HOMOSEXUALITY/COVER STORY

Gays on the March

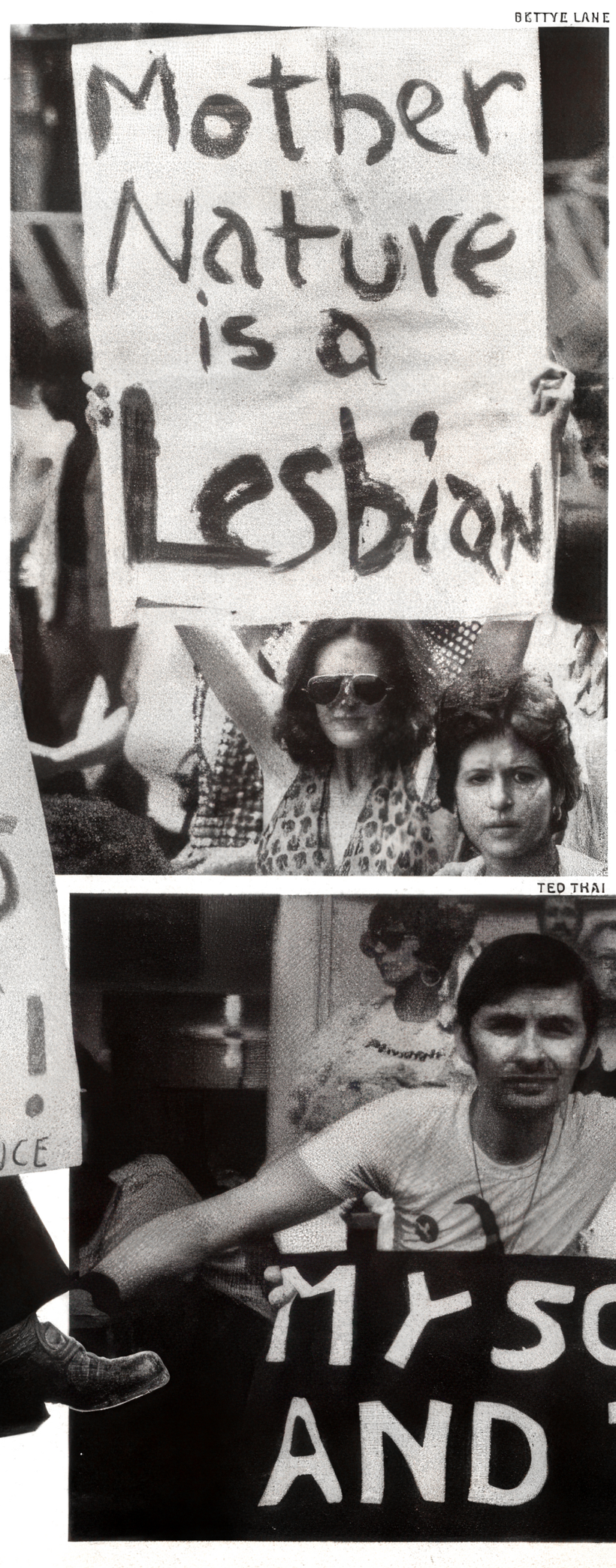
It was not just another Texas-style party. At a lavish ranch outside Austin last spring, some 300 ranchers, bankers, oilmen and politicians drank, ate barbecue, smoked pot and paired off for lovemaking. The only unusual aspect of the weekend-long party was that the guests were homosexuals. In an East Coast version of the Texas party, the cruise ship *Renaissance* sailed out of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for the Caribbean last December carrying some 300 homosexuals, including doctors, lawyers, architects and businessmen.

To most Americans, these and similar recent events are unfamiliar. To those who learn about them, they are jolting evidence of the spread of unabashed homosexuality once thought to be confined to the worlds of theater, dance, fashion, etc. Similarly jolting have been public announcements of their homosexuality by a variety of people who could be anybody's neighbors—a Maryland teacher, a Texas minister, a Minnesota state senator, an Ohio professor, an Air Force sergeant *(see box p. 34)*.

Your husband may be a homosexual, *Redbook* tells its 4.5 million women readers, but your marriage can survive if you make an effort. In her "Dear Abby" column, Abigail Van Buren reassures the distraught parents of a lesbian: "Why do you assume that her sexual preference will necessarily 'ruin' her life?" There are gay* studies classes in 50 colleges, gay dances in churches, gay synagogues, gay Alcoholics Anonymous groups, a lesbian credit union, even a gay Nazi Party and a Jewish lesbian group formed to fight it. There are now more than 800 gay groups in the U.S., most of them pressing for state or local reforms. The *Advocate,* a largely political biweekly tabloid for gays, has a nationwide circulation of 60,000, and the National Gay Task Force has a membership of 2,200.

A generation ago, Sex Researcher Alfred Kinsey reported that in the U.S. between 1% and 2% of the women and 4% of the men were exclusively homosexual, with 13% of all men predominantly homosexual for at least three years of their lives. A conservative estimate of those who are exclusively homosexual today is 5 million. The more political of the new homosexuals like to consider themselves a minority group like the blacks and claim that they number 20 million, most of them, of course, still "in the closet."

Since homosexuals began to organize for political action six years ago, they have achieved a substantial number of victories. Eleven state legislatures have followed Illinois in repealing their anti-sodomy laws. The American Psychiatric Association has stopped listing homosexuality as a psychiatric disorder, and A T & T, several other big corporations and the Civil Service Commission have announced their willingness to hire openly avowed gays. In a special issue on homosexuality, the teachers' journal, *College English,* went so far as to sug-



*The term preferred by most homosexual activists. Since the 15th century, the English word gay, which came from Old French, has repeatedly taken on—and lost—a connotation of immorality or racy living. Example: a gay woman was a 19th century euphemism for a prostitute. Underground usage of the word to mean homosexual may go back to the 1900s (Gertrude Stein seemed to be using it in that sense in a short story, *Miss Furr and Miss Skeene*). The term did not come into common use until the 1950s.

gest editorially that although it may be painful, homosexual teachers should reveal their sexual preferences as a matter of "academic responsibility." If they do not do so, argued the editorial, they will contribute to a "cycle of oppression for our gay students, who, without gay role models or support, will very likely experience self-loathing, ignorance and fear."

But even as homosexuals congratulate themselves on such gains, many other Americans have become alarmed, especially parents. Some are viscerally hostile. Others, more tolerant, want to be fair and avoid injustice and yet cannot approve behavior that they believe harmful to the very fabric of society. They are especially concerned by the new contention that homosexuality is in every way as desirable as heterosexuality.

Coming Out: A Rite of Passage

Militant gays also pose dilemmas for other homosexuals because they urge them to "come out of the closet" in order to strengthen the movement. "Other minorities have everything to gain by demanding their rights," says one anonymous oil company executive. "We have everything to lose." Sometimes the most ardent anti-gays are actually closet homosexuals. They early learn the tricks of controlling facial reactions, feigning interest in the opposite sex, learning to laugh at "fag" jokes to keep their cover.

