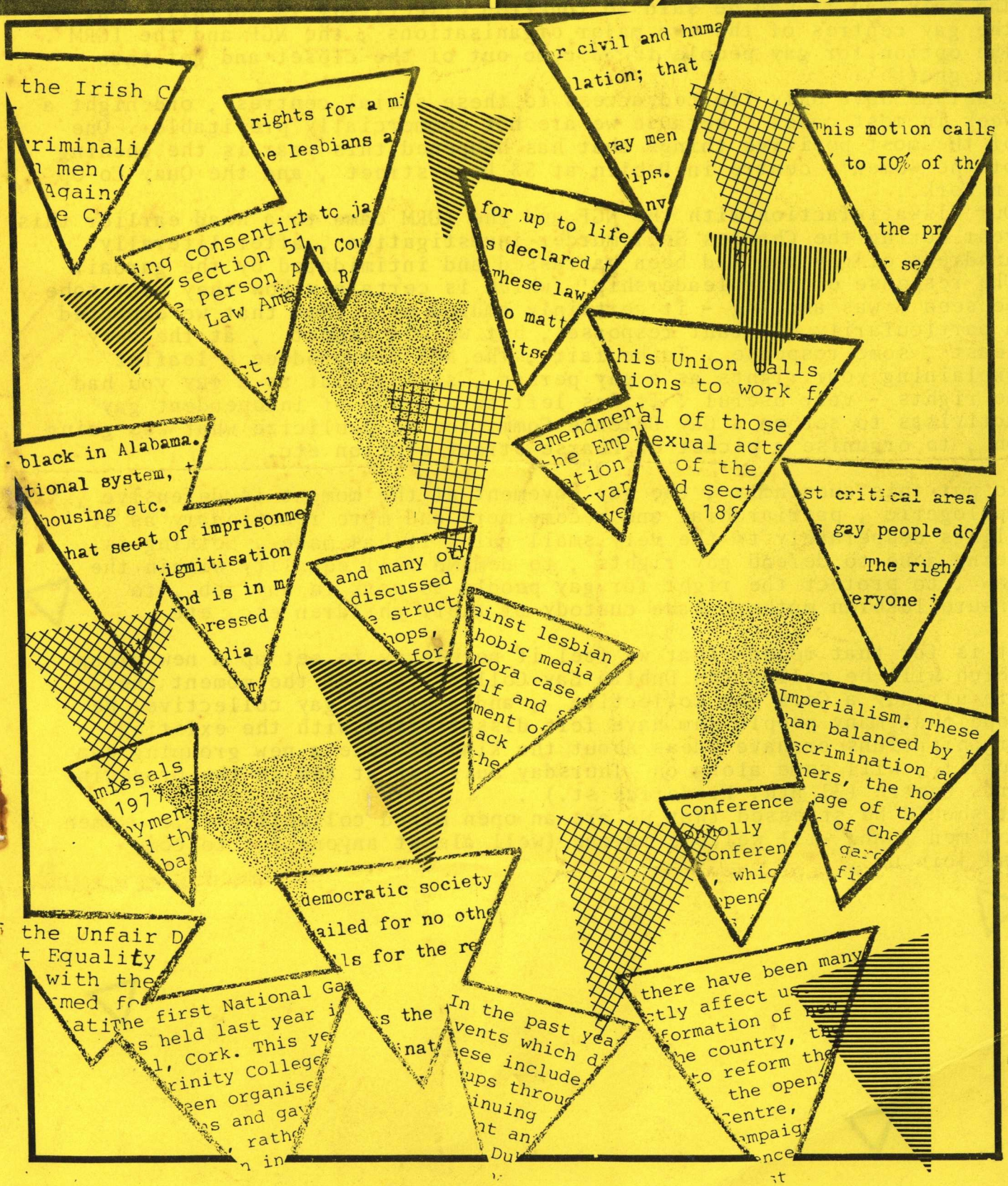
IRISH GAY NEWS

JUNE 1982



EDITORIAL

The Gay movement in Ireland is , at the moment , virtually non-existant. The only way it can be said to function effectively is socially - at the gay centres of the two major organisations , the NGF and the IGRM . The option for gay people is to come out of the closet and get into the ghetto .
Lesbians have only limited access to these social centres , one night a week in most cases , because we are not commercially profitable . One of the most positive things that has happened this year is the opening of the women's centre in Dublin at 53 Dame street , and the Quay Co-Op in Cork .
Our dissatisfaction with the NGF and the IGRM came to a head earlier this year during the Charles Self murder investigation , after literally hundreds of gay men had been harrassed and intimidated by the gardai. The response of 'our leadership' (which is certainly how they want tobe be seen) was amazing - it certainly amazed us . Not that we expected a particularily militant response , but we did expect , at the very least , some response . To be fair , the NGF did produce a leaflet explaining your rights as a gay person , saying that as a gay you had no rights - very useful ! It was left to a group of independent gay activists to set up a Gay Defence Committee to publicize what was going on , to organise a picket of Pearse street station etc.

To put this succinctly , the gay movement at the moment is defensive , apologetic , patriarchial and become more and more reactionary as it clings desperately to the very small gains it has made . Nothing is being done to defend gay rights , to demand full equality within the law , to protect the right for gay people to work in any job , to ensure lesbian mothers have custody of their children etc, etc .

