


bang  rang

the bangarang collective
eight howe street
Lewiston me 04240
thebangarang@riseup.net

a collection of radical queer moments...

Gay Activists Alliance

The Gay Activists Alliance was founded in New York City in December 1969 after the Stonewall riots, by dissident members of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) who wanted to form a non-violent "single issue, politically neutral, militant organization" whose goal was to "secure basic human rights, dignity and freedom for all gay people."

The Gay Activists Alliance was most active from 1970 to 1974. They published the Gay Activist newspaper until 1980. Their New York City headquarters (the Firehouse on Wooster Street in Greenwich Village) was burned down by arsonists in 1974. GAA eventually dissolved in October 1981.

GAA members performed zaps -- public peaceful confrontations with officials to draw media attention. Their first president was Jim Owles.

The symbol of the Gay Activists Alliance was the lower case Greek letter lambda (λ) taken from physics where it represents "a complete exchange of energy." Other definitions of the symbolism of the lambda include balance or unity. A battle flag with the lambda was carried by the fierce Greek fighters, the Sacred Band of Thebes who marched into battle with their young male lovers.

Out of Control

Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

Out of Control is a small, self-supporting committee of ten women in the San Francisco Bay Area. We formed in 1986 to organize resistance to the Lexington Control Unit for women. This was a subterranean, high-security prison in Kentucky that used sensory deprivation, mind control methods, and small group isolation in an attempt to "break the spirit" of the women prisoners. Out of Control joined with a national grass roots campaign of activists, churches, and various other human rights organizations to expose the brutality of the Lexington Control Unit. A lawsuit was brought against the federal prison by the ACLU. After 18 months the prison that housed two women political prisoners, one Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, and two social prisoners was closed.

Out of Control has been working on behalf of the 25 women political prisoners in the U.S. since that time. These women (five are out lesbians) are in prison for various reasons from opposing policies of the U.S. government through revolutionary activities, participating in the Puerto Rican Independence movement, Black liberation, American Indian Movement, to anti-nuclear activities, etc. We work in the San Francisco Bay Area Lesbian and Gay Communities, nationally, and internationally to educate people about political prisoners in the U.S. and about the horrendous conditions in U.S. prisons in general. We have done support work for people with AIDS in prison, and for battered women convicted of killing their abusers.

the stories this far:

(in no particular order)

The Story This Far.....	1
An Introduction of Sorts.....	2
Queer to the Left.....	3
Queer Holocaust.....	4, 5
Lesbian Avengers.....	6
QueerNation.....	7
Queer Liberation Army.....	8, 9
White Night Riots.....	10 - 13
Pink Panthers.....	14
STAR.....	15
QueerFist.....	16
Combahee River Collective.....	17
Stonewall.....	18, 19
Gay Shame.....	20
George Jackson Brigade.....	21
Homocore.....	22, 23
Gay Liberation Front.....	24, 25
ACT UP.....	26
Compton Cafeteria Riot.....	27
Out of Control.....	28
Gay Activist Alliance.....	29

* these moments in queer history are not subject to chronological order. The decision not to arrange things in such an order is intentional. Chronology suggests things have come and gone where we believe many things continue to be very much present and important. Chronological order also often suggests progress, and I do not believe moving forward when the world is so fucking backwards is a step in the right direction...

Greetings!

There are a lot of reasons this project is important to me. The catalyst however, was when I was 21 and someone finally clued me in to the white night riots and the assassination of Harvey Milk. After learning this small piece of queer history I couldn't help but lash out at my peers and older queer friends/mentors. Why the fuck hadn't anyone taught me about this. Where were my radical queer friends/teachers/lovers? How could I not know this amazing and inspiring part of my history!

When I confronted my few older queer friends, they smiled apologetically and remarked, "you don't know these histories because a lot of people that could tell these stories were either murdered by homophobes or murdered by AIDS. The rest of us, the survivors, either don't know our own histories or are petrified to have any sort of relationships with the younger generations, fearing the label predator and child molester."

