
# Forbidden Fruit: The Florida Orange Juice Boycott of 1977 and the Coalescence of a National Gay Rights Campaign

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*Cover Image: San Francisco Tavern Guild Poster, 1977, Stonewall National Museum & Archives, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.*

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## Introduction

On January 18, 1977, the Miami-Dade County Metro Commission voted to pass a law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. Thirty-five nondiscrimination laws of the same kind had been approved in other cities across the United States over the last two decades.[1] Twenty-nine of the thirty-five had been passed in just four years, between 1972 and 1976.[2] The next day, Miami's first and only recorded snowfall began in the early hours of the morning.[3] Flurries wouldn't be the only thing descending on Dade County in the weeks that followed. A conservative countermovement was quickly gathering force, one that would test the strength and capacity of the gay rights movement and ultimately mobilize gay and lesbian communities across the nation for the first time in its history.

The dynamism of the early gay rights movement, accelerated largely by the 1969 Stonewall Riots, reverberated through the 1970s, provoking political proposals and both formal and informal organizing by gay rights advocates. College towns full of young students and urban centers with reputations for progressive politics led the local legislative push, lobbying for laws protecting homosexuals from discrimination. Regionally prominent cities like Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., which had more visible gay communities than Miami, passed nondiscrimination policies in the early 1970s, too.[4] In contrast to the usual "vocal politics" of some gay organizing circles following the widely publicized Stonewall Riots, nondiscrimination laws in the 1970s often passed quietly and without much fuss, drawing little attention within legislatures themselves.[5] Though certainly radical in its own right at the time, Miami-Dade's

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[1] Fejes, Fred, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 4.
[2] Ibid, 7.
[3] "The Day it Snowed in Miami," *The Miami Herald*, January 19, 1977. Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[4] David Holmberg, "The campaign has just begun, Anita pledges," *The Miami News*, June 8, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[5] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic*, 53.

nondiscrimination ordinance was, too, initially seemingly met with little opposition both within the commission and from most local residents; it passed unanimously when first proposed the month before in December of 1976, and even *The Miami Herald*, Florida's biggest newspaper, endorsed the proposal, arguing that it helped enshrine "equal treatment," a fundamental principle of the law.[6] The gay rights movement seemed to be burgeoning into the latter half of the 1970s, as diverse and multi-generational as it ever had been, but still lacking national scope and stability. Indeed, the ordinance's passage in Miami would reveal that the seemingly benign legislative amendments championed by gay activists were vulnerable to an increasingly formidable conservative Christian countermovement.

Opposition mounted rapidly against Miami-Dade's nondiscrimination ordinance in early 1977. On the afternoon of the second vote in January, over a thousand conservative Floridians, most also deeply religious, came out to the County Commissioner's office in droves demanding the revocation of the proposed ordinance.[7] Their protest was helmed by the evangelical, nationally recognized singer and Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) spokesperson, Anita Bryant. A monumental fight between gay rights activists and an emerging moral majority movement, with Bryant as its figurehead, ballooned in the weeks and months following the ordinance's passage. In response to Anita Bryant's calls to 'save our children' and her ultimately successful referendum to repeal freedoms for homosexual individuals in Miami, gay rights activists decided to fight back by attacking Bryant's central platform: her role as Florida Citrus spokeswoman.

The "gaycott" that ensued saw individuals, restaurants and bars, political organizations, and even labor unions vow to stop purchasing Florida orange juice in protest of Anita Bryant's

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[6] "Metro Commission gives early OK to gay-rights bill," *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 1976, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[7] Adon Taft and Susan Burnside, "Gay Anti-Bias Bill Criticized," *The Miami Herald*, January 17, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

bigotry. Florida's reliance on the citrus industry combined with its associations to Anita Bryant made orange juice a strategic target for a boycott. The nondiscrimination ordinance in Miami was repealed that June by a voting margin of over two to one, and Bryant's contract wouldn't be canceled until 1981, but in those four years, the Florida citrus boycott gained national notoriety and, I argue, triggered the momentum gay rights activists needed to defend their new legislative rights more than historians have thus far given it credit for.[8] The events of 1977 in Miami-Dade County clearly marked a pivotal turning point in the growth of what is widely known as the 'gay rights movement' in the United States. I aim to examine how gay rights activists harnessed and exercised their informal political power in order to move forward their goals of disarming the growing Christian right and proactively fighting for legal acceptance. In particular, I hope to dissect how gay activists used novel tactics to circulate the goals of the citrus boycott on a national scale for the first time, successfully convincing divided individuals and groups to unify for their boycott campaign and subsequently the larger gay rights movement. Regarding long-term effects, my thesis explores the indelible role of the Florida citrus 'gaycott' in the historical expansion of the scope and political fervor of the movement.[9]

Ultimately, I argue that the Florida orange juice boycott was politically successful, and more so politically vital to the movement's sustenance, in that it gave queer individuals a singular national focal point to turn their energies toward for the first time. Gay rights activists, previously divided in strategy and along gendered, racial, and class lines, were reinvigorated by the concrete success of the Christian Right's countermovement.[10] I argue that the boycott was the first major product of such reinvigoration. The boycott not only energized but elevated the

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[8] Faderman, Lillian, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 308.
[9] In this thesis, I will use "Florida orange juice boycott" and "Florida citrus boycott" interchangeably, in addition to the terms "gaycott" and boycott.
[10] Tina Fetner, "Working Anita Bryant: The Impact of Christian Anti-Gay Activism on Lesbian and Gay Movement Claims." *Social Problems* 48, no. 3 (August 2001), 415.

organizational capacity and political sophistication of the movement by encouraging different movement leaders to collaborate with one another and illuminating convenient methods of cross-regional communication despite differences. The boycott helped unite gay rights supporters and encouraged individuals and groups across the nation to convert their identity into strategic political clout.

*Historiography*

The gay rights movement has been given increasing scholarly attention by historians since the 1990s. A good deal of general historical scholarship on the development of the gay rights movement in the United States, published as early as 1999 up to 2024, has been helpful in providing important context for the boycott, both relating to its causes and effects. Marc Stein's book, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, provides a very recent and nuanced historical account of the development of gay rights organizing throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The book spans a much longer timeframe, but I use the analysis on the late 1960s and 1970 featured in the book's third chapter, "Gay Liberation, Feminism, and Gay and Lesbian Liberalism, 1969-73," which provides important context for situating divisions within the gay rights movement and locating the movement's place in broader social politics leading up to Miami's ordinance and referendum.[11] Stein brings in several different historical perspectives and analytical viewpoints in his argument, which will allow me to fully acknowledge the complex historiographical environment in which the boycott sits, despite the boycott itself receiving little historiographical attention up until now. Stein provides key background necessary to identify the root causes of fragmentation within the gay rights movement leading up to 1977.

I hope to identify the movement's resolution of such fragmentation, which I argue to be the boycott and its role in the unification of the gay rights movement. Lillian Faderman's

[11] Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, (New York: Routledge, 2023).

800-page book *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle*, gives us a sweeping history of the gay rights movement throughout the 20th century like Stein. Yet, she provides quite a detailed account of the events in Miami-Dade County, including the national and regional landscape leading up to the referenda in 1977 and the growth of the boycott into the early 1980s. Faderman, identifying many of the same internal divisions Stein does, categorized the political fight occurring in South Florida and beyond as proof that Miami "was to become no less than a testing ground for the future of gay rights in America."[12] I argue, however, that the "test" in Dade County, which ended in defeat for the gay community, was not a harbinger of failure for the gay rights movement as a whole, as Faderman suggests, even calling it the "gay Alamo."[13]

I aim to reconstruct Faderman's argument that "the inchoate movement for gay and lesbian civil rights was on a precipitous downhill slide" even into 1978, long after the loss in Miami by the movement's standards. Instead, I assert that the loss in Miami-Dade county was a necessary requisite for the national mobilization of the gay rights movement and quickly motivated gay rights activists not only in South Florida, but across the country to fight back together. By the end of 1977, the boycott had unified the gay rights movement like never before and changed its course for the better. Faderman gives less attention to the positive aspects of the referenda in mobilizing a more diverse cross-section of the gay rights movement, particularly through the boycott. The orange juice boycott propelled gay rights activists forward to a position where they could finally stop the Christian right from continuing to impugn the political rights of gay men and lesbians.

Dudley Cleninden and Adam Nagourney's 1999 book, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America*, as such provides a more optimistic view of the events

[12] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution,* 339.
[13] Ibid., 353.

in 1977 and posits one of the only scholarly historical arguments about the boycott itself I have been able to identify. They argue that "for all the problems in Florida, homosexuals across the country were rallying for the boycott and, by proxy, the cause of gay rights in a way they never had before. Every gay bar in San Francisco agreed to stop serving orange juice altogether, or squeeze their own California oranges."[14] I hope to further this observation by arguing that the boycott was a needed demonstration of political power, authority, and unity in the face of both the Christian counter-movement and a budding national gay community. Cleninden and Nagourney argue more generally about the events of 1977 that "the results in Dade County roused many homosexuals, and the gay movement, as nothing had before. It was a turning point for gay men and lesbians who years later would trace their own coming out or interest in gay politics to the Anita Bryant victory."[15]

My thesis uses this argument as a jumping-off point, emphasizing this shift within the movement, but intervening by arguing further that the boycott itself provided the national focus gay and lesbian individuals needed to organize towards their specific goals for political equality and cultural acceptance in the face of right-wing counteractivists across regional and demographic lines. Cleninden and Nagourney do not interrogate the different tactics used to increase participation in the orange juice boycott nor do they examine how and why such tactics ultimately created an international coalition of activists strong enough to drown out the rhetoric of the Christian right. I aim to ask and answer all of these questions in my thesis.

While there is clearly rich historical material on the gay rights movement, there is little scholarship that centers the orange juice boycott in discussions of the evolution of political organizing for gay rights, and even civil rights more broadly, in the 1970s and early 80s. In fact,

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[14] Dudley Cleninden and Adam Nagourney, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 306.
[15] Ibid., 310.

much of the secondary scholarship, including the books referenced above, focuses on the rhetoric of Anita Bryant and the rise of the 'moral majority,' which is an important contextual facet of my thesis but not the main argument I aim to expound on. The scholars mentioned above have tended to characterize the events of Miami-Dade County by centering the narrative on Anita Bryant and in this way perhaps missed the bigger trends in gay activism which I hope to argue for. There is likely a dearth of scholarship on the boycott itself because of its perceived short-term failure to affect at least financially, both Anita Bryant and the FCC. I find that this point, especially in the context of the citrus boycott's eventual national success, actually makes the story even more compelling.

For example, few scholars discuss the personal reactions and responses of gay rights activists to the repeal of the Dade County ordinance in detail and even fewer discuss the unique tools of resistance and methods of informal political power deployed by activists, including utilizing the press, applying political consumerism to their cause, and using ephemera to expand the reach of the boycott. These scholars also fail to illuminate how the complex gendered, racial, and class divisions present within the early gay rights movement informed the strategies and goals of the orange juice boycott. The general secondary sources I've examined largely gloss over the boycott itself and its implications, despite plentiful primary source collections. The primary sources I located, mainly in Fort Lauderdale and San Francisco, begin to answer the questions left behind. I hope to intervene and fill this gap by interrogating the motivations behind the boycott, in addition to the tactics and rhetoric used to extend the boycott outside of Miami-Dade County and outside of the white gay male archetype. Ultimately, I hope to underscore how the lasting effects of the boycott shaped the mission and values of the renewed national gay rights movement that formed in its wake.

*Structure and Primary Sources*

My thesis is divided chronologically into three chapters. The first chapter covers the years of 1972 to 1977, essentially tracing the development of early gay rights activism, particularly in South Florida, working through changes in political tactics during the early 1970s and up to early 1977 when gay organizers in Miami proposed their own local nondiscrimination ordinance. This chapter attempts to set up the stakes for gay activists in Miami, the platform on which Anita Bryant rose to prominence, and the immediate responses of activists to threats regarding their political protection. The second chapter takes a deep dive from there into the boycott itself, beginning with disagreements between gay rights activists about starting a boycott, and eventually how the specific goals of the boycott were successfully disseminated across regional and ideological lines when it picked up momentum.

Much of the abundant primary source material available on this topic was previously untouched, perhaps due to the location of archives and the lack of historical interrogation relating to the orange juice boycott as a singular phenomenon. There are a plethora of newspaper articles, advertisements, and press releases that help demonstrate the popularity of the Florida citrus boycott and illuminate both different tactics used by de facto leaders of the boycott and reactions from gay communities and right-wing counterprotestors across the world. Dozens of regional and national gay newspapers were inundated with editorials and letters calling for the gay community to stop drinking screwdrivers in solidarity with gay activists in Miami-Dade. An April 1977 article in the *Boca Raton News* captured FCC chairman Dan Richardson's response, saying that, "I don't think anybody in the citrus industry thought it was going to get into such a national and emotional issue."[16] There are articles from international newspapers in Canada, the UK, and even Sweden, which demonstrate the international reach achieved by the boycott in

[16] "Gays boycott O.J." *Boca Raton News*, April 11, 1977. Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

only a short period of time and international solidarity with campaigns of resistance taking place in different countries. I also located correspondence between gay rights organizations and between individual activists that helps to further illustrate the different ways in which the boycott expanded lines of communication within the movement.

