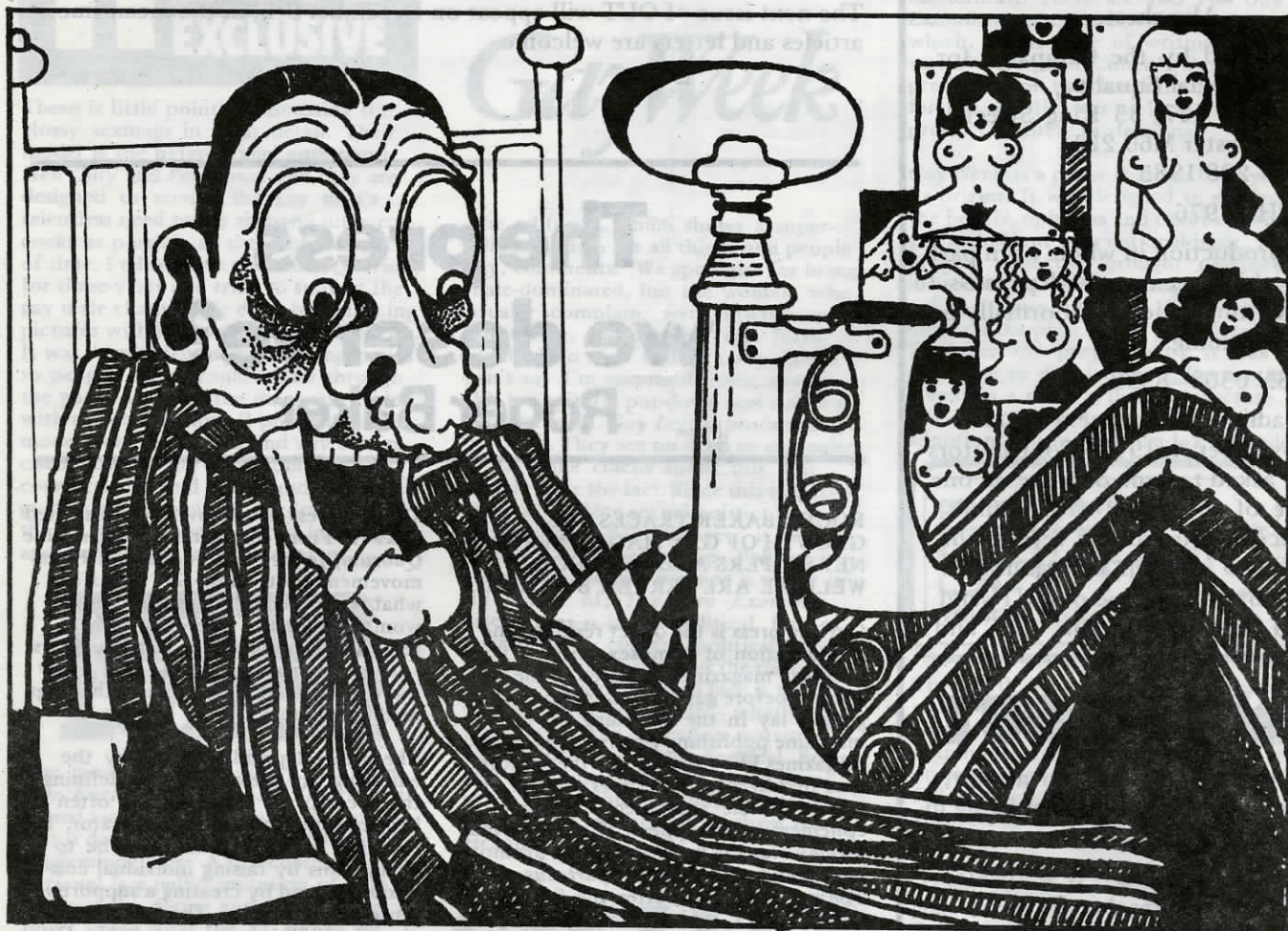


OUT

20p

For and about gay women and men



On the receiving end **Liz Stanley** Why I won't
join CHE **Michael Holt** The press we deserve?
Roger Baker Cutting the bumf **Roger**
Depledge All at sea **John Lindsay**

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OUT OUTCAST

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right to shorten contributions.
To obtain the issue of OUT send
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get it free.

INSIDE OUT

ROGER BAKER is an author,
playwright and journalist living in
London. Page 2-4

MICHAEL HOLT is a theatre
designer and teacher from
Manchester. Page 4 & 5

ROGER DEPLEDGE teaches in
York. Page 8

LIZ STANLEY is a PhD student
at Salford University. Page 6 & 7

JOHN LINDSAY is a librarian in
London and a member of the East
London Gay Centre. Page 9 & 10

TONY PRITCHARD is the
organiser for Manchester Youth
and Community Service. Page 11

Welcome to the first issue of OUT, the new bi-monthly gay magazine.

Each issue will contain articles from a wide spectrum of writers. Our aim is to provoke thought and discussion and we shall encourage criticism of the gay movement. OUT's contents will not necessarily reflect the views of CHE or of its Executive; we will allow our writers the freedom to put their case as plainly as they can.

Although OUT is published by CHE, it is edited by an independent board of two women and two men who believe in gay liberation and non-sexism - which is why you won't find pin-up pictures or advertisements for hard-core pornography.

The next issue of OUT will appear on December 9th, in the meantime articles and letters are welcome.

The press we deserve? Roger Baker

ROGER BAKER TRACES THE
GROWTH OF GAY MAGAZINES AND
NEWSPAPERS AND ASKS HOW
WELL WE ARE SERVED BY THEM

Our gay press is the direct result of the politicization of homosexuality. A few male-gay magazines appeared in the late 1960's, before gay liberation, but their genesis lay in the loosening up of magazine publishing generally. After sex magazines like *Curious*, and the explorations of *International Times* and *OZ* it was inevitable that specifically gay ephemera would appear. The short-lived *Jeremy* was the most appealing, promoting a trendy bisexuality. *Spartacus* and *Timm*, feeling safe after the Sexual Offences Act, looked backward. Cash and cocks were the theme with only the former nakedly apparent.

The explosion of the gay movement raised individual gay awareness and began to define a wide gay audience. The magazines just mentioned folded (for different reasons) and the gay movement filled the gap with its own product: clumsy, sometimes illiterate, shrill and bewildering but packed with ideas and vitality. We may come to respect the loss of *Come Together*, *Lunch*, *Gay International News* and other sheets which still make relevant reading.

