

## Before and After Castro

As a co-publisher of *Mariel*, the quarterly cultural magazine, I feel targeted when Lourdes Arguelles and Ruby Rich state that "the new Mariel generation of right-wing intellectuals are mobilizing to use the issue of Cuban homophobia as Cold War ammo." (*Native* 74, "The Easy Convenience of Cuban Homophobia") We strongly reject this monstrous and demagogic characterization of ourselves. Yes, we're mobilizing; not as naive pawns in a cold war among the superpowers, but against a dictatorship that has remained in power for 24 years, against a system that we know better than any visitor to the island.

Arguelles and Rich attempt to discredit the gay people that are part of the Mariel generation in order to better demonstrate the imaginary flexibility of Castro's hatred of homosexuals. They allow their political delusions to blur their view of the hard facts of day-to-day sexual-political repression in Cuba. Such manipulation of truth will only serve, among other things, to encourage intolerance and homophobia in other political leaders in developing countries.

We, at *Mariel*, know who our enemies are: all dictatorships, Castro's homophobic one in particular. Perhaps Arguelles and Rich, pointing their ideological guns at us, do not know who their real enemies are.

Arguelles is an editor of *Areito*, an uncritically pro-Cuban government magazine put out mostly by Cuban-Americans who were brought to this country as children by their exiled parents; in other words, by people who have never lived in Cuba nor experienced terror there first-hand.

*Mariel* will devote an entire section of a coming issue to an impartial analysis of Cuban homophobia in all its manifestations: in Cuba—before and under Castro's rule—as well as in the exiled Cuban-American community. That issue, planned a long time ago, will also include a detailed refutation of the distortions contained in the *Native* article by Arguelles and Rich. For us, so dogmatically de-

scribed by them as "right-wing," ideology is no reason to sweeten the picture of repression wherever it may happen or to try to discredit the truthfulness of the testimony given by thousands of people about their own tragedy.

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