The third and final chapter looks specifically at the symbolic co-opting of the citrus boycott in contexts outside of Miami-Dade County and application of the boycott's successful tactics to newer political goals, particularly in California's fight against Proposition 6, nicknamed the Briggs Initiative, which aimed to ban homosexuals from teaching in public schools throughout the state. The defeat of the Briggs Initiative marked a successful fight led by gay rights activists in California and across the country following several legislative losses spurred by the repeal of the Dade County ordinance. Michael Bronski's *A Queer History of the United States* examines broadly the evolution of the gay rights movement in the US and touches on the Miami-Dade and California referenda and the boycott's roles in each. My novel intervention aims to examine in particular how the boycott, as a process kickstarted by the events in Miami, ultimately influenced the outcome of the Briggs Initiative and informed the tools utilized by California activists fighting against similar legislative discrimination.[17]

There is rich primary source material relating to the Briggs Initiative, as well, including editorials, pamphlets, and advertisements, with much of it relating directly to the history of the same organizations and gay media sources platforming the orange juice boycott. One organization, for example, called the Bay Area Coalition Against the Briggs Initiative (BACABI), was founded by the same gay rights organizers that had popularized the orange juice boycott throughout San Francisco to the point where the boycott had more buy-in initially

[17] Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 2011).

throughout the Bay Area than it had in South Florida.[18] I plan to analyze how the boycott helped to mobilize communities on a national level and undergirded the gay community's eventual political victory in California in 1978. This chapter will also trace the lingering effects of the boycott in the years following 1978, too, including the blacklisting of Anita Bryant following the FCC's cancellation of her spokesperson contract in 1981.

Though the powerful effects of the boycott took time to come into view, the gay rights movement did end up with international support, while figureheads like Anita Bryant were relegated to infamy and faded into the shadows of political memory in America. Though right-wing conservative rhetoric is making its resurgence today, community organizing efforts like the citrus boycott continue to be effective tools for garnering support and encouraging civic participation towards progressive causes. In this way, the Florida orange juice boycott was revolutionary in its own right, bringing communities across the country together in a new light to take a stand against the countermovement and continue advocating for political and social acceptance in the long-term.

[18] BACABI promotional pamphlet. San Francisco, CA. June 1978, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers, Box 109, folders 4 and 5, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.

## 1.

## Ripe for Rebellion: Radicalism, a Return to Reform, and Ruptures in Early Gay Rights Organizing, 1972-1977

When Bob Basker arrived in Miami in 1972, he saw gay individuals doing a lot of sunbathing and relatively little to secure their political rights.[19] He was still riding the high of New York's successful June 1969 Stonewall riots that mobilized gay individuals against police violence in a militant demonstration of unity, but was dismayed to see that the gay community in Miami wasn't doing the same. Basker had been politically active since his teenage years in the mid 1930s, participating in peace strikes, protesting the US war machine, and rallying for Black civil rights. A Chicago native, he co-founded the Midwest chapter of the Mattachine Society, largely considered the 'grandfather' organization for gay rights, and led successful campaigns combating local police harassment and violence against gay men and lesbians. Most recently, he had been exiled from communist Cuba for protesting government persecution of a lesbian teacher. [20] Basker was one of the first activists to bring the issue of gay rights to the forefront of South Florida's political landscape.

This chapter follows the germination of gay rights organizing, particularly in South Florida, through the 1970s and the evolving motivations of early activists in Miami-Dade County, like Bob Basker. This chapter ultimately aims to illustrate that ideological and strategic divisions within early gay rights organizing spheres stifled the growth of the movement leading up to the passage of Dade County's non-discrimination ordinance of 1977. Given such frustrating disunity, gay activists were 'ripe' for rebellion, wanting widespread political recognition badly, but needing a singular strategic focus to move their cause forward. This pivotal focus came from

[19] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 321.
[20] Ibid.

the movement's growing urgency for unification against the Christian Right, which I argue would ultimately result in the orange juice boycott.

In his book, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, queer historian Marc Stein argues that after the early 1970s, divisions surfaced between the more reserved characteristics of early gay rights organizations before the Stonewall Riots and the newer militant activism of the gay rights movement.[21] Stein traced the "liberal and reformist" tendencies of the movement's majority in 1973 and onwards as a return to the more reserved tactics of earlier groups in the 1950s and 1960s, pushing white gay men to the forefront of the struggle in order to leverage what political privilege they did hold. Whereas the movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s following the Stonewall Riots began to center militant goals of "gay liberation and radical lesbian feminism," prominent leaders soon after returned to "less revolutionary" goals and a diminishing commitment to radical coalition-building.[22]

The militant tactics used in the Stonewall Riots did not disappear, inspired by ongoing diverse protest traditions adopted by civil rights and anti-war activists in the late 1960s and beyond, as seen through lunch-counter sit-ins and storefront attacks.[23] These activists' identities and goals resonated more with the militant activists present at Stonewall than the more reformist lean of the movement did. It is important to emphasize Stein's qualification that although militant activists of color gained visibility following Stonewall, "the riots themselves did not lead to long-term mass mobilization or change the direction of the gay and lesbian movement."[24] The white gay man would remain the normative figurehead of the gay rights movement through the 1970s, often butting heads with more radical members wanting liberation over liberal reform.

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[21] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 99.
[22] Ibid., 140.
[23] Ibid., 100.
[24] Ibid.

Miami, in particular, found itself at the center of a clash in internal leadership between the reserved reformist archetype and more radical leaders at the helm of local gay activism. Miami was a relatively new city, incorporated in 1896 as a "winter resort" for Northerners. Even during the late 20th century, most residents were either newly-arrived or still part-time, and thus felt no real sense of community or "deep-rootedness" in the area.[25] Gay establishments in Florida generally catered to leisure and 'vice,' instead of civil rights and social justice, finding consistent patronage in white gay men with the money, time, and education to vacation by the beach. Often without kids, these men had extra time to be vocal consumers and the entitlement to take action when their identities felt threatened. Basker, whose goals in Miami initially remained reactive rather than proactive, was one of the first activists in South Florida to address larger issues that had loomed over the gay community for decades. However, as more radical, albeit still largely white, activists like Basker and even those to the left of him moved down to Miami with concrete goals of organizing, divisions within the movement intensified.

*1.1 Stagnation in the Sunshine State: Early Gay Organizing in Miami and Beyond*

The gay community in Miami had been growing since the end of World War II, but to newly-arrived activists like Basker, it seemed that most were content to lounge at the beach and fight against profiling and police violence only when they had to. Gay soldiers who had been stationed at the city's air force training base during the war were lured back by the tropical environment and laid-back lifestyles of the locals. As Miami's gay population grew, the city's gay bars and establishments, located in a district nearby Coconut Grove dubbed "Powder Puff Lane," became targets of sexual assault investigations and police raids in the mid 1960s, parallel to other cities' attempts to "clean up" the streets from sexual deviants.[26] Bob Basker was all the

[25] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic*, 57.
[26] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 323.

more surprised that these violent threats to the gay community had not radicalized more residents. Organizing attempts in Miami in the first half of the 1970s largely consisted of occasional litigation challenging discriminatory actions, including a successful attempt by four bartenders in Miami to overturn the city's laws prohibiting cross-dressing and bars from serving or employing homosexuals.[27] This kind of political action, aligned with a reformist approach rather than radical liberation, was relatively infrequent and reactive rather than proactive, merely responding to discriminatory measures rather than working to prevent discrimination altogether.

Basker was ready to take matters into his own hands and rally the few political activists present in Miami to be proactive and, in his own words, "establish a critical gay presence in Dade County."[28] He drew from his previous leadership experience as the founder of Mattachine's Midwest chapter, yet also hoped that his previous involvement in more radical campaigns might complement his goals in Miami. Bob Basker quickly became a heavyweight in the region's gay political organizing scene. Within months of his arrival in South Florida, he co-founded the Miami chapter of the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), a growing national coalition effectively replacing the outmoded Mattachine, with a small group of quasi-activists who were simply eager to see political progress in Miami. The varied organizational landscape alluded to above in the 1970s reflected ideological changes within the movement. Exclusive educated male-dominated 'societies' pushing for legal equality like the Mattachine were challenged by newer militant groups, made up of self-proclaimed street revolutionaries and liberationists. Coalitions like the GAA fell somewhere in the middle, if not a return to moderation compared to the radical resistance efforts of budding gay liberation fronts. Each group had its own goals, its own

[27] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 125.
[28] Carl Hiaasen, "Out of the Closet, and Then Some," Tropic Magazine, *The Miami Herald*, June 5, 1977, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 26, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

strategies, and its own demographic to appeal to, yet perhaps itched to coalesce towards something greater.

The Miami GAA got to work immediately under Basker's leadership, but found their efforts to be frustratingly in vain. In 1973, they filed a class-action lawsuit with the US District Court arguing that police officers were intentionally targeting Miami Beach's gay neighborhood, prowling at night and committing arbitrary acts of violence themselves. [29] Trying to get progressive results without a solid foundation of local movement infrastructure, though, would prove to be difficult and time-consuming. When GAA's lawsuit was dismissed by the District Court without so much as a second look, the local organization fizzled out, and gay Miamians largely disbanded, leaving Basker without the coalition he needed to push on. As historian Lillian Faderman argued, the failure of the GAA highlighted "the limits of liberal Miami, foreshadowing surprising betrayal of gays and lesbians by liberal Miamians in 1977."[30] The presence of gay individuals in Miami-Dade in the early 1970s did not require protection on their behalf, at least as the District Court saw it.

The limits of liberal action in Miami became clear to local activists, but also reflected the often inscrutable complexities of organizing within the United States' broader cultural and political milieu at the time. American troops withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, leaving some activists without immediate direction or purpose. President Richard Nixon and his administration reframed the rhetoric of liberation from the early 1970s as "political extremism."[31] Moreover, deeper divisions permeated gay organizing efforts through the early 1970s. The socioeconomic, racial, and gendered divides within the movement affected who organized for gay rights and what exactly they organized for. Well-educated middle-class white gay men became the face of

[29] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 323.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic,* 43.

the movement, minimizing the legacy and ongoing efforts of Black and brown queer activists, frequently on the frontlines of militant resistance efforts. Lesbians and gay men, too, felt their causes were largely separate, with lesbians finding community in feminist ideologies that clashed with the political goals of gay male activists in the 1970s.

In addition to ideological divisions pitting less revolutionary reformists and radical liberationists against one another, leaders of the gay rights movement wrestled with strategic divisions born out of identity-based differences. Effective coalition building seemed nearly impossible in the early 1970s, as the movement's return to reformist goals "tried to subsume sexual identity behind a respectable face of normative citizenship."[32] As a result, activists of color, trans activists, lesbians, and other groups felt their causes had been pushed to the fringes of the growing movement in the 1970s. Even so, they were not yet ready to give up on their goals of social liberation, even as more "palatable" and homogenous gay rights groups moved into the mainstream and 'quietly' found political success. These layered divisions slowed down the movement's growth, but also foreshadow the unique success of the orange juice boycott in nationalizing the gay rights movement by giving activists across racial, regional, and class lines a common focus and a concrete reason to unify.

*1.2 Rest Less, Riot More: The Beginning of Effective Coalition-Building in Miami-Dade*

By the mid 1970s, Basker found himself working closely with a small but mighty group of four main organizers who hoped that Miami would become a bastion of political protection for homosexuals like San Francisco and New York had. These individuals, most of whom had recently moved to Miami and already made a name for themselves in gay activist circles elsewhere, worked together, and separately, on ad-hoc political matters relating to gay rights, largely in place of a structured organizational landscape that was effectively barren throughout

[32] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic,* 43.

Florida. This de-facto coalition, essentially a group of mutuals connected by their queer identities and regional location at the time, would function as a stepping stone for expanding support for gay rights in Miami and consolidating methods of political action. First, there was Leonard Matlovich, a closeted gay US Military veteran who moved to Florida in the early 70s after two tours in Vietnam. In 1974, he contacted the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), declaring that he would challenge the US Air Force mandate that barred open homosexuals from serving, and then wrote a letter to his supervisor coming out as gay. Though the Air Force refused to overturn their law, Matlovich received an honorable discharge and ushered in a new kind of visibility as an openly gay *and* politically active veteran that would be valuable to budding groups in Miami—he and his story even made the cover of *Time* magazine in 1975, much to the surprise of most of the gay community.[33] Though Matlovitch entered the gay political scene in Miami with a certain degree of fame that the others did not possess, he would remain on the periphery of organizing in South Florida, traveling often for speaking engagements on television and in college lecture halls.

Then there was Robert Kunst, arguably the most radical and outspoken of the bunch. Uniquely a Miami native, Kunst had been involved in many of the same actions as Basker, marching with Martin Luther King Jr., protesting the Vietnam War, and picketing Richard Nixon's Miami mansion. Kunst decried what he considered to be the "conservative" approach of the other gay activists like Basker in South Florida, but knew he needed broad support to form the kinds of coalitions needed to secure political rights for gays. Kunst co-led the sexual and psychological education-focused Transperience Center in Coconut Grove with Alan Rockaway, a clinical psychologist and bisexual rights activist.[34] Kunst and Rockaway would end up adopting

[33] Hiaasen, "Out of the Closet, and Then Some."
[34] Ibid.

more outwardly radical rhetoric of gay liberation, militant action, and open defiance, which Basker felt undermined his goal of broad coalition-building, likely to be most successful by appealing to politicians in power and making the movement more "digestible" to outsiders.

The final key figure of Miami's new organizing leadership was Jack Campbell, a wealthy businessman who had made his fortune as the owner of a nationwide chain of over 40 gay bathhouses.[35] His Club Bath bathhouses in Miami had done remarkably well, which proved to him that there was a critical mass of community members and fighting for legal protection would be worth it. He would go on to bankroll much of the organizing for gay rights in Miami-Dade and gained pivotal access to affluent circles in the County that the others didn't have but which Basker, in particular, agreed that they needed in order to successfully push for political change. He even ran for Mayor of Miami, as an openly gay man, in 1976, though he ultimately lost. Nevertheless, his financial success and political zeal earned him respect from the other three men he worked closely with in Miami. It's important to note that all of these individuals were white gay men, again a reflection of other reformist majority leaders within the movement and the demographic that found the most success early on organizing in Miami from the ground up.

