

AUGUST SPECIAL

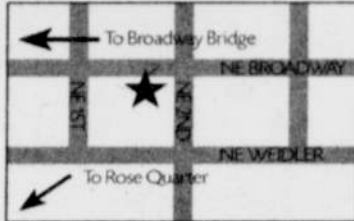
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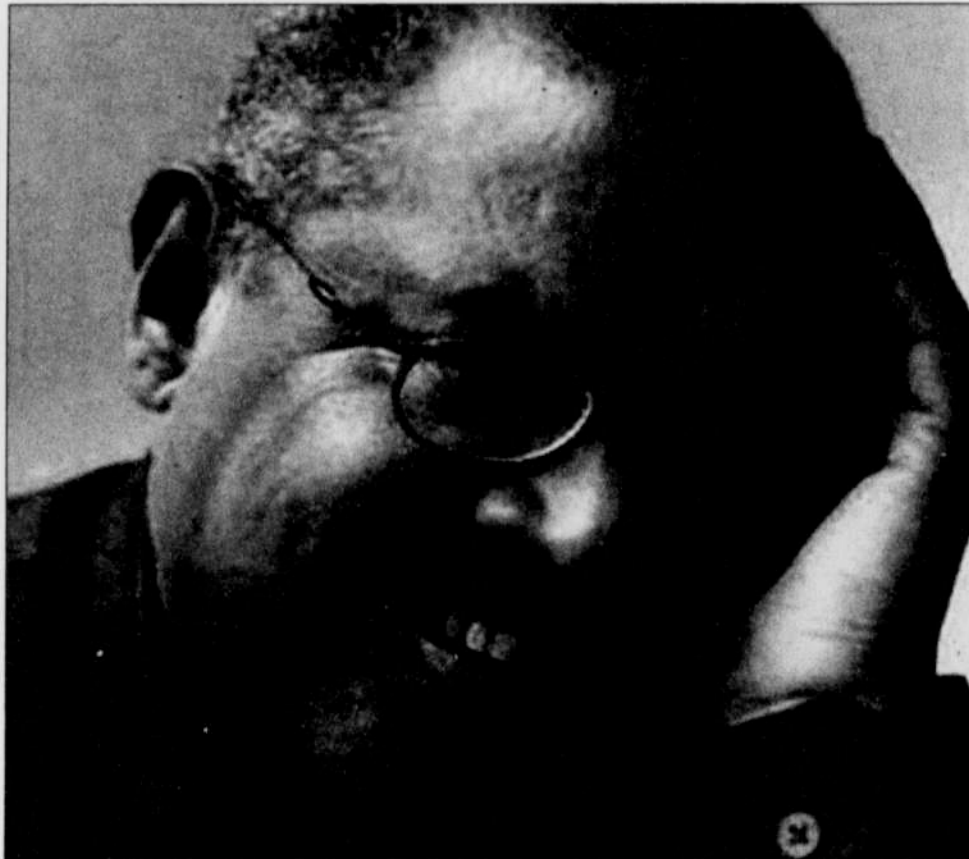
world

AMERICAS

Singer: No Gays in Cuban Communist Party

Famous Cuban singer Pablo Milanés has told Spain's *El Mundo* newspaper that there are no gay people in the Cuban Communist Party.

Asked if things are improving for Cuban gays, Milanés said: "I don't know what to tell you. I have many homosexual friends who still complain that they are discriminated against, that they lack opportunities. There are no queers in the party. And those are signs that they are still alienated. To the best of our knowledge, none of the rulers have come out of the closet yet."



Cuban singer Pablo Milanés claims gays are not Communists.

The translation of Milanés' remarks was done by *The Miami Herald*.

Milanés also said things haven't really changed in Cuba since Fidel Castro stepped down as president.

"What I don't understand is how everything stays the same," he said. "The government said a year ago that many things were going to change, but we stayed the same and the people are very desperate. Raúl Castro still has not had an opportunity to demonstrate what he thinks, because his brother Fidel is there and still emits his opinions. Owning a [mobile] telephone and being allowed to enter a [tourist] hotel is not reform. When it comes to freedoms, we're going backward."

EUROPE

Large, Violent Attack on Budapest Pride

Right-wing extremists attacked the 1,500 marchers in Budapest's Gay Pride parade and fought with police for several hours afterward July 5.

Hundreds of counterdemonstrators reportedly threw rocks, eggs, bottles, firecrackers, feces, acid, paint and Molotov cocktails at the marchers and the police. They also set a police van on fire and damaged three media trucks.

At least 45 of the attackers were arrested. Riot police unleashed tear gas and water cannons on the protesters at points during the mile-long march down Andrassy Road.

At least 25 people were injured, including 17 of the 2,100 police officers protecting the event.

A post-parade concert was canceled.

"There was one street where literally a shower

of eggs and stones was poured on us," said activist Gábor Kuszting. "I was lucky to have a placard in my hand, and others used umbrellas."

A rock crashed through the window of a car carrying Hungarian Euro MP Katalin Lévai.

"It is unacceptable in our democracies that microscopic groups of the extreme right may threaten and attack an important minority while it practices the universal right to freedom," Lévai said. "We must step up against groups advocating hatred and violence."

The European Parliament's Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights denounced the violence and the fact that it was allowed to occur.

"I am deeply disappointed and concerned of Hungary's inability to deal with extremists," said Intergroup President Michael Cashman. "This must be referred to the European Commission and the commission's president."

Intergroup Vice President Sirpa Pietikäinen said: "Police forces again, like last year, failed to protect citizens exercising their fundamental rights to peaceful assembly, probably due to inadequate resources. I will demand an explanation from

the Hungarian government, and I will raise this issue with the European Commission."

Wowereit Welcomes Obama to Berlin

Openly gay Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit said July 9 he would be "delighted" for Barack Obama to speak at the city's famed Brandenburg Gate.

Obama, however, addressed an estimated crowd of 200,000 July 25 in Tiergarten Park during a European trip by the Democratic U.S. presidential candidate.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she doubted it would be appropriate to use the gate as a campaign backdrop.

Moscow Officials Ban Gay Picket at Iranian Embassy

Moscow city officials banned a planned gay picket July 14 in front of the Iranian Embassy.

The protest, which was allowed the past two years, was to target Iran's treatment of gays.

Iran has the death penalty on the books for sodomy and is believed to have used it somewhere between a few and thousands of times since the Islamic revolution, although no accurate information is available. Human Rights Watch has "documented brutal floggings imposed by courts as punishment, and torture and ill treatment, including sexual abuse, in police custody."

Protest organizer Nikolai Alekseev said one word in the picket notification led authorities to ban the event: "We applied to the prefecture with the identical notification to the ones we used in the last two years, adding one word. Before, we