

Fighting back against the cooptation of Pride

Binary Dominance

& creating alternate spaces based on resistance and anti-oppression for queer

Violence against Trans People Polyphobia

communities

As Pride Toronto is busy celebrating it's 25th anniversary, contorting our her/histories, and handing out awards to sellouts like Kyle Rae and oppressive companies like Labatt, we need to reflect on the effects of assimilation and cooptation on our communities.

What is Pride & How Did It Start?

Erotophobia

Police Targetting

Racism

How Was Pride Coopted?

Shame

on

Pride

for selling out queers

Criminalization of Sexworkers

Marginalizing Street Youth

What Is Dyke March & How Did It Start?

Why Do We Need A Seperate Dyke March?

as we gain "acceptance"...

Bodyphobia

Who Are We Leaving Behind?

What Struggles Are Being Ignored?

What Voices Are Being Silenced?

Police Brutality

Homelessness

What Identities Are Being Erased?

Pride Toronto is Racist, Classist, Sexist, Homophobic...

in short, it reproduces the forms of oppressions it was originally meant to fight.

Created by Abuzar (©reatve ©ommons 2005) as a project of <http://queerdiversity.com>

Village Raid Stirs Melee

A police raid on the Stone-wall Inn, a tavern frequented by homosexuals at 53 Christopher St., just east of Sheridan Square in Greenwich Village, triggered a near-riot early today.

As persons seized in the raid were driven away by police, hundreds of passersby shouting "Gay Power" and "We Want Freedom" laid siege to the tavern with an improvised battering ram, garbage cans, bottles and beer cans in a protest demonstration.

Police reinforcements were rushed to the tavern to deal

with the disturbances, which continued for more than two hours. By the time calm returned to the area, at least 12 persons had been arrested on charges ranging from assault to disorderly conduct.

Among those arrested was folk singer Dave Van Ronk, 33, of 15 Sheridan Sq., who was charged with felonious assault on a police officer. Van Ronk was not in the tavern, but got into the fight when it spilled out onto the street, police said.

Police said the raid was staged because of unlicensed sale of liquor on the premises.

4 POLICEMEN HURT IN 'VILLAGE' RAID

Melee Near Sheridan Square Follows Action at Bar

Hundreds of young men went on a rampage in Greenwich Village shortly after 3 A.M. yesterday after a force of plainclothes men raided a bar that the police said was well-known for its homosexual clientele. Thirteen persons were arrested and four policemen injured.

The young men threw bricks, bottles, garbage, pennies and a parking meter at the policemen, who had a search warrant authorizing them to investigate reports that liquor was sold illegally at the bar, the Stone-wall Inn, 53 Christopher Street, just off Sheridan Square.

Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine said that a large crowd formed in the square after being evicted from the bar. Police reinforcements were sent to the area to hold off the crowd.

Plainclothes men and detectives confiscated cases of liquor from the bar, which Inspector Pine said was operating without a liquor license.

The police estimated that 200 young men had been expelled from the bar. The crowd grew to close to 400 during the melee, which lasted about 45 minutes, they said.

Arrested in the melee, was Dave Van Ronk, 33 years old, of 15 Sheridan Square, a well-known folk singer. He was accused of having thrown a heavy object at a patrolman and later paroled in his own recognition.

The raid was one of three held on Village bars in the last two weeks, Inspector Pine said.

Charges against the 13 who were arrested ranged from harassment and resisting arrest to disorderly conduct. A patrolman suffered a broken wrist, the police said.

Thronges of young men congregated outside the inn last night, reading aloud condemnations of the police.

A sign on the door said, "This is a private club. Members only." Only soft drinks were being served.

POLICE AGAIN ROUT 'VILLAGE' YOUTHS

Outbreak by 400 Follows Near-Riot Over Raid

Heavy police reinforcements cleared the Sheridan Square area of Greenwich Village again yesterday morning when large crowds of young men, angered by a police raid on an inn frequented by homosexuals, swept through the area.