It was a sticky July day in 1976. Bob Basker, Bob Kunst, and a handful of other local gay activists in Miami sat in the sunken living room of Jack Campbell's spacious Coconut Grove home.[36] The gathering was, more than anything else, a planning meeting for the activists' next step towards political recognition and equality. These organizers hoped to legitimize their unofficial collective of politically active individuals, and in doing so, their cause. They watched as other cities successfully passed non-discrimination ordinances protecting homosexuals against arbitrary exclusion in areas like housing, employment, and the provision of services and wanted

[35] "The Florida Triangle," *The Advocate*, June 14, 1979, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 26, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[36] Hiaasen, "Out of the Closet, and Then Some."

to see Miami follow suit. In cities like Seattle, Detroit, and Los Angeles, legal loopholes and an uninformed public allowed amendments protecting sexual preference to pass without a fuss.[37] Cities revising or updating their local ordinances would subtly include a clause about sexual orientation or preference. Those not acutely tuned in wouldn't learn about the amendment until after it became law, and, as a result, most passed "with little discussion or controversy."[38] Basker and Campbell, in particular, agreed that this would be a clever course of action for their city, too. This way, they figured they only needed to win over the Miami-Dade County Metro Commission. In order to make a convincing and authoritative claim to the Commission, though, they needed to make strategic choices in line with the local political climate.

Chiefly, the four of them needed to present as a united front. For this small but opinionated group, that came in the form of the creation of the Dade County Coalition for the Humanistic Rights of Gays, the product of their planning meeting which would soon become the central gay rights coalition in Miami. The Coalition influenced small groups of activists nearby to come together and build up their own local infrastructure. Soon, a Broward County Coalition for the Humanistic Rights of Gays would come into being one county north of Miami, bringing more individuals and informal groups into the fold. The organizational capacity of South Florida was beginning to take shape. The Coalition's first and most important goal would be to get county-wide legislation passed banning discrimination on the basis of sexual preference in public housing, accommodations, and employment. Agreeing on their first and most important goal was a profound victory for the Coalition, whose central four members found little to agree on otherwise. Though Kunst's goals leaned to the left of most of his counterparts, he believed in the idea of strength in numbers and, more so, the importance of a nondiscrimination clause for gay

[37] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic*, 54.
[38] Ibid.

men and lesbians in South Florida, even if as a starting point. Even he was on board. Kunst presented the ordinance to established local groups with political sway, including Miami's Community Relations Board (CRB), claiming that "homosexuals may be Dade's largest minority," and encouraging the CRB to go straight to the Metro Commission and recommend the passage of such a non-discrimination measure.[39]

The organization secondarily aimed to address the deep divisions that had kept the gay rights movement from recruiting supporters in many areas. Lisa Berry, a lesbian-feminist activist from Florida who was not involved in early planning between the four men, was named co-chair of the Coalition after its creation along with Campbell and Kunst, likely the most ideologically opposed of the bunch. Berry soon after quit, citing her conviction "that lesbians couldn't work with gay men," a clear indication that the divisions stunting the growth of the gay rights movement persisted.[40] The organization had identified and tried to mend points of contention within the movement, but was left without any female members or members of color at all.

Basker and Campbell decided the Coalition's energies would be better redirected towards recruiting less political community members and "enlist more support from the straight community," rather than radical actors reluctant to unify for political protection. Against the suggestion of Kunst, the two men changed the name of the coalition from the Dade County Coalition for the Humanistic Rights of Gays to the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights (DCCHR). The less confrontational language, which Basker and the Coalition ultimately adopted, reflected the respectability politics embedded within the movement's return to liberal reformism, contrasting the seemingly subordinate militant sentiments which Kunst resonated more with.

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[39] Gayle Pollard, "Gays Present Proposal To End Discrimination," *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 1976, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 26, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[40] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 326.

The second strategic move the leaders of the new Coalition had to make, and a point they ultimately had to agree on, would be finding an ally *within* the Commission to support their proposal from the beginning. All of the county Commission seats were up for election in early 1976, and five of the nine Commission seats were won by candidates whom the DCCHR had endorsed.[41] The makeup of the Commission reflected the relatively liberal lean of Miami going into 1976, as progressive transplants from New York and other cities along the Eastern seaboard settled by the seaside with newfound voting power and political influence in South Florida. While the Commission was progressive, it wasn't necessarily *radical*. Bob Kunst had run for the Metro Commission in 1975 on a radical platform, but his candidacy was unsuccessful. He subsequently dedicated himself to lobbying Florida politicians, arguing that to discriminate against gays would be to infringe on their privacy and claiming that the gay community was a large voting bloc in its own right, perhaps overestimating that it made up over 20% of South Florida's total population.[42]

Ultimately, the Coalition chose commissioner Ruth Shack, a straight female politician originally from New York who had won her seat for the first time earlier in the year, as their sponsor for their proposed nondiscrimination ordinance. Shack might have even been more progressive and ready for confrontation than most of the gay men who were coming to her and asking for her support. When asked to introduce the Coalition's amendment to the County's civil rights ordinance, Shack recommended replacing the language of "sex" with the word "gender," which Campbell and Basker promptly rejected, citing concerns of ostracizing their more moderate and reserved potential supporters.[43] She introduced the proposal, with the Coalition's

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[41] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 327.
[42] Ron LaBrecque, "Dade Gay Activists Seeking Passage of Anti-Discrimination Ordinance," *The Miami Herald*, December 7, 1976, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 26, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[43] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 328.

preferred wording, in December of 1976, and was met with resounding approval, and almost no pushback from the Metro Commission itself. Commissioners voted unanimously, 9-0, to schedule a public hearing the next month, where the proposal would be read a second time and the commission would then actually vote on its passage.[44] Against all odds, and despite disagreement along the way, Coalition leaders managed to achieve their shared goal swiftly and smoothly.

*1.3 Rights Resisters Rise: The Emergence of Anti-Gay Christian Conservative Coalitions*

January 18, 1977, the date of that second reading, marked a turning point for gay activists and a formative battle with an emerging counter-movement: the Christian right. Victory in Miami would provide the impetus for gay activists' confrontation with "a powerful new conservative coalition that had access to far more resources than the gay and lesbian movement could hope to."[45] The Christian Right, with its increasing political influence, clung to progressive laws like the one passed in Dade County to further harp on the radical degeneration of morality in America. The Metro Commission's passage of the ordinance wouldn't happen so quietly after all. Sparse cheers from the DCCHR were handily drowned out by swaths of conservative Christians, many spurred on by their ministers to challenge the 'unfair' legislation that had been pushed through right under their noses.

Oklahoma-born beauty queen and singer turned Florida citrus spokeswoman Anita Bryant stood front and center outside the County Commissioner's office on January 18, 1977, rallying against the ordinance that would protect gay people from discrimination in Miami. She heard about the ordinance from her pastor, Reverend William Chapman, and was moved to act.[46] Anita Bryant rose to prominence as a young adult, first as a sweater model, then as Miss

[44] Cleninden and Nagourney, *Out for Good,* 295.
[45] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 142.
[46] Cleninden and Nagourney, *Out for Good*, 296.

Oklahoma, and then as a musical artist, recording million-seller albums throughout the 1960s.[47] Born and raised a devout Baptist, Bryant brought her religious convictions with her to Miami, when she and her four children moved there in the mid-1970s because of her husband, Bob Green, and his music clients. The family's mansion in Miami included a pool, a boat dock, waterfalls, a bust of Anita Bryant from the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, and a prayer altar upstairs. They quickly became religious socialites in Dade County, affiliated with Miami's Northwest Baptist Church. She made close allies with the Baptist Church's pastor Chapman and other religious leaders in the county. She also signed a $100,000 per year contract with the Florida Citrus Commission to appear in TV ads for Florida orange juice. Bryant thus became a recognizable figure across Florida and more so a religious leader in her own right, but she had deeper political aspirations, too. She feared for what she saw as "a dangerous era of promiscuity in the U.S.," advocating for purity in Miami and even refusing to perform at nightclubs because of their ties to expanding sexual expression.[48] When word reached Northwest Baptist Church that such promiscuity was to be protected by Miami-Dade County law, Bryant was ready to jump into action.

The defensive campaign launched by Bryant was severe and strategic. Bryant used her persona as a Christian mother to espouse paternalistic rhetoric about homosexuals threatening the family unit, targeting current and prospective parents and their values. She argued that the ordinance would allow homosexuals to provide role models for impressionable youth and turn Miami into a "cesspool of sexual perversion gone rampant," which she felt cities with visible gay communities had already become.[49] Bryant weaponized existing stigmatization and

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[47] Richard Steele, "The Citrus Queen: Anita Bryant," *National Affairs*, June 6, 1977, Hormel LGBTQIA+ Center and Archive, San Francisco Public Library History Center, San Francisco.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Abe Mellinkoff, "A Crusading Sheriff," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 8, 1977, GLBT Historical Society & Archives, San Francisco.

pathologization that characterized homosexuals as mentally ill, deviants, and even criminals. She warned that legal protections for gay people would bring about the rapid deterioration of dignity within the pure Christian family. These kinds of threats to the nuclear family unit alarmed Christian Floridians and successfully convinced them to support Bryant's crusade.


*Figure 1: Anita Bryant featured in magazine advertisements for Florida Orange Juice in the 1970s. (Source: Stonewall National Museum & Archives, Photo Credit: Kira Ratan).*

Their burst of outrage on January 18 found almost immediate success in and of itself, changing the Commission's vote from a unanimous 9-0 in favor of the ordinance to a more meager, albeit still impressive for the time, 5-3 vote alongside one abstention. This swift change of heart indicated that for many local politicians and residents in Miami, gay rights was not a hard line, and fervent opposition from a large group of their constituents was enough to move the needle back to the status quo. The Miami-Dade County Commission required Bryant to obtain 10,000 voter signatures for her petition in order to place the question of repeal on the ballot in a special election. She got 64,304 signatures in three weeks.[50]

[50] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic,* 43.

Save Our Children (SOC), Bryant's evangelical anti-gay organization, was born just six weeks later. Religious conservatives glommed onto the mission of the campaign and attempted to rally support to overturn the "homosexual ordinance" as quickly as they could.[51] SOC churned out pamphlets and paraphernalia, set up an office in Miami, and reached out to conservative news outlets like Insight Broward to advertise their campaign against "pervert protectors."[52] In an impressive show of solidarity, the Ku Klux Klan formally endorsed SOC, urging "all white people to back Anita."[53] Church ministers in Dade County urged their congregants during sermons to sign the petition to repeal the ordinance. SOC members and volunteers stood on street corners handing out flyers and even canvassing door-to-door in local Florida neighborhoods.[54]

Though scholars like sociologist Tina Fetner argue that Anita Bryant's mass mobilization of conservatives in early 1977 constituted "the first anti-gay counter movement organization in the United States," in reality the New Right had slowly been crystallizing as an organized anti-gay force to be reckoned with for years.[55] Right-wing activists throughout the 1960s and 70s organized against issues like affirmative action, communism, social welfare, racial equity, and increasingly the evolving nature of gender and sexuality.[56] Christian institutions accelerated conservative zeal, condemning homosexuality as a sin written in scripture, preaching to congregations about the dangers of gay visibility. Municipal unions, firefighters, and most of all the Catholic Church, fought legal protections for gay rights in cities like New York and Boston, whose progressive public officials narrowly codified such protection via Executive Orders.[57]

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[51] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 334.
[52] "Pervert Protector," *Insight Broward*, February 1977, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 10, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[53] "Anita OK, Says KKK," *The Miami Herald*, June 6, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[54] Faderman, *The Gay Revolution*, 334.
[55] Tina Fetner, "Working Anita Bryant: The Impact of Christian Anti-Gay Activism on Lesbian and Gay Movement Claims." *Social Problems* 48, No. 3 (August 2001), 411-428, 412.
[56] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 141.
[57] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic*, 55.

When Congress overwhelmingly passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1974, it was conservative activists who organized "what was to become a successful national movement to stop its ratification by the states."[58] That success would find its way down to Miami-Dade County, a locale seen as an exclusive vacation destination but still vulnerable to "police crackdowns and social violence," bringing Christian conservatives together with a renewed sense of determination that would prove dangerous to gay individuals nationwide.[59]

Miami's activists were overconfident going into 1977—they hadn't been on street corners talking to residents to preemptively build up a consolidated support system outside of their own Coalition and the Metro Commission, unlike the strategic coalition-building that accelerated the momentum of SOC's charge. Bryant and her conservative companions were smart. Their campaign largely utilized effective grassroots methods of relational organizing and interpersonal interaction, which gay rights activists hadn't employed up until this point. Bryant's rhetorical strategies and religious allies made her uniquely equipped to rise up as the dynamic figurehead of the anti-gay movement in Miami, garnering nationwide attention and making an enemy of gay activists across the country. Bryant's campaign not only gave gay activists a challenge to confront, but perhaps a blueprint from which to take lessons about strategic organizing.

Even so, gay rights activists did their best not to be outwardly rattled by the oppositional forces on full display following the Miami-Dade County Commission's vote on the ordinance in January. Kunst, chairman of both the Dade and Broward County Coalitions for Human Rights at the time, and referred to by his gay activist peers in Miami as a "loudmouth maverick, headline grabber, an embarrassment," publicly voiced his lack of concern in the days that followed the

[58] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic*, 43.
[59] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 143.

first wave of counterprotests.[60] In a *Miami News* article that referred to the nondiscrimination ordinance as the county's "most controversial [ordinance] ever," Kunst was quoted saying he was confident that if the question of repeal made it to the ballot, it would "fail miserably."[61] Behind the scenes however, coalition leaders had not quite prepared for such fervent backlash to grow so rapidly. The DCCHR was still small, insular, and in conflict regarding strategies of respectability versus radicalism. Put simply, "Miami's homosexual community was unsophisticated and fragmented."[62] The coalition hadn't really thought past getting the Metro Commission to pass their ordinance quietly nor about what would happen if oppositional noise grew in response to their proposal. As news of the clash between conservatives and gay activists made national headlines in the first weeks of Anita Bryant's assault on Miami's nondiscrimination legislation, communities across the country realized a war was afoot.

