

## 論文

## Paradox of Identity-based Multi-front Politics: Gay Liberation Movement in California during the 1970s

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## 要 旨

本稿は、1970年にゲイ解放戦線（GLF）ロサンゼルスが展開したストーンウォール・ネーション計画（SN計画）という事例から、初期のゲイ解放運動の重要な特徴である他の少数派との連帯の実践を分析する。彼らはカリフォルニアのアルパイン郡に移住し、選挙を通じてすべての公職にゲイを当選させて「ゲイ・ネーション」を建設することを目指した。そして、その過程でアルパイン郡の最大の少数派集団であった先住民のワショー族に計画への協力を呼びかけた。

本稿が着目するのは、SN計画の構想を提示したGLFロサンゼルスの創設メンバーの1人であるドン・ジャクソンである。ジャクソンは、国家が肥大化して個人の自由を侵害することがゲイの抑圧の根本原因であると考え、選挙を通じて公権力を掌握することで性的少数派の自由を獲得するためにSN計画を構想した。国家権力からの自由を強調するリバタリアンを自称した彼にとってのゲイ解放とは、個人の自由というアメリカ独立宣言の理念をゲイに拡張することであり、このためジャクソンはストーンウォール・ネーションにも「丘の上の町」としてのアメリカのイメージを投影していた。

アメリカ独立と建国の物語とイメージが投影されたSN計画は、先住民との連帯を追求する過程でその不可能性を逆説的に露呈させた。SN計画の指導者たちは、先住民をゲイと同じくアメリカの「システム」に抑圧された存在と見なしながらも、同時に自身を西部開拓のパイオニアと重ね、パイオニアを一致団結させる共通の敵として先住民を客体化した。先住民との差異化によって、ゲイたちは個人の自由を保障されるべきアメリカ市民として自己を理解することができた。このような先住民の他者性の利用は、しかし、SN計画の指導者たちの間では問題視されなかった。本稿は、この背景には当時のゲイ解放運動における「抑圧」と「連帯」にまつわる理解そのものの限界があったことを指摘した。

### Introduction<sup>1)</sup>

The 44<sup>th</sup> annual New York Pride Parade at the end of June 2013 was full of joy and happiness because of two landmark rulings by the Supreme Court given on the eve of the events.<sup>2)</sup> Participants of the parade celebrated a huge victory for the gay movement, which has

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<sup>1)</sup> This paper uses the following abbreviation in the notes: ONE for ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, University of South California, Los Angeles; and CPUSL for Center for Pacific and American Studies Library, The University of Tokyo.

<sup>2)</sup> United States v. Windsor, 133 S. Ct. 2884 (2013); Hollingsworth v. Perry, 133 S. Ct. 2652 (2013).

concentrated enormous time and energy on realizing same-sex marriage at the state and federal levels for the last decade. The Pride Parade began as a commemoration of the Stonewall riots in 1969, which is popularly remembered as a starting point of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s. Since 1970, not only New York but other cities in the US and abroad have celebrated the day when gays resisted their oppression, coming out of the closet.<sup>3)</sup>

The picture of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s was quite different from either today's gay movement, which takes the strategy of focusing on a single issue such as same-sex marriage, or the homophile movement in the 1950s, which is often labeled as an assimilationist movement.<sup>4)</sup> Gay liberationists aimed for "total liberation" of human sexuality and believed in the necessity of the "revolution" to abolish heterosexism because traditional gender and sexual norms were so deeply rooted in the foundation of American society. Their radical critique of US society was influenced by other social movements in the 1960s such as the Civil Rights, New Left, anti-Vietnam war, women's liberation movements and others by minority groups. Inspired such movements, they expressed strong opposition against not only heterosexism but racism, capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism and employed confrontational movement strategies.

Such a new wave of the movement spread around the nation by chapters of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), whose first chapter was formed soon after the Stonewall riots in New York. As GLF was named after the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, the formation of solidarity with other minority groups was important for GLF members who were strongly influenced by other social movements at that time. They stated in their Statement of Purpose,

Community of Interest: We are in total opposition to America's white racism, to poverty, hunger, the systematic destruction of our patrimony; we oppose the rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer, and are in total opposition to wars of aggression and imperialism, whoever pursues them. We support the demands of Blacks, Chicanos, Orientals, Women, Youth, Senior Citizens, and others demanding their full rights as human beings. We join in their struggle, and shall actively seek coalition to pursue these goals. . . .

Our goal is - *total liberation* - life is for the living! We are alive! We want all to be alive! Sex is a sure cure of boredom and an antidote to the violence that is so American-

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<sup>3)</sup> Stonewall riots broke out when police raided on the Stonewall Club in New York's Greenwich Village. Behind the Stonewall riots were an anger heightened by a series of police harassments and raids of gay clubs which plagued gay communities. See, Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Plume, 1994).

<sup>4)</sup> For the history of homophile movement, see, for example, John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States 1940-1970* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983); Martin Meeker, "Behind the Mask of Respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and Male Homophile Practice, 1950s and 1960s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (Jan., 2001): 78-116.