Tactical Patrol Force units assigned to the East Village poured into the area about 2:15 A.M. after units from the Charles Street station house were unable to control a crowd of about 400 youths, some of whom were throwing bottles and lighting small fires.

Their arms linked, a row of helmeted policemen stretching across the width of the street made several sweeps up and down Christopher Street between the Avenue of the Americas and Seventh Avenue South.

The crowd retreated before them, but many groups fled into the numerous small side streets and re-formed behind the police line. The police were not withdrawn until 4 A.M.

A number of people who did not retreat fast enough were pushed and shoved along, and at least two men were clubbed to the ground.

Stones and bottles were thrown at the police line, and the police twice broke ranks and charged into the crowd.

Three persons were arrested on charges of harassment and disorderly conduct.

The crowd had gathered in the evening across the street from the Stonewall Inn at 53 Christopher Street, where the police staged a raid early Saturday. The police were denounced by last night's crowd for allegedly harassing homosexuals. Graffiti on the boarded-up windows of the inn included: "Support gay power" and "Legalize gay bars." Saturday's raid took place when about 200 people were in the bar. Plainclothes men, with a warrant authorizing a search for illegal sales of alcohol, confiscated cases of liquor and beer.

A melee involving about 400 youths ensued, a partial riot mobilization was ordered by Police Headquarters, and 13 persons were arrested on a number of charges. Four policemen were injured, one suffering a broken wrist. Among those arrested was Dave Van Ronk, a folk singer.

STONEWALL INN

New York Times, 1969 July 3

Hostile Crowd Dispersed Near Sheridan Square

At least four persons were arrested and charged with harassment last night in the Sheridan Square area of Greenwich Village, where the police dispersed a hostile crowd for the third time in the last week.

The confrontations resulted from a police raid last weekend on a local bar, the Stone-

wall Inn, at 53 Christopher Street, which the police said was well known for its homosexual clientele and was allegedly operating without a liquor license.

Last night a chanting crowd of about 500 persons was scattered by members of the Tactical Patrol Force and police of the Charles Street station who were the targets occasionally of bottles and beer cans. A few fires were set in trash baskets along Christopher Street.

New York Post, 1969 June 28

62 June 1969

New York Times, 1969 June 30

co-opt

To neutralize or win over (an independent minority, for example) through assimilation into an established group or culture: *co-opt rebels by giving them positions of authority.*

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Calling all Radical Queers, Trans People, Youth, Sex Workers, Poly People, Anti-Poverty Activists, & Allies:

Sick and tired of the mainstreaming of the "Gay Movement"?
Frustrated at being pushed out of and excluded from queer spaces?
Angry at getting kicked out of a queer community we helped create?

What the fuck? Is everyone buying into gentrification?
Are there no radicals left to fight back in Toronto?

If you're a pissed off and unapologetic hooker, tranny, gender queer, radical, lived/worked on the streets, or an ally, *it's time to fight back!*

Help build another (yes, another, 'cause we've been down this road before) resistance to the battle that's been with us ever since (and even before) the Stonewall riots.

Back in the day of the Stonewall riots, many of us weren't welcome in gay bars and this still holds true today in many of the posh gay spaces that have been created since.

Many of the people who started the Stonewall riots ended up joining and supporting the gay movement, yet they were quickly dropped from the gay agenda. Within a few years, the Gay Activists Alliance had eliminated drag and transvestite concerns from its civil rights agenda and Drag rights were also eliminated from a proposed gay rights bill to make it more acceptable.

It's been decades and little has changed. We are now pushed into the margins and dissed by a movement we helped create. On top of that, we're constantly told to tone down as middle class queers are busy assimilating into mainstream culture and told to be grateful for the few scraps thrown our way.

Meanwhile, trans people, sex workers, homeless/street-involved queers, people of color, and the visibly queer constantly face increasing violence and marginalization with every new mainstream

queer victory. There is no conscience about the lashback we face as a result of these victories, or the effects of the long term systematic exclusion: (past, present, and future) we face as a result of the blind pursuit for mainstream acceptance.

