



TRANSSEXUAL

ACTION

GROUP

NEWSLETTER Vol 3 No 7

Produce by Di, Hazel, Jane  
Rachel

TAG LIVES: OFFICIAL

Contrary to rumours TAG is not dead. It is continuing but our activities in London are being concentrated on a limited number of areas.

These are:

- \* maintaining correspondence with TSs interested in the group \*
- \* work on the book \*
- \* investigating the possibility of producing a magazine \*

All three are discussed in more detail in articles in this issue. We will also continue to provide information on TSism or at least where to find it to those seeking it.

However, there will be no further issues of the Newsletter - this will be the last one.

We are trying to continue TAG in a way which will reflect a basic feminist viewpoint in the group. In other words, a return, to a certain extent, to an original intention in its formation - to be a group of like-minded individuals interested in feminism and having a common background of TSism - instead of being a group catering for all TSs.

We hope that many of you would wish to keep in contact or participate in a feminist-orientated TAG. If so, could you please write in to the Box No letting us know, otherwise we will assume that you are not interested. (Some worry has been expressed as to what will happen to the old membership list - the answer is that it will be destroyed).

To those whose main wish is for a group dealing with the basic questions and difficulties in changing sex or who are interested purely in receiving a Newsletter we would recommend your joining SHAFT (address: 46 Liddell Way, South Ascot, Berkshire SL5 9UX).

Di

Please remember that the views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the individual writer and not of TAG as a collective.

Articles with an asterisk (\* ) have been edited.

Tagmag

Producing the Newsletter has fired some of us with an ambition to publish a much more professional job - a magazine dealing with a wide variety of issues from a feminist standpoint. We have no intention of proceeding without being absolutely clear about the sort of articles we want, the potential readership and the economics involved.

At the first meeting to discuss the idea we agreed on a number of principles which should guide the publication of the magazine (known at the moment as Tagmag). These are:

- to be a forum for personal politics and current issues from a feminist viewpoint
- to be primarily concerned with this and only secondarily with TSism
- each issue to have a lengthy major article
- contributions to be invited and writers to be sought from outside the group
- magazine to have a digest of interesting articles and letters on any subject from readers
- editorial policy of no personal attacks or overt anti-feminism.

We also set in train studies on the potential readership of Tagmag and the cost of various formats, methods of typesetting for off-set litho and print runs. The crunch question "What sort of magazine is it to be?" has still to be answered and will be discussed at the next couple of meetings. Only then will we have a clear idea about trying to launch Tagmag.

If all goes well the first issue will appear early in 1983, but there are a lot more meetings and questions to be answered before then.

If you are interested in this project and

\* you would like to attend the  
\* meetings

\* you would like to contribute or  
\* know writers who might

\* you have some sort of expertise  
\* or experience you think might be  
\* useful

please contact me via the Box No.

Di

---ooo000ooo---

A postcard showing the Paradise Beach Hotel and postmarked the Bahamas has been received from the Treasurer. She writes:

"As I lie here soaking up the sun I feel I ought to offer you some sort story as to how I spent your money. Here it is:-

Balance 20.2.82	£39-97
<u>Income</u>	
Donations from members	£78-50
Donations from meetings	£18-52½
Donation from Beaumont Soc	£20-00
	<u>£117-02½</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>	
<u>Newsletter</u>	
Postage & Envelopes	£48-70
Stencils & Ink	£11-16
Paper	£25-04
	<u>£84-90</u>
NCCL Affiliation	£10-00
Donation to TRANSEX	£ 3-00
Social	£ 4-00
British monomarks	£25-88
Misc (eg other postage)	£ 3-12
	<u>Total £131-70</u>
Current balance	£25-21½

About £10 of this will be spent sending out this edition of the Newsletter."

Di

LETTERS

Facing up to the media \*

Putting the 'Action' back into TAG

Dear TAG,

In response to your request for constructive criticism in the last issue, I would like to put a few of my own observations forward. When I first heard about TAG I thought it was intended to be an ACTION group. Unfortunately it turned out to be just another newsletter containing a collection of different views of what TSism is all about. Never a mention of positive ways in which the cause of the TS can be furthered.

