

least partially in touch with the community of Philadelphia.

CROW, #25, July 1988, \$4.00 — checks payable to AFTA, PO Box A, Wharton, NJ 07885. 130 pp. glossy covered magazine

CROW is a review of "video, film, television, music, books, essays" as its cover suggests. It is not put out by a Marxist-Leninist group. In fact its authors and editor might be happy to be called liberals from what the reviewer can tell in this issue.

Right from the beginning, the MIM comrade reviewing this magazine — MC5 — would have to admit that s/he is unqualified to review CROW. CROW largely focuses on "video, film and television," which is not an area of MC5's expertise.

Still, it is easy to tell that CROW is written from a knowledgeable and strong point of view worth tangling with. While CROW is not explicitly Marxist, it does recognize militarism, classism, racism, sexism and heterosexism when it sees it. In the cultural field, this in itself is enough to recommend it.

The cutting edge of CROW is its support of gay liberation. Several of the movie reviews focus on the influence of AIDS hysteria in what is coming out of Hollywood. CROW excels in making subtle connections and interpretations in and of movie texts. Readers learn to look for indirect and even unconscious messages from film producers by reading CROW. For example, The movie "Fatal Attractions" is only one of many films that moralizes about how unrestrained sexuality brings about horrible consequences.

Other clues to the line in CROW is its unabashed praise for the SubGenius Foundation, PO Box 140306, Dallas, TX 75214. Its directory of fanzines informs readers that CROW is hooked into the so-called marginals network of punks, anarchists, nihilists etc.

It is also very tempting to call the cultural critique offered in CROW radical, neo-Freudian. As Wilhelm Reich, CROW would seem to favor sexual revolution in a way that is not often heard in the 1980s. Indeed, some of the reviews point out how the sexual revolution has petered out since the 1960s. CROW's critique of the watered down feminism of the 1980s is indicative. For example, CROW offers a scathing criticism of feminists working to ban pornography. (p. 119)

In addition to relating the "isms" to contemporary culture, CROW has a strong and consistent point of view because of its uncompromising championing of the libido. This includes the destructive side of the libido in that CROW seems to find well-done horror movies to be socially redeeming.

According to CROW, some horror movies that are done realistically leave the audience happy to be alive (p. 8) and more appreciative of the evils of

violence. Too often, according to CROW, violence is portrayed as something that characters recover from immediately (p. 7) — getting a chair broken on one's head (John Wayne movies) or similarly a piano dropped on one's head (as in Tom & Jerry cartoons). Apparently some producers consciously struggle against this by making violence realistic.

CROW fills a niche that nothing MIM distributes does. MIM promotes very little by way of a critique of contemporary culture. CROW magazine covers very important areas — visual media — that MIM has left largely untouched.

CROW also offers strong analyses and opinions from a gay liberation point of view. Therefore, while CROW is not the revolutionary communist magazine on contemporary culture that MIM would put together if it had the people, it is the best that MC5 is aware of in this niche. People who oppose putting this magazine on the MIM literature list should write, explain why and offer a better periodical that critiques contemporary culture.

Revolution, Spring 1988, Revolutionary Communist Party "On the Question of Homosexuality and the Emancipation of Women"

In discussions and written exchanges with MIM comrades and countless others, the RCP has discovered that its line on homosexuality in its program frequently provokes outrage. The RCP calls for the "elimination" of the ideology of homosexuality once capitalism is overthrown.

That is not to say the murder of gays and lesbians. In fact, the RCP has said that it opposes all forms of discrimination against homosexuals. Indeed, anti-homosexual pogromists are part of resurgent Amerikan Ramboism according to the RCP.

This RCP article is an attempt to rebut the RCP's critics. Unfortunately, it's really an example of a theological exercise. At the foundations of this elaborate construction of Marxist verbiage are out-and-out bourgeois assumptions. The bibliography of this wide-ranging and assertive article contains only three non-party sources, which themselves are referred to very sparingly. This lack of research by itself assures that the RCP's analysis consciously or unconsciously leans on the dominant ideologies of this time.

In very fancy Marxist phraseology, the RCP says that homosexuality's current function is ideological and symptomatic of the patriarchy and decaying capitalism. Gays and lesbians are not breaking with the patriarchy, only serving as blatantly reactionary or reformist expressions of it at best.

"All forms of human sexuality — including homosexuality — are manifestations of underlying social relations." (pp. 40-1) Indeed, the RCP treats homosexuality as an ideology. Most of the article compares homosexuality with communism and finds homosexuality lacking as a revolutionary vision! "Narrow," "selfish," and "narcissistic" are the words used to compare homosexuality with communism.