Many closet homosexuals watched with mixed emotions while young gays for the first time fought back during a violent police raid on a Manhattan gay bar in 1969. "I hoped they wouldn't get hurt, but I thought, if this succeeds I'll have to make choices. I didn't want my own covers pulled," admitted Producer-Activist David Rothenberg, 42. It was not till 1973, after he had joined the board of the National Gay Task Force, that Rothenberg proclaimed himself a homosexual on national television.

Dr. Howard Brown, a professor of medicine at New York University and onetime New York City health commissioner, was urged by gay activists to reveal his homosexuality three years ago. At one point before he did so, all Brown could think of was "What will my secretary say?" To Brown, who died last winter at 50, the final push to come out was the urge to help other homosexuals, "help free the generation that comes after us from the dreadful agony of secrecy, the constant need to hide."

For many, the first tentative step in coming out is going to a gay beach or a gay bar. Said a Princeton student who went to his first gay dance last spring: "I was amazed. I went not knowing what to expect. Nobody watched me, nobody made fun of me, nobody made me feel bad. It was all I needed."

Some teen-agers now simply announce that they are homosexuals while they are still in high school and wonder why the older generation is still in the closet. In Hollywood, a few homosexuals who are too young to drive are even dropped off at gay dances by their parents.

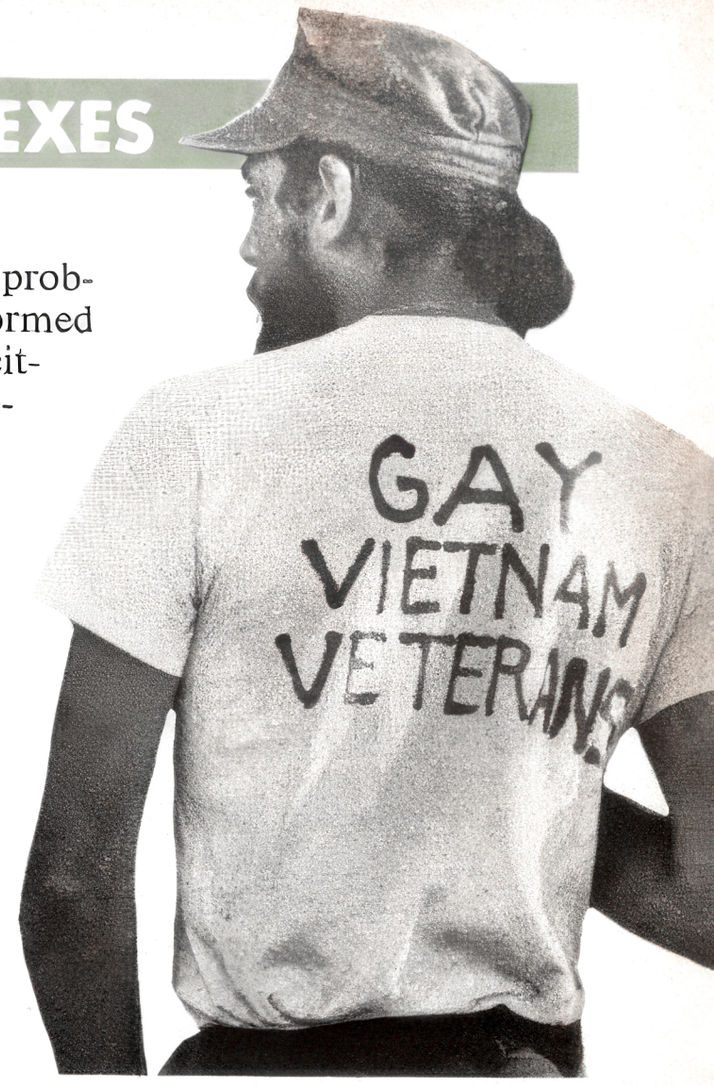
But it is more common for students to tell their high school or college friends without telling their parents. The first response from parents is apt to be "What did I do wrong?" often followed by hostility and bitterness. When Author Merle Miller revealed his homosexuality in the New York *Times* Magazine five years ago, he was disinherited by his mother, though she later relented.

In Laura Z. Hobson's new novel, *Consenting Adult* (Doubleday; $7.95), the mother of a gay teen-ager first sends him to a psychiatrist, who fails to "cure" him. After a cycle of deep shock, self-reproach, bitter arguments and forced reconciliations, she finally comes to accept her son's homosexuality and even sends him a congratulatory telegram when he comes out.

Drawn together by their problems, the parents of gays have formed organizations in a number of cities. Sarah Montgomery, 77, co-leader of New York City's Parents of Gays, took the news calmly when her son Charles told her twelve years ago that he was a homosexual, but she soon learned that a mother's acceptance is not enough. Three years ago, Charles, 46, and his lover John, 48, committed suicide shortly after John's employer found out he was gay and demoted him.

In spite of the risks they run, older homosexuals often come out simply to avoid the finally intolerable strain of living a lie. Explained Minnesota State Senator Allan Spear, 38, after he gave a local newspaper a story about his homosexuality last winter: "I felt I was going to be much more comfortable in a situation where I wasn't going to be hiding what I am, enduring gossip behind my back." His heavily liberal constituency took the news calmly and is expected to re-elect him. For Elaine Noble, 31, the first avowed lesbian to be elected to state office (to the Massachusetts legislature in 1974), coming out was more difficult. It cost her her job as an advertising executive, her female lover, who was afraid to be seen with her, "and at least for a time, a certain portion of my sanity." There were obscene phone calls, dirty words written on her car, slashed tires. People looked on her as "a freak, a tattooed lady." "I wonder, if we knew the cost," she says, "would we still have done it."

Noble finally answers yes, but many others are less certain. "To publicize the fact that you are gay," says a lesbian lawyer in Chicago who has defended gays in civil rights cases, "is something that very few people can handle. All of these younger gays are coming out of the closet, and I'm ready to go back in."