The gay press as we now know it started in 1972. From commercial sources came *Quorum*, *Jeffrey* and *Follow Up*. From movement roots came *Gay News* and what is still the only magazine for gay women, *Sappho*. There have been several deaths during the last four years - all in the magazine field - but today there are at least half a dozen other rags readily available.

The greatest problem faced by the emerging gay press is that of defining the needs of its audience. Sex often becomes the common denominator. The function of a gay press must be to change this by raising individual consciousness and by creating a supportive sense of community. Those first magazines in 1972 were aware of this. *Gay News* took a critical, fairly radical stand; *Quorum* interleaved its legs and loins with thoughtful articles and information; *Follow Up* used a paternal, quasi-psychological approach with rather younger legs and loins; *Jeffrey* garnished information with silly camp and badly printed legs and loins. Beneath these superficial audience-pullers was an evident desire to broadcast the news that gay was good, gay was here and that a community was emerging.

Looking at the gay press four years later this sense of turbulence, of excitement

has diminished or disappeared. The impetus of gay liberation has been used and discarded. *The Gay Examiner* can editorialize in Issue 13 'Gay people have had a long struggle to gain social acceptance and fully deserve to enjoy the benefits which have been won so far'. This hollow platitude seems to sum up the general feeling that our gay press currently exudes.



There is little point in discussing the glossy sexmags in great detail. Their model is the heterosexual equivalents *Men Only* and *Penthouse* and they are designed to service the gay man's relentless need to see as many different cocks as possible in the shortest space of time. I edited one magazine, *Quorum*, for three years and tried to subvert the gay male chauvinistic ethic by balancing pictures with literate, intelligent articles. It was deeply depressing showing copies to people. They would waffle through the pages and cast the magazine aside with the observation: 'I prefer younger models' or: 'Can't you find any circumcised boys?'. The compromise failed conspicuously and today, under different guidance, *Quorum* has become everything I tried to avoid - crass in design and abominably sexist in content.

AFTER LUNCH

The most successful glossy has been *Him Exclusive*, frequently illiterate, its sexual assumptions coarse and oppressive. But it does have a direct sexuality and singlemindedness. A newcomer *Q International* is a pallid imitation of *Him* without the daring and visual bezaz. I don't know what the 'Q' stands for, and I don't think I want to.

These glossies anger and disgust many gay people. I can see why. The pleasure of looking at attractive people, clothed or not, is universal, commonplace and most people respond. In itself this fact cannot be a source of disgust. It is the context, the promotion of oppressive ideas both about the nature of gayness and the nature of gay relationships which are seen as rigidly roled and highly dependent on youth, good looks, physical expertise and social accomplishment.

The idea of an intelligent gay magazine that rejects the sexism of photographs and the equivalent articles is an appealing one; something that is both entertaining and politically aware. The original *Lunch* looked in that direction. This summer brought its step-child *After Lunch* the first issue of which looks attractive but is in fact a disappointment. The coverline 'for men who like each other' is the most wince-making since *Line Up's* 'the magazine of human events'. There is an element of facetiousness that pays decreasing dividends and the lack of editorial energy is reflected in the uneasy mix of articles ranging from an O-level piece about Shakespeare's minor gays to a vibrant interview with John Lindsay. If it can find direction and consistency *After Lunch* may have a future.

GayWeek

The editorial, which shows a supercilious disdain for all things and people gay, comments: 'We apologise for being male-dominated, but the women, who usually complain, were invited to contribute, but nothing was forthcoming'. In view of that cover line, I can't say I'm surprised. And, anyway, this is a spiteful put-down and a shameful admission. *Gay Left* is produced by gay men. They see no need to apologise or to make cracks about this, but merely state the fact. Since this magazine aims to 'explore sexual politics from a revolutionary point of view' it cannot expect a wide readership. Politics is something the gay press as a whole is shit-scared of; *The Gay Examiner* asserts that it is non-political. But, of course, in this context 'political' means anything which questions the *status quo*. What few people care to face is the fact that the *status quo* itself - whether in the Church, the education system, the legal system - is deeply political. Being gay threatens the entire *status quo*; being gay is political and, despite the Ian Harveys of this world, there is no escaping this.

GAY LEFT

Gay Left is the only rag that confronts it; both issues so far have begun with penetrating analyses of the gay world we inhabit and the other contributions are wide-ranging, unbogged and stimulating. Anyone who can grasp the simple fact that to try and keep the boat steady is just as political an act as trying to rock it, will find much to be grateful for in this magazine.

Consciousness and community are elements that simmer around *Sappho* too, which seems held together by commitment and brushes a kind of unstructured feminism with humanity. It has remained a grass roots publication, which means contributions are sometimes naive, sometimes plaintive. Reformist rather than radical, *Sappho* nonetheless manages to convey a sense of sisterhood.

GAY NEWS

So we come to the newspapers. *Gay News* of course towers over all like the Matterhorn. There are also *The Gay Examiner* and *Gayweek* the fortunes of which, at the time of writing, are variable. Stephen Cohen's *Daily Gay*, produced for the Southampton Conference of CHE was a clean and crisp product, entirely professional.

Gay News is a paper that has betrayed its origins. It was designed to express the beliefs, opinions and desires of the gay movement on a national basis. The original collective brought together individuals of varying backgrounds and political views, but who shared agreement on the principal of gay liberation. To make the project work it was necessary to dissolve the collective in favour in a more orthodox structure. But this need not have meant the adoption of a more orthodox attitude.

gay women read
SAPPHO
volume 4

The 100th issue in July was garnished with a parade of the gay elite, most of whom wouldn't have been seen dead within its pages two years ago, with the promise of even more famous unguys to follow. Over the years we have become anesthetized to the paper's bizarre preoccupation with pop records. But the battle to be accepted as worthy of straight society has included too many concessions to privileged gay culture. Ballet, cookery, horoscopes, classical records, opera reviews, servile interviews with trendy nonentities and sub-Dempster gossip clutter the pages. During the last year another tone has crept in - self-congratulation, complacency, all is well in our little gay world.

Some stories are treated with the same nudge-and-giggle the non-gays press reserves for womens' lib, and there is also the technique of trying to drag anyone available into the gay net (I've got nothing to hide' - David Cassidy; 'What - another!' - Marlon Brando) which justifiably sends Fleet

Street into helpless giggles. The tones of the investigative news stories often appears a parody of the *Sunday People*: 'Dennis, in his thirties, with curled ginger hair, sat at an old desk behind a half-empty bottle of scotch. He was giving nothing away'. Not even, presumably, the scotch.

