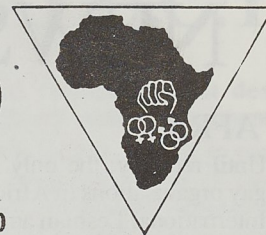


OLGA NEWS



The Newsletter of the Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists

May 1990



OLGA members arrive at the Grand Parade rally to welcome Nelson Mandela on the day of his release.

OLGA AFFILIATES TO U.D.F.

OLGA'S application to become an affiliate of the United Democratic Front, South Africa's largest anti-apartheid alliance, was accepted at the UDF Western Cape General Council meeting on 30 March.

OLGA views this as a most significant development in our history, and indeed as an important event in the history of the progressive lesbian and gay movement in South Africa.

Member Sheila Lapinsky outlined the significance of this step. "The first of OLGA's aims as listed in our constitution is to work towards a non-racial, democratic South Africa. Our becoming an affiliate of the UDF will strengthen both OLGA and the UDF in working towards this end.

"Our affiliation is also an important step with regard to our second aim, namely to situate the lesbian and gay struggle within the context of the total liberation struggle in South Africa. OLGA's presence within the UDF will provide a profile for the lesbian and gay struggle amongst a broad sector of the mass democratic movement. This sector includes organisations with which we would normally have little or no contact, such as the Hostel Dwellers' Association, the Squatters' Association, and Call of Islam. In addition, the COSATU regional executive are present at UDF forums as observers.

"Thirdly, to speak purely in terms of *realpolitik*, our affiliation allows us to represent lesbian and gay interests in the decision- and policy-making bodies

of the largest pro-democratic alliance in the country."

As a side-effect, OLGA anticipates that our presence within the UDF will make it that much harder for any homophobic attitudes within the mass democratic movement to go unquestioned. Hopefully, one result of this will be that more and more lesbian and gay activists will feel safe about coming out.

And apart from our having this underlying influence, OLGA will be in a position to provide formal programmes and workshops around the lesbian and gay issue for individual UDF affiliates, and also for the UDF's Education and Training programme. Says Sheila: "There is a great need for education of the most basic kind around simply what
cont. overleaf

NEWS FROM I.L.G.A.

AFRICA

Until recently, the only lesbian and/or gay organisations in Africa of which the International Lesbian and Gay Association was aware, were organisations in South Africa. But this year, ILGA reports that it has heard of a gay organisation in Ghana, and a lesbian and gay organisation in Liberia. The Liberian organisation, based in Monrovia, is named Club Lambda and was founded two years ago. Its goals include outreach to lesbians, AIDS education, the running of support groups to discuss personal problems, and a social event at least once a month. Liberian society is severely repressive of homosexuality.

OLGA is attempting to make contact with both these organisations.

RUMANIA

In the wake of the democratic revolution in Rumania, information is emerging about repression and torture of gay men under the Ceausescu regime. For example, in a 1986 crackdown more than 100 gay men were arrested and tortured.



We are everywhere!



They were released 8 months later under a general amnesty.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

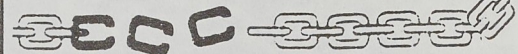
The recent change to democratic government in Czechoslovakia has led to developments in the gay community which are taking place at a "dizzying" pace, according to a spokesperson from the Prague-based Lambda Czechoslovakia. Prague now has 3 separate gay/lesbian groups, and organisations are being set up in several other cities. There is a "race to form gay groups throughout the country."

FREE AT LAST!



We rejoice with OLGA member Ivan Toms that the appeal against his 18-month sentence for refusing to serve in the Defence Force, was announced as successful on 30 March. Handing down judgment in respect of both Ivan and David Bruce, the Appellate Division ruled that the interpretation of the Defence Act on which their sentences were based - namely that there is a mandatory sentence for conscientious objectors - was erroneous. It further ruled that Ivan's sentence should be 9 months - which Ivan has already served.

We wish Ivan all the best as he at last resumes life without the interference of the long arm of the law unto itself. Freedom-loving South Africans will not forget his courage!



from page one

is meant when a person says they are lesbian or gay. Many people do not know, and are curious, about basic issues such as how a man or woman can conceive of giving up the possibility of having children in a nuclear family set-up ... and so on."