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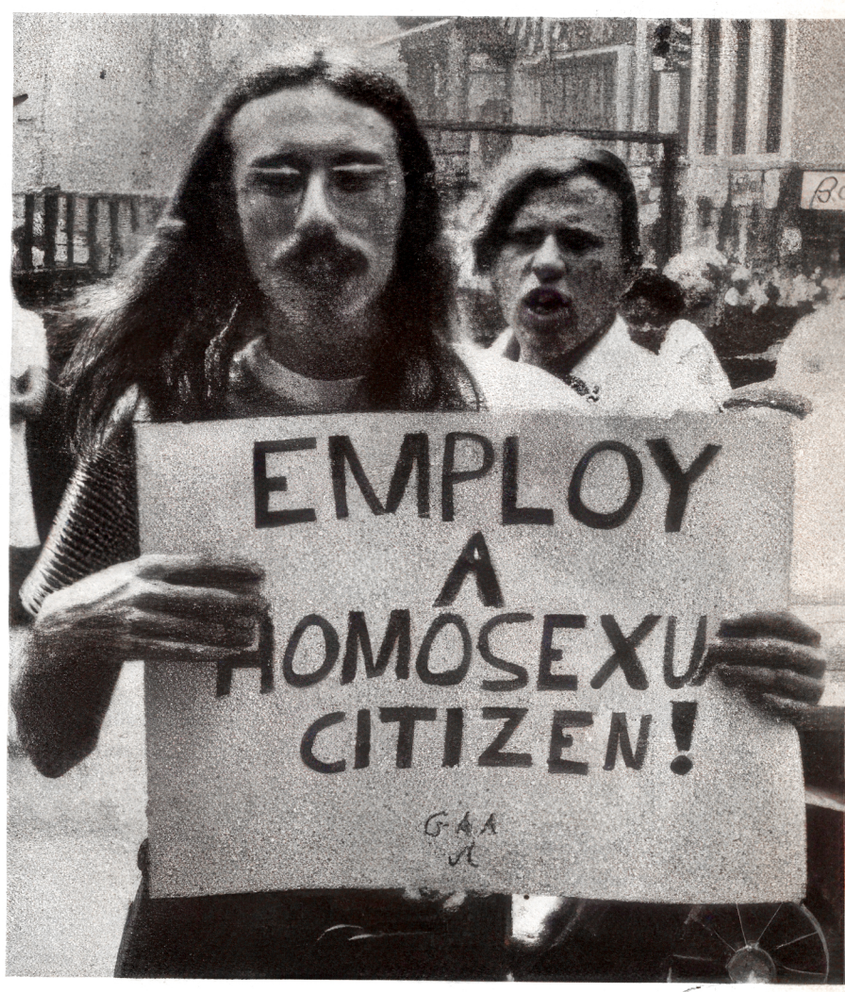


The Gay Culture: Fast and Loose

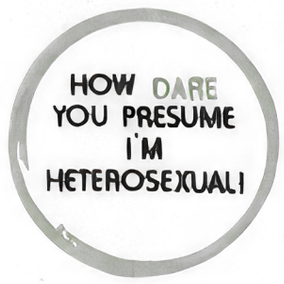
Many homosexuals lead quiet private lives. But for those looking for action, the gay bar is a long-established meeting place. As police harassment has declined, the bars have proliferated. There are now some 4,000 in the country. Once seedy, dark and dangerous, many gay bars are now bright and booming. A few

have developed into mammoth entertainment centers. Studio One in Los Angeles has four bars, a restaurant, game rooms and a nightclub that also attracts ordinary heterosexuals and stars like Burt Reynolds, Raquel Welch and Liza Minnelli. "Gay people like to be awed by their own numbers," says Peter Winokur, manager of Mother's, a bar in Atlanta that is regularly filled to its 1,100 capacity.

The gay bar is usually a sexual marketplace. Though most bars are classless—a college professor may walk out arm in arm with a welder—the trend in big cities is toward variety and segregation. There are bars for writers, artists, blacks, collegians, businessmen, middle-class women, "drag queens," transsexuals, male prostitutes and sadomasochists. At the Eagle, an s. and m. bar on Manhattan's Lower West Side, the uptown "Bloomingdale's crowd" is derided by a tightly packed throng of men in leather and Levi's. They come by subway or taxi rather than motorcycle, but they often wear motorcycle outfits, chains, handcuffs at the hips. Various colored handkerchiefs indicate different exotic sexual specialties, all of which can be quite confusing *(see box page 43)*. "The leather bars are dangerous," said a New York bank vice president who was once handcuffed and branded on the rump by a fellow patron of the Eagle. "But part of the whole thing is the sense of danger, of not knowing what is in store."

Part of it, too, is the search for a masculine image by gay men who have been treated as feminized creatures most of their lives. The masculine emphasis has even affected transvestites, many of whom, prancing in dresses, wear beards, mustaches, tattoos and sometimes Army boots for shock value.

Aside from the blurring of sex roles, perhaps the most obvious aspect of the male gay culture is its promiscuity. Some men have quick, anonymous and furtive sex in the men's rooms of public parks, subway stations or college buildings. Others seek nightly for partners in established pickup areas. In Lincoln, Neb., they cruise near the Governor's mansion; in Arlington, Va., near the Iwo Jima memorial. In the Fens and "the Block," in Boston's Back Bay, homosexuals run the risk of getting badly beaten and even killed by roaming gangs who are out to get them. Most of the sex is free; some is for sale.



Male prostitutes who are teen-age or younger are greatly in demand, particularly by older married men. Robin Lloyd, a Los Angeles writer-producer, has just written a book on the subject: *For Love or Money,* to be published next spring by Vanguard Press. Lloyd estimates that more than 100,000 American boys between the ages of 13 and 16, mostly runaways from working-class or welfare families, are actively engaged in prostitution. Neither the Los Angeles nor the San Francisco police find his figure too high. Recent police raids uncovered teen-age brothels in Los Angeles and New Rochelle, N.Y., and a national guide to the trade, *Where the Boys Are,* has sold 70,000 copies at $5 each.

Some homosexuals also go to "the baths"—homosexual bathhouses, now found in almost all large cities and many small ones. Typically, for $5 to $10, a man is entitled to twelve hours and as much sex as he wants. There are usually small private cubicles as well as a large "orgy room" used for group sex. A customer can go with a partner, pick up a stranger in the orgy

