

# Inflation

By now you'll have realised that the cost of this issue has risen to 20p. The Editorial Collective made this decision early in January, prompted by two considerations:

The first is the rising cost of printing Case Con. No. 17 cost £360 for 5,000; this issue will cost £509 for 5,000. At present it costs 5p to post one copy of the magazine, but who knows what the cost will be by the time of the May conference? We felt justified in making the increase without referring back to the membership, rather than wait til May. Meanwhile, Steve Dunnett as production manager, is looking around for a cheaper printer that's also trade-unionist.

The second factor was the international composition of the new Editorial Collective: Scottish, Geordie, Leeds, Sheffield, Leicester and downtown Waltham Forest. . . for the first time the E. C. isn't London dominated. It's been policy to pay fares of E. C. members to meetings, and after cost-benefit analysis in true sociologist fashion, we found that London is still the cheapest place to travel to, but the average travel bill is £46. We've discussed a pooled fares system or half subsidy, depending on our solvency. But for the meantime to encourage out-of-London supporters to become involved, we're continuing to pay fares.

The E. C. felt - a bit like the Government - that if we fully explained the need for this price increase, the membership wouldn't object. Include it in your next pay claim! Strong groups could possibly hold fund raising events (jumble sales, discos, etc.) in aid of Case Con. Sales of the Kids Con poster and Course Con, and an increase in the supporters fee to £1 (from 50p) would also provide extra income. We hope also to produce all-purpose postcards based on some of our best cartoons, which could be widely sold.

Any other brain-waves will be welcomed.

sheila sim

NORTH EAST CASE CON REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
SATURDAY 15th MARCH - 10.30am.  
LEEDS TRADES CLUB  
SAVILE MOUNT (OFF CHAPELTOWN ROAD)  
LEEDS 7

THE "RADICAL" SOCIAL WORKER -  
REFORMIST OR REVOLUTIONARY?  
EVENING ENTERTAINMENT: "BILLY DOGOOD"  
- SOCIAL WORK'S SUPERSTAR.  
organiser: Anne Uden  
9 Blairsville Grove  
Leeds 13

## POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

The Polytechnic of Central London in collaboration with MIND is launching a series of short courses on "Community Mental Health". The first course, starting early February 1975, will be "Housing and Mental Health". This will comprise a series of day conferences, evening lectures and workshops and will look at the causes and inter-relationship between housing conditions and mental health.

The approach appears fairly radical and will consider wider political issues rather than having simply an individualistic or local orientation. Further courses are planned, in particular a course on "The role of the Family in Mental Health", to start in June 1975.

For further details contact the Short Course Unit, PCL, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1. Tel. 01-486 5811 Ext. 252.

## NEW ADDRESS OF CASECON

to Ron Wallace  
74, Lytton Rd.  
Leytonstone,  
London, E.11.

Printed by SW LITHO  
Corbridge Works  
Corbridge Crescent  
London E.2

Published by CASE CON  
74 Lytton Road  
Leytonstone  
London, E.11

# CASE CON



# GAY ISSUE

ISSUE No 18. JANUARY 1975.

# case\*con editorial

To many people the idea of a homosexual social worker is almost a contradiction in terms. They see homosexuality as a 'problem', to be condemned or pitied when it cannot be ignored. Homosexuals of either gender are 'abnormal' and cannot possibly share or understand the problems of 'normal' people. In fact, their homosexuality is itself a monumental problem, requiring 'expert' treatment, and their place is among our clients, not our colleagues.

The object of this gay issue of Case Con is to challenge these and other received ideas on a subject which has been given lamentably little attention in the magazine so far. Following a decision of the Edinburgh Case Con Conference last May, this issue has been written and edited entirely by lesbians and homosexual men, most of us social workers and all of us active in one or another part of the gay movement.

\*\*\*\*\*

The ideas people have about homosexuality are very bizarre indeed. For a start, homosexuals are always 'other people', never ourselves or our friends (except in snide jokes). Lesbians don't even exist - a mistake not peculiar to Queen Victoria, as any lesbian knows who has been confronted with rank disbelief when attempting to come out. (Women don't really know their own minds, do they? And no-one could really prefer women to men - except men, of course; but that's different...) One rather quaint world-view, prevalent on the left, holds homosexuality to be an aristocratic or bourgeois vice, totally alien to rude proletarians, for whom a robust heterosexual randiness is the natural order of things - a judicious mixture of Baden-Powell and Tit Bits being all that will be needed to get them fit for the barri-ades.

All these ideas are, of course, nonsense, but they have a distressing currency. Sin/sickness/bourgeois vice: all these 'theories' are nothing of the sort; they are ideologies perpetuating the supremacy of heterosexual norms and the oppression of homosexuals.

The irrefutable fact is that for at least one person in twenty (irrespective of gender or social class) homosexuality is the only natural, normal expression of their sexuality. And this under conditions of almost total social denigration and oppression.

In fact, there is no other group of people who are so oppressed by the ignorance, hatred and prejudice of the society around them. There can be no subject about which so much misleading rubbish is peddled by so-called experts who are nothing of the sort because they are not even gay - or, if they are, are obsessed with self-hatred. In this situation, the only people who have the right to speak out on homosexuality are gay people themselves, who are glad and proud to be gay, and who are determined that ours must never again be 'the love that dare not speak its name'.

\*\*\*\*\*

The gay movement both here and in the U.S. has grown up alongside the women's movement; naturally enough, since gay people as such do not possess the enormous social power which women potentially do. There is very little

future for a gay movement that is not also a feminist movement.

Both movements are fighting sexism, enshrined in the nuclear family. Sexism, the most pernicious and insidious of all the ideologies of capitalism. Institutionalised in the family, it is one of the most powerful motor forces of the whole capitalist and imperialist system of exploitation. The nuclear family is the bastion, the last stronghold of capitalism, even during the period of transition to socialism.

Lesbians and gay men cannot but be alienated from the family, for it literally has no place for them. Many gay couples understandably imitate the forms of family life; for their pains they are ridiculed and often persecuted (a lesbian couple, for instance, no matter how deferential to the norms, may well be judged unfit to bring up children).

Women as such are not alienated from the family; on the contrary, it is the seat of their oppression. Their only interest lies in destroying it. The gay movement must learn from this, and renounce the sentimentality of hankering after a way of life which is so oppressive of those trapped in it. The institution of heterosexuality in the family represents the subjection of women to men and the exclusion of gay people from society. Wife-beating and queer-bashing, whether or not they are linked in practice, are two sides of the same coin - the epitome of male chauvinism.

In this situation, it is clear that lesbians are doubly oppressed, as women and as gays. To understand the oppression of lesbians is to get to the core of what sexism is about. The woman without a man and children is seen as a pathetic creature, her life devoid of the only thing which can give it purpose. But the woman who rejects men is also a threat - which is why any woman who is not totally acquiescent in the female role is likely to be branded a dyke. We are all dykes now....

\*\*\*\*\*

This gay issue of Case Con must be seen as in many ways a continuation of the themes raised in the Women's Issue (Case Con 15). In particular, that issue stressed the function of social workers in bolstering up the family during this period of growing economic and social crisis. Social workers are being used as direct agents of the oppression of women and gays. We must find ways of resisting these pressures, and identifying with their struggles. It is a central tenet of Case Con that as social workers we must make our politics relate to the way we do our jobs. Solidarity with women's and gay struggles must not be just a spare-time activity; it must be a part of the way we work. Issues which come to mind include housing for single people, which increases the independence of both women and gay men; discrimination against gays in the care and upbringing of children; and the real possibility of a witchhunt against gay social workers and probation officers (see elsewhere in this issue).

Solidarity with gay struggles is a minimum requirement of any group calling itself political: the denial of democratic rights to gays is an outrage. But it is no longer enough to be opposed to discrimination, important though this is. The left in particular must face the fact that we are not just the pitiful products of a decadent bourgeois society; that, come the revolution, we are not going to go away. We demand the right to play a central part in the struggle for socialism now and in the future. Any 'socialism' which tolerates the sexist oppression of women and gays is digging its own grave. The left must not just show us solidarity; it must try to understand what we are saying.

\*\*\*\*\*

GABY CHARING  
PAUL DESWARDT  
MARTIN HENRY

MIKE LAUNDER  
ANNE McDERMOTT  
NETTIE POLLARD

\*\*\*\*\*

## Only a passing phase

"Yer can't love anuvver girl - unless you're an 'omo", a twelve year old girl asserted, thumping her corksized shoes heavily into the ground. She was quite right of course, love and sex are only permissible between people of opposite sexes unless you want to be given a socially unacceptable label. In a society whose structure depends on competitiveness and the use of force, the emotions of the young are manipulated into rigid patterns which reinforce the status quo.

In some cultures, homosexuality is tolerated in the young as a 'passing phase', particularly in societies where the virginity of females is an essential prerequisite to marriage. The patriarchal society of ancient Greece is often used as an example of tolerant attitudes to homosexuality. In ancient Greece it was not an acceptable alternative to marriage and was only permissible because it encouraged loyalty and submissiveness to the patriarchal order.

Homosexual relationships in ancient Greece were almost a kind of state approved paedophilia, they were not relationships between equals. The young male's education into a male supremacist society began by fostering emotional and sexual attachments with adult men who controlled the apparatus of the State. He was expected to emulate their behaviour and encouraged to believe that the superior spiritual and emotional bonds were those forged between males. Thereby, women were anaesthetised, controlled and their status reduced to that of servicing males.

Although homosexuality in Europe has long ceased to have the formal approval of the state, the legacy of this effective means of control remains. A blind eye is turned to

### FOOTNOTE

There is no article in this issue by a residential social worker. Not surprisingly, since the gay residential social worker is the most vulnerable of all to attack. For it is often explicitly assumed that to be a homosexual is to be a child molester. It should be understood clearly that homosexuals are neither more nor less likely than heterosexuals to be a) sexually interested in children, or b) rapists. The question of the relationship of residential workers to the sexuality of their charges is one which badly needs investigating and hopefully will be in a later issue of Case Con. It is not a gay issue.

The use of force against child or adult is repellent. One of the themes of this issue is that in this society sex too often means power and force. Assault and rape are the products of a male supremacist society and its victims are significantly always women, children and gays.

homosexuality among young males in the Catholic countries, where female virginity is demanded. Kissing, hand-holding, embracing in public is permissible because the male-female relationship begins at marriage and strong affections must be channelled elsewhere until the parentally approved partnership is established. The Catholic church nevertheless condemns homosexuality as a sin; to allow it to be otherwise would not only be an attack on marriage but would force an examination of the untenable - the celibacy of the priesthood itself.

Non-Catholic Europe, with its softer sell of female virginity, and a less powerful Church, has turned to the medical and psychiatric professions to provide it with the weapons to fight homosexuality. Blatantly disregarding the evidence of homosexuality in all species of animals and all societies, these 'experts' have invented the terms 'sick', 'abnormal', 'perverted' etc. to describe the phenomenon, and observed their subjects in the perfect normality of the lunatic asylum to produce their treatises.

America, on the other hand, has taken the line 'If you can't beat them, make them join us'. Capitalistic enterprise has seized the opportunity that is afforded by the middle-class homosexual, desirous of status and threatened sometimes with the middle-aged spread, to assure him (not her, note) that he will be far more attractive to potential partners with the acquisition of a Cadillac, a gold-plated cocktail cabinet and a fully comprehensive insurance policy big enough to seduce the least murderous of Brooklyn youths. The condemners are now competing with the exploiters, and no prizes in the next issue for guessing the likely winner. If Europe follows this example, my odds are on Gay Access Cards rather than the Festival of Light.



Homosexuality threatens any society where power is vested in one group or is the prerogative of one sex. Homosexuals have no tangible investment in any society's future. Denied even the right to adopt children, they have no stake in another generation, they cannot be blackmailed into acceptance of societal norms by threats to the wellbeing of their children. Thus they cannot be relied on to perpetuate materialism. If they choose, they have much greater opportunities to 'opt out'.

Historically, homosexuality has been used to service the state's artistic pretensions, and in much the same way as eunuchs in the harem, to gild the lily of sexism for the benefit of male supremacists. So long as homosexuals were content to act out the role of pseudo-females, they were neutralised as a group. The explosive impact of the Gay Liberation movements of the past few years and their resistance to this passive stereotyping have resulted in confrontation with societal 'norms'.

The working-class has always been exhorted by the left to see its oppression in terms of the class struggle. Sexual politics, even traced back to the suffragette movement, has been viewed as an irrelevance by the left. Thus it is not surprising that even reformism has to battle with the entrenched prejudice of the working class towards women's or gay liberation.

Homosexuals' support of any working-class movement is seen as an embarrassment to the 'cause', and titters of 'freaks' run through the rank and file. Queer bashing is not confined to the working class, but it needs to be said that it is easier to change one's job because of the prejudice of an employer than to organise one's life from a wheelchair after an attack by thugs.

The desexualisation of the young begins at the cradle. The hand that rocks the cradle does not 'rock the boat'. The child's mind is fed with an image of femininity synonymous with passivity and menial tasks, and of masculinity with the

traits of aggression. Boys are encouraged to compete; and the denial of emotional expression extends to the denial of the validity of the emotions.

It is commonly observed that the public school or prison is a breeding ground for homosexuality. The idea being that homosexuality can only exist in the absence of opportunities for heterosexual relationships. On the one hand this permits the notion that it can be 'grown out of' yet also reflects the fear that once 'grown into' it may be found more exciting than the heterosexual world the person must return to. Single sex boarding schools are no longer the experience of one class. Community schools, like their upper class equivalents, still see homosexuality as a 'passing phase', at best a necessary alternative to heterosexuality for a period of adolescence, never as a positive expression of love, sexuality, preference. Even in a society which ridicules homosexuality, one in twenty adolescents, regardless of their environment, will be a homosexual. All institutions corrupt relationships because they distort them. The failure of the "keepers" to realise the potential of homosexual relationships is all too often brought about by their inability to face up to the reflection of the homosexuality in themselves.

In spite of the slogans, much of what is 'gay' is not 'good' nor is it 'glad'. 'Gay' is the most appalling euphemism since 'nice', the word conceals homosexuals' anger and bitterness. It hides the scars of centuries of vicious oppression with a word that conjures up a cornucopia of campy. Better to be called 'nigger' than 'coloured', 'queer' rather than 'gay', unless one is thought sister, brother and friend.

It is easy to carp and deride those homosexuals who, full of self hatred, have been beaten into submission, and who apologise for their existence. They may not reproduce a generation of cannon fodder for the community which scorns them, but may seek to establish themselves in the society which has rejected them. Closeted in the armed forces, the police, the church, surrounded by the ritual and grandeur of a society that has oppressed them, they daily deny their lesser brethren, those on lower rungs of the ladder, like a long line of Judases. From the schools, the unions, the social services (of course) they conform and obey and pass as heterosexuals.

It is easy to dismiss the homosexual who hides his or her sexuality and label them as 'reactionary'. It is also easy to forget that less than eight years ago they lived under the threat of prosecution, blackmail and the loss of their job and even their home.

Many homosexuals still believe these threats to be real. Can they rely on the left to convince them otherwise? Any analysis of society which ignores the role of sexual politics will continue to be viewed with suspicion by homosexuals lest they find themselves exchanging one oppressor for another.

**mike launder**

## lesbian liberation women's liberation

A psychiatrist writing to the Sunday Observer in November 1973 argued that women's liberation represented nothing more than a 'lot of loud-mouthed latent lesbians'. Midge Decter in her book 'The new chastity and other arguments against women's liberation' takes a similar line. This style of attack (for it is obviously meant to be this) is neither new nor particularly unusual. It works from the idea that women who challenge their position in society (whether the society be feudal or capitalist) must be less than women, must be 'unnatural' women; and that once the lesbian label has been attached, then our ideas can at once be assumed to have no validity.

This reactionary response has not been without divisive effect in the current women's movement. In the early stages of the movement both in this country and elsewhere the attitude to lesbians was not qualitatively different from that in society generally. In the United States for example, when lesbians who had been working in the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) began to surface as lesbians they were very sharply attacked in many sections of the organization; Betty Friedan saw a 'lavender menace' to the good image of N.O.W. and a 'lavender herring' in relation to its aims. From 1969 a struggle began to transform the attitude of N.O.W. and to develop a commitment to lesbian liberation throughout the women's liberation movement; (the development of gay liberation, especially in its early stages made an important contribution to this.). Although things have changed a great deal since 1969 this struggle continues. (1) In Britain lesbians first appeared as an identified group within women's liberation at the national conference in Skegness in 1971. There the vicious attacks launched by the women and men of the Union of Women for Liberation produced an immediate, if rather confused, expression of support for lesbians from the vast majority of women at the conference. Since then lesbianism has not appeared as a 'national issue' in Britain; it has largely been seen either as a matter of exclusive concern to gay women themselves, or as the 'solution' for heterosexual women. Beyond that lies considerable confusion, ignorance and uncertainty, and it is important that the Edinburgh conference enables us to sort some of the issues out.\*

To be a lesbian is to be a woman who has the capacity to love and make love with another woman. To have such an identity within capitalist society is in itself subversive in the sense that it implies a rejection of a sexuality committed to reproduction, and the sexual division of labour.

\*This article was written for the Summer, 1974 Women's Liberation Conference in Edinburgh, where lesbianism was a major issue. The conference adopted as a demand of the WLM: "an end to discrimination against lesbians and the right of all women to a self-defined sexuality". (Eds.)

structured through the family cannot operate 'properly' on homosexual women and men. Thus homosexuality is often explicitly seen as a threat to family life and the well-being of the state.

Such a view was recently expressed during the divorce referendum in Italy, when Fanfani, one of the leaders of the right-wing campaign against divorce, argued that the availability of divorce would drive masses of women to lesbianism.

Within this society the oppression of gay people has been expressed mainly in religious, medical and - for men - legal terms: gay people are evil, unnatural, less than human; gay people are sick, unfulfilled (especially if women), and immature, at best suitable cases for treatment, at worst pathetic objects of pity. Until the 1967 Act gay men were criminals and they still do not have parity with heterosexual men, as the increased numbers of prosecutions since '67 have clearly indicated.

