

DEATH THREATS, HARASSMENT CONTINUES ... COMMUNITY RESISTANCE ON THE RISE

February 2, 1983

DEAR LESBIANS:

This is the third information sheet about the current campaign of terror directed against the Northampton Lesbian community. It updates information in the December 10 and January 6 info. sheets.

In addition to many threatening phone calls made to the New Alexandria Lesbian Library and to several individual Lesbians throughout December and early January (calls which mentioned NALL, Valley Women's Voice, and specific wimmin), these threats have occurred since January 6 and mention more Lesbian/gay projects:

- January 13, Thursday AM

Three hand-printed notes in blue ballpoint pen were left at Womofyre Books' front door. These threats said:

1. "NALL WILL NEVER EXIST, GAYS MUST BE PERSECUTED."
2. "THE PAPER IS RIGHT ... HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE MUST BE ERADICATED.
S.H.U.N. - STOP HOMOSEXUAL UNITY NOW."
3. "GAY PEOPLE MUST LEAVE. YOU WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED."

- January 22, Saturday

A Lesbian not previously called and active in the recent Lesbian community meetings dealing with the harassments found a call on her answering machine. It said:

"WHAT'S GOING ON IN THAT MEETING?"

It sounded like one of the two male voices involved in all the previous calls.

- January 24, Monday

The same Lesbian found the same message on her answering machine again, by a different male voice saying:

"WHAT'S GOING ON IN THAT MEETING?"

This Lesbian has also received several obscene phone calls from a man in the night or early morning, throughout January.

- Week of January 24

The Mayor's office of Northampton calls for an "off the record" meeting with selected Northampton Lesbians and gays to discuss the recent anti-gay slurs in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, as well as to get information about the on-going harassments. To be present at the meeting are: the Mayor, the Mayor's assistant, the District Attorney, the Chief of police, the Assistant Editor

of the Daily Hampshire Gazette, and "leaders" of gay and Lesbian organizations.

- January 29, Saturday

A Lesbian who is one of two Lesbians from Smith College Lesbian Alliance who sent a signed letter to the editor of the Daily Hampshire Gazette (published on January 28) protesting the recent death threats and violence and calling for police action, got this call the following day:

"MY NAME IS BILL. WANNA FUCK, DYKE?"

- January 29, Saturday

A long hand-printed letter in blue ballpoint pen was left at the door of Womonyre Books. It said:

" TO ALL HOMOSEXUAL GROUPS:

WE, AS A COMMUNITY, ARE SICK OF THE THREAT OF THE GAY LIFE TO OUR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND LIFE IN THIS CITY. EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO BE WHAT THEY WANT; BUT WANTONLY FLAUNTING A "DISGUSTING" WAY OF LIFE ON OUR STREETS WILL NOT BE CONDONED. WE MEMBERS OF S.H.U.N. (STOP HOMOSEXUAL UNITY NOW) HAVE BEEN SENDING MESSAGES AND THREATS TO THE SMITH COLLEGE LESBIAN ALLIANCE, TO G.A.L.A. AND TO VARIOUS LESBIANS IN THIS TOWN. WE ARE AN AMHERST-BASED GROUP DEDICATED TO THE "ERADICATION" OF GAYS IN THIS AREA. WE WILL ROUTE OUT AND EXPEL THIS EXTREMIST HOMOSEXUAL GERM BY PEACEFUL OR VIOLENT MEANS. PLEASE PUBLISH THIS LETTER IN YOUR GAZETTE TO LET PEOPLE KNOW WHO IS HARASSING YOU. IF YOU DO NOT, THE ATTACKS WILL GET MUCH WORSE.

NO POWER TO THE LESBOS

NO DYKE TOMORROWS

NO D'AMATO

NO WOMONYRE BOOKS

BRING BACK A SANE WAY OF LIFE TO OUR STREETS.

IF YOU DO DISREGARD THIS, WOMONYRE BOOKS WILL BE BURNED TO THE GROUND ALONG WITH NALL?

HETEROSEXUALLY YOURS,

MIK RETNUH
(CO-FOUNDER, S.H.U.N.) "

- January 29, Saturday

Womonyre Books also received a death-threatening phone call that day. A male caller said:

"LESBIANS DIE, LADY."

Wimmin from Womonyre Books and others quickly took the notes, in both cases, to the Northampton police. They were treated courteously but were told not much could be done.

In addition to the above abuses, phone calls of four types have been widespread throughout the Lesbian community in December and January:

- Silence and the caller hangs on at the other end. Sometimes breathing is heard. (On January 8, near 7 PM, within minutes of each other, two core members of NALL got called in this way.)

- Obscene, explicit phone calls ("I'M GOING TO COME ALL OVER MYSELF."
" I WANT TO WATCH TWO LESBIANS MAKING LOVE." " I WANT TO EAT YOUR
PUSSY.")
- A male caller who just says "DYKE" or "LESBIAN" and hangs up.
- The phone rings three times and stops (when no Lesbian's answering
machine clicks on). We've noticed the "organized" harassers are re-
luctant to talk in person to Lesbians they call.

In late December and January many anti-Lesbian, anti-homosexual writings have appeared in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, followed by a series of pro-gay and anti-gay letters to the editor.

Lesbians are resisting this on-going campaign of terror and harassment in many ways:

- We are meeting as a community weekly to plan action to increase public awareness of the problem, to enlist support, and to ensure ways to protect ourselves and our projects.
- We have met in a healing protection circle.
- We are recording the herstory of these events.
- We are working on a petition and letter-writing campaign to expose the situation and demand town action.
- We are doing investigative work.
- We are reporting incidents of harassment to the police and town officials and demanding action.
- We have asked that the Mayor's meeting be "on the record" with media coverage and open to as many Lesbians as want to be present, and we plan to be there.
- We are networking for mutual individual support and pooling together organizational support.
- We are writing letters to local newspapers and giving news of what's happening to Lesbian and gay publications.
- We are planning future protective measures for NALL and Womonyre Books.

Thank you.

In hope for strength, clarity, unity, action, and self-love,

Bet Birdfish

New Alexandria Lesbian Library