

conomic, political, and social life.” It has not developed a clear relationship between immediate reforms and protracted struggle, between defensive and offensive strategies. The movement for community control needs to seek out strategies which go beyond the boundaries imposed by the framework of corporate capitalism. . . .

As more enduring forms of organization develop that can unite workers, the unemployed, students, and other progressive forces of all races, the struggles against repression and economic exploitation will be more closely linked. Such organization will give direction and strength to local work and will make it easier for local projects to link up with national campaigns. Ultimately, building a humane and decent society in the United States will depend on our ability to build a movement that can put an end to all forms of exploitation and repression. And effective educational and political campaigns around the police, while they are not ends in themselves, can be a crucial part of that movement.

2.A.2.

Lesbians against Police Violence

Interview with Barbara Lubinski (1979)

In this interview with KPFA reporter Barbara Lubinski, three members of Lesbians against Police Violence in San Francisco (who identify themselves Diane, Mary, and Barbara, respectively) define how police enforce homophobic repression of lesbians and outline a radical queer critique of policing.

[Diane]: The first incident of police violence against lesbians happened outside Amelia’s bar in the Mission. What happened was two women, two lesbians, Sue Davis and Shirley Wilson, were confronted by policemen as they were leaving, and they were harassed, attacked, beaten by these two policemen as they were leaving the bar. A whole series of charges were brought against them, criminal charges, that have been dropped, like resisting arrest. They were then brought to the police station, beaten, strip searched, without being given the reason for their arrest or given their right to a phone call. That is the first incident. The second incident happened at Peg’s Place, which is another women’s bar. Fifty off-duty policemen entered that bar, assaulted women in the bar, one of the women who was assaulted has been in the hospital seventeen days, which is a very long time. The cops were drunk, they were on their way home from Patty Hearst’s wedding party. They said things such as, when they were asked what are they doing here, we’re cops and we do what we damn well please. To date, one of the officers, Marr, has been charged with battery, but the other officer, Kelly, is still free of any reprisals for this kind of conduct. Mayor Feinstein hasn’t made any strong statements condemning the action. She says all she can do

is make recommendations to the police chief, but she hasn't made any public statements as of yet. Also, along with the violence against lesbians, there's been a lot of violence against gay men, just held at the police station without proper procedure, beatings and things like that by the police.

[Mary]: We see the police as the force which is responsible to repress protest in this country and to carry out the wishes of those people who are in power. Specifically, they often do that through violence, and police violence has always existed, but we feel that it's on the rise as the economy gets worse. We also feel that the people who are affected most by the crisis in our present economy are, first, Third World people, and then white working-class people, and among white working-class people, especially white women and gay people. And that these groups are therefore often the first ones to protest, and that it's the role of police violence to keep us down, to keep us from protesting. And in recent months in San Francisco, lesbians have been attacked, like Diane was just saying. There's been a lot of brutal beatings, people have hospitalized, strip searched, denied their legal rights. Also, police have been real active in their support of Dan White, and Dan White killed Harvey Milk both because he was gay and progressive, and he was a highly placed public official and was murdered, and the police are being very supportive of his murder, they are going around wearing T-shirts that say "Free Dan White" and are raising money for his defense. We see this murder as part of the overall pattern of police brutality.

[Barbara]: Lesbians against Police Violence began as a meeting called by Lesbian Schoolworkers in early February because of the incident at Amelia's. Over two hundred women came to that meeting. We wanted to give support to Sue and Shirley, and we also wanted to organize ourselves for protection against the police. Out of that meeting, a core group was formed, and now we are an organization, Lesbians against Police Violence, and we've been working since then. In planning all our work against police violence, we wanted [people] to know that there's a move to [the] right in San Francisco and nationwide and that changes in police policy and the actions against women and gay people have escalated especially since the murders of Milk and Moscone. On April 21 we had a picket day and demonstration at the first day of the Dan White trial. We wanted to bring out the connections between Dan White's murder of Milk and Moscone and the police violence against women and gay people and also show that there's preferential treatment for Dan White. Also on May 12 we'll be having a legal rights workshop which is to inform lesbians of their legal rights regarding the police. That will be at the Women's Building, Dovre Hall, 1 o'clock. We urge people to come to the workshop to get information about our group. That meeting is for women only. In the future we plan to do more work making alliances with groups who are working against police violence.