It doesn't matter how many of us are murdered, go missing, or find ourselves excluded, bashed, or beaten. The band plays on like the single minded machine that it was always meant to be.

Pride Toronto is busy celebrating it's 25th anniversary...

but wait, something is wrong...

something got lost in all the circuit parties

the alcohol laden, inaccessible and ageist spaces

The Dyke March is now the last refuge for those of us looking for the politics that began Pride, well, actually any politics at all!

Since when did we become a tourist attraction? Where is our community? Why is it that many queer people choose to go elsewhere on the day of Pride? What happened to the revolution? Since when did "revolution" become an embarrassing word associated with those unwanted angry types?

THIS IS A TIME FOR REFLECTION!!

When the mainstream throw us a few scraps after long years of hard fought struggles, how do we react? As we morph and grow, and become "accepted", who are we leaving behind? What her/history and identities are we erasing? What principles do we compromise?

As it stands, Pride is now a coopted event, and an epitome of what is happening to the rest of the queer community. It is an event that perpetuates homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, social classism, economic classism, polyphobia, bodyphobia, binary-dominance, sex-negativity, erotophobia, ableism, ageism, anti-sexwork sentiment, systemic exclusion... in short, all of those issues that it was meant to address and fight.

People do recognize that through cooptation, queer spaces are being taken away from us. The response has been to start creating alternative spaces like Savour, Gay Shame, Vazaleen, Alternative Pride (Queer By Nature), etc. However, all of these spaces (as important as they are) do not confront the cooptation of existing queer spaces.

Without an active resistance against the cooptation of existing queer spaces, we are perpetually caught in a cycle of having to create alternative spaces to alternative spaces to alternative spaces to alternative spaces...

That's why alongside creating alternative spaces, we need to actively resist against queer spaces (like Pride) being taken away from us through cooptation. Otherwise, we are constantly giving into domination and facilitating ourselves being pushed into the margins. That's regression, not progress.

It's time to question and challenge our "community". It's time to fight back, and it's time to reclaim Pride. Along the same lines, we need to make sure that we become more inclusive with the Dyke March, keep it and develop it as a politicized space, and never ever lose it like we did Pride.

Respecting that resistance is created from a diversity of tactics, the following 3 actions (listed below) are being organized by different community groups for this year's Dyke March and Pride:

Limp Fist:
Resist! Revolt! Celebrate!

Sex Professionals of Canada:
Whores And Dykes Unite!

Queer Diversity:
Renegade Community Fair
& Protest Against The Cooptation of Pride

Resist! Revolt! Celebrate!

Tuesday June 21st, 6:30 – 8:00

Bay & Wellesley (south west corner)

As Pride Toronto holds one more bourgeois gala you weren't invited to and can't afford, limp fist urges you to cum and join us as at a kick-ass D.I.Y. party. We will cum together to reclaim social space from corporate sponsors and incorporated queers. We celebrate queer, trans, homeless, and sex worker struggles and successes over the past year by presenting them with a token of our gratitude. While Pride Toronto throws awards at Kyle Rae and corporate sponsor Labatt, limp fist will have some extra special awards for our favorite gay megalomaniacs and soul-sucking corporations.

Limp fist encourages all those queers in the city who don't want to reward sellouts to cum out. Let's show them that there are other struggles going on that we should be celebrating.

A queer and trans movement towards liberation is about people cumming together, forming community and challenging oppression and ourselves. One person did not found Pride. One corporation should not be honoured for it's exploitation of a target market. Queers do not benefit from Labatt marketing. We are a diverse movement of people who confront oppression in its many forms. Sometimes we win. Sometimes we gather our energy to fight again. Sometimes we dance. Always we continue the struggle.

bring
ghetto blasters
pink and black outfits
party favours
noise makers
anything outrageous

Limp Fist:

<http://tao.ca/~limpfist>

YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE

by anonymous

We see the photos splayed across newspaper pages and magazine spreads on an almost weekly basis: Cute couples in gowns and tuxedos smooching before an authoritarian figure who is almost always white, almost always male. Believe it or not, such photos aren't found only in bridal magazines and the entertainment section of the daily newspaper. These are the images currently representing gay and lesbian culture in our mass media and popular culture.

