

GAY PEOPLE:

HAVE WE COME THIS FAR ONLY TO LEAVE BEHIND SOME OF US?

As you know by now, Washington's gay organizations have begun a series of legal actions, including a weekend picket, against the new Lost and Found on L Street, Southeast. Why? Because of flagrant discrimination against gay blacks and women.

L & F's racist policies were explicitly acknowledged by Bill Parry, representing the Lost and Found management, in an October 15 meeting with Paul Kuntzler of GAA, a 10-year veteran of the Washington gay movement. Parry declared: "This is a Southern city." (A reference to when Washington had legalized segregation twenty years ago.) He said that if possible, the Lost and Found would bar all black people, and clearly indicated that the principal reason for L & F's I.D. was to exclude as many gay blacks as possible.

This is how the Lost and Found game is played: Two pieces of I.D. are required, Parry says. A driver's license and a "passport or a birth certificate." Such conventional identification as a "draft card or a government employee I.D. card are not acceptable." However, generally only black gays are asked for identification--whites are not, except those who actually appear under age.

What are the objectives of the L & F game? Parry intimated that the Lost and Found is only interested in serving the most affluent gay crowd, primarily white suburbia. (In a black ghetto!) Parry rationalizes that "black people are generally poor and, besides, most of our patrons are bigots." In any case, the Lost and Found does not want to cater to those gays, black or white, "who spend only \$2.25 a night in our bar."

Now, to answer two questions: It's true that some token blacks are seen in the Lost and Found. The bar has no choice but to admit those few blacks who are willing to meet L & F's I.D. requirements. It is also true that the I.D.s of many whites are now being checked--as a temporary response to the picket line outside.

However, Washington gay organizations are not interested in momentary pretenses at non-discrimination. We will accept only their uncompromising agreement to end all discrimination against all gay people--a resolution that provides the necessary guarantees.

In regard to women, the Lost and Found's double-standard dress requirement for women will not be tolerated. If men can wear blue jeans, so too can women.

Many of you have said that you think it distressing that homosexuals are fighting one another. We agree. Let's resolve this conflict. We ask the Lost and Found management to begin discussions with us.

We, too, think the Lost and Found is beautiful. We congratulate them. And when they change their oppressive policies, the club will be even more beautiful.

In addition, we are fully cognizant of their substantial investments and the need to make a return and a good one. However, we will not allow them to realize extravagant profits at the expense of the human dignity and freedom of certain gay people.

We who represent you in our struggle to improve the quality of gay life have come belately to the recognition that we are not just the defender of white, male homosexuals, but the representative of all gay people. The Lost and Found management will have to recognize, too, that the year is 1971; those days when Washington was a "Southern city" are gone.

All of us, finally, should understand that either we are all together or none of us is together. As gay people we have advanced too far to now leave behind some of us who are black or female.

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The following Washington gay organizations request that the Lost and Found end their racist, sexist, immoral, and illegal policies and implement the list of our 10 demands necessary to resolve this conflict:

The Mattachine Society of Washington
Evangelical Catholic Community
The Black Caucus
Gay Activists Alliance
Alabama Avenue Collective
Skyline Faggots
The Breadbox
Gay Women's Open House
Student Homophile Assn. of the Univ. of Maryland
Easter Day Collective
Hand-to-Hand Newspaper
1971 Kameny for Congress Campaign Committee
The Women's Film Festival
"Our House" Collective
Gay Liberation Front
Gay Men's Open House
Gay Campus Ministry of the Univ. of Maryland
Applecore Collective
Metropolitan Community Church
(Motion passed last Sunday by Church membership)