

# Violence Against Gays Increasing In Vancouver

by Corinne Bjorge

VANCOUVER (CUP) -

Gay and lesbian restaurants, bars, and community centres are tightening their security following the recent bombing of a downtown gay bookstore.

The February 6 bombing of Little Sisters bookstore is only one of several recent violent acts against the gay and lesbian community. Since December, several downtown gay businesses, including three bars, have received bomb threats.

Fred Gilbertson, vice chair of the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre, said he thinks the violence is increasing.

"The beatings are not limited to parks and beaches. They're (now) happening outside bars, even hospitals," said Gilbertson.

Bet Cecill, of Vancouver Lesbian Connection, said the violence has affected the gay and lesbian community in different ways: "Some try to hide more, some come out more. Our safety depends on how many are willing to stand up."

Cecill said the provincial government must take

part of the blame for the increased homophobia in the province.

"There are four or five provinces that actually have sexual orientation protection in their province," she said. "I'm angry we're sitting here with a government that doesn't give a damn about what's happening."

Gilbertson said the violence is also affecting gay men in an unexpected way: "It's making gay men face women's issues."

Gay men are learning what it's like when "they can't walk in a dark city street by themselves, and when they have to arrange for a ride after a meeting," said Gilbertson.

Cecill criticised news coverage of gay issues. The media only mentions gays and lesbians when there are violent incidents, and even then the coverage isn't that good, she said. "Had this (the bombing of Little Sisters) been Duthies Books, it would be all over the place."

"The lack of public and media response to direct attacks is terrifying and infuriating," she said.



I hope you realize that your heterosexuality will not necessarily prejudice my eventual affectional-preference choice.

But Gary Holmes, manager of the gay bar The Gandydancer said "considering the newspapers we have, the coverage has been fair."

"They'll print what sells newspapers, but they haven't tried to sensationalize the issue," said Holmes.

A member of Vancouver's commercial media disagreed with criticisms of the press.

"If there is a bombing in a downtown store you report the fact that there is a bombing," said Vancouver Province city editor Bonnie Kettner.

"It's a straightforward news story," she said.

The Province's coverage of the bombing of Little Sister's bookstore did not men-

tion the anti-gay aspect of the bombing.

Most members of the gay and lesbian community are happy with how the Vancouver police have dealt with the bombs and threats.

"They gave us a circular on what to do, left instructions. They're taking it very seriously," said Holmes.

## New Student Lobby Group Pushes Free Trade

by Laurel Hyatt OT-TAWA (CUP) - The room was filled with more dark blue suits than a corporate board room.

But rather than Bay Street movers and shakers, the people giving a press

conference at the Chateau Laurier Monday were students, the founding members of a student lobby group supporting the Mulroney government's free trade initiative.

The Alliance for the Fu-

ture of Young Canadians read from prepared speeches and handed out press kits boasting the membership of university student council presidents across Canada.

During the press briefing, the alliance's executive read the ideals they want to present to the federal government and young people. On Monday, the group sent a telegram to Brian Mulroney supporting free trade.

"Our call is for youth to participate and encourage young Canadians to look at the deal, whether they support it or not," said the Atlantic co-chairman Edward Farren.

The agreement with the U.S. "will mean a more secure economic future for our young people," said Lars Hansen, co-chair for Ontario. "The widely-held consensus is that this deal will mean more jobs in the future."

Carleton University's student council

president Bruce Haydon was listed as a founding member, but said in an interview after the conference that he had not given the alliance permission to cite him as a student council president.

"I had reservations with the fact that I was introduced as the president of CUSA. Even though I support free trade personally, I was not given the mandate to represent CUSA," Haydon said.

Haydon did not attend the morning press conference because he was not notified of it until late the night before, he said.

Haydon said another student council president, Anthony Carty at Queen's, "was uncomfortable with the fact that he was listed as the president of Queen's."

The president of the student council at the University of Manitoba (UMSU) said he was not travelling on UMSU funds and wasn't at the press conference repre-

senting U of M students.

"We are not representing anyone but ourselves," Janzen said.

Once the free trade issue is settled, Haydon said, the lobby group will likely disband. Haydon said it's unlikely the government will interpret the group's demand as representing the views of all students across Canada.

"No government could accept them as the alternative to CFS (Canadian Federation of Students)," he said. "There's a strong anti free trade movement at Guelph and Queen's (universities)."

Brad Wall, the Western co-chairman, said the alliance had to call for the government to finish negotiations right away. "Our future's economic security hinges on the fact that this choice must be made now. We need to seize the opportunities of today so young people will benefit tomorrow."

## Referendum results

Vice-President Communications amendments approved

Yes 220 votes

No 6 votes

Other constitutional amendments approved

yes 200 votes

no 13 votes

abstain 3 votes

Therefore all the amendments will be taking effect shortly.

Ron Cameron  
Chief Returning Officer