

# OLGA NEWS



The Newsletter of the Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists

January 1990

## LOOKING AHEAD: OLGA CONTRIBUTING TO THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE

### WHAT'S IN OUR FUTURE ?

THE year is 1998, Cape Town - outside the Houses of Parliament flutters the flag of the ANC. Inside the new non-racial people's government is in session. All racial discrimination has ended and the people's constitution outlaws sexism, but what has happened to lesbians and gays? Are there any openly lesbian or gay cabinet members, are lesbians and gays legally able to adopt children, are they able to "come out" without fear of losing their jobs, or are they still second class citizens discriminated against or ignored?

What post-apartheid South Africa brings for us, gays and lesbians, depends on what we do to help shape the new constitution. The ANC's constitutional guidelines for a post-apartheid South Africa are presently under discussion in progressive organisations. Gays and lesbians have the opportunity to make a contribution to this discussion through the progressive lesbian and gay organisations.

Olga has heard through various foreign contacts, that the exiled movement is not only aware of gay/lesbian issues, but is also interested in hearing from progressive lesbian/gay organisations in the country, on their suggestions for the drafting of a constitution. Olga has already attended the discussion on the constitutional guidelines convened by NADEL (National Association of Democratic Lawyers). However Olga feels that wider discussion needs to be conducted before any further correspondence is begun.

The February Forum (18th February) has been set aside to discuss the constitution. We will be supplying some preparatory reading in order to enable an informed and stimulating discussion. If you are interested and not on our regular mailing list contact: Julia 476601 or Stephen 6892866.

### DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

Western Cape delegates to the recent Conference for a Democratic Future in Johannesburg, endured a 25 hour journey during which one of the five buses broke down only half-an-hour outside of Cape Town. On arrival they discovered they were to be accommodated at the plush Johannesburg Sun Hotel.

Although never remotely expecting such luxury, it certainly came as a merciful relief after the tedious journey, and served to offset the rigours of the intense 12 hours of debating by the massive gathering of 4600 activists from around the country.

Any sharp-eyed observer would have noted that there were two delegates from the Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists (Olga) and two from the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (Glow).

Not that this implied that there were only four delegates from the lesbian and gay constituency represented at the conference. As Olga delegates Marc Dobson and Peter Scott soon realised, they were not alone - in fact, they were amongst a good number of activists who had attended Olga Forums, and Olga members representing other organisations. (And if - as Kinsey would have us believe- 10% of the total number of delegates were cont. page 6

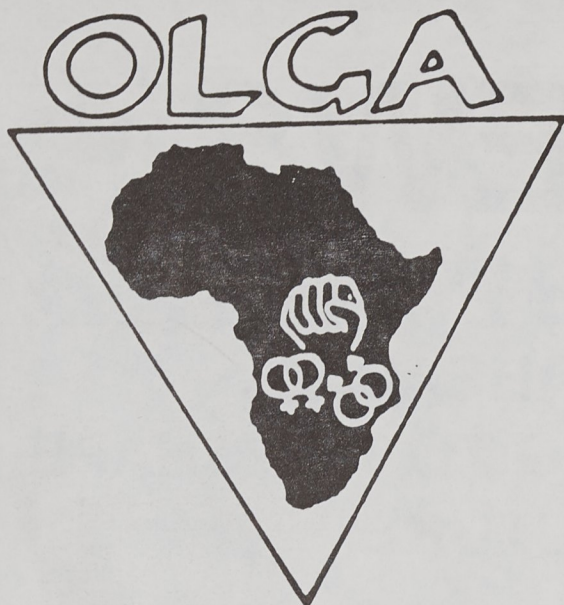
### GLOBAL SITUATION

The law of a country concerning homosexuality, is just one indicator of the level of oppression there. Some have no laws because they do not acknowledge that it exists. Most laws don't even mention lesbians.

