

REPORT TO THE BOARD
of
MSNY DELEGATES TO ERCHO

The time is long overdue for a candid report to the general homophile public of the scandal which passes for the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations, the so-called ERCHO. This body, which meets semi-annually, is supposed to represent eastern homophile interests within the National Conference of Homophile Organizations, the NACHO. The November meeting of ERCHO in Philadelphia merely confirmed that the leopard never changes its spots; on the contrary, the spots seem to grow darker with age. The November meeting provided an excellent opportunity to witness the ERCHO at work, and to determine whether there had been any relaxation of the unyielding grip which the small group of entrenched Kamenyites have uninterruptedly maintained over this conference ever since its formation more than three years ago.

But why this reference to the Kamenyites? Why pick on a group whose leader has added laurels to the homophile movement; who, almost single-handedly, and at great personal cost, has waged a courageous and aggressive campaign on many fronts against discrimination by the Federal government against homosexuality, one of the areas where the road to success is the most difficult? The answer is that the Kamenyites, and particularly their leader, are the homosexual equivalent of "black nationalists", of the most virulent kind. Their obsessive fear of and irrational hostility toward heterosexual participation in the homophile movement knows no bounds, and has, for years, constituted the greatest single stumbling block to the admission to the movement of heterosexual men and women of talent and eminence, who are not only prepared to aid us materially in our struggle, but who would also constitute, when admitted, an adornment to the movement itself, and thereby bring the crusade for homosexual rights into the mainstream of American life.

While giving lip-service to the principle of heterosexual participation in the movement, the Kamenyites have made it abundantly clear by word and deed that heterosexuals are not welcome and that, if they are to be admitted at all, it must be in a subordinate and second-class role. In the Kamenyite world order even bisexuals are suspect, for the Kamenyite prophet has, on his own ex-parte initiative, overruled Kinsey and his followers (they are only heterosexuals anyway) and has decreed that these people do not know what they are talking about when they speak of bisexuality. There are no true bisexuals, according to the Kamenyite doctrine. There are only "Aryan-pure homosexuals" or "coal-black heterosexuals", and the twain never should meet. (The leader of the Kamenyites denies that he contradicts Kinsey, but his denial is a distinction without any difference.) The result is that wherever the Kamenyites have been in control, heterosexuals have either been totally excluded from any effective voice in the movement or have been relegated to the role of menials to do the bidding of their homosexual betters. Thus it has become impossible to attract to the movement any of the great heterosexual names, such as Dr. Evelyn Hooker, Dr. Wardell Pomeroy, Professor R. A. Laud Humphreys, Professor Ned Polsky -- to mention only a few -- many of whom are prepared to help lead the movement out of its segregated ghetto, improve its public image, and, more important than anything else, inject some fresh ideas into the sterile mediocrity within which the ERCHO, under its Kamenyite masters, has wallowed since its inception.

The Kamenyites have never been able to overcome the congenital hostility toward heterosexuals which they developed years ago when the only heterosexuals

who discussed homosexuality were the pseudo-authorities like the present Dr. Bieber, whose pontifications about homosexuals being sick, sick, sick, are too notorious to merit discussion. We all know the damage which these benighted "scientists" inflicted, and continue to inflict, but in the case of the Kamenyites, the damage has been traumatic and permanent. It is time the Kamenyites forget the past, stop beating dead horses, and face up to the rapidly increasing number of talented heterosexuals who are our strongest allies. Instead of insulting and alienating them -- acting like black men who see in every white man another slave driver -- the Kamenyites should become aware of the numerous heterosexuals who have done more for homosexual progress than most homosexuals now alive.

Unfortunately the Kamenyites are not by character disposed to learn lessons from others. Modesty has never been one of their virtues, and they find it extremely difficult to assume the role of learner when they have for so long been accustomed to ordering people around. The fact remains that, if we homosexuals are going to ask our heterosexual brethren to accept us as individuals without regard for our own sexual orientation, it behooves us to apply the same rule toward heterosexuals within our own groups.

