

WE BOMBED

by Mike Silverstein

I was in the Gay Lib Collective living room a half hour after I arrived in Washington for the Constitutional Convention Thursday morning.

Yes, we had our own collective, our own organization and communications system, and our own place to stay. That made the convention something of a success for GLF when as a whole it was a disaster.

The collective was an old brownstone filled with the usual Gay revolutionary hippie chaos. People waking up, going to sleep, rapping, washing, cruising, raising consciousness, and just generally getting acquainted. The Louisville delegation had just arrived, all in Seahorse sweatshirts. Then Tallahassee, Florida, and Lawrence, Kansas. The Boston people came, and it really got crowded when the New Yorkers started coming.

I left New York six months ago. A lot has come down since then. Fems Against Sexism is a strong new caucus in GLF there and their thing is to Off the Butch. The butch Gays were doing their best to be offed as accomodatingly as possible.

STAR, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, wasn't there, they only go to revolutions not conventions. They are the new vanguard myth of New York.

Around one we split to All Saints Church for the GLF caucus. About 150 people were there, mainly brothers, so we rapped down our male chauvinism for a while. A transvestite caucus was also there to demand we confront our anti-transvestite feelings. A dialogue started that is going to have a lot to do with our learning how to off the sexism in ourselves and in this country.

The church gave us a fine Soul Food Thanksgiving dinner, and we rapped some more about an agenda for the workshop. Most of us went back to the Collective for the night.

Friday we learned the convention itself was supposed to start. It had just been announced that the convention wouldn't be held at Howard University. Everyone was waiting on the Panthers to find out what was happening.

A church was announced as the registration point. I went there to find a rather unfriendly chaos. No information was forthcoming about any of the workshops, or how the business of the convention would proceed. All that would be announced at a Panther press conference soon.

The GLF workshop was at the chapel of American U. I found about 200 Gay people there from about fifteen cities starting to get themselves together.

It was apparent to us from the beginning that we would have to work at getting our own shit together before we could really work in a revolutionary loving way on the business of the convention.

We had to off our own Male Chauvinism that made us relate to each other in a competitive, aggressive, emotionally closed way. We had to off the sexism that made us relate to each other as sexual objects rather than as total human beings. We had to learn why so many of our sisters still found us too Male Chauvinistic to work with. And we had to confront our own racism with our third world sisters and brothers. Until we made start at this the way we related to each other would not be an expression of the revolution.

We didn't solve these problems Saturday, but we confronted their reality, and made a beginning.

After contradictory rumors all day it was finally announced that here would be a rally in Malcolm X park that night. We went there together. Chanting, singing, dancing, and waving banners.

"2,4,6,8, Gay is Just as Good as Straight," "3,5,7,9 Lesbians are Mighty Fine," "Go Gay, Go Left, Go Pick up a Gun," "2,4,6,8 Gays Unite to Smash the State," "Hay, Hay What do you Say, Try



Bruce Reifel

by Nick Benton

Boston -- "We walked out on the Washington convention because we didn't think that we had to spurt semen all over the place in order to be an army of lovers."

So said Craig Smith of the Boston Gay Liberation front in an interview here about the sudden departure of the 15 Boston GLF delegates from the gay caucus of the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention held in Washington D.C. over the thanksgiving weekend.

"Sexism" is a term that is commonly bantered around within the movement. Gays and women employ the term most often and identify it as the enemy of their liberation.

But at the Gay Caucus of the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention the concept of sexism was painfully experienced not only as something imposed by the straight pig, but as a subtle reality operating among persons within the movement, transforming brothers and sisters into objects with commodity valves and tearing people apart.

In one of the most decisive actions of the convention, the Boston GLF Contingent bore witness to the sexism by suddenly picking up and leaving, to the shock of the more than 200 other gay delegates gathered from throughout the land.

"It was a painful experience," explained Craig Smith, concerning the Boston walkout. "We, in Boston, over the past months had lived and worked together and had begun to define for ourselves a sense of gayness that was closer to an intimate loving brotherhood not affected by the popular bourgeois images of what constitutes sexual appeal.

"We looked forward to joining with brothers and sisters from all over the country at Washington - the bringing together of the largest gathering ever of a growing army of lovers committed to a new dimension of relationships, men to men, and women to women.

"As males, we had been divided from each other for thousands of years, killing each other competing. But now we would be together at last, revolutionary at last.

GAY BROTHERS FREE OURSELVES • SISTERS UNITE SMASH SEXISM

it Once the Other Way."

Some of the sisters joined us. Most of the men seemed uptight. We were beautiful. "Ho, ho, homosexual."

Aside from us most of the people at the convention seemed part of an anonymous crowd. They had spent the whole day waiting around for something to happen. Nothing had been accomplished except by those groups that had their own organization, notably the women and us.

Most of the rally was taken up by the Panther rock group, the Lumpen. Their records sold for fifty cents each. Then "Big Man" made a speech. He trashed Fascism, racism, Capitalism, Imperialism. "Sexism" we chanted, without effect, yet.

He announced that the convention would continue until the constitution was written, and that we should all meet the next day at Saint Stevens Church. We split back to American U.

Saturday we spent the day together. We unanimously accepted Third World leadership, and the demands of the Third World Gay Revolutionaries, as the framework of our demands.

A delegation of four Third World Gay Revolutionaries, four white sisters, and two white brothers was chosen to present our position to the Panthers. Saturday night we went to the church to present our demands. Again we were marching, singing, dancing, chanting -- and we were together.

The scene at the church was chaos again. A thousand people were inside, - about five or six thousand outside. Most had been milling around all day again, not

knowing what else to do.

Our delegation wasn't admitted to the church, "for security reasons." We later learned no delegations were. Again we encountered considerable sexism in the crowd, and especially among the "marshall" (pigs?) policing the crowd.

A rally was broadcast from inside the church. Huey made a good speech about the stateless society we are all aiming for. Not much was accomplished. We went back to our place and rapped to each other some more.

Sunday we all split. What was accomplished? Well, GLF got a lot done. We started to get to know each other, find out that we're all over, and we're beautiful. We made a start at confronting the ways we oppress each other, and came away with a real sense of urgency about confronting ourselves and making our revolution.

We left knowing that the time is past when we can be Panther Groupies. We still want to work with other oppressed peoples, but nobody's going to make our revolution for us.

No one is going to make the revolution at all, unless we ourselves are together enough and strong enough to demand that it be a real revolution -- against sexism, male chauvinism, and heterosexual chauvinism, this time as well as capitalism, racism, and imperialism. Otherwise, it's just going to be the same old macho trip.

We set up committees of corres-

pondence to get a national GLF convention together, and we all went home determined to get on with the business of building our revolution. We will be ready.

What did the convention as a whole accomplish? It's hard to say because it didn't really happen. Perhaps the straight white male learned what the women and we know -- nobody else is going to make your revolution for you, not even the Black Panthers.

What the Panthers accomplished I have no idea. They didn't have much to say to the rest of us. But we haven't got time to wait around listening. We've got a revolution to build.

SPARE CHANGE

Dear BARB,

A young lady, newly arrived in Berserkeley, was walking down Telly, stoned out of her gourd. She was asking every fifth person for spare change. One of these numbers was a local kop, uniform and all. "Spare change?" she pleasantly said.

Arrest? Search? I.D. check? NO!! The kop, in the midst of rush hour 'people traffic', took a one dollar bill out and placed it gently in her fetching hand.

"Good luck" he said, and never the twain shall meet.

Aron Krohn

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