The Sergeant v. The Air Force

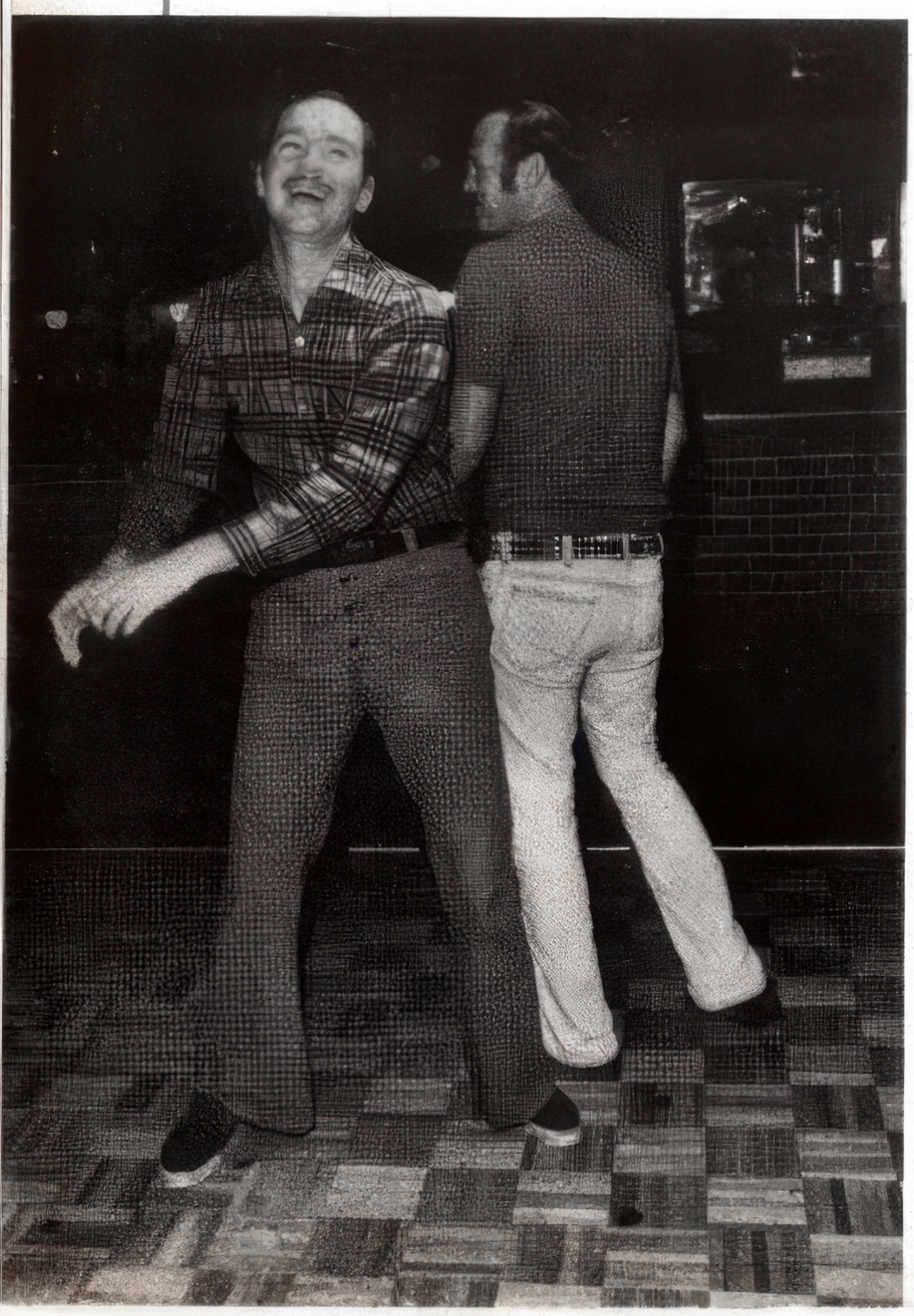
When T/Sgt. Leonard Matlovich handed his coming-out letter to his superior officer, a black captain at Langley Air Force Base, Va., the officer said: "What the hell does this mean?" Replied Matlovich: "It means Brown *v.* the Board of Education."

Matlovich, now 32, was deliberately provoking a discharge from the Air Force in order to challenge the military's long-standing ban on homosexuals (TIME, June 9). Indeed, his lawyers hope the case will reach the Supreme Court and produce a landmark decision on homosexual rights comparable to the court's historic school integration decision of 1954. It is a perfect test case. The tall, red-haired sergeant has an impeccable twelve-year military record, no known psychiatric problems, and a Bronze Star and Purple Heart won on one of his three tours in Viet Nam. A five-man Air Force review board begins hearings Sept. 16 at Langley.

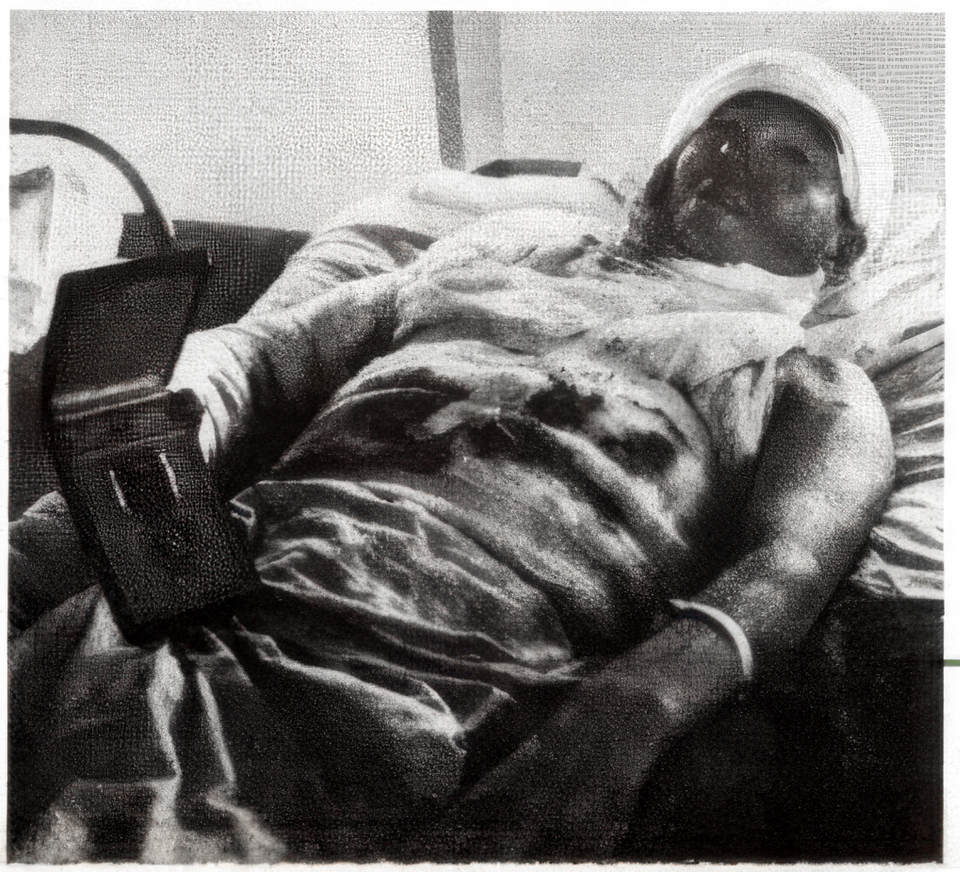
Matlovich is the son of an Air Force sergeant, and was raised at airbases in the U.S. and England. Though he says he knew he was homosexual at the age of twelve, he did not act upon that knowledge till he was 30, when he finally got up the nerve to go to a gay bar in Pensacola, Fla. Though Matlovich feared he would be raped by frenzied homosexuals, the bar turned out to be a civilized place filled with airmen, blue-collar workers and middle-class professional men. He lost his virginity that night to a government civil servant. Says Matlovich: "I had never held another person in my arms, never kissed another person since I was a child except for family."

Though only dimly aware of the gay liberation movement, he ran across the name of Gay Activist Frank Kameny in a military magazine's article on homosexuals. He flew to Washington, met with Kameny and Addlestone, and enthusiastically offered to challenge the military ban on homosexuals. The two men urged him to slow down and think about it. Matlovich did—for nine months—before writing his letter last March.