Yet gay men have the advantage of knowing that at least they are men (and with a socially recognised tradition of achievement in certain spheres, especially artistic ones), while gay women are not even women. Storr, for example, in 'Sexual Deviation', talks of lesbians as women who have failed to realise their own femininity and states that 'lesbianism means a way of life that must leave a good deal of a woman's nature unsatisfied'.

Lesbians have been ignored by the law not because they are more tolerated than male homosexuals, but because the very existence of lesbians is denied on every level; indeed when the extension of legal condemnation to include women has been proposed (as it was here in the twenties) the decisive argument against this has been that even this degree of social recognition would be undesirable.

Part of the oppression of women lies in the subordination and denial of female sexuality except as a response to the male, or as a means to the only 'true' female fulfillment in maternity. The assumption is of heterosexuality consisting of active male and passive female; women without men are assumed to be in an asexual state, or to be waiting for a man. (Even lesbian pornography is produced by and for heterosexual men).

Thus the assertion of homosexual identity in general and lesbian identity in particular has a political significance, and is one important step in the process of challenging our oppression.

We are not simply seeking to be tolerated (inevitably as an 'abnormal minority') within the confines of this society. As has been pointed out (2) 'the chief beneficiary from the new 'humane' attitude is the liberal who can now take pride not only in his heterosexuality but also in his tolerance of the

homosexual as being the victim of an undeserved affliction.' Such tolerance becomes another way of asserting a heterosexual identity, its normality and desirability; such tolerance excludes the possibility of recognising that one's sexuality and sexual orientation may be in any way problematical, or liable to change.

Many misunderstandings and hostilities still exist within the women's movement in Britain; I'll try to consider some aspects of these.

Firstly there is the effect of the assertion of a lesbian identity. The problem here is that at this time and within this society when we say that gay is good, we are asserting an identity which is denied; this assertion (if it has any effect) inevitably challenges the identity which is assumed, namely that of heterosexuality. It seems important to see that within the women's movement the tensions between gay women and heterosexual women develop within this general framework (which we have not created or chosen but which we cannot ignore if we want to change it).

Secondly there is the confusion over the question of bisexuality. To discuss this we have to distinguish between the world we are trying to create and the world we live in now. In some future socialist, sexually liberated society the bisexual potential (which probably exists in most people) may have the freedom to develop. But in the actual society in which we live now to say 'We're all bisexuals really' is as meaningful as saying that 'We're all middle class now'; it simply ignores all the structures of exploitation, oppression and repression which stifle and distort our lives. The point has been made very clearly in discussions in the American movement; in a forum on sexual liberation at Columbia in 1970 one woman put it like this: 'I can tell my friends I'm bisexual and they say how groovy, as long as I'm having a relationship with a man. If I say the same thing and introduce them to a woman I'm having a relationship with, they are very cool about it. I'm bisexual, but it's for my homosexuality that I'm oppressed. Therefore I say I'm a lesbian as a political statement.' (3) While recognising that bisexuality is probably impossible under capitalism or in any society in which women are oppressed, we should also see that the label of bisexual has provided a protective umbrella under which people may develop and change their sexuality (as some of us have done); it's a route to change which we should not close.

Thirdly there are fears amongst some women who consider themselves to be heterosexual that lesbianism threatens the women's movement; that to take up the cause of lesbian liberation is to make the movement more unpopular and especially to make it more difficult to connect to working class women.

There are sometimes veiled assumptions that lesbians are all middle class and that working class prejudice against homosexuals is stronger than among middle class people - both mistaken propositions which are used to justify these fears.

If we are really struggling for women's liberation - not just for equality within this society - then we cannot commit ourselves publicly only to those causes which will be most immediately popular or most respectable.

Few of the issues for which women have fought (the vote, which was won; equal pay, the right to free contraception and abortion - which are not yet won) seemed at all reasonable until the struggle for them was begun. The real danger of a 'lavender menace' to women's liberation will be realised if it is allowed to become the achilles heel which our enemies have tried to make it.

If the women's movement is committed to the right of women to control their own bodies, then we must be clear that this means not only the right to control our fertility but also the right to define and develop our own sexuality.

Fourthly there is the question of separatism, as a strategy and/or as a solution for women's liberation. This is the political perspective of many lesbians within the women's movement, but not of all.

Thus the discussion about separatism and the discussion about lesbian liberation are not identical. A commitment to lesbian liberation may involve a commitment to separatism, but will not necessarily do so.

Despite the age-long history and the pervasiveness of sexism within our society I do not think that we can fight it in isolation. The sexism which we are challenging is integrated into the structure of advanced capitalism, and the fight against it has to be part of a fight against that system as a whole. (Thus, for example, to fight the sexism which undoubtedly exists within the trade union movement requires different strategy and different tactics from those which we must use against fascist organisations such as the National Front).

Lesbian Liberation is not just the concern of lesbians, just as abortion or equal pay are not just the concern of women who themselves want and do not get these at the moment. But it is integral to the struggle for women's liberation. The oppression of lesbians is not separable from the oppression of women, but is an intensification of one aspect of that oppression, and thus contributes to the maintainance of the general system of oppression and exploitation within which we live and which we have to change.

#### REFERENCES:

- (1). Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love discuss this in their book 'Sappho was a right-on woman'. There is an article in 'The second wave', vol. 2, no 3 which discusses lesbianism in the context of female sexuality generally. There are articles on the first lesbian conference in the States in 'The lesbian tide', august 1973. (This is just some of the american writing which I have found useful).
- (2). In 'Psychiatry and the Homosexual'. Gay liberation pamphlet, no 1.
- (3). Quoted in 'Sappho was a right-on woman', p. 120

**margaret coulson**

The above article has been reprinted in greater length from 'Socialist Woman'. The Gay Collective would like to thank Margaret Coulson for her permission to reprint.

## The Homosexual in Education and Welfare Work

What foundations and reasoning lie behind the fears and contentions that the ruling-class have over the issue of the employment of homosexuals in social work, probation work, teaching, nursing etc.? Are these fears simply an extension of the propagated myth that homosexuals (and, in particular, homosexual men) are all potential child rapists and corrupt degenerates? Let us look at the ingredients of the rationale which led to the compilation of List 99\* and the ways in which homosexuals in these sections of employment see themselves.

The ideology of the ruling-class has combined two of its apparatus of oppression together to necessitate and rationalise, in the eyes of the liberal bourgeoisie, the notion of a 'watchdog' of sexually and politically 'subversive' elements in education and social welfare employment....., namely 'ageism' and the pervasive concept of sexism. The ideology of class society has invented ageism to define clearly roles (particularly among the working class) between age-groups.

This, like other methods of oppression, is simply another way of splitting the working-class by alienating one sector from another and diverting any possibility of mass organisation and cohesion among that class. It is especially purposeful in the area of sexuality where it becomes a concrete preparation for future sexist patterns of behaviour when young people reach the stage of entering the production process, safeguarding the Nuclear Family and perpetuating sexist role-differentiation (i.e. the subjugation of women, the myth of maternalism, the machismo of men and the reproductive process). The basis of ageism in relation to sexuality arises from the ethics of capitalist production. The idea that children have no 'real' sexual desires or 'discriminative capabilities' in forming sexual and/or emotional attachments follows from the assumption that because there is no profitable value, no commodity as a result, no production from the sexuality of children, then any manifestation of sexuality in a young person is undesirable or, at best, is not their doing but is the result of persuasion, corruption, exploitation or coercion by an adult (inherent here is the idea that children are incapable of thinking, or feeling, or choosing for themselves).

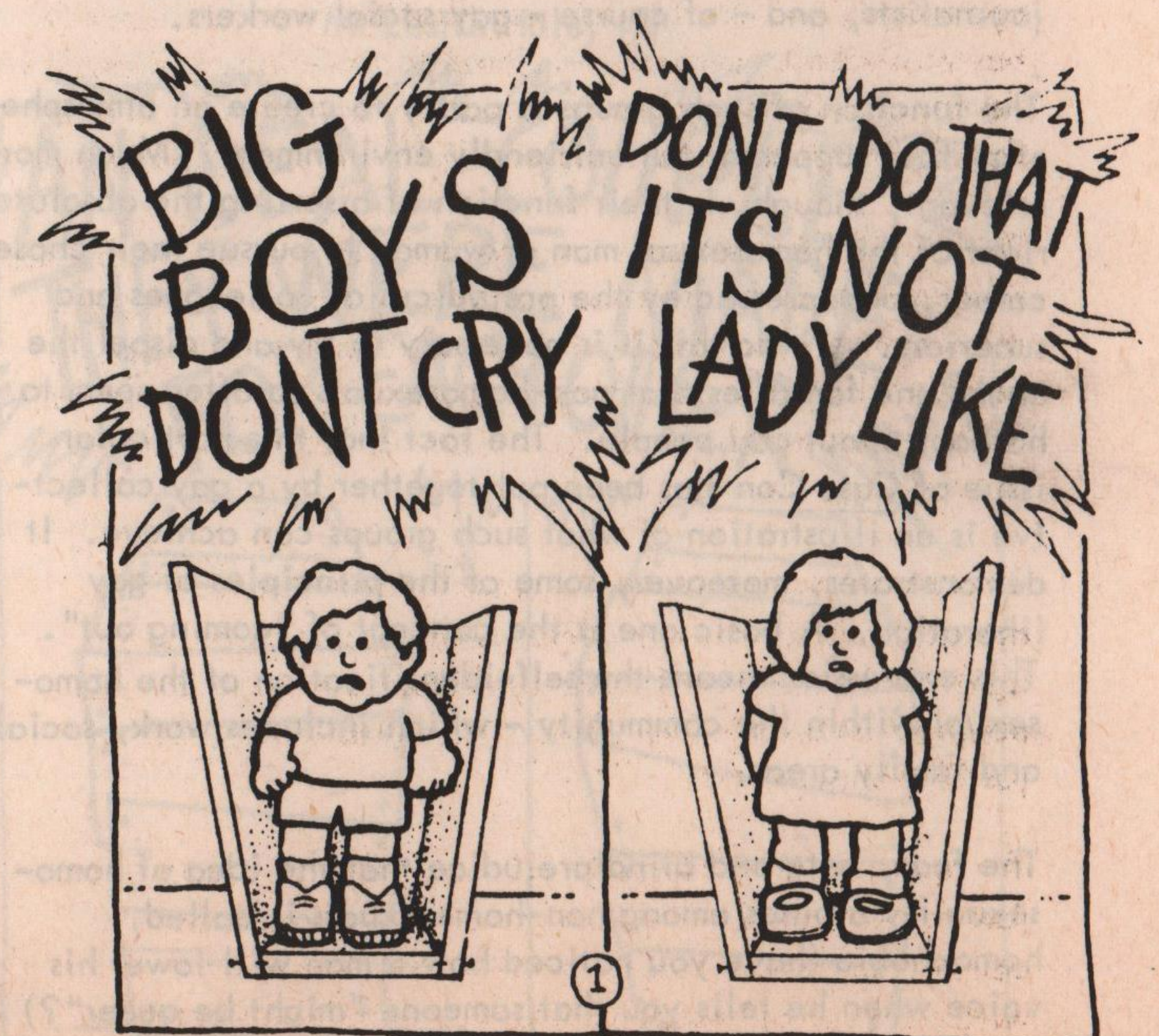
The same political analysis forms the basis which is used against the homosexual. If his/her sexuality is not based upon the principle of reproduction (and, indeed, reproduction is nowhere relevant to homosexual relationships), then it offends the 'laws of nature'. Such 'laws' were devised by the bourgeoisie for their own ends and

\* List 99: A list reputedly held by the Department of Education and Science of people who might for any reason (including homosexuality) be considered unsuitable for employment as teachers; supposedly not binding on local education authorities; its existence has been sometimes admitted, sometimes denied.

generously applied with lashings of 'scientific' explanations and defences in order to maintain and implant them firmly in the consciousness of the masses). Homosexuality, because it survives to a large extent without the confines of the Nuclear Family and is contrary to the chain of perpetuation of the Family, undermines the ideological foundations of class society. This is particularly true of lesbianism, where women have 'withdrawn their labour' from the reproductive process and have identified 'in toto' with other women (a symbolic denunciation, in the eyes of the ruling-class, of both the Nuclear Family and 'femininity').

And so, when employed in the areas of education and social welfare (where in contact with the precious raw material of children the homosexual is exposed to the possibility of being victimised and used as a scapegoat by those who maintain the 'sanctity' of childhood and the alienating mythologies of 'education'. What does the homosexual do when confronted with this possibility?

Because homosexuals (and particularly lesbians) are oppressed people by nature of their sexuality (also, in the case of lesbians, gender) and receive no approval of their sexual position in the power-structure - indeed, are sanctioned for it - many attempt to recompense themselves for this 'deprivation' by accumulating status and possessions in order to gain the approval of the prevailing culture and divert attention from their sanctioned, subversive sexuality (as has already been pointed out, homosexuality is subversive to the ordained sexual order and power structure of sexual politics). Hence, many working-class homosexuals have aspired to the lower middle-class (i.e. hairdressers, antique dealers, interior designers etc.) inheriting many of the values that go with



such status achievement. Lesbians have been denied such aspirational 'success', because of the general economic oppression of all women. The only way in which they can achieve it is secondhand (i.e. through a man), although many have been forced into heterosexual marriage by this and all other facets of women's oppression. Thus, many gay people who have achieved this economic and social status (by becoming social workers, teachers etc.) are afraid that by coming-out in the workplace they may well be deprived of this status and the security that it represents and may find themselves at the edge of the precipice. This situation is not only a dilemma for those homosexuals employed in middle-class professions, but is relevant to all homosexual workers. However, for many, the fear of stigma and reprisals is more acute than the fear of losing the accumulated economic and social status, mainly because the working-class do not possess such. If the mass of the people are working-class, then it follows that the mass of homosexuals are working-class.... utterly refuting any notion that homosexuality is at all a bourgeois phenomenon.

Therefore, what is to be done?

It is the contention of many liberals that dismissals and prevention/exclusion from employment protect the homosexual from harassment, blackmail and baiting. This is an inexcusable and deplorable rationalisation for oppression,

prejudice and legislative aggression. It is only by homosexuals organising together to defend our right to full employment, and by gaining the solidarity and active support of the Trade Union movement in order to protect and maintain our rights as workers to full job-security that we will see the demise of List 99 and eventually the reactionary attitudes which it represents and upholds. By this strategy, and by this organisation and struggle, the working-class movement will dynamically alter its own, often oppressive, attitudes and responses to the issues raised by homosexuals in the workplace and active within the Trade Union movement.

THE GUARDIAN Saturday January 25 1975

### Teacher ban

THE INNER London Education Authority has banned a 25-year-old graduate supply teacher, Mr John Warburton, from working in any of its schools because he has refused to agree not to mention homosexuality in the classroom. The National Council for Civil Liberties is looking into the case.

We, as socialists, trade unionists, workers and homosexuals, lend our solidarity and active support to all workers against oppression and exploitation, but we expect and demand the same in our fight for parity with all other workers in employment, political and social activity.

**martin henry**

# «OUT»

An organised gay movement has been active in this country for just over five years now. One of the developments from this has been a move for gay members of specific professions to get together, especially in those professions that are conventionally hostile to homosexuals. Though a group for gay policemen has yet to emerge, there are now active groups of gay librarians, gay civil servants, gay teachers, gay journalists, and - of course - gay social workers.

The function of such groups is partly to create an atmosphere of mutual support in an unfriendly environment. Much more relevant, though, is their function of asserting the absolute right of the homosexual man or woman to pursue their chosen career, unoppressed by the prejudices of colleagues and superiors. To do this it is necessary to try and dispel the myths and fantasies that non-homosexuals so often seem to harbour about gay people. The fact that this particular issue of Case Con has been put together by a gay collective is an illustration of what such groups can achieve. It demonstrates, moreover, some of the principles of gay liberation. A basic one is the concept of "coming out". This expression means the self-identification of the homosexual within the community - which includes work, social and family areas.

The fear, hate and blind prejudice that the idea of homosexuality arouses among non-homosexuals is called homophobia (have you noticed how a man will lower his voice when he tells you that someone "might be queer"?).

While this damages the personality of the non-homosexual in many ways, its effects are, of course, appalling on the homosexual community. More so when one realises that homophobia is irrational, unsupported by empirical observation and based on a placid, uncritical acceptance of distortions and lies.

Not all societies at all times have been in the grip of homophobia; they have not tried to suppress variety in human response nor tried to force every individual to aspire to the same ideal. In our culture, with its Judeo-Christian base, homophobia has received the blessing of the Church and implementation by the State. So, over the centuries, homosexuals have learned to perfect the most complete act of integration with the dominant society.

It is an act unmatched by any other minority group - we have made ourselves virtually undetectable. Homophobia has dictated a death penalty for homosexual acts which was not abolished in England until 1861. The criminal stigma was only lifted in England in 1967 and still applies in Scotland, Northern Ireland and in the armed forces. In fact, the 1967 Act allows homosexual acts only under the most precisely defined conditions, conditions which, if applied to heterosexual relationships, would most certainly cause an overnight revolution. Imagine trying to tell a couple living with their in-laws

that they couldn't have sex while the parents were in the house!

Legal sanctions and social rejection work hand-in-hand, forcing homosexuals into an amazing disappearing act. But during the last few years more and more gays have begun to question whether there is any longer a need to remain hidden. Homosexuality is normal enough after all; being gay is intrinsically no more harmful or reprehensible than being heterosexual; homophobia is a distortion of the heterosexual personality. If homosexuals decide to identify themselves, then quite quickly the heterohomophobics will see that their carefully polished views of the gay are merely grotesque distortions.

The fact that coming out is a process of self-identification is very important. Most of the perverse ideas that people have about homosexuals derive from discovering gayness in an unorthodox way. For example, a man may be prosecuted for having a sexual connection with a small boy. It is instantly assumed that this man is homosexual and, moreover, that all homosexuals have sexual connections with small boys. There is also a widely-held misconception that male homosexuals wish to be women. Therefore any man whose clothes, manner or address can be interpreted as effeminate must be homosexual. The word 'homosexual' is used as a blanket pejorative; interestingly, the man who has a sexual connection with small girls is not dismissed contemptuously as a 'heterosexual'.

