

SOME BACKGROUND TO FIRST LGPSU LESBIAN + GAY RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE SEMINAR 6-8 NOV '87

MID-70s

GAY ORGANISATIONS LOBBY FOR SPECIFIC PROTECTION IN FORTHCOMING EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY + UNFAIR DISMISSALS LEGISLATION.

1982

"Kincolit", LESBIAN + GAY WORKERS THREATENED WITH DISMISSAL - UNION OPPOSITION - MANAGEMENT BACK DOWN BUT . . . .

CORK BRANCH LGPSU ADOPT LESBIAN/GAY RIGHTS RESOLUTION LATER PASSED BY A.D.C. OF LGPSU and ICTU

1983

CAMPAIGN FOR THE RIGHTS OF LESBIANS + GAY MEN LAUNCHED, ONE OF ITS 3 DEMANDS RELATES TO EMPLOYMENT

1984

FRINGE WORKSHOP HELD AT LGPSU A.D.C.

LGPSU SPONSOR K. ROSE TO GO TO NALGO LESBIAN/GAY CONFERENCE

CORK BRANCH LGPSU GIVES DONATION TO GAY INFORMATION CORK + LIBRARIES CORK EXAMINER TO ACCIT AD.

1985

PHIL FLYNN, GEN. SEC. LGPSU, WRITES  
TO ICM LOOKING FOR SEMINAR TO SET  
PROGRESS ON 1982 RESOLUTION (2nd May)

ICM 2 DAY SEMINAR HELD 29/11/85.  
AND COMPREHENSIVE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE  
PRODUCED

1986

ICM AGREES TO PREPARE GUIDELINES  
+ HAVE INPUT TO TRAINING COURSES (12th Sept)

E.F.A. AGREE TO RECOMMEND THAT  
NEW LEGISLATION SHOULD SPECIFICALLY  
PROTECT LESBIAN/GAY WORKERS. SO DO  
ICML, IDATU etc.

1987

ICM GUIDELINES LAUNCHED AT SEMINAR 28/11/87

LGPSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGREE TO  
IMPLEMENT THEM POSITIVELY.  
\* EQUALITY CLAIM LODGED WITH LGSNB.

OTHER UNIONS LODGE EQUALITY CLAIMS  
(see other sheet)

LESBIAN + GAY RIGHTS AT WORK GROUP BEGIN  
MEETING AGAIN.

\* LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF NEGOTIATIONS BOARD.

# Union supports change in law on homosexuality

OVERWHELMING support for the repeal of laws criminalising homosexual acts between consenting men was expressed yesterday at the annual conference of the 17,000 member Local Government and Public Services Union in Tralee.

After a contentious 20-minute debate, the vast majority of the **17,000** delegates raised their hands to back a Cork motion calling for changes in the laws.

One opposing delegate, Mr. Tom Henn, Limerick described the motion as "nauseating", but no more than six people in the conference hall at the Mount Brandon Hotel, went against it.

Another speaker described Mr. Henn's contribution as "bigoted rubbish" and Union president Mr. Tom Bogue, Cork, said that the executive was strongly urging the conference to adopt the motion.

Also passed was a Cork addition to the motion seeking an amendment of the Unfair Dismissals Act, The Employment Equality Act and legislation dealing with the employment of civil servants, the armed forces, gardai and public servants to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The matter is now to be referred to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Moving the motion, Mr. John Murphy, Cork, referred to a recent statement by Mr. Jack Marrinan, Secretary of the Garda Representative Body, criticising the fact that a well known homosexual was recently allowed to address a national youth conference.

Mr. Murphy said that such a statement was grossly unfair. He (Mr. Murphy) knew of one homosexual member of the union who would be regarded as a criminal under the present law.

Mr. Murphy told the conference that there were no

statistics to prove that homosexuals were involved in more criminal acts than heterosexual people.

"If one is engaged in homosexual acts, a criminal prosecution could follow which means that people like civil servants, teachers and gardai are open to losing their job", he went on.

Mr. Henn, speaking against the motion, said he was proud to be a member of L.G.P.S.U. all his life. He had a "love affair" with the union for 35 years, but, in view of the motion, he was now inclined to call it off.

"I am very surprised to see this motion in the name of the Cork branch. I am nauseated to see it in the name of the branch during the presidency of Tom Bogue", he declared. "If Cork have problems with homosexuality then let them go away and solve them quietly without publicity".

Entering the debate, Mr. Bogue recommended the adoption of the motion. He regretted a trend which polarised people into groups. A significant proportion of the entire population was homosexual and members of the union were no different.

"We have a repressed minority. They are repressed by laws and attitudes which are widely held throughout the community", he stated.

Replying to the debate, Mr. Murphy referred to statements about the Kinvara House scandal, Belfast. Minors, he maintained, were just as likely to be assaulted by heterosexuals as by homosexuals.

## Call to repeal legislation on homosexual acts

A MOTION calling for the repeal of laws criminalising homosexual acts between consenting men was passed overwhelmingly at the annual conference of the Local Government and Public Services Union (LGPSU) in Tralee yesterday. John Maddock.

The motion, put forward by the Cork branch, asked that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions work for the repeal of the laws - Sections 51 and 52 of the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861 and Section Two of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885.

As well, it seeks the amendment of the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977, the Employment Equality Act 1977 and the legislation dealing with the employment of civil servants - the

spoken. Mr. Tom Bogue, the Union's President said the executive board was supporting the resolution and urged its adoption. It referred to a subject which affected some of the Union's members because a proportion of the population were homosexuals and he had no reason to believe that that proportion was not reflected among the Union's members.

Since the motion had been put forward, there had been too many snide remarks about it. The Union was committed to preventing its members from being discriminated against and the present legislation could affect their job prospects and job security.

Mr. Tom Henn (Limerick) said he was surprised to see a

THE IRISH TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1982

## Union backs rights of gays

By Peter Murtagh

HOMOSEXUAL acts should not be illegal, according to the second largest trade union representing public employees. The Government should introduce laws banning discrimination against people because of their sexual orientation, the union also decided yesterday.

A motion seeking these changes was passed almost unanimously at the annual conference in Tralee.

The motion, from the Cork branch, called on the Government to repeal sections of the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, which make homosexual acts illegal and punishable by life imprisonment.

The motion also called for amendments to the Unfair Dismissals Act, the Employment Equality Act and legislation dealing with employment in the civil service, the armed forces and the gardai "to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation".