((((((((((((( Power to the People ))))))))))))<sup>5)</sup>

Their attitude of solidarity with other minority groups showed a clear contrast with other gay liberation groups formed after GLF. For example, the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) New York made clear of their stance “forbearing alliance with any other organization except for those whose concrete actions are likewise so specifically dedicated.”<sup>6)</sup> Some members of GAA New York were ex-GLF members who left partly because GLF’s efforts to seek solidarity with other varieties of social movements took too much time and energy with often fruitless results.<sup>7)</sup> Moreover, betraying their ideal of solidarity, leaders of GLF consisted mostly of white, middle-class gay men and there existed a tension among gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people.<sup>8)</sup> Therefore, exploring the difficulties which GLF faced in trying to form solidarity with other groups has been one of the major concerns for historical studies on the gay liberation movement.<sup>9)</sup> Following the lead of the previous studies, this paper analyzes how GLF pursued solidarity with other groups and what was the challenges they encountered by examining the Stonewall Nation project in 1970, which was unique compared with other activities of GLF Los Angeles, which was formed in December 1969.

Generally, activities of GLF Los Angeles can be classified into two kinds: resistance and self-help activities for the gay community. GLF Los Angeles was famous for their resistance against police harassments.<sup>10)</sup> Not only against police, but GLF picketed bars or clubs which

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<sup>5)</sup> Harry Hay, *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder*, ed. Will Roscoe (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 116-17.

<sup>6)</sup> Dr. Leo Louis Martello, “Gay Activists Alliance Forms in New York City,” *Advocate*, March 1970, ONE.

<sup>7)</sup> See Terence Kissack, “Freaking Fag Revolutionary: New York’s Gay Liberation Front, 1969-1971,” *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 104-34.

<sup>8)</sup> For the tension between gays and lesbians, see, for example, Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). On the political activism by transgender people in the 1970s, see, Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), especially in chapter 6. For the gay liberationists’ attitudes toward drag performance, Betty Luther Hillman, “‘The Most Profoundly Revolutionary Act a Homosexual Can Engage in’: Drag and the Politics of Gender Presentation in the San Francisco Gay Liberation Movement, 1964-1972,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no.1 (Jan., 2011): 153-81.

<sup>9)</sup> For the relation between GLF and the feminist movement or the black movement, see, Kissack, “Freaking Fag Revolutionary.” For the tension between gays and New Lefts, see, Ian Lekus, “Queer Harvests: Homosexuality, the U.S. New Left, and the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba,” *Radical History Review* 89 (2004): 57-91. Beth Bailey described the tension between gays and women in *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), especially in chapter 7.

<sup>10)</sup> “Davis Explained Why He Can’t Talk to Gays,” *Advocate*, January 19, 1972; Leo Laurence and Rob Cole, “Lepers’ Get Ear of L.A.,” *Advocate*, January 19, 1972; Don Jackson, “God is Gay,” *Tuesday’s Child*, March 23, 1970, Don Jackson Subject File, ONE; Don Jackson, “Gay Power,” *Spokane Natural*, March 21, 1970, Don Jackson Subject File.

excluded gay clientele. They used some methods of protest inspired by “sit-in” demonstrations of the Civil Rights Movement, for example, “touch-in” or “kiss-in” protest through which participants shake hands, hug and kiss each other to reverse discriminatory policies.<sup>11)</sup> On the other hand, the most significant achievement regarding self-help activities was the success of establishing the Gay Community Service Center in 1971. The center provided various services such as a clinic for venereal diseases, counseling services and shelters for gays. It was granted non-profit organization status by the Internal Revenue Service.<sup>12)</sup>

The SN project was a form of combining the two kinds of activities together. On the one hand, it was a resistance against police harassments and, on the other hand, a self-help activity to create a better place to live for gays. The SN project was an unfulfilled project through which GLF sought to establish a “gay colony” or “gay nation” by lawful “take over” of Alpine County in California. They planned to move into the county with hundreds of gays to constitute the majority vote in Alpine County and elect gays for all public officers. Alpine County, located in the Sierra Nevada and between Lake Tahoe and Yosemite National Park, was best suited for the project because it had only 367 registered voters, the smallest number in California.<sup>13)</sup> The plan gained support from within California’s gay community and around the nation, but it failed mainly due to opposition from residents in the county.

The SN project has scarcely been studied as a movement which sought solidarity with other minority groups, despite GLF’s emphasis on solidarity for liberating gays. On the contrary, previous studies often describe the SN project as a radical separatist movement.<sup>14)</sup> These studies miss drastic policy change of the SN project which happened in November 1970 because they focus mainly on the original idea of the project to build a “gay nation.” It is necessary to reevaluate the project taking consideration of the fact that the SN project tried to open the door to all the oppressed people in realizing the plan. The work by Elizabeth K. Hobson is especially notable because it pointed out that the SN project sought solidarity with the Washoe tribe, who constituted about 40% of the total population in Alpine County. However, her focus was to trace the genealogy of gay socialism by analyzing GLF Berkeley members’ criticism of the project and did not investigate how the supporters of the SN project sought solidarity with other minority groups.<sup>15)</sup> In contrast to Hobson’s focus on the opposition

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<sup>11)</sup> Mike Merry, “Farm Animals,” *Gay Sunshine*, October, 1970, ONE.

<sup>12)</sup> “Pamphlet of Gay Community Service Center,” Folder 19, Box 4, Advocate Records, ONE; Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 193.

<sup>13)</sup> “1970 Census of Population, California,” United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1970cenpopv1.html>.

<sup>14)</sup> Rodger Streitmatter, *Voices of Revolution: The Dissident Press in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 247-49; Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 89.