In these ways homosexuals become identified. Self-identification allows one to say: "I am gay" in the same way as another might say: "I am heterosexual". Self-identification is a rejection of all the roles and put-downs of homosexuals that have been foisted on us by straight society. We reject straight labelling. To say: "I am gay" is saying also: "I am not a queer, a pansy, a diesel dyke, a poofier", or any other word that may spring to terrified lips.

Of course, it is very convenient for homosexuals to remain hidden while the only identifiable ones are those who fall foul of society or the law, thus confirming prejudices. For this means that the comfortable status quo can be maintained without question or discomforting criticism. The knowledge that there are thousands of homosexuals, in all jobs and in all walks of life, who are perfectly happy, perfectly ordinary and making their potent contribution to society is quite shattering. For the coming-out homosexual does, by his known presence, quietly subvert many almost sacred social structures and assumptions.

As I suggested earlier, the homophobic wishes to ensure that everybody aspires to the identical ideal. The homosexual suggests alternatives, other ideals. The homosexual, for example, questions the idea of heterosexual marriage as an ideal state for happiness; the gay questions the "natural" urge to have children; the gay questions, in fact, all those life-styles that are dictated by a male-dominated, heterosexual society. However, half of that society is not male, while a very substantial minority is not heterosexual either. Women have been forced into rigid roles and compelled to remain there by economic pressure. Gays have been told not to exist. This is changing.

There is a slogan much used in the gay activist movements, "Gay is Good". Confronted by this, many heterosexuals have gone into panic, reading it as meaning: "Gay is better",

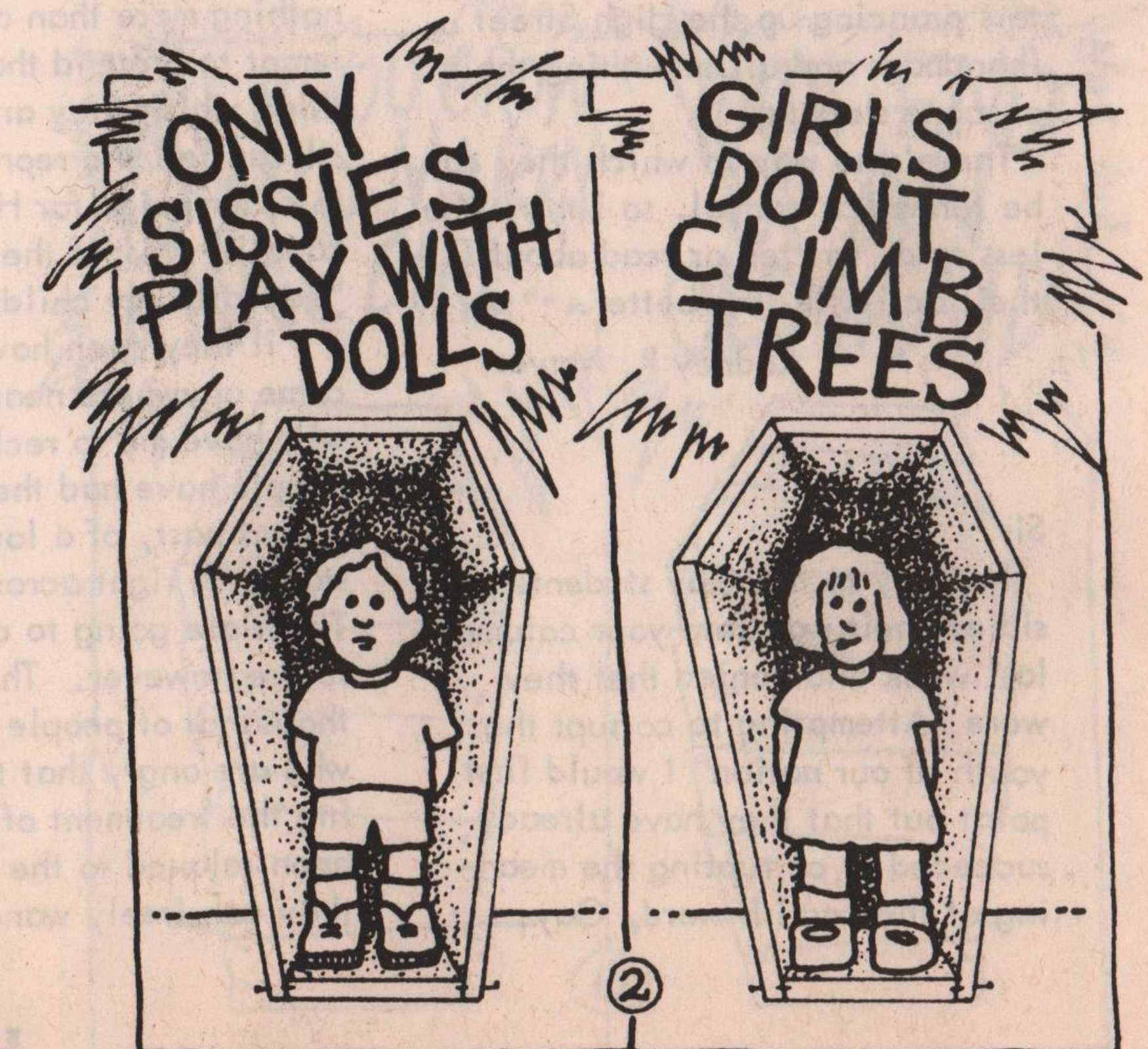
whereas it means what it says: "Gay is as good as..." However, I should like to conclude by suggesting two reasons why gay may well in fact be better than straight, reasons which might be worth consideration by those working with disturbed, unhappy and bewildered people.

Firstly, the vast majority of heterosexuals suffer from the disorder which I referred to as homophobia, which is certainly harmful. At the least, such a person is denying him- or herself access to, and knowledge of, different outlooks and experiences. At worst he is simply rejecting, without thought, one tenth of the population. Homosexuals do not carry this attitude towards straights and, in this area, they have a healthier view of society.

Secondly, all homosexuals, without exception, are brought up in a heterosexual society; they receive the same lessons, are shown the same models and are inducted with the same aspirations as their heterosexual brothers and sisters. It says quite a lot for the naturalness of the homosexual urge that eventually it resists such heavy pressure to conform: just as the body quite naturally rejects food that is bad for it, so the personality, quite naturally, rejects the sexuality that will be wrong for it. However, this means that homosexuals have a thorough knowledge of heterosexual manners and ideas, know about role-expectations, understand all the ins and outs of straight society. But they are also similarly intimate with and sensitive to the homosexual society of which heterosexuals are ignorant. Homosexuals tend, therefore, to be much more aware of human differences and of human potential. In a way it is rather like being able to speak two languages, but the implications are much deeper. (I do not wish to be accused of perpetrating that boring old bit of self-justification so often indulged in by gays - that they are "so sensitive". What I am talking about falls simply within the order of common experience, shared by all.)

Such abilities are valuable, and most surely homosexuals do use them, whether or not their colleagues are aware of it. However, such contributions will be more valuably used when all homosexuals come out, can stand up and say with dignity and assurance: I am gay.

**roger baker**



WITH A  
LITTLE  
HELP  
FROM  
OUR  
FRIENDS . . .  
NALGO's PUBLIC SERVICE DEC. '74.

## Homosexuals: shock and understanding

THE LETTER we published from Howard Hyman in October announcing the setting-up of a self-help homosexual group within NALGO — it is open to members in all services and not just the health service as was stated at the time — has sparked off a strong response from readers. It is impossible to publish all the letters and we therefore quote from, or summarise, some of these letters below.

"Perhaps this could lead to a little more tolerance for those who, like myself, form an even smaller minority group — the sado-masochistic pederasts with overtones of rubber fetishism" — David Jones, Liverpool O&M Unit. Homosexuals are "sick, abnormal perverts who do not want to be cured", writes E. N. W. Warman, Cromer, and quotes 1 Corinthians ch. 6, verse 9, to show that they will not be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. He considers that our printing Mr. Hyman's letter is like being "importuned in a public lavatory".

F. A. Mabbitt, Southampton, appears to consider that homosexuals should not even be admitted into NALGO, let alone heaven.

A woman member, who must remain anonymous, writes: "I was heartened to read Howard Hyman's letter. Six months ago, my son had the courage to tell my husband and me that he was

homosexual and he now has the strength of our support . . . I sincerely hope you will print my letter to let people who are not heterosexual know that they are not completely alone, the climate of opinion is slowly changing and there are people who understand."

M. Brindley, Loughborough, finds it very difficult to believe that there are thousands of homosexuals in NALGO, two-thirds of whose membership is female. (The proportion is two-fifths and there are women homosexuals, Mr. Brindley. — Ed.)

W. G. S. Jones of Swansea writes that "the correct term is not homosexuality but sodomy" and that they "should cease this disgusting habit" which is indirectly responsible for "bombing of property, hi-jacking, murder, kidnapping for ransom, vandalism, mugging, general selfishness and empty churches."

. . . . . AND FROM OUR ENEMIES

KENTISH GAZETTE 15.11.74

Sir,

I fully realise that you have to give space in your paper for some of life's most distasteful subjects, but to publish letters from Canterbury's Gay Brigade is a little too much I think.

Normal people, I'm sure, don't want to know in the slightest about their queer goings on — nor do they want it imposed on them when they are out shopping with their families and have to undergo the disgusting scenes of about 50-60 Gay Libérators prancing up the High Street (handbags and all) mouthing their obscene slogans.

There's no way in which they can be termed as normal, so I think the less said, written or read about their activities the better.

Rodney R. Mayes

Sir,

In reply to the Gay students who sidled their way into your columns last week and denied that they were "Attempting to corrupt the youth of our nation" I would first point out that they have already succeeded in corrupting the meaning of the English word, Gay.

If these posturing parasitical "Poofs" think that there is anything gay about their condition, then they should have a walk round the Earls Court Road area of London around 11 any evening and have a look at the sickening examples of perversion loitering on every corner, who have turned our capital city into a national disgrace.

These people are very well aware of the meaning of the word Gay. They are also well aware that to apply this word to themselves is nothing more than a desperate attempt to pretend that they are something which they are not.

I can tell the representatives of this Campaign for Homosexual Equality this: If they start trying to "educate" my children — and I have 3 — if they even have the nerve to come anywhere near them, they will have me to reckon with. These people have had the benefit in the recent past, of a lowering of moral standards right across the board. Times are going to change in the future however. There are many thousands of people in this country who are angry that the law regarding the treatment of queers has been relaxed to the point where they can freely wander round Canter-

bury, giving out leaflets and kisses to all and sundry. There are many thousands of people who think that the law should be changed pretty quick. "Robin" and his or her friends, should keep quiet and reflect how fortunate they are that the British people are so very tolerant, that tolerance ought not to be pushed to the limit.

D.W. Smith

(Kent Regional Agent, National Front)

Sir,

The promoters and exponents of sodomy in the nation have posed the question, what is moral corruption?

The National Front supports the traditions of Christian moral behaviour handed down to us by our British ancestors and considers these moral values to be essential to our national stability and family life. We are against the new ideas of the "Progressives" with their "New Morality" backed as it is by foreign ideologies of those who have come to our islands from elsewhere in Europe and beyond. The backers of these people are determined on our national destruction. . . . .

K.R. McKilliam

## Coming Out From the Cold

Icebreakers is a collective of homosexual women and men who run a nightly telephone service for other gay people, and who reject the assumptions and jargon of social work.

Their number is 01 274 9590, open every evening of the year between 7.30. and 10.30. p.m.

### WHY WAS ICEBREAKERS SET UP?

We live in a society which generally regards homosexuality as inferior, sick, unnatural or immoral. Even when gay people do not experience actual physical oppression, they usually internalise these values, generating feelings of guilt, self-hatred and depression. The physical oppression can often take the form of officially sanctioned assaults on the homosexual; some are pressurised into, or are forced to undergo, aversion therapy or hormone treatment, others are imprisoned or 'queer-bashed'. Gay men and women are firmly discouraged from displaying their true personalities and emotions, and these often become distorted and repressed through years of deception — even self-deception.

By its pressures against homosexuality and even its pretence that it does not exist, society often makes gay people unable to acknowledge their sexuality. Many people resist recognising their feelings of attraction to others of the same sex, and some — if they are aware of their feelings — may consider it to be a sign of inferiority or weakness; something to be obliterated. Icebreakers believes in the validity and equal intrinsic value of homosexuality, and desires to help change society so that neither gay people nor women are treated as inferiors. We hope to replace the negative attitudes of callers towards their homosexuality with positive ones.

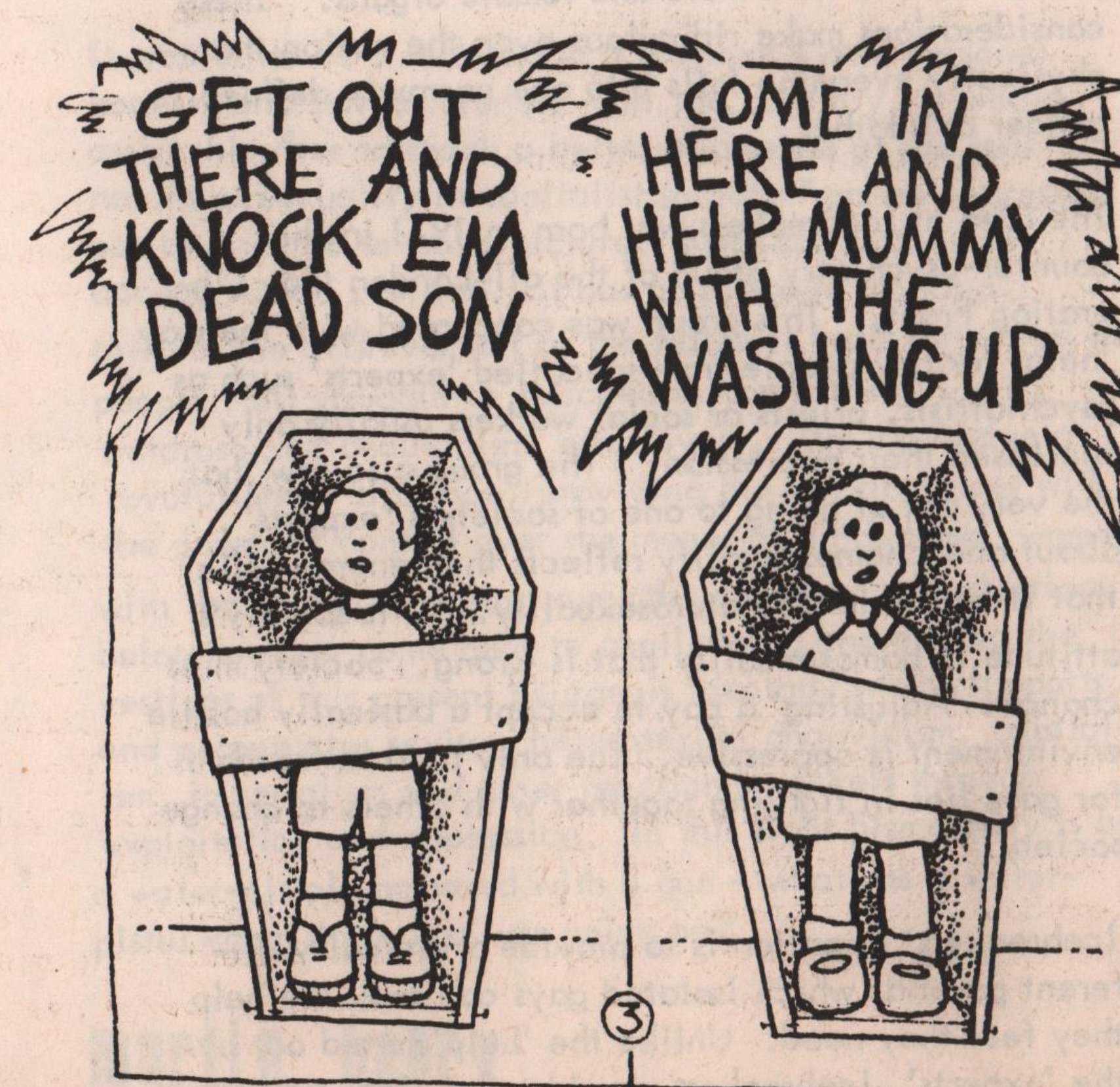
Because of their guilt most homosexuals hide their homosexuality from their parents, children, sisters, brothers, people at work, friends and marriage partner. One result is that people most often remain ignorant of the homosexual nature of others they meet; another is that most gay people remain isolated from one another. "Coming out" is a process in which the gay person can stop hiding from other people her or his homosexuality, therefore entering into honest relationships. This helps to rid the gay person of guilt and communicates to still isolated gays that they are not alone and that there is nothing of which they need be ashamed. Icebreakers believes coming out to be fundamental to finally dispelling guilt and changing attitudes.