In the one place where the RCP compares homosexuality with heterosexuality — a footnote — the RCP only asserts the facts of why heterosexual behavior will continue to dominate for a very long time: "Long-standing worldwide significance in the reproduction of people and production relations, coupled with the millennia of stubborn traditions." (p. 45) This is not an ideological line, unless by it the RCP means that it is futile and therefore bad to challenge heterosexual relations.

This is an especially embarrassing statement by the RCP because the RCP admits that "heterosexuality has never again been free of that stamp of oppression [of the patriarchy — ed.]" (p. 43-4) The RCP admits it would be "tempting" to toss heterosexuality out the window for this reason. So what is happening here — an inability to think past the status quo or an opportunist silence which takes advantage of the prejudices of the status quo concerning sexual orientation?

The RCP has yet to deal with some key relevant facts. As one of the two main reasons that the RCP cites for the dominance of heterosexuality, reproduction of the human race is raised. That is astonishing. Does the RCP not realize that artificial insemination is a long-standing practice that requires no sexual relationship? This is not to mention test-tube babies coming in the future. Sexual intercourse is not necessary for reproduction and the RCP's ignoring of this fact is again opportunist silence playing into the hands of bourgeois ideology.

As for the fact that the patriarchy of heterosexist relations is based on property lineages — the importance of being able to pass down property through the generations — this only proves that heterosexism is a product of class society, not homosexuality. In fact, by the RCP's line of reasoning, if it were factually true that homosexuality appeared with the decay of capitalism (which it is not), homosexuality would have to represent the stirrings of a new proletarian order *since it can serve no use in the transferral of property!* Just as the proletariat has no interest in creating new property relations, only an interest in abolishing them, homosexuality is a practice with no possibilities of being tainted by inheritance considerations! If the RCP has discovered anything by its analysis of the dominance of heterosexism in society, it is the exact opposite of what it intended.

In addition, the inheritance practice could be imitated by gays too. There is no reason they could not adopt children or use artificial insemination.

Filled with unbacked factual assertions such as that gay men are mostly middle class, that the bourgeoisie promotes and practices homosexuality, that lesbian relations have all the same problems as heterosexist relations (but to the same degree with the same statistical frequency one might ask) (pp. 47, 48, 50), this RCP article asks a lot of people's factual knowledge. That is tantamount to opportunism on this issue because the education system clearly prevent

people from having extensive factual information about homosexuality.

The research just isn't there for the RCP to be making all these reactionary assertions.

In any case, there is perhaps one sense in which it is correct to compare homosexuality with communism. If heterosexual communists spend less time thinking about their sexuality and more time working on stopping World War III than do homosexual communists, then there is a problem with homosexuality. However, how could we call someone a communist in the first place if his/her first concern is his/her own sexual needs? On the other hand, one might expect a gay or lesbian to concern his/herself disproportionately (not necessarily mainly) with discrimination against gays and lesbians in general. Or looking at it from another angle, would one expect a South African proletarian to distribute his/her political time to various issues the same way a proletarian in the US would? Of course not.

So on the surface, one might think that maybe homosexuals do spend more time involved with their sexualities than do heterosexuals. If this is true, however, it does not show as far as MIM has learned in practice. It is this comrade's experience that the homosexual population is better than the heterosexual population on average in its political outlook. This is especially true now with the material conditions created by AIDS, something that the RCP seems aware of. (p. 47) In any case, to prove the opposite contention the RCP would have to offer some evidence.

Thus, this comrade would like to agree with the RCP that sexuality should not be a dividing line question. When the international proletariat has yet to protect itself from war and feed and shelter itself, sexual needs will have to take the backseat.

The RCP may be right that fighting discrimination against gays and lesbians may be all that is required to unleash their revolutionary energies. In the same sense there is a duty to fight sexism to unleash the struggle against imperialism and war. People who do not see these duties to fight heterosexist and sexist oppression are not communists.

On the other hand, the RCP's poor presentation of this issue has convinced this comrade that either severe ignorance brought about by decades of Marxist-Leninist neglect of the sexual revolution or opportunist capitulation to dominant bourgeois ideologies or both underlie the RCP's stance. And, opportunism is a dividing line question. The RCP does confront some of its critics' points head on in this article. For the most part the RCP argument collapses, but at least the RCP tried on some issues it hasn't before. Unfortunately, MIM is also aware that the RCP has not tried on all the issues the RCP has been made aware of. The RCP is content to let bourgeois ideology fill in the gaps.