1500 Women at UCLA hold Lesbian conference

HELEN KOBLIN
Fifteen hundred women representing all parts of the nation convened at UCLA this weekend, April 13-15 for the West Coast Lesbian Conference, the first of its kind in the history of the world. Beaming females, a few topless, swarmed Moore Hall Friday night and lingered around Janes Steps in the sunny glow of Saturday afternoon. However, since Los Angeles is not really Mount Olympus, there was a near riot over a transsexual entertainer Friday night and a male Jesus freak with a sign reading “Dykes repent” had to be protected by the Dyke Patrol Saturday from a group of irate lesbians. But collective enthusiasm countered conflict successfully all the way through, setting a mood for all the Women’s Week activities scheduled for the next days.

Friday night at Moore Hall was like any other night with the slight variation of 1,000 women packing the 500-seat auditorium. Maxine Feldman, musician-composer sang her gay song, Angry Atthus. Debbie from Oregon rendered her lyric, I’m Gay and I’m Proud. Now We Can Sing It Out Loud. Later, she sang Your Friends Should Be Your Lovers and Your Lovers Should Be Your Friends. Chairwoman Jean Cordova, editor of The Lesbian Tide, announced that there would be no men allowed in during the duration of the conference except at noon Saturday for a brief press conference. She told of child care arrangements for lesbian mothers who transported their children (gay men from UCLA had volunteered their services) and of the various housing facilities that had been pre-arranged for out-of-towners. Everything appeared to have been well organized.

A trio called The New Woman contributed some more original sounds and lyrics—and received a forceful ovation. Jan Oxenberg’s film, called Home Movie was then shown. It dealt with early role conditioning for little girls, and their natural rebellions thereto. The film was a campy consciousness raiser. Throughout the program, women openly and spontaneously embraced, stroked and kissed another, and while these gestures were loving and sensual, they were never overtly sexual. Gay or straight, this free expression of affection has always been the one privilege allotted to women and not men in this society.

Trans-Sexual Entertainment

Life was humming along at a high spirited pace, until about 9:30 when a thorn in the side of the lesbian psyche ascended the stage, guitarred and ready to perform. The person was Beth Elliot. Beth is a transsexual who claims to be a lesbian sister. Beth was born a male, but made his identification with the female and went through some medical transformations to prove it. However, Beth was not content to be merely a female, merely a feminist, she dedicated herself to being a lesbian feminist. Well, there were a large number of lesbian feminists present who weren’t buying Beth’s trip, and they vociferously protested her presence.

Lesbian women, not famous for acquiescence, shrieked, moved toward the platform and demanded Beth’s removal. One woman stated that Beth had attempted to seduce her four years prior to this occasion. Jean Cordova, who deserves a medal of valor for her calm and patient moderation all weekend, spoke to the audience, took a vote, and found that (please turn to page 4)

JACK ANDERSON
WASHINGTON — Suppose the Watergate scandal had climaxed six months earlier and had propelled George McGovern into the White House. How would President McGovern have handled the problems that now beset the nation?

He has reflected on this lately and he talked to us about it. As President, McGovern would never have lifted the curbs on wages and prices. But he would have applied the same controls on interest rates and excess profits. He would also have slashed military spending by $10 billion and used the money to pay for social programs.

He would not now be bombing Cambodia and he would have cleared all U.S. forces out of Vietnam. He would not have loaded down President Thieu with military supplies to continue the fighting. For the war-battered countries of Indochina, he would have offered economic but no military aid.

In foreign aid, McGovern would have carried on the work of President Nixon in Moscow, Peking and the Middle East. Although McGovern confesses annoyance with his press treatment, he would not be feuding with the press. To head the FBI, he would have appointed Quinn Tann, a veteran lawyer, with instructions to make the FBI more professional and less political. And, of course, McGovern would be doing his best to uncover rather than cover up the Watergate details.

Two members of the Dyke Patrol pose for their picture at the Lesbian Conference at UCLA. Not long after this photo was taken, the girl on the right got punched in the eye when she was protecting a male Jesus Freak who turned up at the Conference holding a sign which read, “Dykes Repent.” See story this page. (Photo by Helen Koblin.)
Lesbian conference at UCLA

'We are the women that men have warned us about'

(continued from page 1)

the majority agreed to allow Beth to perform. The performer proceeded to deliver four songs to a not-too-attentive audience.

One young woman toppled off that first evening with a series of amusing stories about her experiences as a bar maid. (She must remain nameless since she was introduced hurriedly with a unclear first name.) She told of Norman, the proprietor of the bar, her boss, who taught her to hustle drinks, implored her to comb her hair and wear hot pants, and suggested that she even do a little hooking on the side.

Absence of 'Butches'

Norman, who more resembled a rodent than a man, according to the barmaid-poet, finally got around to trying to ball her. Having turned a deaf ear to all her negative responses, she finally copped out to being a lesbian. To this he responded with a barrage of choice epithets, but the writer responded with, "Yes, and I fuck better-looking women than you do." This line elicited a unanimous "right-on" from the audience.