Perhaps Bryant had started the fight, but gay individuals in Florida were determined not to lose it. They would have to come together quickly and creatively to reinvigorate the revolution for gay rights. Steve Roth, a Miami-Dade Community College student, sent a letter to his school's daily newspaper *The Falcon Times* two weeks after the January vote. He wrote that "homosexuals have a lot of buying power," and suggested that if "all 300,000 gays [in Miami] boycotted orange juice, from which she makes her living, might it then be Anita who?"[63] Though, in retrospect, his letter was likely an insignificant addition to that week's news docket, it is a clear indication that calls for a boycott were taken up almost immediately. A handful of gay individuals and organizations alike, including the Florida chapter of Parents and Friends of

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[60] Carl Hiaasen, "Gay Leaders: Just Who are They?" *Tropic*, June 5, 1977, Florida Up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 26, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[61] Morton Lucoff, "Metro bans bias against homosexuals," *The Miami News*, January 18, 1977, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 4, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[62] Cleninden and Nagourney, *Out for Good*, 301.
[63] Steve Roth, "Aid Gay Rights, Boycott Oranges," *Falcon Times*, February 2, 1977, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 24, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

Lesbians and Gays, and even the national leaders of the GAA, immediately supported the idea of a boycott. The Florida citrus industry had Anita Bryant on their payroll, in addition to influence over state and local politics. By targeting Bryant's status as a public figure and jeopardizing the monetary gains of a staple regional market, gay individuals hoped to scare Bryant and her benefactors away.[64]

[64] For examples of early boycott support, see Jean Smith to Anita Bryant and Florida Department of Citrus, February 18, 1977, Pensacola Parents of Gays Papers, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 24, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

## 2.

## Putting the Squeeze On: Butting Heads with Bryant and Bringing the OJ Boycott to Life, 1977

### *2.1 The Boycott's First Failed Wave: Internal Infighting and Local Lag*

In spite of increasing threats to community progress and a sense of desperation to fight back, early attempts to organize an orange juice boycott initially magnified the movement's internal divisions. Gay leaders in Miami and beyond met the idea of a boycott with ambivalence and impatience. Members of the DCCHR, namely Basker and Campbell, opposed a citrus boycott when it was first proposed in early 1977, arguing that it wouldn't end up affecting Anita so much as it would hurt the activists' broader cause for legal equality and ostracize potential non-gay political supporters like "the migrant workers who depend on citrus for their livelihood."[65] Backlash against the ordinance demonstrated to Basker and Campbell that they had even fewer supporters than they thought and couldn't risk losing any more. On the other side, Bob Kunst, who first suggested the idea of a boycott, felt that the reformism championed by Basker and Campbell failed them. Fed up, Kunst left the Coalition altogether early on in 1977 in order to form his own organization with Alan Rockaway, called the Miami Victory Campaign, to create new institutional support for the boycott.

Bruce Voeller, an early trailblazer of the gay rights movement and Executive Director of the National Gay Task Force (NGTF), was an outspoken critic of an orange juice boycott, arguing that to violate Anita Bryant's right to free speech would be counter to the goals of gay individuals fighting for their own rights to freedom.[66] Free speech was a topic close to many gay

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[65] "Gay Groups Split on Issue of Florida Citrus Boycott," 1977, Howard Wallace papers, GLBT Historical Society & Archives, San Francisco.
[66] "Dr. Voeller Speaks at ACLU Convention," *The Alternative*, August 1, 1978, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 10, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

activists' hearts. The 1964-65 Free Speech Movement at the University of California Berkeley, which demanded First Amendment protections to activism on college campuses, had mobilized thousands of young homosexuals to revolt in the name of solidarity and freedom across issues.[67] Many activists like Voeller felt it would be hypocritical to participate in a campaign that attempted to censor Bryant's platform. He denied that Anita Bryant had ever spoken out against gays "on the job" and addressed fervent opposition from other visible gay activists, mostly white men like himself, denouncing any refusal to participate in and endorse the orange juice boycott.[68]

Fervent opposition it was: the article printed next to coverage of Dr. Voeller's speech at an American Civil Liberties Union Convention, in the famous gay newspaper, *The Alternative,* was an oppositional editorial sent in by writer Donald Cameron Scot, an outspoken supporter of the orange juice boycott and proud contributor to what he hoped would be Anita Bryant and her campaign's swift collapse. In the article, Scot brashly wrote that he had "about as much concern for Anita Bryant's welfare as do Jews for Hitler's."[69] He likened Bryant's attack on human rights to that of the Ku Klux Klan, President Richard Nixon, and white supremacist Mike Thompson.[70] Regarding the boycott, Scot declared that if anyone reading *The Alternative* went into a gay bar and "had the gall" to order a screwdriver (a popular cocktail made with vodka and orange juice), then they "[didn't] deserve to be in that bar…You are contributing, if not to your own death, at least to mine."[71] As extreme as Scot's words were, they tapped into the militant sentiments that had originally invigorated activists at the Stonewall Riots and lived on in Miami through leaders like Kunst, despite the reformist tendencies of the Coalition at large.

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[67] Cohen, Robert, and Reginald E. Zelnik, eds. *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s*, (1st ed. University of California Press, 2002).
[68] "Dr Voeller Speaks at ACLU Convention."
[69] Donald Cameron Scot editorial in *The Alternative*, August 1, 1978, Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 10, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

The most radical gay and lesbian activists, on the other hand, didn't think an orange juice boycott went nearly far enough and instead urged a more militant response to Bryant's campaigning, writing to "get out the dog-tags—the war is on!"[72] The Gay Guerillas, for example, organized their own militant action against Tropicana orange juice, dubbed the Tropicana Relay, in which they encouraged individuals to go into supermarkets and take a sharp instrument to puncture as many Tropicana containers as they could, repeating the action at as many supermarkets as they could in a day and, finally, recruiting more people join in with them for the next time.[73] All of these different leaders clearly had similar goals. They wanted to protect nondiscrimination legislation for gay individuals and, more urgently, stop Anita Bryant from trying to take it all away. Earlier on, divisions within the movement made it hard for them to agree on how to do it. Although the more violent tactics didn't exactly become mainstream, they demonstrated that within the orange juice boycott campaign, gay activists of all kinds of ideological alignments could find outlets to contribute to a common cause.

This chapter focuses on the growth of the Florida citrus boycott, from its inception as a localized threat in early 1977 to its successful expansion later that year as a formidable campaign with national attention and support. More specifically, this chapter aims to demonstrate that although the orange juice boycott took time to get off the ground, initially seen as a plan of action "pasted together" by a predictably "disjointed gay people,"[74] the unique and varied tactics employed by gay organizations and individuals to encourage widespread participation in the boycott worked to successfully consolidate a previously fractured gay rights movement in the United States. The boycott effectively did so by deliberately creating a diverse national network

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[72] *Sister* newsletter, [1977?], The Alternative Collection, Folder 1, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[73] "SMASH TROPICANA!!," Gay Guerillas open letter to the gay community, July, 1977, GLBT Historical Society Ephemera Collection, Protests, GLBT Historical Society & Archives, San Francisco.
[74] Joseph Carruba, "The Citrus Boycott," *New Horizon*, June 24, 1977, The Advocate Collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

of gay rights activists with a specific political focus and emphasizing the exigency of direct action on the part of individuals across the the United States.

*2.2 The First Drops of Success: Why a Boycott and Why Florida Orange Juice?*

Boycotts were not a new phenomenon and found substantial efficacy in other social movements, especially after World War II. Consumer activism became a tool for labor unions, farm workers, environmentalists and student groups as corporations expanded and buying power became politicized. The postwar years of the 1950s and 60s saw more Americans buying on credit as discretionary spending flourished, a symbol of American abundance and perceived prosperity following their military victory.[75] Even the counterculture of the 1960s, of which the gay rights movement was born from in many ways, was not immune to material culture spurred by innovation, advertising, and unrestricted markets.[76] However, they saw commercial consumerism as an opportunity to exercise resistance. The more people consumed, the more power their consumption held. Social activists and organizations realized that by withholding consumption for specific goods and services, they could leverage their power as buyers and pressure corporations with political influence to pay attention to their cause.

For example, the United Farm Workers grape boycott, one of the first successful campaigns of its kind, was conceived as a supplemental action against corporate exploitation, in addition to strikes and marches led by Chicano/a farm workers against the brutal conditions codified by Public Law 78 in California.[77] Led by renowned organizer Cesar Chávez, the UFW boycott consisted of recruiting allied unions to stop distributing the most profitable products,

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[75] Peter Mundey, *Sacred Consumption: The Religions of Christianity and Consumerism in America*, (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2023), 12.
[76] Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
[77] Todd Holmes, "The Swing of the Political Pendulum: Congressman John Moss, the Democratic Party, and the United Farm Workers' Grape Strike and Boycott, 1965-1970." *Southern California Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (2006): 295–338, 300.

which were actually processed grapes in the form of alcohol rather than fresh raw grapes.[78] Support for the boycott grew quickly, as laborers in the restaurant union, hotel union, and even autoworkers union spread the word. The grape boycott was unique in that it employed methods of primary and secondary boycott, recruiting participation by both distributors sending out grapes to stores and consumers who regularly purchased grape products.[79] The circumstances of the UFW grape boycott would mirror gay activists' orange juice boycott in its agricultural context, need for external solidarity, attacks on growing supermarket corporations, and even the very products being boycotted. The grape boycott would, in many ways, become a blueprint for successful national, and even international, organizing against Florida citrus growers and manufacturing executives.

Gay rights activists in certain regions had used boycott tactics before, too, in their local fights against discrimination. The Coors boycott united gay and labor activists across the West Coast and became one of the longest-running consumer boycotts of the late 20th century, lasting from 1957 to 1980. The boycott initially began with Chicano/a and Black individuals taking a stand against the company's discriminatory hiring practices, notably people of color who had been left out of early homophile organizing.[80] Soon, other progressive groups, namely students and gay activists rallied together for a uniquely diverse boycott campaign, having been affected by Coors' hiring practices, too. United States historian Allyson Brantley argued that boycotts like the Coors' marked a turn towards ""unusually creative" politics," in America.[81] Bumper stickers and other memorabilia produced for the Coors boycott would resurface with the Florida citrus boycott. The Coors boycott signaled a new era of coalition-building and harnessing

[78] Garcia, Matt. "A Moveable Feast: The UFW Grape Boycott and Farm Worker Justice." *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 83 (2013): 146–53, 147.
[79] Ibid., 151.
[80] Allyson P. Brantley, "Hardhats May Be Misunderstood: The Boycott of Coors Beer and the Making of Gay-Labor-Chicana/o Alliances," *Pacific Historical Review* 89, no. 2 (2020): 264–96, 265.
[81] Ibid., 267.

political consumerism for gay rights, but remained siloed to the American West, given that the brewing company was limited to a thirteen-state distribution territory.[82] The Florida orange juice boycott would be the first in the history of the gay rights movement to truly gain momentum nationwide and symbolic support even outside the United States.

The first calculated tactic of citrus boycott proponents like Kunst was picking orange juice as a creative political target in the first place. Florida and oranges had gone hand-in-hand since the early 20th century. Through the Federal Writers' Project, a subsection of FDR's New Deal Workers Progress Administration, oranges became intimately linked with the narrative history of Florida and the accepted key agricultural commodity for the state.[83] In 1935, the Florida Citrus Commission was created, which consisted of the state agency side named the Florida Department of Citrus and a committee of executives appointed by the Governor to represent the interests of orange growers in statewide political and economic matters.[84] The Commission, in charge of regulating the sales and marketing methods of the Florida citrus industry, became a "hegemonic force" controlling perceptions of the orange as a rising commodity.[85]

During World War II, orange juice entered the national consciousness as a Florida-made product vital to the health of the country and its soldiers. The advent of Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice (FCOJ), where oranges were juiced, had their water content removed and then the juice was frozen to keep it shelf-stable for longer, increased nationwide consumption of orange juice, eventually over fresh oranges themselves, subsequently increasing demand for groves and growers in Florida. Advertisement campaigns from the FCC featured the slogan, "Victory

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[82] Brantley, "Hardhats May Be Misunderstood," 267.
[83] Scott D. Hussey, "The Sunshine State's Golden Fruit: Florida And The Orange, 1930-1960," (2010), *USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations*, 22.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

Vitamin C," solidifying Florida orange juice's place as the country's national beverage and cultural symbol of abundance and prosperity.[86] By the end of the war, Florida produced 55 percent of the country's oranges, outcompeting regions like California.[87] The monopolization of Florida citrus fell in line with increasing consumer demand for domestic goods and the resulting consolidation of power by American corporations. The crystallization of the United States as a capitalist entity on the world stage was reflected in the national diet. Orange juice became a symbol of the lushness of the country's economic base, affirming the idea that the United States could produce almost anything at the highest level. Television advertisements for Florida orange juice became a staple in American households, featuring none other than spokeswoman Anita Bryant.

Orange juice clearly held a strategic place in the postwar political milieu, but it also struck an emotional cord with activists who wholly placed the blame on Bryant for renewed attacks on the homosexual community throughout the United States. In the short term, boycott proponents hoped targeting orange juice would force the Florida Citrus industry to take a stance on gay rights and threaten Bryant's visibility. Bryant had strong monetary ties to an industry that had daily access to nearly every Americans' living room television screen and breakfast table. On a larger scale, local activists hoped to co-opt orange juice as a cultural symbol with national reach to expand their project and extinguish Christian right-wing counterprotestors, led by their figurehead from the Sunshine State.

