

STOP THE ATTACKS- LESBIANS - FIGHT BACK!

1981--the year of the Moral Majority; the year that the Family Protection Act is introduced into Congress saying that "the role of women must be restored to the way it has been traditionally understood...the family must be strengthened for the nation to be strong."

1981--the police harass and dyke-bait us; the Supreme Court says that it's O.K. to take a woman's child away from her if she's a lesbian.

1981--we know we're under attack and that there's a serious attempt underway to drive lesbians back into the closet and to force women back into traditional male supremacist roles. The question is:

What Are We Going to Do About It?

Lots of people are holding out "solutions" to the oppression we face. Here in San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein recently sponsored a "Stop Rape Week", following through on her campaign promise "to make this a city where women feel safe!" On the surface, this seems progressive: after all, the problem of rape is usually ignored, and with the country moving to the right, it's easy to feel that we need all the friends we can get. But a harder look at the content of "Stop Rape Week" shows what it's really about.

The kick-off rally of "Stop Rape Week" was opened with the Navy Band, playing military marches that sounded like something out of the Third Reich, followed by Feinstein giving an impassioned speech about the "model case" of a Black man who was put behind bars for 54 years. Feinstein concluded by urging women to prevent trouble by not going out at night and not talking to strangers (!) She invited women to come hear "anti-rape experts" from the San Francisco Police Department (the people who brought you the beating of Sue and Shirley); the D.A.'s office (the people who brought you the coverup of the May 21 police riot), and the California Department of Justice (the people who run the California prison system, which holds a population that is 60% Black and Latino).

Feinstein's law and order solutions can't stop violence against us, and her solutions certainly won't lead to real liberation. They DO lead towards more police in Third World communities and to more violent attacks on Black and Latino peoples. As lesbians and as women, we have to ask ourselves how we could even think of entrusting our safety to the same police that in the last five years have killed over 2,000 Third World people right here in the U.S.

If we are serious about fighting for lesbian and women's liberation, then we have to refuse to give any legitimacy whatsoever to this system. Any support that we give to the police or to this government only serves to give support to the escalating white supremacist attacks taking place from Miami to San Quentin. We cannot allow the police or the government to masquerade as supporters of lesbian and women's liberation. To do so only ensures that we remain passive and dependent on a system that is racist and sexist to the bone. As long as we have any faith that the government holds the answers to our oppression, we take part in a system that is responsible for the genocide of Third World peoples. We can't close our eyes to what is happening all around us.

We can take example from the struggles of Third World colonized peoples here and around the world. Their struggles show us that the only way to end oppression is to fight and defeat US imperialism once and for all. Through their resistance to genocide, police terror and the Klan, and in their fight for independence and human rights, Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano Mexican and Native peoples challenge the functioning of US imperialism.

As women, we can be inspired by the examples of freedom fighters like Haydee Beltran Torres, one of the 12 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War who defied the court by refusing to participate in her trial. We can learn from Black women like Assata Shakur, a leader of the Black Liberation Army who escaped from prison and remains free in clandestinity to carry on her people's fight. These women define US imperialism as their enemy. They, along with many others, fight to destroy imperialism as the only road to the liberation of themselves and their peoples.

Liberation for us doesn't mean a few more lesbians in the police force or a Feinstein resolution in support of Lesbian and Gay Freedom Day. As lesbians we've taken stands against oppressive roles for women, and we've played a strong part in building women's self-reliance and a women's movement that has had a tremendous impact on society. Now, we have to push ourselves to build an anti-imperialist women's movement that militantly fights for lesbian liberation, for control of our bodies and lives, and to end all violence against women. We have to build a women's movement that on principle fights against white supremacy and for the liberation of colonized peoples. Anything less won't win our liberation. We've got to fight against US imperialism along with the national liberation struggles that are leading in its defeat.