<sup>15)</sup> Emily K. Hobson, “Imagining Alliance: Queer Anti-imperialism and Race in California, 1966-1990” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2009).

to the project, a study by Faderman and Timmons concentrated on the role of Morris Kight, who was a famous gay activist and a spokesperson of the SN project. However, their focus was not only the relation between gays and other groups but its media strategy. They argued that the SN project was a media strategy to attract attention to the emerging gay liberation movement, which had been often neglected by mainstream media.<sup>16)</sup> Though GLF Berkeley and Morris Kight were important actors to understand the SN project, in order to analyze the politics of solidarity in the SN project, more emphasis should be laid on the role of Don Jackson, who originally designed the project and put ideas into action. Don Jackson was one of the founding members of GLF Los Angeles and a journalist who wrote about gay liberation issues for gay press and also for other underground press. My paper reevaluates the project as a movement which sought solidarity with other minorities and analyzes how the solidarity was pursued by paying particular attention to Jackson's role.

In the following section, this paper offers a broad picture of the SN project to examine how the SN project attempted to foster solidarity with other minorities. Then in section two, in order to understand the context of the SN project, I will analyze why Don Jackson proposed such a project and how he pursued his vision for gay liberation through it. In section three, I will explore what were the limitations for them in pursuing solidarity with Native Americans in order to achieve the project.

## 1. Stonewall Nation Project

Don Jackson proposed his plan for the first time at the West Coast Gay Liberation Conference held by GLF Berkeley in December 1969.<sup>17)</sup> He prepared the plan by consulting with a lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).<sup>18)</sup> Audiences considered his talk of "gay nationalism" a right-wing idea and attacked his plan as "reactionary." However, Jackson did not abandon his idea and wrote a short but impressive essay titled "Brother Don Has a Dream" to share his dream with other gays. The essay said,

I have a recurring daydream. I imagine a place where gay people can be free. A place where there is no job discrimination, police harassment or prejudice. A place where love rules instead of hate. A beautiful valley in the mountains, remote enough from

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<sup>16)</sup> Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 177.

<sup>17)</sup> "Homosexual Gov't Planned," *Los Angeles Free Press*, January 9, 1970, ONE; Jim Kepner, "Gay Lib Conference Attracts Hundreds: Delegates Search for Strategies, Understanding," *Advocate*, March, 1970. On the detail of the West Coast Gay Liberation Conference, Morris Kight "Gays Meet up North," *Tuesday's Child*, January 12, 1970, Berkeley Gay Liberation Subject File, ONE; Robert Kroll, "Gay Liberation Conference Closes Five-day Symposium," *The Berkeley Gazette*, December 31, 1969, Berkeley Gay Liberation File; and "Homosexual Symposia Conference Scheduled," *The Berkeley Gazette*, December 24, 1969, Berkeley Gay Liberation File.

<sup>18)</sup> Don Jackson, "Gays Say They Ain't Guilty!," *Berkeley Barb*, October 23, 1970, CPUSL.

cities so we will not be hassled, yet close enough so transportation is rapid. A place where a gay government can build the base for flourishing gay counter-culture and city.

If only two hundred pioneering gays can be found, my dream can come true.<sup>19)</sup>

His dream caught the attention not only of the underground press but also of the local and national mainstream media. Many gays were excited about the project surrounded by the utopian rhetoric because it seemed easy to gather a few hundred gays and stay only 90 days in the county.<sup>20)</sup> Above all, the local or California state government had no means to stop them because the project was completely legal.<sup>21)</sup> GLF received many letters asking for the details of the project from across the U.S. and sometimes from abroad.<sup>22)</sup>

The turning point came in November 24, 1970 when the Alpine Liberation Front (ALF) was formed in San Francisco. ALF was a joint organization of not only GLF chapters (Los Angeles and San Francisco) but other groups and individuals as well.<sup>23)</sup> From this day on, they started to undertake a major reform of the project by promoting the following four policies.

First, a resolution on heterosexual participants was adopted in the founding meeting on November 24 and brought fundamental change to the project, which originally aimed at building a “gay nation.” Jefferson Poland, a founder of the Sexual Freedom League (SFL), drafted the resolution. As a leader of SFL, which consisted of both homosexuals and heterosexuals, he demanded that “Stonewall Nation had to be opened for every person, both homosexuals and heterosexuals, who wish to live under the freedom.”<sup>24)</sup> Don Jackson also accepted the resolution, saying that liberated, in other words not homophobic, heterosexuals

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<sup>19)</sup> Don Jackson, “Brother Don Has a Dream,” Folder 2, Gay Liberation Front Los Angeles Records (hereafter cited as GLF/LA Records), ONE.

<sup>20)</sup> Keane v. Mihaly, 11 Cal. App. 3d 1037 (1970). The ruling shortened the required period residents had to live for voter’s registration from a year into 90 days.

<sup>21)</sup> Though officials from Alpine County met Richard Turner, assistant legal affairs secretary to Governor Ronald Reagan on October 21, Turner said there was nothing the state could do to keep the gays out. See, “Gay Mecca No.1,” *Time*, November 2, 1970, CPUSL; “A Gay ‘Nation’ in the Sierras?” *Advocate*, November 11, 1970; and “Markleeville gets look at real, live GLFers,” *Advocate*, December 23, 1970.

<sup>22)</sup> The letters GLF received are collected in the Folder 2, GLF/LA Records.

