



Photo by Steve Rose

GAYS RIOT AGAIN!

Once again, the police stepped up their pre-election harassment of Village homosexuals; and once again, we struck back.

For a couple of weeks, police brutality against homosexuals rose to a new high, with beatings and interrogations on the streets of the Village, and a 'clean-up' campaign in the Times Square area which meant over 300 arrests during one week. A young man who was looking at a window display on Times Square was asked by one of New York's Fascists, 'Were you ever arrested?' 'No,' replied the youth. 'There's always a first time,' said the pig, and without being told of any charges, the young man was carted away.

For the first time, women have been hassled by pigs on the streets for being gay—possibly due to the increasing militancy of the Women's Liberation Movement. And so a coalition was formed—Gay Liberation Front, Gay Activists Alliance, Radical Lesbians and various Women's Liberation groups.

Assembling on 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue on Saturday night, August 29th, the groups unfurled their banners and marched several times around 42nd Street, to the amazement of the tourist crowd. We women grouped together in the middle, and to the chants of 'Out of the closets, into the streets!' and 'Gay, gay power to the gay, gay people!', we added, 'Male chauvinist, you better start shakin'—today's pig is tomorrow's bacon!'

After a few turns around the block, the march headed down past the 14th precinct, where it was scheduled to disperse. Since the street was dark and nearly deserted—except for us and some angry pigs—we decided to continue to the Village in order to avoid a battle.

Luck was not with us. On the way down, some straight hoods hurled a couple of bottles at our march, and two of our brothers had to be taken to the hospital with profusely-bleeding scalp wounds. The pig car refused to stop for us, and we had to get there in taxis.

We passed the Women's House of Detention, which inspired the slogan, 'Free our sisters—free-

ourselves! The sisters yelled back at us from behind prison bars, 'Power!' When we reached Sheridan Square, the march began to disperse, and we split to go to a party; but suddenly the word filtered back to us: the pigs were raiding the Haven, a gay bar on Sheridan Square. Masses of people, marchers and cruisers, crowded up in front of the Haven. A sister whispered to me, 'There's going to be trouble.' Sure enough, the cops started swinging their nightsticks, and people began to run. Those who had kept their heads began to chant in rhythm, 'Walk...walk...walk...'

Word came from behind us that the Women in the House of Detention had begun to riot and to burn their mattresses. We took the crowd back to the House of D. Sure enough, flaming objects were descending from the windows. Some say it was wads of newspaper; some say the sisters had caught rats in their cells and set them afire. We chanted, and they chanted back at us.

The pigs brought on more reinforcements, and our crowd was swelled by Village residents and cruising gay people and local radicals. The pigs moved us off one corner—we took another corner, keeping up the chants. A huge police bus arrived, and a shower of bottles exploded into fragments in front of its headlights—diamonds scattered before swine. Heads were busted. The cops picked up one elderly black man—who knows why—and dragged him into a patrol car. His wife, crying, pleaded for his release. They took her along with him.

The cops pushed us off one corner, and we took another. We took Eighth Street, which had been closed off as a pedestrian mall. I saw some men jumping up on police sawhorses and making speeches, but the words were lost in the roar of the crowd. The battle continued for two or three hours. About a dozen people were arrested.

Some of us stood under the barred windows of the House of D., shouting slogans in English and Spanish, 'Power to the sisters,' we yelled, and they yelled back, 'Power to the gay people!' One lone voice came down, 'I want to be free!'

by martha shelley

After midnight, the pigs closed off the pedestrian mall, sweeping the area of people. The rest of us dispersed.

Later, one sister complained to me that as she stood in front of the Haven, some of the people to her rear began to throw bottles at the police, thus provoking a club-swinging melee. Several of the people on the march are of the opinion that agents provocateurs were among us—throwing bottles from the rear while the people up front got clubbed, encouraging acts of violence and vandalism for which others got blamed. In particular, a Volkswagen was overturned. Several GLF'ers have Volkswagens. A record store was looted. Some of our members are self-employed or work in small shops, like record shops and head shops.

There are lessons to be learned from this action. On demonstrations or otherwise, one should never take any action which injures the people, nor should one steal from the people. Agents provocateurs should be surrounded and expelled from the demonstration, just like any germ that enters the bloodstream of a healthy organism. They should be pointed out to other people. Hot-heads should be dissuaded from using a demonstration as an excuse to behave in a manner which injures our cause.

Obviously, pig provocation—as in the increasing number of arrests and beatings of gays, and in the raid on the Haven—must be met with resistance. But our enemies are not anonymous owners of Volkswagens, nor small record shops.

On the whole, the demonstration was a success, both in terms of the increasing pride among members of the gay community and in the increasing support we are getting from Women's Liberation, the sisters in the House of D., and other members of the radical community. We're getting it together, and the pigs can't stop us now!

REMEMBER THE STONEMWALL!

