

come out!

25c

a liberation forum for the gay community



Photo by Dave Healey

Winter 1972 Vol 2 issue 8

Dear Steve Gavin and Come Out!

It was very disappointing to see the box entitled "Is Socialism the Answer?" displayed in such a prominent position without a specific rebuttal nearby. Hopefully this letter could serve that purpose successfully.

It seems utopian, in the negative sense, to see a system as either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory replacement. A system reflects the struggle that has taken place to put it into effect. If there is no anti-sexist component to a socialist revolution, obviously the result will reflect that lack. We know by now, I hope, that the "counter-culture" is not striking capitalism, let alone sexism, and that it is fruitless to expect an evolution in consciousness arising simply from propaganda. What is needed is some theory of sexism that can produce a program of action. It seems to me that there has been an over-emphasis on consciousness raising and alienation, and an indifference to gay politics. With no political theory of sexism as it pertains to women and gay people, how can there be a political response that can collectively embrace the left? It is not adequate, it should be obvious by now, to demand sympathy or moral reforms from anyone, including the sexist male left. If there is oppression, then there is a source for a

political movement, in which case the left would be confronted with a real choice, and a real imperative. Consciousness is not a movement in itself.

Russia, China, and Cuba have been consistent in their treatment of homosexuals, but they are not necessarily examples of the limits of socialism. All three of these states were formed from peasant revolutions. I am sure that the results of a revolution in an industrialized country which has enjoyed a long tradition of bourgeois freedom would be different, open to new possibilities. I am also sure that if feminist and gay issues are not pragmatically raised, then the results of a revolution here will be a dismal repetition. That makes the role of women and gay people quite important.

In behalf of the sexist male left then, I would urge you to politicize yourselves and then go to work on us. There is nothing sexist about dialectical materialism, only sexist applications. You must help us try to fill in the blanks. Moral-emotional protestations are not nearly enough—we've all been saturated with these, and we only tend to heed those which are accompanied by some practical solution. The weight of history is, I believe, bearing against that which supports capitalism. We haven't much of a choice: socialism will be the answer, whether we like it or not. The job is to make it the answer for everyone in the fullest, most spiritually satisfying way, and not be stopped short at the success of simply saving everyone sad and clothed.

Although this is no small battle either. Black communists see racism as bad for everyone, and are actively involved in trying to win over white mass workers. They know that without whites they cannot win, that nobody wins. Similarly women will not be overcome unless the victimized actively participate in the struggle, on the basis of political principles as well as moral empathy. Your "enemies" will indeed try to destroy you, until you show them why they are actually your friends, and if friendship is based on a world-vision that overbalds simple personal likes and dislikes, then it can last as something permanent and powerful, even revolutionary.

Sincerely,
Max Newark
40 You Can Eat
30 Railroad Plaza room 215
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

Dear Brothers, Sisters,
I was receiving your paper a brother was sending it to me, until they stopped allowing them to enter (they can't stand the truth).
I'm grateful for your paper because it is the only way a brother or sister can get the truth. So for this reason I would like for you to place my name in your personal column. I would like to correspond with sisters who are in the "front".
I'm twenty-six black, from Pittsburgh, Penna. I received one and a half in three years for driving under a suspended license. I have seven months in. I would appreciate it very much if you would do this for me.

Yours in the struggle,
Donald
Donald Pleban, no. 47882
Drawer R,
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652

losed it, plus and a statement, aware of the opinion of the author only and do not reflect the feelings of the entire collective.

OUR LETTERS

Pepper and Power, Editor's

As you may know I am at present incarcerated and I can truthfully state they have placed me there solely for political reasons.

My reasons for writing this is in hope to gather information of this, your nation of oppression, for I am aware that the struggle society is hard on your way of life and through reading various articles which were biased, I am somewhat at loss as to just what is needed and how to achieve your desired goals. The reason for my concern is I am Black and I can readily understand your situation I am in all areas seeking to understand and in myself maybe find a way to assist all people to freedom no matter what their race or any other barrier for I am for all oppressed people within this imperialistic, fascist, racist form of government ruling and exploiting the masses of the people.

