



INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

It is ten years since the first Gay Pride Week marches in Australia. In September 1973 hundreds of lesbians and gay men took to the streets to express gay pride and to demand gay liberation.

Since then we have won many victories. We have won law reform in South Australia, the ACT and Victoria and anti-discrimination legislation in NSW. And there is the real prospect of the extension of these gains to other states. We have a degree of social tolerance, and established our own voice through gay media. Most important, perhaps, we have thrown off the burden of self-hate and have established Gay Pride as a reality in many people's lives.

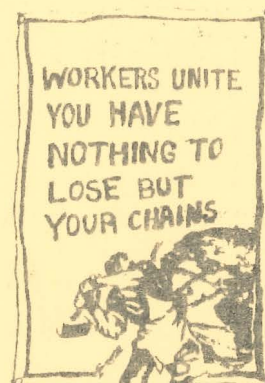
Yet we cannot kid ourselves that we have achieved any decisive shift in power away from our oppressors. The raids on Club 80 and now on The Club in Sydney and the arrests show that our 'liberated zones' are not all that safe. The decline in our support, measured by opinion polls, (which, if the US is any indication, will worsen under the impact of the AIDS hysteria) shows just how much we are still subject to the ebb and flow of forces over which we have no control.

Compared to the witchhunts after the Oscar Wilde trial in Britain in the 1890s, the Nazi concentration camps, the smashing of the US gay rights organisation, Mattachine, at the start of the Cold War, the present attacks on us are moderate. But even so, they do show the limits of gay strength.

Take the example of NSW law reform. Against the determined opposition of the ALP's "Catholic Mafia" all the lobbying, all the demos have not been enough. It has simply not been possible to make it worthwhile to the liberal wing of the party to force the issue. Even the TLC has limited its support for gay rights (as with so many issues) to motions. It has not been prepared to commit either its industrial muscle or its money to the campaign.

We come up against these obstacles because our oppression is deeply rooted in the structures of the society we live in. These structures are oppressive and exploitative to the core. The victims of oppression are not only gays but women, blacks, migrants, old people, the disabled and many others. And the oppression is integrated into an economic system built on the exploitation of the working class.

It would be astonishing if gays, some 10% of the population, could take on and defeat such a system on our own. On the contrary: we can only be liberated when the system is overthrown, and that can only be accomplished by a united movement.



BUT I
LIKE
CHAINS

