

Chapter 15

Mobilizing for the 90's

No peace for women to disturb

Court Statement August 28, 1989

A collective of women to end violence against women

Editorial Note

We end this book with documentation of a militant, feminist direct action in Northampton, Massachusetts, at the end of August, days before the hundreds of colleges and universities in this area re-opened for the first academic year of the 1990s.

Just as the spring 1989 mobilization was initiated by women, organizing to defend abortion rights, the fall mobilization was begun by women putting their bodies on the police line, refusing any more violence. War is a women's issue.

The central question in the continuing mobilization of students into the next decade is the ability of men to join with women, on the basis of feminist demands, to conduct a broad campaign against all forms of violence whether from germ warfare or domestic battering or backstreet abortions. The first statement, a call to end the war against women, was read at the August 26th demonstration, prior to the arrests.

We declare a state of emergency

Life proceeds on course, uninterrupted, plodding. We walk down the streets, we drive down the streets, trying to ignore what we know to be the truth of what is contained in the buildings we pass or what is exposed, yet concealed from our immediate vision, outside of the buildings: the brutality of the rape, battering, and murder of women by men. The raw edge of poverty. The hunger of young children. The incest of little girls by their fathers, uncles, brothers, grandfathers. The joblessness. And when there are jobs, the inhumanity, the alienation, the horror of mindless, exhausting labor for which one is scarcely paid and certainly not respected. Why must we list time and again the litany of violence and pain, the terms of the struggle for survival in capitalist patriarchy?

This enumerating, this repetitive drone of the war casualties is not sufficient to stop the war. The war goes on, the body count goes up, and still we walk by, knowing...forever knowing. This war against women cannot continue unabated. We cannot walk by or drive by one more time. We cannot move on in hopes that it will all cease, yet refusing to step out and use our bodies to stop male violence, racist violence, and exploitation.

Today is the day we declare that all of daily life must stop in order to eliminate the abuse and exploitation of women by men. We are women who cannot pass by one more building as if it does not conceal the dying of another woman or girl. We cannot walk the streets one more day as if we do not fear the fact of its ownership by the men who also possess us. We call upon women to take to the streets in order to **take** the streets. Our goal is to stop the traffic, the casual flow of patriarchal perseverance, in order to stop the war against women. We refuse to take any more steps in the parade of life as usual because life as usual has meant woman slaughter for several thousand years. Our words have not been sufficient. Our attempt to reason has constituted a comedy of errors. We are done. With our actions we intend to force male supremacy into obsolescence. We declare a state of emergency.

Inside the Courtroom

The statement that follows was read at the August 28th, 1989 arraignment of nine women arrested the previous Saturday in a meleé with state police in the center of downtown Northampton. The women had been participating in a demonstration to dramatize violence against women. We had blocked off the main intersection in town, effectively stopping traffic for several hours. We did guerilla theater, we had puppets and banners and signs. We performed songs, shouted slogans and distributed leaflets. Some of us were arrested. Many supporters and activists in a range of progressive causes joined us in court. The judge let one of the arrested women read the following statement. If he had not, we were prepared to read it from the floor.

Nine women, physically fit, butch cropped hair, T-shirts and jeans clad, lined up. The courtroom was tense, silent. Several mainly hispanic and black men had been arraigned before us on theft and drunken driving. It was obvious that the capitalist system denied these men a livelihood (most had wives and children who the men cannot possibly support on minimum wage jobs). The men were subjected to indignity. It was clear that the source of much violence against women was the system driving these men to desperation. Women at home, little kids, are then called into service to be the shock absorbers. These men take out their frustrations against the system on economically dependent members of their families.

We women are refusing to take this violence any longer. Therefore the men must take the only other path open: challenge the system itself. This is one reason why the courts deal harshly with those of us who "destroy property" by trashing pornography in the local stores. The system, in fighting our refusal to be beaten, is fighting for its very survival.

Court Statement

We have been charged with disturbing the peace. We are requesting that the charges be dropped. We believe we have been wrongly accused because there is no peace for women to disturb. There is, in fact, a war against women.

In a "normal" year in the state of Massachusetts, one woman is murdered by a man every 18 days. Things are getting worse. In this area, over the last 18 months, six women have been murdered. Twelve women have been murdered in New Bedford by a serial sex killer in the same period. In fifty per cent of all marriages women are battered by their husbands. Yet, Necessities/Necesidades, which receives 300 new calls every year from battered women, faces state budget cuts of \$45,000 this year.