<sup>23)</sup> Crossing the differences of sexual orientation, movement cultures and generations, a variety of groups and activists participated in ALF. For example, Society of Individual Rights (SIR), Sexual Freedom League (SFL) and Steve Ginsberg from Personal Rights in Defense and Education (PRIDE). The chair was David Carpenter from GLF San Francisco. See, Board Member List of Alpine Liberation Front North California Chapter, Folder 5, Ctn. 4, Sexual Freedom League Records, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; “Groups Wants Alpine to be Haven for All,” *Advocate*, December 23, 1970. ALF had a message center to deal with media publicity. See, Don Jackson, “Alpine for All Swingers,” *Berkeley Barb*, December 4, 1970.

<sup>24)</sup> Sexual Freedom League, “‘Stonewall Nation’ and Alpine County Resolution,” undated, Folder 2, GLF/LA Records.

would be welcomed.<sup>25)</sup>

Second, achieving gender equality became an important goal. Jackson appealed to women by saying that “Alpine can benefit the female more than the male” because “jobs will be opened to women that are closed to them everywhere.” He also emphasized that freedom of gender expression would be guaranteed in the Stonewall Nation.<sup>26)</sup>

Third, a resolution on Third World people was adopted at the ALF meeting on December 8. It was submitted by the Psychedelic Venus Church, whose founder was also Jefferson Poland. It affirmed the necessity to secure political power for the Washoe people by deliberate “over-representation” in legislative bodies in order to realize racial equality and as partial reparation for their exclusion from the political process. As such, it resolved that gay Third World people, especially Native Americans, should comprise at least half of any “Liberation Slate” of candidates for the Board of Supervisors and school boards in Alpine County.<sup>27)</sup> The resolution showed their determination to pursue racial justice in the Stonewall Nation.

Lastly, ALF proposed various policies to protect the native culture of the Washoe tribe in Alpine County. Reportedly, 115 to 250 Washoes were living in the county, and ALF tried to win support from them in return for such policies.<sup>28)</sup> They decided to legalize peyote, subsidize Washoe basketmaking, revive pine-nut harvesting, include the Washoe language in the curriculum of local schools, and eventually establish a junior college where Native American Studies would be one of the leading departments.<sup>29)</sup> In addition, they inserted an advertisement to call for donations for the Occupation of Alcatraz by the Indians of All Tribes (IAT) in the Alpine Report, which was distributed to recruit people to the SN project.<sup>30)</sup>

The number of applicants for the SN project rose up to 479 in October 1970, and it was enough to constitute the majority vote in Alpine County.<sup>31)</sup> The success of the project seemed close at hand, so they decided to organize a community meeting with residents in Alpine County on December 19, and to start moving to the county in January 1971. Some members

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<sup>25)</sup> “Group Wants Alpine to be Haven for All.”

<sup>26)</sup> Don Jackson, “Mountain Women,” *Berkeley Barb*, January 8, 1971.

<sup>27)</sup> Alpine Liberation Front, Alpine Report, Folder 2, GLF/LA Records; “Alpine for Washos too,” *Berkeley Barb*, December 11, 1970.

<sup>28)</sup> “Alpine – Quiet Little County,” *S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, August 30, 1970, Folder 1, GLF/LA Records; “Gay Radical Says Alpine Indian Turf,” *Berkeley Barb*, October 30, 1970.

<sup>29)</sup> Alpine Report.

<sup>30)</sup> The group called IAT landed on Alcatraz Island located in the San Francisco bay and declared its occupation. In the Proclamation addressed to “the Great White Father and All His People,” they reclaimed Alcatraz Island by “right of discovery” and concluded that “it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.” They occupied the island from November 20, 1969 to June 11, 1971. Though the occupation was forcibly ended by the government in the end, it had significant impacts on federal Indian policies and the Red Power movement.

<sup>31)</sup> “Gay Mecca No.1”; “A Gay ‘Nation’ in the Sierras?”



from ALF visited the county to prepare for the meeting during the Thanksgiving season.<sup>32)</sup> However, the resistance from the residents was strong.<sup>33)</sup> ALF tried to arrange a meeting with Sheriff Stuard P. Merrill to obtain permission to hold a community meeting, but he avoided talking with them.<sup>34)</sup> The reaction from the Washoe tribe was also not what they expected. After an offer from ALF to enlist as allies “in a common struggle against oppression,” the leader of the Washoe tribe replied that “homosexuality is something the Indians have never known and had never heard of” and preferred the present local government.<sup>35)</sup>

What made the situation worse was the criticism against the project from within gay communities. For example, Leo Lawrence, who wrote a series of articles for *Berkeley Barb*, criticized the project in his article. He wrote that “The Gay Liberation Front I see on the west coast (and from reports ‘round the nation) messes around with tame cultural activities and political reformism (i.e. Work-within System taking over desolate Alpine County).”<sup>36)</sup> Effectiveness of the “work-within system” movement, which did not aim for fundamental revolution of the “system,” caused controversy among radical gays.<sup>37)</sup> Furthermore, GLF Berkeley adopted a resolution not to support the project and criticized leaders of the project for being “sexist, racist and anti-revolutionary nationalist.” Though the resolution by GLF Berkeley did not have any authority to halt the project, *Advocate* reported that this resolution caused “the first major split” in the West Coast gay liberation movement.<sup>38)</sup>

Consequently, the scheduled community meeting was cancelled due to a blizzard, and so did the plan to move to Alpine County on January 1, 1971. The situation seemed hopeless, but ALF announced, “that doesn’t mean the project is off. . . . it would be more practical to wait for Spring and warmer weather.”<sup>39)</sup> After the announcement, however, media coverage of the SN project in the gay press and the underground press decreased and was replaced by the report on the presidential election of 1972.<sup>40)</sup>

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<sup>32)</sup> “No One to Listen: Gays’ Outline for Invasion,” *San Francisco Examiner Friday*, November 27, 1970, Folder 19, Charles Thorpe Papers, San Francisco Public Library.

