

WOMEN RECLAIM THE NIGHT

Because the night belongs to us'

By Patricia Smith

Women are taking to the streets at night and proclaiming their right to be there. Boisterous torchlight processions have marched through the midnight streets of many cities in England, West Germany, Italy, Canada, and the United States as women "reclaim the night," protesting against the danger and harassment that women encounter on the streets.

Two West German marches occurred spontaneously in the wake of several reported rapes. The prosecutions paused for silent vigils in front of the homes of the victims.

The first of several marches in London involved 100 women. Walking through the porn area of Soho, dressed in costumes and carrying sticked cars and stores, destroying sexist billboards

and breaking windows displaying material offensive to women.

Organized by a large, loose group who decided to avoid media contacts, the march was publicized through the grapevine of the women's community. The march was conceived not as an outreach project but as a "celebration for ourselves of our strength."

VANCOUVER MARCH

In Vancouver, on a rainy Friday night in August, over 300 women marched through the downtown streets chanting "Stop abuse of women! Women reclaim the night!" A leaflet drawing attention to the connections between all types of violence against women, in the homes as well as in the streets, was distributed. Faced with the fear and attempted harassment of some male onlookers, the marchers

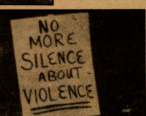


Women in Boston (left) and Denver (right) take back the night.

stood their ground, and fought the retaliatory comments.

A diverse group of women, including several anarcha-

feminists, organized the Vancouver action. As in London, they relied mainly on word-of-mouth to publicize their activities.



They planned a route that avoided poorly-lit or dead-end streets, but which passed along streets where pornography was displayed

and men accosted women. No attempt was made to obtain a permit for the march.

On the night of the march, a police car drove with the marchers, ostensibly for their protection. As the marchers decorated the route with stickers and graffiti, the police moved in to protect the walls. In a spontaneous gesture of solidarity, the crowd surrounded one of the graffiti artists. Chanting "if one of us goes, all of us go!" they forced the police to withdraw.

CONFRONTATIONS

Direct confrontation of hostile male bystanders is a common feature of these marches. In England, men attempting to disrupt the procession have been sprayed with red paint. And in Vancouver, a male flasher beat a hasty retreat when a flaming torch came flying his way.

That the marches themselves produce abuse from some men is an indication of the severity of the problem of violence against women. Rape crisis centres and refuges for battered women already attest to the problem. These groups provide essential services, not the least of which is to publicize the extent to which women are abused. Women are encouraged to come out of hiding and receive support from other women.

"SAFE-HOUSES"

Another tactic is to work to prevent abuse. Santa Cruz Women Against Rape and Men Against Rape (P.O. Box 711, Santa Cruz, Ca. 90561) confront rapists directly. Neighbours Against Rape, an Oregon group tries to encourage communities to provide "safe-houses" for women at night (see *Open Road* #6, Spring, 1978).

Reclaim the Night marches are in the same spirit of direct action. Marching together, they strengthen in their numbers and transform a traditionally oppressive situation into a celebration of their own making. Reclaiming the streets at night "because the night belongs to us".

New wave Clams swing into action

By Earl Averill

A group of anti-nuke activists called "Clams For Democracy" is digging in for a crucial and inevitable battle with the Clamshell Alliance bureaucrats over the future of the east coast no-nuke movement.

They're also mulling over a proposal for a Spring direct action occupation of the site of the New Hampshire site which would give the signal a major break with past no-nuke tactics.

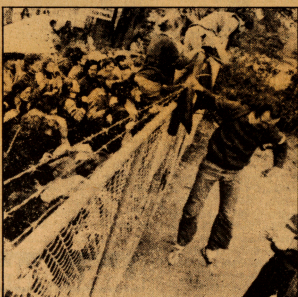
CFD came together as one organized response out of a growing number of rank and file revolts in the no-nuke movement. These arose against a compromising "leadership" in the wake of a series of tame demonstrations and aborted occupations during the past six months. (See *Open Road* #7).