This is the real issue confronting the ERCHO. For unless the ERCHO follows the wholesome lead of its parent body, the NACHO, and removes the Kamenyite-imposed regulations which are strangling it, it will continue to operate in the same self-created ghetto, unknown by the world at large, and unlamented by the rest of the homophile movement. As Tangents magazine so well put it:

"We have already had segregation of a peculiarly degrading kind. What the homosexual has had of the best life America can offer he has had to get by false pretenses, in that, however deserving he might be, if his sexual bent were known, he would have been denied it. We don't need more separatism. Homosexuals want to be part of the mainstream of American life, not an undercurrent!

"Beware the ghetto mentality!"

(Tangents, August-September 1969, editorial, p. 2)

There are two standing ERCHO rules which constitute a bar to the admission of heterosexuals, and, like all such by-laws, their repeal requires a two-thirds vote. The first permits only "organizations" to become ERCHO members, thus precluding the admission of individuals, no matter how qualified they may be for membership. Kinsey himself, humbly seeking admission hat in hand, would have been denied full admission by the autocrats presently in control of the ERCHO. The emphasis here is on the word full, because the Kamenyites are quick to point out that the present ERCHO rules do not specifically bar heterosexuals qua heterosexuals. But since heterosexuals of prominence are not ordinarily members of homophile organizations, the only way they can enter the ERCHO is on the coattails of some already existing homophile group. MSNY is the only homophile group which has had the temerity to include an acknowledged heterosexual on its official delegation to the ERCHO, and this lady was almost physically assaulted during her attendance at the ERCHO meeting in Philadelphia. One can judge for oneself the reception which other heterosexuals are likely to receive at the hands of the powers that be in the ERCHO. While it is easy enough, if an organization so wishes, to include a heterosexual on its delegation IF it already has heterosexual members (assuming provision has been made for body-guards) the difficulty arises from the fact that heterosexual men and women of eminence will not wish to enter the ERCHO through the backdoor, by

means of membership in some already-participating group. At the very least they are entitled to be admitted on the basis of their own reputations, with full voting rights like those accorded to individuals by the NACHO, ERCHO's parent body, whose example ERCHO, under Kamenyite control, consistently flouts.

This brings us to the NACHO itself, whose success in many ways can be measured by the degree to which it has successfully removed the Kamenyite restrictions with which it, too, was originally shackled. Not only have the NACHO doors now been opened to the accreditation of individuals, but bona fide chapters of legitimate homophile organizations may also become members. (ERCHO's refusal to admit genuine chapters is the second Kamenyite exclusionary rule, but this is much less important than the admission of individuals.)

At the same time, under the able leadership of its chairman, Marc Jeffers of Kansas City, NACHO programmed a series of evening "seminars" at the last annual meeting, at which some outstanding people in the field of law, sociology and religion (some of them heterosexuals working on behalf of homosexuals) addressed the conference members on a variety of interesting subjects. These seminars vastly improved the whole tone of the sessions, and provided some very worthwhile publicity. Continuation of programs of this kind may help to free the NACHO sessions from their deadening concentration on the minutiae of internal administration which have been such a bore in the past. Yet all these reforms have had to be accomplished over the most rigorous rearguard opposition from the Kamenyites.

This brings up the fact that nowhere do the Kamenyites represent a majority. Within their own eastern region they are a minority, and since there are virtually no Kamenyites anywhere else, they constitute a pitiable minority in terms of the country as a whole. But this does not mean that this minority is without power and authority far beyond its actual numbers. It was because of Kamenyite policies that the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), the second largest homophile group in the country, with more than 800 members, its own office building, and a \$50,000 annual budget, did not attend this year's NACHO conference in Kansas City. Fortunately, the last NACHO conference did a good job of ridding itself of most of its Kamenyite debris, with the result that SIR is expected to participate in a more active way at next year's NACHO conference in San Francisco, which SIR will host.

How can such a small group continue to control ERCHO, when there are no more than six Kamenyite activists, and only about another six hangers-on? The answer lies in the peculiar voting system within the ERCHO, through the use and misuse of which these six individuals have been able to control something like 25 of the total of 65 votes cast by the entire eastern regional. And no by-law changes being possible without a two-thirds vote, these 25 votes are more than ample to enable the Kamenyites to keep full control.

Ever since the ERCHO and NACHO were established, it has been axiomatic that all member organizations, big or small, have an equal number of votes, namely, five. Large organizations such as MSNY, with hundreds of members, an established office, a full-time staff on duty throughout the week, and with all the other accoutrements of a legitimate and viable organization, have acquiesced in this essentially unjust arrangement because of the difficulties involved in creating a more equitable one. MSNY also recognizes the overriding necessity for mutual concessions and forbearance in the interest of inter-group cooperation. But when it sees this voting system continually misused and perverted in ways which, while technically legal, were never intended by those who established it, then it is time to call a halt.

