

*Horowitz*  
14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014

June 22, 1971

TO MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

As reports come in from the branches concerning the probe of the gay liberation movement, they will be placed in a separate folder available for your perusal in the national office. This folder will be placed in my mailbox in the reception area of the office.

An initial report from New York has been received.

Comradely,

*Barry Sheppard*  
Barry Sheppard

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June 23, 1971

Administrative Committee  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Comrades,

This is in regard to the facts of the matters Comrade Hedda Garza raises in her letter of June 15, 1971 to the Administrative Committee.

A proposal for a probe of the New York gay liberation movement was presented to the Local Executive Committee on June 2, 1971, following the Political Committee's action. The proposal was adopted and is attached to this letter. This proposal outlined a set of activities within the guidelines set by the Political Committee -- "to gather the necessary information about gay liberation formations and actions so that the party can then determine its policy toward them."

Essentially the following was proposed to the New York Local Executive Committee: 1. The writing of a report on the experience thus far gained with gay liberation in New York. (This report is now completed and available.) 2. Systematic information gathering in a number of gay groups, particularly the Gay Activists Alliance, the Daughters of Bilitis, and the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee. (Two reports on the DOB and one on CSLDC have been written and are available.) 3. Special attention to the Christopher Street Gay Pride Week and mass march, as events that will greatly contribute to our knowledge. The proposal indicated the need for a full report after these events. 4. Continued participation in the Student Mobilization Committee Gay Task Force. 5. The establishment of a Gay Liberation probe "task force steering committee" composed of two openly gay comrades, Steve B. and Kipp D., YSA city organizer Steve C., and New York local organizer Lew J. to coordinate this information gathering for the Local Executive Committee.

Since adoption the steering committee has begun carrying out the proposal. Comrade Garza states, "Some comrades think [the probe] means that we have already decided to intervene wholeheartedly in the building and leadership of the Gay Movement and are simply probing to decide what our line will be." Perhaps there are some comrades who have that opinion, but the proposal and the probe itself have confined themselves to information gathering and selected activity for the sake of information gathering. In view of the PC motion which states, "...individuals can be assigned to attend and participate in selected activities of different gay liberation organizations and ad hoc formations as part of this probe," comrades have attended and spoken at various meetings, but have not conducted a "party fractional intervention based on a defined strategic and tactical orientation in the gay liberation movement." In some cases comrades have had to combat red-baiting attempts to exclude them from meetings.

During Gay Pride Week the Local Executive Committee has projected that we attend the activities which seem most beneficial to the purposes of the probe, that we urge all comrades to participate in a Militant and ISR sale to be conducted at the march, and that no party banners be carried. Comrades in the Gay Task Force will participate in Gay Pride Week with the aim of mobilizing gay activists for the National Peace Action Coalition convention.

Within the framework of the national and local probes the New York branches have been conducting their own probes, paying special attention to the campus groups. The proposal to the Local Executive

Committee also states, "It is within the framework of this probe for the branches to hold forums, Militant and ISR sales, etc. directed toward the gay struggle."

The Lower Manhattan Branch Executive Committee as part of its probe proposed holding a forum, in the form of a panel, on June 25 during Gay Pride Week. (The pertinent section of the minutes of the meeting of the Lower Manhattan Branch Executive Committee on June 14, to which comrade Garza refers, is attached.) It was felt that this forum would be a particularly useful vehicle for learning first hand how some gay leaders view the gay movement and its prospects.

Moreover, since "the probe will be conducted within the framework of the party's unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for civil and human rights against the discrimination and oppression they suffer under capitalism," it was felt that a forum during Gay Pride Week would be an appropriate opportunity to put forward that view. The comrade assigned to speak at the forum, Kipp Dawson, intends to speak to that effect. Comrade Dawson does not intend to put forward "a defined strategic and tactical orientation in the gay liberation movement." One point we will want to get across at the forum is that even though the party has no position on certain questions, we are interested in learning from the gay liberation movement and that is one reason we are holding the forum.

I hope this clarifies the matters comrade Garza has raised.

Comradely,

s/Susan LaMont

Lower Manhattan Branch Organizer

cc: Lew Jones, New York Local Organizer

Excerpt from the Lower Manhattan Branch Executive Committee Minutes of Monday, June 14, 1971:

FORUM REPORT: Lora

Militant Labor Forum does number of things: build and establish party as political force, serve as public statement of our position, education for comrades.

Attendance has been down since division. Necessary to involve comrades and to see forums as a branch activity. Contact work should be stressed.

Proposed schedule:

6/25 Gay panel; 7/2 NPAC conference, no forum; 7/9 NY City budget, Howard (tentative); 7/16 Abortion conference, no forum; 7/23 Debsian tradition, Doug Jenness; 7/30 Situation in steel crisis - Frank Lovell; 8/6 Harrisburg 8 Defense Forum; 8/13 Party Convention, no forum; 8/20 &/or 8/27 Jose Yglesias on Cuba with a backup on the International Womens Liberation Movement by Helen J. or Is There a Ruling Class by Dick Roberts. Discussion: Howard, Susan, Louise, Eva, Hedda, Jolee, Don, Eva, Hedda, Susan, Hedda, Kipp, Hedda, Kipp, Lora, Eva, Lora, Eva Lora Hedda asked that it be written in the minutes that she is opposed to having a comrade on the gay panel because she feels that it violates letter of PC report.

Motion on procedure: agree to women's liberation forum on 7/9 and leave decision as to its nature to smaller body.--passed

Motion to approve report passed.

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14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014

June 24, 1971

NEW YORK

Hedda Garza

Dear Hedda,

Enclosed is a copy of correspondence we received today from Susan LaMont, the Lower Manhattan branch organizer.

We see nothing in the proposals adopted by either the New York Local or the Lower Manhattan Branch to implement the probe of the gay liberation movement which goes beyond the guidelines contained in the Political Committee motion of May 25, 1971.

Comradely,

s/Barry Sheppard  
for the Administrative Committee

cc: Susan LaMont - Lower Manhattan Branch Organizer  
Lew Jones - New York Local Organizer

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June 23, 1971

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New York, N.Y.

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