This 'zine was then compiled out of frustration and great excitement. I've been struggling with feelings of isolation, disconnection, and loneliness that come with the territory of being a radical queer out of time and place. I can find very little information about past struggles which cause current struggles to lack the historical background, tactics, and inspiration other movements have. And when there is something I find, its isolated and disconnected from other histories and movements of which it really is a part of.

This zine actively reflects the difference we have to honor and celebrate as radical queers fighting for a world through various movements and organization and identities. The difference (race, class, gender, ability, citizenship, etc) that is often violently erased by mainstream identity politics based organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is integral and necessary to queer liberation. This zine attempts to celebrate these differences in the united states by including trans folks, working class queers, and people of color.

This 'zine is not an attempt at a complete and definitive radical queer history. Such a goal is neither possible nor desirable. Also, this zine is not all original work. A lot of the pieces are gathered from here and there, plagiarized at will to shed some light on our histories that are all too often hidden. Reproduce at will, photocopy like crazy, and teach each other. We've got lots of learning to do!

And thanks to friends and family, in the queerest sense of the word, for helping put together pages, researching, editing and printing this project! Out of the closets, and into the libraries!

with heart,
conrad



Compton's Cafeteria Riot

In the streets of the Tenderloin (S.F.), at Turk and Taylor on a hot August night in 1966, Gays rose up angry at the constant police harassment of the drag-queens by police. It had to be the first ever recorded violence by Gays against the police anywhere. For on that evening when the SFPD police wagon drove up to make their usual sweeps of the streets, Gays this time did not go willingly. It began when the police came into a cafeteria, still located there at Turk and Taylor, Comptons, to do their usual job of hassling the drag-queens, hair faires, and hustlers sitting at the table. This was with the permission of management, of course, but when the police grabbed the arm of one of the transvestites, he threw his cup of coffee in the cops face and with that cup, saucers and trays began flying around the place directed at the police.

The police retreated outside until reinforcements arrived. The Compton's management ordered the place closed and with that the Gays began breaking out every window in the place. As they ran outside to escape the breaking glass, the police tried to grab them and throw them into the police wagon, but they found this no easy task because the Gays began hitting them below the belt and drag queens smashing them in the face with their extremely heavy purses. A police car had every window broken, a newspaper shack outside the cafeteria was burned to the ground and general havoc was raised that night in the Tenderloin. The next night drag queens, hair fairies, and conservative gays, and hustlers joined in a picket of the cafeteria which would not allow drags back in again. It ended with the newly installed plate glass windows being smashed up!



ACT UP, AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power, is a diverse, non-partisan group of individual, united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis. We meet with government officials, we distribute the latest medical information, we protest and demonstrate. We are not silent.

We are loud as we confront those who stand in the way of the fight against AIDS. We've told Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease (NIADID) and the person responsible for overseeing the government's AIDS clinical trials that many of these trials are unethical, fraudulent and misdirected. We told Mario Cuomo that that inadequate funding for AIDS services is killing us and that it is unacceptable to balance the state budget with people's lives. We took on the pharmaceutical industry for attempting to make profits at the expense of the lives of people with AIDS. We made AIDS an issue in 1992 Presidential elections and held President Clinton responsible for the promise he made as a candidate. We are committed to protecting the lives and well-being of people living with AIDS.

We challenge anyone who, by their actions or inaction, hinders the fight against AIDS. This includes:

- ☆ Anyone responsible for inadequate funding for AIDS research, healthcare or housing for people with AIDS
- ☆ Anyone who blocks the dissemination of life-saving information about safer sex, clean needles, and other AIDS prevention methods.
- ☆ Anyone who encourages discrimination against people who are living with AIDS.

IT'S TIME TO END THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT AS WE KNOW IT

lets deal with real issues!!!

Queer to the Left is a Chicago-based multi-racial group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people committed to working in coalition with queers and non-queers to promote economic, gender, racial, and sexual justice. Our current work focuses on building affordable housing and promoting fair community development that does not undermine important community institutions; fighting to abolish the death penalty; and fighting against US war making.





