



ERATO

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Stockholm

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ILGCN (*International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network*) **Information Secretariat**

Stage 2 in Jerusalem, 3rd Stage in Minsk or “Belarus in Exile”

ILGCN World Conference in Bloodied Moscow

Moscow/Stockholm -- The first stage of this year’s ILGCN World Conference on Lesbian & Gay Culture took place in the Russian capital on May 25th – right after the Nordic Rainbow Festival and before the 1st IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia) World Conference and Moscow Pride – an event sparking violent attacks, an army of blue-and-white riot police running through tear-gas soaked streets, arrested gays and neo Nazis, cursing churchmen and angry, old women making the sign of the cross before hurling their tomatoes and eggs.

Nordic ‘Troops’ on the Barricades

Pride participants had tried to place flowers at a Red Square memorial – but the brutality of the police and shouting, punching and kicking homophobes broke up the event – denounced by the city’s mayor who ignored international appeals to retract his ban on Pride. (*Continued on page 3*)
Danish delegates in Moscow.

New ILGCN Eastern Europe Fund: 1st Stop – Bucharest!

Stockholm – The ILGCN (*International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network*) Information Secretariat has launched a special fund to send LGBT cultural workers to Eastern Europe – with many on the barricades fighting a tide of ugly homophobia violence, and condemnation by politicians, religious leaders and the mass media.

“We are proud to announce the first recipient -- a young Swedish graphic artist, Tomas Näslund, on his way to the 2nd Bucharest Pride and are sad that we can only cover part of his travel expenses,” says Bill Schiller, secretary general at the Information Secretariat in the Swedish capital. (*Continued on page 2*)

Moment of Silence, Rainbow Monuments, Golden Tupilak

2nd IDAHO DAY CELEBRATED in SWEDEN

Stockholm – Demonstrations, musical performances, speeches and seminars took place in different cities and towns all over this Nordic nation on May 17th – IDAHO -- *the International Day Against Homophobia* -- honoring the WHO decision to abolish the classification of homosexuality as a disease.

At a concert and seminar at a café gallery in the Swedish capital, a moment of silence was in held collaboration with IDAHO colleagues around the world as a salute to (*Continued on page 3.*)

NEW ILGCN FUND for EASTERN EUROPE... page 2

(from page 1....) “We hope that future contributions will make it possible to be more generous and to send more artists to stand side-by-side with courageous colleagues in Eastern Europe.”

“And we’re pleased that the army of homophobes in this turbulent region are facing more and more resistance. Only a few years ago, our Nordic delegation to Bucharest was prevented from performing by armed police with dogs – “guarding” the theater from the homosexuals,” adds Schiller.

The new fund will be discussed at the coming ILGCN world culture conference stages in Moscow May 25, in Jerusalem as part of *World Pride* August 6-12 and Minsk or “*In exile for Belarus*” in the fall.

Contributions to the fund can be made through Tupilak (*Nordic organization of LGBT cultural workers*):
IBAN nr. 595 0000 99 6026 post giro 498 37 67-7.

Main Supporters of the ILGCN Information Secretariat:

RAINBOW BATTLE of MOSCOW *a Swedish comment from the scene*

Blood, clouds of tear-gas, punches, kicks, stones, knives, whips, curses, screams of “Kill the Faggots” and “Pedophiles out of Russia,” bearded churchmen in full robes and babushkaed old women making the signs of the cross before hurling their eggs and tomatoes..... Blue-and-white uniformed riot police running -- not walking -- the arrested gays and homophobes through the streets to armoured vehicles. Flowers left by lesbians and gays near the monument for the war dead snatched away -- stomped on and crushed into the cobblestones. No faggot flowers wanted here.

The mayors of Paris, Berlin, London and elsewhere had appealed to the Moscow mayor to lift his ban on the Moscow Pride parade -- in vain. A Moscow court moves unprecedentedly fast to review the appeal against the ban -- rejecting it -- to the jubilation of the neo Nazis and the religious leaders who had openly called on their followers to beat up the faggots in the streets.

Our Stockholm request earlier for support to the Nordic embassies in Moscow received different answers. Silence from Finland, Iceland and Sweden. A Danish suggestion for a possible speaker. From Norway, a crucially-needed financial contribution to help cover the conference room rent for the Nordic Festival of Rainbow Culture on the 25th -- and the first stage of the 2006 International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network world cultural conference -- launching the Russian event including the world IDAHO conference and Moscow Pride.

More important than money for the local organizers -- the Norwegian Embassy agrees to give its official stamp of approval for the event -- an invisible diplomatic torpedo fired at the mayor’s office. Another moral boost from the far north for the beleaguered organizers: the Nordic Council’s Cultural Fund had approved a grant to bring 10 Norwegian cultural delegates to Moscow -- from Norway to Lithuania, Denmark to Estonia -- adding badly-needed nationalities to the recruitment list and more man-and-woman power to the rainbow barricades.

After the battle smoke clearsthe Nordic contingent is shaken but uninjured, although a Norwegian violin was captured by the enemy. Human rights groups in Moscow renew their criticism of the ban -- insisting this has fuelled the blood-stained violence. Human Rights Watch, the Russian Helsinki Human Rights Committee, and others. A frightened Russian Amnesty continues to look the other way -- scared to break the silence -- leaving organizers bitter and angry.

