



"GAY FREEDOM 1970"

504 QQ
\$2.95



A Commemorative Pictorial Essay Of
The First Anniversary Of The Gay Liberation Movement
By The Editors Of QQ Magazine

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INTRODUCTION



Movie still from "Hollywood Hustler," courtesy EROS I Theatre.

GAY power is at best a nebulous concept. To some it signifies the coming of a new day, when homosexuals will no longer bear distinctive labels or be signaled out as being significantly different from society at large—when homosexuality will be just one more sexual expression. To others gay power means liberation within an establishment framework, license to live freely as a society within a society, with its own rules and on its own terms. Still others are not as concerned with social acceptance as they are with sexual freedom; this group is primarily interested in the elimination of laws forbidding sex between "consenting adults of the same sex."

The means of achieving these goals vary widely, ranging from passive dialogue in intellectual circles to Marxism to militant violence in the streets. Collectively, individuals and groups are known as the Gay Liberation Movement—and it all started in New York late one Friday evening in June, 1969.

The Christopher Street Uprisings were sparked by a raid on a gay bar, the Stonewall, in New York City, when homosexuals united to openly protest the adverse treatment afforded them; the Stonewall incident was the "last straw"—the last time homosexuals would tolerate unfair discrimination and oppression as a consequence of their sexual proclivities. The raid and reaction which followed gave rise to the Gay Liberation Movement in America, and its effects are being felt in big cities and small towns not only in this country but everywhere in the world.

June 28, 1970 marked the First Anniversary of the Christopher Street Uprisings. For the first time in history homosexuals

gathered to assert their rights and affirm their life-style. The march in New York, which commenced near the old Stonewall, and ended in Central Park nearly three miles away, where a "gay in" took place, was a sight to behold—thousands of homosexual men and women representing organizations and themselves marching up the Avenue of the Americas in open proclamation. Similar demonstrations were held elsewhere, notably in Los Angeles, on this glorious day in homosexual history, a day which might prove a turning point in our thwarted quest for human dignity.

The marchers walked briskly, standing tall and chanting such slogans as: "Gay is good!" "Say it loud: Gay and proud!" "Out of the closets and into the streets!" "Gay power!" "Gay, gay all the way!" Straights on the sidelines reacted differently, expressing awe and amazement, disgust, and admiration. Some comments overheard: A woman to her husband—"Maybe I'll see my hairdresser." A little girl to her mother—"Mommy, what does 'gay' mean?" A burly man—"My God! It's a fag parade!" A woman to her husband, as she darted into a subway entrance—"I can't stand it!" A guy to his girlfriend—"Let's buy a couple of hotdogs and wave them at 'em." A woman to her friend—"Look at 'em, even girls." A woman laughing—"What next?"

But those marching reinforced their gay pride. Tired but exuberant, the marchers entered Central Park, where everyone collapsed on the soft grass in Sheep Meadow, feeling wonderfully free, filled with love and peace under the warm afternoon sun. Dazed by the realization of what had just happened, it took several minutes before everyone was relaxed enough to gather in small groups to talk happily, and laugh, and dance joyously, and love each other not sexually but spiritually. Perhaps for the first time homosexuals felt a brotherhood not unlike that experienced by Early Christians.

The march in New York marked the end of Gay Pride Week, which was celebrated in various ways by homophile groups that held meetings and social functions. The event was organized by the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee, which—in spite of a low budget—managed to secure enough advertising to make the happening known to the homophile community. Already the Committee is planning the 1971 march.