Before the beginning of World War II, homosexuals in Germany, especially in Berlin, enjoyed more freedom and acceptance than anywhere else in the world. However, upon the rise of Adolf Hitler, gay men and, to a lesser extent, lesbians, were two of several groups targeted by the Nazi Party. Beginning in 1933, gay organizations were banned, scholarly books about homosexuality, and sexuality in general, were burned, and homosexuals within the Nazi Party itself were murdered. The Gestapo compiled lists of homosexuals, and they were compelled to sexually conform to the German norm. More than one million homosexuals were targeted, and at least 100,000 were imprisoned under the policy of "Extermination Through Work". German soldiers also were known to use gay men for target practice, aiming their weapons at the pink triangles their human targets were forced to wear. Estimated deaths of gay men imprisoned in concentration camps vary from 15,000 to 600,000. Homosexuals in camps were treated in an unusually cruel manner by their captors, and were also persecuted by their fellow inmates. This was a factor in the relatively high death rate for homosexuals, compared to other "anti-social groups".

An account of a gay Holocaust survivor, Pierre Seel, details life for gay men during Nazi control. In his account he states that he participated in his local gay community in the town of Mulhouse. When the Nazis

Activists taking part in the GLF were mainly interested in sexual liberation for all people, and were also intent on transforming other aspects of society such as the nuclear family. Many supporters of the GLF held the view that change would not come about unless current social institutions were dismantled and rebuilt without defined sexual roles and definitions of homosexuality. Prominent members of the GLF also opposed and addressed other social inequalities between the years of 1969 to 1972 such as militarism, racism, and sexism. Due to internal conflicts of interest within the organization, the GLF officially ended its operations in 1972.

The Gay Liberation Front was initially formed by thirtyseven men and women in light of the Stonewall Riots. The group's first demonstration in response to the riots was the organization of a candlelight march, in which they demanded an end to homosexual persecution. The GLF was not only dedicated to gay rights, but also to the broader social ideals which dominated the 1960's, including peace, equality and economic justice. Between 1969 and 1972, the GLF was an influential force, and ultimately consisted of more than 80 independent chapters across the United States and abroad.

The GLF's primary mandate was to oppose and fight against those institutions in society which had historically oppressed and demeaned gay individuals. Ideally, the GLF wanted to ensure that gay individuals were treated with increased equality. In order to do this, the GLF participated in and organized marches, demonstrations, speeches, confrontations, meetings, books and films in order to raise awareness of their cause and their struggle.

In 1970, the GLF represented itself as a movement "against conformity to arbitrary standards, for an open society in which each of us may choose his own way of life." The GLF, in addition to focusing on gay rights, essentially criticized American values and society in general, and became involved with other causes and social movements, including the anti-war and civil rights movements, and the fight to end racism and bigotry. Ideally, the GLF wanted to establish an open society, in which all individuals could express themselves freely, and it especially fought against machismo (the notion that masculinity is superior, and thus has a right to dominate), which the GLF felt oppressed all individuals in society – both straight and gay.

GAY LIBERATION FRONT

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was the name of a number of Gay Liberation groups, the first of which was formed in New York City in 1969, immediately after the Stonewall riots.



gained power over the town his name was on a list of local gay men ordered to the police station. He obeyed the directive to protect his family from any retaliation. Upon arriving at the police station he notes that he and other gay men were beaten. Some gay men who resisted the SS had their fingernails pulled out. Others were raped with broken rulers and had their bowels punctured, causing them to bleed profusely. After his arrest he was sent to the concentration camp at Schirmeck. There, Seel stated that during a morning roll-call, the Nazi commander announced a public execution. A man was brought out, and Seel recognized his face. It was the face of his eighteen-year-old lover from Mulhouse. Seel then claims that the Nazi guards stripped the clothes of his lover and placed a metal bucket over his head. Then the guards released trained German Shepherd dogs on him, which mauled him to death.

