

IN SEARCH OF THE HOMO-CORE UNDERGROUND

A Beginner's Guide to Gay "Fanzines"

10/10/88

"Where did you get this?"

I've asked that question on many an occasion: when a friend lent me *Fanny Hill*, gave me my first hit of acid, played me Patti Smith's first banned single ("Piss Factory"), handed me an early issue of *Straight to Hell*, fed me a Quaalude, and turned over a cassette of Prince's *Black Album*. It happened again a few weeks back, when my friend Bobo gave me a copy of the gay "fanzine" *Boysville USA*. It was an eye-opener right out of the blue. I wanted more, so I asked.

Bobo's answer was familiar. He smiled, shrugged, and said, "Oh! From a friend."

Homos get adept at tracking down banned books, illicit information, covert culture, and hidden history. The fact is, we've helped—often had to—create much of that stuff to make our own culture. The emergence of gay-punk fanzines shows that we are still at it. On the trail of one, I found five.

There is an "acceptable" face to gay culture: It's in your hands right now. However, for the rude, rowdy, radical, or dreamy delinquents, it's not enough. And bless their bad-boy butts.

Undoubtedly, there are other underground gay mags that I haven't unearthed—and I hope to. Intrigued readers are urged

to send off for this lot, though, and quickly. I'd advise paying by check, in case they've already crashed and burned. Inspired subscribers may submit stories to these publications. The incensed may want to start one of their own. Doesn't Patti Smith sing, "*People have the power/To start queer magazines*"? Right.

Boysville USA: This whimsical wonder from the Northwest features a graphic of a boy spraying deodorant up his armpits over a "statement of principles" worthy of Charles Foster Kane:

- 1) To examine popular culture under a serious light.
- 2) Support gay men in their struggle for basic human rights.
- 3) Examine male roles as portrayed in ads, film, print, and other media.
- 4) Offer a forum for those not usually heard.
- 5) Have one hell of a good time doing all of the above.

The first issue featured an appreciation of *The Partridge Family*; the second, the editor's top ten girl songs. The third, and latest, delivers an interview with Donny Osmond and a piece on Smiths fanzines. The editor tracked down five: *Cover Smiths*, from Belgium; *Smiths Ways*, from Spain; *Fragile et Mystique*, from

France; *Smiths Indeed*, from the United Kingdom; and America's own, *Forever Ill*, from Michigan. The editor has actually seen only *Forever Ill* and was astonished that it didn't feature a word about homo lust. Very weird, considering that a gay youth today can reliably be spotted by his Smiths and Morrissey albums, as sure as he would've been by his stack of Supremes and Diana Ross discs 15 years ago. Curious to see if the European mags are more candid.

Boysville USA is on the case.

To send away for the fanzines on the Smiths, you'll find the info in *Boysville USA* Number 3. (Send \$2 per issue to Jeffrey Kennedy, 121 1/2 N. Central, #4, Olympia, WA 98506.)

My Comrade is glossy and raunchy. *Boysville USA* reviews records. *MC* offers a precisely graded guide to the public-sex toilets of New York.

The first issue is sadly out of print. The second, labeled their "New Age Issue," boasts the photo-comic "Holy Homosexual," in which Jesus returns to earth as a queen with a pierced nipple. The third offers a mock video tour of The Institute of Homosexual Tendencies—documented with 60 subversive photos. A fourth collection of outrages is due shortly. Betcha Sandra Bernhard is a loyal reader. (Send \$2 per issue to

MC, 326 E. 13th St. #15, New York, NY 10003.)

AQUA is an "anarchist queer" affront, with at least two issues to its credit, featuring the heart-stopping thriller "Escape from Hetroburbia" and the "real-life adventure" "The Night I Rode Ron Jr." Ugly rumor has it that *AQUA* may be defunct. (As an act of faith, send \$2 per issue to Editor's Page, P.O. Box 1251, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013.)

F Plus F is a Canadian effort that bills itself as "Another art-war-fuck-zine" and "a magazine of searing anarco-faggotry." A recent issue was labeled Number 14, so there may be that many in print, or it could be a searing anarco-faggot joke. (To inquire, send \$2 per issue to Heart War, 48 Craig St., London, Ontario, N6C 1E8, Canada.)

J.D.s is arguably the most awesome of this lot: a celebration of gay punks that publisher Bruce LaBruce intends "for people revolting against the gay establishment." The name is explained by John Waters's opening quote: "Parents should worry if their children haven't been arrested by the time they turn 16. Being a juvenile delinquent is a birthright and as much a part of a healthy

adolescence as smoking cigarettes or getting pimples."

The first issue of *J.D.s* is apparently history, and I haven't seen numbers 2 or 3, but Number 4 features a punk journalist's grateful account of becoming a permanent urinal for a horde of skin-heads; a gay punk porno novel with illustrations lifted from *The Celluloid Closet*; a comic-strip account of a teen abducted by his parents and taken to Heritage USA; a lavish tribute to Bill Dakota and the *Hollywood Star*; a reprint of a lurid tabloid feature on Lana Turner and Cheryl Crane; a form letter to the Canadian prime minister protesting government censorship; a reader's poll that asks, "Does slamming give you a hard-on?"; and a homo-core top-20 hit parade, celebrating such real tunes as "Fag Bar" by The Mighty Sphincter; "Trashed Out Macho Lesbo Skateboard Junkies," by A.S.F.; "Cowboys Are Homo," by Gay Cowboys in Bondage; and "Boy with a Cunt," by Artless. In another inspired touch, LaBruce has crowned a lesbian the issue's Prince of Homosexuals.

Could the heir to William Burroughs Boyd McDonald, Kenneth Anger, and Iggy Pop be a Canadian? (\$2 an issue will summon the evidence. Write *J.D.s*, P.O. Box 1110, Adelaide St. Station, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2K5, Canada.)

Patti Smith is the only woman listed in *J.D.s* homo-core hit parade, for her classic "Redondo Beach." On her first LP in eight years, *Dream of Life* (Arista), Smith doesn't sing about Johnny's luminous rape in the locker room. She offers an elegy for her buddy Sam Wagstaff—who was felled by AIDS.

Domesticated in Detroit, Patti is no longer the firebrand fury, but she still calls down her dizzy—even mischievous—visions in a voice choked and radiant, somehow weary with wonder.

Even at this distance, I'd wager Smith would appreciate the brazen misfits she helped inspire. And they, her—tough dreamers, all.

—Adam Block



Inspiring brazen misfits: Patti Smith on the homo-core hit parade

COURTESY ANISTA