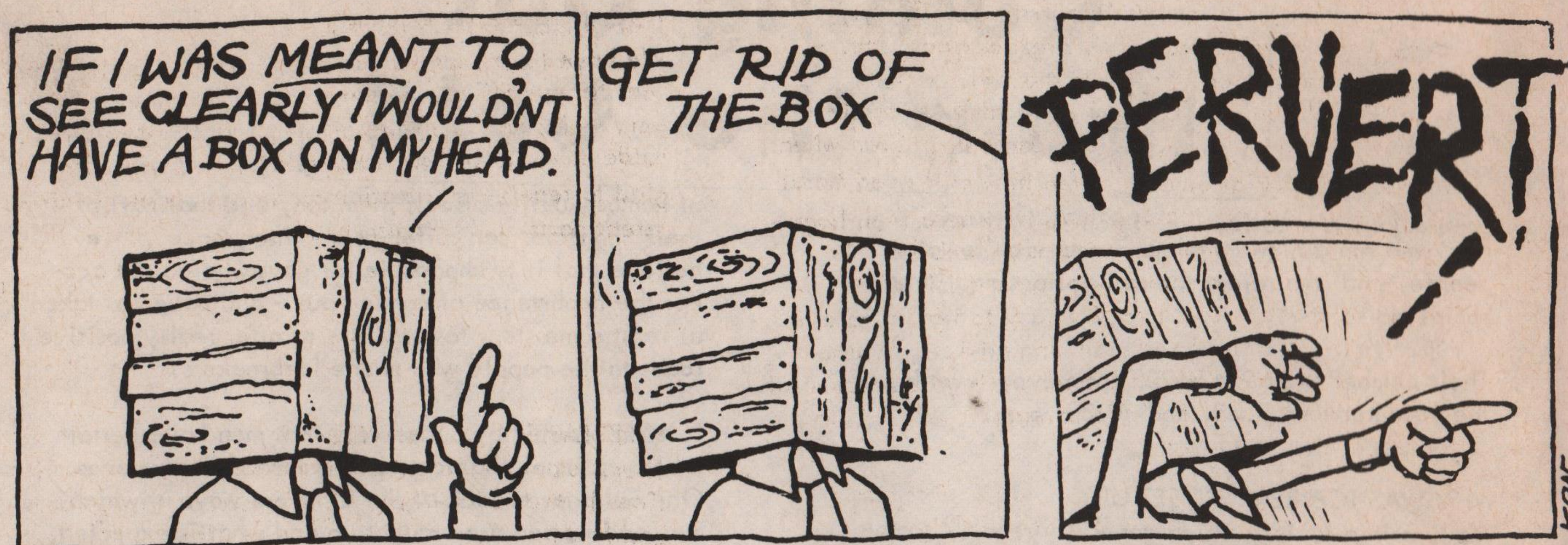
Coming out is not always easy. This is especially true in hostile professions such as nursing, the police, psychiatry or social work. But it is the most important step a gay person can take, no less for Icebreakers than for the people who call us. Coming out as gay is also important for bisexuals; our society's oppression

of homosexuality affects them too, and that part of their character can suffer as a consequence. We believe that it is impossible for gays who do not accept the importance of coming out — and have not taken at least some steps towards it — to offer really positive ideas to the people who phone Icebreakers.

It is maintained by our society that men have certain inborn traits of character and women different ones. One only has to look at the different ways in which men and women are brought up and what is expected of them throughout their lives to see that present differences in character are due to influences after birth. Women are said to be more emotional, and we have all heard it said that "boys do not cry — only girls do that." Men are supposed to be more creative, constructive, rational, intelligent, aggressive and dominant.

Women have only one role — that of wife and mother, secondary and subservient to that of her husband. Women are oppressed even in language; for example the common use of the male pronoun when both men and women are implied. It is not surprising, therefore, that their sexuality should be considered unimportant. The oppression of male homosexuality is by attitudes and actions against it; the oppression of lesbianism is mostly by society completely ignoring it. Even more for lesbians than for male homosexuals they are thought to be people merely lacking a partner of the opposite sex; once they find this partner, so we are expected to believe, they will become heterosexual. Icebreakers rejects these attitudes towards lesbians.





We believe that given the right society, men and women would vary widely in their character; the traits now called masculine and feminine could no longer be aligned exclusively to gender. Transsexuals are people existing in our society who think of themselves as members of the opposite gender from the one to which they have been assigned. Often their sexual organs may be those of the gender opposite to that to which they mentally belong. Transvestites are people - homosexual or heterosexual - who want to dress in clothes 'normally' worn by members of the opposite sex and who may derive sexual pleasure from doing so. The existence of transsexuals and transvestites contradicts the rigid roles of male and female in our society. Similarly, the existence of homosexuals questions these roles. A lesbian does not automatically fit into the role of wife and mother which has been assigned to her, although there are many lesbian mothers. A male homosexual does not fit the role of the 'unemotional' man, nor need he be the dominant partner that we are told all men should be.

Even physical gender characteristics, such as the size of sexual organs, vary. Some people called hermaphrodites have both male and female organs. These considerations make ridiculous even the notion that physically everyone falls into one narrowly defined gender or another.

The idea of Icebreakers was born in 1971 in the counter-psychiatry group of the all-London Gay Liberation Front. This group was concerned with the way 'help' for gay people from so-called 'experts' such as psychiatrists, priests or social workers usually only increased their oppression. The group also saw that the very act of going to one of society's 'experts' about one's homosexuality reflects the general belief that it is inferior to heterosexuality. It is society's attitude to homosexuality that is wrong. Society must change. 'Adjusting' a gay to accept a basically hostile environment is oppressive. The only road to freedom for gays lies in fighting together with others to change society.

Icebreakers' intention is to provide a radically different point at which isolated gays can seek the help they feel they need. Unlike the 'help' meted out by the 'experts', Icebreakers provides the clear message that gay is good.

#### HOW DOES ICEBREAKERS OPERATE?

We are all gay people and advertise ourselves as such. We believe that heterosexuals cannot understand with any depth the feelings and experiences of homosexuals living in a world that is largely hostile to a fundamental aspect of their personality. Nor can they understand what it is like to have loving relationships with someone of their own sex. We can offer our personal experience of these and of homosexual sex. We want gay people to see how valuable their homosexuality is and to increase their self-respect. The act of a heterosexual counselling a gay person oppressed by heterosexual values is unavoidably patronising.

We also avoid the patronising attitudes involved in the assumptions and jargon of 'social work'; we are not concerned with 'cases' and 'treatment' but with people and ideas.

Icebreakers are homosexual people who are glad to be homosexual. Each of us, in our own way, wants to help end the oppression of gay people through practical action. We do not expect everyone who phones us to share our philosophy. But we cannot see how positive help or ideas can come from gay people who tacitly support gay oppression in any of its forms. Icebreakers enables gay people to make contact, often for the first time, with other homosexual women and men.

For many of the people who phone it is the first time they have knowingly spoken to another gay person.

Many are individually met or introduced to regular small gatherings where they can meet and talk freely with other gay people, again often for the first time. Discussions range over sexuality, relationships, the oppression of gay people, coming out, and individual situations. An important aim is to help introduce people into the gay community - but even today it is a problem, especially for women, to find enough places or groups where the apprehensive gay will be made to feel welcome and relaxed on her or his first visit.

We are not a gay dating agency or 'marriage' bureau, nor can we offer lasting friendship to everyone who rings us.

Icebreakers answer letters sent to the 'Troubled Waters' column of the homosexual newspaper Gay News. But the majority of people seem to prefer the greater initial anonymity and immediate response offered by the telephone.

Some callers simply require information on the gay scene - gay pubs, clubs or gay organisations, etc. - a service we are quite happy to provide. Others need special advice - medical or legal for example - and we refer them to people who can help. Even when callers need special advice, often they still need moral support to help them tackle situations where their homosexuality is going to be regarded as a 'problem'. Still other callers want to talk about a crisis with friend, parents and so on, and we try to lend a helpful and willing ear, and non-moralising advice. Where the parents of young gays need contacting we recommend Parents Enquiry, or talk to the parents ourselves with the agreement of the caller.

☆☆☆

#### WHO PHONES AND HOW OFTEN?

We have found that a wide variety of gay people ring us: housewives, lorry drivers, psychiatrists, Samaritans, social workers, clergy, etc. Their ages have varied from 11 to 70. Meeting others, whether or no for sex, is not easy for those in extreme age groups, especially for gay people. As is the case generally for women, the sexual and emotional satisfaction of people of these age groups is discounted and not officially recognised within our society.

In the first year from May 1973 when we began, we received calls from just under 2,000 different people. Only about one in six were from women, although there are probably just as many women as men who are gay. One in ten of all our calls were from people who told us they were transsexual. One of the Icebreakers is a preoperative transsexual. Amongst our callers are fetishists, sado-masochists and homosexual pederasts. These groups suffer all the resulting problems of being rejected not only by heterosexual society but also by most gay people. The most alarming forms of persecution are suffered by transsexuals, transvestites and pederasts.

Calls have come from all over the British Isles and even from abroad, though the majority have been from South-East England and particularly London. We would have had more calls if we had more than one telephone line, more advertising or had operated for longer hours. As it is, individual Icebreakers find themselves dealing with many recalls on their home phones as well as those received in the office.

In January 1975 there were 27 Icebreakers in London, four of them women.

☆☆☆

#### CAN I BE AN ICEBREAKER?

We receive several requests from people who want to help us by joining the rota of people answering the phone. If you want to do this please write to us. Remember that we have to choose from among the people who want to be an Icebreaker. The first step will be a lengthy discussion with one or two Icebreakers who do not personally know you.

#### CAN I HELP IN OTHER WAYS?

We have to pay phone and printing bills, postage and rent for our office. Donations small and large are very welcome. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to 'Gay Icebreakers'. We are also glad to receive information on the gay scene in different parts of the British Isles.

☆☆☆

#### ICEBREAKERS SOUTH-WEST

There is another Icebreakers collective run on similar lines in the South-West. They operate on Mondays and Fridays, from 7:30 to 9:30pm. Their phone number is 0272 (Bristol) 55 6925.

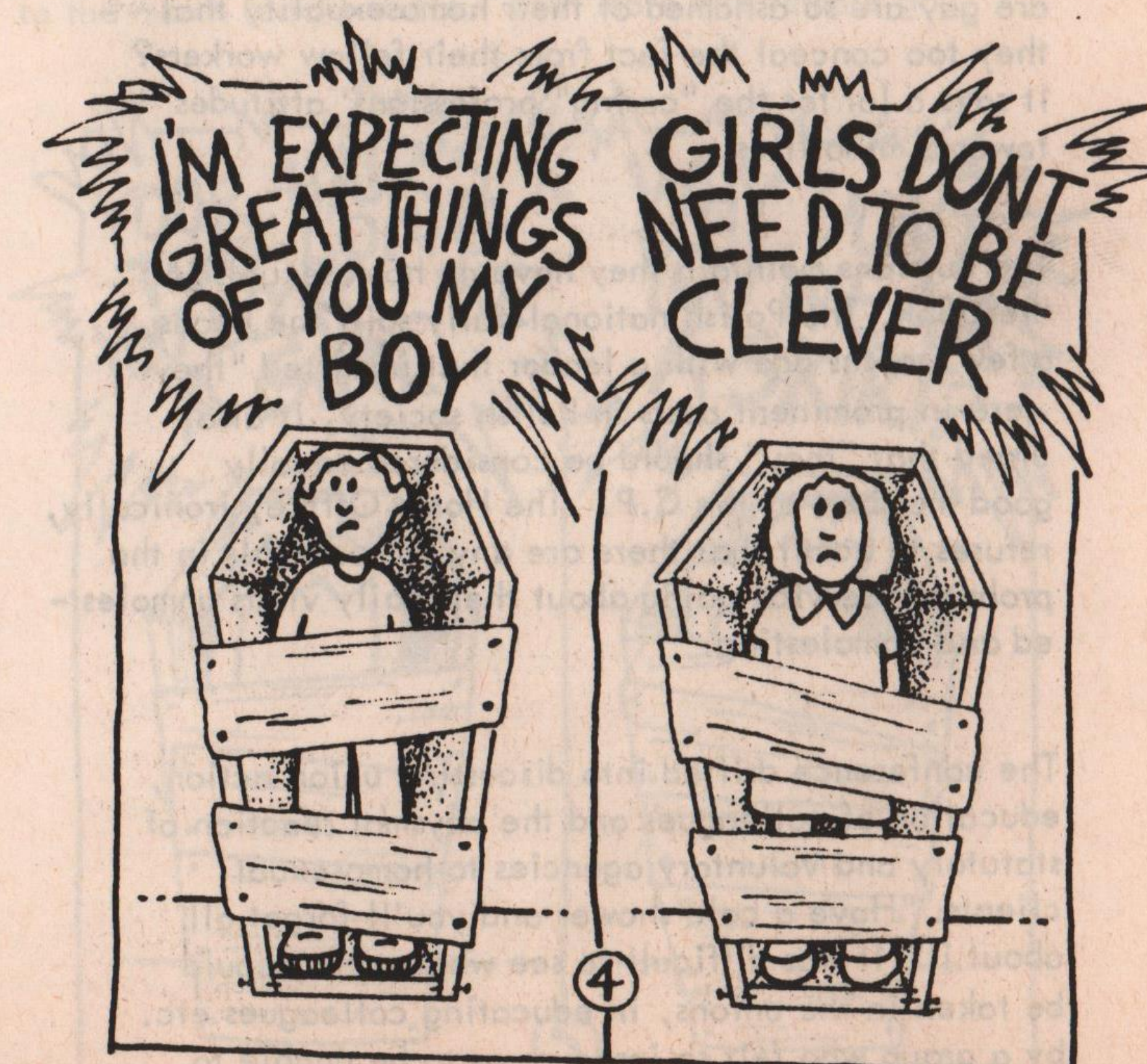
☆☆☆

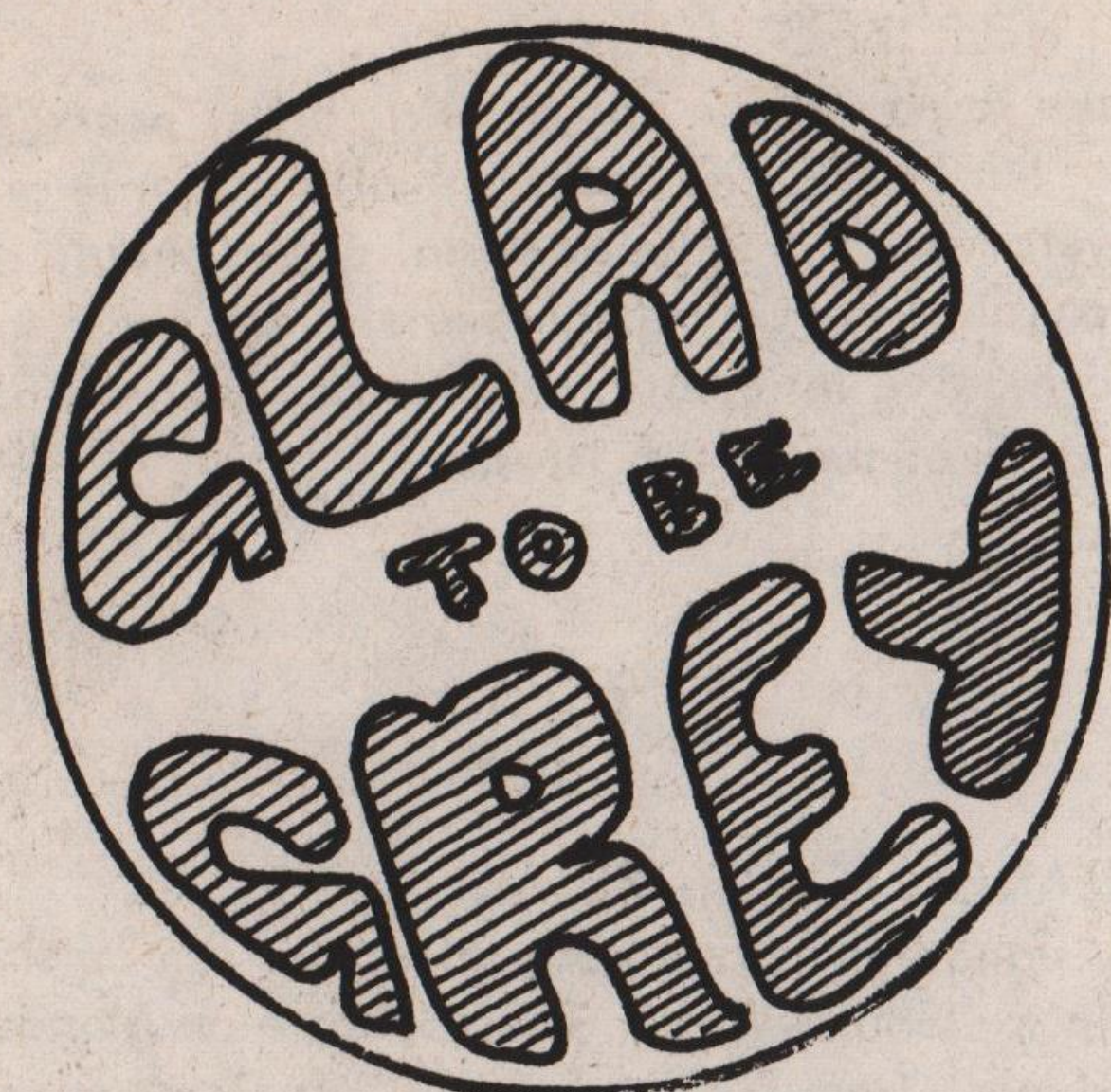
We do not want the name 'Icebreakers' to be used for groups based on a different approach. If you are proposing to set up a group in another part of the country then a meeting with us is an essential first step.

OUR ADDRESS: ICEBREAKERS, BM/GAYLIB,  
LONDON WC1V 6XX

© Icebreakers 1975

**nettie pollard**  
**keith hose**  
**micky burbridge**





Don't be fooled by the badges - if there is one group that isn't "Glad to be Gay" it is probation officers followed, a close second, by social workers.

Scene: Conway Hall, London.

Time: Saturday, October 12th.

Cast: Seventy Gay probation officers and social workers.

So there we all were, stuck in the Conway Hall on the only sunny Saturday since last May, with acres of fag ends, (and for those heterosexuals who are familiar with american slang, I am not referring to the delegates). Superficially, it looked like any other conference, with its quota of those bribed to attend, plus those who had nothing better to do with their week-end. The difference about this conference was that it was of vital importance to all of the delegates. Instead of the usual focus on "them" and "their" problems, this time it was "us" and "ours".

Did you know that 99.9% of homosexual probation officers are passing for heterosexuals amongst their colleagues and clients? Were you aware that almost the same percentage of social workers who are gay are so ashamed of their homosexuality that they too conceal the fact from their fellow workers? It says a lot for the "caring" professions' attitudes towards minorities.

The Russians maintain they have no homosexuals in the USSR. The Polish national daily spilt the beans a few months ago with a leader that admitted "they" were in prominent posts in Polish society. It also urged that "they" should be considered equally good members of the C.P. The Home Office, ironically, refuses to admit that there are any homosexuals in the probation service going about their daily visits unmolested and unmolesting.