As many readers will know, the UDF was established in 1983 to co-ordinate resistance to the tricameral parliamentary system. It rapidly grew to a stage where it now has over 700 affiliates. The severe repression to which the Front, its affiliates and its leaders have been subjected in the 6-and-a-half years of the UDF's existence, is testimony to its tenacity and success in presenting a challenge to the apartheid state.

What are the practical implications of our affiliation for OLGA members?

1. OLGA has representation at UDF Cape Town Region meetings and also at UDF Western Cape General Council meetings.



2. All members have access to the monthly UDF Education and Training sessions. At these broad forums, open to all members of all affiliates, programmes are presented on topics such as the significance of recent developments in Eastern Europe. OLGA aims to keep members informed of these meetings.

3. Via the OLGA core group, any members can take part in any of the UDF working groups, known as "desks". These include desks for Culture, Media, Women and Labour.

4. At OLGA core group meetings, there will be report-backs from UDF meetings, and the formulation of OLGA mandates will take place.

* OLGA is sending copies of our revised pamphlet to all Western Cape affiliate organisations.

* OLGA provided six marshals for the A.N.C. rally on the 29 April.

The extent to which OLGA is able to make its presence felt within the UDF will depend centrally on the amount of personpower we have to draw from..

Now begins the next chapter in our struggle for total liberation.

Some readers may be wondering why OLGA's decision to seek affiliation to the UDF was made only in December last year, when we have been in existence since October 1987. The reason is that it is only since the establishment of the OLGA Forums last year, and the supportive response to them from progressive lesbians and gays, that the OLGA core group has felt that OLGA was sufficiently strong and viable as an organisation to take this step.

THE PINK FLAG FLIES AGAIN AT U.C.T.

April 1990 has seen the re-launching at the University of Cape Town of the Gay and Lesbian Association (GALA), a society which was conceived to serve the needs of the approximately thousand-strong campus gay and lesbian community.

The inaugural meeting of GALA, on April 3, attracted a large turnout of nearly 40 women and men, all of whom expressed their excitement and enthusiasm about the society and its future. One could not help feeling that there was a hint of history in the air: the meeting was the first of its kind at UCT in nearly two years.

It was decided at the inaugural meeting that the aims of GALA would be twofold: firstly, to provide an environment for gay and lesbian people to meet each other free from all the homophobia and misconceptions of the wider student culture; and secondly, to raise lesbian and gay issues on campus, bringing them to the foreground of the vigorous UCT political debate.

The elected steering committee was mandated to organise another meeting and a social. At the second meeting, on

April 11, a committee of 4 members - 2 women and 2 men - was elected, to co-ordinate GALA activities for the coming year. A resolution committing GALA to non-racism, non-sexism and democratic

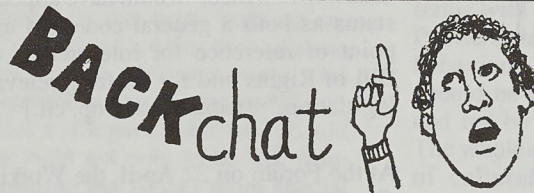


practice was adopted. It was decided that non-sexism would be entrenched in the society constitution by a clause that would require balanced representation of men and women in all future committees. The social was held the following evening at a member's home in Observatory. Again the first of its kind for UCT for 2 years, the event was well-at-

tended and inspired a great deal of humour, fun and general enjoyment.

Projects that GALA intends to take up include a campaign to get all campus political and ethical organisations to take a stand on gay rights, and a drive to increase the coverage of gay issues in the student press. There is also a possibility of OLGA involvement on campus increasing through liaison with GALA and its sub-committees.

Most GALA members were in agreement that much still needs to be done to improve conditions on a homophobic campus like UCT. GALA members account for only 5% of the total gay and lesbian student population: where are the others? And if anyone needed any convincing as to the hostility and hatred that gay and lesbian students still face at UCT, they need only have a glance at the posters advertising the GALA inaugural meeting: of those that had not been torn down, many had graffiti written on them: "FUCK OFF" ...



