Finding Aid for the Queer Nation Records 1982-1995

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Queer Nation Records,
Date (inclusive): 1982-1995
Collection number: 134
Creator: Queer Nation
Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center
Los Angeles, California 90095-1490

Abstract: Queer Nation was a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) grassroots local organization first established in New York, which then proliferated into many other chapters across the country including: Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Houston. The organization was well-known for its confrontational actions and public protests and was initially formed by former members of ACT UP, a non-profit organization that fought HIV/AIDS discrimination. The collection encompasses correspondence, budgets, propaganda materials, press contact information, membership lists, newsletters and photographs.

Researchers who would like to indicate errors of fact or omissions in this finding aid can contact the research center at www.chicano.ucla.edu

Contact the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library and Archive for paging information.

Language of Material: Collection materials in English, Spanish

Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Queer Nation Records, 134, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles.

Acquisition Information
Materials were donated by Luz Calvo and Judy Sifuentes.

Biography
Queer Nation was a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) grassroots local organization first established in New York, which then, proliferated into many other chapters across the country including: Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Houston. The organization was well-known for its confrontational actions and public protests and was initially formed by former members of another group: ACT UP, a non-profit organization that fought HIV/AIDS discrimination. Queer Nation emerged because of the need to visibly denounce and counteract acts of violence and stereotypical portrayals of LGBT people in the media. While prior to the 1990s, the word "queer" conveyed a negative connotation and was considered a pejorative against sexual minorities, the group was able to re-appropriate the term and adopt it as a word of action.

Scope and Content
The Queer Nation Papers includes correspondence, organizational and financial records, propaganda materials, press materials, membership lists, newsletters, and photographs documenting the day-to-day activities of Queer Nation.

The collection is organized into the following series:
- Series 1. Correspondence
- Series 4. Phone Lists, 1991
- Series 6. Minutes
- Series 7. Ephemera: Flyers and Handouts
Series 8. International Issues
Series 11. Photographs
Series 15. Hate Incidents Hearings & Correspondence, February 1982 - October 1991
Series 17. Clothing, No Date
Series 18. Stencils, No Date
Series 19. Posters, No Date

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects
ACT UP
GLBT
HIV/AIDS
Queer Nation

Series 1. Correspondence
Scope and Content Note
Queer Nation correspondence includes an array of letters generated between 1990 and 1992. These reflect the myriad of issues the activist organization became involved with in response to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The correspondence afore mentioned, encompasses topics surrounding internal polemical conflicts, demands to former Governor Pete Wilson regarding AB 101 and letters to media entities regarding the complete absence and/or stereotypical representations of LGBT people as well as congratulatory letters from LGBT publications. The materials also comprise “Thank You” letters sent by HIV/AIDS organizations such as the City of Angeles Hospice and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation which benefited from Queer Nation’s monetary donations.

Box 1, Folder 1
Queer Nation Correspondence, Los Angeles CA. May 1991 - January 1992
Physical Description: Correspondence
Scope and Content Note
Correspondence generated and received by Queer Nation including congratulatory letters and those involving internal conflicts.
Note
Flagging: Letters sent to Governor Pete Wilson protesting discrimination and AB 101 veto

Box 1, Folder 2
Queer Nation Correspondence, Los Angeles CA. No Date
Physical Description: Correspondence
Scope and Content Note
Correspondence generated and received by Queer Nation including congratulatory letters and those involving internal conflicts.
Note
Flagging: A letter sent to Governor Pete Wilson regarding AB 101 veto.

Scope and Content Note
These materials consist of a detailed compilation of Queer Nation's receipts and budgetary records that feature the grass roots organization's purchasing needs between the group's inception in 1990 until its demise in 1992. The receipts denote a proven record of specific line items ranging from photocopies, faxes, post offices, gas, parking, car wash, home and office expenses as well as the organization's fiscal priorities. This series also denotes evidence that the majority of the purchases were made on behalf of public events and demonstrations that Queer Nation conducted across the Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura Counties. In addition, since Queer Nation was an activist volunteer organization, the records also specify who within the organization needed to be refunded for these purchases.

Box 1, Folder 3

Physical Description: Organizational records
Scope and Content Note
Queer Nation's receipts and budgets for their grassroots marketing campaigns.
Note
Flagging: There are two phone bills that reflect calls to Mexico and that were reimbursed to Marco, Wayne's partner. Wayne was one of Queer Nation's leader and founder. The phone bill reads that those were strategic calls with local activists.