**ILLEGAL**  
Africa Algeria, Libya, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Morocco. Asia India, Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Pakistan. Middle East Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Israel, Oman. Americas Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Jamaica, Bermuda, some states in U.S. Australasia Australia (3 states - Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia). Europe Eire, Liechtenstein, Romania, USSR

**NOT ILLEGAL**  
Africa Burkina Faso (men over 21). Asia Thailand, China. Australasia Aotearoa, Australia (other states). Americas Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Central America, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, most states in the U.S. Europe All European Countries except those above.

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY LAWS APPLY**  
Europe Scandinavia, Holland, France. Americas State of California, U.S.; Quebec, Canada. Australasia New South Wales and South Australia.



## OLGA GOES INTERNATIONAL

**OLGA has recently been admitted as a member of the International Lesbian and Gay Association, as reported in the last issue of Olga News. What is this organisation about?**

ILGA is a loose coalition of groups and individuals representing a broad spectrum and diversity of languages, cultures and histories.

Established by a handful of gay organisations in 1978, ILGA now has over 100 member organisations spread over 50 countries. ILGA was formed out of the realisation that governments and other national and international bodies most often either actively oppress or, at best, ignore the rights and interests of lesbians and gay men.

ILGA's aims are:

to promote lesbian/gay visibility; to encourage international information sharing, networking and solidarity among lesbian/gay groups; to secure the human rights of lesbian/gay citizens everywhere; and to protest discrimination and oppression wherever and whenever they may occur.

ILGA's structure comprises two Secretaries-General, an International Information Secretary and four Secretariates (Women's, Action, Information and Financial). The Secretariates are assisted by back-up groups. Various ILGA member organisations take responsibility for ILGA information pools, projects and regional and annual conferences. All members are expected to promote ILGA, contribute to the ILGA Bulletin, and respond to requests for action or information.

ILGA therefore is relatively decentralised and operates within the grassroots tradition of gay/lesbian liberation. Most of the member organisations are European, though there are members from all parts of the globe and an increasing number from the Third World.

One of ILGA's central functions is the maintenance of information resources regarding the position of lesbians and gay men worldwide. International study groups are established

periodically to deal with issues such as gays/lesbians and the military, and gay/lesbians teachers. ILGA activities also include calling on its members to write letters of protest in support of lesbians or gay men. ILGA is at present negotiating with Amnesty International with regard to its policy of refusing to adopt as prisoners of conscience persons imprisoned because of their sexual orientation. Protest activities are usually co-ordinated through the ILGA Bulletin, which is issued several times a year.

The decision-making body of the ILGA is the Annual Conference. Here policy statements, strategies, new actions and protests are debated. An attempt is made to hold conferences in parts of the globe as diverse as possible.

ILGA has a tradition whereby organisations from different parts of the globe enter into "twinning" relationships with one another. Olga is twinned with LBL/F-48 Copenhagen, which kindly paid Olga's \$100 subscription fee for this year.

South African member organisations, apart from Olga, are Glow and the now inoperative Rand Gay Organisation. The Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) was admitted as a member in 1985, despite opposition from some organisations which felt that GASA had not sufficiently distanced itself from the apartheid regime. This school of thought subsequently grew, fuelled in part by GASA's reaction to the indictment of one of its members, Simon Nkoli, on charges of treason. The result was that the 1987 Annual Conference voted to suspend GASA's membership of ILGA pending an investigative visit to South Africa by an ILGA representative. Three Scandinavian organisations undertook to finance this trip. Then later in 1987, before the trip had taken place, GASA disbanded and its membership of ILGA ceased to be an issue.

The 12th ILGA Annual Conference will be held in Stockholm, Sweden in July 1990. We hope that Olga will be represented there.

*Copies of the ILGA Bulletin and Conference Reports may be borrowed: phone Peter 6892866.*

# SIMON IS GLOWING

"TOM Selleck is a really nice guy," says Simon Nkoli, recently returned from a speaking tour of the United States. Simon, chair of Glow (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand), visited Olga for Christmas. Olga News tracked him down to the poolside deckchair, at a friends house, where he was sunbathing naked, to catch up on some news. "Tom came to hear me speak and then took me for a drive around Los Angeles. Whitney Houston and Dionne Warwick were at another meeting I addressed."

