

GAY LIBERATION

meets the SHRINKS

by Gary Alinder

SAN FRANCISCO (LNS) — Walking into the enemy's inner sanctum is an enlightening experience. Last month, Gay Liberation invaded the National Convention of the American Psychiatric Association in San Francisco. We found out how tuned out the shrinks are.

The main convention meeting looked like a refugee camp for Nixon's silent majority. It was 99 and 44/100 per cent white, straight, male middle-aged, upper middle class. They are the insulated ones — separated in their immaculate garb, cars, country clubs, planes, expensive hotels — protected from emotional involvement by a gibberish vocabulary which translates humanity into "scientifically" quantifiable and "objective" terms.

Oh yes, psychiatrists come in different stripes; some are right-wingers, many are liberals, a few radicals. But they seem with few exceptions to be caught up in a sense of their unusual importance. They expect to be listened to. They have no qualms about male chauvinism, they've never even thought about it.

And so they couldn't imagine what the woman was getting at when she took the microphone to say: "I want to know what room the women can have to meet together in, and I want to know now." The chairman went on to the next speaker. Another woman got on the microphone: "I don't believe you heard, we want to know what room we can have and we want to know now."

A week after Kent and Cambodia, the psychiatrists had come to discuss business as usual. A caucus of radical psychiatrists described what business as usual would be: "...a panel about American Indians which concentrates on suicide by them rather than genocide by us...learning about aversion treatment for homosexuals — but not considering whether homosexuality is really a psychiatric "disease" ... hearing about drugs, new drugs and old drugs — but not the way drugs are used to tranquilize people who are legitimately upset... hearing about psychiatry and law enforcement but not about how our society uses police to oppress people and prevent change... discussing sexuality and abortion — but not the way sex roles are used to oppress women."

I've read psychoanalytic writing on homosexuality. They have a million theories about its "causes" and "cure." As a homosexual, it occurs to me that the shrinks don't know their elbows from their assholes.

I don't so much mind people playing intellectual games. (How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?) But psychiatrists hold power to inflict their games on people.

As a young homosexual you feel alone, you need answers but there's no one to talk to. So you read books or end up under the "care" of a psychiatrist. You find out how sick you are. The reactionaries want to cure you through brainwashing, shock treatments or castration. The liberals just want you to be "happy." Of course they know homosexuality is an inferior way of life, but they have little faith in cures and encourage their patients to adapt to the "deviation." A minority of shrinks say that homosexuality falls within the "range of normality". Those with the latter view kept coming up to Gay Liberation people after the sessions: "We agree with you, so what's your complaint?"

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town did that a law was passed against the abuse of lambs. I believe this law is in effect in many states. So, if you are going to show one side of the picture, also paint the other side!

You say: The homosexual thrives on danger by inviting strangers to his apartment. How many heterosexual men bring ladies to their apartments and in the morning find their wallets gone? Ever hear of the old con game? This is where an innocent Joe picks up a woman and a man barges in asking — "What are you doing with my wife?" The poor sap has been had, wallet and all. Sometimes blackmailed and left beaten.

You say: Male and female homosexuals merely tolerate each other and the tensions run high. This mainly comes about because of the straights' stereotyping the "bull dyke" and the "nelly queen." This is now changing because gays are beginning to

One of our replies was: "You do, why don't you tell the world? Silence is also a crime."

One of the worst mind pigs is Dr. Irving Bieber, Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College. Listen to Dr. Bieber: "A (male) homosexual adaptation is a result of hidden and incapacitating fears of the opposite sex...frequent fear of disease or injury to the genitals...frequently includes attempts to solve problems involving the father.... The combination of sexual over-stimulation and intense guilt and anxiety about heterosexual behavior promote precocious and compulsive activity....By the time the son has reached the preadolescent period, he has suffered a diffuse personality disorder, ...pathologically dependent upon his mother and beset by feelings of inadequacy, impotence and self-contempt....Mothers of homosexuals are usually inadequate wives. They tend to dominate and minimize their husbands and frequently hold them more or less openly in contempt....Often there is a sense of identification with a minority group which has been discriminated against. Homosexual society, however, is neither "healthy" nor "happy." Life within this society tends to reinforce, fixate and add new disturbing elements to the entrenched psychopathology of its members." (Irving Bieber, "Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuals.")

When we heard that Bieber and company were coming to the American Psychiatric Association convention, we knew that we had to be there. And we were — on the convention floor microphone:

"We've listened to you long enough; you listen to us. We're fed up with being told we're sick. You're the ones who are sick. We're gay and we're proud!" — bearded Konstantin running around in a bright red dress.

Andy laying it on the twenty shrinks who show up for a Gay Liberation workshop. Gay guerrillas in the balcony sailing a paper airplane down to the convention floor when the delegates voted for a two-year study of violence. The airplane's message:

Bieber is almost too good a target. His views are grotesquely reactionary; personally he is old, with a pinched face and nasal voice. A few days later we dealt with Nathaniel McConaghy of Australia. Young, charming, sympathetic, ("I've gone on television urging an end to discrimination against homosexuals.") He reported his "research" as part of the program entitled "Issues on Sexuality."