Scope and Content Note
The series encompasses an array of materials regarding Queer Nation's public demonstrations to protest discrimination and biases against LGBT people. The compiled records also contain evidence of materials that were created to organize strategic meetings. Some of the protests included street mobilization to counteract verbal and physical violence against LGBT people as well as street demonstrations against stigmatized images of LGBT in the media. Some of the most prominent populist actions the organization protested against involved: PBS's Stop the Church TV documentary, Hollywood's film Basic Instinct, Burbank's John Muir Middle School and the Los Angeles City College (LACC) discrimination cases.

Box 1, Folder 4

Marches and Public Protests Dec 1990 - March 1992
Physical Description: Ephemera
Scope and Content Note
Queer Nations' print materials to alert the public regarding their public demonstrations.

Box 1, Folder 5

Marches and Public Protests No Date
Physical Description: Ephemera
Scope and Content Note
Queer Nations' print materials to alert the public regarding their public demonstrations.

Series 4. Phone Lists 1991

Scope and Content Note
These hand-written and typed lists denote Queer Nation's members names and phones numbers who were actively involved in the organization's public and strategic activities. The records show how the membership had tactically divided their activist outreach by geographic regions ranging from: Silverlake, South of Hollywood, Pasadena, The Valley, Long Beach / Orange County and Central LA.
Series 4. Phone Lists 1991

Box 1, Folder 6  
**Phone Lists 1991**  
Physical Description: Organizational records  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten phone lists of Queer Nation's main members involved in the strategic planning of the organization.

Box 1, Folder 7  
**Phone Lists No Date**  
Physical Description: Organizational records  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten phone lists of Queer Nation's main members involved in the strategic planning of the organization.


Scope and Content Note  
This series consists of an array of Queer Nation's newsletters on behalf of its membership and generated between 1990 and 1992. These newsletters include topics ranging from short essays about where the organization was strategically been headed, assessment of past demonstrations and their impact in the community-at-large, upcoming actions including protests against the media, and an open call for a collection of Queer Nation's papers to be catalogued and kept for archival purposes.

Box 1, Folder 8  
**Newsletters 1990 - 1992**  
Physical Description: Serials  
Scope and Content Note  
A collection of the organization's monthly newsletter distributed among members and an issue of one of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) monthly publication.

Series 6. Minutes

Scope and Content Note  
These records encompass a compilation of important issues examined during Queer Nation's planning meetings. The informal written agendas include minutes on topics such as: an Electra Records potential protest in regards to homophobic comments made by singer Jackson Browne, the announcement of a West Hollywood City Council meeting in regards to homophobic restaurant Barney's Beanery expansion in the city, fundraisers, activist actions such as the painting of guerrilla slogans ("Thou Shalt Not Crucify Queers") and the production of propagandistic materials.

Box 1, Folder 9  
**Meeting Minutes Jan. 1990 - Feb. 1992**  
Physical Description: Organizational Papers  
Scope and Content Note  
Queer Nation's planning meetings minutes that details the group's next actions regarding their events.
Series 7. Ephemerata: Flyers and Handouts

Scope and Content Note
Queer Nation's ephemera records are tangible evidence of the numerous public events the group organized and became deeply involved with. Since the organization was well-known for its confrontational activities, many of the records here described, also denote provocative titles and innuendos such as the Holy Homosexual flyer. A great number of flyers also cover events with satirical religious themes such as the Church of Judy Garland as well as guerrilla tactics for LGBT people to defend themselves from any street hate-related incidents and a guide for straight parents to understand their LGBT kids. Some of the announcements include events by other groups such as the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, art-related happenings such as poetry readings at Highways in Santa Monica and messages from Joan Jett Blakk Presidential team. In addition, a great number of flyers cover media related public complaints against Hollywood in regards to films such as "Fried Green Tomatoes," "JFK," and "Basic Instinct," movies that Queer Nation considered defamatory in the way they portrayed LGBT characters. Also, the series contain announcements regarding AIDS discrimination cases such as the one suffered by W. Wayne Karr, Queer nation's top leader, at the Los Angeles Community College (LACC), by one of his professors; and an avant-garde event where the organizers urged LGBT people not to spend their "queer bucks" at retail stores, an action that broke new ground in regards to what we now see as the gay market's powerful purchasing power.

Box 1, Folder 10
Flyers and Handouts Nov. 1990 - Sept. 1992
Physical Description: Ephemerata
Scope and Content Note
A heavy compilation of records that detail the vast number of events Queer Nation became involved with throughout its existence.

Box 1, Folder 11
Flyers and Handouts No Date
Physical Description: Ephemerata
Scope and Content Note
A heavy compilation of records that detail the vast number of events Queer Nation became involved with throughout its existence.

Series 8. International Issues

Scope and Content Note
This subseries contains two isolated press articles regarding anti LGBT discrimination cases. Rex Wockner, a well-known US reporter focusing on LGBT issues, writes in Frontiers, about the grisly assassination of Alexander Kuleshev, editor of new Life. The article focuses on the general chaotic environment of fear and persecution that LGBT activists in Russian are living in. The other article, written in Outweek, discusses the outing process employed by "Actualidad," a general market daily in Argentina, that printed a list of Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA) board members, propelling their employers to fire them on the spot. Subsequently, the newspaper ran a second list with 35 other members along with their ID numbers. The CHA in response issued an international call for action to organize protests at Argentinean embassies and consulates around the world.

Box 1, Folder 12
Physical Description: Clippings
Scope and Content Note
Press clippings regarding international issues where Queer Nation contemplated providing support.
Series 8. International Issues

Box 1, Folder 13  **International Issues No Date**

- **Physical Description:** Clippings
- **Scope and Content Note**
  Press clippings regarding international issues where Queer Nation contemplated providing support.


- **Scope and Content Note**
  Like any other non-profit organization, by the early nineties, Queer Nation had mastered the art of securing media coverage as a vehicle to enhance the impact of its public demonstrations. Besides the reporting on the organization's birth, this series encompasses a variety of press articles that discuss issues of discrimination, stereotypical media representations, street protests, the proliferation of long term gay and lesbian couples and one of the first articles dedicated to the potential analysis of the LGBT buying power. Among the articles focusing on discriminatory issues are: The Arsenio Hall Show controversy, Barney's Beanery homophobic stance, "Silence of the Lambs" stigmatized portrayal of a gay man, catholic bashings and the Los Angeles City College (LACC) AIDS discrimination case. In addition, the selection also includes a significant number of articles about Hollywood representations of LGBT people as well as bigotry in music.

Box 2, Folder 1  **Press Coverage Dec. 1990 - Dec. 1991**

- **Physical Description:** Press materials and clippings
- **Scope and Content Note**
  A vast compilation of media articles regarding Queer Nation's actions as well as press coverage of other issues across the country.

Box 2, Folder 2  **Press Coverage No Date**

- **Physical Description:** Press materials and clippings
- **Scope and Content Note**
  A vast compilation of media articles regarding Queer Nation's actions as well as press coverage of other issues across the country.


- **Arrangement**
  This series contains Queer Nation's collection of LGBT publications. The Gay & Lesbian Pride Celebration Guide was produced and distributed during the June Pride Celebration in West Hollywood in 1992. The guide depicts that year's honorees, sponsors and complete weekend's program. The rest: "The Advocate," "Girlfriends" and "Christopher Street" are staple publications addressing journalistic topics ranging from Magic Johnson's HIV status to Arsenio Hall's anti LGBT diatribe, female erotica and deeper themes such as the politics of gay writing.

Box 2, Folder 3  **LGBT Magazines Jan. 1992 - March 1995**

- **Physical Description:** Serials
- **Scope and Content Note**
  LGBT publications collected by Queer Nation

Series 11. **Photographs**

- **Arrangement**
  The series includes historical photographs of the organization's public demonstrations. Some of the photos show members at a Queer Village organized to promote Former Governor Pete Wilson's signage of AB 101. The members are not identified.
Series 11. Photographs

Box 2, Folder 4

Photos No Date

Physical Description: Photographs
Scope and Content Note
Photos taken by Queer Nation’s members depicting their organizing on the field.


Scope and Content Note
This short compilation focuses on two bills addressed by the City of West Hollywood and California’s Senate. The first one is in regards to the LGBT discrimination issue perpetrated by Barney’s Beanery and its insistence to apply for a beer license. The other one is in regards SB 982, a bill that would have charged an HIV positive person with a felony if found guilty of infecting someone else with the virus.

Box 2, Folder 5

Political Bills January 1990 - March 1991

Physical Description: Civic papers
Scope and Content Note
Copies and summaries of political bills affecting LGBT people in California.


Scope and Content Note
The scientific studies produced by the Hispanic AIDS Forum and the Community Family Planning Council, focus on Latinas and Black Women and HIV/AIDS. Both organizations are based in New York.

Box 2, Folder 6

Studies December 1990 - January 1991

Physical Description: Papers
Scope and Content Note
Studies generated by two non-profit entities in the City of New York regarding women of color and HIV/AIDS.


Scope and Content Note
The concise papers are a compilation of Queer Nation’s press materials produced to alert the media and the public in general about their protests. Some of the issues included: Barney’s Beanery discrimination case, The Arsenio Hall Show anti LGBT diatribe and the West Hollywood Pride Celebration Committee debacle regarding “hush money” paid to Queer Nation to stop their outcry against an entrance fee to the event.

Box 2, Folder 7

Media Advisories & Press Releases December 1990 - August 1992

Physical Description: Press releases
Scope and Content Note
A compilation of press materials produced and sent to local media by Queer Nation in an effort to raise awareness about their protests.