On his trip to the United States and Canada, Simon was hosted by Black and White Men Together, which is a gay organisation. He spoke in most of the major cities. In quite a few cities Simon was met by the mayors, some even issuing proclamations honouring him, and in San Francisco August 24th was declared Simon Nkoli Day.

Simon, one time secretary of COSAS Vaal, was accused number thirteen in the Delmas Treason Trial. Having been acquitted, after spending 3 years in prison, Simon is still an activist, but now in the gay and lesbian sector.

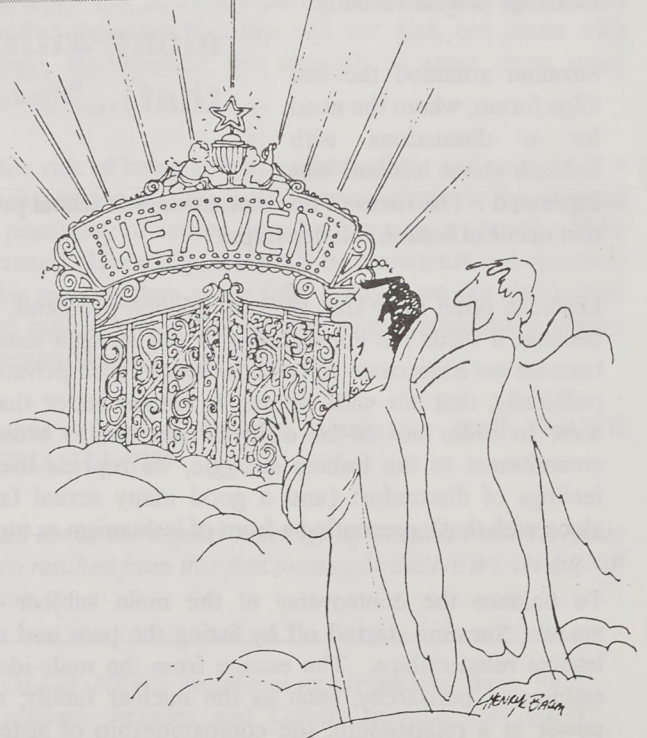
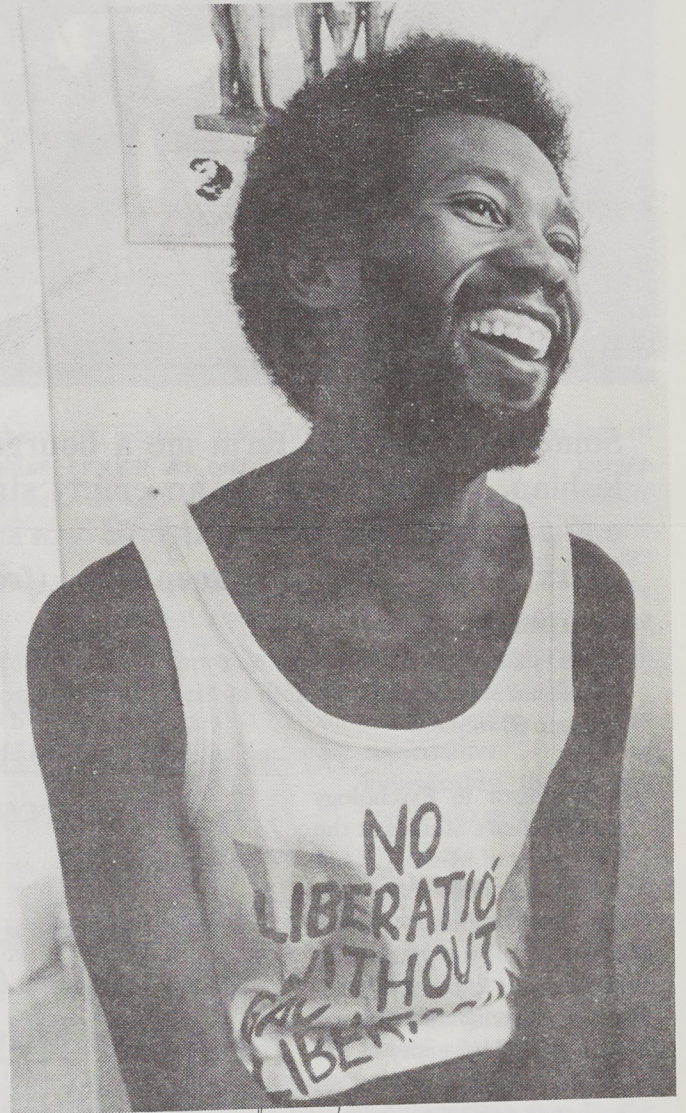
Simon is quick to assert how important he considers gay and lesbian issues to be, citing from his experiences in prison. While in prison Simon had to "come out" to his fellow trialists, and he reports that it was not easy. "Some of the guys found it really difficult to accept that I was gay, but eventually it worked out."