I doubt very seriously if I would be able to receive your paper at this point could you please print this and express my sincere wishes of delving in the "Gay Revolution" and want someone who is gay, be a brother or a sister, to write, it would be appreciated, I wish to exchange political ideals and in truth maybe obtain a friend who is wholly understanding.

I must close for now in hope that this will be printed. Yours in the Struggle, Dave Bridell H-8161
Newark State Correctional Institution
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652

Dear Sisters:
I am enclosing 15 cents for your list of international gay organizations. To bother you with a little info about me—I am a gay guy (fig), 15 years old, and live in Fairhaven, New Jersey, which belongs to Red Bank and Asbury Park—I hope you know where I mean! Anyway, my troubles on the street and complete isolation and alienation I have, out here because it's far from N.Y.C. and hence few gay people live here. Those few that I know are over 25. So please tell if you know of any gay consciousness-raising, coffeehouses, etc. organizations around this area, or in Monmouth County N.J. We have a few mixed straight and gay bars around here, but I can't dig that because of its uninviting, unfriendly atmosphere and there is no one there who I can talk to or can help me, especially since it's over 21 set. I have contacted GAY YOUTH in N.Y.C., but that isn't much help either because it is hard to get up there since I am too young to drive. I had these phone numbers, but it got disconnected. So, if you can give me the address to Gay Youth I would appreciate it too. Thanks, Sisters

Love, Love, Love, Love with Gay Love (Mother Nature's Son) Fair Haven, N.J. P.S. Was really surprised to see your paper made it all the way down to the peace center here—heard so much about it Dig it (the paper)

Note: Name withheld because of age by Come Out! collective.

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Sisters and Brothers of Come Out!
As I was reading the last issue of Come Out! (vol. 2-7B), I found an article, the series of questions about Angela Davis, that disturbed me very much. Since the article was not signed, I assume that the editors of the paper take responsibility for it, and so it's you that I'm writing.

First, I must say that the questions asked about the Communist Party are very real questions—ones that I've never heard them answer. What I didn't like was that the article did not criticize openly where there was every reason to. To ask questions seemed almost a "bourgeois" way to make a point when almost all that was said about the CP could and should be aired in public, so that people can understand what it really goes on. Also, I felt that some of the questions put forward were not done in a way that was meant to be constructive. For example, asking whether the CP is so infiltrated with pigs that Washington is not making policy for them. Every revolutionary organization is infiltrated by pigs right now, and the CP is hardly an exception, but this doesn't mean that they control every organization. If we criticize our friends as if they were enemies, that's almost like driving them into the camp of our enemies. There are many good people in the CP and we should criticize in a way that can help those people change when they are wrong.

There were also some real questions about the Angela Davis case in this article, which maybe I can help answer. First, Angela bought the guns a full year before the shootout because her life was being threatened. Jonathan Jackson was her bodyguard and she bought the guns for him. Another question was about why the CP is defending her. Yes, it is on the grounds that she would never knowingly become involved in a courtroom shootout; simply that she is innocent of those specific charges. Another question was about Ralph Peincenter. He is a personal friend of Angela's, and comes from a wealthy Chicago family ... which explains why he was baited out so quickly, criticism for publishing them. I can't believe the questions were really asked in good faith—in order to get more information about the case. To ask if Angela is an intelligent revolutionary for being confused by the CP is a pretty good shape. Never before in the history of this monster have they gazed upon the country for someone as they have Angela. To ask why she was caught in a white section of town can only be destructive; we can only assume that she was doing everything she could to stay out of the pigs' clutches. If she made any mistakes in that area, I'm sure she now realizes them only too well. What she needs now is not real support (given in a way that cannot be used as opportunists), but that we should attack her escape plans or speculators if she had done this or that....