Send letters to:
OLGA NEWS
P.O. Box 7315
Roggebaai
8012

I AM a lucky (person) ~~man~~ as I have a friend who put me on the mailing list for OLGA NEWS. I have always avoided groupings by sexuality, but OLGA's wide perspective leads me to feel much less threatened by the ways sexual groups have tended to define themselves in the limited way stereotypically produced by conventional categorizing. I almost feel safe enough to appear at a live person meeting - but not quite safe enough yet: why?

I was disappointed with the incitements to lusting and butchery, a regression to defining in terms of male-genitally-preoccupied styles and forms of existence - how boring. I refer to the article "More lesbian lust" in the January issue.

Is there a place in OLGA for any kind of alternative to the above-mentioned genital relations - e.g. androgyny and celibacy?

Anon

I WAS most interested in the article "More lesbian lust" in the January issue. But I was rather disturbed by Suzanna Rose's statement that: "as women, sexual satisfaction is a necessary part of our contribution to the struggle."

What can this mean? If Suzanna is suggesting that people who are sexually satisfied are more likely to have excess energy for other activities such as politi-

continued page 6

WHILE welcoming any discussion of lesbian sexuality, esp. from a feminist perspective, I found some aspects of "More Lesbian Lust" (OLGA newsletter, Jan 1990) disturbing. Womyn's sexuality (whether gay or straight) is an area that has a history of being obliterated by patriarchy and re-defined with endless lists of prescribed "do's and don'ts". In the struggle to reclaim and liberate our sexuality, it's all too easy to set up new lists of what we should (and shouldn't) be doing, thereby undermining our self-confidence. Thus when I read that "sexual satisfaction is a necessary part of our contribution to the struggle", plus the message that "frequent orgasms" are obligatory, my heart sank. Surely this is just a more subtle form of the oppressive message that if you aren't "doing it", you are somehow incomplete as a womyn - and according to this article, you aren't a proper feminist or lesbian either!

Suzanna Rose is no doubt doing sterling work, but why is she limiting the experience of womyn's sexuality to sexual activity - a tradition imported direct from patriarchal assumptions about sexuality. What about those of us who

are celibate (either by choice, or, more painfully, because no loving partnership presents itself) and are trying to express our sexuality through affectionate interaction with our friends, creative projects, passionate involvement in causes, enjoyable non-sexual physical activity such as exercise, massage, aromatherapy, etc? Why are these options, which surely reflect the feminist belief that our sexuality is a holistic and ongoing part of our lives and experience, made invisible and somehow inadequate, not only by patriarchal society, but by our sisters?

Let's wise up - sexuality isn't just sex, which in turn isn't just something naughty but nice, to be compulsorily "indulged" in, complete with "how to" instructions. This both compartmentalises and trivialises (just as patriarchy's always done) a force we're trying to reclaim as an expression of our uniqueness, a healing power, an experience of freedom. Good luck everyone!

Helen

OLGA AND THE A.N.C CONSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES

"The constitution of the new democratic South Africa will be the product of a freedom struggle, and should in its every clause breathe the spirit of liberty. All South Africans should see themselves reflected in it and protected by it."

-Albie Sachs, "Judges and gender: the constitutional rights of women in a post-apartheid South Africa", 1989.

In August 1988 the ANC issued its draft Constitutional Guidelines for a future democratic South Africa, and has since then called for feedback to this document from inside the country. Since January this year, OLGA has been working on the formulation of proposals for the protection of lesbian and gay rights in a future constitutional dispensation, to be submitted to the ANC's Legal and Constitutional Affairs Department on completion.

This is a large-scale and challenging project, but there is no shortage of enthusiasm amongst those working on it. Emma Goldman wrote, "If we can't dance to it, it's not our revolution." It feels as if we find ourselves in a "revolution" of which we as lesbians and gays can feel we are fully a part. It's an unfamiliar feeling - but certainly not an unpleasant one!

What have we done so far, and what are our guiding principles?

Preliminary discussions in the OLGA core group were followed by broad debate in the OLGA Forum held in mid-February. From this meeting a volunteer Working Group was set up, and at the Forum on 22 April the Working Group presented its work to date for feedback. From these various gatherings, the following have emerged as the principles and procedures which we will adopt:-

1. We will press for maximum protection of lesbian and gay rights. Lesbian and gay rights should be given explicit expression, and not merely be assumed to be included under broad statements about non-discrimination, equal individual rights and so on.

