

GAY RIGHTS NOW!



AR AGHAIDH LEIS AN AGÉID



Cork Gay Collective

P.O. Box 39,

Cork.

CORK GAY COLLECTIVE

MANIFESTO

The laws on homosexuality are an unwarranted intrusion on personal freedom. They must be repealed, but legal changes are merely beginning; society's view of sexuality and the structures reflecting that view, must be altered. The Cork Gay Collective encourages gay people to have a positive view of their sexuality, to live fully and to challenge society's control by coming out in the family, work, church and social life.

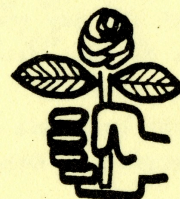
We fight against job discrimination, for equal access to accommodation, for freedom from harassment and for the equal right to express our feelings. Underlying this fight is the need for access to, an dissemination of positive information about sexuality in the media and through all educational structures.

We are convinced that this struggle cannot take place in isolation and that gay liberation involves the freeing of all oppressed groups. Therefore we work

towards forging links with other movements for social progress. In particular we emphasise our solidarity with the women's movement, recognising that our shared oppression derives from the abuse of sexuality as a tool of exploitation which necessitated strict gender stereotyping and the denial of sexual fulfillment.

Further, we are internationalist; the oppression of gays is not solely an Irish problem nor a feature of one particular economic or political system. We pledge solidarity with our sisters and brothers everywhere who suffer oppression because of their sexual orientation and we make this solidarity part of our practical work. We are products of society's conditioning and are aware of the danger of oppressive relations among ourselves. We are attempting to overcome this danger by developing more open and responsive structures for communications.

Cork Gay collective
agreed statement
25th Jan. 1981.



DEVELOPMENT — ORGANISATION

The Cork Gay Collective evolved through a process of discussion and activity over the past year, from a social group to a collective of gays conscious of the need for political action to achieve change.

Within this format, some began building links with other progressive groups. The first project was the attempt to set up a resource centre. The Women's Collective, Anti-Nuclear, Labour Youth and other interested individuals and groups were contacted. Money was raised and a suitable premises found. However, during negotiations on the lease, the owners withdrew the property. This project has now been temporarily shelved but not forgotten. The ideas which gave rise to it are an integral part of the philosophy of the collective.

Plans were announced to re-open the gay club in 4 Mc Curtain Street and it was decided to meet there instead. A Wednesday night meeting was set up to organise/develop/promote, the activities of the club and discussion/C.R. Group met on alternate Tuesdays. After a short time these later meetings ceased as most felt that consciousness would best be developed through action.

A number of us felt that a gay centre utilising local resources as much as possible would best serve the overall needs of the gay community and would prevent further division within the national movement. Financial and practical help was offered to make this possible. Others felt that

Cork's Gay Community could or would not support a centre of their own. That the support of I.G.R.M. was necessary and that this would require integration with I.G.R.M. project and the former option was no longer open. Those who held the former view continued to meet on Wednesday nights.

The ruling of the High Court on the Constitutional action was delivered on the 11th October. Because of the nature of the judgment and because the matter was sub-judice during the trial, we felt that there would be a rush of negative press, particularly in Cork.

An interview was arranged with Cork Local Radio for the following Wednesday and the possibility of a more comprehensive programme later, was discussed. The interview went out live, Caimin Jones (R.T.E.) talked to Charles and Kieran for about six minutes and everyone concerned felt it went very well.

Some weeks later the opportunity arose to stage a production of "Blood Green"

by "Gay Sweetshop" in Cork and despite the fact that we knew very little about putting on a play (there was very little time to learn) the event went well. An important factor in the success was the commitment and energy of the small number of people. Though the play ran to good houses, a major disappointment was the small number from the gay community who attended.

The next activity of the as yet un-named Collective was lobbying the Labour Party conference held in Cork in 1980. We managed to prepare and distribute a leaflet on gay rights but were less fortunate in presenting an emergency motion at the Conference. Most of the people we met were individually though vaguely sympathetic to our cause. (The group officially met with Brendan Halligan and Michael D. Higgins, the Chairperson of the party. Both of these people were very helpful and agreed that the Labour Party should have a position on the issue of gay rights). Michael Higgins drafted a letter which he later circulated to the four national dailies. It appeared in print about ten days later.

