

GAY Prison Liberation



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in solitary confinement for five or ten days, more or less, and then upon release he is told that he cannot associate with his love-mate under threat of more solitary confinement. This is not all. When he appears before the parole board, he is very likely to get a "flop" which means another year to do because of what he has done. **WHAT HAS HE DONE???** Is love such an atrocity that he must pay with his emotional and/or mental health - pay by being forced to do another year under such nightmarish conditions?

Concerning transsexuals within this prison, I present my own case as evidence of the totally unrealistic view taken by the administration and the parole board concerning transsexuality and sex conversion operations. To those of you who are unfamiliar with the term "transsexual", it means this. Transsexualism is a very real and a very deeply rooted problem of gender identification with the opposite sex, beginning in the very early years of childhood. Thus this identification with the opposite sex in regard to habits, reactions, actions, mannerisms, plus the desire to be a member of the opposite sex physically, is deeply implanted, psychologically and emotionally within the transsexual. All other forms of treatment psychiatric, psychological, and medical having failed or proved When I came to prison in December of 1968 with a life sentence, I asked the classification committee to let me live in a multiple cell with call mates, to let me live in the general convict population. This request was denied and I was and am yet forced to live in a one man cell. Later, seeking to help myself I saw the prison psychiatrist telling him of my problem of transsexuality and asked for his recommendation that the much needed sex change operation be done since this is the only form of rehabilitation left for me. But even though the prison psychiatrist did write a five page report recommending that this corrective surgery be done, and even though I stated that the state would not

have to pay for this a operation since a sex change fund is kept in trust for me by my attorney and which now contains over five thousand dollars, the recommendation was met with a resounding "no" from the prison administration.

When I appeared before the parole board in December of 1969, I was told by a member of this parole board to "forget the operation and become a man" and that they could keep me the rest of my life. I have been a transsexual for thirty years that I am aware of and I cannot "become a man".

When I appeared before the parole board in December of 1970, I was given a "no action" or time cut for "failure to adjust to prison conditions and regulations" (not "becoming a man").

I was told in 1970 also that I was to have all of my privileges taken away. They were. I told the parole board members that I had all of my privileges revoked for the last fourteen months and was being punished for being what I am, that the prison administration went out of its way to point up my difference and then punished me for being different. The parole member agreed. This was indeed true when he said "well, you are different, aren't you?"

In february of 1971 I received a letter from the doctor who is to perform the operation. This doctor stated: "we have tried to stack the cards in favor of a good outcome by selecting reasonably stable candidates who have demonstrated their ability to adjust socially and economically by living for a period of at least six month or a year in the new sex role. Unless a male can pass successfully as a woman and can demonstrate successful social and work adaptation, we feel it is hazardous to proceed and have uniformly discouraged surgery."

I am sure that the reader is aware of the impasse

Homosexual Bias Bill is Defeated in Albany

The assembly defeated a measure yesterday that would have banned discrimination against homosexuals in housing and employment. The vote was 84-60.

The measure was sponsored by Assemblyman (sic) William Passante, a Democrat representing Greenwich Village.

Assemblyman Manuel Ramos (D, Bronx) opposing the bill called homosexuals "scum and filth (sic)" and said he would "never hide my discrimination against homosexuals." Assemblyman Joseph Lisa (D, Queens), voted for the bill and asserted that those who opposed it were "doing do to secure [their] heterosexual identity."

face, gay is not that; neither is it those qualities of self-depreciation

which SS Men attribute to women as 'bitchy'.

Joy is facing the inner self and then liberating it. It can manifest itself in screaming and tears, not just laughter. Joy is realizing 'I am gay. All of me past clothes, years, all of the sterile shit that this society imposes upon me, past all of this I am gay. And I will be myself and love myself and love my sisters and brothers because this is liberation and liberation is Gay'.

When a homosexual can liberate this energy of joy and be liberated by it, I believe that person is Gay and being Gay has nothing to do with sterility. It has nothing to do with the homosexuality of the Death Culture which worships the beauty of young soldiers in splendid uniforms lined up, ready to die, of people afraid to know the whole name of the person in their bed, of our whole cult of hidden bars and dark allies called Gay(?) Life(?).