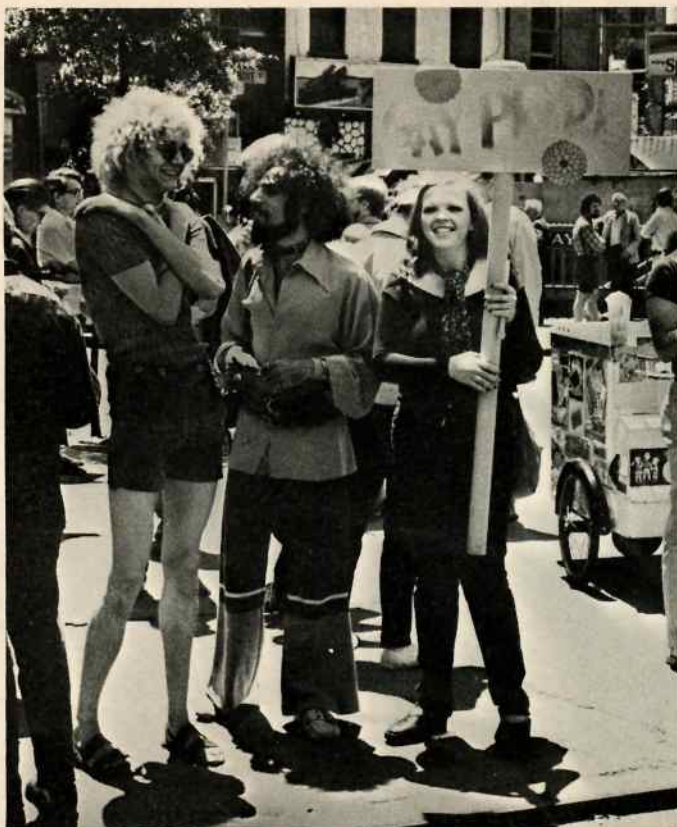
The purpose of this 1970 souvenir pictorial is threefold: For those who participated we hope it will serve as a permanent reminder of the greatest day in our history. For those who did not we hope it will ignite a feeling of gay pride. For those who could not make it this year, we hope it will encourage you to join us in 1971—and perhaps for the first time in your life come to know the true meaning of brotherhood.



Where it all started—the Stonewall, now vacant and only a memory.



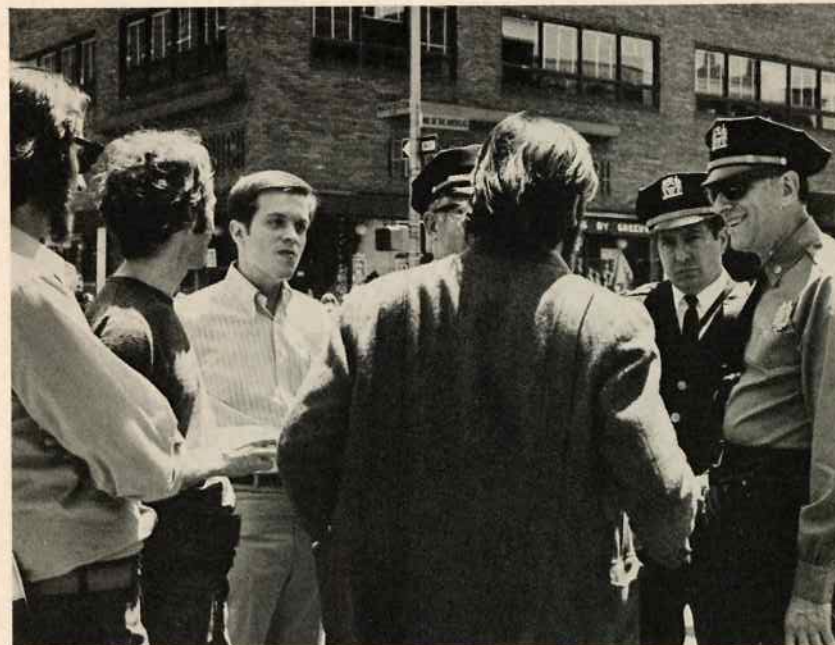
Everyone gathered at Sheridan Square hours before the march, and then moved into Washington Place, which was closed to traffic. The crowd swelled until there were thousands.