For instance, in November I am giving a talk to a collection of twenty plus Doctors on the subject of TSism. Whilst I realise that I am not medically qualified to be doing this, I still feel that I owe it to those who come after me to try to do what little I can to help. Have any members tried to find out what organisations would like to have a discussion given on TSism because believe me there are plenty. How many TAG members have approached their local National Housewives Register, for instance, and actually offered to speak at one of their meetings? The TAG Newsletter would be a perfect means by which such ideas could be passed around to other interested members and the results and reactions would also make worthwhile reading. If TAG is to survive lets put a little more action into it and a little less theoretical argument. The world owes us nothing and if we want a better deal we must be prepared to do a little work for it.

Best wishes and good luck.

Angela.

Dear TAG,

I always enjoy reading your Newsletters, but the latest issue was perhaps a bit disappointing as it seemed 'a bit thin' both in size and content. It is easy to sit back and criticise the efforts of others, so could I say on a more positive note that on the whole I enjoyed the press digest which used to be a fairly prominent feature of your Newsletter. If all, or most of the other readers disagree then obviously the majority must have their way!

I have some quite serious reservations about the 'popular press' and not only in respect of the way in which they treat the affairs of TSS, but the Fleet Street popular press is, for better or worse, read by millions and perhaps consideration should be given to how the 'press image' of TSS can be improved. There is also a fair amount of coverage of the TS world in the 'quality' press, which is not perfect but probably less open to criticism. If your readers cannot stomach the 'gutter press', therefore, what about items from the Guardian, Times etc.

I am not a professional journalist but I do spend a fair amount of time both reading newspapers and writing 'Letters to the Editor' - where I have had some modest successes. I feel, therefore, that the TS case should not go by default - admittedly individual TSS may have different views on many things. Also any organisation needs to have some feed-back as to the views of people in general about members or potential members. Organisations typically employ press-cutting agencies to collect all mentions of their organisation in the press.

The alternative is the ostrich-in-the-sand approach. Ignore other people and hope they will ignore you.

Michelle.

---

The World Historic Defeat of the  
Female Sex \*

---

I propose to put forward a theoretical basis for the sexist and patriarchal nature of society. Obviously the following are my own opinions but they are meant as a working basis for a feminist position.

In order to make any radical critique we first of all have to look at our present position from an historical perspective. We have to examine the past in order to explain the the present and plan for the future.

The relations between the sexes is determined by the development of productive ability in any historical period. To discover the origins of sexism we have to return to the development of society where Barbarism was developing out of Savagery. Prior to this, in Primitive Communism, man (sic) could only produce in a day what was needed to sustain life for one day. Then due to the development of agriculture (sowing and reaping and the husbandry (sic) of cattle) - that is the production of a surplus or surplus value - man (sic) could produce more in a day than was needed to sustain life.

Prior to this time society was Matriarchal and Matrilineal, such gods (sic) as there were were probably female deities. This, like everything else, was economically determined, the male for obvious biological reasons was out hunting all day (which was the main source of food and clothing, the female was at the centre of any communal life and thus held the reins of power. The family as we know it did not exist and men did not know who their children were because sexual relations were free within the confines of the tribal/family organisation. Obviously women knew

who their children were but men did not.

The creation of surplus value was the most important event to occur in the history of man(sic)kind and the cause of the sexism which is with us to this day. Prior to this surplus there was no property beyond a few personal possessions and thus no laws or customs of inheritance. However, now that men, and it was men and not women, acquired possessions they also needed to pass on these and hence to know who their children were.

The creation of surplus value is what Engels and others have called the 'world historic defeat of the female sex'.

As man now possessed wealth and was also mortal he needed to do something with his wealth when he died. He needed someone to pass his wealth on to and therefore he needed to know who his children were which he did not know in the prior time of sexual freedom and equality - it was only the women who knew who their children were. So man, who now possessed wealth and power now used this power to impose chastity and monogamy on women. Thus the nuclear family is economically determined and is dependent on the development of productive resources.

Everything is economically determined. This applies to ideas - and to moral strictures, for morals and religion are themselves only tools in the service of the ruling class.