I have spoken with several sisters about the recognition and spread of Lesbianism in the Women's Liberation Movement. I thought how fabulous this would be if that happened to the straight male part of the movement. I discussed it with the sisters. Wow, imagine what that would be like- not having to be afraid among people you shouldn't have to be afraid of, your

that has presented itself. In order for me to live for a period of six month or a year passing as a woman, socially and exonomically so that I may qualify for surgery, I must first be released on parole. The parole board will not think of releasing me until I forget about the operation and "become a man"???

What is to be done for the homosexuals and the transsexuals, the forgotten ones in prison? We have been recognized as a "class" of people in a class action against this institution, this action being included in a regular class action for all the inmates and made a part thereof. This class action is now before the courts.

During a recent conference, we decided to start a chapter of the Gay Liberation Front within this institution. This organization to be formed is an attempt to help ourselves and protect ourselves. There is a fund held in trust by the legal firm who is to handle all legal action, ^{class} or personal cases. This fund is an "open" fund. All monies in the fund is to be used for legal and medical aid for the homosexuals and transsexuals who do not have the means or the way to help themselves.

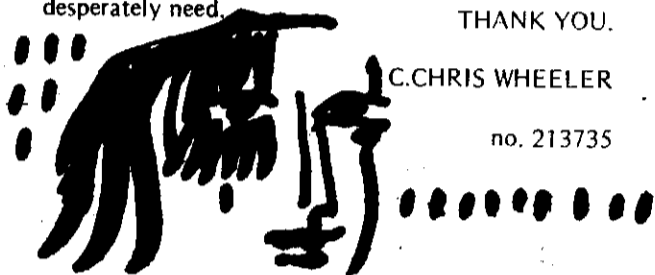
Hopefully in the near future all homosexuals will receive equality. All homosexuals will be recognized as human beings with very human needs. Hopefully, in the near future all homosexuals will have a chance at rehabilitation suited to their needs.

Hopefully in the near future, the transsexuals will receive the medical and psychological help they so desperately need.

THANK YOU.

C. CHRIS WHEELER

no. 213735



IN A WORLD OF DARKNESS

Do you know what it is to live in a World of Darkness?

Where people put you down for being what you are.

Day or night it is always darkness for us of the Life.

Do you know what it is to live in a world of darkness?

I wish you knew.

When we walk down the street

In this world of darkness where people always talk about us and call us names.

People are supposed to be free,

Where??? To be what God has sent her or him to be?

This is not freedom, I ask you. Is it?

Do you know what it is to live in a world of darkness? I ask you.

No, you don't, do you? Well it's miserable.

It's nothing but coldness from the day we are born to the day we die.

No, you don't, you don't understand us of the gay Life or you would't put us down the way you do.

Do you know what it is to live in a world of darkness forever. No you don't, do you? If you only knew the feeling to be cast away in darkness.

Sylvia Lee Messne.

so-called straight brothers. No more sexist Woodstocks. Liberation in the Sheeps Meadow everyday, not just once a year in June. But it just isn't there, it isn't about to happen because Men, sons of the old SS society, just can't face it. They still say they're "afraid of nothing", because homosexual men to them are still nothing and they are still scared to death because we still represent the sterility of their own life that they can't face.

The time of the children of women and men will come. The time when creativity will no longer be sold in department stores with price tags on it and is judged as something outside the "normal" range of human feelings and thus something in the special province of homosexuals. Creativity is now sold and packaged as a commodity (look at those department stores of art called galleries or museums run by the rape-artists of art called curators). When creativity does bring a price-tag it is called immaturity. But a time will come when the children of women who are not just the possessions of SS Men will be unafraid to look at the sterility of their own life. And we, homosexuals aspiring to be Gay people will have no more need of the justifications that we now call 'creativity'.

sterility and homosexuality.

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Fucking has lost most of it's connection with 'intercourse' which does denote a very beautiful communication between people. But 'intercourse' is something that people do in marriage manuals that deal in partners like "the Man and his wife" and fucking is something that people do out 'on the streets'. Also fucking is something that homosexual men do, which deals with partners called 'fucker' and 'fuckee'. If fucking could be something that gay men do and was a 'gay' (therefore liberated) thing, not just an activity but a thing to be shared, then there would be no recreating of those old SS Man and wife roles and fucking would be very beautiful and planned together.