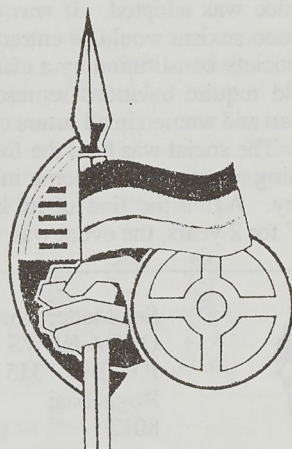
This is based on the analysis that lesbians and gays are not only a minority group, but a group with a history of oppression. Bearing in mind the experiences of lesbians and gays in other countries, it was felt that an explicit approach was the only way to guarantee adequate protection in the face of the possibility of homophobic individual judicial officers. It was noted, though, that while we need

to be assertive we should also take care to be strategic and not divisive.

2. In keeping with the decision to push for maximum protection, it was decided that we will press for:-

(a) Amendments to the Constitutional Guidelines such that provision is made for the specific protection of lesbian and gay rights in both the Constitution itself, and the Bill of Rights section of the Constitution.

(b) A Charter of Lesbian and Gay Rights, to be appended to the Constitution together with other Charters (e.g. Women's, Workers'). Amongst other things, this Charter will call for the revision of all current legislation which



discriminates (whether by commission or omission) against lesbians and gays. Into this category falls, of course, the legislation which makes gay and (since March 1988) lesbian behaviour a criminal offence.

(c) A detailed motivating document, setting out why we believe that lesbian and gay rights should be specifically protected.

3. Our initial submission to the ANC will comprise our proposed amendments to the Constitutional Guidelines, together with the motivating document. The Lesbian and Gay Charter is a longer-term project; but in the meantime we will inform the ANC that it is in the process of being drawn up and endorsed, and we may send them a provisional version.

4. If we expect the ANC to take our proposals really seriously, then we need to obtain support for them on as wide a basis as possible. This means that we need to canvass support amongst the widest possible lesbian and gay constituency in South Africa, and also amongst non-lesbian/gay allies. This of course has wide-reaching implications for the scope of the project as a whole,

and will involve completely new terrain for OLGA.

(As a preliminary step in this process, a letter is being sent to lesbian and gay organisations nationwide informing them of what we are doing, and that we will be requesting their participation).

Some Detailed Comments on the Charter of Lesbian and Gay Rights

A Charter of Lesbian and Gay Rights would be directly comparable in nature to a Women's Charter or a Workers' Charter. It would cite concrete instances of rights and remedies in relatively specific form, covering areas such as employment, parenting and health.

It would have definite legal authority, being used to assist in the interpretation of the Constitution and other actual legislation. In this regard it is interesting to note Albie Sachs' comments on a Charter of Women's Rights. Such a Charter, he writes, "would have a special status as both a general code and as a point of reference for interpreting the Bill of Rights and for drafting relevant legislation." [Albie Sachs, op. cit.]

At the Forum on 22 April, the Working Group presented draft wording for the amendments to the Constitutional Guidelines and for the Charter, and also a draft outline of the motivating document. The Forum made recommendations for improvements, which have been referred back to the Working Group as it continues to work on refining the documents.

CHARTER CAMPAIGN

The Forum endorsed the proposal that OLGA initiate a nationwide campaign in order to publicise and elicit support for the Charter of Lesbian and Gay Rights. Such a campaign could potentially, of course, be vast in scope; its scale will be largely dictated to us by considerations of manpower and funding.

* Additional volunteers for the Constitutional Guidelines project would be most welcome. If interested contact Julia tel. 476601 (h).

Forward!



ALBIE SACHS ON SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE:

Some Quotes From Recent Writings

Albie Sachs is a senior member of the A.N.C. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Dept.

From "Towards a Bill of Rights in a Democratic South Africa," March 1988:-

* "There will be a Bill of Rights which entrenches basic individual rights for all citizens. Any individual discriminated against on the grounds of belonging to any minority (or majority) group, will have appropriate legal recourse. This is the guarantee of equal individual rights."

