

'Look, this is the blood of your brothers!' Hank Ferrari screamed and knelt down to scrape some of it from the puddle that lay on West Eighth Street. He smeared his cheeks with it and it remained on his cheeks for the rest of the night as a reminder that this was it: the revolution had begun. We had been there at the beginning. We gay people. Hank Ferrari, less than 110 pounds, running through the streets of The Village with the blood of his brothers on his cheeks.

And everyone who was there knew it. Everyone except the tourists of the West Village. But the pigs knew it. The straight hip people of The Village knew it. And we gay people knew it. The revolution has begun and gay people are now in it!



COME OUT COMMENT: STEVE ROSE'S PHOTOS OF SATURDAY'S DEMONSTRATIONS SIGNIFICANTLY EXCLUDE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION. HIS CAMERA IS AN EXTENSION OF HIS MALE SUPREMICIST VISION.

# LET A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOOM

by Bernard Lewis and Martha Shelley

Time was when you could easily keep abreast of the growth of homosexual organizations. Up until as recently as even ten years ago, the count was so comparatively low, you could tick off the organizations functioning on one or two hands. The first organization there is a record of in this country was set up in 1925, but it did not last very long; and one of these writers can remember back to when there were none around at all. But as of today, there are literally hundreds of homosexual groupings strewn over the length and breadth of the United States. These groupings reflect a wide enough spectrum politically, socially, organizationally so that each different one of us (especially in New York) can easily find his or her own niche.

Two new groups are in their formative stages now, directly or indirectly, as a development stemming from the June 28th Christopher Street Liberation Day (Umbrella) Committee. One is a direct outgrowth of this committee, the New York Division of that committee. Because of special needs, New York has decided to constitute itself a continuations committee active through the year, not only in preparation for the next Liberation Day march (as it is expected the other regional committees will continue to be) but as an independent committee concerned with reaching out to the unorganized individual men and women homosexuals in New York City (the majority of homosexuals here and elsewhere, like the majority of the entire population, is uncommitted, unorganized and unheard).

In attending a meeting of the committee and in talking with individual committee members (Mike Brown, Craig Rodwell, Brenda Howard), we found that the committee, although as yet unstructured, is talking about setting certain tasks for itself.

As they see their reason for being, they can be the center for all homosexuals as individuals to turn to for social involvement, counsel or advice, plans for actions, the actions themselves, community activities — no

matter what their politics, no matter what their interests. Among the projects they intend to undertake, one in the forefront is the establishment of a printing center for the homosexual movement that will do offset, duplicating, printing, art work, posters. A committee of small gay businesswomen and men is being organized to work with the New York Committee. Fund-raising will be important for the committee to make possible the implementation of plans and projects forecast.

As a neutral organization, the committee will take no political direction, will be concerned with the movement as a whole and work for the benefit not only of organizations but of individual people.

One big project now under discussion, along with the printing center, is a training center for parade marshalls, for people who will be trained to cool off situations that could result in physical conflict. Other plans call for the setting up of an apparatus (such as a switchboard) for channeling information of special interest to the homosexual community, for coordinating actions in an emergency. One of their number has jocularly referred to themselves as "the minutemen of the homosexual movement." Members of the committee speak not only of reacting to needs, but of initiating acts: gay-ins, rallies.

As they are discussing their formation, some members of the committee are calling for keeping the committee small with larger peripheral numbers ready to be involved and ready for acceptance into the committee on the basis of merit shown in their work. The people relating to the committee will have or learn skills which would be available for necessary actions. It is clear from our listening to individual committee members and committee sessions that this New York committee sees itself as operating with no official spokesmen or leaders but as working together as a coagulating force.

The New York Homosexual Community Council is also, as we can tell from its name, a New York group, and it also sprang up out of a need which it felt was not

being met: a need for organizations to resolve misunderstandings among themselves, as reflected in the reluctance of a number of organizations to relate to the June 28th March out of what proved to be an unfounded fear that some organizations were planning violence. The Council is concerned not with individuals, but with organizations; organizations all having the same goal, the liberation of women and men homosexuals, but sometimes differing in methods of action. Thus, when a misunderstanding arises, communication will be possible through meetings of the council which can be called by any one of the participating organizations at any time. The aim of the council and its member organizations as explained to us in a discussion with Mike Kotis of Mattachine, one of the initiators of the council, is to find areas of cooperation, overcoming differences for the sake of the common goal wherever possible. There are to be no officers, no treasury. Since they do not see themselves as a power center, they expect no power struggle. The Council sees itself as a center through which new ideas can be channeled to and from organizations and from one organization to others.