From a summary of his paper: "With apomorphine therapy, the patient was given injections of apomorphine after which he viewed slides of males while experiencing the resultant nausea. With aversion-relief, the patient received painful electric shocks after reading aloud phrases describing aspects of homosexual behavior. Following a series of shocks, he read aloud a phrase describing an aspect of heterosexual behavior, and this was not followed by a shock...."

The Veterans Memorial Auditorium is nearly full — about 20 women's liberation people, 15 gay liberation people scattered through the 300 psychiatrists as McConaghy begins his paper. Shouts of "vicious," "torture," "get your rocks off that way?" McConaghy stops, apparently he'd expected trouble.

"If you'll just listen, I'm sure you'll find I'm on your side." Intermittent heckling continues, but he

like and accept themselves, and also their fellow brothers and sisters. The final analysis is (pardon the cliché) we like people for what they are. Do you say, "I like you because you're a heterosexual." You bet your Freudian slip you don't!

It is a shame your book was published and you had to include "something for everybody" and abort the gay society. Your section on homosexuality was so obviously unknowldgable with very little research, that I spared myself the rest of the book.

The whole point of the letter is to illustrate how silly and stupid your book is (on gays). Who appointed you sex expert? Unfortunately, many gullible people will read your book, since it is a bestseller, and take what you say as the gospel truth. You have done nothing but attempt to set the whole homosexual image back many years by stereotyping us. This is similar to what the film-makers in the 30's portrayed of the American Negro. Negroes did not

complete his paper. Five minutes of discussion and the chairman announces it's time to go on to the next paper. "We've listened to you, now you listen to us," we shout. "We've waited 5,000 years." The chairman responds, "Can't you just wait a half hour longer?" "We've waited long enough, we've waited long enough," comes our chant. With two papers still unread, the chairman announces, "This meeting is adjourned."

We are in a room of enraged psychiatrists. "They should be killed," shouts one. "Give back our air fare," shouts another.

Maria DeSantos reads from a Women's Liberation statement: "Women come to you suffering from depression. Women ought to feel depressed with the roles society puts on them....Those roles aren't biological, those roles are learned....It started when my mother threw me a doll and my brother a ball...."

Michael Itkin reads the Gay Liberation demands. Anarchy. Knots of people talking loudly all over the room. Shrinks coming up asking us what we want. Finally, some discussion.

Dozens of gay brothers and sisters have told me what awful experiences they've had with shrinks. "I was in and out of mental hospitals for three years. I know how to talk their language, and they're motherfuckers," a brother told me. Another said, "When I was about 19, I read Bieber's book; that set me back two or three years. Then I went to a psychiatrist who took Bieber as gospel; finally after a year I stopped."

Rather than dealing with a sick society, the shrinks deal with the individual members of that society. Conform, fit in, straighten up, the shrink tells us. "Something's wrong? It's in your head." And for the privilege of getting such advice, we pay them \$30 an hour, and more.

One of Gay Liberation's demands to the convention was the abolition of psychiatry as an oppressive tool. The more I think about it, the more I favor the abolition of psychiatry, period.

"We've known 4,000 years of violence, don't fight us, fuck us; don't shoot us, suck us."

Bruce heckling the man in a booth selling shock treatment machines. He demonstrates a machine which shows slides of nude males during which the male patient is painfully shocked; the next slide is of a female, the patient receives no shock.

Finally we found Dr. Bieber on a panel (Transsexualism vs. Homosexuality: Distinct Entities?) By this time I'm really angry: "You are the pigs who make it possible for the cops to beat homosexuals: they call us queer, you—so politely—call us sick. But it's the same thing. You make possible the beatings and rapes in prisons, you are implicated in the torturous cures perpetrated on desperate homosexuals. I've read your book, Dr. Bieber, and if that book talked about Black people the way it talks about homosexuals, you'd be drawn and quartered and you'd deserve it."

Bieber answers; "I never said homosexuals were sick, what I said was that they have displaced sexual adjustment." Much laughter from us: "That's the same thing motherfucker." He tries again, "I don't want to oppress homosexuals; I want to liberate them, to liberate them from that which is paining them—their homosexuality." That used to be called genocide.

eat watermelon and say "yes'm, I's comin'." Homosexuals do not all constantly search, pick up people in bathrooms and the rest of the happy horseshit your book alleges.

I would like to sign my name and address to this letter. Unfortunately, because lesbians and homosexuals must live in constant fear of harassment, ridicule, blackmail, and being ostracized from society, I cannot do so.

Next time you write a book that is full of hot air, why don't you choose a subject like the flatus habits of psychiatrists like you.

Gay and happy

p.s. Dear gay sisters and brothers — Please blackball this book. Love and peace. 23

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