The union represents health board workers, local authority employees and psychiatric nurses and it is believed to be the first time that a union affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions

FURTHER INFORMATION FROM CORK GAY CORRECTIVE

# Claiming an Identity



LESBIAN AND GAY WORKERS REPRESENT 10% OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS UNION. WHAT THESE 1,700 WORKERS NEED NOW IS PRACTICAL AND DETERMINED SUPPORT. WE ARE ASKING THE UNION TO WORK TOWARDS:

- \* THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROGRAMME WHICH WOULD IDENTIFY THE AREAS WHERE THE INTERESTS OF LESBIAN AND GAY WORKERS ARE AT RISK AND WHICH WOULD RECOMMEND ACTION.
- \* THE ADOPTION OF A SIMILAR ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROGRAMME BOTH BY THE I.C.T.U. AND THE EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY AGENCY
- \* THE AMENDMENT OF THE UNFAIR DISMISSELS LEGISLATION SO THAT SEXUAL ORIENTATION WOULD BE AN INVALID REASON FOR DISMISSAL.
- \* CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS WHERE THEY COULD BE USED TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST US.
- \* ADVANCING OUR INTERESTS ON THOSE AGENCIES, SUCH AS THE NATIONAL HEALTH COUNCIL, WHERE THE UNION HAS REPRESENTATIVES
- \* THE APPOINTMENT OF A FULL/PART-TIME WORKER TO COORDINATE THIS ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROGRAMME.

TWO YEARS AGO THIS UNION VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO SUPPORT LESBIAN AND GAY WORKERS. LATER THAT YEAR THE I.C.T.U. FOLLOWED THE LEAD WE HAD SET. MANY OF US WERE GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY THIS STAND.

.....BUT.....

SINCE 1982 THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE POLICIES AND THE SITUATION FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF LESBIAN AND GAY MEN IN IRELAND REMAINS APPALING. NOW IS THE TIME FOR THIS UNION TO RENEW ITS SUPPORT FOR LESBIAN AND GAY WORKERS.

# GAYS AT WORK

Foundation  
1982/83  
Kieran Rose  
Cork Branch



'What is needed is a clear, comprehensive and categorised statement of support for equality of treatment for gay people as a major matter of public policy by the Labour Movement, including the Labour Party and the Trade Unions.'

Tony Benn, MP.

# DISCRIMINATION

GIVEN THESE OBSTACLES IT IS EASY TO SEE WHY THERE IS NOT A POWERFUL NETWORK OF LESBIAN AND GAY ACTIVISTS. BUT SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. THROUGH THE DIFFERENT STRUGGLES WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THERE IS NOW A GROWING AND MORE CONFIDENT LESBIAN/GAY MOVEMENT. A UNITED CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN SET UP ON THE BASIS OF FOUR DEMANDS:

- THE REMOVAL OF ALL ANTI-GAY LAWS
- EQUAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES
- EQUAL CUSTODY RIGHTS FOR LESBIAN MOTHERS
- A POSITIVE APPROACH TO LESBIAN/GAY SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

LESBIANS AND GAY MEN ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR LIVES. THE BARBARIC LAWS WHICH CRIMINALISE GAY MEN STILL REMAIN AND MOCK THIS SOCIETY'S PRETENCE AT VALUING CIVIL LIBERTIES. A MORE SUBTLE WAY OF CONTROLLING PEOPLE IS TO THREATEN THEIR JOBS AND IT IS AT WORK THAT LESBIANS AND GAY MEN ARE MOST VULNERABLE. MOST OF US CANNOT TAKE THE RISK OF LOSING OUR JOBS AND SO WE HAVE TO CONCEAL OUR SEXUALITY FROM BOTH CO-WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

ANTI-GAY PREJUDICE ALSO MEANS THAT WE CANNOT GET ACCESS TO SOCIAL FACILITIES SUCH AS PUBS/DISCOS. IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO GET SPACE TO HOLD MEETINGS. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD COVERT POLICY OF SUPPRESSING INFORMATION WHICH WE NEED. BOOKS AND MAGAZINES ARE EITHER CENSORED BY THE STATE OR ELSE NOT STOCKED BY LIBRARIES AND RETAIL OUTLETS. THE MEDIA GENERALLY REFUSE TO ACCEPT ADVERTISEMENTS FOR OUR TELEPHONE SERVICES. PUBLICLY FUNDED AGENCIES SUCH AS YOUTH SERVICES IGNORE THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY, WITH ANTI-GAY PREJUDICE BEING REINFORCED BY CHURCH AND STATE IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT WE LIVE WITH THE THREAT OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.

# DISCRIMINATION



LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND  
PUBLIC SERVICES UNION

Eamonn Ceannt House,  
9 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1.  
Telephone: 01-728899

General Secretary  
Phil Flynn

AONTAS RIALTAIS ÁITIÚL  
AGUS  
SERBHÍSÍ POIBLÍ

Teach Eamonn Ceannt,  
9 Plás Gardnar, Baile Átha Cliath 1.  
Telefón: 01-728899

*(In Federation with the Irish Municipal Employees' Trade Union & the Psychiatric Nurses Association)*

2nd May, 1985

Mr. Donal Nevin,  
General Secretary,  
Irish Congress of Trade Unions,  
Congress House,  
19, Raglan Rd.,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4.

Dear Donal,

In 1982 our Union successfully sponsored a resolution at the I.C.T.U. Conference on the subject of discrimination against homosexuals in their employment.

This policy decision placed an onus on affiliated Unions to inform their members on the problems facing gay people in employment and in Irish society generally. Three years on, however, very little seems to have been achieved. Two possible reasons for this is that most Unions do not know how to approach the task and no process or channel exists by which gay people in employment can articulate their specific problems and difficulties. I wondered in the circumstances if the Executive Council would be prepared, under its Education programme, to sponsor a Seminar / Work Shop on the subject and which would be directed particularly at gay trade unionists.

Yours sincerely,

*Valerie West*  
P.P. PHIL FLYNN  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
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PF/VW

IRIS CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

Education and Training Service

Mr. Kevin O'Driscoll,  
National Officer,  
L.G.P.S.U.,  
9, Gardiner Place,  
Dublin, 1.

*tel 728891*

31 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Telephone: 748221

16th October 1985

Dear Colleague,



As you are aware I have sent out a preliminary notice for the Workshop on "Discrimination in Employment based on a Person's Sexual Orientation" and at the meeting of the Education and Training Committee on Monday 14th October, the format was approved as follows:

1. 2.00-3.00 The Social and Legal Position in Ireland.
2. 3.00-4.00 Practical Experience of Discrimination in Employment.
3. 4.15-5.00 Work in Groups.
4. 5.00-6.00 Reports and Points for Further Action.