This was a valuable experience since it showed that we could organise ourselves into effective political groupings.

At the end of November, opportunity to get all concerned gay groups together to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts in the past and develop new ideas and relationships in the future. A Gay Christian Weekend was being held on 28/30 November and the group decided to take the initiative and try to get the various national groups together. We arranged to have the use of the Glencree Reconciliation Centre on the

Sunday afternoon of the week-end. A pamphlet outlining what we hoped to achieve was sent out with an invitation to the various gay groups within the umbrella of the NGF, IGRM, NIGRA and the Galway Collective. These were distributed by members of the group who went to Dublin and we attempted to talk to as many people as possible. We went to the Reconciliation Centre early on Sunday morning. Larry Bond of the Centre was asked to chair the meeting. Approximately 50 people attended and a general discussion was held. The meeting again gave members of the group a sense of identity as a collective. The fact that it was the first meeting to be held outside the territory of Dublin groups was felt to be good as it gave people who otherwise might have felt intimidated the chance to speak for themselves as individuals. A motion was passed at the meeting to the effect that the collective should initiate a National Conference of Gay activists.

A second radio programme on Gays in Cork was arranged in early November. Caimin Jones (RTE) broadcast taped interviews with two members of the collective (John and Tony). Pat Mahony-Rysh of IGRM Cork, a member of Gay Sweetshop, an old man and Bishop Poyntz. Fr. Joe O'Leary was interviewed live.

Though the individual contributions were good, the broadcast was felt to be too apologetic in presentation, tone and content.

At the beginning of December a new committee to run the gay centre was formed. This was made up solely of IGRM members. The group meeting on Wednesday nights were then informed by the new committee that they could meet in No. 4 only if everyone joined the IGRM. These terms of entry to the centre were clearly unacceptable to many of us because we always felt that to avoid furthering the division between IGRM and NGF we should not become part of one to the exclusion of the other. Also we felt that we needed the degree of independence which would allow us to decide our own policies and activities. The sub-committee framework was felt to be too restrictive and harmful to the development of a Cork gay political action group. As gays fighting for a pluralistic society we felt it essential that the structure we create should incorporate this spirit.

An alternative meeting place was found and the group adopted the title Cork Gay Collective. Since then the collective have sought to develop good working relationships with all other gay groups.

ORGANISATION

1. Membership is open to any gay person who is prepared to work with the collective and who is in sympathy with its principles.
2. We do not have a hierarchical structure or a leadership. Any structures we have set up are a response to the needs of the group and its work.

CORK GAY COLLECTIVE

INFORMATION

Throughout recorded history, oppressed groups have organised to claim their rights and obtain their needs. Homosexuals, who have been oppressed by physical violence and by ideological and psychological attacks at every level of social interaction, are at last becoming angry.

Belfast, Cara Friend
Phone: 22023
Monday, Wednesday
7.30 to 9 p.m.
Thursday Women Only

Galway Gay Collective,
P.O. Box 45 Eglinton
Street, Galway.

Cork Gay Collective
P.O. Box 39 Cork.

Derry Cara Friend
Phone: 63120
Thursday 7.30 to 10 p.m.

Cork Gay Switchboard
Phone: 503394
7.30 to 9 p.m.
Monday to Friday.

Dublin Gay Switchboard,
Phone: 786693

Irish Gay Rights Movement,
18 Mc Jotts Lane
Phone: 786593

Irish Gay Rights Movement,
4 Mc Curtin Street, Cork
Phone: 505493

Norfolk Island Gay
Rights Association,
P.O. Box 44 Belfast.

National Gay Federation,
10 Fownes St, Dublin.
Phone: 710939

T.V./T.S.
Phone: 762542
Thursday 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

MANIFESTO

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agreed statement
25th Jan. 1981.



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