Box 2, Folder 8

Media Advisories & Press Releases No Date

Physical Description: Press materials
Scope and Content Note
A compilation of press materials produced and sent to local media by Queer Nation in an effort to raise awareness about their protests.
Series 15. Hate Incidents Hearings & Correspondence February 1982 - October 1991
Scope and Content Note
This series encompasses correspondence and public hearings notices that precede the inception of Queer Nation. The first document, produced in 1982 by well-known activist Morris Kight, is a letter addressed to Susan McGreivy, an Attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), regarding Barney's Beanery discrimination issue. Other incidents addressed include: a description of a disturbing 911 call made by a gay man in regards to a hate crime he was witnessing and the 911 operator's refusal to help.

Box 2, Folder 9
Hate Incidents Hearings & Correspondence February 1982 - October 1991
Physical Description: Correspondence
Scope and Content Note
Specific correspondence related to hate incidents and crimes against individuals and Queer Nation's members.

Box 2, Folder 10
Hate Incidents Hearings & Correspondence No Date
Physical Description: Correspondence
Scope and Content Note
Specific correspondence related to hate incidents and crimes against individuals and Queer Nation's members.

Scope and Content Note
This series contains Queer Nation's fundamental messages in the form of stickers. Some of them include irreverent lines that reflected the issues they were dealing with in regards to the media, celebrity outing, anti gay bashing, bisexual and trans visibility. The messages include; "If not now, when?" "Queers with Sticks &x2013; Out to Bash Heterosexism." "An Attack on One of Us is An Attack on All of Us"! and "Stop Pride Profiteering."

Box 3
Stickers 1990-1993
Physical Description: Ephemera
Scope and Content Note
A vast and colorful variety of stickers with Queer Nation's logo and messages.

Series 17. Clothing No Date
Scope and Content Note
This series contains two propagandistic t-shirts with the organization's prime messages: "Bash Back" and "Tank Top."

Box 4
Promotional materials No Date
Physical Description: Textile
Scope and Content Note
T-Shirts with Queer Nation's messages.

Series 18. Stencils No Date
Scope and Content Note
Queer Nation's collection of stencils utilized to create stickers and other propagandistic materials such as t-shirts. The messages included: Pride! Power! Nation!, Tank Top, etc.

Box 5
Stencils No Date
Physical Description: Ephemera
Scope and Content Note
Copies of the messages printed to make stickers and other lithographic materials.
Series 18. Stencils No Date

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Series 19. Posters No Date
Scope and Content Note
This series encompasses several posters Queer Nation utilized during protests and street demonstrations. One of them was presented at an event in Berlin, Germany, and it was written in German. The poster reads: "For the dissemination of information and discussion regarding approaches and perspectives of a gay and lesbian analysis and anti-fascist resistance." Another poster identifies David Geffen, Sandy Gallin and Barry Diller as detractors to the LGBT movement because of their support to anti-gay comedian Andrew Dice Clay. The poster claims that although the three moguls supported HIV/AIDS charities, their internal homophobia and support of LGBT bashing performers, caused more damage to the LGBT community. The other materials include generic anti-gay bashing posters, posters that "out" celebrities such as Jodie Foster and Tom Selleck, an anti-Oscars demonstration and a Latina-focused poster that urges Latina lesbians to stand up against racism, sexism and homophobia. This last one contains Spanish words.

Box 6
Physical Description: Ephemera
Scope and Content Note
Large size posters that encompass the types of messages Queer Nation developed to participate at several events.
Note
Flagging: There is one poster that contains words in Spanish.

Scope and Content Note
This series contains large mainstream publications clippings as well as two issues from LGBT publications such as the Lesbian News, a Los Angeles lesbian magazine; Vanguard, a LA-based monthly that is not in circulation anymore and an issue from the Bay Area Reporter (BAR), San Francisco's LGBT newspaper. The materials generated by mainstream media include articles from the Los Angeles Times, The Village Voice, The Collegian, Los Angeles City College paper and a full article regarding the protests against Former Governor Pete Wilson because of SB 982 La Opinió:n, Los Angeles' prime Spanish-language newspaper.

Box 7, Folder 1
Large Press Clippings November 1991 - April 1992
Physical Description: Clippings
Note
This folder includes LGBT press coverage from renowned publications such as San Francisco's Bay Area Reporter (BAR), the Lesbian News and Vanguard.

Box 7, Folder 2
Large Press Clippings May 1991 - November 1992
Scope and Content Note
This folder comprehends a series of publications ranging from the Los Angeles Times to the Village Voice. A significant amount of the coverage in these general market newspapers focuses on HIV/AIDS discrimination as well as protests conducted by Queer Nation in regards to political bills.