Since then, Matlovich has become one of the best-known gays in the country. (His parents prefer to think he is more interested in homosexuality as a cause than as a way of life.) Addressing a Gay Pride Week rally in New York in June, he broke down and cried. Says he: "I found myself, little nobody me, standing up in front of tens of thousands of gay people. And just two years ago I thought I was the only gay in the world. It was a mixture of joy and sadness. It was just great pride to be an American, to know I'm oppressed but able to stand up there and say so. They were very beautiful people out there."



MATLOVICH RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS AT DANANG (BELOW) & DANCING AT A GAY BAR (LEFT)



room, or simply go to a cubicle, leave the door ajar, and see who steps in.

The baths also function as clubs that offer relief from the straight world and as homes away from home for travelers. The Club Baths chain has branches in 32 cities. Some baths have live entertainment: the Man's Country bathhouse in Chicago recently featured Sally Rand, and Bette Midler began her career and won her gay following by singing at the Continental Baths in Manhattan. The Continental is currently shunned by the in set of trendmakers, who patronize Everhart's. Most baths have TV rooms and serve food. Says gay Writer Arthur Bell: "It's like going into a womb—you can live there for days if you want to, completely oblivious to the outside world."

THREE WHO CAME OUT: LEGISLATORS ELAINE NOBLE & ALLAN SPEAR; DR. HOWARD BROWN

Private Lives: Looking for Connections

Gays often argue that they are no more promiscuous than heterosexuals would be if opportunities were similar. "It's much easier dealing with men than with women," said one Los Angeles homosexual. "You don't have to play any games or strike any poses. You just sidle up and pop the question." In addition, many of the restraints felt by heterosexuals do not apply to homosexuals. Says New York City College History Professor Martin Duberman, himself a homosexual: "Gay men are freer in terms of time and responsibilities to act on the sexual needs that all human beings share." In *Gay Spirit* (Grove Press; $6.95), a sex manual for homosexuals, David Loomis reminds his readers that they do not have to contend with "pregnancy, diaphragms, daily hat compliments, paying for every damn thing, marriage contracts and divorce settlements, alimony, babies that screech in the night and adultery."

Such brittle views of the gay life, though currently in vogue, are usually unconvincing. In gay bars, emphasis on physical attractiveness is so strong that many men feel debased. Sociologist David Riesman says it is the "cosmetic self," not the real self, that is on the line. In his new book, *The Age of Sensation* (Norton; $9.95), Psychoanalyst Herbert Hendin tells of a homosexual Columbia College student he calls Hal. Hal hoped for a "long relationship with a man" but also feared that any such relationship would prove destructive and painful, so he retreated "to a life of casual contacts that were so meaningless that they could not deeply hurt him."

According to Hendin, homosexuals today live in double jeopardy. Because of its new political stance, "the homosexual world is exerting taboos of its own. Young men are now not only faced with the traditional forces that encourage homosexuals to hate themselves, but also must contend with a strong counterpressure to deny even to themselves whatever conflict, pain, or anguish they feel." Says homosexual Poet Allen Ginsberg: "I think a lot of homosexual conflict comes from internalizing society's distrust of your loves, finally doubting your own loves, and therefore not being able to act on them."

Yet many homosexuals do live together quietly in stable relationships. Some demand church ceremonies. Three hundred "marriages" have been performed by Los Angeles Gay Minister Troy Perry, founder of the gay-oriented Metropolitan Community Church. Perry claims a low "divorce" rate of 15% among his couples.

For a while, marriage-minded homosexuals were trekking to Boulder, Colo., after Assistant District Attorney William Wise ruled that nothing in the state law prohibits gay marriages. "Who's it going to hurt?" he asked. Many heterosexuals saw the ruling as a mockery of marriage, and normally liberal Boulder was in an uproar over six legally sanctioned gay weddings. (One enraged cowboy tried marrying his horse in protest.)

Publicly, at least, lesbianism is far less flamboyant than male homosexuality, with less promiscuity and more stable relationships. But like male homosexuals, lesbians must often be secretive or lose their jobs. Complains a member of the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance: "You can't talk about your 'husband' as ordinary women do. Try going for a whole day without mentioning the family." Adds a New York City lesbian: "I get upset when I go into a man's office and see a picture of his wife. I'd like to be able to put a picture of my lover on my desk."

Politically, young lesbians are facing an identity crisis. They feel torn between the gay liberation movement, which they find male-dominated and sexist, and the feminist movement, which often seems embarrassed by them. The embarrassment was heightened when some of the more radical feminists insisted that lesbianism is the only logical answer to women's oppression and accused heterosexual feminists of collusion with the enemy. As *Village Voice* Columnist Jill Johnston put it in a rare terse statement, "Feminism at heart is a massive complaint. Lesbianism is the solution."

Some women realize that they are lesbians after they are married and have children. If their marriages break up, many give up their children for fear of exposure. Avowed lesbians fight uphill—and usually losing—battles to win custody.

The Law: Inching Toward Equality?

Homosexuals in the U.S. face an array of penalties more severe than in any Western nation outside the Communist bloc. Sodomy between consenting adults is still illegal in 38 states and may result in sentences of up to 21 years and conceivably life; prosecution, however, is very rare. In Georgia, the Sodomy law was recently rewritten to apply to sex between lesbians. Unless cities have ordinances specifically forbidding it, gays can generally be barred or evicted from privately owned housing, without legal recourse. "Until recently, no avowed homosexual dared apply to medical or law schools," says Lawyer Marilyn Haft, co-author of *The Rights of Gay People*, a new American Civil Liberties Union handbook. "Now the political climate is such that it is less likely that a qualified homosexual applicant would be rejected out of hand." Homosexuals are still regarded as insurance

TRANSVESTITE ON LOS ANGELES STREET

risks, and state licensing laws implicitly ban them from certain professions.

The armed services cashier some 2,000 men and women a year for homosexuality, usually with the stigma of a less than honorable discharge. However, under pressure from the gay movement, the military has lately been granting a few honorable discharges when the man's or woman's service record warrants it. The case of Sgt. Leonard Matlovich is the strongest challenge to the armed forces yet made by a homosexual soldier.

Whether gays should be teachers is a volatile issue among parents. Said Jack Johnstone, a Bronx father, during last year's debate over New York City's (defeated) civil rights bill for homosexuals: "I think they're deviants and should be kept apart from children." Winnie and Albert Lefebvre acknowledged that a good many homosexuals are probably already in the school system, but opposed a bill that would officially protect those jobs. "All we're saying is don't give it legal sanction," says Lefebvre. "Just don't condone it."

Yet some recent court decisions have upheld the homosexual's right to teach. In 1969 the California Supreme Court ruled that homosexuality in itself is not a cause for disqualifying a teacher. The District of Columbia and San Francisco school boards, among others, have banned discrimination in the hiring of gay teachers.

