

One of the motions, passed by the meeting of gay activists at the Glencree Centre for reconciliation held on November 30th of last year, called upon all gay activists and organisations to support the convening and organisation of a National Conference for gay people of both sexes. This mandate is now being taken up by Cork Gays and for the first time in the history of the Irish gay movement it is strongly hoped that the concept of a truly country-wide gathering of gay people will attract large numbers from all parts of the country.

When we consider the progress that we have made since the late nineteen sixties when the very first initiatives were taken in Ireland to provide gay people with social facilities where they could meet, talk, laugh, drink and dance together, we can see what great strides forward have been made. Two national organisations have sprung up to provide the basis for community support and entertainment for our numbers which are increasing more and more under the gaze of a society which can no longer afford to ignore our social existence. The seventies, also, saw our first tentative efforts at wresting legal equality from the State under the banner of civil rights. When we consider that our failure to secure these same fundamental rights which would guarantee our civil safety under the law, perhaps it is timely to reflect on where we have come from and on the point at which we have now arrived. Surely the time is now at hand when we must consider some new initiatives, some fresh directions.

For this reason it is proposed to host a National Conference in Cork city during ~~a~~ forthcoming ^{in May} week-end with the intention that its activities should be varied and as inclusive as possible. This means that as many gay individuals and organisations should feel invited at the most fundamental levels to support and participate in what we hope to see as another step forward in the struggle towards gay liberation in this country. At present a nucleus of people in Cork has formed an ad hoc Conference Organising Committee for the purpose of:

- 1) enlisting support of every conceivable kind from our gay friends throughout the thirty-two counties.

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- 2) providing a provisional framework for the host of events and activities that we want to see taking place here throughout the week-end and
- 3) setting up the venues, travel and accommodation arrangements etc. that we hope will be required.

Our aim is simply to bring gay people together in one place regardless of their political affiliation over a single week-end so that we can meet and talk about our future together as well as having a good time, of course. Our plans could very roughly be divided into three parts as well:

- 1) educational and political viz. discussion groups, lectures, seminars, workshops, film, theatre and poetry reading, the setting up of books and magazines stalls, etc.
- 2) social viz. settings for parties, discos, food and all those facilities where people can relax and enjoy themselves and
- 3) accommodation and travel arrangements and general public relations for the Conference.

One final word at this juncture. The concept of a National Conference obviously would be just a glorious pipedream without the necessary support and physical enthusiasm of our gay brethren throughout the whole country. We earnestly hope and trust that at the very least you will be able to make it to Cork during ~~the~~ week-end where we can guarantee to give you a good time.

For any information of any kind that you may require you can contact us at: