

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Henry David Thoreau



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GETTING OFF

We keep hearing how Liberalism is at its lowest ebb since anyone can remember. The great liberal newspaper columnists are gone; the political progressives have been routed by the ultra-right. Franklin Roosevelt, John and Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey and Adlai Stevenson seem dim memories, even if today's generation can tell you who they were. Where once there were liberal giants, now all we have are mental pygmies; know-nothings who seem to be interested only in power, the buck and prayer in schools.

Whatever became of the liberals? We ask because the only progress the gay community has been able to make toward first-class citizenship has been through liberal causes directed by liberal thinking. There would appear to be no hope whatever for minorities, such as gays, in conservative circles.

We have withstood the religious right, the political far-right, police mentality and have made great, if agonizing, accomplishments in the past dozen years. Our votes are sought, our buying power is beginning to be acknowledged, our talents, creativity, even genius is recognized, however reluctantly. But, alas, there is a more powerful enemy than the combined Falwells, Bryants, Deukmeijans, Reagans, Helms and Hitlers. It is ourselves.

Two giant setbacks have just recently occurred to begin canceling out years of hard effort. And they came from within, not from without.

In San Francisco, the forces headed by the mayor were able to take another step toward turning America's most liberal city into Glendale, or worse, Dade County. From a very few panicky gays came the idea to close the baths because of the plague. And that other side took full advantage of that hysteria. We ended up accomplishing exactly what they wanted us to do. The police presence is back with us and the baths are just a beginning.

In Minneapolis, the feminists were able to bring in good old fashioned censorship, using the ploy that pornography was detrimental to the image of women. If that school of thought continues, it won't be just the T&A magazines that will end up getting burned. Using that same rationalization, one can work all the way up to the Bible's Old Testament (a favorite of the usually antisemitic right wing), the text of which is far more male chauvinistic than it is anti-homosexual.

When these setbacks occur, Falwell, Schlafly & Company smile in triumph as they watch us accomplish what they were not able to do. And we did it to ourselves.

Liberalism, which has brought the great advances throughout history, is far from dead. But it is taking a terrible beating from its friends.

John H. Embry, Publisher

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