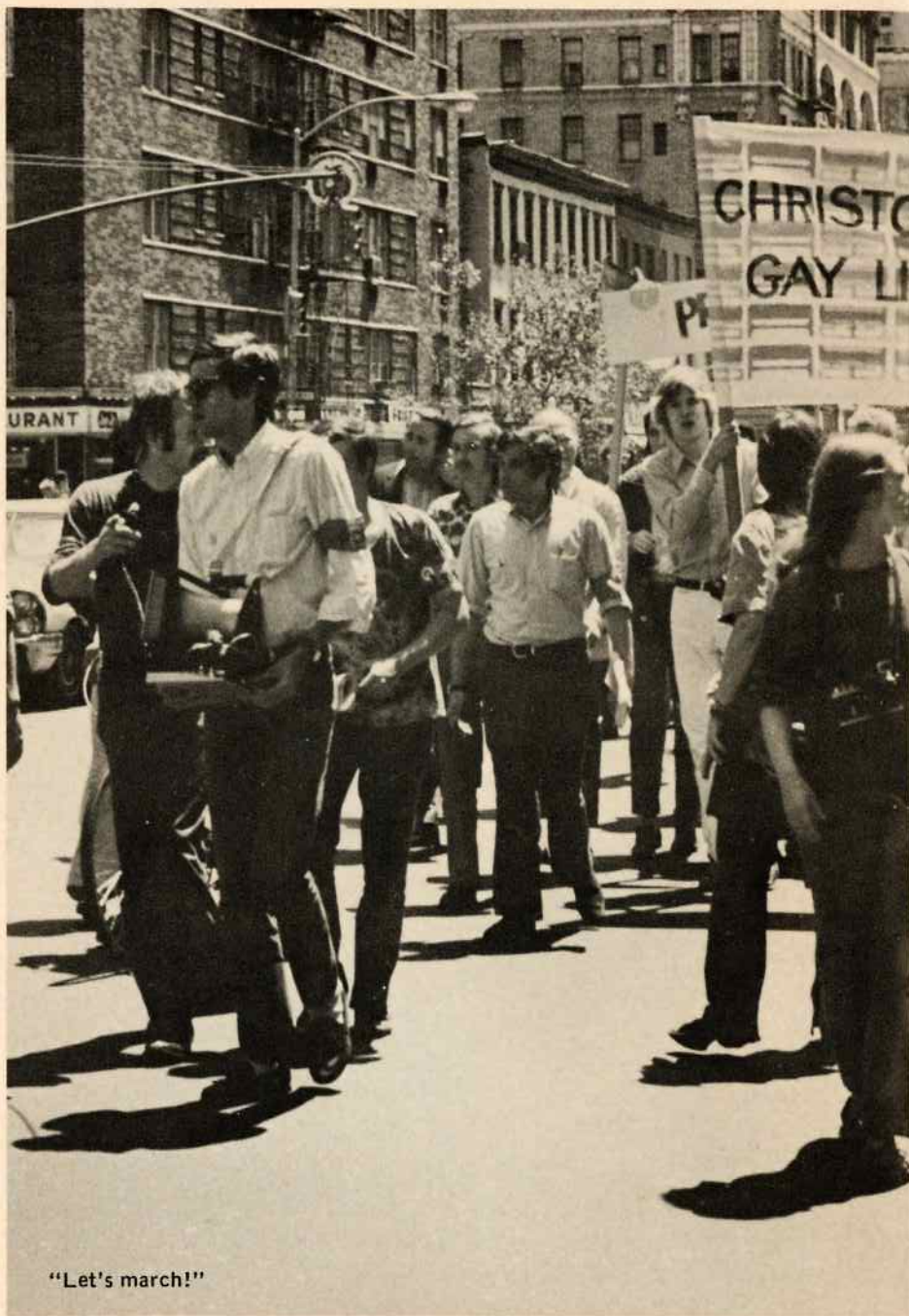


From all walks of life in pursuit of a common goal—gay freedom.

