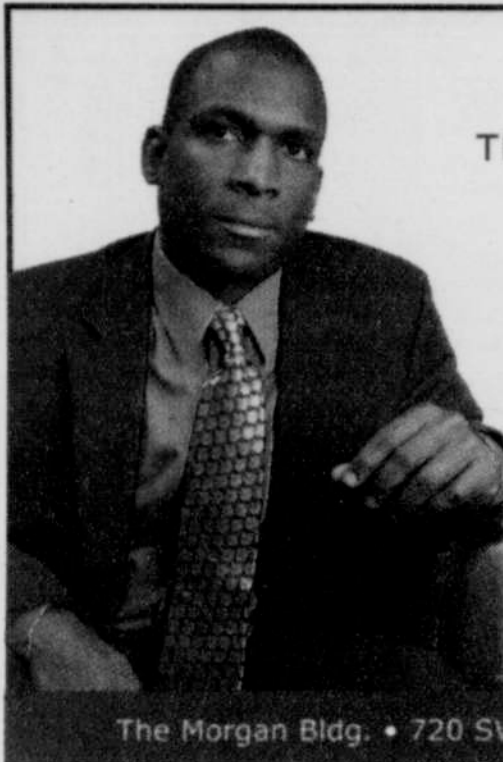




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EUROPE

Melee in Moscow

An attempt to stage Moscow's first-ever Gay Pride march ended with violence, injuries and mass arrests May 27.

Activists took to the streets even though Mayor Yuri Luzhkov had banned the march and was backed up by the Tverskoi District Court.

Among those arrested were co-organizers Nikolai Alekseev and Eugenia Debryanskaya. The injured included German Member of Parliament Volker Beck, Homosexual Initiative Vienna Secretary-General Kurt Krickler and Merlin Holland, who is Oscar Wilde's grandson.

The first of two main confrontations occurred when gay activists approached the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin, intending to lay wreaths. They were halted by riot police, neo-fascists and hymn-singing Christian militants.

"We were immediately set upon by about 100 fascist thugs and religious fanatics who began pushing, punching and kicking us," said British gay leader Peter Tatchell. "Some individual protesters were surrounded, abused and attacked by gangs of fascists."

The counterprotesters, some wearing masks, also tossed flares. Riot police eventually separated the two groups and arrested some members of both groups.

"This is a great victory, an absolute victory—look at what's happening," Alekseev said as he was dragged away by police.

A second large-scale confrontation occurred across from City Hall. "Soon after [our] reassembling...another line of riot police came and drove us out of the square, straight into an oncoming posse of fascists," said Tatchell.

In all, at least 120 people were arrested. Most were later released, but police said they would "draw up...administrative protocols" against the organizers of the gay march.

Police said the gay marchers and their supporters numbered around 200. About 1,000 police officers, a quarter of Moscow's force, were assigned to prevent the march from happening.

Holland, Wilde's grandson, was kicked by "a gang of extremists" while walking up Tverskaya Street, ILGA-Europe said.

England's Tatchell said Mayor Luzhkov's "homophobia created the atmosphere which gave a green light to the fascists to attack the Moscow Pride participants."

Luzhkov had repeatedly denounced the parade and insisted he would never allow it to proceed.

The day before the march, he told Russkoye Radio: "The situation as such can be acceptable for some Western countries advanced in this respect, but it is absolutely unacceptable for Moscow and for Russia. Morality works here. If anyone has any deviations from normal principles in organizing one's sexual life, those deviations should not be exhibited for all to see, and those who may turn out unsteady should not be invited to do so.... I thank the citizens of Moscow, as 99.9 percent of them in recent days also believe it is unacceptable to hold such parades."

International Mr. Leather Gets Married

International Mr. Leather 2003 John Pandal and his partner, Dave Harris, got married May 13 in London under the United Kingdom's Civil Partnership Act.

They tied the knot at their local registry office



International Mr. Leather John Pandal got married in London.

in West London in front of 24 guests.

The couple have been together 13 years. The partnership act grants all rights and obligations of traditional marriage.

Euro Immigration Rules Take Effect

Gays and lesbians in the 25-nation European Union now have an enforceable right to move to any of the nations in order to live with a same-sex partner.

The EU free-movement directive took effect April 29.

In the case of nations that lack same-sex partnership recognition, a couple can demand a government investigation of their relationship. If it is "real and durable," then the nation must facilitate the immigration of the foreign partner.

Nations that violate the directive can be challenged in national courts, in EU courts or before the European Commission.

Top Austrian Gay Group Guilty of Libel

Austria's leading gay organization, Homosexual Initiative Vienna (HOSI Wien), and its secretary general, Kurt Krickler, were found guilty of defamation and libel April 21 by the Vienna Regional Criminal Court for calling Austrian People's Party Member of Parliament Walter Tancsits a "mental descendant of the brown Nazi myrmidons."

Krickler was given three years' probation and the choice of a suspended fine of \$306 or a suspended sentence of one month in jail. If he does not commit another crime during the probationary period, he will not have to pay the fine or serve time. HOSI was ordered to pay Tancsits \$1,913.

The libelous remark appeared in a March 2005 press release that denounced Tancsits for opposing inclusion of homosexuals in the Nazi Victim Compensation Act and engineering their exclusion when a parliamentary committee considered the measure.

"We will appeal against this judgment and then take the case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg," Krickler said May 17.

London Hosts EuroPride

EuroPride is in London this year. Two weeks of events get under way June 17, culminating in a parade expected to draw 500,000 people.

The march will traverse Oxford and Regent streets and end with a mass rally in Trafalgar Square.

"It promises to be the biggest gay and lesbian festival London has ever seen," EuroPride London 06 head Jason Pollock told the British Broadcasting Corp.

MIDEAST/AFRICA

Group Says Iraqi Police Executed 14-Year-Old Boy

Iraqi police executed a 14-year-old boy in the al-Dura district of Baghdad in early April, the British gay group OutRage reports. Ahmed Khalil was accused of corrupting the community and creating a scandal because he had sex with men, the group said.

"According to a neighbor, who witnessed

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