After the war, the treatment of homosexuals in concentration camps went unacknowledged by most countries, and most men were even re-arrested and imprisoned based on evidence found during the Nazi years. They were forced to serve out their sentence for being homosexuals under paragraph 175. It was not until the 1980s that governments acknowledged this episode, and not until 2002 that the German government apologized to the gay community. This period still provokes controversy, however; and in 2005, when the European Parliament drafted a resolution regarding the Holocaust, mention of the persecution of homosexuals was removed after debate.



the **LESBIAN AVENGERS**



The Lesbian Avengers was originally founded in New York in 1992 by a group of lesbian activists from ACT-UP. The purpose of the group is to identify and promote lesbian issues and perspectives while empowering lesbians to become experienced organizers who can participate in political rebellion. The Avengers are inclusive and work with and for women of all colors and classes; bisexual, heterosexual, and queer women; and trans and intersex folks. Emphasis is placed highly on turning energy into action, and using that energy constructively against heterosexist, homophobic, heteronormative, classist, racist, sexist, and generally oppressive forces and institutions in society and our own community. There are about fifty-five Lesbian Avenger chapters, five of them international. There is no national organization or structure, and each chapter is locally founded and operated. Each chapter of the Lesbian Avengers works in collaboration on major events like the annual Dyke March and larger, national protests, as well as in coalition with other progressive groups in their communities. Turn energy into action. "Be the bomb you throw."

As with punk, queercore culture existed outside of the mainstream so zines were crucial to its development. Hundreds of zines formed an intercontinental network that enabled queercore to spread and allow those in smaller, more repressive communities to participate. The DIY attitude of punk was integral to queercore as well. In the 1990s, as the availability of the internet increased, many queercore zines, such as Noise Queen could be found online as well as in print. The queercore zine label Xerox Revolutionaries run by Hank Revolt, was available online and distributed zines from 2000 to 2005. Queercore forums and chatrooms, such as QueerPunks started up. The Queer Zine Archive Project is an internet database of scanned queer zines that continues to grow.

All these developments allowed queercore to become a self-sustaining and self-determined subculture, expressing itself through a variety of mediums independent from the straight and gay establishment.



queercore/homocore

Queercore is a cultural and social movement that began in the mid 1980's as an offshoot of punk. It is distinguished by a discontent with society in general and a complete disavowal of the mainstream gay and lesbian community and what those involved believe to be its oppressive agenda. Queercore expresses itself in DIY (Do It Yourself) style through zines, music, writing, art and film.

J.D.s, created by G.B. Jones and Bruce LaBruce, is widely acknowledged as being the zine which launched the movement. At first the editors of J.D.s had chosen the appellation "homocore" to describe the movement but replaced the word homo with queer to better reflect the diversity of the scene as well as to disassociate themselves completely from the confines of gay and lesbian orthodoxy. The first issue was released in 1985, with a manifesto entitled "Don't Be Gay" published in the fanzine Maximum RocknRoll following soon after; inspiring, among many other zines, Holy Titclamps, edited by Larry-bob, Homocore by Tom Jennings and Deke Nihilson, Donna Dresch's Chainsaw, and Outpunk by Matt Wobensmith, these last two later functioning as music labels. These zines, and the movement, are characterised by an alternative to the self-imposed ghettoization of orthodox gays and lesbians; sexual and gender diversity in opposition to the segregation practiced by the mainstream gay community; a dissatisfaction with a consumerist culture, proposing a DIY ethos in its place in order to create a culture of its own; and opposition to oppressive religious tenets and political repression.

Influences vary for each musician, zine editor and filmmaker involved, but it is doubtful that queercore would have come into existence without the atmosphere surrounding the early punk years. Performers at that time either conspicuously played with conceptions of gender, such as Wayne County (now Jayne County) of Wayne County & the Electric Chairs, and Phranc from the aptly named Nervous Gender or, like Pete Shelley of Buzzcocks, Darby Crash of The Germs, members of The Screemers, The Leather Nun, Malaria! and other bands, were not interested in hiding their sexuality.

It was the confrontational attitude and shock tactics of the punk and industrial scenes that Queercore employed, rather than activism, or politics, or the mainstream approval and major label deals that gay and lesbian musicians of that time courted, since those involved in the queercore scene weren't seeking the acceptance of society, be it homosexual or heterosexual, but rather to condemn it.



