knocked her down and kicked her all over her body. They left her lying in the street. She packed herself up and went over to a taxi, but the driver rolled up his window and drove off. And the four men came back and beat her up some more.

At the next Sunday meeting, we talked about what we thought was the worst aspect of that night. Was it the fact that there was no protection for people at the bar, or that the women didn't throw the men out in the first place, or that the guys left their sister in the street?

Well, we decided that we couldn't do much about the straight who were there that Friday, because we didn't know who they were. But we did decide that whether or not the sisters were ready to defend themselves, they had the right to be safe whenever they were, and this includes in Mafia bars. And so, though several people thought it was irrelevant to confront Gianni's, a large group of GLFers thought it would be a significant act. Forty of us went over there, walked in the door, threw

our coats on the table, refused to buy drinks and began to dance. When one of the three bouncers came to the back room and told us to behave like good ladies and gentlemen, we ignored him. In fact, we ignored him so well that I wasn't even aware that he was there.

Martha Shelley stride up to the owner and said, "We're the Gay Liberation Army and we don't like the way things are going here." And she presented our list of complaints: lack of protection, drinks shoved at the customers, and the general attitude of "you'll take what you get and like it, 'cause this is the only place to go."

Now Gianni's is divided into two parts. The back is a dance floor and the front is a bar. We were all dancing in the back, except for Lois Hart, who was talking to the women at the bar about GLF and alternatives to the Mafia bars. She happened to look out the door and saw that the bouncers had looked out twelve or so of our sisters and brothers.

She came to us and said "Should we open the door?" Of course, we decided we had to do just that!

We stormed up front and opened the door, but one of the bouncers stood in the opening and said, "Nobody else in here." We pulled him away from the door. When he placed his fist next to my face, I was surprised to find myself putting my hand over his fist and moving it to the other side of his head like it was on a well-oiled hinge. We took the other two guards and put them against the wall. And our people came in.

We danced in groups of ten to fifteen holding hands and singing for another thirty minutes, and we turned some of the women on. Afterwards, we did a snake dance out of the place, chanting, "Join us. Join us, join

us." Several women did.

Now here's what I think is the saddest thing that happened. Mark went back to Gianni's the next night, afraid they would kick her out. To me this shows how, even when we are kicked in the face, we still go back to our oppressor because it's — THE ONLY PLACE.

Pat, another GLFer, who was with Mark, went to the owner and said that she understood they were going to keep straight men out. She let them know that we were watching to make sure that they did. And we will be.

That Friday, COME OUT interviewed the owner. He offered us free drinks. I guess this was an attempt to buy us off. We didn't sell out, but we took the free drinks nonetheless. According to the owner, before 5:00 o'clock Gianni's is a straight bar for business men in the district. After eight they try to discourage straights by raising the prices. So now we know why the prices are gay, huh? (They are the same in all Mafia bars — higher than straight bars.) But anyway, we promised Gianni's that if they lower the prices we'll patrol the area to make sure no straights stay healthy enough to bother the guys.

This was one of the first truly GAY militant actions we've done. There are many different stories that can be written on this occurrence, such as: What is the connection between the Mafia and gay people? Or, why didn't the girls come to the aid of their sister in the street?

See what's going on around you. See that the oppressor has gotten into our heads as well as put guns at the door.

Joan Smith

Kathy Hearn

HOWARD DEUTSCH

When I was 23 I got a job at the Hudson Guild Settlement House in Chelsea, doing part-time group work with children. I met Howard Deutsch who was Jewish, adorable, he also knew Murray Kramer, and also completely out of his mind like me. Needless to say (so why am I saying it?) we became friends. I lived in a room the size of Rock the Jock's armpit, on 75th and Riverside. Inward took me home, wanted to kiss me goodnight.

No says I, Ok.

Meanwhile I think he's gay and meanwhile I think I'm gay. So finally we find out about each other. Then we spend months being friends, philosophy right?, sex right?, jobs right — he says I should be a bartender, a rabbi. He says he goes to tearooms. He says Cubans are the most joyous in love. He tells me how I remind him of I-forget-her-name, oh that's right Joanna, a girl he married.

He tells me how he used to get in rages and go after Joanna with knives. He told me how in his new apartment in Wash. Heights he was afraid of the big tough

guys in the street beating him up. He had a very strong muscular body but he was afraid to fight. Anyway, he had been in school for social work but had left during the time of rages and knives stuff but after having worked a while he was trying to get into some graduate school of social work. He wanted to be in social work because he wanted to help people.

He got into either Hunter or NYC, I forgot, but after he had been in a while, loving it, had got picked up in a tearoom.

Oh no, that's not it. He had been arrested before he got into school and led on the application where it says have you ever been arrested. So after he had been in school awhile the application caught up with him and they called him into a meeting. After all the bullshit, what it came down to was that he had to go. FLICK YOU screamed Howard Deutsch.

But he still had to leave.

A while later he had a date to come over my house and he never showed up. Steve called and said do you know where Howard is, he was supposed to be here last night. No says I etc. Howard located. Howard to the looney

bin.

After he comes out, Howard on phone to me, laughing. Do you still want to kill yourself I say. Laughing he says I don't know, probably. Well Howard I said, that makes me very unhappy. But even talking to you about it makes me unhappy. You know the death thing with my family and everyone dying. Well I've had enough with death and I'd rather you didn't call me while you still feel that way.

OK he said and because Howard and I had a true relationship and because we understood the other, it was no more than that.

OK.

A year later I got a call from a girl I had slept with who had been introduced to me by Howard. I wasn't home, but she left a message. Howard's dead. Did the thing. She never called back to speak to me, just left the message. Dead. Howard. Loss. Love. Mother. Loss. Love. Father. Loss. Love. No more Death for me. Later, Howard, Later. Part of my thing now is that I want to make tearoom sex legal.

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