MSNY has long known that the ERCHO -- unlike either of its counterparts in the midwest and far west -- provides a safe haven for "paper" organizations, groups so bereft of any reasonable organizational characteristics that they cannot under any legitimate use of the term be considered genuine organizations -- certainly not for conference purposes. Even so, MSNY has been willing to accept them, together with the equal-vote system, as necessary for internal harmony. Hence MSNY has never officially questioned the ERCHO standing of such "organizations" as the Council on Equality for Homosexuals (CEH), whose total membership consists of the same six hard-core Kamenyites who founded it some three years ago. As long as their founders were interested in pursuing the same goals of homosexual uplift common to us all, MSNY welcomed them. But the situation is something else again when these paper organizations are used by the same six unreconstructed Kamenyites composing them as organizational fronts for the purpose of increasing their voting strength as individuals.

It is bad enough that six individuals parading as "organizations" should control something like 15 votes in the ERCHO and NACHO -- as many as the combined votes of SIR, MSNY, and the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles (MCC), which between them have almost 2,000 legitimate -- not "paper" -- members. It is downright scandalous that, by employing a system of "musical chairs" which is perfectly legal under the Kamenyite-imposed ERCHO rules, these same six are usually able to aggregate to themselves another 10 votes, so that there are few occasions when they are unable to control less than 25 of the 65 votes now being cast in the ERCHO -- enough to prevent any change in the by-laws. By belonging to more than one organization and getting themselves elected as delegates of legitimate groups, they are able to control at least 10 votes belonging to these other organizations in addition to the 15 or so they already possess through their own sham groups, and these 10 votes are frequently cast against the known wishes of the constituents they purport to represent. This small, self-perpetuating coterie, which seems to hold membership in half a dozen organizations, flits back and forth as "delegates" of one homophile group after another.

For example, at last year's NACHO conference in Chicago, the foundress and present head of the HAL represented, not her own Philadelphia constituency, but the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW), with authority to cast all five of that society's votes. This ploy enabled the Kamenyite leader, who is also head of MSW, to attend the NACHO conference as the official delegate of the ERCHO -- an office to which his Kamenyite supporters had elected him, and which gave him an extra vote at the NACHO conference. He was thus insured against losing control of the votes of his home organization to what even then was a strong dissident faction opposed to his leadership.

This lady performed her assigned duties with robot-like precision. An official count of her voting at that conference disclosed that, of the more than 100 ballots which were taken, she never once voted in opposition to her boss. She did once skirt the borders of heresy, and that was when her leader voted "yea" and she abstained. This same lady actually attended this year's NACHO conference in Kansas City as the legitimate representative of her own Philadelphia organization, HAL, which though very small, is an authentic organization. But this role as a genuine delegate soon proved uncongenial to her, and within less than three months, she was back in her home city of Philadelphia attending the ERCHO conference as a delegate of the Institute of Social Ethics of Hartford (ISE), entitled to cast 60% of that organization's ballots. As a consequence, so many of the ISE votes were split 3 to 2 that an outside observer unfamiliar with the labyrinthine ways of ERCHO voting would have been forced to conclude that ISE policy was made by schizophrenics.

However, it is the CEH which constitutes the home base for these six Kamenyites. This is their phantom organization par excellence. Even those who created this ghost, and who continue to constitute its sole membership, can give no plausible reason for its existence. On the eve of the ERCHO conference in Philadelphia, the CEH president himself admitted that he considered the group defunct. Apparently he is as surprised as the rest of the homophile movement when the organization demonstrates its phenomenal recuperative powers by surfacing at every ERCHO and NACHO conference for the sole purpose of casting its five votes. Those five votes represent the classic rotten borough of all time; they put to shame even Chicago politics.