Engels observed that in Victorian London the family structure had broken down, this was caused by the conditions of economic deprivation obviating the need for the nuclear family. It is interesting that such conditions, which again exist in an area of London - Brixton - have again brought

about the collapse of the nuclear family and a change in 'moral values'. Such a change is of course determined by the economic conditions of our existence and not by individuals coming to any realisation of the desirability of a change in 'moral values'. That is, our consciousness is determined by our being or to put it another way - our ideas are determined by our situation.

It follows from the above that women will only gain equality when the economic circumstances which determine our oppression are ended for good, that is when the development of productive forces make possible the socialist transformation of society.

What I have written is only meant as a very bare outline. Anyone wanting to know more could do worse than start with Engels "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"

Rachael

---ooo000ooo---

---

Stand up and be counted \*

---

When April Ashley's lifestory was recently published, the book was extensively reviewed in the press and it is not really important what sort of reviews she got. It does not even matter what we ourselves think of it. The important thing was the phenomena of another TS facing the public and giving an account of her life. We don't think her typical? We don't think her life a credit to other TSs? Nonsense. However bad it might be it is far better than a great many have been used to thinking of us. Public ignorance has fuelled hostility and until quite recently many people thought us wicked perverts living dishonourably on the fringes of criminality. That, apparently, was what J Ormrod thought and he had power to make law!

Thanks to people like April Ashley, Jan Morris, Julia Grant and many others who have not been afraid to come out and tell of their success: to the generous hearing the media have given us; public attitudes are changing. A majority of people now consider us unfortunates with a bizarre condition deserving of sympathy. I wrote to Marjorie Proops thanking her for her sympathetic coverage and asking for her continued support. I had a lovely appreciative letter from her, promising to campaign at every opportunity to campaign against 'ignorance and prejudice'.

There are of course many ignorant: those who will shout "Pegleg" at a cripple or 'fooueyes' at a spectacle wearer. Such rabble will show their hostility to us also. There are also men who may regard us as an easy touch. However, it must be remembered that all women have to defend themselves against predatory males. We learn as girls, if our mothers teach us right, to avoid places and situations where we could be compromised; to be prepared to swallow insult and avoid assault. Discrimination is rife against all women, not just TSs.

So I appeal to all to examine their situation carefully and see how much secrecy is really necessary. TSs are not 'news' any more: the press are interested in us only if we behave badly or get into trouble. The more enlightened employers are interested only in the quality of our work, not our sex. Indeed I know of cases where employers have gone out of their way to help, even arranging a transfer to a different location when hostile reaction seemed likely. or discreetly announcing a change of name in their internal newsletter. Unions, too, can be extremely supportive. In short, it nearly always pays, as soon as you know your own mind, to take responsible people into your confidence. I didn't and I think I paid for my mistakes.

contd on p10

## THE LAST ALTERNATIVES.

As it appears that TAG is in the process of imploding into its own entrails, I should be grateful for the opportunity in this last edition to take up a few points arising from comments in previous newsletters which I believe help to illustrate why TAG has expired. Having recently re-read all the previous editions of the N/L, a number of patterns emerge. Firstly, there is a confusion in many members minds as to what a TS is and what they are themselves. Undoubtedly most of our readers do suffer from a gender dysphoria of various kinds, but it would have perhaps been salutary to determine (a) those members who were successful post-ops (b) those who had even changed over full-time, and (c) those who were living full & integrated lives in society as females. I suspect you could count the numbers, even of (b) & (c) on the fingers of one hand! Hazel (Vol 3 No 3) pleads that we should dare to question everything, accept nothing, & "try to understand our TSism". This is all very well, but you are either TS or not (and TS is but a stage on the way to being a full woman): if you need to question it all, it probably means you are not.

This leads to the 2nd point; an obsession with our own trivialities & a failure to define our objectives or purpose as a "movement". Davina (Vol 3 No 4) criticised the detachment, objectivity and "consistently ambiguous nature" of my "communiques" as "just a little trying". This neatly illustrates two failings in TAG. One was the personal criticism, levelled often as in this case under the guise of editorial comment, instead of concentrating on issues. The second is the failure to realise that we need more objectivity & detachment, not less, if we are to present ourselves and our case to others in a responsible and useful way, and less of the "I changed address a couple of times & met many new faces" sort of twaddle which is of little interest to anyone except the writer! This links to my 3rd point: a refusal to accept that there were any social 'norms' which we as women must accept per se. Consequently the N/L became a ragbag of