The purpose of this workshop is to enable Trade Union Representatives to examine the policy adopted by Congress on this type of sexual discrimination and to enable them to discuss how unions might take a positive initiative to implementing the policy.

The format suggested in the memo sent to you is unsuitable for a Trade Union seminar. Such a seminar might best be organised by an affiliated union and the desirability of organising such seminars can be discussed at the Workshop.

Yours sincerely,

Michael O'Halloran,  
Education and Training Officer.

MOH/sk

I.C.T.U. SEMINAR ON DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT

in relation to

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (NOV.'85)

Report from Workshop No. 3 on "The Role of Trade Unions".

In this workshop participants identified the role of Trade Unions under two headings:

- (a) Their role in the education and training of full - time and lay officials, shop stewards and members on Discrimination in Employment in relation to Sexual Orientation.
- (b) Their broader role in dealing with attitudinal prejudice in Irish society.

The following recommendations and proposals were made:

(1) Seminar on Dealing with Discrimination at Workplace Level:

In the workshop it was recognised that at present in Irish workplaces gay and lesbian workers often find it extremely difficult to raise issues concerning them with shop stewards or Union Officials for fear of an unsympathetic, hearing attitudinal prejudice, ignorance, etc. The workshop recommended that the I.C.T.U. organise a one day Workshop/Seminar on Gay and Lesbian Workers to discuss this problem, with a view to making suggestions as to how best it might be dealt with, within the present trade union structure. It was recommended that this Workshop/Seminar be organised on a Saturday so that the vast majority of intending participants would not have to seek release from work, and also consideration be given to allowing participants to attend without nomination from their Union as some participants had found difficulty in obtaining nominations to attend this Seminar.

(2) Further Seminars on Discrimination in Employment in Relation to Sexual Orientation

Given the level of ignorance, misinformation, prejudice etc. prevalent on this issue within the Trade Union Movement. The workshop recommended further Seminars on this subject, and also that it be incorporated in the form of "Case Studies" etc. on Shop Stewards and other Congress Courses.

Working Party on Discrimination in Employment in relation to Sexual Orientation

The workshop recommended that following the Seminar a recommendation be submitted to the I.C.T.U. Executive Council for the establishment of a "Working Party on Discrimination in Employment in Relation to Sexual Orientation" and its work would comprise the following:

- (a) The preparation of information leaflets, booklets etc. for distribution to Shop Stewards, members, Trade Union Officials etc. (It was noted that the E.S.B.O.A. already had a number of Publications).
- (b) Drawing up of Guidelines for Negotiators on discrimination in employment in relation to sexual orientation.
- (c) Monitoring of incidences of discrimination in all workplaces including workplaces which are prohibited by their contract of service from joining a union such as Garda, Defence forces etc.

.../cont.

The workshop participants also recommended that the working party should liaise with or be serviced by an I.C.T.U. official.

(4) Motion of Annual Conference 1982 on Job Discrimination on Sexual Grounds

The workshop recommended that I.C.T.U. circulate this motion to all affiliated unions reminding them that it is Congress policy, and requesting them to forward information on any progress that has been made in their attempts to resist this form of discrimination.

The Workshop also recommended that this motion be forwarded to the I.C.T.U. Labour Legislation Committee to be examined with a view to making a further submission to the Department of Justice for the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour between consenting adults and also to ascertain what changes are needed in present Labour Legislation in the Republic.

(5) Fair Employment Act, Northern Ireland

The Workshop recommended that a submission be made requesting an amendment to this Legislation to make it illegal to discriminate against a worker in relation to their sexual orientation.

Health Education

The Workshop recommended that I.C.T.U. make a submission to the Health Education Bureau requesting them to organise a comprehensive Education programme on all sexual transmitted diseases particularly AIDS as the present media coverage on AIDS tended to portray it as a homosexual related disease which research has shown to be untrue.

(7) Media

The Workshop felt that the constructive use of the media could be extremely helpful in eliminating the misinformation and ignorance regarding this form of discrimination in Irish workplaces, and in society generally and recommended that I.C.T.U. issue a press statement or report of this seminar and of future seminars and workshops.

(8) Report of Seminar

The workshop requested that a report of seminar be circulated to affiliated unions and to participants.

WITH COMPLIMENTS

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS  
Education and Training Service

31 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Telephone 748221

LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS AT WORK LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS AT WORK

P.O. Box 97

Cork.

(temporary address)

DRAFT.

REPORT OF MEETING HELD IN LGPSU HEAD OFFICE DUBLIN ON 3.5.1986

This meeting was organised by a few individuals who felt it was necessary to consider how to go forward after the ICTU seminar of 29.II.1985 on discrimination against lesbian and gay workers. Kieran wrote a letter outlining the issues and this was circulated and responses invited. Kieran and Cathal then set a time and place for the meeting and this again was circulated to those lesbians and gay men who had been at the ICTU seminar. Reservations were expressed about who and how these decisions were made and the restricted nature of the group invited.

The meeting began with a general discussion of our feelings/analysis as lesbian and gay workers and what needs to be done.

Many lesbians and gay men are unemployed or on the periphery of the labour market and are not organised into Unions.

In a growing right wing climate, to survive and grow we need workers coops, housing coops and a social network that supports us politically and personally. There is a danger that we will be seduced by standard type jobs with money and security but we will be then more vulnerable as individuals.

On the other hand it was said that right wing economists are presenting part-time jobs, job share, alternative ways of working as a way of getting people into the system without them knowing it, as a way of benefitting the employers. The vast majority of us will always have to work in standard type jobs.

It seems clear that there is a widespread need for security now - whether through "proper" jobs or a serious/determined approach to self created ones.

There was a feeling that getting involved in the unions was very time consuming - like another career. Also some unions seem to be middle class and alienating.

There is a problem of those who are employed in the gay movement with bad pay and poor conditions.

Also there are lesbian and gay employers.

\* Three workshop reports available. Donations for copying & post gratefully received.

There are very reactionary elements in the trade unions.  
Ours will be a long process like the womens movement.  
The seminar on 29th Nov. broke a lot of ice.

In the afternoon we got down to a detailed discussion of what could and should be done.

There was general agreement that there was a need for some kind of organisation and campaign. But it was also generally agreed that it should not be a major time consuming group with a lot of meetings. It should be a loose network which could be expanded when necessary. There was a need for a list of demands for those working in their unions and it was agreed that the recommendations of the ICTU seminar provided such a list. When an issue is taken up by the ICTU it is then possible to pursue it at ground level, for example sexual harassment.