Of the six Kamenyite stalwarts comprising the CEH, two New York ladies in particular have been its guardian angels. Their apartment frequently serves as the CEH meeting place. One of them was elected in Philadelphia as the new ERCHO chairman to replace the leader of the Kamenyites. It was not to be expected, however, that either of these two would appear as an actual CEH delegate. They were too busy casting their ballots as representatives of the West Side Discussion Group (WSDG) where, in addition to voting an inflexible Kamenyite line, they also managed by their voting to give an unexpected fillip to the radicals and revolutionaries from the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). The latter had graciously descended upon the meeting through the kind invitation of the proprietor of the Oscar Wilde Bookstore -- the same gentleman who, as head of the Homosexual Youth Movement in Neighborhoods (HYMN) had obligingly insinuated the GLF members into the conference before they had been accredited, by clandestinely furnishing them with fake identification badges bearing the HYMN name. Thus the well-to-do membership of the WSDG, usually at its best when listening to post-prandial speakers at its rather high-priced dinner meetings, awoke on the morrow of the Philadelphia conference to discover that two WSDG "delegates" had voted the radical line.

What about the votes of HAL and CEH? Since the meeting was on its home ground, the HAL votes were cast by a pliant member of its office staff, who did nothing but follow instructions. As for the CEH, its five votes were in the hands of the sixth member of the Kamenyite contingent, a companion and former roommate of the HAL directress. Thus, while the head of HAL was voting as a delegate of ISE, her colleague was casting the five CEH votes for the straight Kameny line with an aplomb that would have warmed the cockles of Mayor Daley's heart.

We need not dwell further on the obvious conflict of interest and self-serving opportunities which these devious practices afford, however legal they may be. Through these tactics these six Kamenyites, working with no more than six or seven followers, are able to control the whole ERCHO against the wishes of a sizeable majority. It is for this reason that the ERCHO has been unable to follow the wholesome lead of the NACHO and repeal its exclusionary by-laws. It should be noted that none of these abuses has any necessary connection with the system of equality of votes for all organizations, which principle MSNY continues to support. An easy way to clear up the mess is for the NACHO to adopt the proposal which is expected to be offered by one of the western delegations at the next annual meeting. This will prohibit any person from serving as an organization's delegate to either NACHO or ERCHO who, within the previous two years, has served as a delegate of a different organization. If the Kamenyite groups are so hard pressed that they have to rob each other for delegates in order to attend conferences, the reader can judge their legitimacy for himself. The NACHO should also insist that the ERCHO follow NACHO's lead and admit individuals and chapters, on pain of losing its position as the official eastern regional division of the NACHO if it refuses.

The admission of heterosexuals to the ERCHO should also make it possible to obtain a chairman for its meetings from outside the conference, who is thus above the warring factions and can be someone with the necessary knowledge of parliamentary procedures. To be sure, the selection of a chairman from amongst those present was justified in the days when the ERCHO was the size of a glorified sewing circle, numbering seven or eight essentially Kamenyite groups with scarcely a dozen persons in attendance. There was then little need for strict adherence to parliamentary forms. Under those circumstances, no one could have properly objected to giving the leader of the Kamenyites, who served as chairman, liberty to engage in floor discussion.

But conditions have changed. The Kamenyites have lost much of their following, though little of their power. In November the ERCHO meeting found itself suddenly transformed from a group of eight organizations into one of thirteen groups, plus two more organizations which sat as observers, and another two which were present without any official standing. More important, the number of persons in attendance jumped from about twelve to more than fifty. The result was that the informality of the old days disappeared, leaving a crying need for adequate parliamentary procedures. Those attending the ERCHO meeting had a right to expect that the Kamenyite leader, as the chairman, would in the interest of equity put to the enlarged assembly the question whether he should continue to enjoy his special dispensation to speak on the floor as chairman, since a majority of the organizations now present had never been privy to this privilege, which destroyed the impartial character of the chair, and permitted it to intervene -- as it did on several occasions -- for partisan purposes. MSNY, for one, will no longer tolerate this objectionable practice. There are licit means by which the person acting as chairman of a meeting can speak to matters which are under discussion on the floor, and it is about time the ERCHO chairman was required to abide by them.