Before the trial Simon was involved in GASA Rand, and started the Saturday Group, which was a social Group for gays and lesbians living in the townships. Despite his work in GASA, the organisation failed to support him during the trial, so Simon left GASA to start Glow.

Since the inception of the organisation, after Simon's release on bail mid-1987, Glow has flourished. The "Glow Bar", a Soweto shebeen colonised for the purpose, was a popular meeting place for gays and lesbians, and although it has had to close down, Glow has kept on growing. Glow has at present 108 members and is thinking of opening a branch on the East Rand. Glow is also an affiliate of ILGA and Simon represented them at the 1989 ILGA Conference and he says they plan to send two reps this year.

Simon's present work includes his continuing duties as Glow chair and involvement in Township AIDS Project. This coming year he will be working in an education project, and studying part-time.

Simon is a comrade and friend that we are glad to have.



"Now that's Camp!"

# more lesb

## SUZANNA ROSE ON LESBIAN SEXUALITY

**Some women would term me a bourgeois lesbian. I don't sleep on an empty single mattress with only the collected works of Marx and Lenin to keep me (from) company.**

Maybe that is why I indulgently enjoyed Suzanna Rose's talk on lesbian sexuality, held on 15th of November and attended by some 60 women.

A Professor in Psychology and Women's Studies at the University of Missouri (and a bourgeois lesbian herself, that in a state where homosexuality is punishable by \$2000 fine and/or 2 years' imprisonment), she visited the University of the Western Cape as part of an exchange project recently.

Suzanna attended the last Olga forum, where the need for a discussions with lesbians about lesbians was expressed. The focus of this discussion was sexual problems that occur in lesbian relationships.

Lesbians often deny that they experience problems, mainly because it feeds the homophobia of our straight sisters and because we have come to the conclusion, both privately and politically, that sex with women is *always* better than with men. In order not to be disloyal, and not to breach our commitment to the lesbian struggle, we repress the vague feelings of discomfort (and a good many sexual fantasies along with that), presenting a front of lesbianism as utopia.

To balance the controversy of the main subject on the agenda, Suzanna started off by listing the pros and cons of lesbian relationships. The escape from the male-identified systems of patriarchy, such as the nuclear family; sharing power in a relationship; the companionship of sisterhood; freedom to explore different facets of oneself without the gender restrictions of (most) heterosexual relationships; greater intimacy and understanding; less emphasis on genital

intercourse and more overall stimulation of the body; better sex and assured orgasms, were mentioned.

However, the success of the feminist movement in addressing power imbalances and working towards non-exploitative association, has been internalised by lesbians to the extent of policing themselves. All too often we repress our need to assert ourselves with a lover or to take the lead on certain issues because this "wouldn't be a feminist thing to do".

(Although not mentioned at the meeting, the current lesbian S&M movement reacts against this. They experimnt with power under controlled conditions - and enjoy their sexuality in the process.)