Where there is fear, there has got to be not much else. Laing says that the turning point in life is to go from 'being afraid of nothing' which does not look at the realities of ugliness and violence, to saying 'there is nothing to be afraid of', in which case all of the violence and ugliness has been faced and dealt with. In our life it is very hard to face the realities of being homosexual. It is very, very heavy to face the omnipresent sterility of the Death Culture which wants to off homosexuals because we are such a threat to the sterility of this Death-Role-Culture. Straight society obviously doesn't want us around because we are what they are most afraid of: the reality of their own sterility which they protect by doing sexist violence to anyone manifesting real joy. Being gay is releasing real joy. Not just the old capitalist shit of the painted-On Miss America

WASHINGTON
APRIL 24

power... and the people!

martha shelley

Scene I: Power Sometimes an ego trip, or power trip, brings unexpected blessings. Following my ego taught me a lot this week. It began in New York, about a week before the April 24th Peace March, when a pacifist friend of mine asked if I would speak for the Gay Liberation Movement in Washington. Since I am not currently a member of any organization, I wondered how I could properly represent the Gay Movement. My friend replied that I was being asked as an articulate woman who had been in GLF and Radicalesbians, and not as a representative of a particular faction. With my characteristic lack of modesty, I accepted. She then told me some fellow named Brian Yaffe and confirm the acceptance. I called Brian. He promptly gave me a quiz on my Movement credentials -- it was unexpected, but I complied, figuring that he was going to use the information for an introduction. He then told me he would have to check with Fred Halstead (who the hell is Halstead?), and would call me back, but that everything was fine. He never called back. Two days later, and several telephone calls, I tracked him down in Washington. I wanted to find out if I was indeed going to speak, so I could make adequate preparations, rather than just spouting off the top of my head to half a million people. Anyway, I was finally told that I would not be



speaking; The National Peace Action Committee (NPAC) already had too many speakers and too little time. After hanging up, I felt hurt, but assumed that my hurt feelings were entirely the product of my own egotism. Then it dawned on me that standard procedure is to ask someone if she would like to speak. If she accepts, you've got a speaker; if not, you look for someone else. These people had asked me to speak, then given me a rather complicated run-around. In the end, I began to feel like I had been begging them for the right to speak, when all I really wanted to do was go hide around Lake George and read poetry that weekend. Now the way to figure out if you've been fucked over by the Left is to ask yourself, "Would they do that to Kate Millett? Huey Newton? Abby Hoffman? Angela Davis?" If you get treatment that no one would dare mete out to the superstars, you are being treated with less than the dignity due you as a human being. And it doesn't matter whether you are a speaker or a typesetter, whether you are sweeping floors or designing posters. After this incident, I decided to investigate to find out who I should blame for damage to my ego. The New York Times said that the Socialist Worker's Party was running NPAC, and friends of mine who were working with NPAC agreed. Furthermore, they said that NPAC chose these speakers to represent each contingent. Two months ago, the Socialist Worker's Party wouldn't let gay people into their precious organization. Now they are the ones who decide which people shall represent the Gay Movement. They chose Frank Kameny of Mattachine Society of Washington and Tina Mandel, of New York Daughters of Bilitis. Frank and Tina are friends of mine, and I have debts of friendship to them. But how can they represent the Gay Movement at a Peace March? For years, Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis have consistently refused to take a stand -- even a wishy-washy liberal stand -- against the war. While GLF and Radicalesbians were fighting to get recognition as human beings from the self-appointed "liberators of oppressed peoples" on the Left, while we sent contingents to every Peace March and got spat upon for doing so, Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis stayed home. What makes the whole thing even more ludicrous is that Frank and Tina were practically pushed off the speaker's platform by "labor leaders" who didn't want gay people speaking at their pretty rally. And where were the labor leaders when George Meany was championing the at the AFL-CIO convention in Miami? Now they, too, have the right to decide who shall speak for peace. And when they finally got a chance to speak, it was already 5:00 P.M., and everyone was heading for the buses.

The SWP-run speakers' committee also considered Kip Dawson as a representative of the Gay Movement, but they were persuaded not to use her by the non-SWP members of the committee. Kip, a longtime Socialist-Worker's Party member and candidate for public office, has now revealed that she is a lesbian and is

accepting speaking engagements in which she will represent the Gay Movement. Just a few months ago, when we threw the Socialist Worker's Party out of the Women's Center, she vigorously defended the SWP policy of excluding gay people from the Party. I was there. So were fifty other women.