DISSIDENT CLAMS

When Clamshell Alliance held its New England called off the June 24 Seabrook occupation because of pressure from authorities, dissident Clams sought out each other and began to rebuild their organizations from the base to enable them to carry out militant "autonomous" action that would be free of any centralized command.

Since August 14, when construction resumed at Seabrook after a three week shut-down, there have been six separate protests. At the most recent, October 7, forty-two people were arrested and respawning are

Now, according to a recently agreed on statement among its members, CFD has a fundamental commitment to building anti-hierarchical structure into the foundation of its caucus and affirms that the affinity group is the fundamental unit of the CFD network.



Clams scale fence again at Oct. 7 protest.

collective of about a dozen friends and comrades, which makes decisions on a consensus basis and coordinates action with other similar groups.

CFD is organized around a network of such groups, has no superstructure built over the affinity group base, and makes decisions only at conferences of the entire caucus.

As of press time, CFD is circulating a proposal among all its groups for a conference in Providence, R.I., to evaluate the possibility of a "Direct Action Occupation" of the Seabrook site in the Spring of 1979.

STOP CONSTRUCTION

The proposed occupation would involve people gaining access to the construction zone to actually prevent a construction and stop the plant.

The proposal for the occupation flows from a September, 1978 CFD statement on Direct Action and Civil Disobedience:

"Our priority is to stop nuclear power and weapons and to transform society

through education and collective direct action. This can only be done by acting for ourselves without appealing to or recognizing the legitimacy of state or corporate authority.

We also feel that direct action does not depend on

media coverage for its effectiveness, because it accomplishes undeniable and concrete change.

Direct Action to us then, becomes distinct from civil disobedience which we feel has been useful, but has inherent limitations in that it legitimizes the structures of authority and control which direct action intends to supplant."

NEW PROCESS

Other questions for debate at the conference include:

- what kind of decision making process will develop solidarity and initiative among the participants instead of isolation and intimidation;
- the possibility of property destruction effectively stop construction;
- the relation of this direct action to the Clamshell Alliance's actions.

The CFD is also preparing for an upcoming Clam Congress and has agreed to proposals which include the following:

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bank workers to organize on a branch by branch basis. Hundreds of volunteers were mobilized to help in leafletting and organizing. Since 1976, the union has been certified at 24 bank branches in B.C. involving five different banks.

SUCCESS ELUSIVE

Success at the bargaining table, however, has proven more elusive. The only contract the banks were prepared to sign offered nothing more than the banks already provided their employees. The union realized that only strike action could force the

•The Clamshell Alliance would endorse no candidates in the electoral arena. "To even tactically endorse a particular candidate can only mislead people into believing that this is the way changes can be made, thereby deflating Direct Action and other types of tactics. Movement among people is far more important than reorganizing the faces of politicians."

- political discussion must be incorporated in all non-violent training, detailing the dangers and sources of a system that builds nukes and profits from them;
- CFD defends the right of all Clams to disagree and to organize their disagreements without being labelled as provocative, irresponsible elements, agent provocateurs or obstructionists as has happened in the past.

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Workers to bargain seriously. After much discussion by the membership of a strike or boycott, however, it was concluded that such an action could not be won without the involvement of more bank workers. The Labor Relations Board's publicly upheld the banks' right to pay workers in unorganized branches more than workers in branches signed by SORWUC.

LABOUR OBSTACLES

Another obstacle to the bank organizing drive has been the Canadian Labor Congress (the Canadian affi-

liate of the AFL/CIO). After SORWUC helped bank workers win the right to organize, the CLC decided that it should be the one to organize the banks. The CLC executive proposed that the UBW break away from SORWUC and affiliate with the banks' right to pay workers by the membership of the United Bank Workers, the CLC retaliated by actively campaigning against SORWUC and instructing its affiliated unions to cut off financial support.

The decision to stop

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