It is not in matters of voting alone that the Kamenyites demonstrate their mettle. The ERCHO conference disclosed an amazing affinity between the Kamenyites and the revolutionists, led by the GLF, which tried to take over the meeting and very nearly succeeded. The Kamenyites, of course, are not radicals or revolutionaries. They are too old and too set in their ways, and they lack the necessary youthful resiliency and volatility to make good radicals. But they do find themselves in agreement with the revolutionaries on a surprising number of issues. When the leader of the GLF contingent (generally known as "Vinegar" or "Coldlocks") menacingly strode up to Mrs. Madolin Cervantes, one of the MSNY delegates and a heterosexual, with fire in his eyes and threats in his voice and gestures, and told her to leave the meeting forthwith because she was a heterosexual -- which information had been obligingly supplied to him by the proprietor of the Oscar Wilde Bookstore -- the leader of the Kamenyites, who was the conference chairman, sat by in utter silence and never once exercised his prerogative as presiding officer either to have the ruffian expelled, or to offer an apology to the lady for the outrage. On the contrary, at a private gathering at the conclusion of the conference, this same chairman had the unparalleled effrontery to add insult to injury by declaring, in Mrs. Cervantes' presence, that there may be heterosexuals who are authorities on homosexuality, but he had never heard of any.

An even more striking instance of the congeniality between the revolutionaries and all of the Kamenyites except the chairman of the ISE came on the question of whether or not to continue the annual 4th of July picketing at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. As the handiwork of their venerated leader almost ten years ago, this project has assumed a sacrosanct status in the Kamenyite Pantheon. Conceded that when it was originally instituted, it was original and daring, but it no

longer serves any useful purpose. Hence, the Kamenyite motion to continue the custom was roundly defeated. The radicals then proposed that a revolutionary demonstration be held in New York on the last Sunday in June to commemorate last year's Stonewall riots. This provided unexpected balm for the Kamenyites, who, smarting from the defeat of their own Independence Hall resolution, rushed to make common cause with the radicals and revolutionaries, seeing in the new proposal a means of salvaging some semblance of their leader's precious brainchild.

So they voted to a man for new Stonewall riots, the implementation of which was placed in the trustworthy hands of HYMN and its leader, whose Oscar Wilde Bookstore already serves as general field headquarters for every revolutionary gay in the New York area. The combined votes of the radicals and the Kamenyites proved irresistible. The appeal to youth inherent in the proposal swept along all the college organizations present, with the result that MSNY found itself a minority of one in opposition to the Stonewall proposal. (MSNY's Boston and Lehigh Valley affiliates -- now respectively the second and third largest homophile groups in the east -- strongly supported MSNY's dissent, but in enforced silence. Our Boston group, the Homophile Union of Boston (HUB) had been denied admittance by the Kamenyites despite a 60% vote in favor of amending the by-laws to permit them to enter. Our Lehigh Valley affiliate (LE HI HO) had the good sense not to court rejection, and did not apply for admission. Both organizations sat silently by as observers.)

A word about radicalism and revolution. MSNY believes in the principle that homosexuals, like all Americans, have a right to be as radical as they wish, so long as their radicalism does not encompass revolution. Thus we believe that radicals should be admitted to ERCHO like anyone else. But the converse of this is that Americans also have the right to be as conservative and reactionary as they wish. In terms of the homophile movement, this means that the fight for homosexual rights cannot be made the exclusive preserve of any single political faction. The movement must be open to everyone, the gay hawk as well as the gay dove, the homosexual Tory as well as the homosexual socialist. Only one thing is demanded -- a fundamental loyalty to the American system of representative government. There is absolutely no place in either the ERCHO or the NACHO for the out-and-out revolutionary, for the individual or group which joins the movement with intent to subvert it and to destroy our democratic institutions. To homosexuals -- of all people -- this elementary proposition should require no restatement.

There is, however, a profound difference between radicals and revolutionaries. Radicalism has always been part of the American scene, and while the MSNY is not a radical organization any more than it is a conservative organization, it includes within its membership many radicals. For this reason MSNY is opposed to the clandestine attempts presently underway by a small group of self-appointed Kamenyites to oust Robert Martin (aka Stephen Donaldson) from his position as chairman of the NACHO credentials committee. This is all part and parcel of the proprietary manner in which the Kamenyites conduct ERCHO affairs, as if both ERCHO and NACHO were their own private domain.

Thankfully the days are gone when the NACHO can be controlled by a small Kamenyite band, but the ERCHO itself is still made to dance to the tune of the Pied Piper from Washington. A few weeks ago, a top secret conference of Kamenyites was convened on Long Island to oust Martin. Since only persons with impeccable Kamenyite credentials were admitted to this rarified conclave, by definition no one from MSNY was eligible. (MSNY is several times larger than all the other homophile or-

ganizations in the east combined, but the Kamenyites claim we are "empire-building" if we dare remind them of this.)