ideological factions that had very little to do with TSism. For example, it was a pity both Erica and Dave King (Vol 3 No 5) in commenting on the "Men" article (Vol 3 No 3) did not read what I actually wrote instead of reacting emotively to a supposed attack on sexual preferences. Of course everyone is entitled to his/her own choice of gender relationships: I would merely state an obvious fact- that the vast majority of relationships in the non-TS world are heterosexual male/female & lesbianism, homosexuality, asexuality & indiscriminate promiscuity form a minority. These relationships are of course significant for those who choose these roles, but statistically they are minimal rather than maximal. I then questioned why it was that the proportion of such roles was statistically greater among TSs than other genetically-born females. It appears that for some people, questions like this were better left unasked! Someone saying to me privately that the Alternatives articles certainly seemed to have ruffled a few skirts, commented that she was sorry I had not carried on with them - "it all certainly needed saying". As she is one of the few TAG members I know to have made a successful change-over & complete integration as a woman, her humorous point in N/L (Nov 81) that we all wanted to fly our own kites and no-one listened to each other is perhaps worth noting. Finally, there was a distressing inability to view our role as part of the wider context of society. We became obsessed by ourselves as a group, forever setting up new factions and divisions, of which Gillian & Jane's plan (Vol 3 No 6) is but the latest example, & Romana's Conference the most notorious. Most were & are mercifully short-lived & peripheral: the only movement to have lasted & had any sort of impact on the media & society is SHAFT. I would advise any true TSs to join that organisation. As well as providing a wealth of useful & practical information for the TS, it has been consistently confident & aware of its role in society, instead of an embittered enclave, which has unfortunately too often been TAG's lot. For example, Jane (Vol 3



WRITE YOUR WRONGS.

Although TAG is undergoing a major change, most of what TAG has come to mean will remain the same. That means that your letters to us, although they will no longer be published, are very welcome. We have a team of writers here only too willing to correspond with you, so don't feel cut off ( if you know what I mean! ) - we haven't forsaken you. We know how isolated, even desperate, some of you feel, so if a letter helps please write to us, we will try to help in any way we can. After all, we are all going through the same thing so we may have the answer! At least we'll be sympathetic.

Write to us too if you want to organise something or need to communicate to all the membership ( if there's anyone left out there! ). Of course we are particularly interested in corresponding with feminists and are still open to ideas/suggestions for the future direction of TAG.

Jane.

NEW WOMEN.

Over the last ten years the sex role stereotype of women has changed in Britain. One way to discover the changes is to look back at what was thought the traditional role of women ten years ago. In the book "Sexual Signatures" by J. Money & P. Tucker ( in 1973 ), they referred to "women's accepted role in society & normal behaviour", it makes interesting reading. Here are the important sections: If you are a woman 1) you are a failure unless you marry and have children. 2) Until you marry, your job is to compete with other women ( not openly) for the attention

- of men & to hang on to your hymen, but it's unbecoming to show interest in a man until he has signified interest in you.
- 3) After you marry, your job is to be a good wife & mother and pay no attention to other men.
- 4) Wile & guile are your weapons, manipulation is your tactic; you are not expected to have a strategy or be consistent.
- 5) You read and write, but not too much of either, and even less of maths.
- 6) If you earn a little money, that's great, as long as it does not interfere with your housework, but to surpass your husband or his colleagues in any kind of achievement outside of the domestic sphere puts everyone in grave psychological peril.
- 7) Your sexual feelings are not very important; it's not nice to think or talk about them.

Seven rules for life or are they?

Today, the number of women who do not come under rule 1 has definitely increased and has resulted in the fall of marriage as a viable institution. To determine the numbers of women rejecting child-birth is not so easy, but the general fall in the birth rate over the last ten years speaks for itself.

To those women who don't marry, rules 2 & 3 automatically have no meaning. Remaining a virgin just does not have any meaning either as recent statistics show, most young women have had intercourse by the age of 18 these days. Showing interest in men only when approached still persists today, though the fact that most young women have had intercourse by 18 suggests that many may have initiated the event.