What remains? Well, quite a lot, actually. *Gay New's* strengths are precisely those that connect directly with gayness and gay people. News coverage is generally good, though a more vivacious hand rewriting hand-outs and press cuttings would be refreshing. The news pages tell us what is happening to us, about us, around us. Occasional individuals describing their experience of coming out have poignancy and value. Bob Workman's picture spreads of social activities, though clearly designed by a brick-layer,

keep us in touch with reality. Guide and information listings are excellent and book coverage is especially prized since here, as with many news stories, *Gay News* can bring us information ignored or dismissed by the orthodox press. The potential of the interesting letters page is diminished by the gap between issues.

The publicity and editorial comments on *Gay New's* fourth anniversary suggest an ambition (almost realised) to be accepted by society at large. The theatre critic is quoted outside a Shaftsbury Avenue, we are told with pride; the paper is available at some branches of W. H. Smith and, above all, there is the staggering pretentiousness of the Gay News Literary Award, given for two years running to non-gay writers who have said nice or understanding things about us poor gays.

One of the papers regular heavyweights wrote in Issue 100 '*Gay News* must not be a journal for gays alone'. Would he, I wonder, urge a Roman Catholic journal to widen its appeal to include Protestants, or a Jewish paper to appeal to Gentiles? Yet the signs are that this is the way *Gay News* is going. This is fine for those who want blandness, evasion, concessions. John Warburton points out that gays are the only oppressed minority who wish to be accepted by their enemies. *Gay News* can become acceptable to heterosexuals, but at the cost of erasing gay identity. Already it has drawn the teeth of gay liberation, destroyed the danger and defused the dynamite. There is certainly room for an alternative. ●

OUTSIDERS

Why I won't join CHE

An occasional series

I can't imagine why I've not written to you all before to tell you why I won't join CHE. The trouble is, you know, that I don't identify myself with any barometer of homosexual opinion, not even the little lady with the parasol, let alone the dirty old man with the mac and umbrella.

Yet some of my best friends are queers — no, dammit — all of my friends are; the best, the second best and the downright third rate. They are all Marys, Jessies, pooves, pansies and pooftahs and I'm very glad that they are. You will notice that I studiously avoid the term "gay". I do so prefer the pejorative terms and "queer" is my favourite. When my friends and I use it, it is with a sense of self-mocking irony; the sort of deflection of abuse that most minority groups find effective as self-defence. If I refer to my best friend as a queer it is to establish that my friendship rises above and beyond the abusive term and that I accept, appreciate and rejoice in the very thing other people would have me despise. This is for me a reflection of the sense of ironic humour that is one of the joys of keeping the company of pooves.

You see. I like being queer. I don't find it a burden and a great difficulty. I find any suggestion that I should do so silly and even offensive.

At the one CHE meeting I went to recently at least half the time was spent denouncing the pub/club scene as exploitative, self-defeating, shallow and leading to loneliness. Well, my friends (all heads-held-high, wrists-held-limp nancies) would never recognise themselves as these down-trodden pre-revolutionary serfs that the meeting felt itself to be campaigning for. I was really lampooned and made to feel a traitor to the cause for saying that I found the clubs and pubs a useful way of meeting friends with the same attitudes and interests

who lived on the other side of town. I was made to feel that I was pulling down the barricades by saying that queer bars were only the same as motor rally bars, Irish pubs and Liberal clubs. My name was noted when I said that most 18-year-old girls went out with the queer's idea of getting a man that night in any pub they could. Oh yes, I was definitely against the revolution and probably, Glenys Parry save us, a Tory!

But as you have already learned, the trouble is that I am queer and not gay. You see I simply don't recognise myself in the homosexual mould CHE would apparently want me to fit. I don't feel down-trodden because of my sexual preferences, nor particularly exploited for them. I don't feel the necessity to recite each day the CHE morning prayer: "Oh God, turn the rest of the world normal".

Of course I could let myself be overpowered by a feeling that the normal world is actively against me but, instead, I chose to recognise that for the most part the het world I move in has a capacity implicitly to tolerate queers without feeling any necessity to express active approval. Which, let's face it, is my attitude and the attitude of most of my friends to any behaviour of which we have no previous knowledge or experience.

It is not surprising to me if normals want to change the subject at the office party from my queer love life — after all, I'd do the same if someone confessed to me that they were turned on by wearing a plastic mac and having their wife throw wet lettuce at them. It's not that I disapprove or want to have them put down, it is that the idea is so new and beyond my experience that it's either irrelevant or risible. But let them go their own way say I. After CHE meetings I do so fear the coming of the lettuce throwers.

And if you think my example too facile, imagine saying at an interview for a teaching post that you thought you ought to make it clear that you were a confirmed wife-swapper but you hoped it would in no way alter the committee's picture of you.

I suppose it's always the same with evangelism for that is surely what this over-declaration amounts to. I went to a private party recently where two young men were asked not to dance together as the host felt that it might be unacceptable to the normal guests there. I don't know whether it was but I certainly found it so. I felt the dancing nancies were guilty of gross indiscretion and criminal exaggeration. No, I didn't object because they were queers crashing the barriers of respectability but because the behaviour was inappropriate. I would have been just as embarrassed had two people gone around the party saying in loud voices: "Are you willing to die for Jesus?" I happen to believe in the salvation through Christ but, faced with such a confrontation and such demands to declare myself publicly, I would have shrivelled and denied my belief — three times if necessary. Now there is nothing wrong with believing in Jesus and with declaring it publicly, but to demand that others stand up and state their position is likely to have two effects. One is to make people shrink from public acknowledgement, and the other is to make them hide behind unheld beliefs of conformity.

Of course I am annoyed by petty prejudice and infuriated by grotesquely unequal laws, but I think that my approach to change would be far less dramatic and radical than that of our revolutionary, evangelical, lefty CHE member. (You don't think I caricature, do you?)

Let's examine the aims of functions of CHE and see if I can be persuaded that my caricature should turn to flattering portraiture.

I suppose that it would be impossible to argue with the name Campaign for Homosexual Equality — so respectable. But let's be careful about equality. It is one of those terrifying blanket terms like liberty that are useless unless defined further. It must mean equality with a normal in society. In other words, that in our society the aim should be for a queer to feel as free or as justly treated as a normal does. A laudable and unexceptionable aim, of course. Naturally the age of consent should be equal for everyone. Obviously no one should be dismissed from a job because he is

attracted to pansies. I don't need to argue the simple issues of justice here. But I would like to underline what I have been saying above that with equality comes not only the freedoms of normality but also the restrictions. Let no one imagine that the liberty to hold hands in the street, to kiss goodbye at the station, to choose a double bed together will mean that a man can wear Mary Quant eye-liner in the street, or that drenching oneself in "Evening in Paris" will be regarded as anything but odd.