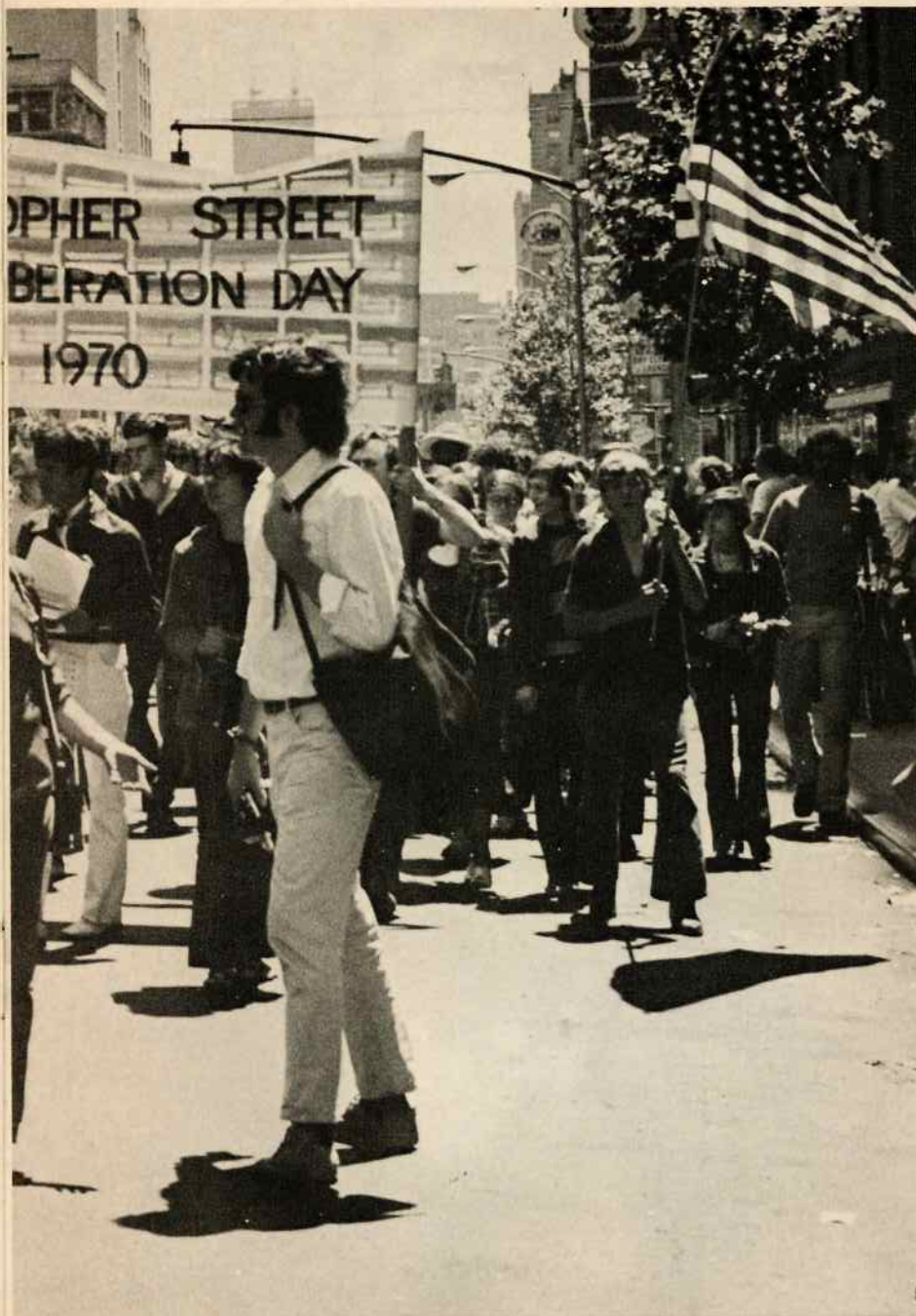


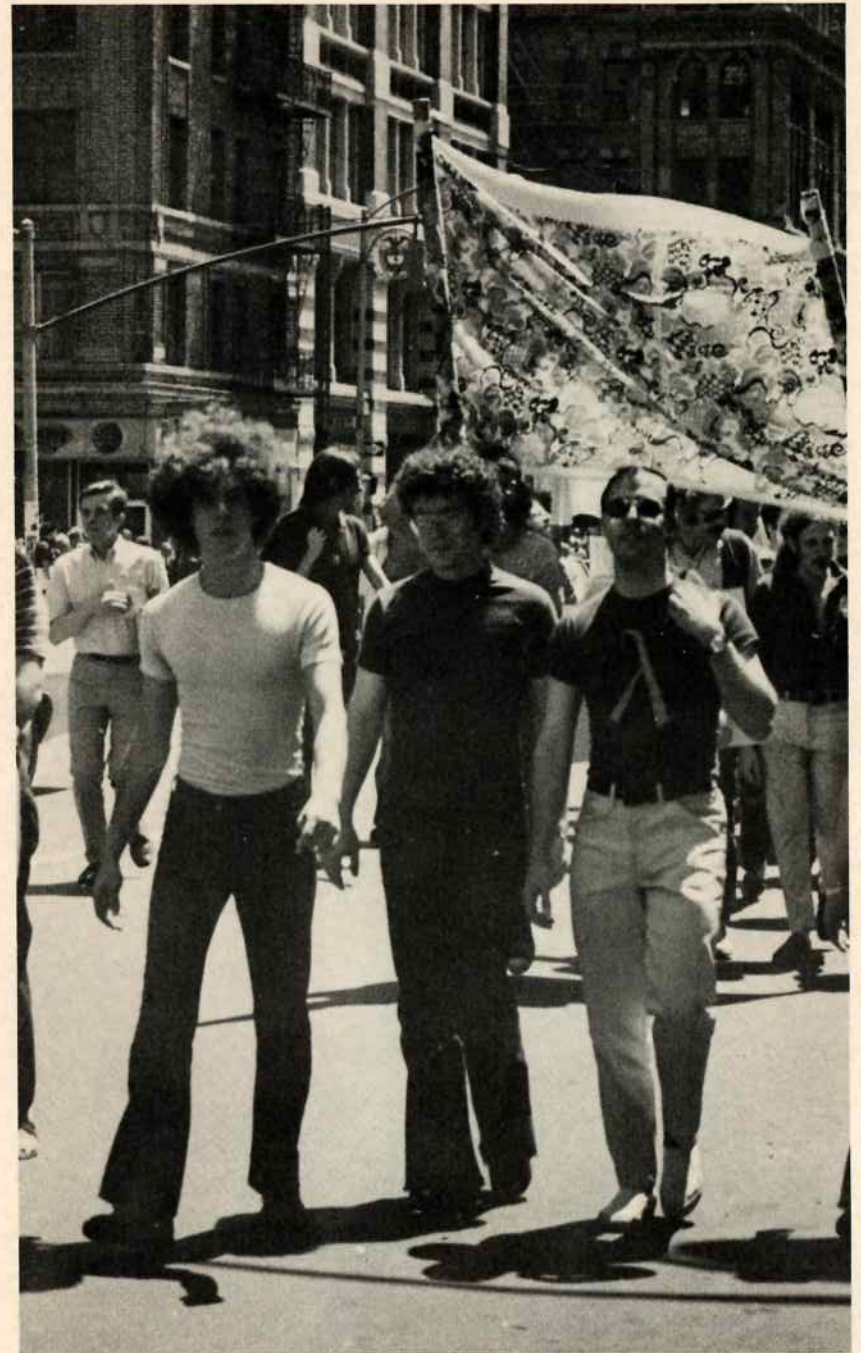