The conference drifted into discussing union action, education of colleagues and the abysmal reaction of statutory and voluntary agencies to homosexual clients. "Have a cold shower and you'll forget all about it". It was difficult to see what action could be taken in the unions, in educating colleagues etc. by a group who felt so insecure as to be unable to be frank about their own homosexuality.

If gay is glad it shouldn't be after this conference. What emerged can give little comfort to the kids on council estates who have dared to be so "deviant" as to show affection towards friends of the same sex as themselves. They have good reason to fear an outbreak of queer bashing. Their gay social worker or probation officer will not be "coming out" this year, or next year either. Gay equals deviant equals pervert equals outcast. The respectable elite are not going to sweep that stereotype from their own office doorstep.

## mike launder

### GAY WORKERS' CONFERENCE

The first ever conference of gay working people will be held in Leeds some time in March, 1975. This is our first opportunity as gay workers to start challenging the chauvinism of the trade union movement by organising the widest possible support within the unions for the rights of gay workers, and in particular to fight victimisations. Organising the widest possible publicity and support for this conference is the first step. TU branches should be encouraged to send messages of support, and all gay workers should attend this vitally important conference. Enquiries and messages of support to:

Conference of Gay Working People  
c/o Martin O'Leary  
32 Hartley Grove  
Leeds 6.



## M.P. protests on 'gay' 100

Sunday Telegraph Reporter Mr. Jenkins, Home Secretary, and Mrs. Castle, Social Services Secretary, are to be asked to explain why the Government is employing more than 100 homosexuals as probation officers and social workers.

M.P.s and welfare services experts believe that homosexuals in probation officers' positions leave them open to blackmail intimidation, and contempt among offenders.

Mrs. Jill Knight, Conservative M.P. for Edgbaston, said yesterday: "I will be questioning the relevant Ministers on how such people can be placed in positions of responsibility to pervert young people." At least 70 probation officers and 50 local authority social workers from all over Britain, banded together in the Conway Hall, London in October, to form the first British Gay Social Workers Club.



Mrs. Jill Knight, M.P.  
House of Commons  
London S.W. 1A 0AA

124 Wilberforce Road  
London N. 4

3 January, 1975

Dear Mrs. Knight,

I have only just seen a copy of the Sunday Telegraph of December 22nd, in which certain remarks are attributed to you, concerning the employment of homosexuals in the probation and social service.

No doubt Mr. Jenkins' and Mrs. Castle's departments will be able to reassure you that there has been no change in the criteria used for the selection of probation officers by the various academic bodies and employing authorities. (I am assured by friends in Edgbaston that the rush for shoulder bags and nail varnish in the last month is a normal occurrence before Christmas and has nothing to do with rumours about transvestite parties among social workers and probation officers.)

I am unaware of any significant number of sexual offences committed by social workers or probation officers, whether heterosexual or homosexual, against their clients. I thus feel that the judgement of academics and employers have been vindicated and that these two professions are no more subject to violation of professional ethics than any others. Therefore I feel forced to conclude that your accusation against these two professions is hypothetical, and could equally have been launched at any other group in positions of responsibility and trust.

Homosexuality is known by most authorities and researchers to be in the ratio of one in twenty of the adult population, regardless of their socio-economic grouping. Might I suggest that you commence your witch-hunt to find the thirty members of the House of Commons, who might, (hypothetically, of course) be guilty of homosexuality? Then, if your concern is about 'undesireable influences', you might have a fruitful look at the books which might, (again, hypothetically) be on the reading lists of sixth formers. Since you obviously take offence at declared, unrepentant, known homosexuals, this area is particularly rewarding and includes works by Sartre, Gide and Genet for the Anti-Marketeer, and Maugham, Forster and Waugh for the Nationalist. I take it that you are not unduly worried about the influence of homosexual workers on the assembly line at Fords and therefore the Fine Arts might be another area for rooting about - and who better to start with than Michaelangelo and Da Vinci? Lady Longford has done an excellent biography of one of our homosexual kings, James 1st, which could serve as a thoughtful beginning to a weeding out of the higher echelons of society - but then this would leave you so little time to attend to your constituents, (the heterosexual ones, of course, not the offending one in twenty) - but then you might learn something about a subject of which you are at present so painfully ignorant.

I am forwarding copies of this letter to Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Castle in the hope that it may at least bring a little light relief to their departments, toiling on your behalf, as they too reflect: 'how can such people be placed in positions of responsibility?'

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Launder

From: Mrs. Jill Knight, M.B.E., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th January, 1975.

M. Launder, Esq.,  
124 Wilberforce Road,  
LONDON, N4.

Dear Mr. Launder,

I am sorry that you feel that the possible perversion of young people in the care of the Local Authority is a laughing matter. My concern stems from an actual case in which a child in the care of a Local Authority was sexually harmed by a pervert who was in charge of him. I think you should understand that those people who have care of children who themselves are in the care of the Local Authority must be as Caesar's wife. While of course there are many many thousands of avenues open to homosexuals (and quite right too) in which they can earn their living happily and successfully, it is clear that looking after very young children in an intimate way is not one of them. Whatever else one may say about homosexuals - and I am sure that very many of them are kind, gentle intelligent people - they are not normal sexually, and it is never wise to allow a child to be cared for by persons who are not normal. Surely that is not so extraordinary?

Your rather stupid remarks make me hope that you are unrepresentative of most homosexuals. I am not engaging in a "witch hunt" in any way. I am merely rather more concerned for the safety of children than you appear to be.

Since you sent copies of your letter to Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Castle, I am also sending copies to them of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Knight

Mrs. Jill Knight, M.B.E., M.P.  
House of Commons  
London S.W. 1A 0AA

Dear Mrs. Knight,

Thank you for your letter of 10th January, and for clarifying what I already suspected, that you have elected to speak on a subject about which you are grossly ignorant. Homosexuals per se are no more of a threat to children than heterosexuals; you are talking about a completely different subject, i.e. paedophilia.

What angers me is not that an M.P. should make such a fool of herself in public but that she should insult upwards of two million homosexuals by her ignorant use of terms. I see no purpose in continuing this correspondence on a personal basis and I am thus forwarding your letter to the Campaign for Homosexual Equality for action in defence of its members and supporters. There are two statements in your letter directed at me personally which do warrant my reply. Firstly, nowhere in my letter is there a shred of evidence to justify that I consider sexual offences against children a laughing matter or that I have no concern for their safety. Secondly, and again without evidence, you assume that a letter which defends homosexuals must be written by a homosexual. For a member of parliament to assert that any person who defends a minority must belong to that minority reveals an impetuous tendency to draw conclusions in the absence of facts. Should you reply to other letters on this subject you would be well advised not to repeat that assumption, for the description 'homosexual' as applied by you could prove actionable.

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Launder.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th January 75

Dear Mr. Launder,

I was most

amused at your warning that I may be said to suggest that any person is a homosexual. If there is nothing wrong with being a homosexual why on earth should such a statement or assumption be actionable?

Yours sincerely,

Jill Knight

Mrs. Jill Knight, M.B.E., M.P.  
House of Commons  
London S.W. 1A 0AA

Dear Mrs. Knight,

In reply to your letter of 20th January, I would refer you to the first paragraph of my last letter in which I stated that you did not know the difference between paedophilia and homosexuality. When you have clarified in your own mind that difference, the answer to your question will be quite obvious.

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Launder.

124 Wilberforce Road  
London N. 4

14 January, 1975

Two months is a long time in politics, long enough, it would seem, to forget that professed ignorance, even if it does not gain one votes, can at least spare one's blushes. The Campaign for Homosexual Equality wrote to Mrs Knight in September 1974, asking her attitude towards proposed changes in the law on homosexuality. She replied thus:

JILL  
KNIGHT

ELECTION HEADQUARTERS  
96 EDMUND STREET  
BIRMINGHAM  
B3 3DW  
Telephone: 021 236 7671

CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE FOR EDGBASTON

JK/JF

3rd October, 1974

C. J. Bowden-Smith, Esq.,  
CHE West Midlands Group,  
P.O. Box 39  
SUTTON COLDFIELD  
West Midlands.  
B73 6BY

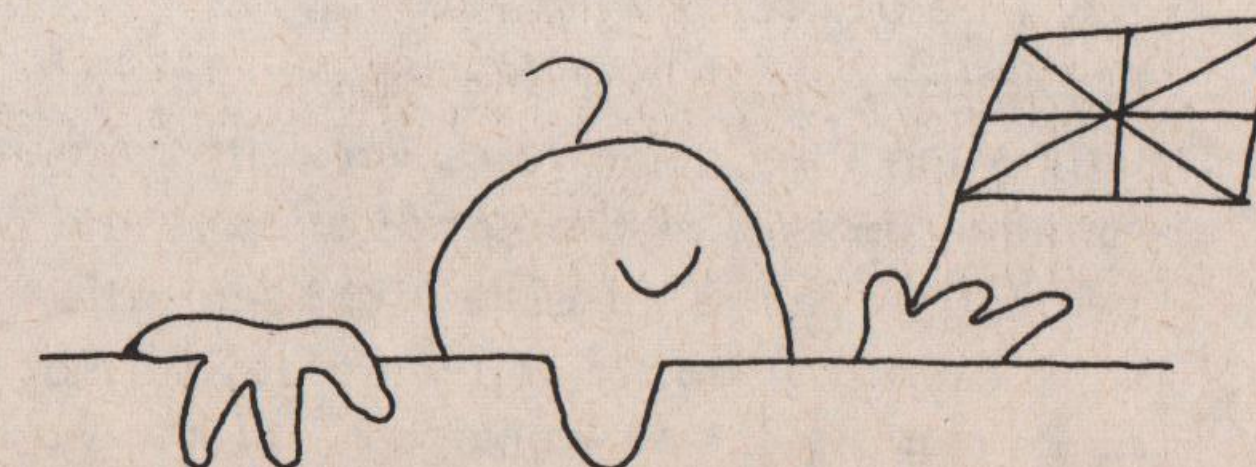
Dear Mr. Bowden-Smith,

I cannot quite understand the letter which you sent to me on the 28th September. It puzzles me that you make some reference to previous correspondence with regard to my attitude about changes in the law on homosexuality.

I have always said, with regard to this subject, that I do not understand homosexuality and I always follow a rule in Parliament not to vote on subjects which I do not understand.

Yours sincerely,

Dictated by Mrs. Knight and signed  
in her absence by Mrs. J. Fletcher,  
Private Secretary.



BYE-BYE

# If they come in the morning

"I don't care what you do in bed as long as you don't organise around it" - that's one reaction to the gay movement from a leading member of a political group. It's a reaction that sums up the attitude of many liberal minded people who are prepared to tolerate homosexuality - even tolerate a gay movement, as long as it knows its place - but who don't see the question as at all important, even to homosexuals.

Unfortunately, there are people who do care what we do in bed, and are quite prepared to organise against it. In 'normal' times, the capitalist state is quite prepared to make laws about what gay people do in bed, and to 'organise' them into prison for it, on the basis that what they do is a threat to one of the central institutions of capitalist society - the nuclear family - and to the ideas on sexuality that prop up the family.

We are not at the moment in 'normal' times. All the basic institutions of capitalist society - economic, social, and political - are beginning to look a bit rocky. In situations like this, some very strange political coalitions tend to be put together in an attempt to prop them up; these coalitions draw their inspiration from an idea of how things used to be when everything was lovely in the garden, to try to create a new political right wing by reasserting the traditional values of love of one's country, motherhood, self reliance, cold baths, etc. The actual tactic for reasserting the traditional values, of course, is to wipe out the rotten elements that have been threatening them.

There is no coalition of this sort with mass influence in Britain today. There are some small groups trying to get a mass base, trying to build up a powerful regroupment on the right. The National Front, the British Movement, and the New Democratic Freedom Party are all ferreting away at this job. Most of their energy is directed towards reinforcing the British 'race', but they haven't ignored the question of the family either. Mary Whitehouse and the anti-abortionists have been used as recruitment and election fodder in a big way. The NDFP in Leeds has used an anti-gay campaign as an important tactic in drumming up support. The city centre was recently plastered with stickers saying "Smash GLF: Kill Martin O'Leary". (Martin O'Leary is a local gay militant.) While there are lots of people who are virulently anti-gay, the far right is going to be able to use this in campaigns against all sections of the gay population - against the ghettos and against the gay liberation movement.

Of course, that's nothing to what fascists do to homosexuals when they come to power. In Germany, the Nazis rounded up tens of thousands of gays and put them in concentration camps. Inside a concentration camp, you wore a yellow star if you were Jewish, or an upside down pink triangle if you were gay. Either way, you were beaten, tortured, starved, and eventually gassed. In Chile too, since the coup, there have been mass arrests and torture of gays.

Of course, there are gays in fascist organisations. Some fascist organisations at some stages in their growth actually encourage a sort of supermasculine all-boys-together homosexuality. There is even a Gay Nazi Party in the States. Hitler's Brownshirts were of course the best developed and best known example of this sort of thing, but there are traces of it much nearer home in the iron crosses, chains, leather jackets cult in the Earls Court Road. The fantasy world of the gay Nazi can come to life in a rather unpleasant way, though. For the Brownshirts, the dream ended abruptly on the Night of the Long Knives, and today's gay fascists are just as likely to be sticking their own heads in the gas oven.

There is no immediate danger of a fascist government in Britain. But some fascist groups have won substantial votes in election campaigns, and they clearly have some fairly big backers, financially speaking. There is a danger that fascist groups could develop a campaigning strike-force that would be a real threat for gays, for blacks, and for the left in general. This is of course only a possibility. It should be possible to stop the fascists from organising. There were gay contingents of each of the anti-fascist demonstrations last summer - in Red Lion Square and at Hyde Park Corner. The contingents were small, but it was significant that gay people were prepared to organise as gays against fascism - wearing, incidentally, the upside down pink triangle of the Nazi concentration camps. The campaign can now be taken up more widely within the gay movement itself. We should try to create the conditions where members of the National Front and similar organisations are automatically expelled from all gay organisations, and where leading members of the National Front are no longer welcome in gay bars.

If the left doesn't organise around what we do in bed, there is no question that the right will start to in quite a big way.

mike greene



# Not Fit To Foster? paul deswardt

On the surface the motives for providing both a mother and a father in a fostering or adoption situation may be well intentioned and thought valid but they presume a certain factor; that the mother is a housekeeper, nurse-maid cook etc, the father - wage earner, plus a binding document that in most cases keeps these two parties in business 'till death do us part'.

That business is the turning out of 'decent citizens' ready to fulfill their role in society. So from the word go it is important that if a child is to succeed in later life it must play one or other of the roles. What the male and female roles entail should not need to be enlarged on. Needless to say one dominates the other.

It is these roles that are required of parents with little regard to what lies beneath and it is the absence of these roles that poses a threat, a threat to the child's ability, desire even to fit into its predetermined role and therefore a threat to society as it exists today. Arguments may still rage as to the biological importance of the mother or father to a child in its earlier years but a barrier restricts the father developing any sort of relationship with his children outside of his role as dominator, authority figure and ultimate threat in the "you wait till your father gets home" syndrome. Were he to reject this role in favour of relating to the child on an instinctive level he would find coping with the child much easier and not the embarrassment that is so often experienced when he is called upon to manage the simplest of tasks performed by the mother every day.

The situation already exists where gay children are with foster-parents who may or not know of their being gay. No doubt, too, there are gay children with foster-parents one of whom is gay. A 'closeted' gay may hide his or her gayness within the family unit. But why not select gay couples especially to care for gay children? After all, the arguments for doing this are the same as those for placing black children with black foster-parents and equally valid. Ideally, black children need not be placed with black foster-parents to be vested with any kind of black pride. However, well-meaning white foster-parents tend to protect the black child; for example, "They call me nigger/blackie/spade at school" is the type of statement faced by many white foster-parents. The usual reply in these situations is, "Don't take any notice of what they say/turn the other cheek" sort of negative response, instead of encouraging positive action or reaction - e.g. "Sure, you're a nigger/etc. - and don't forget it".

Similarly, gay children (and it is naive to dismiss children as asexual in the pre-puberty period) should be able to grow up in an environment, in the family if nowhere else, that promotes positively gay relationships equally with heterosexual ones, instead of the usual monopolizing reign of heterosexual indoctrination. Liberal lip-service wouldn't suffice; the feeling has got to be there, and that is reason enough for positive discrimination in favour of gay foster-parents.

This idea isn't a new one. In America the authorities have enlisted the help of various gay organisations on the matter of gay fostering - quite a contrast to the situation when they fought (and in some States still do fight) against lesbian mothers gaining custody of their children. It is unfortunate, however, that it has taken the most extreme cases to promote any acknowledgement or practical help towards the situation. The type of case the authorities present, and only as a last alternative, is that of a young gay male prostitute, for example, who has run away from home, either after or in fear of a confrontation with his parents about his being gay. Placement is then sought, and almost always after a string of 'unsuccessful' previous placements.

One of the first widely publicised attempts at using gay foster parents was in Chicago, where the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services said that it was using gays as foster parents, if both the social worker and supervisor involved found it to be a viable solution. The practice grew informally and without any specific directives, but other agencies have now come to realise the advantages of using gay foster parents for gay children. However, the increase tends to be in the private agencies, where there is no public accounting to be done. A prerequisite of applying to be gay foster parents is that both partners have 'come out' at work, with family, friends, etc. and then they have to satisfy the authority on the usual points of stability etc.

Of course, it is almost exclusively to boys that the placements go. Girls, after all, are not brought up to have an independent identity as much as one that relates in the context of merely complementing and completing the man's identity. The wife adds (inches) to the man's (cock) status. Both male and female gay



couples are used, although doubtless even the most liberal would be hard put not to fear for the child's sexual exploitation. I only hope that this same fear haunts them when heterosexual children are welcomed with open arms into the perils of the heterosexual nuclear family. In this field America is a couple of years ahead of us, so how long before it happens in this country? ...or has it already happened?