Of course CHE has an answer to this: we queers are different and must develop our own modes and conventions; we must not be oppressed by our normal backgrounds but accept that our relationships are less stable, that marriage is not within our terms of reference and so on. It's the old revolutionary story — all animals are equal, but some more equal than others.

But perhaps I am still skating over the surface and should ignore what I think equality involves and concentrate on the common cause: to get rid of the injustices both CHE members and I think monstrous. After all, any movement aimed at fighting these is better than none. There is great force in this argument. CHE does exist and has become a focal point of some strength.

It is much to be congratulated on its very existence. I sincerely hope it grows into an army to wage war against prejudice and injustice.

However, at the moment its battle plans seem to be non-existent. I must overlook such sorties as Gay Pride Marches which frankly seem calculated to induce embarrassment rather than pride. That melee of effetes only induces in me such self-consciousness that I buy the Daily Express and stop the lip. Surely we can demonstrate our solidarity, our value to the community and our individuality in a more seemly way.

It seems to me that CHE has failed on this level over the last five years. For instance, I think that it does not yet know the size of its potential sphere of influence. It is ridiculous that it still argues its case on behalf of a group whose size it can only guess at from a discredited American estimate. Why has so little market research been done on this and on attitudes to law reform? I become very annoyed when I see how a comparatively tiny social group such as single parents can enjoy such splendid air time on radio and television while the huge homosexual clan fails to make any real impact. I know that it all costs money and that my subscription would of course help, but I remain unconvinced that CHE is able to do the job.

Like some of my best friends, CHE has two faces. One is reformist and the other socialite and, in their endeavour to keep it on the straight revolutionary path, the reformers are becoming more and more extreme.

"Come out, come out wherever you are," they should, "and join this repressed, exploited underprivileged sect to fight for our rights." Some invitation!

But the socialite other face has no appeal to me either. Living in Manchester, there are many outlets for me already and I feel that suppressed homosexuals will more likely drift into the anonymity of a gay bar than to a CHE group. I can see the necessity and great value for such a meeting place where no outlets exist, but I don't actually need it myself.

I feel that until this split between campaigning and socialising is healed, CHE will not put its undoubtedly necessary case with any real force but shout itself round into a Leftist circle demanding a privileged equality and disciplining its less ardent socialite members with rhetoric. We see the emergence of castigating phrases such as "self-oppressed, closetted, self-defeating" and I can already hear the abuse this deliberately extreme article will elicit! "It's all right for him in his cosy queer world, with his subscription we could do something. That's the sort of attitude we have to fight." I have been made to feel already that because I don't join CHE I am a traitor to the cause. Well, tell that to my best friends!

Michael Holt

Advertising Manager

OUT require an Advertising Manager. If you live in or near London and have access to a daytime telephone you could be the person we need. Write to OUT, PO Box 427, 33 King Street, Manchester M60 2EL or telephone 061-228 1985

GAY SWEATSHOP

ON TOUR/WINTER 1976

ANY WOMAN CAN by Jill Posener
Oct 15 Reading University
Oct 20-23 Derby Playhouse
Oct 25-30 Haymarket Theatre Leicester
Nov 6 Nuffield Studio, Southampton
Nov 10 & 11 Plymouth Arts Centre
Nov 12 Bath Arts Workshop
Nov 15-27 Project Arts Centre, Dublin
Nov 29-Dec 4 Scottish Tour
Dec 5 Gateway Theatre, Chester
Dec 6-8 Lancaster University
Dec 15 Dovecot Arts Centre, Stockton

INDISCREET (The Revenge of Mr X)
by Drew Griffiths & Roger Baker
NB New re-written version of the show seen at Southampton and the ICA
Oct 11-Nov 7 Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam
and on tour in Holland
Nov 15-27 Project Arts Centre Dublin
Dec 5 Gateway Theatre, Chester
Dec 6-8 Lancaster University
Dec 16 & 17 Maris Club, Newcastle

IN LONDON
Dec 7-18 ICA Tuesday-Saturday
A new lunchtime play at 1.15 pm
Dec 21-24 A Gay Panto!
Late-night entertainment for the festive season.

Denis Rake

1898-1976

Denis Rake, a member of the wartime Special Operations Executive in occupied France, died on September 12th aged 78. For his courageous intelligence work he was awarded the British Military Cross and the French Croix de Guerre and was made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur. He left instructions that, instead of flowers, donations should be sent to C.H.E. and a number of donations have been received.

Mr. Rake came out publicly as gay many years ago and was interviewed on the subject by magazines and also on television where he stated that one of his reasons for undertaking highly dangerous work in Nazi-occupied territory was to show that a homosexual could be every bit as brave as a heterosexual.

A friend wrote to C.H.E.: "He was a really remarkable and very lovable man with a warmth and bubbling sense of humour that made anyone near him feel happy . . . He never ever hid the fact he was homosexual."

"He was genuinely very modest, hated to be called 'Major' Rake and only came to write his story (Rake's Progress published in 1968 by L. Frewin) because of pressure from friends and especially from Douglas Fairbanks, where he went as butler."

"He loved being with young people & not only homosexuals. I think I can say I was his closest woman friend especially during the last 12 years of his life . . . We trusted one another totally and we had a great deal of fun together. He loved coming to my house in Chelsea and knowing my then young son and all his friends and they all loved him. When I left London in 1970 it was a great loss to him and he was a great loss to me, but I never failed to see him every month and sometimes stayed there. He loved my son and his girl friend going to see him and fetching him to spend a day with them and he telephoned me often."

"For myself, I wept constantly (after his death), which I haven't done at the death of someone for years and now I feel an ache and a silence knowing he won't be telephoning and he won't be there when I am in London. He was a truly wonderful, warm and loyal friend."

On the receiving end

Liz Stanley

analyses obscene phone calls and the lesbian threat

From late 1971 our phone has been one of the main contact numbers used by gay people in the Manchester area. It has also been a popular number for obscene callers. The number was on a poster with a picture of four gay women, a little information about gay groups and the message 'ring Sue or Liz for more details'. A total of 286 calls were received in one seven week period — a weekly average of just over 40 calls. (Table 1)

Genuine	169 (59%)
Obscene	105 (37%)
Silent	10 (3.55%)
Joke	2 (0.5%)
Total Calls	286 (100%)

Table 1

The genuine calls were made by gay people wanting to join gay groups, asking for information and so on. The obscene calls are defined as those which made unsolicited sexual or violent remarks or calls where the caller masturbated without making any obscene remark. The silent call category is self-explanatory and whether these were made frightened gay people or very quiet wankers is anyone's guess. The joke calls were made by the same girl, who spoke in a high camp voice and was very funny (well, better than Dick Emery anyway). The rest of this discussion will concentrate on the obscene calls.

