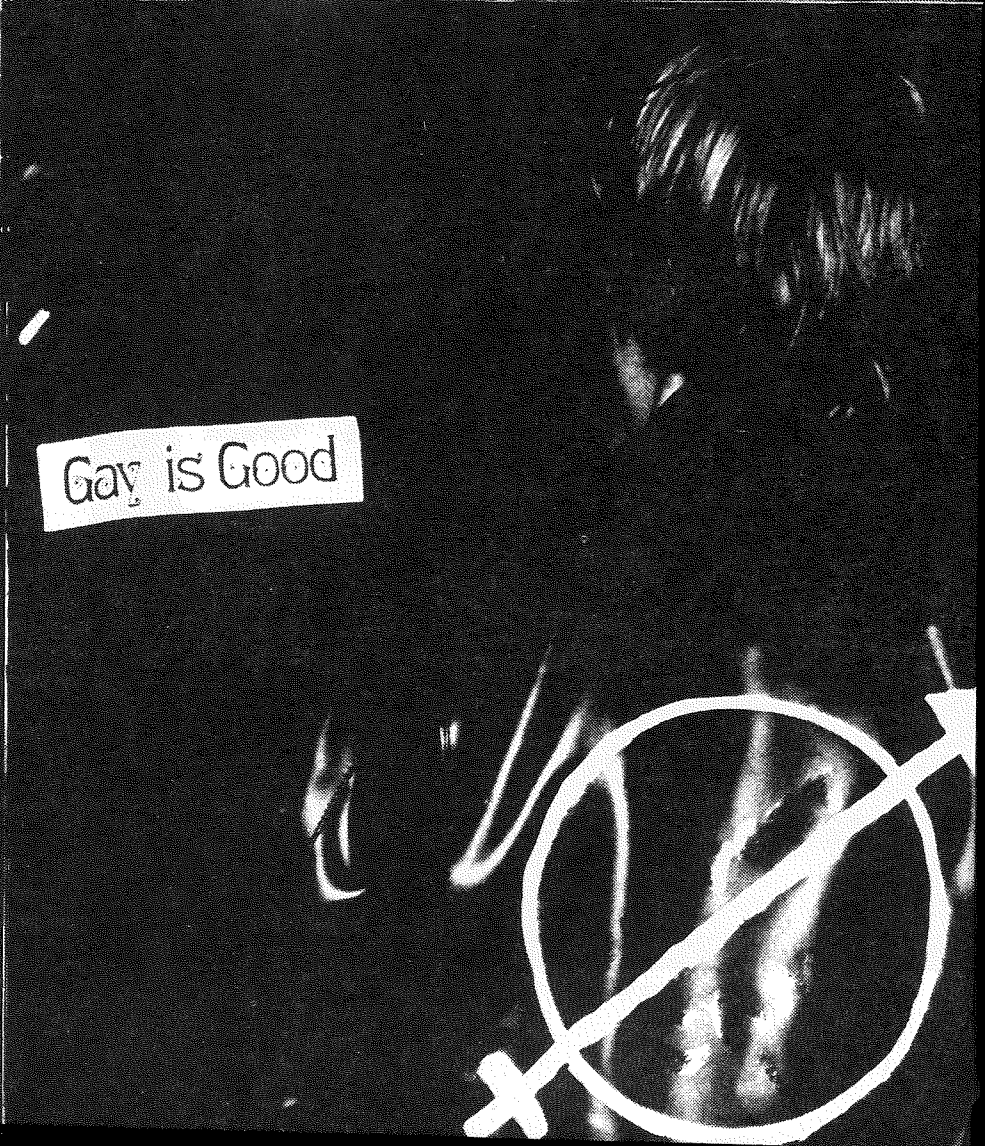
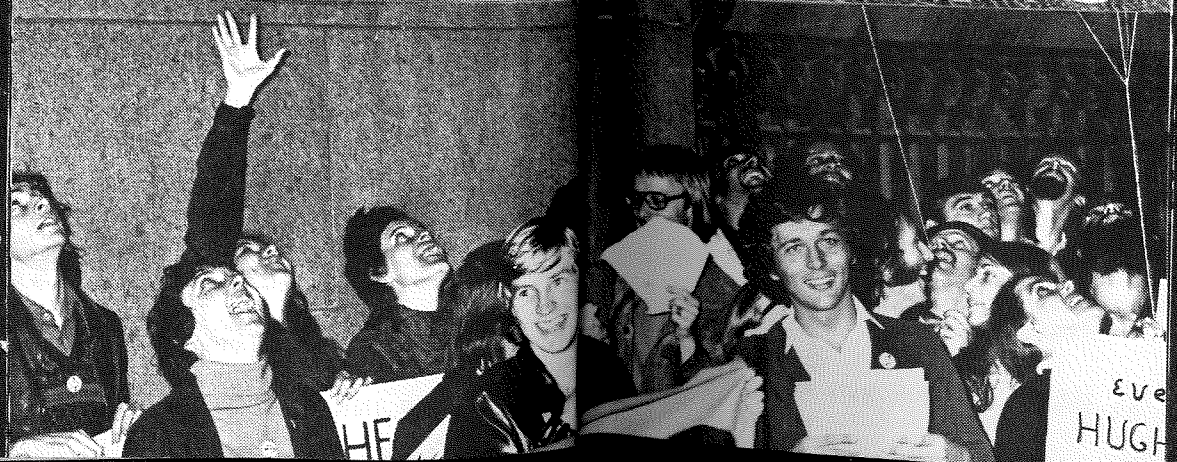