What is so horrifying about these statistics is that they've become so common place that nobody flinches when they hear them. And to top it off, most of the men who commit these crimes against us go free. We, as women, cannot continue to call this normal life. We cannot continue to call this peace.

On Saturday, August 26, 1989, one hundred women gathered to publicly declare a state of emergency in Massachusetts. The police arrived and singled out one woman for arrest without warning or explanation. The police continued to escalate the situation with a display of force that was absolutely uncalled for. Thirty state police in full riot gear, marching in military formation, pushed unarmed women to the ground. Those who tried to assist these women were arrested. Consequently, we hold the police fully responsible for the situation that brings us to this courtroom.

We have been charged with disturbing the peace. We are requesting that all charges be dropped because there is no peace for women to disturb. Women are living in a STATE OF EMERGENCY.

9 women protesters to be arraigned today

NORTHAMPTON (AP) — Nine women arrested over the weekend after a demonstration here were scheduled to be arraigned today.

The women — all giving their name as "Sandra Goodman" — were arrested over the weekend during a demonstration about a variety of feminist issues concerned with violence against women, police said.

About 100 women taped off a three-road intersection in downtown Northampton Saturday around 3:15 p.m., said Police Capt. Michael Wall. Local police requested help from state troopers to clear the area.

"They were protesting a number of women's issues concerning rape and violence against women," Wall said.

Police initially arrested three women, and took two to the police station. Demonstrators then surrounded a second cruiser carrying the third woman, Wall said.

At that point, a dozen state po-

lice troopers, dressed in riot helmets and carrying riot batons, were called to the scene to assist local police, said State Police Sgt. Daniel Jamroz. "They felt that they needed assistance," he said.

During the attempt to get the cruiser out, six more women were arrested, Wall said. All were arrested on charges of disturbing the peace, he said.

They were later released late Saturday on personal recognition, police said.

There were no injuries, Wall said.

All nine women gave the same name — Sandra Goodman — to authorities, Wall said. Wall said he believed Sandra Goodman was the name of a woman involved in a similar protest in Amherst.

But at least one Amherst police officer said the name was unfamiliar to her.

"The name does not ring a bell at all," said Patrolman Noreen Mulvehill.

Union-News

MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 1989

NEWSPAPERS:

Boston Globe	135 Morrissey Blvd., Boston 02107	929-3000
Boston Herald	One Herald Square, Boston 02118	426-3000
Christian Science Monitor	1 Norway, Boston 02115	450-2000
New York Times (Jenny, Kay, Kings, H)	Suite 300, 15 Court Sq., Boston 02108	720-0727
Wall Street Journal	10 P.O. Square, Boston 02109	423-4600
Wash. Post (Mike Rezendez)	6 Bagnal Street, Brighton 02134	787-0123

TELEVISION: News Director

WGBH (2) Alan Foster	125 Western Avenue., Boston 02134	492-2777/2
WBZ (4) Stan Hopkins	1170 Soldiers Field Rd., Boston 02134	787-7019
WCVB (5) Phil Balboni	5 TV Place, Needham 02194	449-0400
WNEV (7) Jeff Rosser	7 Bullfinch Place, Boston 02114	725-0777
WLVI (56) Jack Fitzgerald	75 Morrissey Blvd., Boston 02125	282-0938
Neighborhood Network News	640 Commonwealth Ave., Boston 02215	353-9700
ABC Joe Bergantino	800 Boylston Street, Boston 02199	638-0500
CBS	1 Bullfinch Place, Boston 02114	720-3425
NBC Tom Keenan	1 Gateway Center, Newton	244-1484

RADIO: (Fall '87 Ratings Order)