Kip has never been a part of the Gay Movement -- now the SWP has appointed her to be our spokeswoman. Because the Women's Liberation Movement and the Gay Liberation Movements are so disorganized, the old white heterosexual men who run the SWP think they can send in their minions and co-opt us into Trotskyism. Is Kip's lesbianism dependent on the pleasure of these little old men? And what about those other SWP gays who are now working so hard at taking over the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee and running our parade for us in June? Where did all these gay Trotskyites come from (I have just received reports that they are doing the same thing in Boston and in Phoenix), since the SWP supposedly had no gays in it two months ago? Who are these poor pathetic closet cases, so grateful now that they are accepted by the SWP and that the SWP has "changed"?

Don't call them gays, don't call them sisters -- the proper names for these people are male-oriented infiltrators, cowards, opportunists, traitors.

Scene II: ...and the People

I decided not to spend the day sulking, and went down to the March with three lesbian friends of mine. Nothing notable on the way down, except for a busload of Construction Workers for Peace. We stuck a big Women's Liberation symbol on our side window and got a few raised fists from sisters, as well as all the V-signs.

Arrived late. The Gay Liberation contingent had already passed, and we had to hustle to catch up with them on the right side of the Capitol. Apparently the Gay contingent made quite a stir -- everyone knew where they were, and pointed in the right direction. "Oh, yes, just behind Women's Liberation. They went that way." "It's a big purple and white banner." "Yeah, every once in a while they popped up and did their chants -- over there past the

United Farmworkers." And sure enough, we saw their banners right past the Aztec Eagle.

We sat down and passed the food and drink. One gay guy had some bread and grape juice, so someone said the Latin blessing and I did the same in Hebrew. The whole thing was one big open-air mass, with the sweet smell of grass replacing incense. We made the sign of our religion -- the V or the fist -- and sang the liturgy, "Blowing in the Wind." Meanwhile, the SDS tried to get people to repudiate the liberals running the march, and to organize a "worker-student alliance" and prepare for class war. Nobody paid attention to the SDS, and nobody paid attention to the speakers, either.

I begin to realize that if I had actually spoken at the March, I would have missed the significance of the event. The action had nothing to do with the words -- we hear the same thing at every march, and we all know the story. Genocide in Vietnam. Neglect of domestic needs. Genocide in the ghettos. Repression by the government.

The real story lies in the mass itself, an experience of community which was inconceivable in the 1950's. Somehow a lot of people have overcome their fears to the point where vastly different kinds of people were accepting each other on a minimal level -- but that minimum wasn't possible ten years ago or even five years ago. Nobody freaked out at Viet Cong flags or at the banners of the Communist Party. Nobody freaked at the Gay Liberation except the "leaders" of the march, who were light years behind the people. And the people knew something that no leader has been able to articulate.

Remember the grey flannel '50's? I remember them as a time when all of us in high school felt that we had no alternatives but to join the lock-step up the corporate ladder. The alternative to corporate liberalism was racist McCarthyism. Spiritual expression meant Billy Graham's commercialized death-of-the-spirit in Madison Square Garden, unless you were prepared to take off looking for a fix and cheap wine and bastardized Zen with the Beat poets. We could not conceive of a way out that did not lead to self-destruction, loss of jobs, loss of friends, even of life.

But the people are finding a way -- we have come out of the computerized plastic office, we are trying to build a community together instead of competing with each other for the approval of the corporate officers, we are trying to re-establish contact with the earth. We have returned to the earliest and most universal form of religious festival: the rites of spring.

Every culture has a spring festival. We have been the only society without one: Easter and Passover have become formalized, empty observances, without meaning. But now we have created our own festival, our annual April march against the war, and our harvest festival in October or November, our Moratorium. It may seem pathetically ineffective to the more militant, but the need for community, for communion with the earth, for a mystic experience, is far more powerful than any intellectual doctrine.

The gay movement has its own religious aspects, and I don't mean the re-upholstered Christianity you can find in the newly-created gay churches. Gay-ins in the park are our spring festivals. The circle dances are our communion. In fact, the circle dance is the most ancient form of dancing, cutting across barriers between individuals and families to unite the tribe.

More than doctrine, more than reason, more than the combined weight of all the propaganda put out by all the Movements in the country, it is the mystic experience of community and communal support which will give people the strength to break away from the old ties of the corporation jobs and the nuclear families. It is the experience of the circle dances that gives gay people the strength to fight against the contempt of the right, middle and left, to come out of our isolation and lose our jobs and our pseudofriends, to find our real selves. It is *las grandes sentimientos de amor* which can give us the courage to pick up the gun.

Photo by
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