In fact, yes, but very discreetly! Two local authority Social Services Departments attempted to find a suitable

place for a 15-year-old boy, the one (an Inner London Borough) having responsibility for the boy and the other providing a suitable gay couple. In fact, in this particular instance it didn't work out, but that was for reasons unrelated to his being gay. However, this conscious effort to change the environment instead of the person must be a step in the right direction.

One question hanging over this case is how the two authorities got together? Not, I fear, through the services offered by the Adoption Resource Exchange:

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE OF GREAT BRITAIN

# ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE

CRANMER HOUSE,  
39 BRIXTON ROAD, LONDON SW9 6DD

Telephone: 01-735 8941

Organising Secretaries: Miss M. P. T. Sawbridge, B.A. Miss Wanda McClanahan, M.S.W. (U.S.A.)

PTS/NM

23rd May, 1974.

Dear

Thank you for your inquiry about whether a homosexual couple might be considered as foster parents.

This is difficult to answer, as every agency makes its own decisions on the eligibility of applicants, but my experience leads me to think that so far this has not been done. I think such an application would meet the same response usually given to single people, widows etc. - that when a child has lost his first set of parents, the agency seeks to replace them as nearly as possible by finding him another set. Fostered or adopted children are at a disadvantage from the start by being in a different position from the majority, so agencies tend to seek families where other differences are at a minimum.

I realise that this begs a lot of other questions, but I think it is probably the answer most agencies would give.

One other point may also be relevant and that is that, as a result of the recent "World in Action" programme several thousand couples have applied to foster or adopt. Agencies all over the country are now taking up these applications. I think without a doubt preference will be given to married couples, often those with children already, since the children needing homes, are older and experienced parents are often what is needed. As you doubtless know, the number of babies available for adoption has decreased enormously in past years, and there are waiting lists at every agency for any baby.

I am sorry if this is disappointing, but I hope it answers your question.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

*M. P. Sawbridge*  
Miss. P. Sawbridge,

Organising Secretary

Sponsored by the Adoption Committee of International Social Service of Great Britain

# THE BISEXUAL MALE

~ Gentlemen both ways please

It can be seen through the developed analyses of the Women's and Gay movements, that sexuality, as we know it, is of a political nature. Thus, in making any statement concerning sexuality, either one's own or someone else's, one is making a definitive political statement.

At this point in time, the Women's and Gay movements are struggling to have their position as revolutionaries and their analyses as oppressed people taken seriously and adopted by the revolutionary left movements. This applies especially to the Gay movement as gay people are a minority group who have never had any political credence whatever or power position, and the connections and relationship between homosexuality and capitalism, although clear to those in gay movements, is more easily obscured by the left and put down as diversionist.

It is in the openly political struggle concerning sexuality (there is no other struggle) that bisexuality appears as nothing but a heterosexual conjuring trick. The implication of being bisexual is nebulous and the political purpose of the statement "I am a bisexual" is illusory. This is not to say, by any means, that there is no such person as a bisexual and that all people who claim to be such are liars. But purely in order to struggle against sexual oppression the position of being a bisexual, and working from that position, is feather-light in its political effectiveness and paper thin in its political potential. Bisexuality, like many other things, has been successfully assimilated into bourgeois ideology and has no longer any revolutionary potential in undermining or threatening that ideology. Gay people who are bullied and coerced by heterosexual chauvinism and sexist society, claim to be bisexual to protect themselves against social ostracism and escape the direct brutalities of the reaction that saying one is homosexual manifests. On the other hand, heterosexuals in the bourgeois milieu or freak rock 'n' roll circles claim to be bisexual as a pretence at liberation and broad-mindedness and consequently receive adequate applause from within the 'drawing-rooms of hipdom'.

Both these types of 'bisexual' are not uncommon in this society and, it seems to me, and I'm sure that those who feel a genuine attraction to both genders would agree from a revolutionary position, must be confronted. Gay people must realise that it is in their interests to state that they are homosexual and struggle against the oppression that faces them. They will be unable to struggle effectively if they cling to the reactionary securities of the qualification that is implicit in the statement "I am a bisexual". That is that "I still retain my heterosexual capabilities and the ascendant position that goes

with it and so I am not 'one of them'". It is confrontation that is necessary when gay people are faced with paternalism and obscured ideological queer-bashing that they get from so many of their "comrades" on the left and from bourgeois liberals.

Bourgeois trendies and individualistic hippies must not be permitted to massage their egos at the expense of the homosexual struggle, or to create a new niche of sexual oppression by their verbal compromises and diversions - "I, too, am attracted to members of my own sex, therefore I have something in common with gay people". What they have in common with homosexuals is analogous with what Jackie Onassis has in common with working-class women. Bisexuals, whether genuine or not, do not suffer the same oppression as gay people, regardless of whether they really do have sexual relations with members of their own sex or are paying lip-service to yet another accommodating whim of bourgeois fashion, which dictates that that one ought to be just a touch hedonistic and outrageous if one is to be anything other than 'mediocre'.

People who feel themselves to be bisexual and have a modicum of politically revolutionary consciousness must, as I see it, make the statement that they are homosexual. If the struggle is to have a truly revolutionary perspective, then it must be seen that now, in this struggle, the fact that one may be genuinely bisexual is unfortunately irrelevant; in order to gain an understanding of gay oppression and how to struggle against it one must make the (political) statement that one is homosexual. This is a necessary prerequisite for effective revolutionary analysis and action.

It would not be a sell-out to a bisexual's own personal honesty and self-awareness - on the contrary, it would assist him/her to reach a better awareness of the real nature of sexuality in capitalist society from an oppressed position in the sexual structure. Bisexuality does not occupy such a position. It has no place in working towards the achievement of the material basis for which gay people must struggle to succeed in combatting heterosexual chauvinism effectively. We must have a revolutionary situation, providing the working class with the power of control over the means of production, women with the power of control over the means of reproduction, before we can come near to challenging and ending the vestiges of this present bourgeois ideology which supports and perpetuates sexism, heterosexual chauvinism, capitalism, imperialism and other reactionary facets through exploitation and oppression. In this fight bisexuality is as a water-pistol compared with a gun - what use a water-pistol when there is a war going on?

**martin henry**

# Lesbians, Marriage and Motherhood

The particular form that homosexual oppression takes in British society reflects a culture dominated not so much by men as by the myth of 'masculinity and femininity', in which is embodied the subordination of both men and women to a cultural misconception. As far as homosexuals are concerned, however, yet another myth exists - that since gay men are oppressed by the 'masculinity' myth which sees women as objects and not as equals, thereby denying men their true sexuality, they should consciously share their oppression with women and gay women, since gay men are also second-class citizens. However, as I shall discuss later, gay men tend to carry straight male attitudes towards women into gay society.

Men and women must appear to follow the role patterns which society has set for them. Both are dominated by the 'male' bias of society. These role patterns do not allow for much flexibility - indeed, it is this rigidity which causes confusion and often hostility when certain, apparently incompatible roles are combined (i.e. incompatible as defined culturally). In the homosexual subculture this is so for the married gay - man or woman - who finds hostility, not only outside the homosexual community but also within it. Apparently, to be gay and also a parent or married is a contradiction in roles. Since society casts the homosexual into the ghastly stereotype of effete, effeminate man and strutting, masculine woman, it cannot account for the homosexual being so obviously neither as to produce children, and so obviously unobtrusive as to belong to the realms previously considered to be peopled only by full-time heterosexuals.

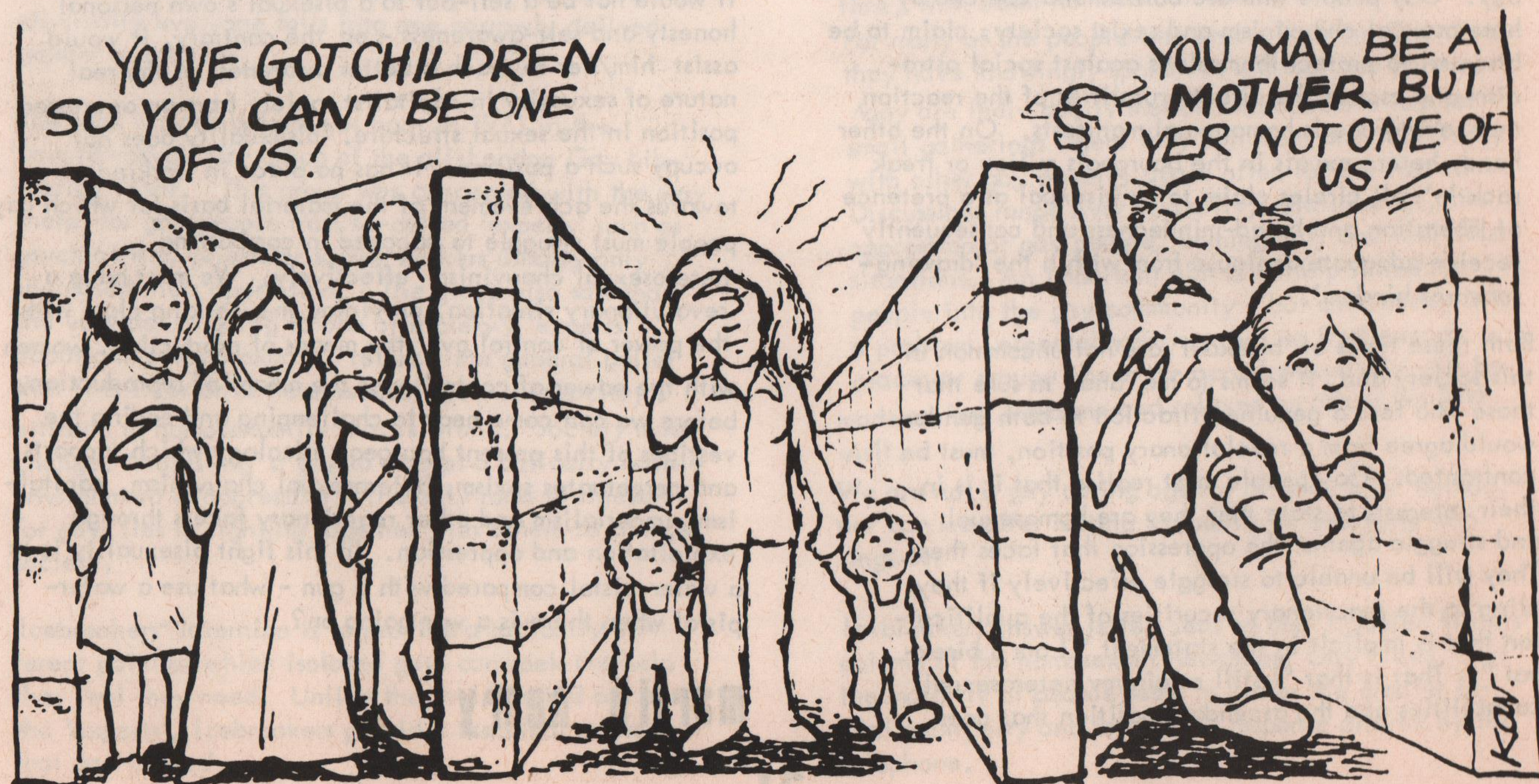
The differential socialisation of male and female leads to a situation where it is more acceptable for a woman to have deep emotional feelings for another individual, including her own children, whereas such deep feelings between man and man are acceptable only in time of war. For a man

status is more important than emotional ties, since he is forced into a bread-winning, career-structured role. A woman becomes economically dependent on her husband because of the children she is expected to bear and look after, and is, therefore, more concerned with her children on a day-to-day basis (1). She is more tied to them and the home, more socially isolated. A man is freer, he can get away during the day and in the evenings. The home is his resting place, but not his wife's; his place isn't in the home. Thus, if a man is married and has homosexual orientations, he has the freedom to relieve his homosexual urge in the anonymity of the cottage\*. He has the training to cope with sex just for relief, pleasure and not for emotional involvement.

No cottages exist for women (nor inclination to use them). Women are expected to have, and do, stronger emotional ties than men; and sex, for the lesbian at least, and sexual attraction is usually based more on personal attraction than physical. Furthermore, as a married woman with kids, she is financially dependent on her husband at least until her children are grown up and even then she will lag behind a man economically because of the gap in her career caused by child-bearing. Often as not marriage is regarded by a woman as a career. (2)

Once pushed and trapped in marriage she may find that it doesn't come up to her expectations, it doesn't fulfill her. It is no different for the lesbian than for any other woman. If she is more oriented and tuned in to women, then she has probably chosen her man badly anyway, and her marriage has a higher likelihood of being unsuccessful. The break-up of the marriage will often be concurrent with the realisation, for the gay women, of her sexuality and often as not she will have had kids by that time. But

\*'Cottage' is a lavatory; 'cottaging' is gay slang for the (exclusively male) activity of meeting, making contact and sometimes making love in a lavatory. (Eds.)



just as women are taught to 'work at' marriage, so it isn't unnatural that they blame themselves and their inability to 'contain' their sexuality for the failure of their marriage. Furthermore, they have been socialised as mothers and so want their kids with them. It is partly this socialisation which causes them to try and hold on to their children when break-up finally comes. Then married gay women are forced to face the fact that a hostile heterosexual society will not accept that her homosexuality in no way affects her ability to bring up her children, in spite of the fact that until her homosexuality becomes obvious she had been largely instrumental in their upbringing.

So, perhaps partly accepting guilt and societal disapproval, she is immediately placed at a disadvantage in a fight with that disapproving society, to keep the children she has spent most of her married life caring for. She is in any case often better equipped to care for them than the husband who will often be using the custody of the children as a weapon in his fight against the woman who has so injured his male vanity by preferring a second class citizen to him.

The depression, guilt and shame which women who are unsuccessful in marriage experience often lead them to the couch of a psychiatrist or to a psychotherapist. It would seem that she is more likely to choose a male therapist. (3) Furthermore, since in a recent study on clinicians' judgements of what is 'normal adult behaviour' male traits were considered as adult by the clinicians (4) and both male and female therapists are likely to have a male oriented view of female patients' behaviour, a woman can hardly expect unbiased help from the profession. In fact she is more likely to be at the receiving end of an attempt to bolster up the marriage and devalue or remove her sexuality. One psychoanalyst (5) recently put forward the viewpoint that although children brought up in a lesbian relationship 'turn out to be relatively well balanced', he took a dim view of bringing up children without a father. He didn't actually say why, as a man of science, he could make this fantastic statement. He does quote one case-history where the lesbians concerned had been ashamed and frightened to tell the son, so that when he found out he was naturally shocked and ashamed and frightened as well. His argument appears to be that because bringing up children in a lesbian relationship is frowned upon by society, it should not be done.

Neither can the married gay woman expect to find sympathy or understanding in male gay quarters. This was recently demonstrated in London when the Gay Wives and Mothers Collective was refused permission to meet at Centre if they brought children under sixteen (their own children) to the meeting because the children might be contaminated by the other women at the meeting.

From female gay society they received even less sympathy. It is not uncommon to hear from married gay women the tale that they have been advised by gay women to go back to their husbands and not get involved with gay society. The married woman's motives are considered suspect. She is not recognised as attempting to come to terms with her own sexuality as those who condemn her probably haven't done, and marriage seems to be regarded by the same accusers as being 'normal' and 'secure', so why 'rock the boat'?

This type of attitude further separates those isolated by marriage and motherhood from the support of others, which is so important in bringing about the self-acceptance of their sexuality and the alleviation of guilt. At a recent meeting of the GWM Collective many of the women commented that until that meeting they had thought themselves the only married gay women around and that the knowledge of the existence of so many others with similar problems was reassuring. Several were able, later on, to accept themselves as lesbians and to tell others about their sexuality and/or take positive action to alleviate their current problems: (i.e. talk to their husbands; get divorce proceedings going; etc.). It becomes more obvious as the group grows that this type of self-help and open discussion is of positive advantage to Collective members. After all, surrounded by a male-created 'feminine mystique', which permeates psychiatry, psychology, sociology and the training of social workers, therapists, the medical profession, help agencies, and the male gay world, where else can the married gay woman turn, but to others with similar experiences?

I recently asked a social worker acquaintance in charge of fostering in an area family casework team if she would approve of lesbian couples fostering children: "I don't think so", she replied. I asked why and was told: "Because of their oedipals." On enquiring further as to the nature of this strange sounding disease, I was told: "Freud". Had she read any? "No, only read about him".

It would appear that our capitalist society, whenever it can, attempts to perpetuate the myth of femininity and the need for a parent of either sex, in the shape of the nuclear family. Thus, the social worker and the therapist are pressed into the cause of supporting this anachronistic and divisive institution at the cost of the people within it. The social worker, with her non-directive approach, becomes almost equivalent to the psychotherapist, who voyeuristically relieves the problems of married women by listening, allowing her to let out her aggression harmlessly on herself, while maintaining the situation of the client and doing nothing to get her to analyse her situation radically. The social worker, cast in the role society would like to see her in, then becomes merely another, more sophisticated agent of social control.