<sup>33)</sup> “Vigilantes to Fight G.L.F.,” *Los Angeles Free Press*, December 11, 1970, Folder 1, GLF/LA Records; “Bear Valley Hoping It Can Outvote Gays,” *Advocate*, December 9, 1970.

<sup>34)</sup> “Markleeville Gets Look at Real, Live GLFers.”

<sup>35)</sup> “Committees Formed in Alpine County to Deal with Gays,” *Advocate*, December 9, 1970.

<sup>36)</sup> Leo Lawrence, “Leo Bids Farewell to All This,” *Berkeley Barb*, October 30, 1970.

<sup>37)</sup> The Sandman, “Get Gay!!,” *Berkeley Tribe*, October 30, 1970, Folder 30, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers, GLBT Historical Society; “From Gay Flames,” *Gay Sunshine*, November, 1970.

<sup>38)</sup> “Berkeley GLF Opts Out,” *Advocate*, November 25, 1970.

<sup>39)</sup> “Alpine Project off? Only ‘till Snow Melts,” *Advocate*, January 6, 1971. Jackson wrote that the most serious setback was the new building code enacted by the Alpine authorities, which precluded gays from living in trailers, campers or tents, and also prevented gays from building their own homes. Also, Alpine property owners had a “gentleman’s agreement” to freeze out sales to gays. Deposits by gays to purchase property was returned. Don Jackson, “Gay Highland Plan Goin’ Down,” *Berkeley Barb*, March 26, 1971.

<sup>40)</sup> Though some supporters of the project promoted the gay takeover of another city, instead of Alpine County, it could not gain much popularity. “L.A. Judge Finds Alpine Fund Raiser Innocent,” *Advocate*,



## 2. “Liberty and Gays”

Don Jackson’s response to criticism against the SN project leaders highlighted a crucial aspect of Jackson’s view for gay liberation. He stated,

Of course Gay Liberation is a revolutionary movement, but most gay people have rejected violent revolution. We can accomplish our goals by working within the system. The foundation of Gay Lib’s philosophy is that homosexuals must go through an emotional revolution to overcome their basic self-hatred. . . . Since Marxism preaches the same self-hating doctrines, it militates against Gay Liberation. Marxism is counter-revolutionary.<sup>41)</sup>

He denounced Marxism and insisted “we can accomplish our goals by working within the system.” His emphasis on pursuing liberation of gays through “working within the system” was notable because that was the very reason why the project was not disrupted by the government and succeeded in gaining support from the gay community. He was unique when compared with other project leaders who were known to be Marxists, such as Morris Kight and Don Kilhefner. What made his vision for gay liberation different from other gay liberationists? How were his thoughts reflected in the SN project? What was the significance of his thoughts in the political or historical context of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s? To understand the context of the SN project, this section addresses these questions by analyzing Don Jackson’s writings in the early years of the gay liberation movement.

Firstly, his speech titled “Liberty and Gays,” which he made for the founding convention of the California Liberation Alliance on February 28, 1970, is useful in approaching such questions. Jackson harshly criticized the sodomy law and stated,

The political persecutors of the erotic minorities subscribe to a statist ideology; it is the job of the state to punish people who violate the religious concepts of the majority. A growing number of statist are using the mental illness myth to get rid of non-conformists of every type. Everyone who is not exactly like everyone else is mentally ill. This method is especially effective against homosexuals, on account of the great fear and revulsion of homosexuality inherent in the culture.<sup>42)</sup>

For Jackson, the cause of the oppression of gays was, first and foremost, the excessive state authority to punish sexual minorities who were thought to transgress religious beliefs.

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June 23, 1971; Jackson, “Gay Highland Plan Goin’ Down”; “Nation’s First Gay Town May be in San Diego County, not Alpine,” *Advocate*, March 3, 1971.

<sup>41)</sup> “San Francisco GLF Affirms Alpine support,” *Advocate*, December 9, 1970.

<sup>42)</sup> Don Jackson, “Liberty and Gays,” Don Jackson Subject File.

Jackson insisted, “There is no type of statist legislation more obnoxious than the attempt by government to write religious doctrines into law. . . . The laws against voluntary sexual acts are, after all, patently the legislation of religious beliefs.” Behind his attack against the state, which punished gays by using “the mental illness myth,” was his extensive research about the Mentally Disordered Sex Offender Act in California.<sup>43)</sup> He wrote, “California law [the Mentally Disordered Sex Offender Act] provides for ‘indeterminate’ prison sentences. A person given an ‘indeterminate’ sentence remains in prison until the State Parole Board feels that he is ‘rehabilitated.’”<sup>44)</sup> Because Jackson was very much concerned about the state interference into the private matters including voluntary and consented sexual acts, he concluded that gays needed “Laissez Faire.”

What do Gays want government to do for them – Laissez Faire. The Gay Liberation movement is a true libertarian cause – the struggle of a people against the tyranny of the majority. . . . A libertarian political strength can be attained by seeking support of all peoples oppressed by the statist. . . . Let us all unite behind our ideal, liberty so that every man will be able to live his life without interference from others so long as he lives in peace.<sup>45)</sup>

For Jackson, “Laissez Faire” was a logical conclusion induced from his observation, and the SN project was the best solution to achieve liberty for gays. This is evident in the slogan of groups Jackson organized for the project: “We will never be free from police oppression until we control the police power.”<sup>46)</sup> He considered that if gays occupied the police department in Alpine, gay police officers would not interfere in the privacy of other gays. Through the SN project, he tried to achieve personal liberty by seizing state power through election rather than by destroying the “system.” Therefore, he did not care about criticism calling the SN project a “working within the system” movement or “political reformism.” In response, he criticized ideology of the radical leftists as “statist ideology” which disturbed gay liberation by tolerating big government interfering in the personal lives of citizens.