● It was agreed to set up a group called LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS AT WORK

The purposes of the group are:

- to raise the issue of the rights of lesbian and gay workers within the trade union movement. This would include the rights of unemployed workers and lesbian mothers who are classified out of the workforce.
- to get a charter for the rights of lesbian and gay workers from the ICTU
- to act as an information exchange for those working on this issue
- to raise the issue of workers rights and trade unions within the lesbian/gay community. Especially the rights of unemployed and part-timers.

It was agreed to draft a leaflet and Kieran and Joan were to work on this.

Mick is to open a bank account and Kieran is to donate the £50 he got as expenses from the ICTU. Donations will be invited.

A report of the meeting will be sent to OUT, trade union magazines and lesbian/gay groups.

Kieran Rose is to act as convener and organise the membership/mailing.

Present at the meeting were: Joan, Mick, Imelda Kieran, Marie Iris, Cathal, from the following unions: LGPSU ITGWU UPTCS A and two unemployed people. Kevin O'Driscoll National Officer LGPSU spoke briefly to the group.



IRISH DISTRIBUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRADE UNION  
O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1.

JOHN MITCHELL  
General Secretary

Tel. 746321/2/3

Mr. Donal Nevin,  
General Secretary,  
I.C.T.U.,  
19, Raglan Road,  
Dublin 4.

14th July, 1986.

Re: Seminar on Discrimination in Employment in relation  
to Sexual Orientation

Dear Donal,

On 9 June 1986, I requested that recommendations from the above be discussed at the June Executive Meeting.

I am at least surprised that they have again failed to make the proposed agenda for the July Meeting.

Can I now have the matter discussed on 17 July.

Yours fraternally,

GENERAL SECRETARY.

JPM/AS:

# IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

*original*  
19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4

Our Reference: 1603

RECEIVED 17 JUL 1986

15 July 1986

Mr. John P. Mitchell  
General Secretary  
Irish Distributive and Administrative  
Trade Union  
O'Lehane House  
9 Cavendish Row  
DUBLIN 1

RECEIVED 16 JUL 1986

Dear Colleague

With reference to your letters of 9 June and 14 July 1986 concerning the seminar on discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation held in November 1985, the position is that such seminars do not make recommendations to the Executive Council as participants are expressing their personal views. In any case there are no means by which participants at seminars can formulate recommendations since seminars are precluded from taking any decisions. The seminar in question was organised as an information/education function by the Congress Education and Training Service. Unions' views on any matter are expressed either through Annual Conference or directly by communication with Congress.

A report on the seminar referred to was received from the Education and Training Officer on 27 January 1986 and this was considered by the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 10 February. Arising from the discussion on the report the General Purposes Committee decided that a number of the recommendations in the report dealt with matters of policy and could not be accepted by Congress, but that the other proposals could be implemented. These latter were as follows:

- (a) A further seminar could be organised if required on the subject of discrimination due to sexual orientation, particularly the problem of raising issues concerning such discrimination within the Trade Union Movement;
- (b) The 1982 Annual Conference motion on job discrimination on sexual grounds should be forwarded to Unions who should be requested to forward information on progress made in resisting such discrimination;
- (c) The Health Education Bureau should be requested to organise an education programme on sexually-transmitted diseases.

Over/

# Irish Congress of Trade Unions

19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4

Our Reference: 1603

15 September 1986

Mr. John P. Mitchell  
General Secretary  
Irish Distributive and Administrative  
Trade Union  
O'Lehane House  
9 Cavendish Row  
DUBLIN 1

RECEIVED 16 SEP 1986

Dear Colleague

With reference to your letter of 11 September the General Purposes Committee, at its meeting on 12 September, agreed that the following actions should be taken in relation to discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation:

- (a) A seminar should be organised on the subject, particularly the problem of raising issues concerning such discrimination within the Trade Union Movement;
- (b) The motion adopted by the 1982 Conference should be re-circulated to Unions;
- (c) That the Health Education Bureau be requested to arrange a joint ICTU/HEB seminar on Aids as a workplace issue;
- (d) That the Congress Trade Union Education and Training programme should cover the issue of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation;
- (e) That guidelines to assist trade union negotiators should be prepared.

As regards your suggestion that representations should be made for changes in legislation, both criminal and employment, to end discrimination, the General Purposes Committee decided to refer this matter to the Executive Council as Congress has no stated policy on this matter.

Yours sincerely

*Donal Nevin*  
Donal Nevin  
General Secretary

dn/ag

As I have indicated, participants have no function in making recommendations to the Executive Council. However, if your Union, or yourself as a member of the Executive Council, wishes to have the matter of discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation considered by the Executive Council, then the matter could be put on the agenda.

Yours sincerely

*Donal Nevin*  
Donal Nevin  
General Secretary

dn/ag

Employment Equality Agency  
Gníomhaireacht um Chomhionannas Fostaíochta

36 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2. Telephone (01) 605966  
36 Sráid an Mhóta Uacht, Baile Átha Cliath 2. Teileafón (01)605966



Chairperson  
Cathaoirleach: Sylvia Meehan

Mr. Kieron Rose,  
Trasmere,  
9 Greenfield Road,  
Cuttton,  
Dublin 13.

Our Ref/Ár dTag:

Your Ref/Bhur dTag:

Date/Dáta: 05/08/1986

Dear Mr. Rose,

Your letter arrived just as I was going on annual leave.

I should be very interested to meet you in September and it would be very helpful if prior to that meeting, you would let us have a copy of the recommendations, particularly those relating to the EEA, which were drawn up at the ICTU November Conference.

I shall be away during August but will be happy to arrange the meeting in early September. Perhaps you would ring me then.

Yours sincerely,

*Sylvia Meehan*  
Sylvia Meehan  
Chairperson

Grasmere  
19, Greenfield Road  
Sutton  
Dublin 13

Barbara Cashen  
Chief Officer  
E.E.A.

14.11.82

F

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your letter of 3.II.86. We are happy to hear that the E.E.A. has recommended to the Minister that lesbian and gay workers should be protected under an amended Employment Equality Act.

We agree that general civil rights legislation is needed but specific employment equality measures would still be essential to protect and improve the working conditions of lesbians and gay men, who constitute 10% of the labour force.

The documentation of cases in this area presents special problems. We are aware of many cases of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and enclose a typical case history. We have already forwarded to you a summary of cases in Britain and the recommendations made by the European Parliament are in themselves evidence that discrimination against lesbian and gay workers is a serious problem. However, to our knowledge no such case has as yet been processed under existing labour legislation here. This situation is closely analogous to that of sexual harassment where it proved almost impossible to verify the scale of the problem until positive protection was seen to be available.

