ACLU launches new Lesbian/Gay Rights Project

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) announced this week plans to establish a new project aimed at ending discrimination against gay men and lesbian women.

The Lesbian/Gay Rights Project, located in the ACLU's national office in New York, will begin by challenging the state sodomy laws that criminalize homosexuality and attacking the various forms of discrimination that these criminal laws engender.

ACLU Executive Director Ira Glasser and ACLU President Norman Dorsen said that with the creation of the project the ACLU would be able to take a more aggressive and visible role in fighting for equal rights for gays and lesbians.

"Gay men and lesbian women confront laws and government practices that would long ago have been struck down as unconstitutional if they applied to racial minorities or women," Glasser said.

"Laws in twenty-four states, and the District of Columbia that outlaw consensual sodomy are used as the legal justification for various forms of discrimination, and force gay men and lesbian women to choose between suffering second-class citizenship or keeping their sexual orientation a secret from the world."

"As long as civil rights for gays and lesbians remains a gay people's issue alone, it will be too easy for gays to be isolated in their struggle to secure equality," Dorsen added. "Antiquated sodomy laws restrict the civil rights and liberties of many Americans, and permitting such discrimination to continue threatens the civil rights of all Americans."

The first priority of the ACLU Lesbian/Gay Rights Project will be the eradication of sodomy laws. Sodomy laws are used as the legal basis for police harassment of gay men, and to justify differential treatment of lesbians as well as gay men in housing, employment, and domestic relations (e.g. child custody) cases. Even where sodomy laws are not vigorously enforced, their mere existence defines gay relationships as a crime, perpetuating common myths and stereotypes about gay men and lesbian women, and inhibiting gay people from living openly.

The ACLU, with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, has already filed a legal challenge to the Louisiana sodomy law. The ACLU is now exploring the possibility of bringing similar challenges in Alaska and Minnesota.

The gay rights project will also target discrimination against gay men and lesbian women in housing and employment — with emphasis on education and the uniformed municipal services (police, firefighters, etc.).

In addition, the project will pursue several cases in which local laws interfere with gay people's First Amendment rights, including laws barring gay teachers from "advocating" homosexuality in the classroom.

The ACLU Lesbian/Gay Rights Project is a result of strategy meetings of the national Ad Hoc Task Force to Challenge Sodomy Laws. This task force, organized in 1983, consists of the national ACLU, several state ACLU affiliates, Lambda, the Lesbian Rights Project, Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, Texas Human Rights Foundation, and several gay and lesbian press organizations.

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By Ted Sahl

Nobel Prize Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu Visits San Francisco Bay Area

A press conference waited for Tutu to arrive. I noticed Senator Alan Cranston standing by himself and decided to hold my own press conference till the Bishop arrived.

Sahl: Senator, why would Bishop Tutu, fighting white oppression of his people in South Africa, hope to receive help from the United States when the white majority of this country has systemically oppressed blacks in this country for two hundred years? Do you honestly think he will get help?

Cranston: I certainly do. Presently I am working on a bill in Congress that has been agreed to by those leaders most opposed to apartheid, and we feel it has a good chance of passing.

We propose to get America on record against the South African regime.

No. 1. this bill would ban new investments by American firms in South Africa.

No. 2, ban all bank loans by American banks to the government of South Africa.

No. 3. ban the sale of computers that help to control the population.

No. 4, ban sale of the Krugerrand.

Also, Cranston said, I am working with Robert Dole, Senate leader, to create an American Krugerrand for those who seek an alternate gold coin to invest in.

I believe it has a good chance of passing, Cranston said. There will be a lot of blacks who will lose jobs — a common claim by some skeptics. The best answer to that is . . . when slavery was abolished in the United States, there was some unemployment in the South. So should we have kept slavery?

The first bill I spoke of passed in the Foreign Relations Committee 16 to 1 — only Jesse Helms of South Carolina opposed it. This bill would impose sanctions within two years if there is no progress toward ending apartheid. Democrats and Republicans support this bill unanimously, Cranston said.