*2.3 A Second Wave Picks up Speed: Concentrating Boycott Participation Countrywide*

With the eyes of the nation on Miami-Dade, the County's nondiscrimination ordinance was repealed by its own residents in a special election made possible by Anita Bryant. The

[86] Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years of the Florida Citrus Commission* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Citrus, 1986), 20.
[87] Hussey, "The Sunshine State's Golden Fruit," 57.

referendum vote, held on June 7, 1977, saw unusually high turnout, and gay leaders were dealt a substantial blow, losing by more than a 2-to-1 margin and in every neighborhood except Coconut Grove.[88] The repeal was devastating for gay leaders, who had been instead reading articles that "2 out of 3 favor gay rights" in Miami, confident that the referendum would end in victory for them.[89] The decision immediately made waves nationally, too. Anita Bryant's push for the June 7 vote was "the first referendum of its kind in a major United States city," and one that generated national attention "on the question of civil rights for homosexuals."[90] On the night of her 'victory,' Bryant announced she would establish "a national committee to fight homosexuality."[91] She vowed to travel across the country, leading other cities with legal protections for homosexuals towards the same conservative fate as Miami. The momentum of Anita Bryant's campaign only accelerated following the ordinance's repeal.

However, as national attention focused more on Save Our Children's successful efforts, gay activists and other progressive groups across the country concurrently generated more support for their own campaign. What initially divided militant and more reserved activists, perhaps because of the hotheaded dispositions of early supporters like Kunst and Scot, faded as Bryant's campaign found concrete success. The June 7 vote that overturned the passage of Miami's ordinance spelled trouble for cities across the country with nondiscrimination laws, spurring previously skeptical individuals into action. Early citrus boycott opponent Bruce Voeller along with his co-executive director Jean O'Leary, made it clear to their membership in an NGTF newsletter that the ordinance's repeal in Miami had significant repercussions for the rest of the country and it was time for gay activists nationwide to "redouble our efforts to end such

[88] Cleninden and Nagourney, *Out for Good*, 308.
[89] "2 out of 3 favor gay rights," *The Miami News*, March 31, 1977, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[90] "Dade County Upset," *New Horizon*, June 24, 1977, The Advocate Collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale, 9.
[91] Ibid.

prejudice and the discrimination it inspires."[92] In fact, Voeller and O'Leary told their constituents that "Anita Bryant and Save Our Children Inc. are doing the 20 million lesbians and gay men in America an enormous favor," making visible the need for unified opposition against the imminent threat of codified homophobia.[93] Following the devastation of Bryant's successful referendum in Dade County, national gay leaders like Voeller changed their tune. As a result of their organizations' increasing support of the boycott's goals, more hesitant activists started switching over, too. Anita Bryant seemed to be doing the work *for* gay activists, uniting gay rights supporters to stop SOC's rapidly expanding and increasingly successful crusade.

By the late summer of 1977, the stinging loss in Miami-Dade had ignited the militant spirits of more moderate gay leaders like Bob Basker and Jack Campbell, forcing them to rethink their previously reserved campaign tactics. On July 29, 1977, the DCCHR, like Voeller and the NGTF, changed its earlier tune against the boycott. At the first National Gay Leadership Conference, Jack Campbell officially announced that the coalition was "urging the public not to buy Florida oranges or Florida orange juice… in the name of common decency."[94] On August 1, 1977, three days after the Dade Coalition announced its support for a citrus boycott, Bob Kunst and Alan Rockaway's Miami Victory Campaign, headquartered in Coconut Grove, ignited what they dubbed "Phase II" of their proclaimed plan to secure gay rights in Miami.[95] They called it "The International Gaycott."[96] Kunst and his organization had big goals to make "grapes and lettuce boycotts look like a picnic" by getting 100 million Americans to participate in a Florida citrus boycott. Following the DCCHR's lead, John Gill, the new Chairman of The Broward

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[92] "Dade County Upset," 9.
[93] Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller, "Anita Bryant's Crusade," *The New York Times*, June 7, 1977, Anita Bryant clippings, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[94] "Gay Groups Split on Issue of Florida Citrus Boycott."
[95] Alan Rockaway and Bob Kunst open letter from the Miami Victory Campaign, August 1, 1977 , Florida up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 10, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[96] Ibid.

County Coalition for Human Rights (BCCHR) sent a letter out to members, "formally endorsing the national boycott against Florida citrus products," citing the widespread praise the boycott received at the 1977 Denver Gay Rights Conference.[97] With broadening support from organizations and leaders who previously were not keen on the idea of a boycott, the fragmented nature of early gay activism began to heal. Coalition-building took shape as these gay activists zeroed in on the same political goal and tools to try and achieve it.[98]

The Victory Campaign's open letter, which was followed by many other open letters from other gay organizations outside Miami to their membership, was an effective early map for laying out and disseminating the goals of the boycott, the rules of participation, and the demands of activists for the Citrus Commission. Kunst and Rockaway's Victory Campaign, which quickly rose to prominence as a force to be reckoned with among gay activist organizations in Miami after branching off from the DCCHR, defined the 'gaycott' as a voluntary mass withdrawal of consumption of orange juice in order to oust its spokesperson and "sales huckster," Anita Bryant, who was "being paid to continue her witchhunt against gays by the Florida Citrus Commission."[99]

Bob Kunst and Alan Rockaway had been a part of the gay community in Miami through the 1970s, and their Victory Campaign had the stature and credibility needed to re-engage a boycott campaign. Kunst had made a name for himself as an activist dedicated to pushing the boundaries of political action for gay rights in Miami. Rockaway's position as a psychologist and community organizer made him a trustworthy and educated leader. Kunst and Rockaway capitalized on the fact that gay activists now more widely accepted that the FCC's silence and

[97] John W. Gill letter to BCCHR members, August 1977, Florida Citrus Boycott Committee collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[98] Miami Victory Campaign open letter.
[99] Ibid.

refusal to act against Anita Bryant in the six months since she arrived on the anti-gay scene was an effective endorsement of her political views. The situation was now urgent enough, because gay people had lost something tangible following the special election, to pursue such an organized 'gaycott.'

Kunst and Rockaway not only addressed the concerns of gay rights organizations like the DCCHR in their demands, but also used the "gaycott" as an opportunity to try and mend previous divisions hurting the early movement, a strategic choice leaders in Miami hadn't taken advantage of before and for which they suffered. Their demands including getting the original ordinance passed and enshrined into law in Miami-Dade County, ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), passing legislation guaranteeing the right to privacy for gay individuals, and also increasing wages and quality of life for migrant laborers, largely people of color, being taken advantage of by the citrus industry.[100] The Victory Campaign's renewed citrus boycott campaign, though still led by white male activists, attempted to bring lesbian and feminist activists into the fold, who before had felt excluded by the homogeneity of Dade County's white gay male leaders, but now saw their own interests considered and potentially satisfied by the expanded boycott demands. As factions of the gay rights movement began to align their strategies and goals, divisions that had stunted the growth of the movement started to dissolve.

Some gay activists utilized rights-based language to appeal to queer communities of color fighting concurrent rights battles and undermine the rhetoric of SOC and its conservative allies. United States historian Gillian Frank argues that Anita Bryant's campaign strategically utilized contemporaneous racial conflicts between civil rights and right-wing groups to encourage "a migration of conservative ideas and activists from race-based conflicts to gender- and

[100] Miami Victory Campaign open letter.

sexual-based conflicts."[101] Recent debates over school integration and the ERA ended favorably for the Christian right in Florida, who co-opted the fight for 'rights,' of parents and religious Americans. Gay activists needed to counter conservative rights claims and clarify exactly whose rights they were fighting for and whose rights were contrived in the name of preserving discriminatory practices. Gay activists were even quoted saying, "Miami is our Selma."[102] Garnering the support of gay people of color and lesbians proved to be more important than ever in this respect, too.

In addition to uniting queer activists together across differences, the boycott caught the attention of organizers not directly focused on gay rights who saw the June loss in Miami as a loss for progressive organizing more broadly. The Socialist Workers Party, for example, held a march on June 26 in San Francisco to protest the outcome of the June 7 referendum. The rally, dubbed "No More Miamis!," hoped to convince socialist labor union members that the defeat of gay rights in Dade County was "a defeat for all human rights."[103] The Party contextualized the events in Miami alongside the defeat of the ERA, antilabor, and anti-black actions across the country. They urged "women, Blacks, Chicanos, and trade-unionists [to] add their voices" to the fight against right-wing forces in Miami threatening gay rights.[104] Growing support from more diverse external groups like the Socialist Workers Party helped to counteract the insularity of gay rights organizing in Miami, which had contributed to its losses in 1977. Furthermore, these rallies connected lines of communication between gay activists to other protest traditions who would prove time and again to be valuable constituents of the broader gay rights movement.

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[101] Gillian Frank, "'The Civil Rights of Parents': Race and Conservative Politics in Anita Bryant's Campaign against Gay Rights in 1970s Florida." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22, no. 1 (2013): 126–60, 128.
[102] "Battle over Gay Rights," *Newsweek*, June 6, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[103] Socialist Workers Party open letter, "No More Miamis," June 26, 1977, GLBT Historical Society & Archives, San Francisco.
[104] Ibid.

Although women and people of color were still absent from leadership positions in organizing the boycott, they gained much needed representation as diverse stakeholders mobilized for Miami.

Budding gay rights organizations publicly declared their official participation in the citrus boycott following the June 7 referendum. Miami's chapter of Dignity, a national organization founded in 1969 as an advocacy group for LGBTQ+ acceptance in the Catholic Church, made the boycott a focal point at social gatherings and political events. At the first anniversary gala of the Miami chapter, for example, Dignity invited "Ms. Minute Maid," a drag queen, to replace Anita Bryant, "the Orange Juice Queen," and perform numbers like "Don't Drink the Orange Juice."[105] Strengthening lines of communication between gay rights organizations within Miami was a necessary requisite for successfully disseminating the boycott's goals to individuals and groups outside of South Florida. The "gaycott" united progressive organizations within South Florida might have been estranged before by rather miniscule political differences. Anita Bryant's antagonism heightened activists' sense of urgency along the ideological spectrum. Her continuous attacks in Florida, which tangibly threatened progress for gay rights across the country, made it easier for gay leaders to overlook respectability or outward radicalism and focus their efforts on a singular target.

The BCCHR and DCCHR worked together to solidify support of a national orange juice boycott regionally in Florida, with both coalitions agreeing that "the gay movement will be embarrassed nationwide if we can't get support right here in Florida, the home state of the Citrus Commission."[106] Local lack of participation in the boycott soon became seen as an act of betrayal

[105] "Lookin' Back," *Dignity/Miami Newsletter*, May-June 1977, Florida Up to 1981 Collection, Box 1 Folder 9, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[106] "BCCHR Joins Dade Coalition in Boycott," *Our Time* newsletter, November 1977, 1 no. 2, Florida Citrus Boycott Committee collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

and counterproductive to the unification of the movement. Michael McKay, Vice President for the DCCHR, called for sanctions against gay establishments continuing to serve Florida orange juice instead of alternative citrus products from California and Texas, which McKay assured gay bar owners would be politically noble and "economically feasible for gay businesses."[107] Businesspeople who owned gay bars and clubs became key constituents for boycott leaders to recruit. Gay bars had been politically active sites since the 1950s and influenced the kinds of politics patrons brought home from their night out. Their diverse customer base and control over what products were served made them vital lynchpins for mobilizing others to boycott orange juice. Boycott leaders couldn't afford *not* to have their support.

Local and national news outlets combined with the gay press cultivated cross-regional and cross-organizational participation in the boycott. Word of the revitalized boycott reached millions of Americans nationwide. Even the Stonewall riots hadn't garnered the kind of immediate media attention that the citrus boycott did.[108] This unprecedented media attention, especially in the mainstream, likely broke through because of a combination of Anita Bryant's existing recognition as a quasi-celebrity and the fact that this was the first expansive battle between an organized Christian Right and tangible change championed by the gay rights movement. The *Austin American-Statesman*, the largest daily newspaper in Austin, Texas, for example, reported on Bob Kunst and Anita Bryant both attending the Texas State Bar Convention June of 1977 and concluded that gay rights activists in Miami like Kunst were forming a "coalition like this country has never seen before" to fight the Christian Right's anti-gay crusade, namely with a boycott on "Florida orange juice and Miami tourism."[109]

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[107] "BCCHR Joins Dade Coalition in Boycott."
[108] Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic*, 35.
[109] Linda Kerr, "Gay activist vows boycotts, battles," *Austin American-Statesman*, June 19, 1977, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

The gay press emerged as a highly effective and efficient tool of organizing for gay rights advocates, and the orange juice boycott was one of the earliest campaigns to use it to increase participation en masse. The gay press had been one faction that had steadily increased its credibility, audience, and reach since the 1960s. In the 1950s and 60s, "homophile" publications attracted limited audiences and limited funding by way of advertisements. By 1980, there were over 600 queer periodicals with a combined circulation of over 500,000, covering topics like gay consumerism, radical content, "third-world lesbianism," black community members, and trans individuals.[110] Gay rights organizers had greater access to more diverse national platforms as gay press readership grew nationwide.

Snarky editorials popped up in both the gay press and national news from angry individuals who warned that "drinking orange juice from Florida can be hazardous to your health" and quipped that, "Anita Bryant will discover that California orange can also be hazardous to one's health, but only when hurled at close range."[111] Articles and editorials endorsing the boycott made their way to every corner of the country, with gay men and lesbians making jabs at Bryant's "vicious anti-homosexual Christian Crusade" by warning that drinking Florida orange juice could cause a gay person to become heterosexual, so "it might do us well to abstain from drinking Florida citrus products until this affair is resolved."[112] Humor served as a means of cultivating solidarity and, thus, practical support for the underlying goals of the boycott. For the first time in the country's history it seemed, gay rights activists were commandeering headlines themselves to expand their political campaign and power, as a result transforming their once localized action into a national phenomenon.