WBCN-FM Katy Abel	1265 Boylston St., Boston 02215	437-1920
WBZ-AM Bob Salsberg	1170 Soldiers Field Rd., Boston 02134	787-7250
WXKS-FM Bill Rossi	99 Revere Beach Parkway, Medford 02155	395-3200
WRKO-AM Joe Morgan	Three Fenway Plaza, Boston 02215	236-6800
WJIB-FM Robert Mehrman	68 Commercial Wharf, Boston 02110	523-6611
WHDH-AM Ed Bell	441 Stuart St., Boston 02116	267-1313
WEEI-AM John Rodman	4450 Prudential Tower, Boston 02199	262-5900
WZOU-FM Jeff Michaels	441 Stuart Street, Boston 02199	267-9090
WZLX-FM	200 Clarendon Street, Boston 02119	267-0123
WSSH-FM	4 Broadway, POBox 1817, Lowell 01853	729-1632
WROR-FM Robert McNeil	Three Fenway Plaza, Boston 02215	236-6800
WILD-AM Ron Jackson	90 Warren Street, Boston 02119	427-2222
WODS-FM Gordon Hill	30 Winter Street #12, Boston 02108	236-7900
WMJX-FM Rod Fritz	Box 501, Back Bay Annex, Boston 02116	542-2749
WVBF-FM Len Mailloux	100 Mt. Wayte Ave., Framingham 01701	332-9817
WBOS-FM	441 Stuart Street, Boston 02116	542-0712
WAAP-FM Peter Ziffel	19 Norwich Street, Worcester 01608	931-1577
WPNX-FM Sharon Brody	25 Exchange Street, Lynn 01901	595-6200
WSSH-AM Leslie Bennett	74 Lansdowne St., Boston 02116	267-1510
WMEX-AM Rod Fritz	330 Stuart Street, Boston 02117	542-2749
WCRB-FM Dave MacNeil	750 South Street, Waltham 02154	893-7080
WBUR-FM Doug Berman	630 Commonwealth Ave., Boston 02115	353-4747

WS SERVICES:

Associated Press	184 High St., Boston 02110	357-8100
United Press International	One Herald Square, Boston 02118	542-2967
State House News Service	Room 458, State House, Boston 02133	722-2439
State House Radio Service	Room 437, State House, Boston 02133	722-2377
Broadcast News Service	POBox 1008, Boston 02103 789-0726 or	325-1936

WEEKLY PAPERS

Boston Phoenix (Dick Gaines)	126 Brookline Avenue, Boston 02215	536-5390
Bay State Banner (Mel Miller)	925 Washington St., Dorchester 02124	288-4900
The TAB	1238 Chestnut Street, Newton 02164	969-0340
Citizen Group Papers	481 Harvard Street, Brookline 02146	232-7000
Tribune Publishing	1205 Hyde Park Avenue, Boston 02136	361-6500
Transcript Newspapers	420 Washington Street, Dedham 02026	329-5000
Boston Business Journal	451 D. Street, Boston 02210	330-1000

MAGAZINES

Boston Magazine	300 Massachusetts Ave., Boston 02115	262-9700
Newsweek (Mark Starr)	31 St. James Ave., Boston 02116	350-0300
Time (Joelle Attinger)	399 Boylston St., Boston 02116	262-7551
Business Week	575 Boylston St., Boston 02116	262-1160



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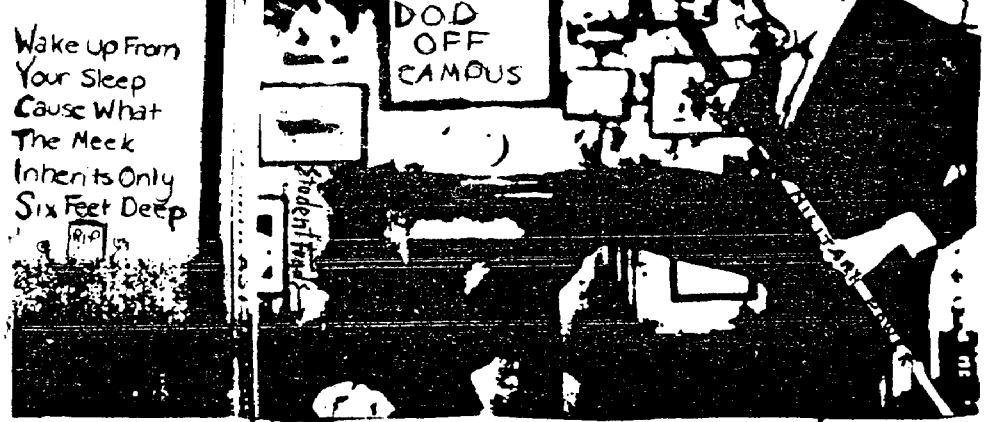
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