The problems that arise for lesbian and gay workers are diverse and may involve adverse treatment by both management and co-workers. In our experience workers are unlikely to challenge such discrimination because:

- they have no clear legal protection
- they risk future employment possibilities if they pursue a grievance and fail
- they may lack confidence in a positive response from their union representative.

Frequently when a grievance is pursued, the underlying issue is ignored and the discussion is in terms of consequential matters such as "personality clashes". This means that one has to "read between the lines" when, for example, examining cases coming before the Employment Appeals Tribunal.

In conclusion we would stress that the lack of well-known and documented cases of discrimination is evidence of the lack of any means of redress and is proof of the need for employment protection legislation for lesbian and gay workers.

Yours faithfully

*Maura Mallon* *Kieran Rose*

on behalf of Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work

# Irish Congress of Trade Unions

19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4

F

①

Ms. Ellen Breen  
Higher Executive Officer  
Department of Labour  
Mespil Road  
Dublin 4

26 November 1986

Dear Ms. Breen

Your letter of 28 October to the General Secretary on the question of making discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation unlawful under the Employment Equality Act, 1977 has been referred to me for reply.

Congress policy on this question arises from the following resolution which was adopted in 1982 by our Annual Delegate Conference:

"Conference supports the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour between consenting male adults in private and as a consequence of such support urges affiliated unions to resist any attempt to discriminate against their members in their employment on the basis of their sexual orientation".

Further to the adoption of this resolution, Congress sought amendments to both the Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977 and the Employment Equality Act, 1977 to cover discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Furthermore, the Women's Charter adopted by Congress in 1985 to mark the end of the U.N. Decade for Women includes the following statement:

"The Irish Congress of Trade Unions recognises and demands the right of everyone, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, creed, political opinion, age, sex, marital status or sexual orientation to have the means to pursue their economic independence and to full participation in the social, cultural and political life of the community in conditions of freedom, dignity and equal opportunity".

Clearly, in view of these policies and statements, Congress fully supports the position of the Employment Equality Agency on this. As I have pointed out, Congress itself already has sought such an amendment to the Act.

Yours sincerely

Patricia O'Donovan  
Legislation and Equality Officer

pod/lg

# Protect gays, ICTU urges

By KATHERINE  
DONNELLY

Industrial Staff

TRADE unions have been urged to draw up workplace agreements to protect lesbian and gay workers.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions claims there is "widespread prejudice" against homosexuals at work and has sent out anti-discrimination guidelines to member unions.

"The objective of these procedures is to create a workplace environment where lesbian and gay workers can have equality of opportunity and be free of harassment or possible reprisals from other workers or management," the ICTU stated.

According to Congress, they are discriminated

against when it comes to hiring, firing, training, promotion, harassment and discipline.

And partners in a homosexual relationship do not have the same rights as their heterosexual colleagues when it comes to pensions or leave for compassionate or family reasons.

"Pensions and benefits are paid for, but cannot be passed on to partners. Partners are given no recognition in relation to sickness or bereavement," the ICTU guidelines add.

The Congress document quotes research showing that one person in 10 is predominantly gay or lesbian, a statistic which, when applied to Ireland, could amount to over 300,000 men or women.

## ICTU move on gay rights

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions yesterday issued guidelines on discrimination at work against lesbian and gay workers.

The guidelines form part of overall trade union policy and strategy to protect workers' rights.

According to an ICTU statement, the object of the procedures is to create a workplace environment where gay and lesbian workers can have equality of opportunity and be free of harassment or possible reprisals from other workers or management.

*Irish Independent  
28. 5. 87.*

*P. J. West, Pres.  
Eamon McNamee  
28. 5. 87*

# ICTU issues guidelines to protect gay workers

THE IRISH Congress of Trade Unions has issued a set of guidelines to combat discrimination in the workplace against gay workers. According to the ICTU, such discrimination occurs in relation to hiring, firing, training, promotion, harassment, discipline, and conditions of employment.

Congress recommends that equality clauses in union agreements be amended to include opposition to discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. There is widespread prejudice against gay men and women in society, it says, and this prejudice affects their rights in the workplace.

Congress is also urging its affiliated unions to negotiate procedures for handling complaints of discrimination on grounds of sexuality. Collective agreements and conditions of employment should be examined for direct or indirect discrimination in relation to pensions, access to leave or other fringe benefits, it says.

Gay workers are often harassed by management or fellow-workers, the guidelines state. This can be verbal, such as unwanted personal questions and remarks, offensive jokes, innuendo and malicious gossip. In extreme cases, a person could be physically attacked.

At work, gay people were often afraid of the opinions of their colleagues, the document goes on. They are afraid that if their sexuality becomes known they will lose any chance of promotion and above all, they are afraid of losing their jobs.

Congress says that unions should recognise that this discrimination is a trade union issue affecting thousands of workers and requiring a serious anti-discrimination policy and programme. Gay workers should be able to raise any complaint with their union representative and expect it to be dealt with in a positive and supportive manner.

*16. 28/5/87*

TRAINING COURSE REGARDING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF  
SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

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6th, 7th and 8th NOVEMBER 1987

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DERGVALE HOTEL / 7 GARDINER PLACE, DUBLIN 1

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PROGRAMME

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**FRIDAY**

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7.30 p.m. : Evening Meal, Dergvale Hotel.  
8.00 p.m.  
to 9.00 p.m. : Opening Session - General Discussion.

**SATURDAY**

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10.00 a.m. : Discrimination - Trade Union Response.  
Kevin O' Driscoll, LGPSU.  
11.00 a.m. : Coffee.  
11.15 p.m. : Irish Congress of Trade Unions - Position.  
Patricia O' Donovan, ICTU.  
12.00 a.m. : Group Work - General Discussion.  
1.00 p.m. : Lunch.  
2.15 p.m. : Role Playing - Preparation.  
3.15 p.m. : Discrimination in Society.  
Michael D. Higgins T.D.  
4.15 p.m. : Coffee.  
4.30 p.m. : Role Playing.  
6.00 p.m. : Evening Meal.

**SUNDAY**

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10.00 a.m. : Video - Discussion.  
1.00 p.m. : Course Closes.  
1.15 p.m. : Lunch.

# NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMPAIGN "LESBIAN & GAY RIGHTS AT WORK"

ISSUE NO. 1

JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 1988

## BREAKING THROUGH

1987 was a year of significant progress for lesbian and gay workers. 1988 could be equally important if we take all the opportunities for action that are now open.

The adoption by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions of the radical policy document on Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace was an historic breakthrough. As it is implemented it will considerably improve the working lives of thousands of trade union members.

Of course there are many other thousands of workers unemployed or in non-unionised workplaces who it will not directly benefit. And of course organised workers are facing the severe threat posed by the right wing anti-worker consensus that is growing in this country.