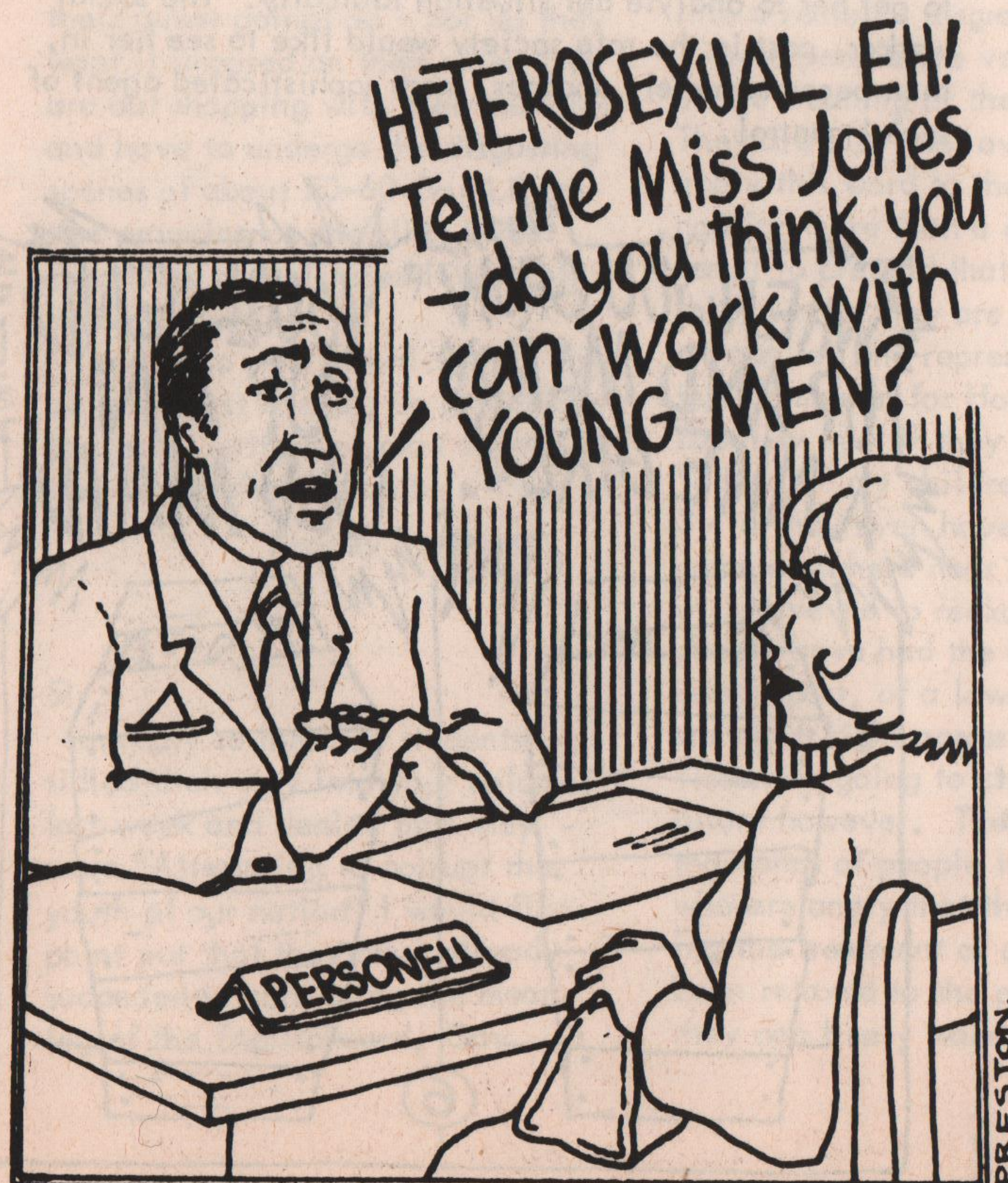
So it is not surprising that the married gay woman needs to turn rather to others in a similar situation to herself, than to the agents of the larger society. Until those people in that larger society, charged with the responsibility of supporting those within it with difficulties, face up to the fact that they are merely prolonging the existence of the structure which oppresses so many, and seek to reassess their own training and attitudes, then the only solution for members of a minority group is to help themselves.

For the married gay woman, the support she needs is within the growing community of gay married women and mothers. She has to become aware of herself as a woman and a lesbian and throw off the folk beliefs about being feminine. As an oppressed person she needs to seek and redefine herself as a first class citizen and actively and without guilt seek to create a life for herself and her children - if she wants them - in the context of equality and full self acceptance.

#### References.

- (1) Hannah Gavron: "Captive Wife". Conflicts of House-bound Mothers. Routledge Kegan Paul 1966.  
For a comprehensive picture of this group.
- (2) op. cit.
- (3) Phyllis Chesler: "Marriage and Psychotherapy", in Radical Therapist, Penguin 1974.
- (4) I.K. and D.M. Broverman, et al: "Sex Role Stereotypes and Clinical Judgements of Mental Health", (Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1969)
- (5) Donald Webster Cory: "The Lesbian in America", Tower Press.

**bernice humphreys**



## BOOKLIST

A short selection of literature arising from the gay movement. In addition, writings from the women's movement are essential reading.

- Abbott, Sidney & Barbara Love: Sappho was a right-on woman (Stein & Day, 1972)
- Martin, Dell & Phyllis Lyon: Lesbian/Woman (Anton Books, 1972)  
Both by American lesbians. Paperbacks.
- Jay, Karla & Allen Young (eds): Out of the closets, voices of gay liberation (Douglas Books, 1972)  
The anthology from the American movement. Really worth owning. Includes documents/articles from Cuba. And lots on women. Paperback.
- Altman, Dennis: Homosexual Oppression & Liberation (Outerbridge, 1974; also Avon paperback)  
Excellent documented. Paperback.
- Blamires, David: Homosexuality from the inside (Society of Friends)
- Hoffman, M: The gay world (Basic Books, 1974)
- Humphries, Laud: Out of the closets (Prentice-Hall, 1972)
- McCaffrey, Joseph A.: The homosexual dialectic (Prentice-Hall)
- Richmond, Len (ed): The gay liberation book (Ramparts Press, 1973)
- Weinberg, George: Society & the healthy homosexual (St Martins, 1972; also Doubleday Anchor paperback)
- Wolffe, Charlotte: Love between women (Duckworth, 1974)

#### PAMPHLETS AND MAGAZINES

- Gay Liberation Front Manifesto: written in the early days but still interesting.
- Psychiatry and the Homosexual: GLF pamphlet no. 1.  
Devastating attack on the oppression of gay men by psychiatrists of every hue. Read it!
- With downcast gays: homosexual self-oppression.  
Especially useful to gay people who are thinking about gay oppression for the first time.
- The Lesbian Tide: excellent lesbian feminist magazine from the U.S.

Many of these books are available from GLF or Gay News (see list of organisations) and hopefully from left-wing bookshops. But try getting them from your public library, who should order them if they don't have them already.

#### ORGANISATIONS

- Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE)  
28 Kennedy Street  
Manchester M2 4BG Tel. 061-228 1985
- Gay Liberation Front (GLF)  
5 Caledonian Road  
London N1
- Scottish Minorities Group (SMG)  
214 Clyde Street  
Glasgow G1 4JZ Tel. 041-771 7600
- Union for Sexual Freedoms (Irish National Org.)  
Vestry Hall, Ballygowan  
Co. Down Tel. Ballygowan 428
- Gay Wives and Mothers Collective  
182 Uxbridge Road  
Harrow HA3 6SS
- Gay Teachers' Group  
c/o Paul Patrick, 14 Holden House,  
Deptford Church Street, London SE8

#### COUNSELLING/BEFRIENDING

- Icebreakers (GLF)  
BM/GayLib, London WC1X 6XX  
01-274 9590 (7.30-10.30 each evening)
- Friend (CHE)  
44 Earls Court Road, London W8  
01-402 6750 (Mon-Fri 7.30-9.30pm)

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Gay Switchboard  
01-837 7174 (Mon-Thurs 2-11pm  
Fri 2pm till Sun 11pm)

#### PUBLICATIONS

- Gay News (fortnightly, 15p)  
62a Chiswick High Road  
London W4 1SY
- Sappho (monthly, 35p)  
BCM/Petrel  
London WC1V 6XX Tel. 01-837 1081

KEEPING THE WOLFENDEN FROM THE DOOR  
Last cries from the Chambers

I do not at all relish the thought of there being illegal homosexuals under 21 and legal ones over 21 and a crossing of the line ceremony being performed with pederastic celebrations in university colleges.

Mr T L Iremonger  
Commons, 19.12.66

If an offence is committed at sea, it is not private. One knows at sea what happens in very quick time. It is rather like the House of Commons in one or two respects.

Mr Simon Mahon  
Commons, 19.12.66

I suggest that we are opening the floodgates.

Sir Cyril Osborne  
Commons, 11.2.66

Have we come down to such a state in England that a threat to expose a man to his friends as a bugger will have no effect? May not the blackmailer threaten to expose a man ... so that he will be ostracised from decent society?

Lord Goddard  
Lords, 24.5.65  
(Lord Goddard was Lord Chief Justice)

I reiterate, how far should the floodgates be opened?

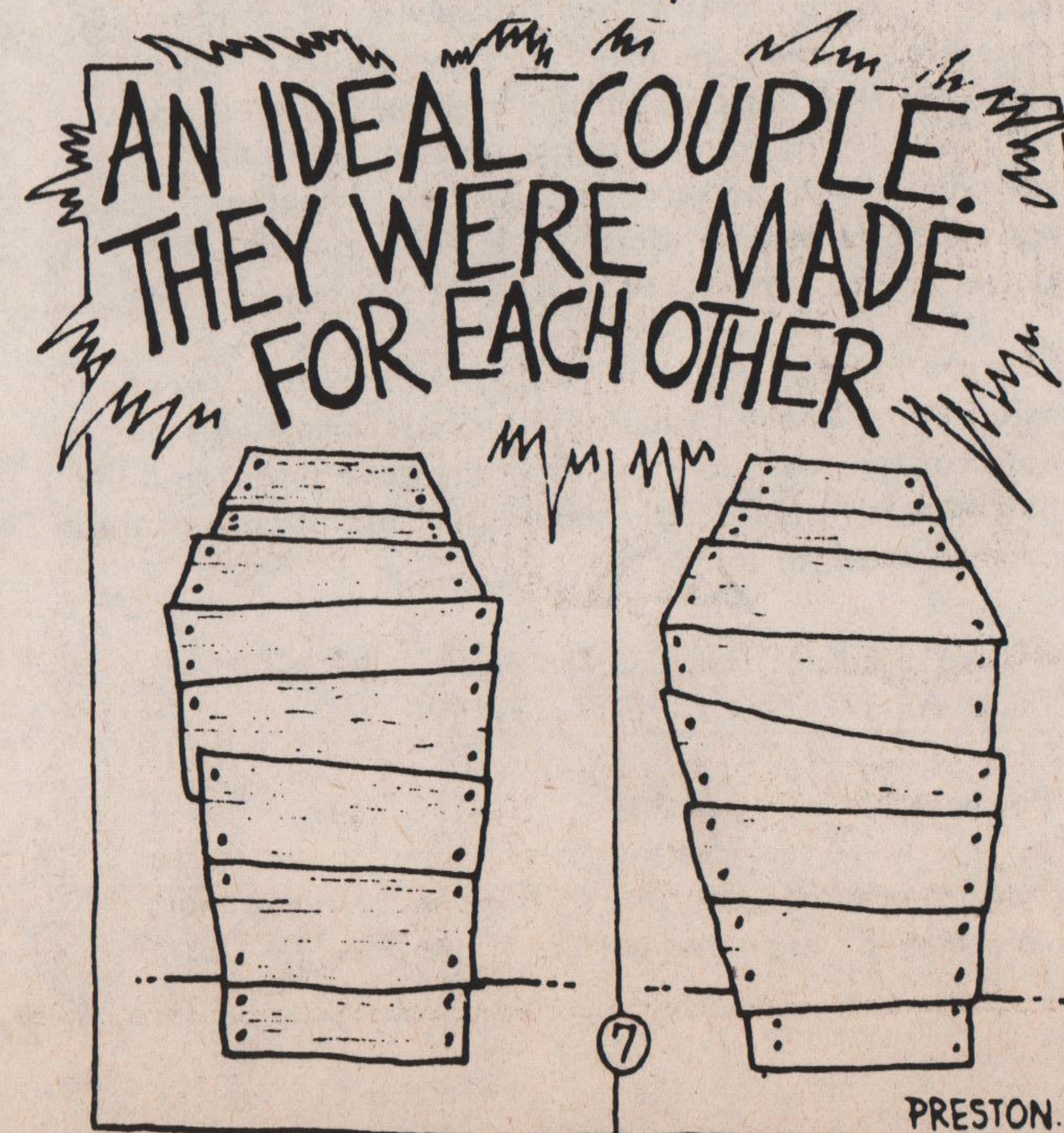
Mr Peter Mahon  
Commons, 19.12.66

Are your Lordships going to pass a Bill that will make it lawful for two senior officers of police to go to bed together?

Lord Kilmuir  
Lords, 24.5.65

La Vice Anglaise  
is not buggery  
but humbuggery.

Mr Leslie Hale, MP



# Fight The Cuts

"It is far better that more people should be in work, even if that means accepting lower wages on average, than that those lucky enough to keep their jobs should scoop the pool while millions are living on the dole. That is what the social contract is all about." (Dennis Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 10th. January, 1975.)

"In his budget statement on 12.1.74., the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the need to give priority to investment and the balance of payments had important implications for public expenditure. It would be necessary to establish firm control over the demand on resources of the public sector as a whole so as to ensure that public expenditure programmes did not increase in demand terms by more than 2½% on average over the next four years..... However desirable it was to see a further development of standards and services, a rate of growth which (has) so far outstripped the growth in national resources could not go on indefinitely." (Joint Circular 171/74 DOE 23.12.74.)

"I do not see any deterioration in the standards of services if staffing is operated in a flexible manner. It is up to authorities to decide the deployment of staff and changes in their spending patterns." (Anthony Crosland, Jan. '75)

"Capitalism can continue to maintain itself only by lowering the standard of living of the working class." (Trotsky, 1933.)

Over the next few months Welfare State workers will be involved in the battle over cuts in public-sector spending. Those who are trade unionists, as well as those who prefer the 'professional' label, could find themselves participating in recommending cuts, determining priorities or implementing policies of reduced spending. Trade unions have already been 'consulted' in some places and many have uncritically accepted the 'tighten your belt' con. Professionals are being asked to recommend where cuts can be made in services. (Did you imagine that your professional social work training might qualify you to participate in such an exercise?).

If we are to be prepared for a fight on the cuts, we need basic information. To that end two documents will be quoted at some length - one from the government and the other from NALGO. You should get hold of both of these and study them in full.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT JOINT CIRCULAR 1771/74 DOE 32.12.74

### "Personal Social Services :

15. For these services the Rate Support Grant settlement has provided only for such increase in expenditure above the expected outturn figure for 74/75 as

is necessary to meet the extra cost in the full year 75/76 of developments started in earlier years, including the revenue cost of bringing capital projects into use and salary increments for staff. A small allowance has also been made for an expected increase in the number of children in care. No further growth in services is provided for. The Government recognises therefore that Local Authorities will not be able to meet all the demands for these services and that difficult choices will have to be made in the selection of priorities. It will not be possible next year to maintain progress towards levels of provision previously recommended : indeed some services may have to be provided on a reduced scale. The Government accept that this will have an impact on the NHS ( which will be under similarly severe financial restraint), since availability of local authority domiciliary day-care and residential facilities for the elderly, mentally handicapped and others will affect decisions about the discharge of some patients from hospital.

16. In view of the diverse nature of the services, and of local circumstances, the Government cannot direct specifically how the restrictions that will be necessary should be applied locally, since this is a matter essentially for local direction in the light of the particular needs of each authority. Accordingly it is all the more important for local authorities to review their own social services programmes with a view to concentrating resources for the benefit of those in particularly acute need ; in this review each authority should :-

- (i) concentrate on the task of identifying people in most need - examples are suggested in para. 17.
- (ii) reconsider any policies under which services or facilities are provided on a uniform basis to broad categories of people without reference to individual need
- (iii) ensure that staff vacancies are not filled automatically as they arise, but that staff are redeployed to meet the most urgent tasks
- (iv) review the scope for modifying the use of buildings - whether existing or about to be brought into use so that they may contribute as much as possible to priority needs
- (v) consider the possibility of better mobilisation of community and voluntary effort, and further developing collaboration with voluntary organisations.

In reviewing their services in this way authorities should take account of the interaction of the personal social services with other services ; in this connection Joint Consultative Committees of local authorities and Area Health Authorities may have an important contribution to make.

17. The overall aim should be to enable the limited resources to be concentrated on helping those persons, regardless of age or type of disability or affliction, who are regarded as being in the most acute and immediate need - for example :

- (a) children at risk of ill treatment
- (b) the very elderly or severely handicapped living alone - especially those recently discharged from hospital, recently bereaved or in inadequate housing;
- (c) the mentally ill or mentally handicapped in urgent need of residential or day care, or domiciliary support, to prevent a deterioration in their condition or to relieve intolerable strain on their families
- (d) vulnerable individuals, or families with vulnerable members, who are at imminent risk of breakdown under severe stress imposed on them by handicap, illness, homelessness or poverty.

18. The Children Bill, at present before Parliament, will not give rise to any significant expenditure in 1975-6. It is intended to consult with Local Government before it comes into effect, on the consequences of its implementation.

### Home Office Services :

29. The Government intends to strengthen the police and the forecast allows for 1,000 additional police officers compared with the number in post at the midpoint of the current financial year....

### Housing :

42. The Government continue to give high priority to housing, including sheltered housing. The settlement reflects a continuation of the much higher rates of investment in local authority housebuilding now prevailing. There must, however, be restraint in expenditure on housing repairs, maintenance and management, which has increased substantially in recent years....

## EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTER TO BRANCH SECRETARIES FROM G. DRAIN, GENERAL SECRETARY NALGO.

"NALGO must be greatly concerned not only about the manpower implications of this Circular but also with its effect on the quality of local government services, the level of which is clearly intended to decline in the interests of keeping average rate increases to around 25% in the forthcoming financial year.

On manpower, local authorities are advised to provide for no staff expansion beyond the small increase needed to meet "inescapable commitments", and authorities are asked to make savings in areas of "lower priority" in order to offset staff increases elsewhere. The Local Authority Associations and the Government have agreed to set up procedures for monitoring staff numbers. The detail of this proposal has not yet been disclosed, but the immediate conclusion for us is that branches should oppose any attempt to introduce retrograde staff policies leading to reduced establishments, including in particular, any proposals for the non-filling of vacancies as a method of economising.

There must also be concern about the quality of local government services in the forthcoming period following this abrupt reversal of expenditure trends. I draw attention to the 1974 Conference decision about the obligations of local public services to the communities they serve:

'In pursuit of the objective of a fair society this Conference calls on branches to check that their employing authorities observe their legal and moral obligations to assist all members of the community to live in dignity and to publicise any shortcomings which may be found.'

In particular, NALGO must ensure that local authority duties and responsibilities in the fields of housing, education and personal social services are not neglected or diminished, and branches are asked to establish a monitoring system to ensure that NALGO can make representation backed by publicity about any deficiencies in services which may result from the policies now announced.

