

GAY LIB developments in Melbourne

It seems that there are now three gay liberation groups in Melbourne : one at each of the universities.

The largest and most established of these is the Melbourne University Gay Liberation Front, a big proportion of its members being non-students. MUGLF appears to be the main focal point for gay lib activities in Melbourne but its membership is by no means limited to homosexuals or bisexuals. Going by reports the non-homosexual group appears to be made up of heterosexuals or people calling themselves "human sexuals", whatever that tag might imply. It would seem that there has been some polarisation of these groups of late following a lot of dissatisfaction on the part of some of the people who are exclusively homosexual or bisexual.

The MUGLF Publications Group in a pamphlet entitled : "Heterosexuals in Gay Lib : Queens and Dykes want Gay Lib back" argued that while they were not prepared to say categorically at this stage that heterosexuals should be excluded, there were enormous problems. They pointed out, and I would agree, that the development of a radical gay consciousness was fraught with problems

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anyway, and that attempts to arrive at some consensus of issues to be discussed, to encompass straights, has meant a watering down of the specific issues of homosexual oppression, especially in CR groups. They cited the examples of Black Power and Women's Liberation where whites and men (respectively) were excluded on a similar basis.

It seems to me that "the poofers and dykes who want gay lib back" have shown remarkable patience in the face of a peculiar situation. Elsewhere in their pamphlet they pointed out that the presence of large numbers of non-homosexuals in Gay Liberation seems to be unique to the Melbourne group, no-one having ever heard of it in either Britain or North America. That's hardly surprising of course because there's no doubt elsewhere that "gay liberation" is synonymous for "homosexual liberation" (the American term 'gay', for homosexuals, being co-opted, as the movement first began there).

Faced with this unique situation what are homosexuals of MUGLE to do? It's relatively easy to make judgements from afar of course, but it may be that they fear being labelled authoritarians if they do state categorically that heterosexuals ought to be excluded from the group, but for the sorts of reasons outlined above I think this decision is justified, or rather imperative.

To make charges of "authoritarianism" in this context would be a gross misapplication of the concept. Similarly, reported charges of "sexism" and "ghettoism" against the arguments of the "poofers and dykes" indicates that the "gay" is not the only word that has taken on curious new meanings for some people in the group.

John Lee