* "What will be guaranteed will be the inviolability of the home, freedom to pursue family life and general freedom of the personality."

* "Finally, it should be mentioned that there will be other constitutionally protected group rights which by their nature will necessarily cut across linguistic and ethnic divides. Thus the workers of South Africa, who today are playing a key role in the fight to destroy apartheid and build a new South Africa, will receive extensive constitutional recognition in the form both of individual and of collective rights. Similarly, South African women, also active in combat, and the victims of special social and legal disabilities, should have the right not only to be free from discrimination but to call upon special resources so as to overcome the legacy of past discrimination. Other groups that could merit special constitutional recognition could be children, the aged, handicapped persons and victims of apartheid persecution. In none of these cases would the question of race or ethnicity

enter. Group rights will exist, but they will be the rights of workers, women and so on, not of racial groups."

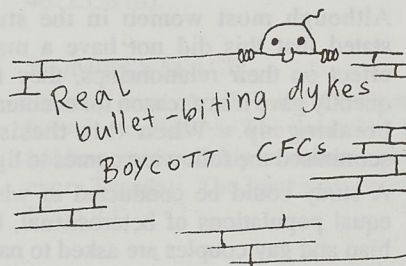
* "The new Bill of Rights, democratic in its mode of adoption and democratic in its content, will provide the legal framework whereby the injustices of the past can be redressed and each and every person, whatever his or her background, will be able to act as a free person and to enjoy the benefits of freedom in the land of her or his birth."

From "A Bill of Rights for South Africa: Areas of Agreement and Disagreement," October 1989:-

* "The question of the right to be different and the right of privacy has many other dimensions, some of which will be referred to later. One aspect which merits immediate attention is whether there should be a constitutional prohibition against discrimination based on sexual preference. Many gay rights groups have raised the question in broad terms with the ANC, whose Director of Publicity has made it clear that sexual behaviour between consenting adults should be regarded as a private matter and not be subject to any penalisation. The whole question touches on a variety of cultural sensibilities, and clearly needs to be handled with dignity and sensitivity, without pandering to backwardness and homophobia and bearing in mind the special contribution which the South African gay community has itself to make towards finding the right answer."

U.C.T.S.R.C. RESOLUTION

On 4 April the University of Cape Town S.R.C. passed a resolution on homophobia, in terms of which it committed itself to: "take an active stand against homophobia and discrimination against lesbians and homosexuals"; to embark on a process of educating itself as an S.R.C., and its sub-committees, around lesbian and gay rights; and to support the Gay and Lesbian Association in "working against homophobia on campus."



DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The U.W.C.-based Centre for Development Studies has formally invited OLGA to participate in its programme. The Centre was established 2 years ago to initiate and fund research with regard to the planning of the socio-economic structures of a future South Africa. The C.D.S. holds itself accountable to the mass democratic movement, and the participation of all organisations linked to the MDM is the cornerstone of its structure. There are 8 study commissions, dealing with: education, law, economy, planning, women, land, culture, and health. We can send reps to any of these.

This is an opportunity for us to participate in wider debates about the future of South Africa, and it also raises the possibility of funding for lesbian and gay-related research. Anyone who is interested should contact the OLGA core group.

LESBIAN SEXUALITY GROUP

The Lesbian Sexuality Group recently decided to become a sub-group within OLGA. This arrangement seems destined to be of mutual benefit to both groups.

The Lesbian Sexuality Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm, at 12 Nuttall Rd,



Another shot of the OLGA banner at the Mandela Rally

LESBIAN "BED DEATH": A POST-MORTEM *by Engela*

Note: "Bed death" refers to the phenomenon of marked decline in sexual activity within an intimate relationship.

Ever since we were informed, at Suzanna Rose's talk last November, that lesbian "bed death" was an official statistical reality, the lesbian sexuality group have been trying (among other things) to find a theoretical explanation for this.

As discussions continued, both inside the group and outside, various possibilities were suggested:

* According to the original statistical finding (in a study done in the U.S.), lesbian couples frequently experience a marked decline in sexual activity after a period of time.