Protests stack up all over Europe. EU parliamentarians denounce the violence in a meeting with Russian delegation in Brussels but no blond-and- blue-eyed Swedes are seen among the protesters. Noise from the Swedish foreign ministry...? At the moment, only cold and uncomfortable silence. But at least one official Swedish voice: Thomas Hammarberg, the new human rights chief of the European Union, denouncing the violence and homophobia of the Moscow authorities.

In Moscow, the young Pride organizers are facing sharp criticism from some local gays for provoking the homophobic Russian bear by challenging it in public -- perhaps a splash of jealousy for not being on the battlefield when history was being made.

The organizers ignore the slaps and their worries over unpaid debts -- and announce boldly that the 2nd Moscow Pride will take place on May 27, 2007. The anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality in Russia. The response from Stockholm? Tupilak, the ILGCN Information Secretariat, the Nordic Homo Council and the Nordic Rainbow Humanists are already signing up for future duty on those bruised and bandaged barricades.

Join us..? Or skip a beer and send some rubles to help feed the troops.

-- Bill Schiller, Stockholm

2nd IDAHO DAY CELEBRATED IN SWEDEN... page 3

(from page 1) persecuted, harassed and murdered LGBT people over the centuries. The gathering was organized by the Nordic Homo Council, Tupilak (*Nordic organization of lesbian and gay cultural workers*), the ILGCN (*International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network*) Information Secretariat and Nordic Rainbow Humanists.

IDAHO Recognition, Nordic Rainbow Monuments?

The meeting also launched a campaign to ask all Nordic governments to follow the example set by Belgium and France to give official recognition to IDAHO and also to take steps to help create rainbow monuments in Nordic cities such as those already existing in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and elsewhere.

“I’m afraid our request to Nordic sections of Amnesty International to take the initiative to beef up support for LGBT issues world-wide did not succeed in ‘breaking this silence.’ Amnesty regards ‘rainbow work’ only as voluntary – and some groups such as in Russia and elsewhere ignore this while other human rights groups join the LGBT battles,” says Bill Schiller of the Nordic Homo Council. “We’ll keep on trying – and hope that Canadian Amnesty will be more eager to light a new candle.”

At the IDAHO gatherings, Tupilak announced the winners of this year’s Golden Tupilak for outstanding international achievements going to the Palestinians and Israelis working together for Jerusalem World Pride in August and the internationally-minded Toronto Pride 2006. (IDAHO founder Louis-Georges Tin received the award last year.) Other Stockholm events included a demonstration in a downtown square and the Stockholm Gay Choir giving a musical salute to IDAHO from the stage.

ILGCN World Conference in Bloodied Moscow ...

(from page 1) ... The Nordic rainbow cultural festival was made possible by a grant from the Nordic Culture Fund of the Nordic Council – with presentations by Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian cultural delegates – and music, films and art work from Iceland and Finland.

“When the small Nordic nations join together, we can be a sizable addition to any rainbow barricade, and we’re proud that the Nordic fund supported this event in a city where LGBT people are openly condemned by politicians and where religious leaders tell their followers to beat up homosexuals on the street,” says Bill Schiller of the ILGCN Information Secretariat in Stockholm. “And we’re especially glad that the Norwegian Embassy in Moscow gave us a grant to help cover the conference locale rent for the Nordic cultural festival and the ILGCN conference – also giving a psychological boost for the hard-pressed and courageous Russian organizers desperately searching for allies,” Schiller concludes.

A special presentation was made by delegates from the ILGCN History Secretariat in Minneapolis, with the highly impressive historical exhibition immediately booked for Warsaw Pride in June and Riga Pride in July. Another crucial presentation came from the ILGCN co-ordinator - Belarus, discussing whether the 3rd stage of this year’s world ILGCN conference can be held in this the last dictatorship of Eastern Europe -- or if it once again has to be held in exile – perhaps in Poland or Lithuania.

The ILGCN Grizzly Bear 2006 honoring outstanding and courageous efforts in the face of unusually fierce homophobia was awarded to the organizers of the 1st World IDAHO conference and the first Moscow Pride.

New ILGCN cultural ambassadors and co-ordinators were approved from Algeria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden (see website).

The next stage of the 2006 ILGCN world conference will be in Jerusalem
American, Norwegian, Swedish as part of World Pride August 6-12.

ILGCN participants in Moscow

ILGCN World Homo Cultural Conference

Stages 2006

MOSCOW May 25 (*Prior to IDAHO Conference*)

Jerusalem (*Part of World Pride August 6-12*)

Minsk (or Exile) -- *autumn*

Photo by Sweden's Willi Reichhold, part of the Nordic art exhibition for ILGCN 2006 world cultural conference sites.

ILGCN Secretariats

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Proposals to ILGCN Annual Awards Welcomed at all Secretariats:

Orfeo Iris (*research in Nazi & neo nazi persecution of homosexuals*)

Grizzly Bear (*work in especially ferocious homophobic situations*)

Orfeo Musica (*international musical co-operation*) Arco Nordica (*Nordic co-operation*)

Clio's Silver Cup (*LGBT history*)

Sappho in Paradise (*libraries and publishing*)

New PROPOSALS from the ILGCN:

An annual ILGCN award for international contributions in art & photography (similar to those for literature, publishing and music. An annual ILGCN award for outstanding international work – promoting rainbow culture and human rights -- the Iceberg Award underlining the enormous potential of what seems to be just the tip, and a confirmation of the enormous hidden amount of work and energy going into every project and event.

Comments from ILGCN contacts welcome!