Rule 4 is probably the most int-

eresting of the seven, since it suggests women use underhand techniques to achieve goals ( mainly in relation to men ). For women installed in relationships based on the marriage system, this manipulation certainly goes on today as ever it dead. For feminist women the phrase "resort to manipulation" is considered a better description, even so, in this age of pragmatism, rule 4 still applies today.

Of all the generalisations described in the seven rules, rule 5 has changed little, that is- for the working classes. For middle class women things certainly are changing, with parents encouraging their daughters to reach high levels of education. Right now we have a very conspicuous example of a middle-class woman reaching the heights - Margaret Thatcher.

Rule 5 still holds true for women and maths. Sadly the sciences and engineering still remain out of bounds to women in Britain. Elsewhere, in Europe and the U.S.A. there are signs that women are making inroads into this type of activity, but in Britain it is the arts which are thought a preferred domain for women. In contemporary literature there are many women who have made an enormous contribution to society both in the standard fiction medium and just recently ( via the feminist movement ) in sexual politics. We now have even such things as feminist science fiction.

Rule 6, which effectively speaks on employment prospects for women, certainly has no truth today. High unemployment has changed opportunities between the sexes quite markedly. Reverse role families with mum at work and dad at home in the kit-

chen have never been so common. The debate on how things will change in the future goes on. Basically everyone fears that high technology will put more women on the dole, and this will force things back. My view is that high technology will only put things back for those women who have not broken rule 5, that is, who have not trained themselves for new skills. It is in the area of employment where a sort of battle of the sexes will occur in the next few years. During this time, the media ( which is generally right-wing and male dominated ) will be trying to stereotype women into the mother/kitchen syndrome via advertising etc.. Opposing forces to this conditioning will come from sections of the media which are left-wing and from women already employed ( mainly in the public sector ) who will win the war for jobs is very difficult to determine except that it will become strongly class dependent. This will be due to the dividing mechanism between the classes already mentioned.

The last rule about women's expression of sexual feelings has changed little over the ten years. This has been due to the male dominated media which of course suppresses any comment on the subject. There is one sign that things are changing, and that is the sudden appearance of the subject of male impotence. This subject is certainly something men themselves would never volunteer to discuss, so it must have come from women themselves.

So as you see, Money & Tucker's interpretation of women's role & lifestyle has changed over the last ten years. Just where it is leading is not easy to see. One thing is certain though, as women change, men must change as well

..continued from previous page.

(assuring we don't have large scale separatism).

....But that is another story.

Rachel

!!

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED.

....continued from page 5.

Otherwise, I have been fortunate: everyone around home knows of my status. They are bound to, for I lived here before I changed. Nobody has been hostile. In fact I think they are kinder to me now than before. I have never been shouted at or insulted in public. Although I am now retired from regular teaching, professional colleagues accept me and my scientific work on exactly the same terms as ever.

In my opinion, acceptance by friends, colleagues, family and the public depends on 3 conditions: To be a perfectly credible and authentic woman in behaviour as well as appearance. Not to leave in the lurch an aggrieved and hostile wife. To show absolute commitment to the change, including surgery at all costs and as soon as possible. These are high standards and ideals; but only by letting everyone see our success can we hope for improvements in our legal status and public esteem. Above all, we shall never get doctors and psychiatrists to help us if we are not open, determined and successful.

Elaine.

\*\*\*\*\*

THIS IS THE END, BEAUTIFUL FRIENDS...

The last page of the last TAG Newsletter. I just want to say that for a long time it has seemed to me the mistake TAG made was to move right away from its original objectives, attempting to be another TS group, almost as if to "rival" SHAFT. Even our leaflet, radical though it may appear to some, represented a compromise, a watering-down of original intentions. Now at last, by 'ruthlessly' shifting TAG back to its original concept (& ~~and~~

inevitably losing the majority of members), will TAG become an ideologically consistent group with a sense of direction. To us, Feminism is crucial to our own concepts of being women. So henceforth, TAG becomes a group strictly for TSs sympathetic feminism. Will you be in that group??  
??

ASTCRAPT

Goodbye everyone in fandom! Don't send us anymore letters for the news-letter, send them to Terry Wogan instead. And remember rule 8 -no pooftahs! Is this the way the world will end? Not with a bang but with a Winky.....

..signed the lovable(!) trio of primates... Hawkeyes, Bat-ears & Forked-tongue.