The A.C.L.U. reports job discrimination against gays is eroding. Some major corporations—including A T & T, the Bank of America, IBM and NBC—have declared themselves equal-opportunity employers with regard to homosexuals. Honeywell, which publicly refused to hire gays in 1970, lifted the ban seven months before Minneapolis, where its home office is located, passed an antidiscrimination ordinance in 1974. Most significantly, the Federal Civil Service Commission in July reversed its ruling that gays are unfit for public service. About 90% of the nation's 2.6 million federal civilian employees are covered by the new policy, though some agencies such as the FBI, CIA and Federal Reserve Board are not. Security clearances, either by Government or industry, are still not given to gays because of fear of blackmail.

The major goal of gay activists now is a federal law prohibiting discrimination. Democratic Representative Bella Abzug of New York introduced a bill last March to amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act by adding "affectional or sexual preference" to the proscriptions against discriminating because of race, religion or sex. The bill has 23 co-sponsors but is not given any serious chance of passage during the current Congress.

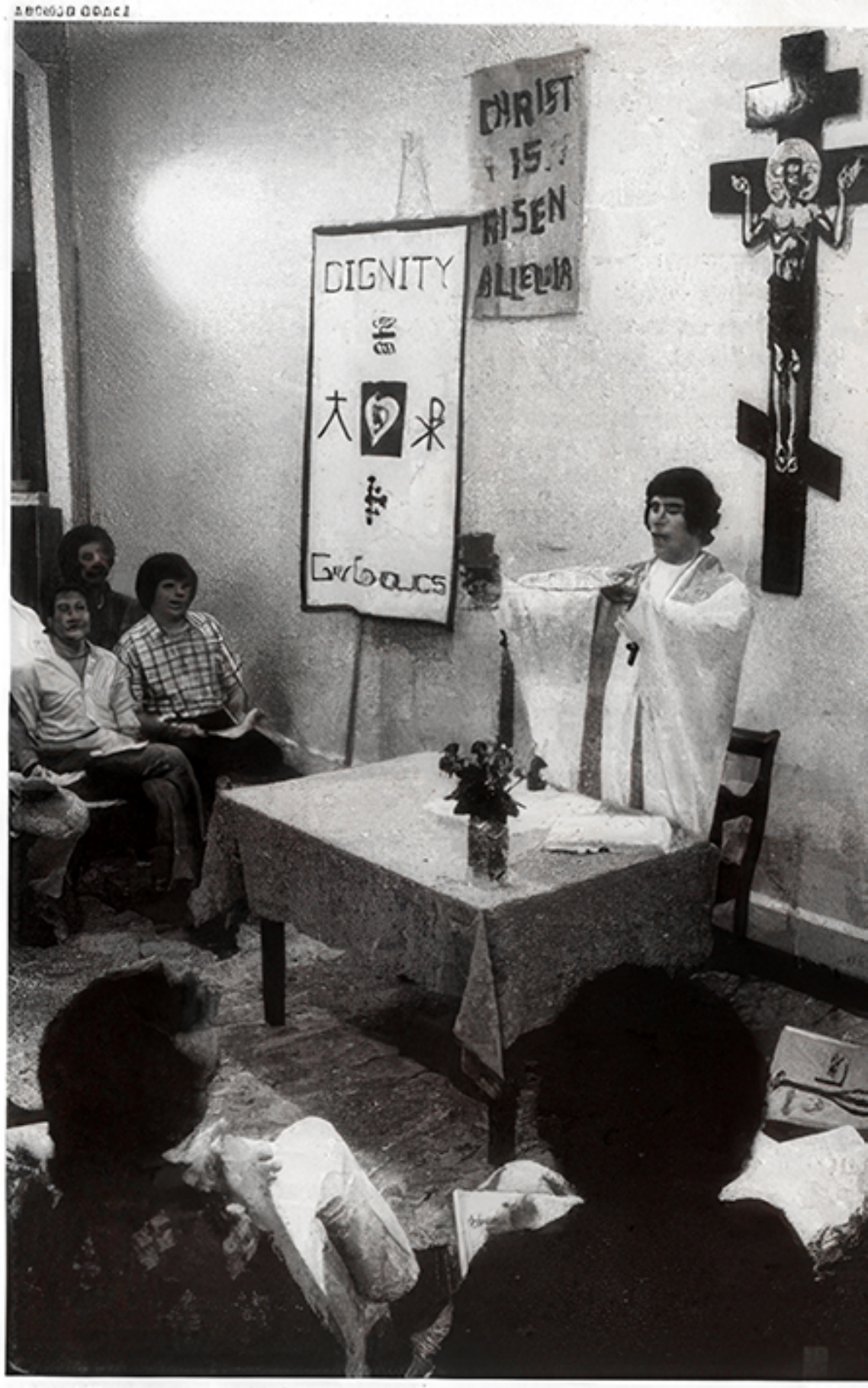
Homosexuals have made much headway by using the model of the black civil rights struggle, from the routine singing of *We Shall Overcome* at rallies to specific complaints such as that of Gay Activist Franklin Kameny protesting the Army's ban on gays: "When you had problems with racism, you didn't throw out the blacks, you threw out the recalcitrant racists."

Some pro-gays even argue that it is harder to be a homosexual than to be black. Wrote Lawyer Walter Barnett in *Sexual Freedom and the Constitution:* "It is easy to stand up for the right of a black as a human being, but hard to side with a 'queer.' No matter how closely the white civil rights enthusiast tries to identify with the plight of the Negro, blackness can never rub off on him. The aura of 'immorality' can."

Though strategically effective, the analogy with blacks surely begs the question of whether homosexuality is as irrelevant and accidental as skin color. The belief that some homosexuality, at least, comes from emotional disturbance has been shaken in recent years, but not laid to rest.

Gays and Psychiatry: An Uneasy Truce

For 23 years homosexuality had been listed as a mental disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's official diagnostic manual, and for six years militant gays have objected to being considered mentally ill. In December 1973, the A.P.A. board of trustees voted to remove the label. "For a mental condition to be considered a psychiatric disorder," the board explained, "it should either regularly cause emotional distress or regularly be associated with generalized impairment of social functioning; homosexuality does not meet those criteria."