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<sup>43)</sup> The Mentally Disordered Sex Offender Act in California was enacted in 1944 and repealed in 1981. In 1973, 28 states had a similar law. In California, a person who was charged of any crime could be sent to Atascadero State Hospital if he or she was thought to have a potential risk of committing sexual crimes. See, Susan G. Tanenbaum, “Toward a Less Benevolent Despotism: The Case for Abolition of California’s MDSO Laws,” *Santa Clara Law Review* 13, no.3 (1973): 584. Jackson wrote many articles about the law, see, for example, Don Jackson, “Gays Can Be Incarcerated for Life,” *Los Angeles Free Press*, July 16, 1971; Don Jackson, “The Cure is a Crime,” *San Francisco Good Times*, August 6, 1971, Don Jackson Subject File; Don Jackson, “Lobotomy Foiled,” *Berkeley Barb*, January 7, 1972; and Don Jackson, “Castration is Still Used as Punishment,” *Los Angeles Free Press*, January 14, 1972.

<sup>44)</sup> Don Jackson, “Dachau for Sex Offenders,” *Los Angeles Free Press*, November 13, 1970.

<sup>45)</sup> Jackson, “Liberty and Gays.”

<sup>46)</sup> “BAG-FUN,” *Berkeley Tribe*, October 16, 1970, Don Jackson Subject File.

It [the gay liberation movement] is a revolutionary movement – not a political revolution with guns and violence (although there are those who would make it so), but a social and cultural revolution. . . . To many in the movement, it is a libertarian cause; to many it is not. Gay libertarians are anxious to align the Gay Community with the libertarian cause before the Marxist within the group are able to align it with the statist of the left.<sup>47)</sup>

Such anti-communist sentiments that opposed interference by the state in the private matters were not unique to Jackson. As Ian Lekus demonstrated, some gay liberationists strongly denounced communist countries for their hostility toward homosexuals and were disappointed by New Lefts in the U.S. who admired the Cuban revolution and ignored gays in Cuba.<sup>48)</sup> However, Jackson was distinctive in the way in which he expressed his sympathy with libertarianism and hostility against communism. He described his vision for gay liberation in nationalistic rhetoric. He cited the Declaration of Independence in the first paragraph of the “Liberty and Gays.” He stated, “‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.’ There exists a minority of some 20 million people, to whom this promise of the founding father is unfulfilled.”<sup>49)</sup> In this way, he tried to argue that gays were also Americans who deserved the right of personal liberty.

Jackson frequently used such rhetoric or images of America’s nation founding when he discussed the SN project. In the letter to GLF, he wrote about the visit to Alpine County in November 1970 to prepare for the community meeting with residents in the county and stated,

We could announce that the purpose of the Thanksgiving trip is to negotiate a treaty between the Stonewall Nation and the Washoe Nation. We will be going to ask the Washoe what they want from the new Gay government, and to dispel the myths and lies about us that are being spread by the white racist regime in Alpine.<sup>50)</sup>

He described the Thanksgiving trip as an opportunity for negotiation between the “Stonewall Nation” and the “Washoe Nation” to recall the historical encounters between colonists and Indians in the 17th century. By juxtaposing the preparation period for the SN project with the colonial period, the narrative of nation founding paralleled with that of the SN project. Here the participants of the project who sought a better place to live free from oppression were overlapped with the Puritans who were oppressed in England and journeyed

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<sup>47)</sup> Jackson, “Liberty and Gays.”

<sup>48)</sup> Lekus, “Queer Harvests.”

<sup>49)</sup> Jackson, “Liberty and Gays.”

<sup>50)</sup> Don Jackson to GLF, undated, Don Jackson Subject File.

to the New World. Furthermore, Jackson projected the image of a “city upon a hill” onto the Stonewall Nation when he wrote, “the colony could become the gay symbol of liberty, a world center for the gay counter-culture, and a shining symbol of hope to all gay people in the world” in his essay “Brother Don Has a Dream.” By deliberately manipulating these rhetoric and images, Jackson tried to create an imaginative continuity between Pilgrims and gays in order to situate gay liberation as a natural course of the American Revolution, not Marxist revolution. He argued that his vision for gay liberation was “revolutionary” because revolution for Jackson was to realize and expand the ideal of the American Revolution to include gays as American citizens whose personal liberty should be secured as their civil right.

The role model for Jackson as a liberator was Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Washington March in 1963. Indeed, his essay “Brother Don has a Dream,” in which he elaborated the idea of the SN project, was apparently modeled after the “I Have a Dream” speech by King, and Jackson cited the Declaration of Independence in “Liberty and Gays” as King did in the “I Have a Dream” speech. He also wrote an article titled “We Shall Overcome” when the project was attacked by other gay liberationists.<sup>51)</sup> It is evident that Jackson was deeply inspired and affected by King and the Civil Rights Movement. Following the path King had shown in “I Have a Dream,” Jackson tried to start a civil rights movement for gays with the emphasis of personal liberty as their deprived right.

