

in a vacuum. We are one of many oppressed groups, the roots of whose oppression lies within a diseased capitalist system. This system fosters the exploitation of the many by a privileged few. It is a system of competition which serves the interests of the power structure. It is perpetuated by a lie called free enterprise and an illusion called equality of opportunity. But the realities are injustice, oppression and inequity. Brotherhood, humanity, a feeling for one another are sacrificed to the lies. We become alienated from one another, dehumanized, reified market commodities.

It is a mistake to think that we are oppressed only as homosexuals. We are oppressed as people employed at meaningless, alienating, unnecessary jobs to support a work ethic we no longer believe in. We are oppressed by our own guilt at watching helplessly as our government, in the name of the people, slaughters Vietnamese, ignores the rights of tens of millions of black, brown and red skinned Americans, and exploits all the colored peoples of the world. We are oppressed by a social system that defines sex roles in such a limiting manner as to violate the rights and potentialities of women and

severely curtail the emotional development of men. It is for reasons like these that we must now join forces with our sisters and brothers in the Movement so that we can begin the struggle for total human liberation.

Some homosexuals denounce the Movement because they feel that it has not sufficiently embraced the homosexual cause. However in order for our goals to become part of the Movement, we must first define our cause and ourselves, thereby creating a radical homosexual consciousness. Then we can begin to educate our radical sisters and brothers to our oppression and our needs. It is an error to think of the Movement as a static organization with a fixed dogma. The Movement is young and growing. It expands and enriches itself with each new contribution. Look at the example of Women's Liberation—Radical women, recognizing elements of their oppression within the Movement, separated themselves to explore and create a consciousness of their own oppression. The feedback was enriching both to the Movement and to the women who could now begin to participate in the revolution in a new and meaningful way.

Gay Liberation Front's contribution to the Movement must now be dealt

with. Our participation in Movement actions (eg, the Moratorium, Panther rallies) is a beginning. Each time we appear at a Movement function identified as GLF we reinforce the bonds between us. An opportunity for further exchange exists in such dialogue as will take place between GLF and Movement people at Alternate University. This is our work!

Power to all people includes our power to be ourselves.

Red Butterfly Continued
destroyed—Capitalism.

Central to oppression is the particular family structure of bourgeois society. The nuclear, authoritarian, patricentric, monogamous family is the property, condition children into accepting an unfree way of life, and to divide man from man on the basis of class. The superstitions and ideologies maintaining the nuclear family have resulted in Fascist sadism, racism, and all forms of bigotry. All forms of sex for pleasure (not contractual procreation) threaten not only the compulsive building block of a reactionary society of domination. This family structure results in the oppression of women by men, and oppression of children by parents. The bourgeois family serves chiefly to manage and transmit private

nuclear family, but the very bases of authoritarian society.

As homosexuals, we do not see our struggle in the granting of special privileges or token reforms. We consider this to be revisionist. We have seen, only too clearly, how the ruling class can use cooptation to remove and pacify struggle against the State.

Our goal is not better bars, recognized marriage, entry into the military, or even jobs.

It is, however, a recognition of racism in all its forms manifested by the ruling class. A struggle against imperialist wars fought against the colored peoples of the Third World. Against an economic system which makes 65 million Americans live in poverty, ravages the planet's resources in the interests of private capital, and plays Nuclear Roulette to maintain this obsolete system.

Capitalism is now in its terminal stage—requiring continual spending for war and preparations for war, imperialism, repression of minorities, and perpetuation of mass poverty.

Freedom.

The Red Butterfly
15 November 1969
Washington

THE MONTHS NEWS

The initial attempt by the Nixon regime in its first 9 months to carry out a carefully contrived policy of moderation is dead. It is dead because it could never have worked. Richard Nixon tiptoed into the Presidency with bland slogans of "bring us together" and "lower our voices". He didn't understand that inside the hyper-agitated nation he inherited from Lyndon Johnson there existed grave problems, problems which required root solutions.