The most notable fact about the obscene callers is that 2 out of 105 were made by women. Both of these calls consisted of anti-lesbian abuse screamed down the phone and the receiver hastily replaced.

Obviously it's difficult to draw conclusions about the age or class composition of the callers from their obscenities, although we did try to talk to as many as possible. In between getting annoyed and robbing the caller of an orgasm by putting the phone down, we managed to have quite lengthy conversations with between 30 and 40 of the male callers. Of those we spoke to, all were under forty and most were in their middle 20's. Quite a few of them were married and, of those who weren't, all except one said they were involved in sexual relationships which were satisfactory to them. Most of them had skilled jobs, a number worked in offices where they had access to a 'phone in a private room.

The tone of the remarks suggested that most of the callers were heterosexual, although some claimed to 'fuck blokes' and women too. The popular image of the dirty phone caller as a grubby-macked, sex starved middle-aged man appears without much foundation if the comments of our sample are to be believed.

It's impossible to write about obscene 'phone calls without detailing some of the obscenities used. So, please stop reading now if you think you might be outraged or upset.

Table 2 shows the content of the calls, classified by their opening remarks. However, most of the calls contained elements of a number of these categories.

The following example shows how calls may shift from one category into others. Words placed in brackets in all the examples used are those spoken by Sue or I.

'Liz? (No, it's Sue) Hullo sexy (Can I help you?) Yes, you can give me a good fuck (No thank you, I'm not interested) That's what you need, a good fuck (Why?) Well, it's the real thing, isn't it? It's better than going with a girl (I don't agree) I'd like to splash spunk in your face, I'd like to kick your head in you fucking queer, you fucking cunt you (Have

you finished now?) Er, well, have you anything to add then?'

All the calls, except the heavy breathers who couldn't be coaxed into speaking, eventually mentioned our lesbianism in the course of what they said. The content of the calls demonstrates the lesbian myths which we've all heard.

WOMEN 'BECOME' LESBIANS BECAUSE THEY CAN'T ATTRACT A MAN — ANY MAN:

You're a les, aren't you? (No, but I am a homosexual woman) You need a good fuck you do, and I'll give it to you. That'll cure you, I bet you've never had it from a man. You'll love it, I've got nine hot inches that'll set you up'.

BEING A GAY WOMAN IS SYNONYMOUS WITH BEING A WHORE:

'When can I come round and have sex with you? (You can't, what on earth made you think you could?) Where can I get sex then? (I should try a prostitute) I thought you were one (No, I'm a lesbian, this number is the contact number for gay people in Manchester) Oh, I thought that — meant you were one. Will you have sex with me then? (No, I've already told you) Why won't you? That's what you leses need'.

A PENIS IS NECESSARY FOR A WOMAN TO HAVE SEX:

'Are you a queer then? (What do you mean? Do you mean am I a lesbian?) Yeah, are you a les then (I am a lesbian) Do you use a big dildo or something when you have sex? (Don't be silly) It's not silly, you don't have a cock. You'd like my cock up you . . . it's big and stiff right now.'

GAY RELATIONSHIPS ARE LIKE STRAIGHT ONES:

'Are you the butch one or the other one? (Neither, it isn't like that in gay relationships) Of course it is, you're just kidding me. Come on, tell me what you do in bed, do you do the fucking, like a man? Do you shuv it up her then? I could do you better than any fucking lesy could (Don't be ridiculous) You need a fucking psychiatrist you do, and a good fuck by a real feller'.

HOMOSEXUALITY IS JUST ABOUT SEX:

'Do you hold her hand then? I mean, do you love each other like men and women do? Do you watch tele and hold hands, things like that? I bet you got a big bed in your room, haven't you? Have you been pussy-lapping today?'

Many of these statements illustrate some of the callers' (and many other people's) ideas about women in general and gay women in particular. They also say

something about how the callers see the nature of female and male sexuality. Other statements demonstrate this too:

WOMEN ARE SEXUAL RECEPTACLES:

'Women need fucking, that's what they're for. That's what you need — a good fucking by a real man, that's what you need . . . you stinking shitting woman, you'.

PENIS SIZE EQUALS SEXUAL PROFICIENCY/SEX IS A PENIS:

'I've got 7½ or 8 inches to stick up you (Don't you know which it is?) It's 8 inches (Really) Yes, you'll like it, I'm a real man. It's 5 inches round (Do you measure it often,) Yes, I do, it's what you're missing, you know'.

SEX WITH A MAN 'CURES' LESBIANISM:

'What you leses need is a good fucking by a real man, that'll sort you out. You'll like it, all hot and wet up you'.

VIOLENCE AS SEXUAL TURN-ON:

'Why don't you let me give you a good-arse-fucking, I'd fuck hell out of you. You'll like that, that'll get you, you filthy cunt-lover. I'd fuck you into the ground, till you can't stand up, till the spunk runs out of you. I'll fuck the hell out of you . . . Oh, it's alright, I've come now'.

The most frequently repeated information related to the penis size of the caller and how delighted we would be to experience how ever many inches were being offered. Each man we talked to regaled us with the dimensions of his penis. If they are to be believed, the average penis length of the callers was between 10 and 12 inches.

The outstanding characteristic of the calls was their repetitive and limited content. As quoted here they sound quite interesting, but repeated 105 times, they lose whatever amusement or interest they appear to have. The fact that people could get so turned on by the simple repetition of a few not very imaginative rude words and phrases never ceased to amaze us.

Last year I spoke to a number of CHE groups about the calls. One man suggested that the calls were our fault, for affronting male pride. He was right of course, but he was taking the part of the ego-damaged callers rather than making a political analysis. Other people said we should have put the phone down and not listened. Easier said than done — only the caller can terminate calls, and some of these men remained on the end of the receiver for hours, waiting for us to pick up the phone again. Others thought the callers were all sex-starved psychopaths. However, most of the women who were at the meetings had had experiences of their own with

Violent	1 (1%)
Sexually violent	5 (4.75%)
Lesbianism a turn-on	31 (29.5%)
Sex service requests	36 (34%)
Try to get address	7 (6.75%)
Heavy breathers	21 (20%)
Anti-lesbian violence	2 (2%)
Non-classifiable*	2 (2%)

*spoken too quickly and loudly to catch the sense of it.