The struggle for gay and lesbian marriage has been framed as a human rights issue, but popular discourse around this issue has failed to acknowledge the ways in which the movement for gay marriage is a movement toward the co-optation of radical queer culture by hegemonic patriarchal, capitalist and homophobic systems of oppression.

The struggle for marriage rights dismisses and ignores the decades-long struggle of feminist movements to abolish or establish progressive alternatives to the marriage system imposed by governments and churches over previous centuries of gendered exploitation, colonization and oppression. Instead, the debate encourages non-heterosexual partners to identify the legitimacy and "equality" of their relationships as the ability for those partnerships to be "permitted" by the same legal and religious authorities which have historically dominated, exploited and excluded women from participation and decision-making roles.

The focus on marriage also encourages queer partners to actively participate in a system based on consumer culture rituals and selfish gluttony that makes any remotely "traditional" engagement and marriage ceremony a boon to late-capitalist consumerism and exploitation.

Through active engagement in "engagement" and marriage, queer partners sign themselves and their friends and families up for an endless list of expenses ranging from wedding rings made of metal and stones sold to buy weapons and traded by racist colonial-era mining companies from Africa, sweatshop-labour tuxedos and lace, flowers cut by slave-wage labour displaced from traditional lands in war-torn Columbia, and honeymoons in polluting tropical resorts constructed overtop destroyed fishing villages and peasant farms.

Instead of linking the struggles of queer activists with the struggles of other oppressed groups around the world, the battle for marriage rights asserts that non-heterosexual people in the privileged north should have as much of a right to exploit and plunder the Earth for selfish gain as any hetero-imperialist bride and groom.

Instead of actively confronting and opposing the legal and dogmatic tools and loopholes by which governments and churches have excluded and oppressed non-heterosexual people over previous centuries, the movement for marriage rights asks for queer partners to be made an active and consensual participant in those systems of hierarchical exclusion and institutionalized oppression. By focusing the movement for gay and lesbian equality and liberation on the success or failure of that movement to acquire the right for marriage under law and in established religions, the movement drops a snowy white veil over the systemically homophobic and patriarchal institutions from which married couples seek approval and membership.

It's time for the queer movement to reject outdated models such as marriage and to re-focus discourse on the imperative goal of true liberation.

FUCK MARRIAGE - LOVE FREEDOM - UNITE IN STRUGGLE

Whores and Dykes Unite!

Dyke March:

Saturday June 25th, 2pm

Meet us at Church & Hayden

(look for the Sex Pro's of Canada banner)

The Dyke March was created as a response to the cooptation of Pride and the realization that women did not have a viable presence in the streets or in the planning of Pride. It was recognized that Pride tokenized women and that there are issues that need to be addressed in our lives.

Protest marches are a time-honored way to bring issues to light and threaten the status quo. The Dyke March was created as an alternative to the celebrations put on by pride parades (which had originated as protest marches themselves).

Technically, Dyke March is a part of Pride Toronto, so there has been immense pressure from Pride Toronto to assimilate this event. Many Dyke March Coordinators have fought Pride Toronto on the *_inside_* to keep this event alive, politicized, corporate-free, progressive, and to increase inclusion. At one meeting, half of this group quit because of the decision to welcome transwomen in the march. Those who left were outspokenly biphobic and viewed bisexual women and transpeople as portals through which straight men would steal lesbian space.

The first Dyke March was held in Washington D.C., in April of 1993. There is no founder because it was a spur of the moment protest.

Pride began with the stonewall riots by street youth, sex workers, drag queens, trans people, people of color, amongst others. This history has since been lost. Identities have been erased and our issues have been silenced.

Today, hundreds of sex workers remain missing and/or have been murdered, most of whom are people of color. Violence and the reported murder rate of trans people is at an all time high. Yet, these alarming issues remain invisible in our communities.