But we cannot afford to be defeatist. We should organise to make progress in any area that we can. The issue of lesbian and gay rights in the workplace is one where we can make substantial gains.

## WHO ARE WE?

Lesbian & Gay Rights at Work (LGRW) is an informal network of trade unionists. Our objective is to provide an information link for trade unionists and for the lesbian/gay community on workplace issues.

We intend to publish this newsletter every three months and to produce other information material as needs arise and finance allows.

If you would like to receive further copies of the newsletter or further information on any of these issues you can contact us c/o P.O. Box 1890, Sheriff St, Dublin 1 or tel (01) 758848 and leave a message.

Comments, suggestions, news for future Newsletters would also be welcome.

## LGPSU SEMINAR

The Local Government and Public Service Union held a seminar in Dublin on the weekend of 6-8th of November to consider how the union should implement the ICTU Guidelines. It was a weekend of stimulating and original discussion resulting in a useful programme of work that the union could undertake. The seminar recommended that the union set up a working party to process that work.

Michael D. Higgins T.D., Patricia

O'Donovan (Legislation Officer of Congress) and Kevin O'Driscoll (National Officer of LGPSU) addressed the seminar. Among the many issues raised by the speakers were:

- the lack to date of a serious public debate on the lesbian and gay issue within the trade union movement by contrast with the large scale and rancorous debates that punctuated the progress of women's issues. This conspiracy of silence must be broken!
- The relative inexperience of Irish trade unions in tackling issues of discrimination and how much we can learn from the American experience of tackling racial discrimination for example.
- The link between many particular problems of anti-lesbian and gay discrimination (e.g. pension rights and special leave entitlements) and broader questions of the recognition of non-marital relationships which unions will increasingly have to tackle.

Michael D. Higgins made an important analysis of the scale and nature of anti-lesbian and gay prejudice in Ireland and how it might be tackled. Its conclusions brought home the vital importance of radical reform of the law and the creation of positive images of lesbian and gay people within the educational system.

A full report of the seminar is available from Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work.



## CONGRESS GUIDELINES

The publication last May of the ICTU's 'Guidelines for Negotiations on Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace' was an historic event. Congress has had a policy of support for lesbian and gay workers since a motion was passed at annual conference in 1982, but little action had been taken. The Guidelines are an action programme for trade unions on this issue. They provide an analysis of how anti-lesbian and gay discrimination affects people at work — and often prevents them from getting a job in the first place. It sets out a procedure for handling complaints of discrimination and a model equality agreement prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. It also suggests a wide range of initiatives that unions can take to progress the issue.

Of course the publication of a set of guidelines will not change the world but it does mean that anti-lesbian and gay discrimination is finally getting on to the real agenda of the trade union movement. Remember how important the Guidelines on Sexual Harrassment were in transforming what was seen as an almost trivial complaint into an accepted concern of all trade unionists.

The Guidelines provide a basis on which a lesbian or gay workers can take up a complaint of discrimination or harrassment confident that clear policies exist to support that complaint. It also poses a challenge to all trade unionists to raise the issue in their own workplace and their own union. In dealing with this, as with any form of discrimination, we cannot stand back and wait for those who suffer the discrimination to act. It must be taken up and dealt with by the trade union movement as a whole.

## IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

If you are being hassled at work:

- Don't panic.
- Don't resign.

Keep a record of what is said, done, dates etc.

Know your rights — get copies of free ICTU leaflets on lesbian/gay rights and sexual harrassment and study them.

Contact your shop steward, branch officer, or some union official you know will be sympathetic.

If you are not in a union (why?) find out your legal rights (free leaflets from the Dept. of Labour).

Contact us if necessary.

## EQUALITY AGREEMENTS

Unions and employers negotiate agreements on a whole range of issues from pay and conditions of employment to grievance/disciplinary procedures etc. More recently unions are negotiating agreements to ensure that women are not discriminated against in the workplace. Following the launch of the Guidelines, many unions have begun to demand that lesbians/gay men be specifically included in these equality agreements.

The LGPSU have lodged a claim with the Local Government Staff Negotiations Board which would affect 70,000 workers in local authorities and health boards (contact Alice Moore, LGPSU at 01-728899). The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance have lodged a similar claim (contact Sid McDowell, NIPSA at 084-661831). The Irish Distributive and Administrative Union has an equality agreement with Principals, the Dublin Clothes Shop (contact Marie Hayde, IDAUT, 01-746321). The Federated Workers Union of Ireland has also got lesbian/gay equality agreements with some employers (contact Bernard Browne, FWUI).

at 01-748711]. A number of other unions have lodged or are about to lodge claims as recommended by the ICTU. What is your Union doing?

## WHAT YOU CAN DO IN YOUR UNION

Deciding on the most effective form of action to take depends on the type of union you are in and whether you have an elected position or are an ordinary member. But whatever you are you can do something or you can get your union to take action. Here are some suggestions and others are outlined elsewhere in the Newsletter.

- distribute and tell people about the Guidelines.
- write an article or a letter to your union newsletter.
- invite an ICTU speaker (or an LGRW one) to your union meeting. M.D. Higgins has agreed to speak to Trades Councils.
- get your Branch to start negotiating equality claims as recommended in the guidelines.
- get your union to hold a seminar on how to implement the guidelines.
- link up with lesbians and gay men in your union (perhaps by contacting us).
- write down even a brief summary of any case of discrimination you know about and send it to the Equality Officer, ICTU or to us.
- propose a motion at your Branch AGM or Trades Council similar to the one outlined in this Newsletter.

## MODEL RESOLUTION

The following resolution is a suggestion; you could use all or parts of it or write your own. It is important that resolutions should demand a specific course of action within a reasonable time scale. It is our right and duty to use the democratic structures of our Unions in this way.

"This Union welcomes the ICTU Guidelines for negotiators on Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace and calls on all unions affiliated to the ICTU to prepare an anti-discrimination programme of action which would include the following:

- negotiating equality agreements with all employers
- lobbying for the decriminalisation of sexual relationships between men and full legal equality for lesbians and gay men
- lobbying for amendments to the Unfair Dismissals and Employment Equality legislation to specifically protect lesbians/gay workers
- Including this issue in all education and training courses.
- producing education and information material such as leaflets
- organising a seminar to initiate and evaluate progress on this issue.

We call on the ICTU to recommend that the International Labour Organisation produce a report on discrimination against lesbian and gay workers internationally and to make proposals for action to counter the discrimination.

We also call on the ICTU to evaluate progress that has been made in implementing the Guidelines, to identify any obstacles and problems, to make proposals for further action and to report back to the next Annual Conference of the ICTU."