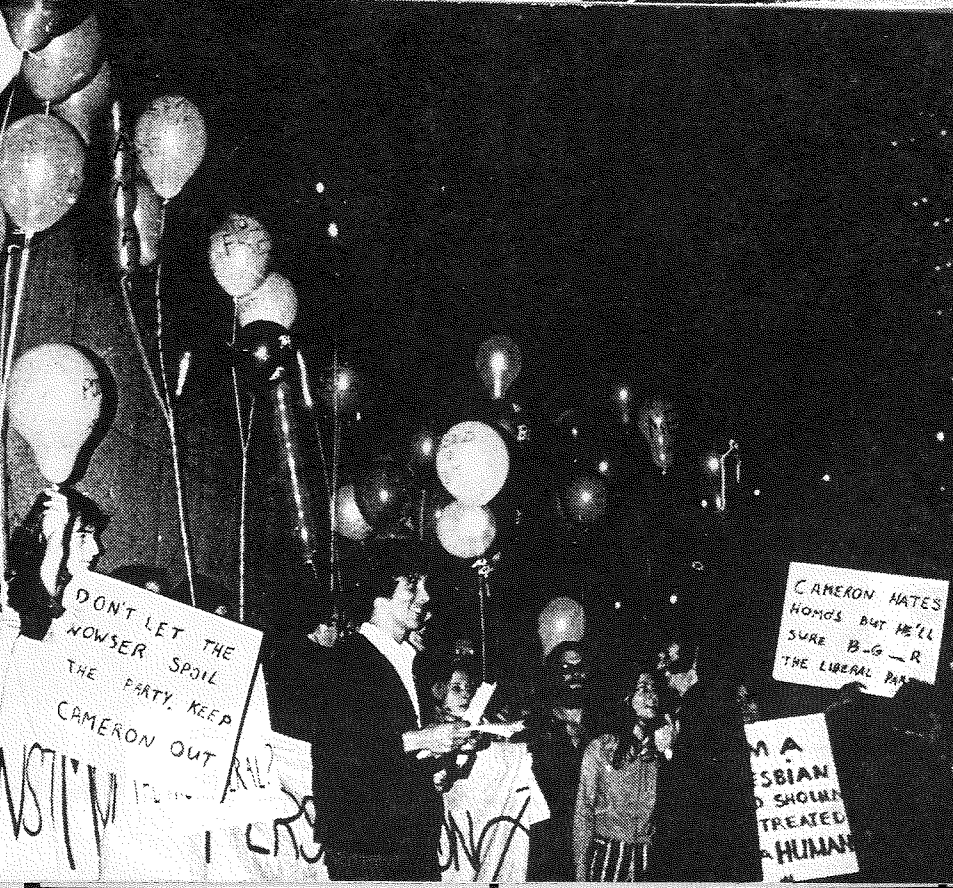