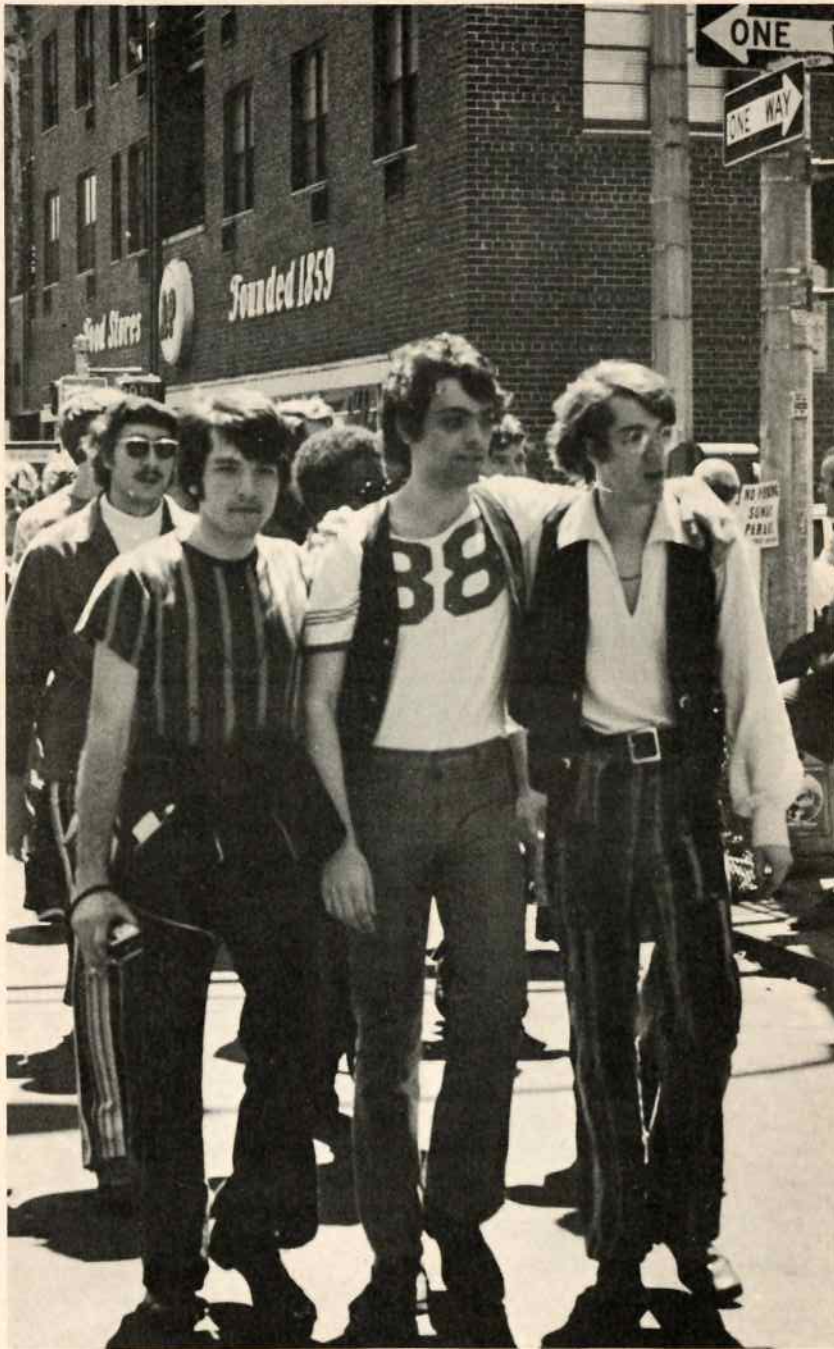
Officials chat while the police escort readies itself.