Nixon believed that all he had to do was play the role of President as Eisenhower had and the country would somehow

fall back into "normalcy". Somehow the inherent American decency would reappear and we would once again unite in harmony. For Nixon, the turbulent events of the last 8 years never occurred.

The 1960s are not the 1950s no matter how often the nation's chief executive decides to play out the charade of business as usual. The Black Panther Party is not the NAACP, SDS does not indulge in panty raids and American GIs in Viet Nam murder peasants in cold blood.

It was inevitable that the terrible unsolved problems of this nation would force this new government to action of some kind. They must have known that

their synthetic serenity could only hold the tide for a short while and in fact the Administration's first 9 months were widely interpreted as an attempt to buy time. Now they realize that there is no more time.

The American people voted a year ago out of apprehension and confusion and Richard Nixon won a bare plurality. Richard Nixon is a cautious man. Why should we expect boldness and innovation from a man who is really nothing but a political craftsman? Why should we be surprised when this government makes a decision to retrench and crack down on dissent?

The situation is in control of the Government and the government has been reduced to a choice of two alternatives: either the problems are solved or the opposition generated by those problems is silenced. That Nixon has apparently chosen the second option and decided to suppress those demanding change is not surprising when one examines the character of America's elected leaders. The best are technocrats: moderates who are devoid of any inspirational qualities. The rest

are gangsters, thieves and fools who live their living by exploitation and gain their elected positions through systematic repression.

So Agnew opens the Pandora's box of intimidation against the media. The Secret Service issues orders to federal and local agencies to gather information on those who "malign high government officials", seek "redress of imaginary grievances" and participate in "anti-american demonstrations". The FBI puts pressure on Bus Companies to cancel transportation to the Nov. 15 Moratorium in Washington. Bobby Seale is sent to prison for 4 years on the whim of a racist judge. The police harass, intimidate and photograph Gay Liberation Front members who leaflet the streets of Greenwich Village.

This Government is moving to defend itself against a movement which is growing too large and too fast. The polarization between "us" and "them" is suddenly being defined and all of us are being forced to choose sides by circumstances none of us made.