The other questions about why she joined the Communist Party, about what happened in Florida, or about breaking Party discipline only she can answer, and to she should be asked. And I definitely think that it is high time that feminists and all revolutionaries get themselves a political education about the history and methods (and failings) of left-wing groups.

sent with love
Jim Jones

Though I'm not the author of the Angela Davis article, I feel a response is necessary since, I believe, the writer of the above letter has not understood the article. The questions put forth by the writer in question transcend Angela Davis. The idea is not Angela Davis is a traitor, let's stab her in the back. Rather it is: An intelligent revolutionary does not automatically jump on bandwagons, especially bandwagons created by groups who endorse the genocide of gay people. At this late date the partial explanations given by this writer were only to underscore the idea put forth in the article.

As for there being many good people in the Communist Party, I think ...I've already answered that statement.

Steve Gavin

this issue brought to you by:
Perry
Ellen
Steve
Roy
Steve
Debb
Warren
L. IN
Martha
Brass
Bedoz
Brooks
Eddy
Gavin
Moldovan
Singer
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WE ARE EVERYWHERE! NOWHERE ARE WE FREE!
BUILD THE EFFEMINIST REVOLUTION!

We have written our struggle for sexual self-determination at New College in the face of a rising tide of anti-homosexual bigotry. At the moment the threat of expulsion is in the air, and worse: brothers in the community have been jailed in a stepped-up campaign of police harassment. We are receiving hate mail and death threats. An ugly mood hangs over the campus.

Flaming Faggots Come Out at New College

Our commitment to fight back is, of course, unquenchable, regardless of the consequences. But our numbers and resources are not as great as we would like, and our hope is that in calling widespread attention to our plight, outside support will be forthcoming — and indeed, this has already begun to happen, in letters of support to us and in letters of protest to: John Elmendorf, President; New College; Sarasota, Florida 33578.

New College is a hoopla pseudo-experimental Hollywood haven designed to apathize students with repressive tolerance as though it were the liberation they really hungered for instead. Calling itself "the Harvard of the South," it is rather a fake Goddard or Antioch. It offers no sweat-pat-streking, narcissistic encounter games, and sexual liberty for straight (mostly counter-cultural) men: they beat up queers and call orientation "Rape Week." The college seeks out the highly intelligent and the highly rebellious — those they regard as most potentially dangerous to the status quo. The cooling out process is remarkably effective. Also, standing on the edge of a black ghetto, the college is unbelievably racist; instead of a significant number of scholarships to the black community, free gundrops are offered to ghetto children on Halloween.

DeMott is an establishment man who opposed a black studies program at Amherst. He denigrated women and Women's Liberation in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Now, seeking to be tenured Provost of New College, he used vicious terms to refer to us homosexuals and ridiculed our notion that we had a history of oppression and accomplishment worthy of study. Our anger exploded in spontaneous confrontation, but joining together, we draw up demands addressed not only to this question but others that had been disturbing us for a long time.

Monday, November 1, 1971, we presented our demands to President Elmendorf, after he tried to divert us and then sneak out a side door. That night, at an emergency "town-hall" meeting, Elmendorf called our demands a threat to the existence of the college, thus creating a kangaroo court atmosphere among student students.

Tuesday, November 2, without adequate notice, Elmendorf summoned us to a secret meeting, during which he promised nothing but succeeded in intimidating us, particularly about the dangers of pressing our case further — whether in releases to the college community, the media, or the national Gay Liberation movement.

Wednesday, November 3, we walked into a faculty meeting, uninvited, demanded to be heard, asked gay faculty to come forward, and chanted the names of homosexuals whose life and times merited attention as part of an effeminate studies program, contrary to DeMott's mockery.

Monday, November 8, after growing low and struggle within our group, we issued a criticism of our male supremacy and liberalism, *Smash Hetero-Sexism*, building toward the trustees' meeting on Thursday.