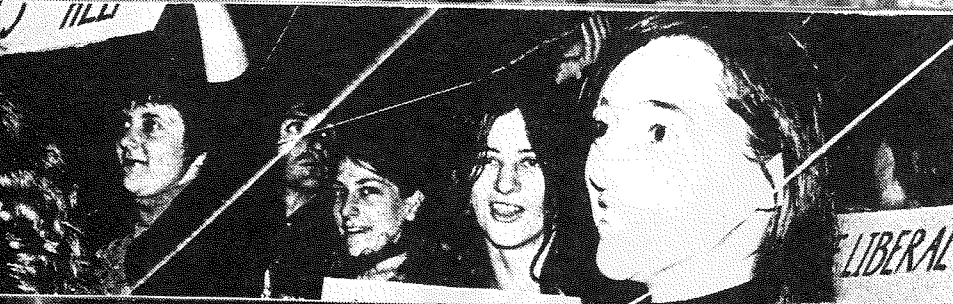
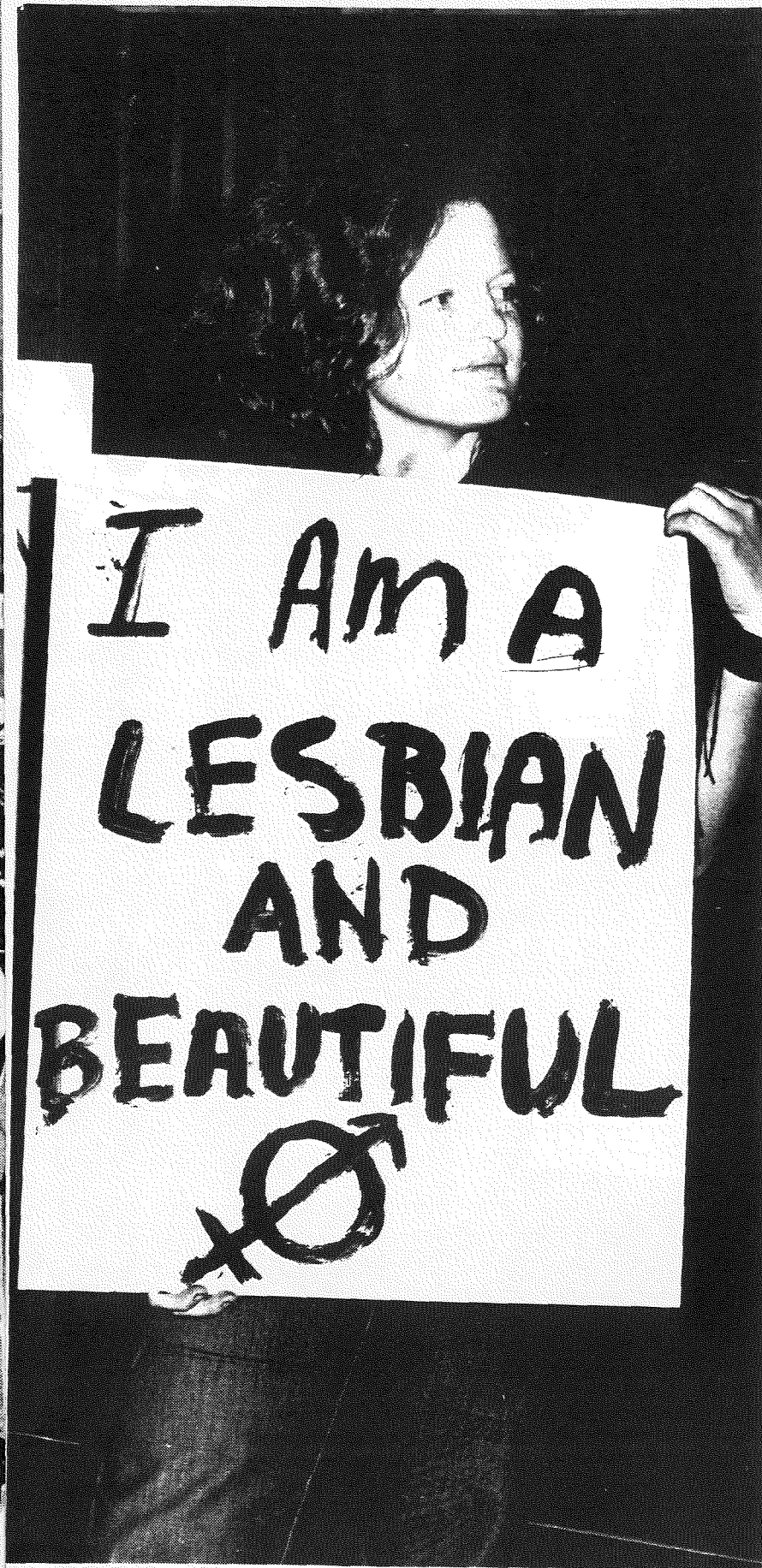