## LABOUR LAW

The Minister for Labour has published a discussion document (free) outlining his proposals for reform of the Unfair Dismissals, Employment Equality and Payment of Wages Acts.

Court decisions in the Eileen Flynn case have meant that a worker can be lawfully dismissed for reasons to do with their private life. The Minister has not accepted that the law should be changed to protect a worker from this form of discrimination by employers (often the Catholic Church).

What we need is specific provision in the first two Acts to outlaw discrimination on the basis of a person's lesbian or gay sexuality, or their presumed sexuality or because another person has prejudices about that sexuality.

The ICTU have already made recommendations to the Minister along these lines. So have the Employment Equality Agency (E.E.A.), the Council for the Status of Women, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and lesbian/gay organisations. The final date for submissions is January 31st 1988.

The more widespread the support we can get the better. Ask your branch, union, community organisation etc. to support the demand. Contact the Minister yourself or call to your T.D.'s clinic and get him to write. You could mention that in the Squarcia Lupi Report the European Parliament has recommended that lesbian/gay workers be given legal protection in their employment.

\* Free copies of the booklet are available from the Dept. of Labour, Davitt House, Mespil Road, Dublin 4. Letters can be sent to the Minister at the same address.



## LAW REFORM

While David Norris's case is inching along in Strasbourg, the Annual Conference of the Labour Party decided that a Private Members Bill decriminalising sexual relationships between men should be proposed in the Dail. It seems that the Labour Party lawyers group is working on this. It is vital that any proposed law reform should provide for full legal equality with heterosexuals.

A law that restricted decriminalisation to those over 21 and in "private" would be worse than useless. If you are in the Labour Party or if your union is affiliated to the Labour Party it would be well worthwhile pursuing this.

The British Labour Campaign for Lesbian & Gay Rights has produced a pamphlet with sound proposals for law reform. Available from P.O. Box 306, London N5 2SY.

## SIMON NKOLI

Simon Nkoli is a leading black gay activist in South Africa.

He was one of 22 anti-apartheid activists who were arrested and held in solitary confinement for more than a year for organising opposition to the rent increases. Simon is now out on bail but the conditions of bail prevent him earning a living.

A fund raiser for Simon was held by lesbians and gay men against apartheid in Dublin. Music was by Dear Frankie and puppets were also provided.

## RESOURCES

There is a growing number of books, reports, videos etc. being produced and a few of the better ones are listed below. LGRW have most of these and can forward you a full list (enclose a s.a.e.).

\* Free copies of leaflets from ICTU at 19 Raglan Rd, Dublin 4. Tel: (01) 680641 or 3 Wellington Park, Belfast (084) 681726.

\* The Dept. of Labour produces free guides to various employment protection laws. Contact: Davitt House, Mespil Road, Dublin 4, (01) 7655661.

\* The Employment Equality Agency also produces various free leaflets etc. Contact: 36 Upr. Mount St, Dublin 2 (01) 605966.

**IN THE OUT TRAY**, two half-hour videos, designed for union education/training courses. The LGPSU has a copy. Contact Kevin O'Driscoll, National Training Officer. Tel (01) 728899.

**OUT FOR OURSELVES** the best and only book on the lives of Irish Lesbians and Gay Men by Dublin Lesbian and Gay Men's Collective, includes sections on work and unions. Women's Community Press, tel (01) 712149, £4.95. (223 pages).

## QUOTES

"Trade Unions must oppose all forms of discrimination and that includes fighting discrimination against lesbian and gay workers."

John Mitchel

General Secretary, IDATU  
"All Unions should now take action to implement the ICTU Guidelines."

Patricia O'Donovan,  
Legislation & Equality Officer,  
ICTU

"There are as many voters for Fine Gael as there are lesbians and gay men."

M.D. Higgins  
quoting Noel Browne

# LESBIAN & GAY RIGHTS AT WORK

REPORT OF MEETING 25.5.88, TEACH EAMONN CEANNT; CATHAL FRANK  
JOHN KIERAN

\*\*\*\*\*  
MOTIONS:

A motion proposed by Chris, calling on the Union to implement the ICTU Guidelines was passed at the UPTCS Annual Delegate Conference (ADC) there were some debate

A motion proposed by Kieran, calling on the Union to implement the recommendations made by its seminar was passed by the LGPSU ADC

UPTCS/ITOU are to put an AIDS anti-discrimination motion to the ICTU ADC. The ICTU have produced guidelines.

Frank is to propose an AIDS anti-discrimination motion at FWUI ADC, this will include a "sexual orientation" clause. *PASSED.*

CLAIMS:

LGPSU claim to the Local Government Staff Negotiation Board and FUE is still in progress

As is UPTCS AIDS anti-discrimination claim

No news about NIPSA or ESBOA

PUBLICITY:

The newsletter was posted out and distributed in pubs.  
UPTCS motion got coverage (because of opposition?)

Workers Solidarity and Womens News covered the newsletter  
SWM are to do a report. Out magazine published our letter

FUTURE WORK:

Agreed that we were making good progress and that we should review our priorities

NEWSLETTER, this is expensive to produce and post out, 2 a year should be enough. We will do another round of pubs and the Trades Council. We should use existing media more and kieran is to issue press release.

ICCL, some of us met them about their draft lesbian and gay rights document. Agreed that this was a very important area of work given that the Strasbourg decision could be soon. We need to prepare our arguements now. Kieran to liaize with David Norris.

INTERNATIONAL, we should try to get either the European Trade Union Confederation or the ILO or one of the trade union internatiuonals to do some work on the lesbian/gay issue even if it was a survey of members policies, Kieran to follow up. Frank to check literature.

LGPSU, resolution adopted sets out work programme and we need to follow this up.

ICTU, we need to get a lesbian/gay rights motion down for next years ADC, 1982 was the last time a motion was "on the floor".

REACH, a christian organisation, Frank to arrange for us to do an educational in the Autumn

MONEY, kieran to open a savings account and we will look for annual subs. or S.O.s

NEXT MEETING:

5

# DUBLIN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS

## Comhairle na gCeárdchumann Bhaile Átha Cliath

President: Paddy Trehy  
Vice President: Paddy Coughlan  
Secretary: Sam Nolan



44, Lower Gardiner Street  
Dublin 1.

6th December, 1989.