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A SERVICE AT BOSTON HEADQUARTERS OF DIGNITY; THE POOL AT MANHATTAN'S CONTINENTAL BATHS; A GAY ACTIVIST COUPLE AT HOME

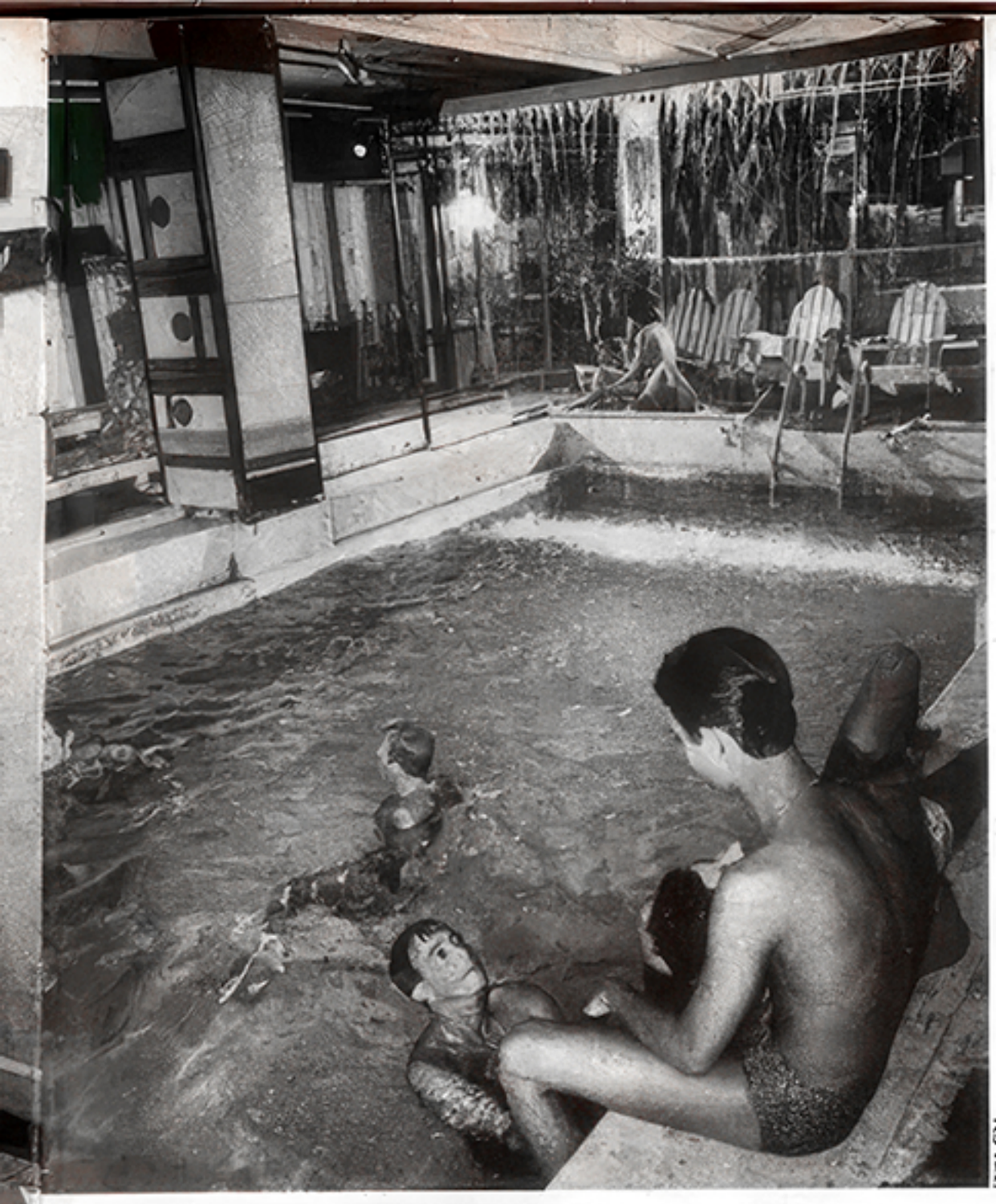
That took care of the happy homosexual. The A.P.A. added, however, that those "who are either bothered by, in conflict with, or wish to change their sexual orientation" could still be diagnosed as ill under a new category called "sexual orientation disturbance." In fact, it was an awkward compromise by a confused and defensive profession. But gay activists treated it as a clear victory. "The substitute category," they announced, "has been created to prevent a few psychiatrists who make careers of changing homosexuals from being drummed out of their profession." The following spring the A.P.A. membership voted 5,854 to 3,810 to endorse the change at least partly in response to the gay argument that the "sick" label gave support to those denying jobs and housing to homosexuals.

The notion that homosexuality can or should be "cured" is a matter of dispute. In the past 20 years, a number of psychoanalysts have reported limited success with patients who wanted to become heterosexual, but many psychiatrists and sex researchers are dubious about the reported changes.

The results of behavioral therapy to change homosexuals are even more controversial. One common method: to expose male gays to electric shocks or nauseating drugs while pictures of nude men are shown.

Such attempts seem to be going out of fashion. The emphasis now is on helping troubled homosexuals to function well as gays. A number of clinics have sprung up for that purpose. Homosexual "marriage" counseling, for example, addresses itself to problems such as which partner should be dominant in the relationship.

Part of the reason that psychiatry seems less and less in-



terested in helping homosexuals go straight is that so few of them want to, and it is no longer widely seen as the enlightened thing to do. Another reason is that the causes of homosexuality are notoriously obscure. The familiar late-Freudian explanations ("Smother mother," weak or hostile father) fit many male homosexuals—but by no means all. Though some argue that they "were born this way," so far, attempts to find a biological or genetic cause of homosexuality have failed.

Religion: Still a Sin

The reigning theory among sex researchers is that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is "learned behavior"—the product of subtle interaction between a child and the significant people around him. Only birds and lower mammals are rigidly programmed to mate with the opposite sex. The higher one goes on the mammalian scale, the more the organism is under the sway of learning rather than inherited factors. But that does not really explain anything either. Scientists do not yet know how an individual creates a heterosexual or homosexual value system.

Thus psychiatry and to a lesser extent the law have both heeded the new gay pleas for tolerance. Society in general remains hostile out of the conviction that its own way of life is mocked or threatened by homosexuality. This view is strongly influenced by Christianity and Judaism, which have traditionally taught that homosexuality is unnatural and its practice sinful. Though all the major churches and branches of Judaism have increasingly come to recognize that the homosexual's dilemma is a matter for pastoral care and understanding, they continue to refuse to ordain avowed homosexuals (with the exception of the United Church of Christ, which has ordained one openly gay minister).

But in many denominations, small groups—usually a coalition of liberals, gays, women and youths—are pressing for full acceptance of gays. Says the Rev. Tom Oddo, national chaplain to Dignity, an organization of Catholic gays and their sympathizers: "Listening to those people and feeling the pain of their lives, you can't help but be concerned. They have been hit with all kinds of guilt that they are condemned by God." Dignity plans to present its views at the November meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. When the United Methodist Church's Council on Youth Ministries announced a drive to persuade next year's general church conference to approve the ordination of homosexual ministers, a conservative caucus warned that the move "will precipitate the most divisive climate since the slavery controversy split American Methodism in 1847." Acknowledging this, the youth council has called instead for a churchwide study on human sexuality. Episcopalians expect a similarly divisive controversy if the gays succeed in bringing the issue before the church's general convention next year.

On civil rights for homosexuals, the churches are split. In the past few years, the National Federation of Priests' Councils, the National Council of Churches, and scattered church jurisdictions have passed various resolutions condemning discrimination in law, employment, housing, etc. But several Roman Catholic bishops have come out against "gay rights" bills in their cities. With the tacit backing of Terence Cardinal Cooke, Catholics played a heavy role last year in defeating a New York City antidiscrimination bill that had been expected to pass. In California, an *ad hoc* Coalition of Concerned Christians recently tried—but failed—to put to a referendum the state's new law legalizing all sexual acts between consenting adults.