"Let's march!"





CHRISTOPHER GAY LIBERATION DAY 1970



"Say it loud: Gay and proud!"



Contradictory slogans, but a singlemindedness nonetheless.





Drag queens and dachshunds.

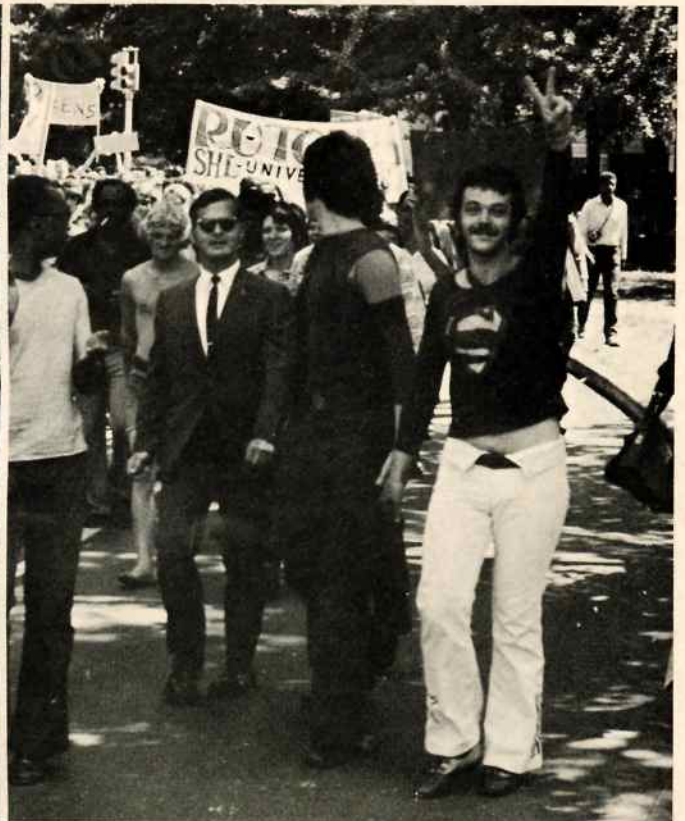
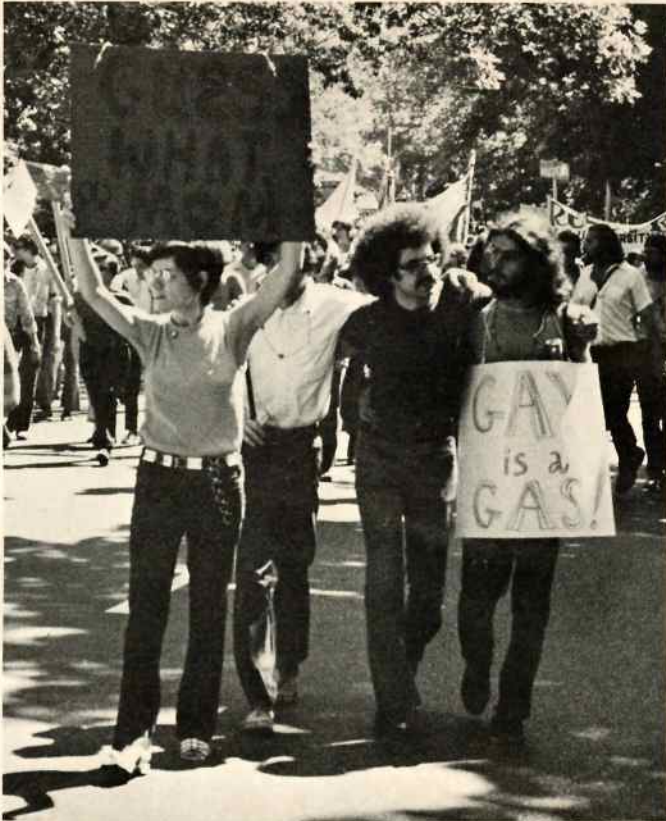