Queer Nation was founded in March 1990 in New York City, USA by activists from ACT-UP. The four founders were outraged at the escalation of anti-gay and lesbian violence on the streets and prejudice in the arts and media. One of the four was a survivor of anti-gay violence.

On March 20, 1990, sixty queers gathered at the Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in New York's Greenwich Village to create a direct-action organization. The goal of the unnamed organization was the elimination of homophobia, and the increase of gay, lesbian and bisexual visibility through a variety of tactics.

The direct-action group's inaugural action took place at Flutie's Bar, a straight hangout at the South Street Sea Port on April 13, 1990. The goal: to make clear to patrons that queers will not be restricted to gay bars for socializing and for public displays of affection. More visibility actions like this one became known as "Queer Nights Out."

Although the name Queer Nation had been used casually since the group's inception, it was officially approved at the group's general meeting on May 17, 1990.

Queer Nation's popular slogan "We're here. We're queer. Get used to it." was adopted and used by many in the LGBT community. Aside from its militant protest style, as opposed to the more reformist gay rights organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign or the Log Cabin Republicans, Queer Nation was most effective and powerful in the early 1990s in the USA, and used direct action to fight for gay rights. They also worked with AIDS organization ACT-UP as well as WHAM! and were the birthplace of Queer Action Figures. Even though never officially disbanded, most sources agree that Queer Nation no longer exists.

Queer Nation is credited with starting the process of reclaiming the word queer, which, previously, was only used in a pejorative sense and Queer Nation's use of it in their name and slogan was at first considered shocking.

Queer Nation is also linked to several controversial incidents in which closeted public figures were outed as gay or lesbian. Queer Nation's reasoning was that ending this "hypocrisy" benefited gays as a group because it let them know there actually were gay people in influential places, and promoted gay rights by forcing the outed and the organizations they belonged to take a stance on issues concerning gays. Many in the gay community did not agree with Queer Nation's radical tactics and favored a more assimilationist course of action.

Queer Liberation Army

The Queer Liberation Army formed as a spontaneous reaction to the growing political and cultural backlash against queers in America. We are here to liberate this country's queers from a far right bent on destroying them, a Democratic party willing to blame them, and a mainstream gay/lesbian movement willing to give up on basic human rights for all queers in exchange for marriage rights for some. We will achieve our aims through the creative use of mass media, demonstrations, non-violent direct actions, the speaking of truth, the use of humor in a bleak world, the pursuit of pleasures as multiple as we are, and a fabulously queer style in the face of ugliness. We also seek to strengthen and build alliances with other movements for social justice that are sympathetic to our mission.

The current threat to queers doesn't come just from right wing evangelicals and neo-conservative politicians, however. The Democratic Party has also declared open season on queers. Immediately following the latest Democratic party electoral debacle, Dianne Feinstein (D, CA) said that same sex marriage "gives (conservatives) a position to rally around. The whole issue has been too much, too fast, too soon. People aren't ready for it." John Kerry's co-chair of gay and lesbian outreach, Jeff Trammell, concluded that "(t)he big lesson... (is) figuring out how to talk about issues in a way where you're not for or against gay people." The real lesson of this election is that there's little point in queers supporting political parties that have absolutely no ethical commitment to providing human rights to all American citizens. The Dems have no vision of social justice in this country or for the world. They support the war, the military economy and the current systems of class, race, and gender/sex hierarchies. To paraphrase Gore Vidal, the U.S. continues to have a one party system with two right wings. The Queer Liberation Army asks all queers to stop blindly following the Democrats (roughly 75% of gay and lesbian voters supported John Kerry — a candidate who has done little to extend the rights of queers in this country — in the most recent presidential election) and to demand real representation by parties and candidates that support human rights for all, not just the rights of wealthy, white, married, heterosexuals.