An additional bonus to the introduction was that Suzanna gave a description of how lesbians "do it". This was especially informative for the "lesbian virgins" present. It also reassured those women who have just come out that they are not perverts, and refreshed the memories of those who have been out for a long time.

Because it seems, according to a study done with 1 000 lesbian couples in the USA, that there is a marked drop in sexual activity of couples after 4-5 years together. Although this is not unique to lesbians, the extent and causes certainly are. Lesbians "have sex" far less than both gay and heterosexual couples.

And the standard by which this is measured is not the sole culprit. However, it needs some scrutiny.

To "have sex" is not only too vague a measure, but also too direct. To start with the latter, genital sex is not the only form of sexual expression and one of the pros of lesbianism is that it is not as goal-oriented as gay sex or heterosexual sex. Women don't (as a rule) insist on uncontrollable urges

**"...we repress the vague feelings of discomfort (and a good many sexual fantasies along with that)..."**



# Lesbian Lust

A REPORT BY CHRISTELL

that turn into desperate needs, but rather enjoy full body contact and the overall stimulation this provides.

It must also be asked whether the few minutes it takes for most men to stimulate themselves to the point of orgasm, using a women's vagina, can be termed as "having sex". The average time the North American heterosexual couple spends on their twice-a-week sex slot is 10 minutes. (It is doubtful whether the South African average would look any better). When asked where that leaves the woman, the lesbian average of orgasmic sex once a month begins to look better.

A last word from the North American report: The lesbians all answered affirmatively when asked whether they were satisfied with their sex lives. In spite of this, the reason most frequently given for breaking up, is sex.

Leaving this patriarchal piece of research behind us: the response of the lesbians present, confirmed Suzanna's thesis. There was notable relief (and lots of curiosity and repression) at this opportunity to speak freely, without being judged and without the constant threat of another attempt at conversion.

Even though the possibility of an internalised biased standard was mentioned, many women expressed sexual dissatisfaction in their relationships.

Possible causes were then discussed: merging and the loss of individuality and independence; internalised sexual passivity, resulting in hesitation and even inability to take sexual initiative; policing from certain feminists (not just lesbians!) on the issue of any form of role division; over-sensitivity to one's partner, the hesitance to impose the need for an orgasm from fear of exploiting her sexually; the absence of

lesbian role models; invisibility in the media and the lack of lesbian erotica on our SA bookshelves; lack of lesbian support through internalised homophobia; a stressful environment politically, economically and ecologically, and

the context of a broader struggle; the (mis)conception that sexual satisfaction is counter-revolutionary, subsequently an annihilation of individuality to try and colour our privileges.

There was division on some of these issues. The possibility that the discussion as such was on the wrong track, was also hinted at. This was

balanced by Suzanna's insistence that, as women, sexual satisfaction is a necessary part of our contribution to the struggle. Frequent orgasms will not sink our boats with privilege, but provide the strength to steer them more confidently.

At the risk of being overtly individualistic and separatist, it was decided to indulge in another meeting. At this meeting the possibility of setting up a lesbian support group will be discussed. Hopefully, there will be more trust and openness at this meeting than at the talk. (Maybe we can also import some tantric love poses to help us re-circulate the energy generated through intercourse).

Suzanna's farewell message speaks for itself: "MORE LESBIAN LUST!"

(Read about the regular meetings of a lesbian interest group which resulted from this first meeting in the NEWS IN BRIEF section.)

**"... as women, sexual satisfaction is a necessary part of our contribution to the struggle."**

**"...the reason most frequently given for breaking up, is sex."**

OLGA NEWS welcomes contributions from its readers. Articles and Letters may be sent c/o OLGA.

(from page 1 ) C.D.F.

lesbian or gay, then the constituency was far more substantial than was visible.)

This presence underscores the importance of mobilising support for lesbian and gay rights among progressive organisations in order for the issue to be placed firmly on the political agenda.