The ostensible reason for attempting to sack Martin is that his election in Kansas City last August by the NACHO executive committee was supposedly defective and did not comply with the by-laws. It is charged that he cast a vote for himself when, presumably, he had no right to do so. Even his right to have attended the executive committee meeting is questioned. The Kamenyite record on matters of parliamentary procedure being what it is, one would think that they, of all groups, would shrink from pointing their fingers at others. However, the real reason for their sudden assiduity in matters procedural is not a new-found sense of procedural regularity, but the fact that Martin is a radical, and there is widespread fear that he may misuse his official position as NACHO Credentials Chairman in concert with his two radical friends who were elected in Philadelphia to represent the ERCHO on the NACHO credentials committee.

MSNY takes the position that, until there exists concrete evidence that Martin has misused his official position or contemplates doing so, any talk of his ouster is not only premature, but quite out of order. MSNY is still old-fashioned enough to believe that everyone -- no matter how radical he may be -- has a right to his opinions, and that until such time as there exists evidence of wrong-doing, any attempt to punish a person is indefensible. People are not convicted for putative misconduct. It should also be noted that, except for the chairman of the ISE, (Martin's predecessor as the NACHO Credentials Chairman) there is no Kamenyite who is such an indefatigable worker as is Robert Martin. The Kamenyites should think twice before they try to expel one of the movement's few able civil servants.

This brings us to the Kamenyite's administration of the ERCHO itself. In truth, even to employ the term "administration" to describe the muddle which passes for the management of ERCHO makes a mockery of the term. Here again, the ERCHO by-laws are part and parcel of the mess. There are, in truth, no actual members of the ERCHO, only organizations accredited to it, with the result that every organization must seek renewed accreditation every year in advance of ERCHO's fall conference. The arm of the conference which is supposed to implement this is the ERCHO credentials committee, which has never been known to meet, and the identity of whose chairman was in open dispute prior to the Philadelphia meeting. Consequently, the November meeting commenced without any official members at all, and thus all those present were confronted with the Alice-in-Wonderland spectacle of who was to accredit whom.

The absence of any permanent members also raises the perennial question as to which organizations should be notified of ERCHO meetings. Since there were more organizations in Philadelphia seeking accreditation for the first time than there were groups which had formerly been accredited, it meant that a majority of those present had never received any official notice of the meeting, and had had to rely on word of mouth rumors to find out where and when to attend. This was of particular importance, since the conference had originally been called on very short notice to meet in October, and had then been shifted to November when one of the Kamenyite organizations, within the charmed circle that had received notice, complained that October was inconvenient. The truth is the Kamenyites play fast and loose with the administration of ERCHO, and carry over into it their inability to manage things in a businesslike manner.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, to learn that the entire first day

of the two-day Philadelphia conference was devoted to the accreditation of members and the discussion of the agenda, with the result that it was not until the second day that any substantive matters were discussed at all. An agenda had been drawn up immediately prior to the opening of the conference by a hastily convened "executive committee", the legality of which was open to serious question since there were, at that time, no accredited members. Without any legal members, there could be no one to sit on any executive committee. But this presented no difficulty to the chairman who, by fiat, declared that the eight formerly-accredited organizations comprised the executive committee, and he refused to entertain an appeal from his decision to the conference itself -- an outrageous violation of parliamentary procedure.

This tactic served the purpose of excluding MSNY from the executive committee, since it had never been previously accredited to the ERCHO as an organization, although one of its sitting delegates had previously been refused accreditation as an individual at an earlier ERCHO conference. The SHL, as a previously-accredited organization, was entitled to sit on the executive committee, but its president chose to disassociate his organization from this Kamenyite rump, and boycotted its proceedings. Thus the Kamenyite "executive committee" consisted of seven lame ducks who represented no one but themselves. It was this committee which confronted the conference with an agenda that allowed one and a half hours at the tail end of the two-day conference for a discussion of the most pressing issues confronting the ERCHO -- changes in its own by-laws -- thus insuring that this item would never be reached for discussion. This was why HUB of Boston, at that time a chapter of MSNY, was denied admission; it would have required a by-law change to have admitted it, and the 60% majority which it received in favor of the proposed change was insufficient.