The Queer Liberation Army has also formed as an alternative to mainstream gay and lesbian organizations which are increasingly conservative in their approach. By focusing almost exclusively on the issue of same sex marriage, mainstream gay/lesbian organizations have ignored the needs of most queers and worse, supported the current sex/gender apartheid by agreeing that the only valuable relationships are those that mimic the heterosexual marriage models. The fact that a number of mainstream gay/lesbian organizations are currently courting the likes of ex-New Jersey governor James McGreevey — who throughout his career sought to benefit from the trappings of heterosexual marriage while doing little for

The George Jackson Brigade

The George Jackson Brigade formed in the crucible of prisoners' rights organizing which came out of the civil rights movement and mass anti-war protests of the '60s. In its three-year existence, it claimed 11 bombings, as many bank robberies, and one prisoner liberation. Targets included the Department of Corrections, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as different corporate offices. The chemistry present in the group was the same that had been combusting across the country: society's most oppressed members allied with college educated youth who refused to continue their class and white skin privilege. In the case of the Brigade, women took center stage, queers challenged straights, convicts communicated with college students, and a black man enthusiastically aided whites.

The story of the Brigade takes place against a backdrop of the domestic activism of Black, Chicano, Native American, gay and white prisoners, and armed struggle in the U.S., Canada, Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Also documented is the FBI's infiltration of women's land and the lesbian community (in pursuit of Katherine Powers and Susan Saxe) and political abuse of the grand jury process.

"Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are already dying who could be saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act." — George Jackson

Gay Shame

a virus in the system

GAY SHAME is a Virus in the System. We are committed to a queer extravaganza that brings direct action to astounding levels of theatricality. We will not be satisfied with a commercialized gay identity that denies the intrinsic links between queer struggle and challenging power. We seek nothing less than a new queer activism that foregrounds race, class, gender and sexuality, to counter the self-serving "values" of gay consumerism and the increasingly hypocritical left. We are dedicated to fighting the rabid assimilationist monster with a devastating mobilization of queer brilliance.



- We will express outrage through symbolic actions in order to inspire ourselves to confront power dynamics and disseminate information.
- We will not only critique targets like corporations, but we will also expose inconsistencies within our social groups and so-called "communities", in order to grow more toward our radical ideals. Whenever possible, we will use humor and satire to get our points across and to critique ourselves.
- We will call out the greed and consumerism inherent in mainstream gay identity. We are dedicated to fighting capitalism and its resulting inequalities.
- We will go beyond theorizing to make our actions not only fun but also empowering.
- Our goal is to serve as a catalyst to encourage people to take direct action and civil disobedience further.
- Our goal is to create a home for the culturally homeless.
- Assimilation is erasure. We resist assimilation in all its forms.
- Fighting racism, classism, misogyny, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism and all other hierarchies is the central purpose of GAY SHAME, not an add-on. We will create a space where radical queers can challenge these hierarchies.

the queer community - as a potential public face is but one recent example of how misguided the actions of many mainstream gay organizations have become.

The Queer Liberation Army hereby declares war on the far right, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, mainstream gay and lesbian organizations and anyone else who blocks full equality for queers.

These are our demands:

We demand that rights and privileges be detached from marital status, and that family relationships be defined by the people in them, not the state. People's rights in relation to health insurance, social security benefits, hospital visitation, inheritance, child custody, adoption, and other issues should not be determined by their willingness or ability to participate in a fundamentally unequal system such as marriage.

We demand that all children be allowed to learn about their bodies and sexual health unfettered by political and religious doctrines that turn pleasure into shame and well-being into disease.

We demand that the medical and psychiatric professions stop enforcing sex/gender apartheid through the creation of false diseases and the denial of medical care.

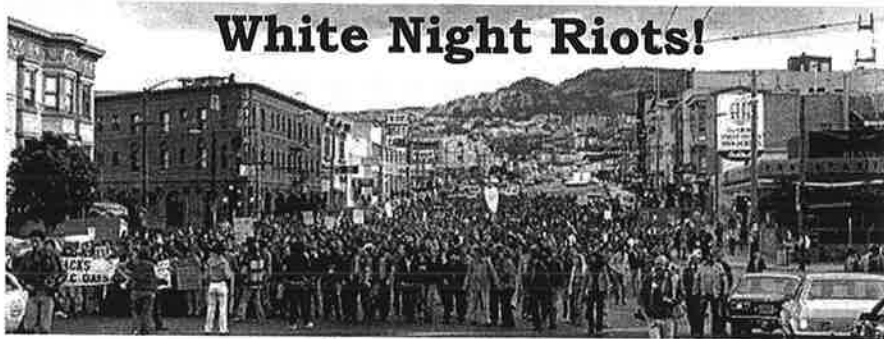
We demand an end to anti-queer violence and intimidation.