### Negotiations, Sanctions and Mass Action

There were three major items on the agenda of the CDF, held at the University of the Witwatersrand:

- \* the attitude of South Africans to negotiations with the apartheid government;
- \* the call of South Africans to the international community;
- \* a programme of mass united action.

Olga supported the MDM in; \* the adoption of a position on negotiations as outlined in the OAU's **HARARE DECLARATION on SOUTH AFRICA.**

- \* calling on the international community to increase sanctions in order to maintain and increase pressure on the government, (which has forced the "reforms" announced so far);
- \* the adoption of a wide range of resolutions for mass united action.

Under this third item - programme for mass united action - resolutions were passed concerning the following issues; negotiations, international pressure, labour, education, local government, rural resistance, the Natal violence, the "apartheid army", abolition of the death penalty, privatisation, health, welfare, children, the sports boycott and rebel tours, white action, and the environment.

Had the issue of lesbian and gay rights been well publicised, with the necessary ground work of campaigning and lobbying already proceeding, then the agenda (the first of its kind on a national level for many years), also would have been an ideal one in which to mobilise amongst progressive people and organisations, for the acceptance of lesbian and gay rights and the discouragement of negative and homophobic attitudes.

(A remarkable absence from the resolutions is that of the womens sector; given the many years women have been making a major contribution to the struggle against apartheid, and for their own rights. One can but glimpse the enormity of the task lying ahead for lesbians and gay people.)

### Personal Interaction

Although the ANC leadership has indicated its support for, and has acknowledged the contribution made against apartheid by lesbian and gay activists, many organisations within the struggle remain uninformed of the oppression of lesbians and gay people.

## SUMMARY OF THE HARARE DECLARATION OF THE OAU ON THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

### 1.PREAMBLE

This states the opposition of the people of Africa to apartheid and the practices of the present South African regime, and their peoples commitment to peace and justice for all South Africans.

### 2.STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Principles similar to those of the Freedom Charter, and including a call for a Bill of Rights, are outlined. These will enable post-apartheid "South Africa to take its rightful place as an equal partner among the African and world community of nations".

### 3.CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

Non-negotiable pre-conditions for the creation of a suitable climate for negotiations are stated. These are; the unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees; the removal of restrictions and bannings on all organisations and people; the removal of all troops from the townships; an end to the State of Emergency and all repressive legislation; and an end to all political trials and executions.

### 4.GUIDELINES TO THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION

This would ensure the transition to a new democratic order, via an interim government which would supervise the drawing up of a new Constitution.

### 5.PROGRAMME OF ACTION

This outlines the OAU's role on the international front, in fulfilling its commitment to the transition to democracy in South Africa.

The OAU's Harare Declaration was accepted by the African National Congress prior to the CDF and, with minor amendments, by the United Nations in the week following the conference. It incorporates the COSATU resolution on negotiations.

Copies of the document maybe borrowed from OLGA by phoning Peter Scott at 689-2866.

However, on a personal level, Peter and Marc found that there was considerable interest expressed by a wide range of organisations at Olga's presence at the conference.

Delegates from various religious and youth groups and trade unions engaged them in discussion on Olga's objectives and what role it saw itself playing in the preparation for a post-apartheid SA.

These talks also enabled Peter and Marc to debunk many of the myths surrounding homosexuality. "Our talks were pretty basic," said Marc. "For example, I was asked by a delegate from a religious organisation to explain what 'caused' homosexuality."

### Lesbian and Gay Rights

Following the successful Constitutional Guidelines Forum, organised by NADEL in the W.Cape, Olga's presence at the CDF was the second recent occasion at which an opportunity to present the issue of lesbian and gay rights occurred. With the prospect of negotiations

drawing closer, let us now begin to assert ourselves as a valuable and sizeable sector within the Mass Democratic Movement, in order to proudly stand up for OUR rights as lesbians and gay people, in addition to those for which we are already fighting.