Jackson’s strategy to claim civil rights through “working within the system” as pursued through the SN project, signaled changes happening in the gay liberation movement in California. When new organizations such as the Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) San Francisco and the Gay Community Alliance (GCA) Los Angeles were formed in 1971, GLF gradually lost its momentum in California. These new organizations were formed by some members from GLF who believed they should concentrate their time and energy solely on gay rights to improve their situation by taking realistic measures and operating through legitimate political processes such as election. The SN project can be situated in such a transition period from the radicalism of GLF to the realism of GAA and GCA. It maintained GLF’s politics of solidarity while sharing GAA’s realism to work for social changes without radical revolution. Seen in such a light, the heated debate over the SN project reflected discussions over the future course of the gay liberation movement in California.

In addition, it is notable that Jackson, driven by anti-communist sentiment, embraced libertarianism as his cause and expressed it in nationalistic rhetoric, because libertarianism and anti-communism were core ideologies for political conservatism in the Cold War era.<sup>52)</sup> Indeed, Jackson himself recognized his sympathy with conservatism and also commented on the conservative nature of the SN project.<sup>53)</sup> Such nationalistic or conservative tendencies of

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<sup>51)</sup> Don Jackson, “We Shall Overcome,” *Gay Sunshine*, November, 1970.

<sup>52)</sup> Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8, 19.

<sup>53)</sup> *San Francisco Good Times* reported “Don Jackson of the Gay Nationalist Movement believes McIntire

the project were not irrelevant to their problematic attitude toward Native Americans. The next section investigates what happened when the SN project, laden with American nationalism, came into contact with Native Americans.

### 3. Gays as Pioneers

In order for gays to claim that they deserve civil rights including personal liberty, they needed to present themselves as American citizens. However, it was not an easy task for them because “sexual deviancy” had long been regarded as incompatible with citizenship.<sup>54)</sup> Here is when the image of Indians plays a significant role. This section analyzes the limitations of the SN project in forming coalitions with Native Americans, which was paradoxically revealed through their efforts to call for the supports for the project.

It is notable that the SN project leaders identified with pioneers, metaphorical Pilgrims in Richard White’s words, when they faced Native Americans. For example, Jackson wrote,

The Alpine project is a pioneering effort. There will be hostile natives. Chopping wood, drawing water from a stream, severe Alpine winters, living in tents and Quonset huts. The hardships will be great, but so will the rewards. A Gay city will rise from the huts and tents. There will be the camaraderie and brotherhood of enduring hardship together, and the joy of accomplishment in creating a city especially suitable for the Gay life-style.<sup>55)</sup>

The images of Indians along with the descriptions of severe winter life in Alpine County were used to emphasize that Alpine County was a wilderness. Charles Thorpe, a young gay activist in Berkeley and a supporter of the project, also said that “anywhere else, we would have to create from the ruins of heterosexual society, but here is open land.”<sup>56)</sup> By emphasizing that Alpine was “open land,” they were able to identify themselves with pioneers in the West.

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will harm his own causes more than the gay’s because the majority of gay’s are political conservatives” in “Gay vs Gospel,” *San Francisco Good Times*, October 30, 1970, Folder 19, Charles Thorpe Papers. Carl McIntire was president of International Council of Christian Churches and opposed to the SN project. “Fundamentalist McIntire Tells Plan to Thwart Homosexuals,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1970, Folder 1, GLF/LA Records; and “Preacher out to Stop Alpine Takeover,” *Advocate*, November 25, 1970.

<sup>54)</sup> Immigration Act of 1965 explicitly prohibited the entry of “sexual deviants” including homosexuals into the country for the first time in US history. For the history of homosexuality and immigration, see, for example, Margot Canady, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>55)</sup> Don Jackson, “Gay City,” *Berkeley Tribe*, October 30, 1970, Folder 30, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers.

<sup>56)</sup> “Gay Lib in Alpine County,” *Daily California*, October 22, 1970, Folder 19, Charles Thorpe Papers.

When they identified with pioneers, the image of Indians played a symbolically significant role in making the narrative of gay liberation in the Stonewall Nation convincing and attractive. Don Kilhefner, a spokesperson of the project, commented that, “It’ll be like Death Valley Days. . . . Pioneers moving in. Hostile natives. Right and justice winning out in the end.”<sup>57)</sup> They applied the narrative of the Western drama to construct the narrative of the SN project. In that framework, “hostile natives” were objectified as a common enemy against which pioneers should unite to overcome. The Image of Indian Otherness had significant importance for the participants of the SN project as it served as an opposite figure which enabled them to imagine themselves as Americans.

In addition, their identification with pioneers alienated racial or ethnic minorities and women in spite of the call for solidarity with them. Jackson could use the rhetoric of “brotherhood” because most GLF’s members were white men. Most participants were reportedly middle-class gay men, and they were young and “tough enough to withstand the rigors of outdoor living, under what might become hostile (from the vigilantes) neighbors.”<sup>58)</sup> The sexism and racism of the SN project were evident and, in particular, sexism became the target of criticism by the members of GLF Berkeley.<sup>59)</sup> For example, a committee organized to visit Alpine County and prepare for the community meeting in the Thanksgiving season was called the “Alpine County Penetration Committee.”<sup>60)</sup> This naming reflected colonialism mixed with sexism that represented the colonizers as men and the colonized as women, and justified the dominance over the colonized.