Although most women in the study stated that this did not have a major effect on their relationships, they frequently gave it as a reason for eventually breaking up. When this thesis is scrutinised the following comes to light:

A study could be conducted in which equal populations of heterosexual, lesbian and gay couples are asked to name their reasons for breaking up. If the number of lesbian couples that break up as a result of sexual factors is not significantly higher than the number of such couples in the other populations, one crucial question would be answered: lesbians do have less sex than other groups, but do sexual problems have a greater

impact on their relationships than on everybody else's? If this is not the case, a re-evaluation of the "syndrome" of lesbian "bed death" is necessary.

* It is also possible that the original questionnaire may not have been clear enough on the difference between the questions: "Did the relationship end as a result of the cessation of sexual activity?" or "Did it end because of sexual reasons?" Sexual problems are usually very complex, and by simply asking people to tick a block, one could risk making unwarranted deductions.

* Mostly women grow up with a different attitude towards sex than men. Women are socialised to be caring and to invest a lot of emotional energy in intimate relationships. The social conditioning of men on the other hand has made them (particularly heterosexual men) notorious for exploitative, pleasure-hunting dispositions when it comes to sex. This is no doubt part of the greater patriarchal scheme of things, but be that as it may, women still find themselves prey to these attitudes, whether they are lesbians or not. The gathering of all of these things into one relationship is quite clearly a breeding-ground for complexities.

* The monogamous, forever faithful and

sexually fulfilled couple brought to us by the heterosexual world, which according to all evidence does not exist anyway, is very much a patriarchal institution. Is there any reason, apart from the deliberations of this institution, to believe that two people can sexually fulfil each other for the rest of their lives? Are lesbian couples sexually maladjusted, or is the ideology of monogamy killing off people's sexuality?

There is no doubt that most women in the group felt quite threatened by the heavy label of "lesbian bed death" suddenly cascading down upon them, although the "syndrome" was often recognised. But it would certainly be unfair to declare lesbians sexually deceased because of this statistically proven phenomenon.

One should be cautious about moulding sexuality into inappropriate categories: categories have a way of gaining lives of their own and as such oppress people. To call lesbian couples' particular sexual patterns "problematic", is to employ an often invisible norm. We should be careful of letting norms rule our sexual expression.

More Backchat

-cal activism, I cannot accept this as logical. And Suzanna surely knows about the concept of sublimation, i.e. the unconscious diversion of sexual energy towards other channels?

What's more, Suzanna's statement brings to my mind nightmare visions of robot-like clones, programmed to regulate every tiniest aspect of their lives in accordance with some assumed consensus about the demands of the struggle. But we all know that people in general do not (thank heavens) live their lives like that.

In expressing these views I don't wish to sound carping. But I'd hate for us to get lost in a sea of rhetoric which does not stand up to examination.

Best wishes

Val

HAVING attended several meetings of the lesbian sexuality group, I'd like to use the letters page of OLGA NEWS to express my appreciation to all the women who attend this group, for their attitude of openness and sharing. This has made the meetings an extremely worthwhile experience, for this participant at least. Thank you!

Amber

OLGA dIArY

Video Evening

We will be showing further episodes of the BBC Channel 4 magazine programme OUT ON TUESDAY

Sunday 20 May, 6.30 - 9.30 pm

12 Nuttall Rd, Observatory

Please bring food and drink to share.

Forum Planning Workshop on the Politics of Sexuality

Wednesday 30 May, 6.00 pm

12 Nuttall Rd, Observatory

Please bring interesting articles & ideas.

For further information tel. Mikki 243789

Lesbian Sexuality Group

Wednesday 13 June, 7.30 pm

12 Nuttall Rd, Observatory

Forum on The Politics of Sexuality

Sunday 17 June, 7.30 - 9.30 pm

12 Nuttall Rd, Observatory

Please bring food and drink to share.

Hand-drawn graphic for OLGA T-SHIRTS. The central text reads "GAYS / LESBIANS against apartheid" with "ANC tricolour" below it. To the left and right are smaller boxes with "GAYS" and "LESBIANS" respectively, also with "against apartheid" below them. The word "OLGA" is written in large letters in the center, with "T-SHIRTS" below it. The entire graphic is framed by a jagged, hand-drawn border. Below the graphic, the following text is written: "PRICE INCLU. POST • CAPETOWN R15 • REST RSA R17 • EUROPE/UK R21 • N. AMERICA R24 • AUSTRALIA R26" and "WRITE TO OLGA: PO BOX 7315, ROOGEBAAH, 8012, R. S. A."