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[110] Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement*, 144.
[111] Excerpt of Janie Greenspun column, *Las Vegas Sun*, June 15, 1977, in Miami Victory Campaign open letter.
[112] Jim Wood, "S.F.'s homosexuals join fight against the Orange Juice girl," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 6, 1977, Harvey Milk and Scott Smith Collection of Artifacts and Ephemera (2002-43) Oversize Box 8, GLBT Historical Society & Archives, San Francisco.

Importantly, news readership, unlike the boycott's central leadership, was not restricted to white gay men. Both mainstream outlets and the gay press reached lesbians, people of color, conservative individuals and even closeted community members. *El Cajón Daily*, a regional newspaper from San Diego catering mostly to hispanic communities, reported as front page news that the San Diego County Democratic Central Committee "called for a boycott of all Florida citrus products" because of Anita Bryant's conservative campaign in Dade County.[113] From Lakeland, Florida, where the Citrus Commission was headquartered, to Albany, New York, individuals and groups proclaimed their support for the Florida citrus boycott, urging the Florida Citrus Commission to disaffiliate themselves from Bryant and her rhetoric. Regional newspapers like the Oakland Press, Cleveland Sun Messenger, and the Las Vegas Sun published calls to join the boycott and reported on community organizations lobbying to get signs supporting the boycott put up in local supermarkets.

Many of these calls to action also utilized economic statistics as a tactic to expand the boycott and legitimize the feasibility of the mission. In newsletters and editorials, both the Miami Victory Campaign and Homosexuals Intransigent! cited the same public opinion poll that found that 11% of the Florida Citrus Commission's potential consumers were turned off by their connection to Bryant and her anti-gay crusade, which in economic terms, spelled "disaster."[114] Small local newspapers and national gay news outlets alike published calls, using diversified tactics, to boycott Florida Orange Juice regularly, even if they had to fit it in the corner of the second page rundown.[115] Again, Anita Bryant seemed to be inadvertently helping gay activists'

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[113] "Democrat unit pushes citrus boycott," *El Cajón Daily*, June 23, 1977, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[114] Ibid.
[115] For examples, see "Boycott Florida Orange Juice!" *N.Y. Gay Scene*, February 1977; and "Juice Queen Fights Gay Rights," *San Francisco Sentinel*, February 10, 1977, Florida Citrus Boycott Committee collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

cause, as her fame brought publicity not only to her own campaigns but responsive campaigns from her opponents like the orange juice boycott.

In response to coverage of the boycott in the press and growing participation, gay communities in cities far removed from Dade County provided much needed political and financial support, raising money on behalf of Miami activists for the protection of local rights in South Florida, a legal battle with very real implications for the rest of the country. San Francisco, for example, became an integral stronghold that the movement needed to sufficiently apply pressure to both Anita Bryant and the Citrus Commission. San Francisco arguably was home to the most robust gay bar scene in the entire world. By getting gay bars in the Castro and the Mission District to participate in the boycott, gay activists hoped to make a substantial dent in the commercial sales of Florida orange juice. The San Francisco Tavern Guild, the city's official union of gay establishments, eagerly joined the fight. Bartenders traded in their orange juice cocktails for apple juice spritzes, dubbed the "Anita Bryant" drink.[116] Bars in the Guild put up official signs that read: "To Promote Human Rights This Establishment Does Not Serve Florida Orange Juice or Orange Juice from Concentrate [FCOJ]."[117]

By the end of the summer, more organizations, including the newly formed 'Boycott Committee' of Homosexuals Intransigent!, a New York City-based gay separatist organization, sent out open letters to their members calling for participation in Miami's "gaycott." These ad-hoc boycott committees, often far removed from Dade County, became useful indicators of cross-regional support between urban hubs of gay culture and the focused battle in Miami-Dade. The Miami Support Committee was another ad-hoc committee founded by a group of San

[116] "5000 Threaten Juice Boycott," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, November 8, 1977, GLBT Historical Society Archives ephemera collection, Box 19 Folder 22, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[117] San Francisco Tavern Guild Poster, GLBT Historical Society Archives ephemera collection, Box 19 Folder 22, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco (see cover page).

Francisco activists in March of 1977 to build up political goodwill and monetary support for activists in Miami-Dade County fighting against Christian conservatives. Alan Rockaway of the Miami Victory Campaign traveled to San Francisco in March to raise $30,000 for the battle against repeal.[118] Organizations in Toronto, London, and even Stockholm received word of the OJ boycott's spread and were ready to provide international support, albeit far more symbolic than economically or politically impactful, for the fight against the rapidly rising Christian right-wing countermovement they saw threatening their gay and lesbian affiliates abroad. This cross-regional solidarity for the boycott and its goals proved vital to reinvigorating gay rights activists and the movement's infrastructure as a whole.

The wide range of ephemera produced by and for the orange juice boycott also served as a unifying force both internally and externally, connecting the battle for gay rights with other diverse political battles. The creative tactic also reflected the material culture that permeated the social and political milieu of the United States in the 1970s. The postwar surge of hypercapitalistic ideals, including mass production and free trade, seeped into the fabric of ongoing social movements in the US. More proximately, gay and lesbian activists drew on prior models of political materialism. Anti-war, feminist, and civil rights activist groups who popularized t-shirt culture, utilized armbands, and wore patches and buttons as political statements opened the door for gay men and lesbians to make ephemera central to expanding their movement. The organizing circles that had the most success with using ephemera as a symbol of protest were not made up of white males, in contrast to the gay leaders in Miami and San Francisco. Even still, many of these white gay rights leaders, like Basker and Kunst, had been intimately involved in earlier protests for civil rights and feminism and knew that

[118] Wood, "S.F.'s homosexuals join fight."

paraphernalia could be distributed widely with little effort and great success in garnering support for the mission at hand.

Progressive organizations and collectives took on the financial burden of distributing handmade shirts, pressed pins, bright orange flyers, and more, all in the name of expanding support for the citrus boycott. Miami Victory Campaign leaders handed out orange and blue bumper stickers that read, "NO IS THE ANSWER. VOTE AGAINST REPEAL JUNE 7," with the O replaced by an orange, in local areas leading up to the special election in Dade County.[119] This came largely in direct response to Anita Bryant's Save Our Children campaign, which took advantage of the popularity and ubiquity of material culture just the same, giving supporters bumper stickers that read, "Kill a Queer for Christ," and pamphlets urging voters to "Save Our Children from Homosexuality."[120] The sinister and paternalistic tone of Anita Bryant's camp was rendered sardonic by the humor and wry jabs of gay activists' ephemera and campaign language.

Just as Bryant's minions did in the days following the ordinance's passage in January to get signatures for their petition, Victory Campaign volunteers stood outside supermarkets in South Florida, only this time they handed out yellow tote bags printed with oranges and "Tell Anita You're Against Discrimination / VOTE JUNE 7TH."[121] Circular buttons pinned to people's shirts donned Florida Citrus oranges and the prohibition sign or had catchy slogans like, "No More Orange Juice from the Un-Shine State," "Anita Bryant Sucks Oranges," and "May he who hath not sinned cast the first orange."[122]

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[119] Miami Victory Campaign bumper sticker, 1977, Miami Victory Campaign Collection, Box 1, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[120] Save Our Children selected ephemera, 1977, GLBT Historical Society Archives ephemera collection, Box 19 Folder 1, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[121] Orange Juice boycott ephemera, 1977, GLBT Historical Society Archives ephemera collection, Box 19 Folder 22, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[122] Assorted custom buttons, 1977, Miami Victory Campaign Collection, Box 1, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

Everyday clothing became another means of political resistance for gay men and lesbians, who could illustrate their support for the boycott and, by proxy, for other political rights simply by donning a graphic tee that read, "A Day without Human Rights is like a Day Without Sunshine," a nod to her catchphrase as orange juice spokeswoman, "a morning without Florida orange juice is like a morning without sunshine." Other wry slogans for their informal campaigns included "We are your children," in direct response to Anita Bryant's established organization Save Our Children and the rhetoric of parental rights that came with it, and "Anita, You're Dreaming," screenprinted next to a tasteful cartoon orange.[123] For a group who had, up until the 1960s, largely been rendered silent, gay activists were clever to take advantage of the tradition of material protest to visibly show their support for gay rights and use tactics familiar to other minority groups to bring them into the boycott's fold.


*Figure 2: Original pressed pins and t-shirts distributed as a part of the Florida citrus boycott. (Source: James Hormel LGBTQIA+ Center, San Francisco Public Library; Photo Credit: Kira Ratan).*

T-shirts, buttons, and other kinds of ephemera moved easily across borders and, as such, selling merchandise also proved to be an effective way both for gay rights organizations to fundraise and

[123] See "A Letter From the Publisher," *After Dark*, October 1977, and "God's Crusader," *Newsweek*, June 6, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale, 22.

for relatively uneducated individuals far removed from Miami-Dade to conveniently participate and show their support for the boycott's mission.

Gay and straight individuals across the country incorporated the boycott into their daily lives. From the news they read, to the clothes they wore, the money they spent, and the beverages they drank, participation in the boycott happened everywhere and all the time. In her acclaimed memoir, author Alysia Abbott recalled living with her gay father in San Francisco during the late 1970s and feeling a sense of solidarity, even as a child, with the goals of the boycott:

> "Six going on seven at the time, I was too young to understand exactly why we'd switched from orange juice to apple juice in the mornings, but I did absorb a sense of persecution: They don't want us. They want to do away with us."[124]

Abbott remembered seeing an entire "generation of gay men and women" who hadn't felt compelled to formally join the movement become "for the first time politicized."[125] The Florida citrus boycott gave gay rights supporters across the country, and even the world, a focused political target that could easily be sustained and whose goals could easily be identified and disseminated. Reactions and responses from Anita Bryant, the Florida Citrus Commission, and activists working on other issues, would demonstrate the degree to which the gay rights movement had remobilized itself and may have finally been equipped to give Christian conservatives a run for their money.

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[124] Alysia Abbott, *Fairyland: a memoir of my father*, (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2014), 85.
[125] Ibid.

## 3.

## New Breakfast and New Beginnings: Cross-Regional Coalitions Back the Boycott and California Gays Against Briggs, 1977-1983

*"Homosexuals and the opposition wonder if Dade County's battle will become California's war."*

- William Overend, *Los Angeles Times*

The orange juice boycott brought informal political organizing networks across the nation together at a time when the gay rights movement was in dire need of a momentum shift. The powerful gay bar scene and burgeoning gay press lent themselves to supporting the boycott's message. Crucially, swaths of people who "had never been involved publicly in gay rights" came out, risking visibility professionally and socially, in order to combat Anita Bryant's bigotry.[126] Because of them, these informal networks ballooned, bringing more queer individuals and allies than ever before into the folds of a coalescing gay rights movement. Reactions from activists fighting other political battles were largely positive and demonstrated how the orange juice boycott, in many ways, legitimized the gay rights movement as a fast-acting, high-functioning entity actively pushing their opposition into retreat. Amidst deeply homophobic cultural norms, gay rights activists harnessed their economic power to assert their entitlement to political protection.

This chapter seeks to highlight the longer-term tangible impacts of the orange juice boycott on the national acceleration of the gay rights movement in the United States. In particular, I aim to underscore how the boycott successfully brought community members together and ultimately subdued Anita Bryant as a leader and figurehead of the Christian Right. The defeat of Bryant was key to the movement's national revival, but also demanded the

[126] Jon Nordheimer, "Miami Homosexuals See a Victory Despite Defeat of Antibias Law," *The New York Times*, December 28, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

adoption of nonviolent tools of resistance in tandem with the boycott. The boycott, coupled with effective and continuous protest through other means, chastened Anita Bryant's crusade and simultaneously gave gay activists the confidence to unite for legal protections in other parts of the country. I use the Briggs Initiative, a California ballot proposal from 1978 that attempted to ban homosexual teachers from public schools and which was ultimately defeated, as a case study to demonstrate that the events in Miami-Dade and the resulting orange juice boycott gave gay rights advocates in other parts of the country the tools and momentum necessary to secure a desperately-needed victory for the LGBTQ+ community. This victory helped paved the way for further social visibility and political progress.

The orange juice boycott strategically garnered support from less visible gay and lesbians and gained the sympathy of other minority groups and organizations spanning the ideological spectrum of progressive America. Groups like the Miami Young Democrats Association and the National Organization for Women (NOW), which generally operated within the existing political establishment, worked alongside the Socialist Worker's Party and even more radical organizations because of their shared belief in the boycott's goals. NOW, for example, had been trying to get a boycott of all Florida-made products off the ground for years, ever since the state refused to ratify the ERA. By appealing to critics of capitalism and reducing barriers to participation in this form of resistance, gay leaders in Miami unlocked the aid of militant resistance groups removed from earlier fights for gay rights.

The Toronto chapter of the Trotskyist League, too, a far-left political group that promoted international socialist revolution, vocally supported the fight against Anita Bryant. They argued that "homosexuals lack social weight in capitalist class society," and as a result only a "united

working-class action" like a boycott could defeat a right-wing attack like Bryant's.[127] The citrus boycott, as a result, was an inherently radical act of anti-capitalism, which appealed to their leftist values. Feminist organizations and youth-centered subcultures, too, saw Bryant's crusade as an undertaking aligned with "capitalist rulers" to "counter the erosion of [nuclear] family stability."[128] Though anti-capitalism wasn't the ultimate ethos behind the boycott, it became convenient for gay and lesbian boycott participants to co-opt and align its mission with these left-wing groups in order to further expand participation and diminish class division alongside increasing gendered and racial unity. Unlikely organizations found ways to relate with the ongoing plight of gay rights activists and brought themselves in line with the campaign.

