

that rape will become a public issue, so that these men will lose their anonymity, and so women can be warned of some particular men.

4. We support confrontations of rapists by women (or women and men). The message we want to present to them is that we know who they are and what they did, that they are responsible for their actions, and that they have the responsibility to change. We try to offer follow-up reeducation by antisexist men. Although we think that each individual confrontation is important, we hope that each one will have the widespread effect of encouraging people to force men to stop violent and sexist behavior. This means that people have to deal with the men close to them—their family, friends, etc., as well as with strangers who hassle women.

A confrontation allows a woman who's been raped or hassled to be active and powerful in a situation in which it is safe for her to be so. She can make the decision about how a confrontation will take place and what she'd like to say. We help her get together a group of women who will be supportive to her during the process. This is very different from reporting a rape to the police where the woman's role is a passive one (as a witness for the state) and where others make decisions about her case for her. . . .

We realize that rape is not going to end by the creation of these few alternatives, that rape will only end with the development of a new system that provides a context for these changes in people's lives. We want to develop a movement that is working toward these changes. It is crucial for antirape groups not to focus on rape as an isolated issue to the exclusion of developing a broader analysis of the society as a whole.

### 1.A.8.

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Daniel Tsang

### **"Third World Lesbians and Gays Meet" (1980)**

The first national Third World Lesbian/Gay Conference was held immediately before the first March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights on October 14, 1979. The conference, which was organized by the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays in collaboration with other groups, drew LGBT people of color from around the United States as well as a small number from outside it. Tsang published this report about the conference in *Gay Insurgent*, a radical gay and lesbian newspaper.

Some five hundred Third World lesbians and gay men converged on the nation's capital the weekend of October 12–15 for the first national Third World Lesbian/Gay conference. The event was almost completely ignored by the corporate media, which missed a historic march October 14 by two hundred of the

conferees from the conference site at Howard University to the center of Washington to join the full march on Washington.

The early morning march through the Black neighborhood and through Chinatown was the first time Black and Asian lesbians and gay men had paraded through our own neighborhoods. The mood of the marchers was jubilant, and the reaction from onlookers more surprise than hostility. The dozen or so Asian lesbians and gay men chanted “We’re Asian, gay, and proud!” as the street signs turned Chinese at the edge of Chinatown. Many of the Asian marchers faced deportation for so visibly coming out as lesbian or gay, under a reactionary McCarthy period law which bars gay people from abroad from entering this country.

At noon the marchers joined with others forming the main March on Washington and marched as the Third World contingent, right behind the lesbians and handicapped gays who led off. The Third World marchers expressed pride in their gayness and solidarity with national liberation struggles abroad. Chants included “Third World revolution!” When the Latino delegation passed the building of the Organization of American States (OAS) it roared, in Spanish, “These are the people who take away our lands!” Heading the Third World contingent was a small group of Native Americans, holding a sign proclaiming “the first gay Americans.”

The march culminated a weekend of intense discussion among Third World lesbians and gay men who attempted to reconcile being both people of color and lesbian or gay in a racist and homophobic society. Participants heard a moving address by keynote speaker Audre Lorde, Black feminist lesbian, and discussed racism and sexism in various workshops. Conferees late Saturday also heard solidarity statements from socialist compañeros from Mexico, who had somehow managed to avoid detection and enter the country.

Thunderous applause greeted a statement by Rodrigo Reyes, from the Gay Alliance of Latin Americans, who read the following statement from Ms. Aura L. Beteta, general counsel of Nicaragua in San Francisco: “To the first national conference of Third World lesbians and gay men, revolutionary Sandinista greetings. May from your conference be born a movement that identifies, that unites and struggles with the liberation movements of all oppressed people.”

Conferees appeared moved as Tana Loy, a lesbian member of the newly formed Lesbian and Gay Asian Collective, shared what had happened among the Asian caucus at the conference. She described the tendency for many Asian Americans to avoid each other when they meet—“We run from each other, because of the pain, because of the anguish, because of the deep self-hatred of racism in this country. It’s a survival response, because for decades of imperialist wars, we have been atomic bombed, we have been napalmed, we have been raped, we have been driven to suicide—and we have built this country from the east to the west, and we have been called the barbarian.” But at this conference, where many gay Asians met one another for the first time, “We have [. . .] run *toward* each other!”

The late evening sharing of support and solidarity culminated in a disco at the conference ballroom, where many white supporters, including gay poet Allen Ginsberg, joined in dancing with the Third World sisters and brothers present.

The high level of political awareness and militancy among the majority of conference participants suggests that the largely white-dominated gay movement, ten years after the uprising at the Stonewall Inn in New York, now faces a threshold in its history. The next decade may see an autonomous Third World lesbian and gay movement developing, one that seeks to challenge and fight against the racism and reformism in much of the existing gay movement.

## **1.A.9.**

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Joseph Beam

### **“Caring for Each Other” (1986)**

In the early years of the AIDS epidemic, US government responses were minimal, alternating between neglect and punitive measures. Activists relied on each other to organize services and advocacy for people with HIV/AIDS. Due to inequities of health care, housing, drug criminalization, and poverty, the epidemic became disproportionately concentrated among Black and Latinx people. Yet most early AIDS organizations were white dominated and failed to organize in communities of color. This essay by Joseph Beam, a prominent Black gay writer and poet, reflects the community ethos and critique of state oppression that have been central to people of color AIDS activism. His essay also suggests the tensions that surround a rhetoric of community and personal responsibility given a context of neoliberal abandonment and neglect.

Some years ago when I was growing up in West Philadelphia there was a brother named Slim who was tall, lanky, and an alcoholic. Most often he could be found at the court on the avenue watching us play basketball. Every so often, no doubt inspired by his drink, he'd demand to play in our game. When refused he'd curse us and start swinging his half-full half-gallon jug. We'd stop the game. Some of us would rest, others would head for the water fountain, but usually two brothers would attempt to console Slim. Almost always, he, happy for the attention, would be escorted home and safely deposited on his front porch. It was never a thought to call the police or an alcohol rehabilitation center, where Slim had been many times. It was a matter of taking care of your own kind. Calling the Man would have introduced another variable, one which too often proved to be a wild card.

I say that to say this: the State (a euphemism for white people) has never been concerned with the welfare of Black people. So it comes as no surprise to me that the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force (PATF) has trouble getting AIDS infor-