The Council has issued this statement of purpose and organization:

**NEW YORK HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Purpose:** To meet at regular intervals and/or at the request of any member organization in order to plan cooperative activities, communicate general information, discuss relevant ideas relating to homosexual liberation, and to resolve misunderstandings among member organizations.

**Organization:** NYHCC is an informal confederation of New York City's homosexual civil rights, membership organizations. It is composed of authorized leaders and/or representatives of these same organizations.

## OUT OF THE DUNES & INTO THE STREETS!

A new kind of action in Provincetown

P-Towners had an added attraction this Fourth of July: a mini-march of homosexuals that showed a great deal of kutspah.

About one hour after the traditional and uninspired holiday march of floats, fire engines, officials, school children, bathing beauties, and horses, Gays gathered at the wharf. The Gay march was to start at 1 P.M.

Three of us — all Lavender Menaces — were on our way to the big event with posters rolled up and tucked under our arms. One of us, March Hoffman, had been publicizing the march in her leather shop where she distributes literature, posters, and acts as an unofficial Gay community center. March brought Come Outs with her. Nobody appeared to be heading toward the wharf with any sense of urgency or purpose and not a poster was in sight. One block from the wharf I questioned March. "Where is everybody?" "Well," she filled me in, "there was no permit given. Frank Morgan from the Homophile Union of Boston tried to get one, but nothing doing." Good reason and no reason, I thought. We would have to show them.

Near the wharf about 25 people stood in groups of twos and threes — also with signs rolled up — rapping, exchanging addresses, and selling buttons. And it was 1 P.M. Too few to start, we thought and decided to wait until 2. A few people from Boston were not there yet. It was an overcast day, so people were not at the beaches. At 2 things hadn't changed much. Our ranks had swelled to about 35 and we were still quiet and separated. No momentum or solidarity was building.

A few of us called the group in a huddle to discuss. Signs began opening up and most of us put on lavender

arm bands (which we wore the rest of the weekend). A bit fearful, but strongly committed, we started to line up. I started some chants to build my own courage in the front line. As we were only about four lines, this was no big deal. "Say it Loud, Gay is Proud," and "Power to the People, Gay-Gay Power to the Gay-Gay People."

I had my arm linked with a good-looking blond fellow from Boston and my lover on the other side. A lot of different feelings were racing through me. Our confidence was building and our voices grew louder. I stood up straighter. Some hesitants saw our fast-growing solidarity and joined. We were maybe 60 when we reached the corner and turned onto Commercial, into two of the toughest policemen I have seen. "You're blocking traffic," said the one. "No, you are," we said. "We are marching peacefully and moving along — or were until you stopped us." Crowds began forming around us. Shouts of "Let them march!" were heard frequently. After more than a casual glance, the police looked at each other and then asked if we would accept a police escort. We agreed, and a rather strange chant broke out called "We love the police." This must have made them very happy — being loved by us.

Down Commercial, past the shops, into the residential area, out on the highway and to the beach we march shouting "Out of the Dunes and onto the Streets," and summoning reluctant Gays — many of whom were astonished. Windows and doors flew open, but we never attracted more than 20 or 30 new people en route.

The march was important, but not a triumph, as one paper reported. A march of thousands might have been,

but not dozens, especially when the greatest number of spectators were homosexuals instead of marchers.

That night at the bars I talked with girls who said "We're not oppressed. We can do anything anyone else can. The march was silly." (And one of the girls who concurred had just been fired for being a "not very oppressed" Lesbian.)

The next night my lover and I encountered a new kind of myopia. The cast of the Provincetown Playhouse announced between one-act plays that they were going to commemorate the arrival of pilgrims who sought freedom by giving money to oppressed groups. They had decided on HELP and the Panthers, but had discussed the Indians, etc., etc. (no mention of homosexuals).

We confronted the senior member of the cast at intermission. "Can't you see all the oppressed homosexuals in this town? the Indians have left." "That is interesting and important," the man said. "As a matter of fact, I read in the Mattachine newsletter about the Puerto Rican who was impaled trying to escape police" (wasn't he saying something to us?) A community leader who seemed to understand the problems all too well ignored us.

The march was a beginning of P-Town liberation. But what is needed is massive consciousness-raising. How could the town leaders who make their bread off of Gays (and overlapping Gay leaders) be so unaware and unconscious? Another march is being discussed for Labor Day. And next time we must try to get Gays out of the closets, beds, bars, and dunes and show people there are more than 100 Gays in P-Town who are proud.