

just news

Police Violence Spurs Outrage

Repeated protests demand inquiry into excessive force

BY MAGGIE POWERS

Montreal Urban Community police (MUC) made a violent raid on a private gay party on July 15. According to Montreal's *Lesbiennes et Gais Contre La Violence* (LGV), a coalition working to stop anti-gay violence, officers from Station 25 physically and verbally brutalized the approximately 300 people present at the party which took place in the city's "gay village."

Nearly 50 people were injured and eight were arrested for allegedly assaulting an officer. Arrestees were reportedly denied medical attention for up to 24 hours. LGV also said that police had removed their plastic identification tags in direct violation of MUC policy. Frank Smithson, a member of ACT UP/New York, said that people were running for their lives as the MUC officers "flooded their engines, trying to run people over on the sidewalk."

At 9 pm that same day, about 900 demonstrators gathered in the Gay Village to stage a peaceful sit-in, protesting the police raid. Riot gear-clad MUC officers from Station 33 also showed up for the event.

Demonstrators called for police to drop all charges against those arrested, free a man who was still in custody, make an independent inquiry in to the incident, and give the gay community a seat on the MUC police/minority relations committee. By 11:15 pm the crowd had agreed to disperse, promised by the police that their demands would be addressed by noon the next day.

On July 16, the violence began again, when 250 lesbian and gay protesters staged a noontime kiss-in at Station 25. Club-wielding officers in riot gear, once again wearing no identification, attacked the demonstrators from four directions. While bystanders and members

of the press watched in shock, the protesters were brutally beaten: 48 were arrested, 70 were injured and 12 sought medical treatment.

According to members of Montreal's lesbian and gay community, the MUC police have a history of similar treatment toward native peoples, blacks, women, and people with disabilities.

Police later admitted that undue force was used during the July 15 raid, that the use of rubber gloves and riot gear was provocative, and that there is a problem with the relationship between themselves and Montreal's lesbian and gay community. Despite these admissions, charges against the arrestees were not dropped, although ACT UP/Montreal's Michael Hendrick's says that the lesbian and gay community is now looking toward "sustained and concrete demands" in dealing with the police, and a full-scale inquiry by the city's Public Security Commission.

Another demonstration protesting the police incidents was held on July 29. Attendance estimates ranged from 2000 by the press, to 2500 by the event's organizers.

Contributions to the LGV Legal Fund can be sent to *Lesbiennes et Gais Contre La Violence*, c/o Contre Communautaire Gais Lesbiennes, Montreal, C.P. 476, Succ. C, Montreal, QC H2L 4K4, Canada, or call (514) 522-9851.

Actions are also being planned at the Canadian embassy in Washington, DC. Members of Queer Nation's International Focus Group in New York have urged that protest letters and phone calls be addressed to Quebec Delegate-General Leo Pare, Quebec Government House, 17 West 50th Street, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020; (212) 397-0200.

Excerpted from an article by Jon Nalley, Gay Community News, Aug. 5-11, 1990.

Human Rights March and Rally

A Portland-area coalition is planning a march and rally for Sunday, October 7, 1990, to address concerns about the increase in hate crimes in Portland. The event will precede the trial of neo-nazi organizer Tom Metzger, who is being sued in connection with the murder of Mulegeta Seraw. Eric Borgerson of the October 7th Committee explained, "We want to show that our community stands for justice and equal rights for all people... bigotry and violence like that promoted by Metzger will not be tolerated."

The event is being sponsored by a wide spectrum of organizations, including the

Community Defense Coalition, the Coalition for Human Dignity, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), Lesbian Community Project, Radical Women, Anti-Racist Action, Oregon Fellowship of Reconciliation, American Friends Service Committee, to Portland Rainbow Coalition and the Portland Reproductive Rights Committee. "Anyone interested in celebrating the diversity of our community and working to drown out the forces that would destroy it, are welcome to join us," says organizer Catherine Smith.

The next meeting will be held Saturday, August 18 from 1-5 pm in Room B of the Multnomah County Library at 801 SW 10th Avenue.

Buffet Flat Denied Relocation

Deemed a "gold-mine-in-the-middle-of-nowhere" by *Self* magazine, Central Oregon antique palace Buffet Flat may soon be history. The store, located on Highway 97 between Redmond and Bend, home to such delights as a bowling ball garden, a goat named Lucy that lives in a pink Studebaker, and a dog named Bear that lives in a tree, as well as a huge collection of antiques and memorabilia dating from around 1870 to 1960, is set to be demolished in September as part of a highway-widening project.

Owners Gene Carsey and Mike Craven, who are openly gay, proposed moving the complex

across the highway, as explained in a December, 1988 *Oregonian* article, but their application to move the store was denied by Deschutes County hearings officer, Ed Fitch. Carsey and Craven say that the ruling is being appealed to the county commission level, and a hearing is set for September. This is the last chance for relocation of the business.

Buffet Flat opened in their present location in 1977. Owners Carsey and Craven, host a party for Central Oregon gays every Saturday night. Friends of Buffet Flat have begun a letter writing campaign to the Deschutes County Commissioners, asking for fair play. For more information call Gene Carsey or Mike Craven, 389-6391.

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