Sydney Scene

**OUR
DEMO**







We had the sign "I'm a Lesbian and I am beautiful", which we brought in with us on the bus. This guy and his girl saw us at the bus-stop and sort of clutched each other. They weren't quite sure what it was all about. On the bus everyone stared at us or pretended not to, and one old lady came up to us and said, "Are you really lesbians?" We said we really were and she said, "Go on, you can't be. The only lesbian I ever met pinched me purse". After a while we sort of got sick of being stared at so we turned the posters the other way.

I felt as if I was on show. When we carried the balloons down George St., and middle-aged matrons stopped to look, I felt I should explain. Then when Gary and Greg held up that banner with "Queens" my first thought was, "They are going to give us a bad name" — then I thought "No, that is what it's all about" and I forced myself to go and stand behind that banner. I know Jill felt the same way about it. She forced herself to go and stand behind the banner. Hell, stuff it all that was OUR problem. If we got freaked out by some queens saying they were queens then we were as badly in need of liberating as the squares.

To the average middle-aged matron that passed by looking at the posters "Love your drag!"

It was a really high-camp demonstration, unlike any other demonstration. There was absolutely no hatred involved. At the apartheid demonstration you thought of racism and Sharpeville, and you could really feel the hatred, but at our demonstration there was no hatred. We didn't hate the squares. It wasn't like the moratorium where there was something you had to hate. There was an incredible feeling of morale; of comradeship; of feeling that you were actually doing something. I wanted to talk to the people that walked passed and explain what we were doing. I've never felt like that at a Moratorium. Demos should be fun — this was! If the Czechs can morally defeat the Russians with jokes then surely we can win a moral victory with humour.

A fun and continuously funny experience was that unique (so far) Look at the pictures. Everyone is smiling. I enjoyed every minute of it, and really enjoyed being part of it. Preparing for the whole to-do was entertaining; a community 'Laugh-in' script-writing affair at Balmain with wit spread, not like caviar as Noel Coward suggests, but like marmalade as he abhors, on balloons and on posters. If you thought air-pollution was American paratroopers over Vietnam, you should have seen the messages on the balloons that were sent skyward a la Lord Mayor of Sydney.

"Would you like a balloon for the children, Madam?" Some of the comments may even have made their way into suburban homes. "What does 'Show me a prick and I'll bang mean, Mummy?" Driving those helium-filled balloons into town in a panel-van won't be forgotten in a hurry. Four queens in the front and balloons leering over into the driving section, foisting their comments into the conversation and completely filling the back with their remarks.