Table 2

heterosexual men who had not known of their gayness. And so, what is suggested here is that the callers are not so very unusual, and that they displayed in an exaggerated form the more or less typical reaction of heterosexual men to lesbianism; they have some kind of lesbian fixation.

The content of pornography, or at least that part of it which purports to be about gay women, can help us find out more about this fixation. If you happen to frequent porn shops — but not gay ones, where anything about women is somewhat rarer than the dodo — then you'll know that a large proportion of porn is supposedly for lesbians, but in fact for heterosexual men. The plots are simple: woman dallies with another woman; in comes man and has sex with both who immediately forget any interest they had in each other.

The conclusion I draw from the obscene calls and the representation of lesbianism in pornography is that heterosexual men find lesbianism very threatening — even more threatening than they find women. To remove the threat, lesbianism is portrayed as titillation for men. Lesbians are turned into the sexual object par excellence. The message comes across very clearly as 'if it's threatening then fuck it with the all-powerful penis'. But why should gay women prove such a threat?

The GLF Manifesto and many activists in CHE have pointed out that the reactions of people who see homosexuality as a threat to the established moral order are absolutely correct. It has also been pointed out that the

attitude of CHE, in treating these reactions as irrational and soluble at the drop of a leaflet or article, are rather naive. Prejudice of all kinds results from threatened or insecure people being made to confront the source of their insecurities. The 'threat' posed by homosexuality in general is that it demonstrates that the gender stereotypes of masculinity or femininity are artificial creations, and that sex is not tied to reproduction. This may be the limit of the threat posed by male homosexuality; but gay women threaten other norms and values that are probably even more ingrained and basic to 'heterosexist' society.

All the calls made to us focus on sexual acts. They didn't say 'how dare you love women' or 'I'm going to kiss you until you can't stand any more'. What they did say was that the callers were outraged and that we should prefer a woman, of all things, to them and their amazing penises. In all the calls, almost all of the obscenities uttered were about the penis and penetration, and how the callers couldn't understand a sexuality that involved no penis at all.

It would seem that what lesbians — as opposed to gay men — threaten is the definition of all sexuality in entirely male terms. Not only is the penis seen as important for men, but totally necessary for women for any satisfactory sexual encounter. Even so-called liberated books and magazines emphasise this message: the penis is real sex, and sex without a penis is but foreplay, a few quick tweaks of a nipple before getting down to the real thing.

Merely by existing, gay women (that is, women who are bisexual or homosexual) say something fundamental about female sexuality. Lesbianism implies that female sexuality is clitoral and that the penis is necessary only for reproduction. Gay women are first and foremost women and thus lesbian sexuality says something about all women's sexuality. And this is the source of the threat experienced by the men who rang us to shout out information about importance and wonder of their sexual organs.

Men, all men, have been conditioned to believe not only that males are in some indefinable sense better than women but also that sex is about them as sexual subjects and women as sexual objects, and that the penis is very important and totally wonderful. And then along come these terrible lesbians, who seem to suggest that the penis is irrelevant to women.

One of the assumptions basic to many of the activities of CHE is that the nature of oppression for gay women and men is very similar. What I have tried to suggest is that in one important fundamental respect our oppressions are not only different, but in confrontation. ●



Cutting the bumf

Roger Depledge

Every organisation contains bureaucrats who, when kept in check, make harmless pets to be fed on carbon paper and paper clips, but who easily assume an importance that threatens the survival of the organisation itself. Whether they work for Unilever, CHE or the Department of Health and Social Security, their characteristics are the same; indeed watching them in action it is sometimes difficult to tell who they are working for, so removed is their behaviour from the original aims of the body concerned.

The true bureaucrat finds life and people rather messy and spends most of his time (for it almost always is a man) trying to avoid human beings and maximise paper work. There are no personal problems for the bureaucrat, no personality clashes, only administrative difficulties or differences of policy. What makes a bureaucrat happy? Above all, committees and sub-committees, and in order to make these even more remote from everyday life he will use a long string of initials rather than action-

based names; for example NFHO, NCEGRC or even the Welsh village YSIPCHETM*.

He also enjoys playing with forms and code numbers so that everything and everybody can be filed and tabulated under paragraphs, sub-sections and page 17 of 35. Next time you see this sort of thing getting out of hand, remember that someone must like it or it wouldn't happen.

The real world consists of real people doing real things — John defending his job, Mary speaking to a meeting of doctors, David picketing a chain store — and any description of this needs only straight-forward English, plain words in short sentences.

In order to escape this frightening directness the bureaucrat first de-personalises the people, who lose their names and become the Treasurer, the Board, the Executive, the 3 per cent of the group under 21. Then he waters down the verbs — “It was decided —

various points of view were expressed” — and inflates the vocabulary — “necessitated” for “needed” and as many “situations” as possible. Once a side of A4 paper has been started it might as well be finished — another 500 words for oblivion. Real issues and direct conflict are neutered by reference to “collective responsibility”, “policy decisions” or “job descriptions”, so that the result is as bland as a Government White Paper.

Ironically the bureaucrat will often proclaim the need for more communication, which he always sees as the largest amount of paper sent to the longest mailing-list — his private gods are Gestetner and Xerox. The important thing for him is that information must be sent out, never mind if it is read, or even readable. The headmaster of an Irish county school was required to fill in a return for Dublin in which he had among other things to record every year the size of his classrooms. Convinced that this information was not only unnecessary but even went unread he would increase the dimensions by one foot in each direction every year. In 15 years no one complained. Has any local CHE secretary or convenor ever been tempted to do the same?

This plethora of paper explains how the bureaucrat defends himself against criticism. He works very hard indeed, and anyone who wished to question or cry halt to this madness must first of all have read all the bumf and filled in all the forms, or they can be ignored as being less loyal to the organisation. Now only another bureaucrat would go to all that trouble. A further defence comes from the bureaucrat's inability to see the wood for the trees. “But surely”, he will say, “you recognise the need for the Muslim/left-handed/diabetic gays campaign?” Yes, but in perspective, and that is just what he does not understand, like the cat too close to the pattern on the carpet.