NEWS BRIEFS

ILGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Member Sheila Lapinsky has been invited to be a keynote speaker at the annual conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association, to be held in Stockholm on 1 - 7 July. Sheila's fare is being sponsored by the Riksförbundet for Sexuellt Likaberättigande (Swedish Federation for Gay and Lesbian Rights), an organisation comprising 7000 members. OLGA is excited at this wonderful opportunity for us to make contact with our sisters and brothers on the global front.

PINK PAPER

When two OLGA members visited the U.K. in January, the staff of the London weekly gay and lesbian newspaper *The Pink Paper* very kindly offered to donate to OLGA a free airmail subscription. Copies of this interesting publication are arriving regularly. Anyone who wants to borrow copies should contact Peter tel.6892866.

OLGA IN PRINT

* The 7 March issue of the University of Cape Town student newspaper, *Varsity*, carried a short interview with two OLGA members in an article titled "Lesbian and gay activists."

* The March issue of *Style* magazine (nationwide circulation approximately 60 000) carried a letter from OLGA protesting against a homophobic article in the October issue of the magazine.

* The *Weekly Mail* of 12 April carried a lengthy letter from OLGA in which we repudiated a *WM* article which stated, on the basis of "scientific" evidence, that most South African gays were affluent.

* A revised, updated version of the OLGA pamphlet was recently printed.

LILACS LIVES

Former members of LILACS, that fulfilled, fearless, feisty (*That's enough.-Ed.*) lesbian organisation that flourished in Cape Town in 1983 - 85, may be interested to know that the organisation is cited in a publication entitled "The struggle for democracy: a study of community organisations in Greater Cape Town from the 1960s to 1985", published by U.W.C.'s Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. In a listing headed "Special Interest Organisations", LILACS is described thus: "Aim: To provide a non-hostile environment for lesbian women in Cape Town; to fight homophobia in society, and the isolation of individual lesbians. Activities: Newsletter, fortnightly meetings, outreach programme."

NEWS FROM GLOW

The Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand reports that they have recently had contact with gays in Giyani and Mankweng in the Northern Transvaal. A GLOW member was invited to speak at gatherings at two colleges of education in this area with regard to the setting up of progressive

gay/lesbian organisations. One of the main problems facing these people is that the college students live throughout a widely dispersed area, which makes organising difficult.

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The Lesbian Sexuality Group recently decided to become a sub-group within OLGA. This arrangement seems destined to be of mutual benefit to both groups.

The Lesbian Sexuality Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm, at 12 Nuttall Rd, Observatory. Contact person: Christell tel. 4622358 (h).

WOMEN'S SPACE

Starting from April 3, the Observatory late-nite coffee bar The Joint has been holding women-only evenings upstairs every Tuesday. The Joint is at 79 Lower Main Rd.

SENSIBLE SINGER

U.S. vocalist Dolly Parton was reported in the *Cape Times* (21/4) as having reacted to "hurtful" rumours about her close relationship with the woman who usually partners her to functions, one Judy Ogle. Ms Parton is quoted as saying: "There is nothing but beauty in my relationship with Judy." Right on, Dolly - isn't it great not being straight? (*Some mistake, surely?-Ed.*)

Finally, for those of you who may have missed these articles in the press...

Judge urges leniency in sodomy cases

WEEKLY MAIL 5.4.90

THE Grahamstown Supreme Court has found that harsh sentences are no longer appropriate for homosexuality between consenting adults.

The court also criticised a regional court magistrate for saying that indecent acts with children were rife, but this ruling has come under fire from lawyers.

Mr Justice Jansen, sitting with Mr Justice Cooper, was hearing an appeal by a 22-year-old Grahamstown man, Duncan Guy Morris, against his sentencing to an effective three-year jail term on 10 counts of sodomy. Both courts drew a distinction between those counts involving adults or near-adults, and those involving children.

In those cases involving adults, the Supreme Court said that imprisonment was "not a proper sentence in modern days for a first offender convicted of sodomy, especially where the initiative came from the

By PETER AUF DER HEYDE

other party, where both parties are adults and the act is committed in private."