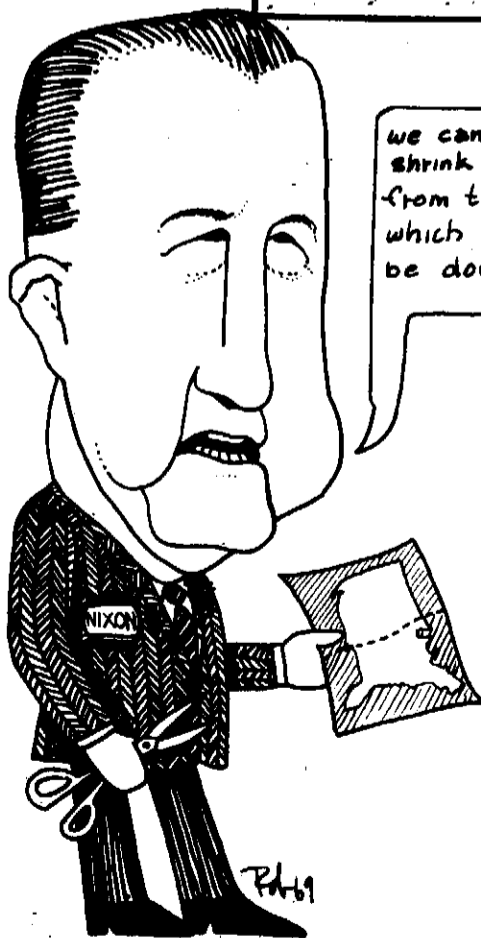
GLF Continued

square crowd to the Justice Department, followed by perhaps 30,000. When we arrived at the Justice Dept., there were strangely few cops. This government still keeps up a pretense of legitimacy and this demonstration had a permit. The building was surrounded with a crowd that had grown to perhaps 50,000. It was very quiet except for the cries of "free Bobby Seale" and "stop the trials". Then from the massed militants in front of the building flew the first rocks and bottles. The door was assaulted with a battering ram. There were no sirens this time, no warnings to disperse and the gas was not tear gas either. As it exploded to my left, I saw the flag of the 28th of June cell of Gay Liberation Front begin to move up Constitution Ave. Since the CS (pepper) gas exploded between us and the flag, we ran in the opposite direction and the group was separated. Those of us who were still together left to get above the Government Building along Constitution Avenue. We were driven by huge clouds of gray gas into downtown streets which were filled with people shouting "power to the people." As we moved west onto New York Ave. from 14 Street, it was apparent that a large part of the crowd that had been at Justice earlier intended to take the protest to the White House.

We never got there. Just as we reached Penn Ave. and 15 St., the cops and the army drew into ranks to protect the President of the United States from his own people. Richard Nixon can't understand that these kids don't give a shit about peace with honor, especially when they know that when the Administration speaks of honor what they really mean is that the President wants re-election in 1972. They don't expect the truth from this government, they expect lies. Lies to cover poverty, lies to cover wars, lies to cover lies.

So they came to Washington over a million strong, not really expecting to change anything but hoping that by being there they would somehow show something as yet undefined. When they left they knew that there are two nations and that the nation of the "silent majority" is afraid to change what must be changed. When they left Washington, they knew that they were an army; what they do with that knowledge will determine the future of America.

FREEDOM FOR HOMOSEXUALS HOMOSEXUAL FREEDOM FOR EVERYONE



New Jersey Landscape: October 12, 1969

Sunflowers, oaks and maples hail autumn
The whole world is on fire; red, yellow
And rust red hail the earth, are
Mostly green, brown
Fall to ground
Tall proud weeds shadow the sun
Greens grass is hidden, hides forbidden
To us; fenced-off we see
The snake grow from ground:
Barbed wire blocks beauty.
We cannot enter
And cables cross
Like a cage in the sky, smash us leaf-flat,
We are ants;
The sea-blue sky becomes white cloud,
A rise from earth: tear gas, once air,
Now becomes our prison
A tree is a billy club, bayonet and
Holstered gun, her foliage a gas mask.
Rocks siren the forest-scream:
"Keep the crowd in order; they do not
Truly appreciate our beauty" —
The prisoners are free — but are we?

— Eileen Rupel

MORE RADICAL THAN THOU

martha shelley

Recently, the Gay Liberation Front came under fire from some conservative elements of the homophile movement as being a "Commie-front" organization. At the same time, some members of the GLF have been railing at GLF for not being more radical. These people who call themselves "radical" seem to want to go in for street fighting and bombing. They foresee an armed revolution in the next five years, and they want to be in the "vanguard."

Seems like everybody wants to be Che Guevara — remember what happened to him? The Pentagon has all the guns . . .

We've all heard it from the Real Radicals. If you haven't been busted or had your head beat in by a Chicago cop, if you don't have a Mao poster hanging over your bathtub and a gas mask and gun in your laundry bag; you aren't Radical enough. Meanwhile, all these Real Radicals prate on, oblivious to the fact that GLF is an open organization, and meetings are attended by police informers, and phones are tapped (mine is). How in hell can you even conspire to wire your way into a pay toilet when you are practically advertising the whole thing on CBS?

This article is being written both for the benefit of the Real Radicals and for the conservatives, though I suspect I'll get small thanks for it . . . Neither of these groups could detect a real Communist if they woke up in bed with one.

Come on, gang. Known homosexuals, SDS members, Panthers, GLF members, long hairs — people like us — are light years away from an armed political revolution. We make good copy for the establishment press (we're very photogenic in our odd clothes and long hair), and we help cops get their rocks off by busting us on drug charges or conspiracy charges. (Do you know that conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor, say *walking on the grass* or *littering*, is a felony?) We get our own rocks off by screaming "Off the pig!" in demonstrations or by spouting revolutionary rhetoric in underground papers.