Branches should inform employing authorities immediately of the union's policy in the following terms:

1. NALGO will not accept the use of the Joint Circular as an excuse to introduce retrograde staffing policies, including reduction in establishments and non-filling of vacancies;
  2. authorities should carry out their obligations to the community, which means no reduction in the standards of any service.
- Any threatened reduction in standards should be reported to me in as much detail as possible".

Very basic questions of local government finance are raised in this cuts business. For example, interest paid on council housing at 8% over 60 years (the usual borrowing period) is £6019 on every £1000 borrowed. 75% of council rents are paid in interest - to money lenders. No wonder the government is concerned about the "national housing problem". The interests of capitalism are too deeply invested in council housing for the government to make any cuts here. The money lenders continue to make enormous profits at the expense of council tenants. Tax money continues to benefit the owner-occupier, with £224 millions in tax relief ( 1970 ) compared to council housing subsidies from Central Government of £163 millions. The Greater London Council gross debt (1973/4) was £1,500 million. Imagine what the interest payments must be - and who profits from them.

Is it true that the national resources are dwindling? Or is it that the priorities for national spending are aimed at propping up a system that just doesn't work? There is what amounts to a "strike of capital" at the moment - the capitalist's answer to wage demands. Big business is not investing so the government does - in industries which do badly - and pays out compensation plus interest for the privilege. All this will be solved, we are told, if workers accept a cut in their standard of living. Do you believe that?

Where details of social service cuts are becoming known, it seems that the weakest sections of the community will be hit first - holidays for old people, home help provision, aids for the chronically sick and disabled, etc. The pattern is a freeze on unfilled vacancies and a sudden interest in 'involving the community' to fill the gaps. Deals are being proposed - for example, giving up a social worker post in a team for a mobility officer for the blind. And we are being asked to recommend and sanction these reductions in service.

We must not be drawn into this invidious process. Such decisions, if they are made at all, must be made by the elected policy makers of the local authority. There are

### Call for guidance on unfilled posts

## NEC asks committees to consider cuts in spending

Westminster SSD is planning to cut its budget for expenditure for the next financial year by almost £550,000. Drastic cuts will have to be made in training and research, alterations to residential accommodation, the number of staff proposed for the home help service, and in the number of vehicles proposed for the meals on wheels service and transporting children. In addition, the opening of four major residential establishments will have to be deferred for periods of two or three months and grants to voluntary organisations will have to be re-examined.

CUTS IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE should be opposed as "an attempt to solve the country's economic problems by attacking ordinary people's living standards and by reducing the real wages of those who staff the public services" stated by Jean Geldart (Metropolitan). However, rather than carry the motion then and there, the Council decided to refer it to its economic committee and all national service conditions committees.

The key to the Government's understanding of the present situation is probably given by their interpretation of what Anthony Crosland called flexible staffing. He said some weeks ago: "I do not see any deterioration in the standards of services if staffing is operated in a flexible manner. It is up to authorities to decide the deployment of staff and changes in their spending patterns," he concluded. One London borough has already decided it will not advertise any vacancy which occurs in the coming year and there are moves afoot inside NALGO to refuse to co-operate with any attempt to use voluntary workers to fill in where staff leave.

other alternatives which could be considered by Councillors, such as demands for interest free loans and increased rate support grants. Central government expect obedience from Councils, even though a few repeats of Clay Cross might help change their minds. We must support any effort on the part of local elected representatives to resist the cuts. We must organise ourselves with other public sector workers to improve the level of services and protect vulnerable members of the community. We must organise to fight the cuts.

myra garrett

"The strong will love our methods, the weak will hate them."

### Danger!

Ban overtime, end mobility and flexibility. Occupy as soon as sackings are announced.

The circular has left most local authorities in a state of uncertainty. As Peter Westland, social services director at Hammersmith, told me: "Each week the bag is emptied and everything falls out in a different order. Taking the revenue programme, for example, we are still in such a state of confusion about how much money will be available. We have had to offer up hostages - for example if we are asked to achieve a five per cent saving we'd have to axe all the luncheon clubs and all the holidays for the elderly and handicapped."

It was perhaps part of the writing on the wall that social workers witnessed at the last BASW conference when they were addressed by Peter Wisner, Business Editor of the *Sunday Times*. Mr Wisner reminded social workers of the inherent contradictions of their position, stuck uneasily between public expectations, the availability of resources, and their own moral agonising. His analysis was harsh and uncompromising, suggesting that he would be surprised if a majority disagreed that "during the welfare state years, we had become, as a people, a great deal more selfish, envious, greedy, self-centred, parochial, frightened, unconfident, divided and uncompassionate than any healthy community can afford."

### Conference Report.

The last national conference was held on 23-24 of november at the North London Polytechnic. Between 150 and 200 people turned up on the saturday, dwindling as usual to about 50 on the sunday. The 'official' theme, the crisis of the nuclear family, received scant attention in most of the groups. The question of the role and structure of Case Con itself seemed to dominate the proceedings. (Again?). Supporters from outside London were amazed to learn that only one London borough now has an active Case Con group. (Elsewhere in the capital social workers seem to be active in NAG more than in Case Con).

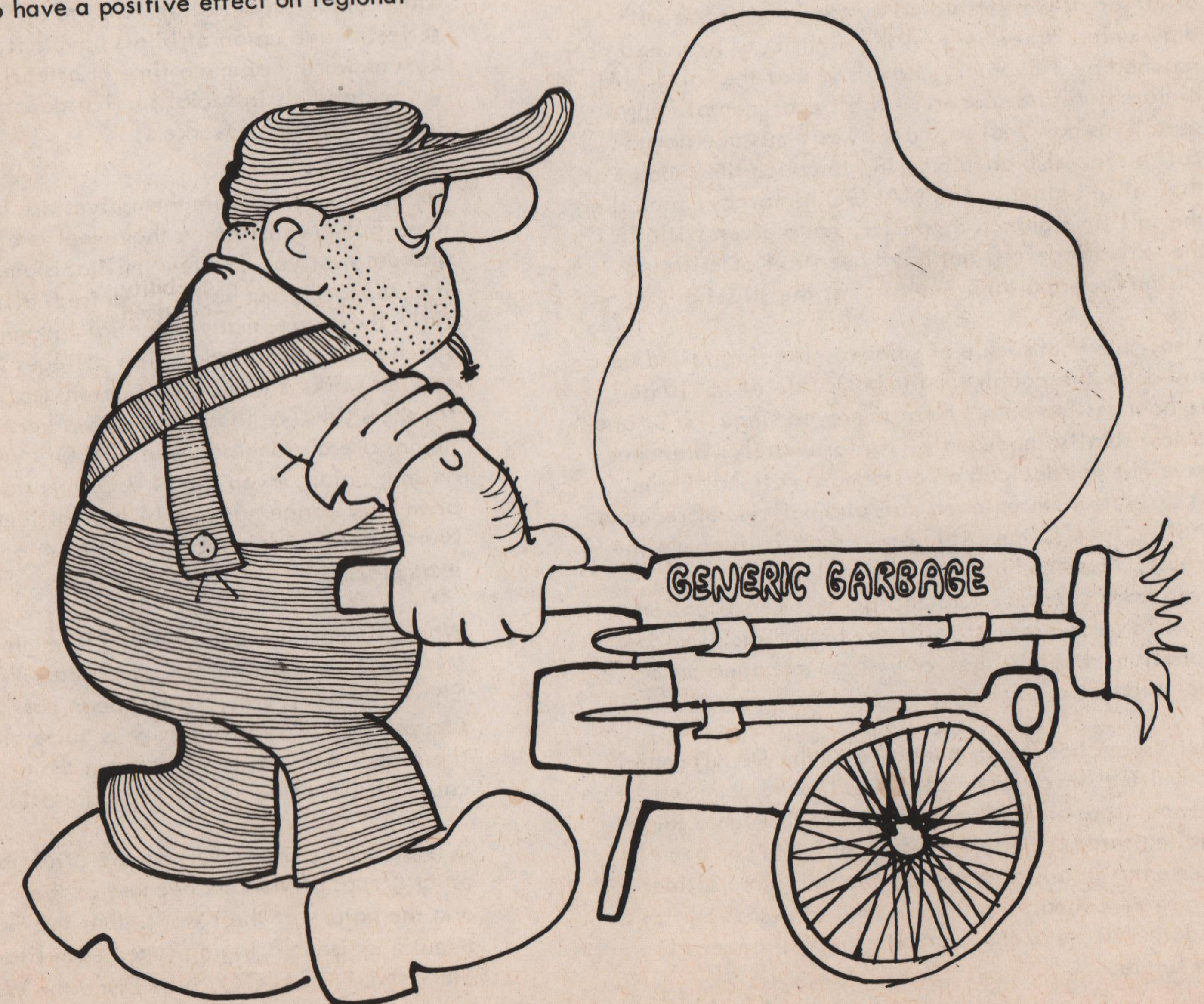
However, there was a strong general feeling that a separate existence for C.C., educating and organising round issues that trade union branches cannot or do not want to fight for at this stage, is necessary.

The activity of the E.C. at present is wholly geared to the production and distribution of the magazine. Many people felt that C.C. should provide more on a national level and be more of an organization than it is now. But very few people were prepared to come forward to commit themselves to the work that is involved even in maintaining E.C. activities at its present level. After all the talking, that was the most worrying sign....

As a result of the discussion however, the E.C. is now more 'national' than it's ever been before, which hopefully will also have a positive effect on regional activities.

### The new Editorial Collective:

London	30 Parliament Hill, N.W.3
Steve Dunnett	14 Manbey Grove, E.15
Pete Feldon	6 Pickering Ct., Lordship Lane, N. 22
Harry Fletcher	29a Arvon Rd., N. 7
Abigail Gooden	5, Grange Hse, Highbury Grange, N. 7
Maria v. Helmond	76 Foyle Road, S.E. 3
Neil Williams	15 Greenfield Avenue, 5
Newcastle	" "
John Goldup	" "
Alastair Tinto	148 Steade Road, S.7
Angela Tinto	29 Stonegate Road
Sheffield	80 Harehills Avenue, 8
Paul Summers	336 Langside Road, G42 8XR
Leicester	
Nick Guy	
Leeds	
Miranda Miller	
Glasgow	
Sheila Sim	



# standby again

Leicestershire social workers are demanding that the old stand-by system be replaced with a specialist night duty team, such as that already established in the London Borough of Harrow. After a series of Departmental NALGO meetings and growing frustrations with the unresponsiveness of management, they finally set an ultimatum to withdraw from the stand-by rota 1 February, 1975. The NALGO Branch negotiators finally decided to take the matter seriously and discussed it with management.

The Branch President held one of his 'informal' meetings with management. Management refused to "negotiate under duress". The Branch General Purposes Committee then passed a resolution instructing social workers not to withdraw from stand-by duty, without any consultation with the members concerned. The Community Care report that "the local branch of NALGO persuaded them to abandon the threat", amounts to a deliberate distortion of what actually happened. Management have in fact agreed in principle to a night duty team, but persuaded the union President to ignore the determination of his members. A Departmental meeting on 27 January will consider the management offer, and make a decision whether the ultimatum will be carried out.

This dispute raises again the question. When 61 out of 80 social workers voted by secret ballot to withdraw unless agreement on the night duty team had been reached by 1 February, how is it that the local NALGO hierarchy refuse support? The Departmental Representatives now realise that it was a mistake not to call a special branch meeting to gauge the support of the entire branch. The NALGO hierarchy, including the full time Branch organiser, have given little in the way of advice, but have been full of criticisms for the reps and their handling of the situation.

Also, the whole issue of stand-by is being raised up and down the country. The basic rate of £3.10 per 16 hour session hasn't been improved since 1972, and is now totally inadequate. Unfortunately, branches have not yet decided on a standard national claim. As a result of threatened cuts and policies of reduced staffing levels, the strain on workers is likely to increase, thus making the additional stand-by duty even more onerous. Obviously, this is a situation in which workers must resist the arguments of vocationalism, whether they come from management or the union.

The dispute has shown the value of the Departmental Committee which has greatly facilitated communication between reps and members dispersed through a large and scattered department. The committee has been instrumental in building around the unity and solidarity of members. Learning from the mistakes made in this dispute will make the Committee even stronger in the future.

nick guy

## Nursery Workers' Workshop

26 April, 1975, 10.30 - 5.30  
Ecumenical Centre, Denbigh Road,  
London, W.11 (Notting Hill Gate tube).

Everyone, (Womens Movement, Working Womens Charter, local authorities, industrialists, etc.) seems to agree that there is an urgent need for increased nursery provision. Rarely do any of these advocates take up the issue of those workers - nearly always women - who staff the nurseries. They are among the lowest paid, -despite a recent pay increase-, poorest organised, most submissive group of workers in the country. They are, by and large, young working class girls just out of school, many of whom are also on a nursery nurses' training course at a college of further education. Both in the nursery and at college they can be subjected to authoritarian, arbitrary discipline and are sometimes doubly exploited because of their very vulnerable situation. There are examples of students being failed, although their academic and practical work were satisfactory, because of the 'wrong attitude'. (Shades of social work training). No wonder they are reluctant to speak about conditions, standards of child care, wages, etc.

Trade union organisation tends to be ineffective in nurseries. Trade union officials have not seen nursery workers as worthy of much time or attention, and even trade union activists in social service departments often overlook this group of workers.

Now, nursery workers themselves are beginning to organise, but the resistance they meet is often demoralising and destructive. The few militants among them feel that support from better organised allied groups is essential. There are many potential link-up points, -e.g. teachers in further education colleges (ATTI), social service workers (NALGO), co-students (NUS), nursery teachers (NUT). Those nursery workers who are in unions are divided between NALGO and NUPE, but neither union, even the NALGO Action Group, has been very concerned. (A NUPE official referred to Nursery Staff Action Group as 'froth on the beer', for example).

Where support has been offered through organised groups (NALGO Shop Stewards Committees, Working Womens Charter groups, etc.), it has been possible to launch successful local campaigns. It is quite clear in fact that the recent pay rise was less mean than previously because of these beginnings of organisation.

It is because nursery workers are often isolated from other groups of workers because of their workplace and the nature of their work, that this workshop has been organised. Bringing together militants in ATTI, NUS, NUT, NALGO, NUPE and the Womens Movement could build an organised grouping around issues

in nursery/child care work. All of us (NALGO Action groups, Rank and File groups, Working Womens Charter groups, Shop Stewards Committees, etc.), should send representatives to the workshop. Only with organised support can nursery workers break through the oppression of their work/training situation.

For further information send SAE to:

Nursery Staff Action Group  
Toddlers Club, St. Peters Crypt  
Eaton Square, London SW 1.

myra garrett

## "No Victimisation" -

### Strike In Southwark

CASE-CON 17 reported briefly on the victimisation of two Southwark admin. workers at Castle House, the head-office of the Social Services Department.

An intercepted memo. between senior management indicated dismay at the disruption caused by union action during the London Weighting dispute and called for discussions to develop counter-tactics to minimise the effectiveness of any future union activity. With much of the initiative for activity originating in the Social Services, Castle House was an obvious target, where it was more difficult to organise union support under the nose of an ever critical senior management. The most effective (sic) intimidation was clearly to savagely punish strong unionists over trivial irregularities in their work.

The first person attacked was John Pratt, the shop-steward at Castle House for interpreting the NALGO Conference decision on non-cooperation with agency staff by returning agency bills unopened. He was demoted from an experienced clerical position to the lowest grade of clerical worker. Such is the thanks to be expected for 8 years service to the Borough, with no other discredit to his name.

The shop-stewards took up John's case. The appeals procedure was carried out to the full, needless to say with no change to management's attitude at all. Instead they received full Council support.

A departmental union meeting was called, after an earlier meeting had pledged support to John's case. The only response to such blatant victimisation was to strike and the motion for an unofficial strike of the department commencing the following Monday was passed. A moderate amendment calling for no action until the NEC had approved an official strike - a bureaucratic procedure notorious for defusing any support an issue might have - was only narrowly

defeated. A Branch Meeting was called for Monday, the first day of the strike, to obtain the support of the whole Branch.

At the departmental meeting the assistant director had tried to argue that John's case was simply a matter of individual misconduct, and the punishment was so severe, not because of what John had done, but because he refused to show any contrition for his actions. At the Branch Meeting the director with a strike on his hands, sent a message to the effect that after reconsideration of the matter, management were now prepared to offer John back a similar job at his previous grade, but specifically not based at Castle House. He still maintained with little credibility, that this was punishment of an individual rather than victimisation of a union official! The meeting rejected this approach and voted overwhelmingly for an expansion of the strike to all departments until John was re-instated in his original post.

The strike lasted 2½ days, after weeks of negotiations had achieved no success at all. The response in the area offices was particularly strong with many workers, previously little involved in the union, joining the picket lines, and very few blacklegs. Although no other department came out in any strength their offices were picketed, and many individuals joined rather than cross the line. On Wednesday management finally agreed to a full reinstatement and a departmental meeting accepted a return to work rather than fight the further issue of pay that John had lost during six weeks working at a lower salary.

Regrettably, the same success was not achieved in the case of the second admin. worker, Peter Cooper. He was sacked during his probationary period for lack of punctuality (sometimes up to half an hour late for work!) and disregard for office decorum. It became apparent that Peter's political activities were the issue that threatened management. Unfortunately these same beliefs threatened the more conservative union members who succeeded in rejecting an amendment to extend the strike in support of Peter's re-instatement. Predictably, further negotiations on Peter's behalf failed and now he has left Southwark.

The strike in Southwark demonstrates that when a group of workers are prepared to show their solidarity in strike action, an apparently intractable management can suddenly find the means to meet their demands. The strike fell short of success: Peter Cooper was not included, John Pratt has a period of demotion on his record and management refused to publicly admit the political intent behind their conduct. However, the successes are also apparent: a worker's job was protected, an active shop-steward continues at Castle House, where a replacement would be difficult to find - especially with a precedent of victimisation. The unity and consciousness of the Branch has grown and now places it in a stronger position, more aware of its strength and potential for future struggles.

steve dunnett