Although most people who had heterosexual relationships might find acts of sodomy unacceptable and reprehensible, it had to be accepted that times had changed.

"We cannot close our eyes, however, to the fact that society accepts that there are individuals who have homosexual tendencies and who form intimate relationships with those of their own sex," the judges said.

They cited other countries where homosexuality was being decriminalised, and said that the subject was being more openly discussed. The sentence on these counts was reduced to a R200 fine, or six months in jail suspended for five years.

Decriminalise homosexual conduct — DP

By ANTHONY JOHNSON
Political Correspondent

HOMOSEXUAL conduct between consenting adults should be decriminalised, according to the notice of a private member's motion introduced into the House of Assembly yesterday by the Democratic Party MP for Houghton, Mr Tony Leon.

The motion submits that criminalising homosexual conduct between consenting adults was:

- Discriminatory against 5-10% of the adult population.
- Intruded the state into the sphere of private conduct.
- Impossible to police and brought the law into disrepute.
- Suppressed information about the spread of Aids.

Mr Leon said the legal prohibition relating to homosexual conduct was partial, unequal and oppressive in its operation. "The DP is committed to non-discrimination in all areas of civic life."

CAPE TIMES 16.2.90

THE SLOW RACE TO LIBERATION

This essay by Tseko Simon Nkoli, chairperson of the Gay and Lesbian Association of the Witwatersrand, is reprinted from *GLOWLETTER*, March 1990, with thanks.

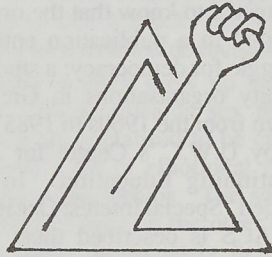
I am frequently asked, "Why aren't more black Lesbians and Gays active in our community?" I never have the right answer, but here are some thoughts.

Black people come from communities where homosexuality is not often discussed. If anything is mentioned, it is only condemnation or denial: "There are no Gays in the black community." How can people believe that?

I have heard many comments from black people about Gays and Lesbians. Some say that we are perverts, others that Gay men are afraid of women. We are mad, sick or "influenced by the whites" to be Gay. Others say that we are "middle-class" people and therefore to be detested. I deny all these statements against us. All I can say is that Gay and Lesbian people are here simply to live their lives, they have been here since the beginning of the world and shall remain. All we want is to be accepted as normal people.

Still no answer to the question. I was brought up in a poor family and went to High School like other kids. I noticed all the racial discrimination and unrest in the black townships. Coming to the city of Johannesburg, I saw black people being subjected to detention for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I don't know if it was racism or "classism" but unless I was aggressive in posture and well-dressed, I was treated shabbily. A small example: in shops, my change was always set on the counter, never in my hand. I could have been treated worse was my sexual orientation known. Is this treatment an answer to the question? Is there a distrust of white people by many blacks which prevents them from joining forces in the Gay and Les-

bian struggle? There is a feeling that all white people are prejudiced and that they pay little attention to black people. One should not wonder why there is a distance and misunderstanding. I have been accused by some black people of letting whites control my mind. This accusation nearly led to a resignation by



some members. Only by discussion leading to understanding was this problem solved.

Another possible answer is that a black Gay or Lesbian person having been "uplifted" (to use the latest buzzword for self-improvement) may enjoy improved living standards such as a good home, food, clothes and car "in the closet", and may not wish to leave that closet to take part in Gay Liberation activities.

Sexual orientation equality is not as important for black people as racial equality. A black person may wish to mix in exclusively black straight social groupings rather than be a (racial) minority in a Gay group.

Some black people dislike taking direction from white people, some lesbians from men. Having suffered under their white/male/straight boss all day, they feel that leisure time is not for being an "underling" in a Gay group.

I am encouraged by the "Black and White Men Together" group in the USA. I met members of this group on my recent visit to that country. There is a good working relationship between all members of the organisation. If only that relationship can be further developed in GLOW, the pace of liberation can be much accelerated.

If there are differences of opinion within the group such as those about "Drag Queens", only discussion and understanding will help us to go forward.

One question has led to more questions. Has anybody there an answer for me?



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