

NGLTF Reports Increase in Violence

Reports of violence and harassment against lesbians and gay men more than doubled in 1986 from the level reported in 1985, according to a report released by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, (NGLTF). A total of 4,946 incidents were reported to NGLTF in 1986, as compared with 2,042 incidents documented the year before. Directed against persons because they are gay or lesbian or perceived to be so, these incidents included verbal harassment, intimidation, assault, police abuse, vandalism, arson, bomb threats, and murder. The reported violence was perpetrated by lone individuals, gangs, and organized hate groups--including the KKK and neo-Nazi organizations. Victimization occurred in a variety of settings--on the street, in school, on campus, in jail and prison and even in the home.

Anti-gay attacks reported to NGLTF in 1986 included the following:

* In Morristown, New Jersey, three men beat and slashed a gay man, extinguished a cigarette in his face, tied him to the back of a truck, and drove the truck--dragging him along a dirt road.

* In Portland, Maine, an assailant called three women anti-lesbian epithets and assaulted them, leaving one of the victims with a fractured jaw, broken teeth, and bruised ribs. The other victims also sustained injuries requiring medical attention.

* In Boston, a gay man leaving a local gay bar was abducted by three assailants and raped with bottles, lighted matches, and

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MOVEMENT

against police harassment. The year 1969 was made for the event. It was the time of social rebellion and demonstration against the Vietnam War and the civil rights marches, and shouts for black power throughout the South and in every major city in the country. During the two days of the Stonewall Inn riots the words GAY POWER began to appear on the walls in Greenwich Village. The impetus for this riot came from black homosexuals and drag queens. It was an event to remember.

After the riots, activism began in earnest. The Gay Activist Alliance, the Gay Liberation Front and the National Gay Task Force were formed. All the previous groups disappeared while new groups were formed and continue to be formed as lesbians and gay men increase their activism.

Now, every year on the anniversary of the first ever gay riot at the Stonewall Inn we celebrate. We call it LESBIAN/GAY PRIDE DAY!

Altman, Dennis; The Homosexualization of America; Beacon Press; Boston; 1982

D'Emilio, John; Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities; University of Chicago Press; Chicago; 1983

Marotta, Toby; The Politics of Homosexuality; Houghton Mifflin Co; Boston; 1981

other implements. The assailants repeated to the victim that "this is what faggots deserve."

The rising tide of reported violence occurs at a time of widespread attacks against Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Jewish Americans. Observed Kevin Berrill, Director of NGLTF's Anti-Violence Project, "the killing of a Black teenager in Howard Beach, growing attacks upon Asian immigrants and their businesses, hundreds of documented anti-Semitic incidents, and other types of hate crimes suggest that tolerance of individual and group differences in America is on the decline."

Most of the groups reporting to NGLTF indicated that fear and hatred associated with AIDS had exacerbated the violence. References to AIDS were made by perpetrators in 681 or 14% of the incidents documented in 1986. "The AIDS crisis has clearly fanned the flames of anti-gay bigotry," said Berrill, "but it is unclear whether and to what extent 'AIDS

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Statewide Mtg

Discussion shifted to strategies for the future. There was agreement on the need for a more organized, grassroots campaign to counter the highly organized right wing. That effort will include building a network of county lobbying coordinators around the state and building support among other groups to push for passage of the bill. A decision to pursue the bill next session, possibly in the Senate, which has a more liberal reputation than the House, will be studied and acted on in the fall. Many expressed a need for development of a comprehensive strategy for passing the bill.

The meeting also noted that 1988 is an election year. "We will need to prove that we can produce votes, money and volunteers equal to or greater than the fundamentalists" said one woman at the meeting. Others emphasized the need to provide support for those legislators who have support H. 247 and to attempt to elect both friendly legislators and openly lesbian and gay candidates.

In addition to discussion of H.247, the meeting adopted a permanent change in format. At future meetings, a short meeting will be held in the morning of both men and women, the group will break into separate women's and men's caucuses. After the caucuses and lunch, the groups will meet jointly again.

Terje Anderson told the group of his intention to step aside as male liaison after the next meeting. He said that his growing duties as Director of Vermont C.A.R.E.S. made it difficult to devote adequate time and resources to the job of liaison.

The next meeting of the Statewide Coalition is set for Sunday, September 13 at 10:30 am in South Royalton. An open steering committee meeting to discuss the legislative efforts will be held Wednesday, June 10th at the ACLU office, 43 State Street, Montpelier. All are encouraged to attend both meetings.

backlash' is distinct from--or another manifestation of--this bigotry."

The NGLTF report was highly critical of the official response to anti-gay/lesbian violence on the national, state, and local level. "For several years we have pressed the federal government to respond to the violence... yet the actual response has been denial and neglect," said Jeff Levi, NGLTF Executive Director. Some state and local governments were praised for their efforts to address the lesbian/gay violence in their communities.

Local groups are urged to compile statistics on anti-lesbian/gay incidents and to report them to NGLTF. To obtain incident report forms, or other information on organizing against violence, contact the NGLTF Anti-Violence Project, 1517 U Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Those without local resources can make a report to the National Gay and Lesbian Crisisline at 800/221-7044 (212/807-6016 in NY state) 3-9 pm. Victims can also seek help from the National Organization for victim assistance hotline, 202/393-6682, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Women's Music Roundup

Here's a roundup of women's music festivals around the country this summer -- just in time to make your summer vacation plans!...

May 22-25, Cleveland, Georgia. Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festival. Ferron, Heather Bishop, Robin Flower, Kate Chaton, Robin Tyler, plus more. SWMCF, 13514 Hart St., Van Nuys, CA 91405 (818)904-9495.

May 22-25, Oxford, Pennsylvania, Campfest '87, PO Box 53430, Philadelphia, PA 19105, (609)694-2037.

May 29-31, Bloomington, Indiana. National Women's Music Festival. Tracy Chapman, Kate Clinton, Sweet Honey, Barbara Higbee, Heather Bishop, Tret Fure, and more. NWMF, PO Box 5217, Bloomington, IN 47402. (317)637-4938.

June 27-28, Washington, DC., Sister Fire. Call or write Roadwork, 1475 Harvard St. NW, Washington, DC 20009. (202)234-9308.

August 12-16, Michigan, 12th Annual Womyn's Music Festival, Bennett & Smith, Heather Bishop, Robin Flower, Tret Fure, Kay Gardner, Ronnie Gilbert, Holly Near, plus more. SASE to: Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458.

September 5-7, Rhode Island, New England Woman's Musical Retreat. FMI write Betsy Gooch, 171 Shore Rd., Old Greenwich, CT 06870. (203)637-3569.

September 5-7, Yosemite, CA, West Coast Woman's Music Festival. WCWMF, 13514 Hart St., Van Nuys, CA 97405. (818)904-9495.