And as the committee meetings drag on for hours longer than anyone wants, and the chairman wrings his hands helplessly, and the voluminous minutes are laboriously duplicated, collated and sent to dozens of people who don't want them but dare not admit it, the rest of us are made to feel guilty that we are not helping the cause enough, yet vaguely aware that all is not right, that this is not why we joined. For that is the bureaucrat's final triumph. His selfless devotion to exhausting work, especially if unpaid, is a nagging reminder that nobody who is less dedicated has the right to criticise. For him it is better to travel than to know or care where you are going. ●

**National Federation of Homophile Organisations, National Colleges of Education Gay Rights Committee, Youth Services Information Project Campaign for Homosexual Equality Teenage Movement.*

All at sea

John Lindsay's critique of the Southampton Conference

Malvern was a triumphant celebration of gay pride, 800 people almost took the small town over, but a chauvinist assertion of the right to be different is not enough to build a life on and Sheffield showed up the pain behind the pleasure. Being gay is not the fundamental experience of our lives; yes it colours everything but it is not the starting point. The starting point is housing, income, work, the form of your daily grind. When the excitement of realising you are not alone in the world passes you have to face that you won't get on with everyone.

A wealthy gay man has little in common with a poor one, unless he is dishy and available. Gay women find they have much the same experience of gay men as of any others except that the gay men don't want to fuck them. Gay men can't really see the point of women anyhow as they are interested in men — that's what it's all about after all. Young people and old are frequently separated by a gap that only the unusual can bridge, and only for a short time. The sybarite is separated from the aesthete . . . the more we get together the more we realise what separates us. That is fine, however, at Sheffield there was the continual attempt to recapture the elation of Malvern, but time had changed and so had our world.

This should have been realised at Southampton and an attempt made to confront the differences so that the gay movement could have some direction and acceleration. But no — keep the rotting edifice together. Above all, don't let the light show through. Isn't that what the majority of men in CHE want? They want three days a year when they can escape from their jobs, escape from the mask of heterosexuality they wear the rest of the year (except of course one evening a week in the private room of a pub), and have a jamboree — sex camp, costume and gay pride; well, not quite, but an adrenalin anodyne.

What the 'leadership' wants is a public demonstration of the acceptability and equality that the whole of CHE is based on. Equality means being the same as heterosexuals, or rather, the same as male, middle-executive, professional hets. And that means having conferences, mayoral receptions and nights in a conference hotel even if it can't be charged up to an expense account. The final accolade of normality was the road signs put up by the AA.

So the debates were boring. Well what did you expect? The average CHE group doesn't spend its year confronting its practical and strategic so that bringing the groups together will result in the development of a programme for the next year. The average CHE group didn't even think of motions for the conference: those dragged up were either complacently congratulatory, innocuous or boring. The only interest came from the emergency debates which had to be dreamt up over coffee, made respectable by 50 signatures at lunch and fitted in between procedural wranglings after tea, with the maximum confusion possible and barely a quorum. But that sort of conference must have been what was wanted otherwise the mistake of Sheffield couldn't have been repeated. Or am I wrong? Did the debate and the applause at the end of the weekend indicate that there was a real body of people within CHE who were looking for a lead into the future? Those who could have contributed much were kept away; students by exams, radicals by cost and the membership requirement. The confrontations at Sheffield were at times unpleasant but at least they were stimulating. Southampton needed confrontations, not a stroll to a pub which immediately backed down. Good grief! they won't even oppress us any more.

What was wrong with the Conference was what is wrong with CHE right the way through: the deficient understanding of being gay, of struggle and of organisation. We can never be equal with heterosexuals, and even if we could who would want to be? Look at their lives: working, chasing after the perfect world of television, reproducing the species in an extra-ordinary synthesis of opposites which results in identical opposites.

Jealousy, competition, consumption and a gold watch. What sort of life is that? We at least can have a vision of the world which is different but we can't if equality is all we want. We can never be equal with heterosexuals because their institutions won't allow it. Their society needs the family to make sure the housework gets done and to make sure that little mummies and daddies grow up into big ones.

Their society needs men who will struggle with one another in a circus of competition, who will fight and die in their wars. They need women to form a collapsible labour market which can be forced back to the fireside to raise the kids when not needed as workers.

While there is a lot of money around, plenty of jobs and a liberal climate we can make progress and buy respectability by playing their games. But then the crunch comes — shortage of work, falling incomes and standards of living. Someone has to take the blame. Last time it was the Jews, the time before the Irish, this time the Blacks, but we'll be next. Ten years of law reform goes down the drain in one sitting. The gay rights movement in Germany by 1930 was in some ways streets ahead of us, but ten years later half a million had died in the gas chambers. History repeats itself, the first time as a tragedy. ▶



the second as a farce. I don't want to end up as a farce in history; I don't want to end up in the sewers of time, flushed by the cistern of our own complacency.

What was wrong with the conference was the lack of understanding of struggle. Until we become aware that our interests are linked with other workers' in protecting jobs, standards, social services, education and housing; until we recognise that our interests are tied up with those of other liberation groups — women, blacks, Irish, claimants and squatters — we will be isolated and an easy target. What was needed was a wide discussion of the whole issue of being gay, not just of the right to fuck and be fucked but the struggle to make all sections of society aware of what we contribute, what our particular insight and worth is and what part we play in transforming our world. This cannot be met by ten or twenty people meeting once a month in a pub. The leadership has to create those conditions where five hundred or a thousand people can stimulate and learn from one another. They can then leave filled with the determination to go back into a heterosexual world with a changed understanding and the determination to act. But that leadership cannot be provided by people who see CHE as the North West Homosexual Law Reform Society or the Albany Trust.

And finally what was wrong with the conference was the poor understanding of organisation, of structure and of hierarchies. We now have a centre which is almost moribund; the Executive election was barely contested, the Executive Report admitted that almost nothing had been done for a year. We also have a periphery with pretty little activity; some groups can't even get a meeting together, discussion is the last thing others want and there are even convenors who won't come out.

Because of this lack of understanding the whole of CHE could collapse overnight.

'Ah'. I have heard you muttering since you began reading this tirade, 'another poof critic who comments, demolishes and yet buildeth not'. True, to some extent, except that I have filled in and returned every activist form ever sent out and never yet seen anything happen. But I don't despair of CHE. I am sure that if a solid platform can be presented to the next conference promoting serious discussion with practical planning then the heart and muscle which the gay rights movement needs can be provided. But if it can't then the crisis we face as workers will be our crisis as gays. The result will be the demolition in days of the work of years. To have to live history is bad enough. To know in advance its course and do nothing is the prerogative of fools. We have a choice and we have to choose. Heaven help us if we choose the wrong way. ●

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Tony Pritchard reviews

Michael Schofield's 'Promiscuity'

Victor Gollancz £6.50

This really is everything you wanted to know about promiscuity. It may be a bit more than you wanted to know, for if it has a fault it is in the repetition of his pet theme which becomes irritating and suggests poor editing.