Major eastern cities were represented.





Three miles later—Central Park. Mission accomplished without incident.

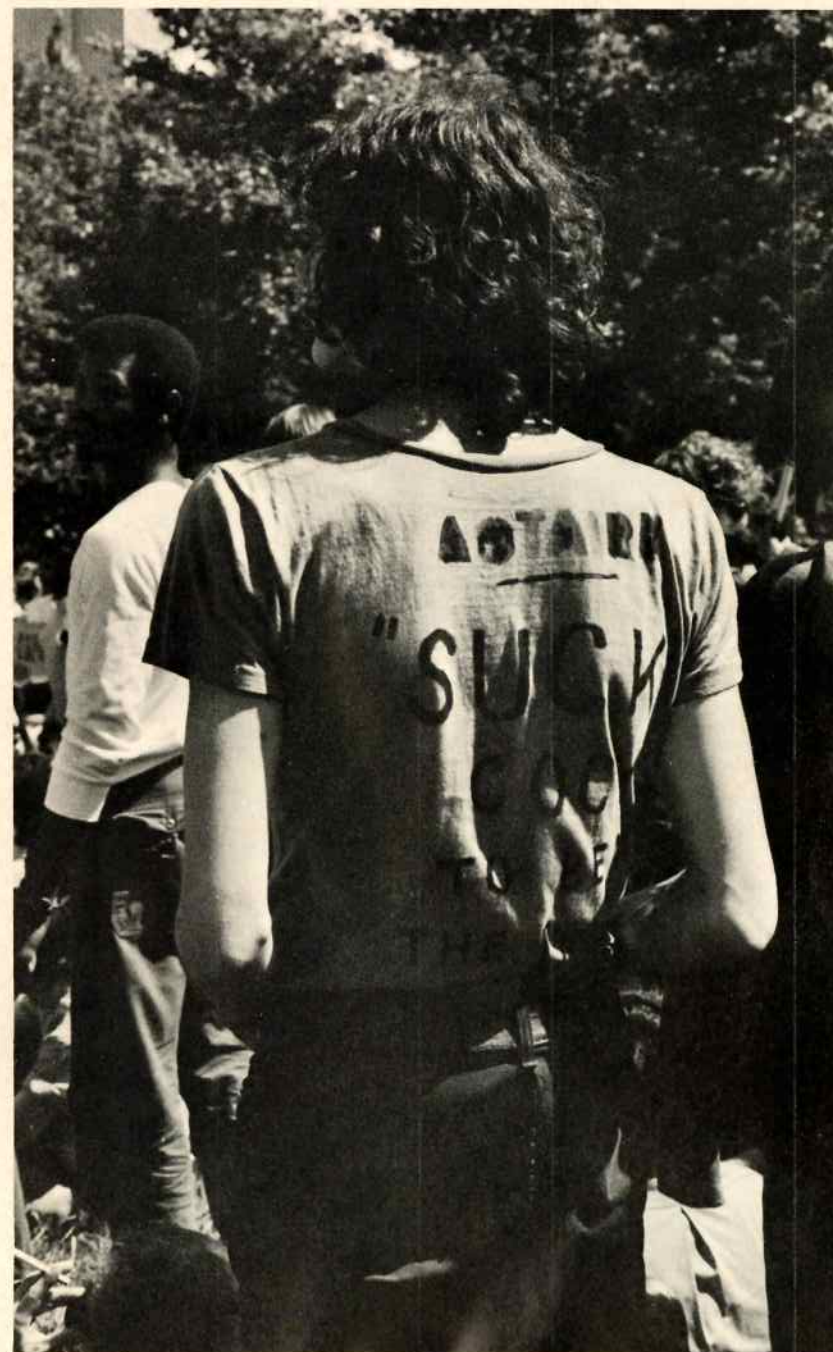




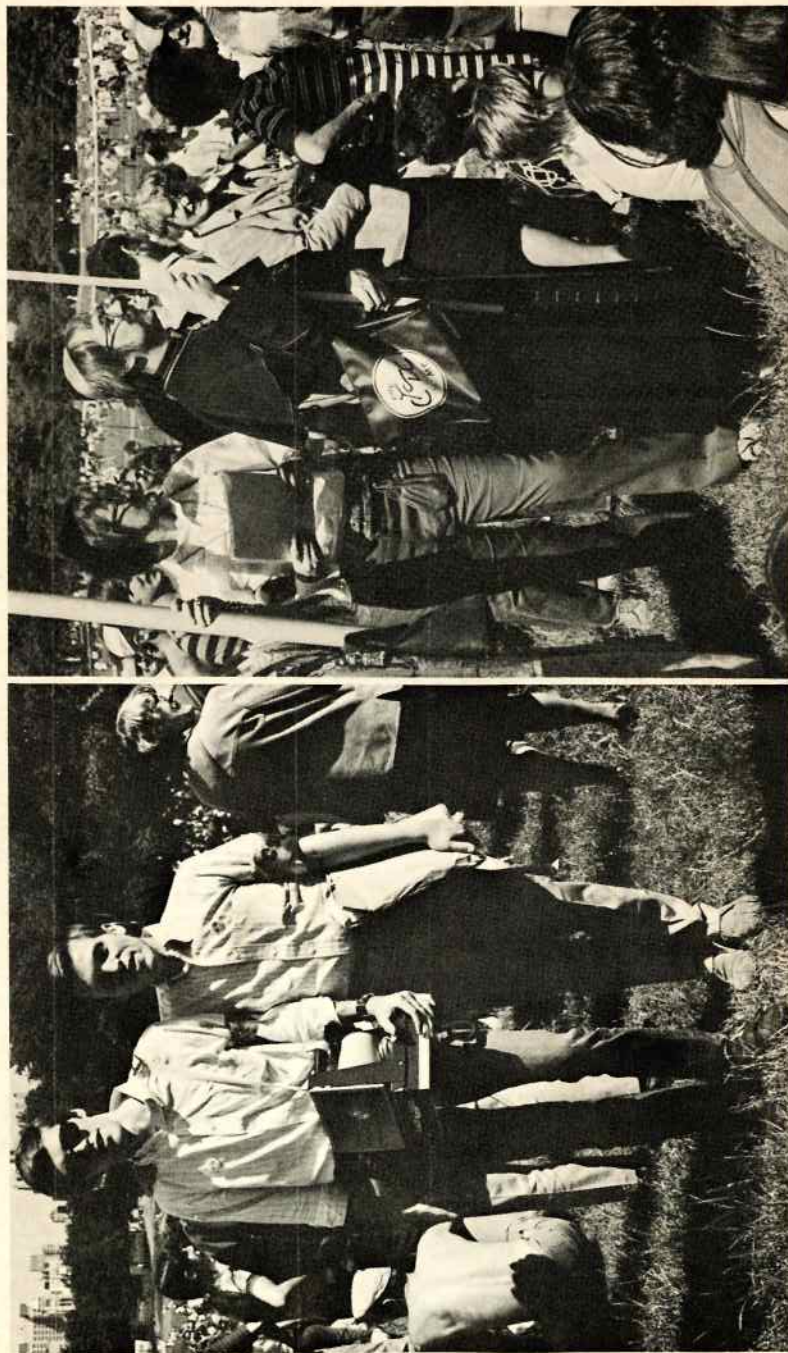
A "gay in" at Sheep Meadow.



Brotherhood and messages: "Suck cock to beat the draft."







Amen.

Two organizers, Fred Sargeant (left) and Craig Rodwell.

SUNBURST

I am what I am,
 A stranger to posterity.
 Whence I came or whither I go
 Is neither here nor there;
 For I have come like the wind,
 Noticed, felt but never wanted.
 I am a child of the storm,
 Born to be reviled and forsaken.
 But, alas! hearken to the clarion-call!
 It heralds the dawn of a new day,
 The day I shall be free to love, to speak out.

—Anton Parry