We demand full equality in all spheres of American life.

The Queer Liberation Army is fighting to unite all of us into an army of queers—a mass of people willing to live- not die or kill- so that human diversity can prosper.

The U.S. Army wants you for their unjust war in Iraq, but why be cannon fodder when you can join the Queer Liberation Army and fight for peace, justice, truth, and pleasure.





Timeline...

10 Nov 1978 - Dan White resigns his elected position on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors.

27 Nov 1978 - Dan White entered San Francisco City Hall through a basement window, went upstairs, and shot and killed Mayor George Moscone and Gay Activist/Supervisor Harvey Milk.

May 1979 - Psychiatrist Martin Blinder testified in court that White had been depressed, which led to eating junk food: Twinkies and Coca-Cola. This further deepened White's depression, since he was an ex-athlete and knew that the food was not good for him. This was evidence of his depression that prompted his murder spree. This celebrated diagnosis became known as the "Twinkie defense."

White's depression was used to establish grounds for a successful diminished capacity plea; and therefore White was judged incapable of the premeditation required for a murder conviction.

21 May 1979 - Dan White is convicted of the lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter and is sentenced to seven years and eight months in prison. The queer community revolts...

a personal account:

As evening approached, a crowd gathered at Castro and Market. We were angry. We wanted the world to know we were angry. We took over Castro Street and stood around with no idea of what we should do. Eventually the crowd moved into the intersection of Castro and Market.

put up a struggle that encouraged the crowd to do the same. Whatever the case may be, *mêlée* broke out across the crowd—which quickly overtook the police. Stunned, the police retreated into the bar. Heterosexual folk singer Dave van Ronk, who was walking through the area, was grabbed by the police, pulled into the bar, and beaten. The crowd's attacks were unrelenting. Some tried to light the bar on fire. Others used a parking meter as a battering ram to force the police officers out. Word quickly spread of the riot and many residents, as well as patrons of nearby bars, rushed to the scene.

Throughout the night the police singled out many effeminate men and often beat them. On the first night alone 13 people were arrested and four police officers, as well as an undetermined number of protesters, were injured. It is known, however, that at least two rioters were severely beaten by the police. Bottles and stones were thrown by protesters who chanted "Gay Power!" The crowd, estimated at over 2000, fought with over 400 police officers.

The police sent additional forces in the form of the Tactical Patrol Force, a riot-control squad originally trained to counter anti-Vietnam War protesters. The tactical patrol force arrived to disperse the crowd. However, they failed to break up the crowd, who sprayed them with rocks and other projectiles.

Eventually the scene quieted, but the crowd returned again the next night. While less violent than the first night, the crowd had the same energy as it had on the previous night. Skirmishes between the rioters and the police ensued until approximately 4:00 AM. The third day of rioting fell five days after the raid on the Stonewall Inn. On that Wednesday, 1,000 people congregated at the bar and again caused extensive property damage.

STONEWALL RIOTS

On Saturday morning, June 28, 1969, not long after 1:20 a.m., police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. A



number of factors differentiated the raid that took place on June 28 from other such raids on the Stonewall Inn. In general, the sixth precinct tipped off the management of the Stonewall Inn prior to a raid. In addition, raids were generally carried out early enough in the night to allow business to return to normal for the peak hours of the night. At approximately 1:20 AM, much later than the usual raid, eight officers from the first

precinct, of which only one was in uniform, entered the bar. Most of the patrons were able to escape being arrested as the only people arrested "would be those without IDs, those dressed in the clothes of the opposite gender, and some or all of the employees".