*3.1 Pulp Non-Fiction: How the OJ Boycott Drained Anita Bryant's Confidence*

The orange juice boycott, among other nonviolent tools of resistance utilized by gay activists, made it abundantly clear to Anita Bryant that a growing majority of the nation was against her. More people everyday wanted to see her out of a job and without a political platform on which to preach her bigoted views. As people flooded the Florida Citrus Commission with letters condemning their relationship to Anita Bryant, they continued to send "avalanches" of letters to TV programs, radio shows, and late night hosts who dared to bring Anita Bryant on-air.[129] Groups around the country started boycotting Anita Bryant's concerts, which they dubbed programs of political hate, and called for a redirection of ticket fees to various progressive community and civil rights organizations.[130] Gay men and lesbians started attending

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[127] "Revolutionary Leadership Key to Democratic Rights Struggle… Stop Anita Bryant!" Trotskyist League newsletter, January 14, 1978, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[128] "Stop Bryant's Crusade!," *Body Politic*, January 1978, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[129] Gay Media Alert letter, National Gay Task Force, November 15, 1977, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Box 1, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[130] For example, see Dwight D. Porter, Citizens for Decency Committee Meeting talk, Parents of Gays, Pensacola, FL January 12, 1978, Florida up to 1981 Box 1 Folder 24, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

her speaking engagements and sermons at churches just to walk out in protest, a rather novel and bold use of visibility by gay people. Some held voter registration drives or prayer vigils simultaneously with her performances.[131] More of them stood outside churches and picketed.[132]

Indeed, Anita Bryant herself couldn't ignore the national reach of the orange juice boycott and gay activists' efforts to take her down, despite public statements to the contrary. She would tell journalists asking her about how her publicly anti-gay views have affected sales of Florida orange juice that, "I hear Christians are drinking it like holy water."[133] They evidently couldn't drink fast enough to drown out the voices of gay activists fighting against growing homophobia and legislative action restricting the freedoms of queer individuals, though. Following a speaking engagement of Bryant's in Texas where over 3,000 gay rights advocates marched in a candlelight procession in protest outside of the convention center, Bryant stated that, "The voices of a radical minority have screamed their curses at me and the normal majority from Chicago to Houston."[134] It's true, she had been shouted at, walked out on, pied with banana cream on live television, and more. She felt confused, claiming to the press that "nobody had ever said a bad thing about me in my life. It was hard to understand the viciousness. All of a sudden, nobody would touch me."[135] This taste of her own medicine made it hard for Bryant to resist the temptation "to get bitter."[136] Her facade of righteousness was fading away.

Just as Anita Bryant's confidence wavered, so did the Citrus Commission's. The FCC had continuously puffed up its chest to defend Bryant, but was steadily deflating under the pressure

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[131] "Gays Avoid OJ Gal," *Hollywood Sun-Tattler*, February 18, 1978, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[132] "More Citric Acid From Anita," Our Time BCCHR newsletter, November, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[133] Lynne Helm, "Anita: Christians Swig OJ Like Holy Water," *Fort Lauderdale News*, January 23, 1978, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[134] "Miss Bryant Says National Crusade Isn't Her Battle," *Palm Beach Post-Times*, June 18, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

of the boycott. As 1977 dragged on, its diminishing enthusiasm was becoming more obvious. For example, holiday cards sent out by the FCC featured the famous Yuletide carol, but with the stance "don we now our gay apparel" conveniently excluded.[137] The FCC was becoming inextricably tied to the political battle for gay rights in the United States, and deliberate choices like these only became ammunition for activists charging ahead with the boycott. Edward Taylor, executive director of the department, began to realize that "when consumers see her they don't think about orange juice, they think about the gay rights issue."[138] Gay activists were actively reshaping Bryant's persona, and both she and her employers were losing control. The boycott brought to the fore her religious zeal and conservative beliefs, putting an unwanted political spin on her notoriety as a singer and citrus spokeswoman. As the Department of Citrus's marketing director, Douglas Hoffer, put it: "you can't be a commercial star and an evangelist at the same time."[139]

By late 1977, Taylor advocated for phasing out Bryant as the Florida citrus industry's top promoter, given that she no longer represented the "wholesome Americana" orange juice marketers hoped to be associated with.[140] Taylor was outnumbered, though, and the Commission renewed Bryant's contract in November 1977 for another two years. This setback once again served only to galvanize gay rights activists, who urged "a more serious boycott than ever before" and called on heterosexuals in particular to take up the boycott and stop buying Florida

[137] Nordheimer, "Miami Homosexuals See a Victory Despite Defeat of Antibias Law."
[138] "Is Bryant Losing Her Orange Appeal?" *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[139] "Anti-gay crusade may cost Anita her juicy job," *SF Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, June 19, 1977, Hormel LGBTQIA+ Center and Archive, San Francisco Public Library History Center, San Francisco.
[140] "Anita Not Wholesome," *Hollywood Sun-Tattler*, October 31, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

orange juice products.[141] The tide was finally turning, and gay activists could feel the pull getting stronger.

*3.2 The Briggs Initiative and the Boycott: Helping Secure a Legislative Win in California*

As historian Sara Smith-Silverman asserts, "Anita Bryant's crusade against gay rights in Dade County, Florida, in 1977 was a launching pad for campaigns against gay rights in cities and states across the United States."[142] Bryant's campaign in the Sunshine State had specifically shed light on the efficacy of emphasizing the 'dangers' of gay and lesbian school teachers as a means of mobilizing conservative voters. Though Miami's ordinance prohibited general discrimination against gays and lesbians, "the threatening presence of gay and lesbian teachers in the schools proved the most compelling" to motivate residents to vote for repeal.[143] Conservatives were indeed capitalizing on their increased visibility and successful rhetoric, taking on local nondiscrimination ordinances in places like Wichita, Kansas; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Eugene, Oregon, and winning. Repeals came one after the other, yet only served to further invigorate the resolve of gay individuals and their allies across the country wanting to put an end to the Christian crusade that continued to cut away at legal protections for gay men and lesbians.

In late 1977, Republican California Senator John Briggs brought the "newly galvanized public presence of the Christian Right" to the Golden State and proposed a provisional amendment to ban gay men and lesbians from teaching in the state's public schools. A California native, John Briggs had spent little time outside of his hometown of Fullerton, Orange County, known for its conservative political lean throughout the 1960s and 70s, and remained relatively sheltered, despite his goals as a politician. He went to high school in the same district in which

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[141] Sy Presten Associates press release, November 23, 1977, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[142] Sara Smith-Silverman, "'Gay Teachers Fight Back!': Rank-and-File Gay and Lesbian Teachers' Activism against the Briggs Initiative, 1977–1978," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 29, no. 1 (2020): 79–107, 88.
[143] Ibid.

he lived as a senator. He gained national notoriety, though, after campaigning with Anita Bryant in the weeks leading up to the June 7 vote that would overturn Dade County's controversial nondiscrimination ordinance.[144] After realizing how protrusive Bryant's anti-gay Christian crusade was turning out to be, Briggs decided to solidify himself as a part of the team. Exactly a week after Miami's ordinance was repealed in June 1977, John Briggs announced on the steps of San Francisco's grand City Hall that he would be introducing legislation once back in Sacramento "to ban gay teachers in the state's school system."[145]

Briggs' campaign in California mirrored in many ways Bryant's successful opposition in Dade County. He even went as far to name his new organization California Defend Our Children, a strikingly similar moniker to Bryant's own Save Our Children group.[146] Importantly, Briggs took Bryant's mission a step further, introducing *positive* discrimination for the first time against gay people. Instead of challenging existing anti-discrimination legislation, Briggs was proposing active discrimination against gay men and lesbians in schools. Bryant and her Christian Right supporters had specifically used the idea of parental rights to garner support for her "brand of social conservatism," and Briggs hoped to capitalize on it in a major way. Briggs saw the success Bryant had in recruiting supporters worried about 'exposing' their children to homosexuality and planned to take her politics a step further. Briggs hoped that the right-wing "cause of morality can and will sweep the nation" with a win on the West Coast.[147] Hoping to codify proactive measures against gay individuals instead of the reactive repeals Bryant's campaign had been pushing for, Briggs looked to the state's voters to approve his anti-gay bill through a ballot initiative. Thus, California's infamous Proposition 6 was born.

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[144] Smith-Silverman, "'Gay Teachers Fight Back!'," 88.
[145] Morris and Shectman, "Gay Rights Battle Rages On Three Fronts."
[146] Sara Smith-Silverman, "'Gay Teachers Fight Back!'," 89.
[147] Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative press release, June 12, 1978, Hormel LGBTQIA+ Center and Archive, San Francisco Public Library History Center, San Francisco.

Just as Briggs took what he learned from Miami to mobilize his campaign, so did gay activists across the state of California. Much like the organizing that occurred from the ground up in Miami-Dade County, gay rights activists and allies throughout California knew that all hands would have to be on deck in order to subdue the conservative Christian forces trying to ostracize homosexuals. They needed institutional support, informal participation, and public visibility in order to have a chance at defeating Briggs' proposal. California had proved itself to be a force to be reckoned with as the gay rights movement expanded. Cities in California consistently led the nation in contributions, financially but also through political committees and organizing efforts, to support Miami-Dade County activists in their fight against Anita Bryant's campaign.[148]

Smaller cities like St. Paul, Wichita, and Eugene simply didn't have the manpower nor political enterprise that cities across California did. California felt like a state better equipped to take the tools utilized in Miami and use them to finally turn the tide in favor of gay rights; and it was ripe to do so. Just like Florida organizers had used the DCCHR and later the Miami Victory Campaign to legitimize their campaign, Californians created institutional support for their fight where it hadn't previously existed. Because of California's size and regional diversity compared to Miami, one organization would likely be insufficient. The broadest group would become the California Steering Committee to Defeat the Briggs Initiative, but by far the most powerful and effective was the Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative (BACABI).

BACABI activists took the strategies of Miami activists to heart, studied them carefully, and applied them to their own circumstances. They saw the Briggs Initiative not as an isolated event, "but part of a series of attacks attempting to roll back gains in the gay rights

[148] George Mendenhall, "SF Leads Nation in Anti-Anita $$$," *The Bystander*, May 1977, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.

movement."[149] Pamphlets distributed across metropolitan San Francisco by BACABI volunteers looked like they had cut and pasted onto those of the Miami Victory Campaign's. Stickers with cartoon oranges that read "Vote NO for Repeal on June 7" turned into bright red stickers with the big white block letters "Vote NO on [Proposition] 6 November 7."[150] Materialistic strategies directly paralleled that of Miami's, and not by accident. Ephemera utilized by gay leaders in Miami and subsequently by gay activists across the country effectively spread the word about each city's respective cause and allowed individuals to contribute financially to gay rights, while connecting themselves to the movement and diverse protest traditions in a more tangible and visible way. The orange juice boycott had necessitated the use of creative forms of communication and nonviolent combat. Their use by Briggs Initiative opponents demonstrates how well they worked and how far they reached.

The boycott itself became a tactic replicated in California to exercise opposition to the Briggs Initiative from all angles. The orange juice boycott itself was still in full swing for the majority of gay activists in California as Anita Bryant kept her contract as OJ spokeswoman and simultaneously continued her national crusade. Gay activists discovered through an article published in *The Advocate* that the largest individual contributor to qualify Briggs' proposition for the 1978 ballot was the president of the fast food chain, Carl's Jr.. In response, they jumped into action and called on all gay rights supporters not to "subsidize discrimination" and to boycott Carl's Jr. restaurants.[151] Activists sent letters to Carl Karcher Enterprises declaring that they "will <u>not</u> patronize a Carl's Jr. and are passing the word."[152] Just as orange juice boycott

[149] Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative press release, June 12, 1978, Hormel LGBTQIA+ Center and Archive, San Francisco Public Library History Center, San Francisco.
[150] Briggs Initiative selected ephemera, 1977, GLBT Historical Society Archives Berner/Briggs Collection, Folder 2, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[151] BACABI "Don't Subsidize Discrimination & Witch-Hunts" flyer, BACABI flyers and leaflets collection, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[152] BACABI "Hamburgers vs. Human Rights: Boycott Carl's Jr." flyer, BACABI flyers and leaflets collection, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.

leaders had, California activists called on individuals to send letters, cards, mailgrams, telegrams, and more in order to magnify the effect of their own boycott.

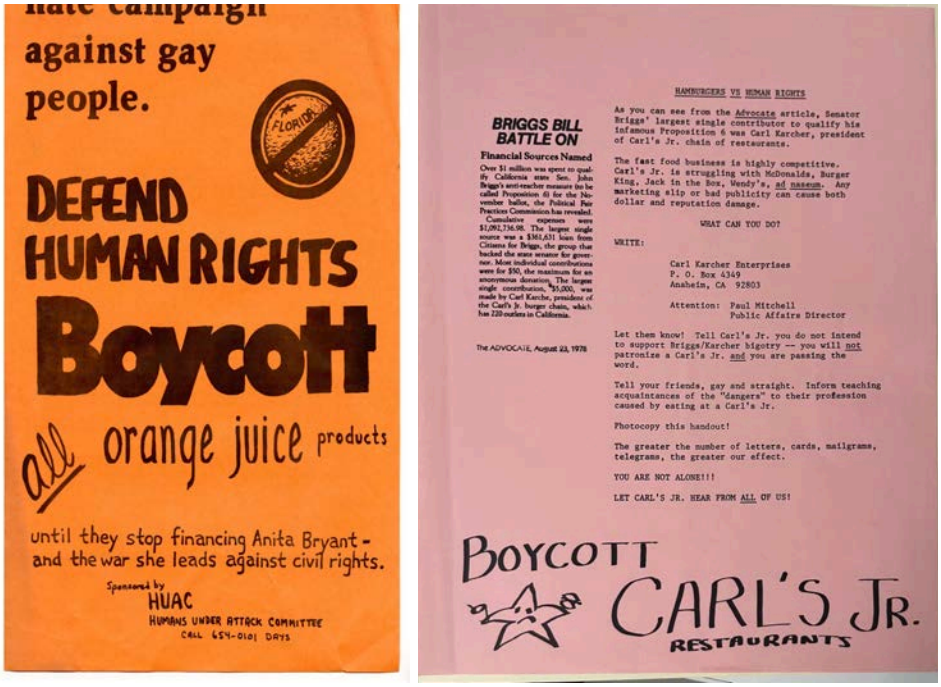


*Figure 3: Two examples of homemade flyers by gay activists calling for respective boycotts of Florida orange juice (1977) and Carl's Jr. restaurants (1978).*
*(Source: GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco; Photo Credit: Kira Ratan).*

Though considerably smaller and deliberately less far-reaching than the orange juice boycott, the Carl's Jr. boycott highlighted the fact that activists 3,000 miles away from Miami-Dade County were applying lessons learned there to their own battles. Gay rights activists recognized the potency of harnessing their economic power for political means, and as such, boycotts were reproduced elsewhere.