As to the second bill, we might not get it through in its present form, but I expect we will get something now. (Senator Cranston is a strong opponent of apartheid.)

Bishop Tutu did arrive, only to be greeted in the lobby by an
Robertini Measure Extends Life of AIDS Advisory Committee

Sacramento - SB 479 by Senate President pro Tempore David Robertini to extend the current date of the state's AIDS Task Force to 1990 was approved by a 3-0 vote by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The task force was created by SB 901 in 1984 to address the AIDS epidemic. "The AIDS Task Force was created in 1984 to address the AIDS epidemic. It is continuing to do a good job of education and the provision of services to people with AIDS."

Sex Offense Bill Passes Senate Committee

A bill making it a crime to induce sexual intercourse through false representation intersected the Senate's Senate Appropriations Committee, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the Assembly Appropriations Committee on April 12, 1985. The bill was approved by the Senate and signed by the Governor 18 months ago with a sunset date of July 1986, according to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Human Rights Commission Strongly Objects to Military Use of HTLV-III Testing Results

Upon the recommendation of the Lesbian/Gay Advisory Committee, the state's Human Rights Commission voted unanimously to oppose SB 903, to object to the Defense Department's recent decision requiring that military and civilian blood agencies collecting blood of people who test positive for the HTLV-III antibody in blood tests for army personnel. "The United States army will be using a test for the HTLV-III antibody to replace the blood screening tests that blood testing agencies are now using. The military's decision is based on the belief that a person who tests positive for the HTLV-III antibody is unlikely to have the disease."

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LGAES founder Sebesta resigns

Meeting announcement for the first meeting of the Lesbian
Gay Associated Engineers and
Scientists notes that the Lesbian Gay
Association will be organizing all.
LGAES activities effectively im-
mediately after the meeting.
Susan Sebesta, "I have called
"Mommy Gays are in this" to take
over and honor all member-
ships. After 1 year I have
finished all I wished to do in
LGAES and I am moving on to
other interests which include par

I will cover the next year as
archive all of LGAES records
and accomplishments and
interact with all members.
A history of our
organization and activities
will be available on the
major LGAES website.

I am now a founding director
of San Francisco Bay Area
Gay Historical Society and will
also make our archives available
on the major LGAES website.

Thank you again and keep up the
work.

Rick Rudy of High Tech Gays
States Sebesta, "I have talked
about the importance of social
outlets. In High Tech Gays there is
a good group that will provide a
steady avenue of national
cooperation."
NGTF Position Statements on AIDS-Related Issues

NGTF Call For Major AIDS Preventive Education Effort in Senate Testimony

The National Gay Task Force (NGTF) called today for a major national prevention and education program to stem the spread of AIDS. NGTF Acting Executive Director Larry Levi, testifying before the Senate's subcommittee on health and Human Services, said, "It is impossible in these times not to recognize the fiscal, economic, and environmental problems. However, every year, we do not spend on prevention and education will be spent many times over on health care costs alone." Levi said administrative Chairman Leonard L. Lellis, "It is a fact, a fact that supports this position, that the federal government has provided only $100,000 in AIDS education funds. These programs must be restored.

AIDS-Related Violence

Last year the National Gay Task Force released the first nationwide study of bias-related anti-gay and lesbian violence in the United States. The survey showed that 98% of the U.S. population have experienced some form of sexual orientation; 20% of gay and lesbian families have been physically attacked. Part of the increase in anti-gay/lesbian violence can be attributed to the fact that sexual orientation is increasingly recognized as a human right.

AIDS-related advocacy groups are working to make sure that the test is not a diagnostic tool for AIDS.

Alternative Testing Sites and Funding

For the nation's health care system to be as safe as possible, it is critical that those in risk groups continue to refrain from donating blood. The National Gay Task Force and other gay/bi/lesbian organizations have been working to establish alternative testing sites to offer the HTLV-III antibody test to individuals who might otherwise have gone to blood centers to learn their antibody status even though the test is not diagnostic.