This said, it is on the whole a delight to read. The humanity and humour of the man comes through strongly. He relishes a well-turned phrase and some of his one-liners aren't bad: "there is a name for people who use the rythm method — parents" or on VD — "A shot of penecillin for the man who has everybody".

The substance of the book is fascinating. Most books on sex are re-hashes of what we already know but there is a lot of new material here.

Drawing on an impressive range of research data, Schofield builds up a picture of the promiscuous person which challenges most lay prejudices. If you have more than one partner a year, you are probably better-educated, better paid, more talkative, more gregarious, less nervous and more questioning of tradition than your non-promiscuous counterpart. You probably drink more and smoke rather more, are more likely to contract venereal disease, but are better informed and more likely to go for treatment.

You like going to bed with people. (This might appear blindingly obvious to you and to me, but Schofield points out that most moralisers, chauvinists, doctors and psychiatrists insist that we don't.) You enjoy sex more, but don't feel that you are really getting enough. In fact you have less sex than the non-promiscuous. (This is because far more of them are married and have fewer problems of access and opportunity.) If all this is true then we may well ask, "what's the problem?". Schofield's answer, developed at length and with careful detail, is that the major problem is the historical and religious hatred of sexual freedom. This hatred is not news to gay people and Schofield uses the example of prejudice against homosexuals and bi-sexuals as a powerful analogue to identify the irrationality of much of the condemnation or promiscuity. The same dynamic is at work in both cases and similar language is used by the self-appointed custodians of

morality. Promiscuity, like homosexuality is feared because it challenges the basic assumption that the sole purpose of sex is procreation. One of the intellectual delights of the book is the clarity with which Schofield analyses the ways in which, once sex for pleasure is separated from sex for procreation, many other strongly held beliefs lose their credibility.

He pursues the logic of this analysis to its logical conclusion, however unready society may be to adopt them. His arguments for the need to attend to the sexual needs of the physically handicapped is the most compelling statement on this important subject which I have seen.

This book does not deal at great length with homosexuality and bi-sexuality, but what it does say clearly expresses the author's view that homosexuality and other minority preferences are valid individual choices and that a humane society is one in which these choices are facilitated.

I liked the title of the chapter in which the main discussion of homosexuality and bi-sexuality takes place. It is pleasant to be an "erotic variation" instead of making the usual seedy appearance in the "problem" section of most books about sex. You remember those books don't you? We usually got stuck between the Drug Addicts and the Alcoholics.

There is even this statement: "There is something that many hets could learn from homos, who seem to be more interested in sexual techniques and more concerned about the reactions of their sexual partners".

It is not all so positive. (Schofield is a bit squeamish about buggery in my view.) But the overall treatment of the homo scene, given the tradition, is something of a breakthrough.

If you do buy it, read page 183 when you are high, like I did. As you read about the sexual research of Ball, Hair, Petit and Zipper, you too may begin to develop a theory about why children grow up to become sexologists. If you start to make words out of the letters in the name of Scommegna, you will realise that you are on to something. ●

CHE

The case of Ian Davies, the social worker from London who was dismissed by his Council for a gay offence and, after a strike, was subsequently reinstated, illustrates a severe weakness in the organisation of CHE. Although we were able, belatedly, to donate money to the strike fund and to strongly urge NALGO, his union, to make their strike official, there was no other support from CHE except for a few members of his own CHE group helping on the strike. Why?

To answer the question we must look at the history of CHE and its past policy of prioritisation. The two key campaigns for the last three years have been law reform and education. Executive committees and annual conferences agreed that these were the areas in which we were likely to achieve most success in gays rights. In the former we have indeed made some progress — the continuing dialogue with MP's, the CHE Parliamentary group, the submission to the Criminal Law Revision Committee — in the latter we have practically stood still. And all this time we have been shamefully neglecting the area which most concerns the majority of homosexuals — our working conditions.

Earlier this year, in conjunction with the Gay Labour Group, CHE made a strong initiative — the launching of the Trade Union Gay Groups scheme. This would enable gay people, especially in industries which had not formed their own gay group, to come together and struggle within their union and their workplaces for gay rights with the backing of CHE.

Since then we have fallen back, ignoring the potential support there is in the trade union movement; accepting help from some far-sighted unions, but not following up with others. Taking up a few individual cases, but without the organisation needed for this type of work, failing to pursue our objectives to the end.

However, following a mandate from the Southampton Conference, the Executive's Campaigning Group has considered just where CHE's priorities should lie, and has decided 'that discrimination against gay women and men in areas other than the criminal law should be given much greater attention in the forthcoming year'. In their report they go on to say that discrimination in employment and in social administration seem particularly important areas. To give effect to this CHE, both locally ►

and nationally, must (a) improve its own system of internal communication to make effective action speedily, (b) work more closely with other organisations and pressure groups eg. Action for Lesbian Parents, Council for Single Parent Families, other union gay groups, etc and (c) improve its system of external communications learning how to work with the media., and (d) the Executive must give a stronger leadership in this crucial area.

To give effect to this last point the Executive has co-opted Nikki Henriques one of whose jobs will be in the area of homosexual parents, and is considering several ideas for creating a separate employment campaign (not, needless to say, with the object of creating employment for EC members). In the area of media coverage a 'Press Release Kit' is being revised for circulation and a complimentary kit on using local radio stations to the full is being planned. But communication is a two-way affair at least, and one reason for CHE's belated help in the Ian Davies case was ignorance of the case in the first place. Unless those involved in cases such as this, contact CHE both locally and nationally

then we cannot help. Unless local groups involve themselves in individual cases (as recently in Sheffield) CHE cannot work effectively.

But it is to the first point that members and groups within CHE must turn their urgent attention. For too long we have sat back and watched our brothers and sisters persecuted and discriminated against, or at best stood by while 'sympathetic' organisations came to their aid. Discrimination, especially at work, is something experienced by us all (and those who cry 'no' are either very lucky or very stupid). Now that we have established a large number of groups across the country we must make them work and start to initiate action ourselves. We must recognise the trade union movement for the strength that it represents and work within and from outside to get unions to accept the struggle for gay rights.

Of course it is not suggested that our law reform campaign should suddenly take a back seat — indeed we are likely to see more action in this area soon — but the key to the fight for gay rights is working in solidarity with our fellow workers. Once we achieve their support

it is then that we can expect law reform and better education. ●

Barry Jackson
CHE Executive
Committee

Campaign for Homosexual Equality

For details about how the Campaign for Homosexual Equality works and how you can become a member, please write to CHE National Office, PO Box 427, 33 King Street, Manchester M60 2EL.
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