California activists took advantage of many of the cross-regional collaborations born out of the gay rights battle in Dade County. The Briggs Initiative was defeated in large part due to a substantial grassroots campaign spanning the state and led by gay and lesbian teachers. The campaign against the Briggs Initiative led the American Federation of Teachers in California to

become one of the first unions to directly merge queer rights with the labor movement.[153] Lesbians and gay men organized together; civil rights leaders felt a personal connection to the growing gay rights movement.[154] Gay rights activists in California had the ACLU, the National Council of Churches, the American Psychiatric Association, the League of Women Voters, and the National Education Association among others on their side. These unique developments were largely the result of hard work that began in Miami.

Though Briggs' discriminatory proposal in many ways felt like a step back, in reality it helped to further display how far the movement had come since January of 1977, let alone the early 1970s. As historian Michael Bronski argued, "religious rhetorical fervor and conservative political activity" grew directly as a response to progressive social changes they saw happening around them.[155] Progress by way of national coalitions, cross-regional participation, and greatly increased visibility largely became clearer *because* of gay activists' clash with John Briggs.

The year 1978 was another positive turning point for gay rights activists and their growing movement. In their first newsletter of the new year, NGTF leaders reflected that, "1977 was the year in which gay rights became a household word, a media staple and a subject of national debate."[156] Gay activists hoped to leave many things behind going into the new year, namely Anita Bryant and the Christian right movement that had grown under her leadership. One thing they were certainly not leaving behind, though, was the orange juice boycott. In fact, many

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[153] Smith-Silverman, "'Gay Teachers Fight Back!'," 89.
[154] For an example, see Claude Wynne, "Fighting Bigotry: Gay-Black Alliance Growing," The Sun Reporter, December 29, 1977, GLBT Historical Society Archives Berner/Briggs Collection, Folder 2, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[155] Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States*, 221.
[156] Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller newsletter, National Gay Task Force, January 1978, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Box 1, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.

gay rights organizations announced that the 'gaycott' would be expanding its participation and demands to address the many political attacks that had taken place since January of 1977.[157]

At a rally in San Francisco in May 1978, Hotel and Restaurant Workers and Bartenders Union president, David McDonald, took the stage. In his speech, McDonald celebrated that "with growing visibility over recent years, lesbians and gay men have become a social and political force to be reckoned with."[158] He mentioned the many unions, including his own, that "supported the orange juice boycott" because of Dade County.[159] As the leader of the largest local union in San Francisco, McDonald had the ears of labor activists and gay individuals alike. Gay individuals had a growing number of California's labor union activists on their side, further proof that the collaboration and coalition-building spurred by the clash in Dade County was a necessary requisite for an eventual victory against Briggs and Bryant.

On November 7, 1978, John Briggs' Proposition 6 was defeated. Final polls showed that close to 70% of voters rejected the senator's anti-gay initiative. Even more conservative regions near Orange County trended towards rejecting Prop 6.[160] Gay activists had finally won. Victory parties roared across the state. San Francisco mayor George Moscone was quoted saying that the Briggs Initiative's defeat was "a victory in every sense of the word, over the Wichitas, the Eugenes, and the Miamis. It is a victory of intellect over ignorance."[161] The Briggs Initiative's resounding defeat marked a decisive reversal in political trends for gay rights, but also the clear culmination of steady progress for the movement and its activists through informal organizing, nonviolent resistance, and visibility despite vulnerability.

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[157] "GAYCOTT EXPANDED," Lambda Speaks newsletter, June 1, 1978, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[158] David McDonald, "S.F. Union Leader Speaks for Gay Rights," *Gay Community News*, June 17, 1978, GLBT Historical Society Archives, San Francisco.
[159] Ibid.
[160] "WE DID IT!," *The San Francisco Sentinel*, November 8, 1978, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[161] Ibid.

*3.3 Bryant Be Gone: The Gay Rights Movement on a New Path to Visibility and Victory*

In sum, the Briggs Initiative's defeat in California marked a turning point in a tumultuous period for gay rights activists and the beginning of a new era, characterized by progress and international participation in the gay rights movement. As Fred Fejes, in a 2008 essay published in *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, put it:

> "The anti-gay campaigns of 1977-78 live on in the memory of many lesbians and gay men to this day. For many, these events marked their first involvement in political activism, whether it was working in one of the various campaign efforts, protesting against Anita Bryant, donating money to a gay rights organization, or simply not drinking orange juice."[162]

The Briggs Initiative's defeat opened the floodgates for gay men and lesbians who had been working, whether through boycotting or other means, to secure a victory for their rights and protections. In October 1979, Washington D.C. hosted the first ever national lesbian and gay march. Over 75,000 people marched together, led by lesbians of color, in a testament to how much the movement had coalesced in just two years, kickstarted by finding a common enemy in Anita Bryant and strategically cutting her down. Though it took time, effort, and patience, and there were ever improvements to be made, the end result was perhaps more satisfying and promising than gay activists ever imagined. Their ceaseless organizing, by way of the orange juice boycott and so much more, buried Anita Bryant for good and expanded gay rights infrastructure for the long term.

Anita Bryant's fall from grace was swift. In August of 1980, the Florida Citrus Commission announced it would terminate Anita Bryant's contract as spokeswoman for Florida orange juice after 12 years. The Commissioners claimed that the end of her "juicy job" was not due to her controversial political views, but that she had simply lost effectiveness as a

[162] Fred Fejes, "The Briggs Initiative Goes National," *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 15, no. 4 (2008): 21–22.

"family-oriented" advertiser of OJ.[163] In reality, though, the reason was clear, and the end of her orange juice contract was just the beginning. Gay rights activists had thoroughly dismantled her platform. Her tumble became a domino effect of sorts, and she lost almost everything. Bryant would lose television contracts, scheduled radio appearances, tour dates, book advances, her mansion in Miami, and even her husband. Her husband, Bob Green filed for divorce in 1980, not even a month after the Citrus Commission cut her off. As a result, she lost the only other thing she seemed to have going for her: her religious supporters. Fundamentalists and evangelicals who sung her praises now condemned her divorce and "urged her to repent." The very woman who had evangelized against queer 'sinners' was now a sinner herself. In her own words, she was "blacklisted."[164]

Within months, she went from jetsetting across the country to near-busking back in Florida. Anita Bryant, the beauty queen and singing extraordinaire from Oklahoma, stopped preaching against homosexuality and faded into cultural oblivion. She remained angry about her lost career, lost livelihood, and lost support, arguing that, "I was not treated fairly. Nobody ever sold more Florida orange juice than I did."[165] While that may have been true, it was also clear that no one had mobilized activists to stop drinking orange juice like she had. Anita Bryant was dragged away from the spotlight with no shortage of enemies and no prospects for her future. She would go on to host singing gigs in trailer parks around Florida, her infamous bigotry a relic of the past that continued to motivate gay activists as they surged ahead towards political progress and social acceptance.[166]

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[163] Diane Hood, "Board Cuts Down Anita's Sunshine Tree," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1980, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[164] Barbara Stewart, "Ex-Florida orange juice queen is waiting for God to come," *The Globe and Mail*, June 3, 1988, Anita Bryant Clippings collection, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

Some of the original gay leaders in Miami decided to take their political chops elsewhere and utilize the same tactics that had worked in Dade to win bigger fights. In 1979, Bob Basker left his post leading the DCCHR and moved to the bustling gay metropolis of San Francisco, fresh off its triumph against Briggs' bigoted bill. In a July 1983 interview between Bob Basker and John Kyper for *Gay Community News*, Basker was introduced as the man who authored the notorious sexual preference non-discrimination ordinance in Miami-Dade County, which not only "set into motion Anita Bryant's holy crusade," but more importantly "brought the gay struggle to a new stage and greater public visibility."[167]

It was true, the events in Miami accelerated the gay rights movement like never before. Kyper even referred to the movement's national growth as a "quantum leap" thanks to the battle born in Miami-Dade.[168] This positive shift in momentum, as a result of both gay activists' outrage and belief in themselves, would remain largely permanent, accelerating the gay rights movement towards its victory against Briggs in 1978 and beyond. Though gay men and lesbians were defeated in Dade County in 1977, their response would become a leading light for activists across the country witnessing homosexuality become, for the first time, a central issue in American politics and culture. The creative tactics deployed in order to fend off Christian conservatives and try to keep gay rights off the chopping block brought people together. From boycotts to bylines, these strategies became beacons of hope for communities and coalitions created out of crisis, but unafraid to battle on for their civil rights.

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[167] John Kyper, "Ahead of His Time: An Interview with Bob Basker," *Gay Community News*, July 30, 1983, Florida up to 1981 Box 1 Folder 11, Stonewall National Museum and Archives, Ft. Lauderdale.
[168] Ibid.

## Conclusion

The orange juice boycott transformed the gay rights movement, helping to bring a splintered and siloed organizing entity to the fore of social, cultural, and political life throughout the entire country. The events in Miami-Dade County in 1977 and the response of gay individuals to conservative attacks spotlighted a national debate over gay rights for the first time. As this thesis has aimed to demonstrate, the orange juice boycott, in particular, amplified gay activists' desire for political protection, but also unified queer communities, increased visibility of marginalized members, and encouraged the use of economic power as a means of gaining social progress. Through coordinated effort, consistent communication, and novel collaboration, activists applied creative strategies to convince diverse groups of supporters that gay individuals deserved legal equality. Victory didn't come easily, nor did it come immediately. Sustained action, through the orange juice boycott, but also through ephemera, increasing publicity through the press, and coalition-building with other minority groups and activist organizations, would be the eventual key to success.

The orange juice boycott brought activists and allies across the nation, and even internationally, together for a common cause. The national coalitions born out of the boycott's informal organizing networks were perhaps its most valuable products and remain a salient feature of queer activism today. The early divisions that defined gay activism have largely dissolved, in large part because of the ubiquitous exigency felt by both gay men and lesbians across class, geography, and varying levels of political involvement. Across organizing circles, too, we've seen the increasingly frequent use of boycotts as an effective tool of nonviolent resistance. Dozens of nations boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan one year earlier. International consumer boycotts of South

African goods helped the Anti-Apartheid Movement move the needle in South Africa until the end of apartheid in 1994.[169] The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes political consumerism against Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, has skyrocketed in popularity and notoriety since its start in 2005. Since the orange juice boycott, similar tactics have grown in size, in speed, and in shaping the responses of the forces they are fighting against.

Because of the ceaseless efforts of gay rights activists combating a zealous countermovement in the 1970s and beyond, nondiscrimination and even positive political rights for LGBTQ+ individuals in the United States have been enshrined legally and, for the most part, codified culturally. In 1998, after three re-proposals, Miami-Dade County permanently passed its fateful nondiscrimination ordinance that ignited a cultural war and, ultimately, the unification of an otherwise divided gay rights movement 20 years earlier. Despite the similarly strategic efforts of the Christian right, gay rights activists were even more imaginative, using popular culture, media, and materialism to secure political freedom, or at the very least fend off political discrimination.

The existence of religious homophobia hasn't waned. Christian fundamentalism continues to be a driving force of hatred against gay people and action against gay rights. The resurgence of right-wing extremism in the United States, especially, has created renewed anti-LGBTQ+ fervor, the likes of which are reminiscent of the days of Anita Bryant and her followers. Black queer individuals continue to endure violence and discrimination at disproportionate rates. Nevertheless, the ever-increasing visibility and resolve of intersectional

[169] "Boycott South African Goods March 1st to 31st 1960" leaflet, 1960, AAM Archives Committee, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

queer communities throughout the country continues to stave off conservatives from reclaiming a significant cultural hold on the topic of gay rights.

As old battles are won, though, new ones continue to bubble up. Several of profound magnitude are currently underway between the queer community and its opponents. Teachers, frequently swept up in the debate on gay rights, are now being prohibited from discussing LGBTQ+ issues in the classroom. Transgender individuals find themselves under fire, denied access to medical care, privacy, and legal protection. The Supreme Court even considered hearing a case that hoped to overturn the 2015 decision that led to the protection of same-sex marriage only a decade ago. Activists today may be able to learn from the organizing strategies of predecessors in Florida, California, and other parts of the country. If there's anything the last 50 years have taught us, it’s that without community engagement and participation, there is little chance of success in organizing. Solidarity was vital in the 1970s and it is today, too. We enlisted our neighbors to stop drinking orange juice and support human rights. We stood hand-in-hand with queer public school teachers to convince opponents of our humanity. Let us continue to come together, not in spite of but on behalf of our differences, to not only seek, but practice justice in all that we do.

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