Currently, prostitution is not illegal in Canada. However, laws around activities such as communicating in public effectively criminalize sex work. These laws have had the effect of creating unsafe working conditions for sex workers. The sections in the Criminal Code of Canada affecting sex workers are:

- Procuring (section 212), i.e. 'Living on the avails'
This law makes it illegal for anyone to be habitually in our company or live wholly or partly on our earnings. It is being used to target people we work with, associate with, and our friends and families.
- Bawdy House Law (section 210)
This law makes it illegal for us to start our own businesses and/or work out of our own homes.
- Communicating Law (section 213)
This law makes it illegal for us to communicate with our clients.

These laws serve to demonize, endanger and divorce us from the rest of society. This year, Sex Professionals of Canada will be marching in the Dyke march. We will be:

- Celebrating the contributions of sex workers, street youth, street workers, trans people, and people of color in Pride and Dyke March.
- Raising awareness of the hundreds of missing and murdered sex workers in Canada, many of whom are native and people of color.
- Protesting the criminalization of sex work by the Federal government and demanding the decriminalization (but not legalization) of sex work.
- Supporting the Dyke March coordinators past and present, who have worked without recognition to keep Dyke March politicized and increase inclusion.

Queer Diversity: Dissenting Against The Cooptation of Pride

Sun June 26th

Last year, Queer Diversity brought together 14 community groups and individuals representing social justice and anti-oppression topics at Pride. We were clearly organizing to infect the mainstream Pride Parade event with an Anti-Corporate Pride. Groups and issues ranged along the lines of anti-poverty activism, immigration, animal rights, anti-war, anti-occupation, polyamory, people of color, trans, and sex worker issues.

We were clearly too political for Pride, as they shut us out. They turned down applications for all 6 of our community tables just 2 days before Pride. We marched to protest and raise awareness in the Dyke March and at the Pride Parade.

This year, we are not bothering to register or ask permission to do anything. Pride Toronto has no legitimacy in defining the politics of our communities. In addition, it has been a time of learning for us. We refuse to participate in Pride in a manner complicit with their oppression. We refuse to be tokenized by Pride and dissent against it's marginalization of the queer community.

Renegade Free Community Fair:

Sun June 26th, 1pm

Church and Wellesley Area

This year, we will set up one or more unregistered free tables at the Community Fair at Pride. We will place literature and material about community and activist groups that are systematically excluded from Pride. If Pride Toronto wants to remove us by force, well, we'll see what happens.

We are asking community/activist/social justice groups to bring us your pamphlets, flyers, artwork, literature and other print material. We will place them on the free table at Pride. Email us at info@queerdiversity.com to participate.

Protest Against The Cooptation of Pride:

13

Sun June 26th, 1pm

Renegade Free Community Fair
around the Church + Wellesley area

Meet us at the Renegade Free Community Fair and we will march in protest against the cooptation of Pride together. Just look for the only banners/placards dissenting against Pride at the community fair on Wellesley between Yonge and Church.

In addition, we are calling on all community and activist groups participating in Pride and the Pride Parade to dissent in some form or other against the cooptation of our spaces. Create banners and placards that confront the cooptation of Pride and join various groups in the Parade this year.

The Stonewall Riots: A Militant Era of The Gay Movement

The Stonewall riots were by no means the beginning of the gay movement. This has been an ongoing struggle which has taken on different forms over a period of centuries. What the Stonewall riots did was to usher in a new era of



Police raid on the Annual Exotic Carnival and Bar at the Mattachine Center, Halloween, 1962. (AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS)

militant struggle in the gay movement. In the following few years, it was the radicals who led the way. It was a turning point from "we want to be accepted" to "we are not going to take it anymore". Prior to that summer of this violent backlash, there was little public expression of the lives of queer people.

Since then, we have all seen the astonishing flowering of gay culture that has changed the lives of many queer people in North America and other places in the world.