Why did the SN project leaders reproduce oppression while they tried to criticize it? Philip J. Deloria’s argument is helpful in approaching this question. Deloria argued that countercultural youths who appreciated images of Indians tended to cherish Indian Otherness more than real native people.<sup>61)</sup> Because the SN project leaders only dealt with symbolic Indianness, drifting away from the actual Indians, they could only show a very limited

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<sup>57)</sup> “Alpine County Hopes for Snow,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 22, 1970, Folder 1, GLF/LA Records. “Death Valley Days” is a TV series about stories of the old American West broadcasted from 1952 to 1970.

<sup>58)</sup> “1179 Gay Libbers Sign up to Go up,” *Berkeley Barb*, November 20, 1970; Rundy Hurst to Don Jackson, undated, Don Jackson Subject File, ONE.

<sup>59)</sup> GLF Berkeley criticized the SN project leaders as “sexist, racist anti-revolutionary nationalist,” however, their main target of criticism was not the colonialistic relation between gays and Native Americans but the power hierarchy between gay leaders and others because it replicated the pattern of sexism. Smedley, “Off the Snow Pigs,” *Gay Sunshine*, January, 1971; Nick Benton, “‘Alpine Liberation’—Green Gay Ghetto?” *Berkeley Barb*, December 18, 1970. For their critique on sexism and gay liberation, see, Nick Benton, *Sexism, Racism and White Faggots in Sodomist Amerika* (Berkeley: The Effemist, 1971), Nick Benton File, ONE; “A Conversation between Cy Schoenfeld and Elijah,” KPFA Radio Berkeley, September, 1971, Berkeley Gay Liberation File. They published *The Effemist* magazine in 1971 whose articles shows how strongly they were influenced by radical feminism in the 1970s.

<sup>60)</sup> “No One to Listen: Gays’ Outline for Invasion.”

<sup>61)</sup> Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 159.

understanding of claims by the Red Power movement. For example, Charles Thorpe stated that “it’s like the Indians, if they take Alcatraz and stay, it’s theirs. There’s no such thing as, it can’t happen here [Alpine County].”<sup>62)</sup> Thorpe apparently misread the Proclamation by IAT, because the Proclamation was not only intended to show their will to take Alcatraz but to assign blame for the colonization of the Native Americans.<sup>63)</sup> The leaders of the SN project could ignore the possibility that they might also be a part of the “Great White Father and All His People” addressed by the Proclamation by IAT because they regarded Native Americans and gays as being “in a common struggle against oppression.”<sup>64)</sup> In this way, they could distance themselves from the position of the oppressors. Indeed, Jackson wrote,

We will devote great effort to helping the Washoe. Not by forcing the white value of integration (which they don’t want) on them, but by giving them the right to self-determination, the right to perpetuate their own ancient culture. We will give the Indians what they say that they want, and reject the white colonial attitude of giving them what white people think they should want.<sup>65)</sup>

Jackson actually took a “white colonial attitude” himself by naturally regarding relations between gays and Native Americans as a hierarchy in which gays could provide something that Native Americans really desired. However, he could be free from the accusation of having a “white colonial attitude” because he attached the label of “white colonial attitude” to the U.S. government, which forced “the white value of integration.” Consequently, his colonialistic attitude was concealed to amplify his good intention and innocence.

Patricia Nelson Limerick argued that “innocence” was the most powerful idea attached to westward expansion. The pioneers thought themselves as “innocent” because their pursuit of improvement and opportunity did not intend to harm the Indian lives. They were led by the mission to expand Christian civilization, which justified national interests to expand territories and individual interests to gain private properties. Therefore, even if they massacred Indians and robbed them of lands, they were not criticized as criminals but appraised as brave pioneers. As Limerick suggested, “innocence of intention placed the course of events in a bright and positive light; only over time would the shadows compete for our attention.”<sup>66)</sup> The SN project leaders demonstrated a “white colonial attitude” by emphasizing good intentions and innocence and ultimately shattered the possibility of critically reflecting the problem of US colonialism as theirs.

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<sup>62)</sup> “Gay Lib in Alpine County.”

<sup>63)</sup> For the Occupation of Alcatraz, see, no. 30.

<sup>64)</sup> “Committees Formed in Alpine County to Deal with Gays.”

<sup>65)</sup> Jackson, “We Shall Overcome.”

<sup>66)</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 36.



## **Conclusion**

This paper analyzed how gay liberationists in the early 1970s sought solidarity with Native Americans and their limitations while attempting to constitute a “gay nation” by winning support from the Washoe people. In the first section, this paper reevaluated the SN project not as a separatist movement but as a movement which sought solidarity with other minority groups through various measures. The second section examined Don Jackson’s writing to offer an analysis of Jackson’s motivation in proposing the SN project. It also explored the significance of his thoughts on gay liberation in the historical and political context of the gay liberation movement. The third section demonstrated how GLF members drew heavily on the narrative of the colonization of the West and exploited the Otherness of Indians to construct the narrative of the SN project in spite of their efforts to open the Stonewall Nation to all oppressed people and to pursue racial justice and gender equality.

This study described how gay liberationists expressed, examined and debated the diverse and conflicting ideas and opinions in the early years of the gay liberation movement. By revealing Jackson’s conservative view towards personal liberty for gays which was reflected in the idea of the SN project, it tried to provide a more nuanced understanding of the gay liberation movement, which tends to be monolithically regarded as a radical leftist movement carrying the legacy of the 1960s. For the future studies, such a conservative aspect of the gay liberation movement will offer a useful perspective to consider why the gay movement has achieved exceptional success even in an era of rising conservatism from the late 1970s.