TO: EACH DELEGATE

A Charsa,

The monthly delegate meeting of the above Council will take place on Tuesday, 14th December next, in the O'Lehane Hall, Cavendish Row at 8 p.m. sharp. The Agenda is as follows:-

### AGENDA

- 1) Minutes
- 2) EC Summary
- 3) Correspondence
- 4) Disputes
- 5) Motions

Motion from the Executive Committee:-

*Passed*  
"Council condemns the failure of the Government to provide a substantial increase in the rates support grant to Dublin Corporation and Dublin County Council. This will result in another year of sub-standard services to the City, in particular in the areas of maintenance to Corporation houses and flats.

We also call for Trade Union resistance to moves to extend the use of private contractors by Dublin Corporation and Dublin County Council."

Motion from the Local Government & Public Services Union

"The Council welcomes the Government decision to give protection to lesbians and gay men and travellers, under the Incitement to Hatred Bill. We call on the Trades Council to lobby the Government and others so that the Government's response to the October, 1988 decision of the European Court of Human Rights (declaring that the current anti-gay laws contravene the European Convention of Human Rights) will include:

- Passed*
- 1) Full legal equality for lesbians and gay men, including the same age of consent for heterosexuals and homosexuals.
  - 2) Anti-discrimination legislation to give protection to lesbians, gay men and other groups vulnerable to prejudice.

We call on the Trades Council to circularise all other Trades Councils and the ICTU, requesting them to take similar action."

### Please Note:

At our November delegate meeting we passed a resolution to support the demonstration to be held in the city on Saturday, 9th December.

/Contd.....

# GAY & LESBIAN EQUALITY NETWORK



GAY & LESBIAN RIGHTS  
ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

GLEN,  
HIRSCHFELD CENTRE,  
10 FOWNES STREET,  
DUBLIN 2, IRELAND.

TEL: (01) 710939 [10-5 p.m.]

## P R E S S      S T A T E M E N T

11th April 1990

### G.L.E.N. WELCOMES LABOUR'S EQUAL STATUS BILL

The Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) welcomes the publication today of Labour's Equal Status Bill, which would outlaw discrimination against a number of groups, including gays and lesbians.

Kieran Rose, co-chairperson of the organisation, said:

"We are calling for all-party support for this enlightened measure, which would be an important step towards equality for all Irish citizens, regardless of their social grouping, gender, or sexual orientation. If this is enacted, Ireland could make a leap ahead to join those far-sighted countries which now protect their minorities from unjust treatment and discrimination.

"A society which is healthy enough to accept the many minorities which go to make it up is a safer and better place for all its members. The broad welcome given to the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act last year shows that protecting the human rights of all our citizens strikes a chord with most people's basic sense of fairness and justice."

GLEN is campaigning for equality for lesbians and gays in Ireland. It seeks implementation of the Strasbourg ruling on the laws criminalising gay men, a common age of consent for all, and the passing of anti-discrimination laws.

END

#### FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

Kieran Rose - (01) 325831 (home) or 724755 (office)  
John Bergin - (01) 710939 (office hours)  
Don Donnelly - (01) 535040 (home)

# GAY & LESBIAN EQUALITY NETWORK



GAY & LESBIAN RIGHTS  
ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

GLEN,  
HIRSCHFELD CENTRE,  
10 FOWNES STREET,  
DUBLIN 2, IRELAND.

TEL: (01) 710939 [10-5 p.m.]

Brian Fitzpatrick,  
Principal,  
Employment Equality Section,  
Dept. of Equality and Law Reform,  
65a Adelaide Road,  
Dublin 2.

6th April, 1993

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick,

Thank you for your letter of 24th of February inviting our views on employment equality issues. It would be difficult to overestimate our welcome for the proposal to include sexual orientation and other categories in amended employment equality legislation and indeed for the consultation process itself. Discrimination in the labour market is the most critical issue facing our community. We attach a research proposal commissioned by the Combat Poverty Agency which sets out these issues in greater detail.

We strongly welcome the proposed extension of the legislation to include a wide range of other disadvantaged categories not least because many lesbian and gay workers are also discriminated against on other grounds such as gender, parental status, disability, ethnic origins etc. Equally important is the encouragement of a 'culture of equality' which would regard any form of discrimination or harassment in the workplace as unacceptable and detrimental to the interests of employer and employee alike. We attach a policy document from one employer, Software 2000 Limerick, in this regard.

The Employment Equality Agency has had an important role in encouraging such a 'climate of equality' within the constraints of its statutory functions and available resources. With the expansion of its statutory role and greater resources, the Agency could have a far more decisive role in the creation of an environment where 'equal opportunity' would be regarded as the norm in terms of the workplace. The pro-active role of the Agency would (as with the unfair dismissals legislation) reduce the potential for conflict and recourse to legal/disputes procedures. The proposed broader based representation on the Board of the Agency would be vital in ensuring a realistic consensus on these matters.

As you know, the Board of the Employment Equality Agency as far back as 1986 recommended to the Minister such an inclusion and there is now a consensus amongst the social partners and others on the matter. We attach our resource document on unfair dismissals, a draft report to the E.C. and other material in this regard.

Discrimination in the labour market is a complex process and a very difficult issue to tackle and we welcome the various measures proposed

Codes of Practice, improving access to information and the extension of the legislation to include contract workers and members of the Defence Forces.

As our research proposal to the Combat Poverty Agency outlines, discrimination in the labour market often begins in the educational, youth services and job training systems and we would hope that these agencies, especially FAS, would develop more effective programmes to facilitate equality of opportunity.

It is our experience that harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is a key mode of discrimination in the workplace and the proposals made in relation to sexual harassment are most welcome. We suggest that codes of practice to combat harassment on any basis (i.e. age, membership of the Travelling community etc.) should be developed.

We would like to reiterate our strong welcome for the proposed changes to the legislation and for the consultation process itself. If you would like any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact myself (tel. 724755 work or 372995 home) or Chris Robson (tel. 789011 x3320 work or 963762 home).

Yours sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kieran Rose

# IMPACT

The Public Sector Trade Union

Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union  
Nerney's Court, Dublin 1. Telephone: 874 5588 Fax: 874 2425

## Civil Service Division

NATIONAL SECRETARY  
PADDY KEATING

20 February, 1995

TO: - Each Branch  
- Central Executive Committee  
- Divisional Executive Committee  
- Staff

### Policy Document on the rights of lesbians and gay men

A discussion document on the rights of Lesbians and gay men was presented to and discussed at the 1993 Equality Conference.

This was referred to Branches and Divisions for views. A small number of Branches responded. The discussion document and the views of branches and divisions were considered by the National Equality Committee which reported with recommendations to the CEC.

At its meeting of 27/1/95, the CEC adopted the enclosed Document on the rights of lesbians and gay men. This document will form the basis of future Union action.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Keating  
NATIONAL SECRETARY  
CIVIL SERVICE DIVISION