

Gays Probe Psychiatrists

by Sally S.

Gaymale activists sitting under a menacing sculpture/chandelier of many sharp metal and plastic tubes, on plastic chairs in a large windowless room underground in plastic hotel, mildly detailing their social - service projects for several dozen sympathetic people in the helping-hands industry. The only refreshment offered is ice-water, which the thirsty can pour from metal pitchers into monogrammed glasses.

As your tacky reporters stumble in late, a whitegayman from Emmaus House is rapping at length about his life story (former military and then cop; fired by pigs when they learned he was gay). Next a blackgayman from a new agency, Golden Gate Gay Liberation House, described their work with the homeless and hassled. His white partner, a Catholic ex-seminarian, ran on in the same vein.

Their nonpolitical/professional/compassionate approach fit right into "Orthe", the liberal nationwide association for people vocationally concerned with "the problems of human behavior".

I began to wake up when the moderator asked whether the recent American Psychiatric Association verdict--"Gays Are Sane"--made much difference. The official gay reps tended to belittle it.

Ortho pros hoped it would help. Del Martin, leading lesbian crusader, described the runaround which California gays had gotten: liberal politicians saying "We'd like to repeal the anti-gay sex laws, but the Christian churches would throw us out of office. You've got to get the churches on your side before we can act."

So gays organized the Council on Religion and the Homosexual (even though some gays involved were atheists!), lobbied Christers for years, got a few pieces of lip-service in that irrelevant sector of society. Next the pols were saying they couldn't legalize gay love without a green light from the medical establishment, especially the powerful shrinks (for Freudianism, or at least Psychiatry, is America's official state religion). Now that APA has come across, what will be their next excuse?

Others thought the sanity label would ease problems of gay therapists; and might encourage adoption agencies to let gays adopt kids. This led to a debate on whether het therapists could effectively help gay clients. One straight shrink warned colleagues against being "too pompous about our ability to help people". A bi-male therapist urged het professional men to hang out in gay bars and baths, just to learn about

their own anxieties in a gay erotic environ.

The Lib - House black staffer mentioned that some transexuals have trouble finding any therapist, gay or straight, who can emphasize with their unusual trip. Barb urged het therapists to "come out as bisexuals." The moderator, Dr. Ann Rubin, responded by looking forward "to a day, in our lifetime, when bisexual behavior will be the most acceptable".

From the audience, a black lesbian hassled the black gaymale; asking him to explain why so few black lesbians are active in Gay Lib groups. He admitted there were non in GGGLH here, but cited one in a similar Los Angeles agency. The seminarian added that very few gay women, of any race, are attracted to GGGLH.

Since above-ground gay institutions (bars, baths, organizations, etc.) are interracial but mainly white, it seems these include only those blacks who can stand associating with whites. How do separatist black gays get together in the ghetto? Del told about informal social groups of black gays, as indicated by a gay party she attended in Oakland: 150 blacks and 4 whites.

For lunch, the GGGLH men took Dr. Rubin and your reporters to a monthly meeting of the "Wednes-

day Group"--some 25 gay professional men--in the back room of an elegant but campy gay restaurant. The place was dimly lit, black-ceilinged, with framed mirrors and 1890's pictures covering wine-red walls. Our host/chairman was a charming and handsome grey-haired clinical psych. Members were in their thirties and forties, mostly handsome but all well-groomed; besides their lecture-luncheons, they plan to socialize in the boonies at Bear (bare?) Wallow.

Over shrimp creole, we were to hear several talks on "mental-health service delivery in the gay community." Him Stoll, gay Unitarian minister who has become an expert on gays who attempt suicide, told of counselling such victims at SF General Hospital, the Center for Special Problems, and now at Family (?) Service Agency. The plump young bearded long-hair read the testimony he had given to a California legislative committee.

In SF, where perhaps 20% of the residents are gay, only about 17% of the "successful" suicides (corpses) were gay. But about 35% of the "unsuccessful" suicides (survivors) are gay. Stoll blamed the attempts on societal oppression of gays. He ignored the possibility that gaymen (like females) might be less skillful

at killing than hetmen are.

The legislative committee, chaired by Sen. Mervyn Dymally in September, will hold hearings on the health needs of California gays.

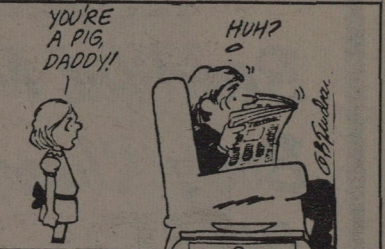
As coffee was served, we heard from a gay academic man doing Establishment-sponsored research on mental health needs of SF gaymales. He found a "wide diversity of homosexual populations" in Queen City, sub-subcultures who don't necessarily speak to each other, casting doubt on the concept of "a homosexual community".

Prominent gay politico Rick Stokes trashed the academic, expressing a feeling that research rarely benefits the gay populations being studied.

Dr. Dave Stockford unnerved many of us by reporting on problems of "the mature homosexual" over 30. "One of the great tragedies of homosexual life", he warns, "is that we bought the youth cult totally." So older queens get ignored and despised. Stockford exhorts us to accept our inevitable decline to death. Heaveeee.

I was relieved when the topic switched back to Golden Gate Gay Liberation House, whose reps want to recruit a Board of Directors consisting of prominent and/or affluent gay adults.

Back at Orthe, we found the erotic avant-garde discussing "new-sex". In nice clear Oldspeak, thank Hali! Berkeley sex therapist Sharie E. Marler explained her body-and-soul work with men afflicted by impotence or other erotic "dysfunction". Dr. Lynn G. Smith, academic expert on g. smith, academic expert on swinging, offered a utopian vision of "eufunctional" sex (like, ecstatic & fun); Smith's first book, *Beyond Monogamy*, will be born in May; then she'll start writing a book on her study of Sexual Freedom League members. Bebe J. Scarpie, New York gay/transie activist, blasted away on various sexual topics; despite her arrogance, she charmed everyone. Radical sociologist Laud Humphreys offered provocative questions about a fascinating new trend: "radical drag," also known as genderfuck, flash, glitter, low drag, or cocketry. He suggested the trip may be invading The Cabaret in SF, so guess where I'm gonna flaunt my sequined arse. Afterwards Marler rapped with porn - exhibitor Arlene Elster. They lifted up their skirts to show off their garters in the Greer-inspired trend away from cunt-smothering pantyhose). Elster wore panties with her hose and garters, but Marler left her pussy completely free to breathe.



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