As I scanned the auditorium, which was now solidly packed with women seated on the floor, in the aisles, around the platform, and pouring out into the corridor, I flashed that "the new world comin'" was really here. For most of the women were very young, averaging around 22 to 28, and most looked happy and lovely, and free in that there was a decided absence of the "butch" stereotype that lesbians of the past were conditioned to believe was appropriate to their life styles ... and that the straight society was conditioned to look for.

Although the "star" system aroused much controversy, two keynote speakers were scheduled. The first was Robin Morgan, author and editor of Sisterhood is Powerful, a collection of poems. Robin, who is frequently attacked from within as well as outside of the Movement for her radicalism, nevertheless commanded the rapt attention of her sisters, who were sprawled about the lawn around Janss Steps, where she spoke Saturday morning. Her speech was at once so poignant and poetic, powerful and incisive, informative and insightful, in short, brilliant, that her words were transfixed and made no issue about violating the agreed upon anti-star format of the conference.

Since Robin Morgan took five weeks to prepare her speech so that she would not be misquoted, and

neurotic, crazy, frigid, castrating, bitchy, aggressive lesbians, and bughill-riding witches! So I want to start by saying that this shocking stereotype is absolutely true. The days of real women asking politely for a crumb of human dignity are over.

"Most men say, 'You've become so hostile,' to which a good retort is a quote from a 19th century feminist who said, 'First men put up the chains and then when we write in

The main thrust was, 'Is she or isn't she?' "Know anyone who's been to bed with her lately?" "Can't you prove she's a lesbian, so what right does she have to address a lesbian-feminist conference?"

"Now such charges hardly devastate me since I've been straight-baited before. So, it is creditable time, once again. I am a woman! I am a feminist, a radical feminist, a militant feminist. I am a witch. I identify as a

movement vs. faggot effeminate consciousness, women, tactics of the women's revolution and the vision of the female cosmos.

I am an expert with the scars to prove it. I have been in my time, not only straight-baited, but also bughill-baited, red-baited, violent-baited, mother-baited, and artist-baited.

"As you can see, the above credentials qualify me for being an excellent target, available not only to the male rules, but also to any woman just dying to practice, even on a sister. But now to the subject.

The So-called Split

"It is necessary to recap history a little. In the early days of the current women's movement, many of us were a bit schizoid. The very first consciousness-raising session I went to, for example, gave me the warning:

We were talking about sexuality, and I described myself as a bisexual. This was even before the birth of the first gay liberation front, and long before 'bisexual' became a naughty or copout word. Every woman in the room moved, almost imperceptibly an inch or so away from me. This was not the first time I was to have such an articulate reaction.

"Later, with the creation of GLF (Gay Liberation Front) a few of us Jewish mother types spent a lot of time running back and forth between the two movements, telling straight women (feminists) that the lesbians weren't ogres, and telling the lesbians that the straight women weren't creeps. Simultaneously, the intense misogyny coming against lesbians from gay men, drove many women out of the gay movement, and into the women's movement. It was a brief and glorious sisterhood-glazed honeymoon, among all women in our movement.

"Then the contradictions began. I had announced my lesbian identification in the New York Times in 1968, before the first GLF was founded. In 1970, one group of radical lesbians said to me, "Don't you dare call yourself a lesbian. You live with a man and you have a child."

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The 'split' between heterosexual feminists and lesbians

by Helen Kolkin

Los Angeles Free Press
April 20, 1973
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Nobody wants their queers

The West Coast Lesbian Conference was sponsored by the Southern Region Working Committee and the Black Caucus of the UCLA Women's Resource Center. The Conference began at 8 p.m. with a keynote speech by a female speaker, Kate Millett. The anti-starling was cool and direct, and her speech was expository and enlightening. The audience could hear her clearly. She was a strong leader, and her words were steeped in the experience of the black woman. Her speech was a call to action, a challenge to all women to join together in the struggle for equality. She spoke about the need for solidarity and the importance of unity in the fight against injustice. She emphasized the need for education and awareness, and she encouraged everyone to take an active role in the movement. Kate's speech was powerful and inspiring, and it left a lasting impression on everyone who heard it.

Maxine Feldman

The Berkeley Free Press
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The third complication occurred Saturday afternoon at the uniformed speaker, Kate Millett. The anti-starling was cool and direct, and her speech was expository and enlightening. The audience could hear her clearly. She was a strong leader, and her words were steeped in the experience of the black woman. Her speech was a call to action, a challenge to all women to join together in the struggle for equality. She spoke about the need for solidarity and the importance of unity in the fight against injustice. She emphasized the need for education and awareness, and she encouraged everyone to take an active role in the movement. Kate's speech was powerful and inspiring, and it left a lasting impression on everyone who heard it.

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