Ever read SDS *New Left Notes*? The paper is full of semi-Marxist rhetoric about "solidarity with our Third World brothers" and "the *correct* analysis" of somebody's actions or thinking. And nobody reads that shit except other Real Radicals. It's a kind of mutual mental masturbation — the Real Radicals talk to each other; and the rest of the country, which they are supposed to be "radicalizing", doesn't give a goddamn.

The Panthers, for all their blunders, at least have a free-breakfast-for-children program. Now some people say that fighting for a small benefit here, a court case won there, or a change in one oppressive law, is simply "reformist." In other words, what it does is to make conditions a little bit easier for the people, thus keeping them content with the system and retarding the progress of the revolution.

Bullshit, baby. You can't feed the people a mass of revolutionary rhetoric while you let their children starve. They won't hear you over the cries of their babies. Besides, hasn't history proven that people don't revolt unless conditions do improve — that is, when they can see some real hope in their lives? You can't have a revolution based on misery and despair — it has got to be based on hope, on the fact that conditions have improved sufficiently for the people to see that a better life is possible. There must also be trust between the people and the active revolutionaries — they must be convinced that the revolutionaries are trustworthy, are acting in their basic interests. And you convince them by your deeds — by winning something for them now.

At any rate, if you insist on letting people suffer now — in order to advance the cause of some distant revolution — if you, in effect, say that your glorious end justifies any means: **what makes you any better or more worthy of the people's trust than the G.I. who said at Bien Tre, "We had to destroy the city in order to save it."**

Let me make this point clear — I'm not a pacifist on principle. Passive resistance has its uses, but as a Jew, I know damn well that is has its limitations. There is a difference between using violence to resist oppression or genocide, and employing it to perpetuate the same. In my book, the American action in Vietnam is an atrocity. On the other hand, nothing would cheer me more than a massacre of the government of South Africa.



photo by Diana Davies

I'd like to discuss three forces at work in this country. The first is conservative capitalism, sometimes known as "capitalist imperialism." This has been analyzed down to the ground as a philosophy which enshrines the economic exploitation of the poor by the rich. The corruption of the American legal system; American support of fascist dictatorships in Spain, Haiti, South Africa and South Vietnam; the oppression of blacks, migrant workers and Indians are a direct result of this philosophy.

The second force calls itself radical. It is represented by various elements of the Movement. Now the Movement itself is comprised of several groups, which can be subdivided as follows:

- 1) the members of minority groups who have realized that their oppression will not be alleviated by working within the system;
- 2) drop-outs who prefer a free life-style to the economic benefits available to Company Men;
- 3) those people (religious or otherwise) who find their expression and satisfaction in devotion to a humanist cause;
- 4) the guilty offspring of the middle-class — who have discovered that the comforts provided for them were obtained by the exploitation of other people — and who have discovered that, though well-off economically, they are politically powerless.

These groups overlap. Some people in the Movement, whom I have labelled the Real Radicals, have attempted to model themselves after the revolutionary forces of the Third World. In identifying with their oppressed brothers and sisters, they have swallowed whole the slogans, rhetoric and tactics of different cultures in different economic and political conditions — and have tried to thrust their ideas on middle-class America.

There is also the matter of inalienable rights and freedoms. I'm not about to give up what freedoms I have in the name of a Party or ideology. Once you surrender your freedom to dissent against your government, against any government, you never get it back. Look at Russia and China today, and you will see that **absolute power has absolutely corrupted the Communist Party.** They have turned their violence from liberation to oppression.