The church's opposition to homosexuality stems from five biblical condemnations of homosexual acts.* But by attempting to distinguish between what is divinely inspired and what is an expression of the cultural assumptions of the biblical era, a few theologians are challenging old interpretations of these texts. For example, the mysterious sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, which have been assumed to be sodomy, are now thought by some scholars to be pride and inhospitality to strangers.

In the New Testament, Paul's views on sexuality were colored by his shock at the Greco-Roman world at the time. The homosexuality of Paul's era, says Norman Pittenger of England's Cambridge University Faculty of Divinity, "was often just licentious, not in any way a noble and moral affair as it had been among many of the Greeks of, say, Plato's time." Some argue that today's homosexuals, if not noble, are often truly loving. The British Society of Friends in its book *Toward a Quaker View on Sex* maintains that "it is the nature and quality of a relationship which matters. Homosexual affection can be as selfless as heterosexual affection and therefore

*Among them: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman: it is an abomination" (*Leviticus 18: 22*); "Neither the immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals . . . will inherit the kingdom of God" (*I Corinthians 6: 9-10*).

we cannot see that it is in some way morally worse."

While most scholars manage to resist the notion that Paul might have applauded selfless homosexual relationships, it seems that neither the Old Testament writers nor Paul had any conception that homosexuality might be a permanent psychic condition in an individual. The Dutch Catechism, a product of liberal Roman Catholicism with the imprimatur of Holland's Primate, says that "the very sharp strictures of Scripture ... must be read in their context" as a denunciation of a fashion that was spreading to many who were "quite capable of normal sexual sentiments." The catechism suggests that a homosexual not capable of "normal" sexual sentiments may not fall under the same censure.

The basic Christian case against homosexuality is also founded on the concept of a natural order. Says German Theologian Helmut Thielicke: Homosexuality is in every case not in accord with the order of creation. Many theologians still cite various Scriptures, from *Genesis* to *Ephesians*, as expressing God's wish for men and women to join together sexually. The great Swiss Protestant Theologian Karl Barth wrote of the homosexual: "The command of God shows him irrefutably—in clear contradiction of his own theories—that as a man he can only be genuinely human with a woman, or as a woman, with a man."

Next Stop: How Much Approval?

As a civil rights issue, the argument of homosexual militants is persuasive: no one should be harassed by the law, evicted from his apartment, or prevented from earning a living because of the private sex acts he happens to perform with, as the famous phrase has it, consenting adults. (A case can be made against their employment in the armed forces, in education and perhaps certain other areas.) Moreover, it is one thing to remove legal discrimination against homosexuals. It is another to mandate approval. Homosexuals and their champions in effect admit this and even insist on it. Says Barbara Gittings, a Philadelphia librarian and lesbian: "What the homosexual wants, and here he is neither willing to compromise nor morally required to compromise—is acceptance of homosexuality as a way of life fully on a par with heterosexuality." It is this goal of full acceptance, which no known society past or present has granted to homosexuals, that makes many Americans apprehensive. So much so that it sometimes skews debates about basic American rights.

Many fear the demands that seem to flow logically from the assertion that "gay is good." For instance: the legal right to marry; homosexual instruction in school sex courses; affirmative action or quotas in hiring; and gay love stories to go with heterosexual puppy-love stories in libraries and schools. The Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association has already begun such a campaign.

Another concern is that homosexuality will spread, especially among the young, if social sanctions are removed. No one knows whether this is in fact happening in the U.S. Homosexuals point out that the countries that have relaxed strictures against homosexuals—such as England and Denmark—do not report any upsurge in the number of gays. Yet serious analysts are confused and divided on the question. And if some homosexuality, at least, comes from faulty child rearing, many think it makes less sense to celebrate the results than to try to strengthen the family.

Says Psychoanalyst Herbert Hendin: "'Anything goes' is a legitimate attitude for consenting adults toward each other, but for a culture to declare it as a credo is to miss entirely the stake all of us have in the harmony between the sexes and in the family as the irreplaceable necessity of society. This is a society that is increasingly denying its impotence by calling it tolerance, preaching resignation and naming all this progress."

KEYS DANOLINO LEFT

Crossing Signals

In gay bars these days, the men's costumes, with their coded signals, are so elaborate that even habitués are beginning to get confused. Keys dangling from a belt over the left hip generally signal a desire to be sexually dominant; on the right, a passive disposition. But the designations may change from city to city and bar to bar. An expert on left-right symbolism interviewed for the gay tabloid the *Advocate* last week warned of a further possible misunderstanding. If they are on the right side he said, it may just mean that the wearer is righthanded.

Another contributor reminisced about the good old days when "you could read a guy like a page, top to bottom." Nowadays, wrote Karl Maves, two strangers in a bar may spend more than 20 minutes staring at each other just "to figure out what the hell the other one is supposed to mean." The fellow in cowboy boots and beads, with the blue sequins spelling LOVE on his olive-drab army pants, "must be a sort of butch hippie," a cruiser might speculate. "Or at least non-nellie. Without being anti-nellie of course."

Like most subcultures, the homosexual world has its own language. To cruise is to go out looking for sex. A nellie is an effeminate fellow, and a butch a virile one. Male gays who project or seek hypermasculinity go to leather bars, often to pick up a partner for s. and m. (sadism and masochism) or b. and d. (bondage and discipline)—terms sometimes used among heterosexuals as well. Brown leather refers to either a newcomer to the leather crowd or a bar where patrons are more interested in posturing than in seeking risky sex. Trade refers to a very masculine hustler (prostitute), and rough trade refers to straight men who seek homosexual sex (called rough because of the risk of violence from the straight partner once the sex is over).

Many gay terms for sexual styles and tastes are put-downs. Besides nellies, effeminate gay males are called twinkies, sissies or queens; they do their drinking in vanilla bars, swish joints or fluff parlors. The all-purpose term queen is used in many combinations: a drag queen wears women's clothes, and a chicken queen (or chicken hawk) prefers sex with underage boys.

Among lesbians, a butch, dyke or bull dyke is a mannish woman who seeks a femme—a passive, dependent partner. With the rise of feminist consciousness, the butch-femme pairing seems to be fading, though the terms are still in use. Butch women are sometimes called brothers; effeminate male homosexuals call each other sister. An auntie is a derogatory term for an older male homosexual. Abigail is a nickname for a stuffy middle-aged gay. A front marriage is a legal marriage of convenience. Fag and faggot are acceptable terms among gays if no straights are present.

Gay speech can be fresh and funny but also dirty and self-deprecating. Bruce Rodgers, who compiled more than 12,000 terms for his book *The Queens' Vernacular*, acknowledges that many gay activists regard gay slang as "another link in the chain which holds the homosexual enslaved."