**AMANDLA!**

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## IVAN'S APPEALING

The appeal of Olga member Ivan Toms against his 18-month sentence for refusing to serve in the Defence Force, is to be heard in the Bloemfontein Appeal Court on 27 February. David Bruce, currently serving a 6-year sentence, is also appealing in a joint action with Ivan. Ivan is currently out on bail, having served 9 months of his sentence in Pollsmoor Prison in the period March - December 1988. After the February hearing there will be an interval of 1 - 4 weeks before sentence is handed down. Ivan and David's appeal will be the first appeal on behalf of persons convicted under the 1983 legislation and the outcome will of course have bearing on the sentences of all other conscientious objectors convicted under the same legislation. Ivan, we wish you strength.

## LET'S GET TOGETHER

A group of lesbians has begun meeting on a fortnightly basis to discuss lesbian sexuality and related issues. This is an independent, informal gathering with no links to any particular organisation. All interested women are welcome. The meeting on Thursday 25 January was on "Open Relationships". The next one will be on the 5th February at 7.30 at 12 Nuttall Rd, Observatory.

## RADICAL PAPER DREAM

A long-cherished dream of Olga's may very soon become a reality. A group of Scandinavian lesbian/gay organisations are attempting to raise funds to assist us in launching a progressive nationwide lesbian and gay newspaper.

## AIDS WORKSHOP

Olga participated in a workshop on AIDS at the Centre for Developmental Studies Conference in December entitled "The Western Cape in the 1990s". The workshop was presented by the AIDS sub-group of the Progressive Primary Health Care Network, of which Olga is a member.

## UDF AFFILIATION

Olga has taken the decision to apply for affiliation to the UDF.

## SASPU WAKES, NUSAS FORGETS

The S.A. Student's Press Union, for the first time, passed pro-lesbian and gay rights policy this year, the motion was proposed by a Durban delegate. NUSAS which has in recent years passed pro-lesbian and gay policy this year neglected to even raise the issue.

## SUBSCRIBE NOW

### JOIN OLGA

Becoming a member ensures that you get this newsletter and invitations to OLGA events.

OLGA also needs your support in order to be able to raise the issue of OUR rights in the MDM. So if you have an interest in a non-heterosexual Post-Apartheid South Africa, send your name and address, and R5,00 to:

OLGA

PO Box 7315

ROGGEBAAI

8312

OLGA's MAILING LIST IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL



# DO YOU NEED TREATMENT?

Gay people get asked some pretty strange questions. Often this is because their interrogators have a narrow, strictly heterosexual view of what is 'normal'. NI turns the tables and asks heterosexual people some strange questions too ...

- 1 What do you think is the cause of your heterosexuality?
- 2 When did you first realize you might be heterosexual?
- 3 Have you told your parents? What do they think of it?
- 4 Are there others like you in your family?
- 5 Would you say that you had an inadequate mother or father figure?
- 6 Don't you think your heterosexuality might be a phase you are going through?
- 7 Are you afraid of members of your own sex?
- 8 Isn't it possible that what you need is a good gay lover?
- 9 What do you actually do in bed?
- 10 You put *what where?*!
- 11 But how can people of the opposite sex really please each other when there are such vast emotional and biological differences between them?
- 12 Although society gives considerable support to the institution of marriage the divorce



rate is spiralling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?

- 13 Is it because heterosexuals are so promiscuous?
- 14 There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Have you considered aversion therapy?
- 15 Why do you feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual activities?
- 16 Why do you insist on making such a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just keep quiet about it?
- 17 More than 90 per cent of child molesters are thought to be

heterosexuals. Would you feel comfortable about entrusting your children's education to heterosexual teachers?

- 18 Why do people like you emphasize the heterosexual qualities of famous people such as film stars? Is it because you need to validate your own condition?
- 19 Penetrative sex is most common among heterosexual couples. Aren't you worried about the risk of getting AIDS?
- 20 If everybody were heterosexual like you what would happen to the world's population? Don't you think it is rather unreasonable and irresponsible of you to insist on sleeping with people of the opposite sex?

*this cartoon with thanks to NEW INTERNATIONALIST*