Even when the veteran demonstrators arrived; those women-libs and civil-rights demonstrators of many boisterous protestations, it still remained a fun demonstration, and still we managed to get the message across. The people read our slogans, and laughed, and probably retained the sentiment for a long while. They will probably regard homosexual equal rights with a less furtive glance from now on. It isn't something sinister and ugly that is likely to leap out.

As demonstrations go we certainly did not play by the established rules of long harangues, marches through traffic and deadly-dull seriousness. We got our message heard not with a shout but a laugh. Professional demonstrators would probably say "it wasn't cricket", but on that particular occasion it did not matter. Tom Hughes had left his hat at home, and the Liberal Party was forced to field a liberal candidate.

David Widdup
(or Minnie, if you like).

Brothers and sisters in ways different from society's usual role, eighty of us laid siege to Liberal party headquarters on 6-10-71 with helium filled balloons, banners, song and placards in a demonstration of our opposition to Mr. Cameron as Liberal candidate for the Federal seat of Berowra. Cameron being the arch enemy of homosexual law reform. Mrs. Cameron spoke up for her husband's sexual prowess, when she read a placard saying "Cameron is lousy sex anyway." Such a pity Mrs. McMahon wasn't on hand to speak up for her husband's.

Most of them took our pamphlet and read the placards. A few very old men with closed minds, stayed that way, and refused to read anything, hiding in their own closets. Claustrophobia must be a problem for them.

A member of the force has been captured in a photograph straining earnestly over a copy of Camp Ink, presumably trying to read it. One upright gentleman wanted balloons for his children. He couldn't read their slogans in the night light. Perhaps in the morning his family did.

After a hearty rendering of "Our Song" we let the balloons drift heavenwards, hoping that our cause might receive some intercession from on high.

We left quite a few bewildered but thoughtful Liberals behind us, as we headed up George Street. Fortunately Cameron lost the preselection.

Bob Hayward.

Inside it was brilliant. You could hear "Cameron Out" quite distinctly at the strategic moments. The Liberal Party people were a bit confused but they thought it was a real hoot. They really enjoyed it. It probably went a little way towards making them relate to different people; to screaming queens etc.

At first, as we walked into Ash Street, we were all a bit wary of the media, and then we got used to the cameras, and weren't afraid. As the night wore on people got more confidence. Two members walked hand in hand across Martin Place plaza. One kid ended up by ringing his parents and telling them he was camp.

Riding to town in a van full of helium balloons (That's Camp!) and walking along George Street with an armful at 6 o'clock is even more so. (Even felt self-conscious?). But the passers-by seem to like it. It's all a bit of a giggle!

Well, there they are. (You couldn't miss those placards). I'm handing out balloons as we go down the lane.

We're here! Unfurl the banner! (So this is coming out? it's all so simple, no traumas at all!). Calling across the laneway in nervous comradeship. One of four pigs present decides to display his power: "Keep on the footpath, on the footpath." (Cold disdain here).

The voters start arriving. "Boos" for Cameron, cheers for Hughes. It's all very friendly, they walk up and down reading the placards. Someone even asks for five balloons for his children (They're "Adult Literature Only").

We chant — "In Hughes, Out Cameron" and "2-4-6-8, Gay's just as good as straight." Flashlights are popping. Someone spots a T.V. camera. Greg and Gary are high-kicking behind a bright pink banner with the bold black legend "QUEENS".

Things slowly quieten down; the voters are all inside, and the small groups of spectators have left the upstairs windows. With a final solemn(?) rendition of "God Love Australian Queens" we release the balloons and gradually disband.

I like this coming out! Such a sense of freedom. I shall have to move to a larger closet!

Cass Radley

I saw the Director of the company I work for. My first reaction was to hide behind a poster or balloons, then I thought 'What the heck' and stood there. I don't think he saw me anyway, but I wouldn't have cared if he had.

Selling magazines the next day, and seeing the gay-bar queens, they were all uptight. They didn't want to be associated with anything like street demonstrations. It was as if they wanted the whole thing kept closeted.