There is a dark side to our history and our present communities that we are prone to ignore. Many of the people who started the Stonewall riots (i.e. drag queens, trans people, homeless youth, people of color, sex workers) and their identities are being marginalized and erased from our communities. Transvestites were expelled from the Gay Activists Alliance and drag and transvestite concerns were eliminated from it's civil rights agenda shortly after the Stonewall riots. Drag rights were also dropped from a proposed New York City gay rights bill to make it more acceptable. Even at the time of the Stonewall riots, many of the marginalized queer populations felt at odds with the mainly middle-class, mostly white gay and lesbian

activists. Sadly, the situation hasn't changed much since. This trend is being reflected even today, and even in Canada. Sylvia once told Michael Musto in a 1995 interview, "When things started getting more mainstream, it was like, 'We don't need you no more.' ". As a community, it is our responsibility to not let this internal oppression continue.



ALTERNATE PRIDE GUIDE

Limp Fist: Resist! Revolt! Celebrate!

A DIY Party to reclaim social space from corporate sponsors and incorporated queers. Celebration of queer + trans + homeless + sex worker struggles & successes over the past year.

Tue June 21, 2005, 6:30pm - 8pm

Bay & Wellesley (south west corner)

Savour: the flavour, 7th annual Pride

classic + deep house, hip-hop, electro, old skool, R&B, dirty disco, new wave, punk funk, \$5, licensed, 19+

Sat June 25, 2005, 11pm - 3am

Andy Poolhall

489 College (one block West of Bathurst, at Markham)

Sex Professionals of Canada: Whores and Dykes Unite!

Protest the criminalization of sex work and demand the decriminalization (but not legalization) of sex work + support Dyke March coordinators past and present who have worked without recognition to keep Dyke March politicized and increase inclusion.

Sat June 25, 2005, 2pm

Meet at Church and Hayden (one block South of Bloor)

Queer Diversity: Renegade Community Fair & Protest The Cooptation of Pride

We will set up a free community fair table without asking Pride Toronto, so bring your political propaganda for this Renegade Community Fair. Also, march with us in the Pride Parade and protest the corporate takeover of Pride. Email us to find out where to meet or visit the website on Saturday June 25th.

Sun June 26, 2005, 1pm

Location: email info@queerdiversity.com or visit queerdiversity.com

This zine is supported by (and partially funded by) the Women's Centre at U of T <http://uoftwomenscentre.com> and Queer Diversity <http://queerdiversity.com>

Some photocopies were "borrowed" from social service/educational/corporate institutions by very naughty and corrupt queer people.



Sylvia Rivera, 17-year-old homeless trans sex worker who helped lead the resistance to the police raid at the Stonewall Inn.

Pride began with the Stonewall riots:

When the Stonewall Inn was invaded on June 28, 1969, homeless/street-involved youth, gender queers, trans people, people of color, and sex workers fought back against the well armed and brutal police force of New York City. Back then, as it is now, they were not welcome in some of the city's tonier gay bars and the Stonewall Inn was one of the very few spaces they could call their own.

This violent confrontation with the police set a new militant tone for the gay rights movement, but many of the people involved (like Sylvia Rivera) continue to be shunned by a gay movement they helped give birth.

Not only has Pride become coopted by corporations, but voices of dissent against cooptation and alternate queer expressions are being silenced. In the process of gaining acceptance, the identities of those who started Pride are being erased.

In hindsight, it seems fate is not without a sense of irony. Today, it is "more acceptable" queer people who sic cops on "less acceptable" queer people at Pride. Not

The arrests of radical queers supported by mainstream queers is best noted in San Francisco. Don't get too comfy, Toronto isn't far behind. Pride Toronto has threatened community groups with police action for simply handing out flyers. The first person to be arrested for nudity was a woman who marched naked in the Pride Parade. The Toronto Police were hesitant to arrest her and were willing to overlook the incident, however it was a Pride Toronto coordinator who insisted on having her arrested.



Non-violent Gay Shame activists arrested at San Francisco Pride (2003), with the support of Pride organizers.