Wednesday, November 10, a notice of the homosexual jailings appeared in the two Sarasota newspapers owned by a New College trustee. We took this as a direct warning concerning the next day's actions. We issued *Therapeutic Games*, our harshest indictment of the college so far — in the

context of the increasing ugliness of mood on campus. We moved, now, only in tactical groupings; we did not feel safe except when we were working, eating, and sleeping together.

Proud Thursday, November 11, we went in a body to the trustees' meeting, hoping to state our total resistance to further persecution. When we reached the estate where they were meeting, we found iron gates closed and locked against us, so we struck out around the estate, climbed the sea-wall at the rear, and made our way into the meeting, where we presented the *Trustees Statement and Press Release*.

Next, we attended a lecture DeMott was giving (on morality, yet). We taped up, on the wall behind him, the names of homosexual heroes and martyrs; we challenged his lecture for its sexist terminology. After much hub-bub, we also announced the nationwide campaign by gay groups to confront him wherever he lectures. This campaign was suggested by a number of groups in the nation who were in touch with us by phone, telegram, and letter. We hope the campaign will spread and become total.

Next, we held a press conference, explaining our actions during the day. When we left the campus that night, talk of legal action, expulsion, and the closing of the college was already rife.

Since then, we are still here, loving and working together. We obviously don't care about their B.A. If it means selling out our very right to exist proudly and openly as revolutionary effeminists. Whatever it falls now, this college will never be the same. And perhaps we have created a model for struggle at other colleges and institutions.

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SMASH HETERO-SEXISM
by the Ad Hoc Gay Men's Committee

ON MALE SUPREMACY: No man, straight or gay, can feel free from struggling with his male supremacy. It is an undeniable fact that anyone with male genitals in our society has been given special power and privileges which pervade every aspect of being. In the spirit of struggle, we gay men criticize our own male supremacy as it appeared in the following instances during recent actions:

First, during the presentation of our demands, President Elmendorf said, in reference to our desire to talk to him, "That's refreshing," a remark intended as a slur on the South Hall 22 — the women who were occupying his office to press their own

demands. This attempt to set two oppressed groups against each other, in competition for his approval, was male supremacist of him. Our male supremacy was evident, however, in that we let this slur go unanswered. On another occasion, he used the term "gals" in speaking to us — which we failed to confront each time he used it.

Second, in the demands themselves, we incorrectly included the oppression of lesbians along with our own. Although in some instances we purported to speak only for ourselves, in others we actually expressed demands on their behalf in true male fashion. Throughout history, men have assumed the right to speak for women; it is imperative that we put an end to his oppressive practice. This is also in our own self-interest, since the hetero-sexist, masculinist mentality is the source of our own oppression and is thus our enemy, even when it crops up within ourselves.

ON LIBERALISM: In the struggle for liberation, it is necessary to distinguish between liberalism and radicalism. Liberalism has always been the ideology of the hetero-sexist oppressor, attempting to keep oppressed groups appeased with token concessions, all the while wearing a false mask of benevolence. It is now necessary for us to fight liberalism as it appears in our thinking.

First, after stating our grievances clearly as demands, we allowed ourselves to appear to be willing to compromise them through closer negotiations. What is worse, the night preceding these negotiations, John Elmendorf, before the entire college community, spoke about the impossibility of considering our demands, much less meeting them, describing them in no uncertain terms as being the final blow to the existence of the college. In spite of his remarks, the remnants of our liberalism still allowed us to be manipulated into pointless negotiations.

Second, ON Tuesday morning, during the closest negotiations themselves, Elmendorf made it clear that token concessions might well be forthcoming, provided that no mention be made to the press concerning his written response to our demands. Moreover, Elmendorf intimated that even allowing the college community to become aware of his response would not be advisable because of the possibility of its reaching the press through this more indirect route. As a result, no one but us knows of the contradictions between his public and private utterances. We see now that no oppressed group can agree to stifle the very mention of their own oppression, since calling attention to their plight is a necessary first step to its remedy. Consequently, any implication of abiding by the rules of the oppressor, as epitomized by Elmendorf, is hereby rejected for the liberal sham it is.

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