By contrast, the GLF had no difficulty in being admitted, and immediately began to abuse its newly-won membership in an out-and-out campaign to disrupt the conference. At the time its accreditation was being discussed by the conference, the GLF representatives were asked by MSNY whether they were revolutionaries or were prepared to work within the framework of parliamentary institutions. The GLF leader replied that the question was too insulting to merit a response. At the conclusion of the first day's meeting, the GLF convened a "radical caucus", at which a series of radical resolutions were drafted. The following day, by causing continuous disruptions which threatened to bring all proceedings to a complete halt -- aided by the impotence of the chairman -- they managed to have these radical resolutions placed at the head of the agenda against the wishes of the weary majority.

As a consequence, with one or two exceptions, these radical resolutions took up all but the final hour of the whole second day, and that last hour was devoted to the election of new officers. In short, with the exception of the relatively brief discussion devoted to the Stonewall demonstrations, the conference dealt with virtually no other substantive matters except the GLF resolutions during its entire two days. The objection to these resolutions was not that they were radical, but that their consideration had been foisted upon the conference by questionable parliamentary tactics, and that 80% of them involved matters which were not even remotely pertinent to the homophile movement. (The GLF resolutions included amongst other extraneous subjects, support for the Black Panthers, freedom for the "Chicago Seven", support for the West Coast grape strikers -- no homosexual should eat any grapes -- and condemnation of the supposedly inequitable system of government taxation.) None of the resolutions were adopted as originally presented, and a majority of the conference members, by separate notice to the con-

ference secretary in the weeks after the conference, formally disassociated their groups from those resolutions which were carried. Thus the reader will understand why the entire two days in Philadelphia represented a total waste so far as all those in attendance were concerned, the Kamenyites included.

Two episodes illustrate the disruptive tactics of the GLF. During a discussion of the time for the spring ERCHO meeting -- whether it should be held next April or May -- several of the delegates from the four college organizations indicated their preference for April since May is examination time. The GLF, a high percentage of whose membership consists of academic delinquents, wanted the conference in May on the grounds that the students should be burning the schools down instead of taking exams.

An even better example of GLF tactics was the furor created by their charge of racial discrimination at the meeting. The conference had met at a lesbian bar, the owner of which, a heterosexual, had rented it to the conference for an exceedingly small sum as a kind gesture through the efforts of HAL. The entire second floor of the building, including an ample conference room and some ante-rooms, was made available. Whatever criticism can be made of the Kamenyites' management of the conference, there was certainly no fault to find with the accommodations provided. (In truth, the Kamenyite record with respect to quarters for conferences is beyond reproach.)

This bar is in the center of Philadelphia and like many of today's center-city locations, the neighborhood has changed from white to predominantly black, and this is reflected in the clientele of the bar, which is now almost all black. The GLF came to the conference with four representatives, one of them a black girl. With one exception, she sat mute throughout the entire proceedings, leaving the talking to her two loud and raucous male companions. The single exception came when she rose, apparently on cue, to denounce the officers of the conference for holding the meeting in a "black ghetto."

To the horror of all those present, including the proprietor himself who had remained at the rear of the room throughout the proceedings, she began to dilate on the alleged racial prejudice of the organizers and to berate the owner for his bigotry. She was soon joined in her harangue by her three GLF colleagues, whose staged antics made it quite evident that if the racial "mix" of the bar's clientele had been the exact reverse -- the GLF would have been ready to accuse the management of operating a segregated establishment. So blatant were their diatribes, and so insulting their tone, that it appeared for awhile that the entire conference would be ejected from the premises, and only the tact of the head of HAL prevented this.

No point would be served in adding to this already too lengthy report. It is the hope of MSNY that this will convey some idea of how the ERCHO operates and of the groups which compose it. MSNY is most anxious to see ERCHO develop into a genuine and viable regional conference open to all -- individuals as well as organizations -- and conducting itself in a businesslike and efficient manner. This, it feels, is the best antidote to the revolutionaries, who gained influence only because of the ineptitude of the Kamenyite administrators.

Austin Wade
Madolin Cervantes
MSNY Delegates to ERCHO Conference

cc: All MSNY Board Members
Selected homophile leaders