The third force I will call a kind of moral individualism — the philosophy of a bunch of Br'er Rabbits trying to survive and do their own thing in a world of wolves who would prey on them, and lemmings who march off cheering to their own destruction. It appeals to the second and third groups in the Movement, the drop outs and the humanists. This individualism is not what the conservatives claim to represent. We know that. American individualism in a G.I. haircut, in a pin-stripe suit, working for IBM? Bullshit. The real individualist isn't about to exploit his neighbor — he also isn't about to take orders from anybody. Nobody tells him how to eat, dress, talk, work — or whom to sleep with, or whom to shoot. He makes his own decisions and takes responsibility on himself. He cannot be convicted of the most terrifying of modern crimes — moral abdication — **because he was never following orders in the first place.**

Br'er Rabbit is a threat to conservatism and also to Communism. Life is short, and he wants to live as fully as he can, without imposing on toher people's right to do the same. He is a terrible, seductive threat. The conservatives hate him because he represents, by his life style,

an alternative to the pinstripe suit. He doesn't owe his soul to the Company. The Communists hate him because he doesn't owe his soul to the Party. Wherever he goes, he is a living example of the Third Alternative.

These ideas, this ideology, originates with the Communist Party. The ideal of equality of economic opportunity has been most forcefully advocated by the C.P. The tactics of modern revolution have been developed by Mao, Ho Chi Minh and Castro. The ideal — equality of opportunity, an end to economic exploitation — is beautiful. I dig it. The method of guerilla warfare is appealing to romantics, and also offers a chance of personal power (the gun you see on all the posters) and the dream of glory.

On the other hand, what happens after the Party comes into power? Members submit to Party discipline, considered necessary to advance the revolution and then to "build socialism". There is a liquidation (purge, massacre) of dissenting elements. Equal opportunity is there — for those who conform best to the Party line. So instead of kissing the ass of the Board of Directors, you kiss the ass of the Central Committee.

Why exchange one master for another? Well, maybe it made sense in the context of feudal Russia, or China, or as a change from a corrupt dictatorship or colonial exploitation. It doesn't make sense to me, not in the context of American society. We've got to transform this society — but I don't want to see it become an imitation of Red China, with thousands of people carrying pictures of an American Mao, chanting a new dogma through the streets. A 20th century American Revolution must spring from new ideas — because we have a new situation here, a post-industrial society, different from anything the world has ever seen.

My conservative friends look at these individualists and immediately scream "Communist dupes!" What they refuse to see is that we are simply dedicated to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. (Like warm nests with other furry rabbits to play with. *N.B. A sense of humor is essential to life as a Rabbit.*) They see the world in terms of Us. vs. Them, and are blind to the Third Force springing up around them. We Rabbits don't fit into the paranoid mold.

My Communist friends see a bunch of undisciplined, ragged nuisances and are infuriated because we can't be controlled and formed into a fifth column. Both groups call us dirty and lazy. Anybody you don't like is dirty and lazy. Remember how often you've heard that about blacks?

Bullshit. Give us real, fulfilling human jobs and we'll put in more productive man-hours than you ever could squeeze out of a slave laborer. Who built the People's Park in Berkeley? We did. Give us another park to build. Or a gay community center. Or a free hospital. Bosses in both systems have assumed that the way to get people to work is to use a carrot (profit) and a stick (the threat of jail or starvation). The real way to work is to make a job for yourself, a job that you love.

The Real Radicals put down the cultural revolution as irrelevant. They put down gay liberation and women's liberation as trivial. My needs are not trivial to me. I'll stand by my brothers and sisters — because my freedom is dependent on their freedom, and because a revolution to establish a free and loving society must be based on freedom and love — but I'm not an altruist. I've got 40-50 years to live, if I can stay alive in the briar patch and we don't have a nuclear war, and after that I won't know or care what you do. Most people, deep down, feel the same way. Anybody who wants to reach the majority of the people — to be really relevant — has to relate to their needs and give them some hope worth risking their lives for. Even the Church gave the hope of heaven — a real personal hope, for you and me, not just for a few people in the far future.

What are you doing for me, and what have you done for me lately? What's in it for you? The answer to the last question had better be, *I'm trying to meet my own needs, too* — and not *I want to get power to build a future Utopia.* Power once achieved is never voluntarily surrendered.

Advice to people who wish to join the Honorable Br'er Rabbit Society: Don't take orders. Seek out people who like good food, warm blankets, and need love. Watch out for people who want Power — they will take you and your carrots and put you both in a stewing pot. Another good piece of advice — come visit me. I, too, need love.