

AN IMPRESSION OF THE GAY DEMO

To bring you up to date....

"On July 2 "This Day Tonight" filmed a segment on Gay Liberation for screening on that programme. Without even seeing it Clement Semmler, Deputy General Manager of the A.B.C. banned the programme because of the subject matter. Fear of homosexuals and prejudice against us is based on ignorance. In suppressing the T.D.T. Gay Liberation segment Semmler has perpetuated this ignorance, and in turn helped perpetuate

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The harrassment, bashing and humiliation to which we are daily subjected."

To me, a demonstration of any kind, always gives me a feeling of involvement, starting with feelings of elation and high-pitched excitement, and more often than not, ending with feelings of anxiety and depression.

The gay demo was no exception.

Brightly coloured balloons, bunches of flowers, a huge crate of green apples, (later termed queer apples) bright banners, and the general chanting gave this demonstration a carnival atmosphere, which was lots of fun and gave everyone an added boost of confidence.

Of course Semmler refused to release the segment for screening, but if you look at the overall effect of the protest and the results, I think most would agree that it was a success.

The fact that about eighty (someone said a hundred) homosexuals were obviously identifying themselves as gay to the general public and the media was, in itself, a major breakthrough for the Sydney movement.

Lots of little old ladies were obviously freaked by the whole thing, and lots of people just gazed with that same apathetic stare they give to anything relevant. There were very few hecklers, which rather surprised me. I think those that wanted to laugh, couldn't, or wouldn't because we were all there and obviously serious about what we were doing.

One middleaged tightlipped lady whom I approached with a leaflet kept on repeating "Disgusting.." to an invisible person on her right side. (refusing to direct her disapprovals at me. She probably thought that she'd turn into a toad if she came face to face with one of "them".) That lady was the only one who had anything to say to me about it of the people who got leaflets. Others either turned a blind eye and kept their arms tightly to their sides, or took one rather shyly. Not many smiled but then I guess they didn't have a reason to.

On the media side, it seemed that all TV and press people were alerted (except the fairy Fairfax mob - S.M.H. and 7) At least one radio man was there too.

One of the TEN 10 cameramen, a queen from way back, obviously afraid of being recognised became even more freaked when I asked him how he was doing.

Coverage, that night, was great. A.B.C. 2 reporting with the same blandness that they would report a semi-trailer running into a butcher shop along Parramatta Road. TCN 9's "A Current Affair" was the best of all with interviews from passers-by and Mike Willesee's usual impartial innuendo. TEN 10 was downright cynical but at least we made it. (Which means that they shouldn't have any qualms about screening us in the future) A degrading article in the Telegraph and a piece in The Australian was the extent of the press coverage.

Three members got inside the ABC building for chats and managed to get relevant points across. Whether it was talking to deaf ears or long time closed ones it was quite obvious according to them, that there was a communication problem.

One guy was arrested, which was the turning point as far as general feelings went. After he was taken away, people became very angry and serious, which was what was required and very effective for onlookers.

The girls were great, terrific...WOW

Overall, I personally got a kick out of yelling my "gaiety" to the world and feel more confident, personally, as well as socially, for the future.

Maybe next time we protest a few more queens will come out. I hope so.

F.T.

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This newsletter was written and produced David McDiarmid, Frank Taylor, Joanne Horneman, John Lee, Robert Tucker, Gregg Blackford, Jim Wafer.

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