The federal government is giving many to speed up the research. The government must ensure that scientists have sufficient funding for laboratory facilities.

Support the SAN JOSE GAY PRIDE RALLY!

AIDS Funding

NGTF has long argued that the federal government is not spending enough money on AIDS research. Much of the funding that can be attributed to AIDS is critical to the failure of the government to control the epidemic. The government must ensure that scientists have sufficient funding for laboratory facilities.

Health Care Costs

Local governments trying to cope with the health care and service costs of the AIDS crisis are increasingly being forced to accept the burden of risk reduction education and long-term care in their communities. The Administration and Congress agree on new funding. The National Gay Task Force will continue to call for sufficient funding to address the needs of at-risk groups concerned about the epidemic.

NGTF also called for the Administration to establish alternative funding sources to finance the HTLV-III antibody test. It is inconceivable that unless the Administration and Congress agree on new funding, the government will continue its full-scale lobbying efforts to obtain sufficient funds.

Perhaps the area most neglected in the AIDS crisis has been the prevention of unintended pregnancy. Yet the government has provided only $100,000 in AIDS education funds. These programs must be restored.

The THE TEST CAN BE ALMOST AS DEVASTATING AS THE DISEASE

The rate has been deplorable due to the ignorance and intransigence of the AIDS " vandal." The name should not be used as a generalization, but only indicates that you have been exposed to the HTLV-III virus. "AIDS virus" doesn't tell us very much of anything. It only indicates that you have been exposed to the HTLV-III virus. "AIDS" is a label created by the administration to establish alternative funding sources to finance the HTLV-III antibody test. It is inconceivable that unless the Administration and Congress agree on new funding, the government will continue its full-scale lobbying efforts to obtain sufficient funds.

We TEST CAN BE ALMOST AS DEVASTATING AS THE DISEASE

The core idea behind the "AIDS test" is not to test everyone, but to test those who are at risk. The test is not designed to be a diagnostic tool for AIDS.

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**Mass Appeal at A.C.T.**

**Theresa Rebeck**

Alain Boublil (1950-1999) in a strong performance as the American Conservative Theatre's Managing Director and one of the major characters in "Fathers" by Jean-Claude Carrière. The play is a study in the complex relationship between two men, one a radical and the other a conservative, as they struggle to find common ground in their work. The tension between them is palpable as they debate the merits of their respective approaches. The performances are excellent, with Boublil delivering a particularly strong performance as the radical, capturing his intensity and passion in every scene.

**Gays of Our Lives**

By Claire Mitz

**SPORTS • SPORTS • SPORTS**

The South Bay Volleyball League completed its spring season last weekend with many of its top teams vying for the championship. The league's final standings are as follows:

- **Golden Boys (9-3)**
- **White Briefs (10-2)**
- **Red Cross (10-2)**
- **Sixth Place: Golden Boys (4-8)**

The championship game was between the Golden Boys and the White Briefs, with the White Briefs emerging victorious in a decisive match. The game was played on the court at the Watergarden, a venue known for its excellent facilities. The crowd was enthusiastic and cheering loudly throughout the game, creating an electric atmosphere.

**Fortunes**

By Tycho

**DESPERADOS**

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**Photo by Ted Sahl**
The project will work closely with Lamba to ensure that no duplication of effort, and to avoid diverting contributions from other gay rights groups. The ACLU said it would require $50,000 to bring the project and new activity into effect.

The national office of the ACLU in San Francisco aims to develop strategies that will be developed in consultation with an advisory board now being formed. The board is expected to include such leading gay rights activists as Jay Kovalik, Robert Altman, Brenda Moseley, and Adiby Rubinstein, in addition to up to six members of the ACLU Board of Directors. The ACLU said it would require $50,000 to bring the project and new activity into effect.

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ACLU Board of Directors of the Arts Council of Gay & Lesbian San Jose

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