Details about how the riot started vary from story to story. According to one account, a transgendered woman named Sylvia Rivera threw a bottle at a police officer after being prodded by his nightstick. Another account states that a lesbian, being brought to a patrol car through the crowd

Traffic came to a standstill. There were only a few policemen present and they did nothing more than observe the scene. As time passed, the crowd grew larger, eventually exceeding 1000. TV News trucks arrived. More police arrived. Amid the shouting and whistle blowing, there were shouts from the crowd. "CITY HALL" became the rallying cry.

We began moving down Market toward City Hall, getting louder, growing larger, picking up momentum. The crowd had become huge by the time we reached the Civic Center. There was nothing to do, no one addressed the group, no one gave any instructions. But something had to happen. We were much too angry to just end the demonstration. Some people near the entrance began pulling the wrought iron grillwork off the doors and using the pieces to break the glass. One person was seen entering through a broken basement window. They started a fire using papers on the desk in the room. City Hall was trashed. Several hundred police in riot gear stood in formation at the corner, watching the activity, but they were not allowed to respond, a wise decision on the part of the administration. For some reason they had parked police cars at the other end of the block. No one really wanted to destroy City Hall. They just wanted to make a statement. However, when the Activists went after the cars, cheers of approval came from the crowd. A dozen police cars were torched. Car horns and sirens from the burning cars added a chaotic note to the smoky night air.

Seemingly appeased, some began heading back to the Castro. Others feared the inevitable retaliation and hurried off into the night. At some point after the crowd thinned, the police were unleashed, and heads began to roll. Battles erupted everywhere and many fought back valiantly. Tree limbs and parking meters and pieces of asphalt were used as weapons. These were queers fighting for what they believed in. Police suffered nearly as many casualties as the resistance. The people were eventually driven from the Civic Center and the slower ones suffered the wrath of the overzealous officers. They pushed people down to Market Street where many store windows had already been broken.

Castro street was full of people relating stories, debating the issues, licking wounds. After Midnight dozens of police arrived. They had been humiliated earlier and were here to even the score. They gathered at Market and started moving the crowd down toward 18th. We were in no mood to comply. Many of them weren't wearing badges or name tags!

They came to our neighborhood to get even. They formed a line and moved us half way down the block. It became evident to all, even to those who had stayed in the Castro and away from the riot; WE WERE AT WAR WITH THE POLICE!



People came from every direction to join the resistance and we moved the invading forces right back up to the corner. They appeared to be leaving but they somehow regrouped at the corner of 18th and Castro. We stood and watched as they marched into the Elephant Walk, smashing windows, doors, tables, chairs, bottles, and peoples' heads. Some victims needed to be hospitalized. These police were vicious. They were out for blood.

The rioting police cost the City a fortune in Lawsuits and Investigations. The FBI even looked into it. We had no reason to apologize for our

The Combahee River Collective

Black Feminist Organizing in the 70's and 80's

We are a collective of Black feminists who have been meeting together since 1974...involved in the process of defining and clarifying our politics, while...doing political work within our own group and in coalition with other progressive organizations and movements.... [W]e see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face.

Our politics evolve from a healthy love for ourselves, our sisters and our community which allows us to continue our struggle and work. This focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics.... [T]he most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity...[t]o be recognized as human, levelly human, is enough.... Although we are feminists and Lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive Black men and do not advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand.... We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism.... We are socialists because we believe that work must be organized for the collective benefit of those who do the work and create the products, and not for the profit of the bosses.... We need to articulate the real class situation of persons...for whom racial and sexual oppression are significant determinants in their working/economic lives.... [O]ur Black women's style of talking/testifying in Black language about what we have experienced has a resonance that is both cultural and political.... No one before has ever examined the multilayered texture of Black women's lives.... "Smart-ugly" crystallized the way in which most of us had been forced to develop our intellects at great cost to our "social" lives.... We have a great deal of criticism and loathing for what men have been socialized to be in this society...[b]ut we do not have the misguided notion that it is their maleness, per se--i.e., their biological maleness--that makes them what they are.