It is for that reason that we feel it necessary to set up a new group which will be called the Dublin Gay Collective . At the moment there are already a Cork gay collective , and a Galway gay collective. We hope that many people who have felt dissatisfied with the existing organisations or have ideas about the kind of role a new grouping can fufill , will come along on Thursday July 1st at 8pm in the Grapevine Arts Centre (31 nth. Frederick st.) .
It should be stressed that we are an open mixed collective (i.e. women and men) and will welcome anyone (well almost anyone !) to come and join us .

▽LGPSU▽

The Local Government and Public Services Union recently passed a pro-gay motion , the text of which is printed below. On the next page is the text of the speech put before the local Cork branch by Kieran Rose and Tricia Treacy .
The motion was not passed in time to go forward to this year's ICTU conference (in July) , but it is hoped that the Irish Federation of University Teachers will be bringing forward a similar motion . It is important that gay people lobby the delegates before the conference . If you are interested contact either the Cork Gay Collective (P.O.Box 39 Cork)or the Dublin Gay Collective (P.O.Box 1076) .

"That this Union calls on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to work for -

(1) repeal of those laws criminalizing consenting homosexual acts between men (i.e. section 51 and 52 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and section 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885)

(b) amendment of the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977, the Employment Equality Act 1977 and the legislation dealing with the employment of civil servants, the armed forces and the Gardai to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation."

Proposed : Kieran Rose
Seconded : Tricia Treacy

Union backs rights of gays

Cork Examiner, Friday, May 14, 1982

Union supports change in law on homosexuality

TEXT OF SPEECH ON GAY RIGHTS MOTION (NO. 35) TO CORK BRANCH L.G.P.S.U. 30.3.'82

KIERAN ROSE AND TRICIA TREACEY

This motion calls for civil and human rights for a minority that represents about 5% to 10% of the population; that is the lesbians and gay men of Ireland.

Under the present laws gay men can be sent to jail for up to life terms for consenting sexual relationships. The European Court has declared that these two laws contravene the European Convention on Human Rights. These laws degrade our democratic society because a society where a minority no matter how small can be jailed for no other reason than prejudice - cannot call itself free. This motion calls for the repeal of these two laws.

Besides the threat of imprisonment - gay people experience the same range of discrimination, stigmitisation and prejudice as other minorities. Living as a gay person in Ireland is in many ways like being black in Alabama. This discrimination is expressed in terms of the educational system, the so-called caring professions, media stereotyping, access to housing etc. A more recent development is that gay men have been subjected to what seems like an organised and widespread campaign of Garda harassment.

But employment is the most critical area where discrimination and prejudice effect gay people. In many cases gay people do not get jobs, are fired or lose promotion solely because they are gay. The right to work and to a fair deal at work are basic workers rights which everyone is entitled to whether black or white, male or female, gay or hetrosexual.

The Employment Equality Act and the Unfair Dismissals Act specify certain types of discrimination as unlawful - this motion calls for these and other Acts to be amended so that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation will be unlawful.

It would be wrong to consider gay rights in isolation from the rights of other minorities. 25% of our population are denied the right to a basic standard of living and are classified as living in poverty. There are about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a million people on this island who are denied the right to work. Women, by no means a numerical minority, are kept in a subservient role by our male dominated society. I could go on listing those groups which are excluded from full participation in our community - travellers, the disabled, unmarried mothers, those who we decide to incarcerate in mental institutions etc. All these groups share one thing in common- they do not have the wealth, the power or the priviliged status to ensure that their legitimate intrests are protected.



On the other hand there are elites which can hold the community to ransom. 5% of the population owns more than 70% of the wealth of this country - this unequalled power has allowed that elite to have the Wealth Tax abolished and to place the burden of taxation on us the PAYE workers. When it comes to deciding how to share out the wealth of this country - all of us here are a minority in power terms.

The achievement of a just and equitable society where the rights of every citizen are respected has been the guiding principle of the Trade Union Movement. Solidarity among workers is the basis of our strength and of the considerable social progress that has been achieved since the Movement was founded.

I trust that this meeting will support the rights of its fellow workers who are gay by giving its overwhelming support to this motion

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NATIONAL

CONFERENCE
JUNE 18-20
TRINITY COLLEGE

This issue of Irish Gay News was produced by Mary , Melissa , John , Fiona, Maura, Charles, Declan , Adrienne, John and Clodagh. If you are interested in joining the collective or contributing articles to the next issue (or writing abusive letters) come to the first meeting of the collective at 8pm on July 1st in the Grapevine Arts Centre , or write to P.O.Box 1076, Dublin 1

NATIONAL GAY CONFERENCE

The first National Gay Conference was held last year in the Connolly Hall in Cork and consisted of workshops, films, videos, bookstall, art exhibition and social events. Overall, it was very successful and the main disappointments were not with the conference itself but with the lack of practical follow up to the issues discussed. It is a common problem to have great ideas at a conference and to completely forget about it the following week, and it is a problem which this year's conference will attempt to overcome. A full report of last year's conference was published (available from P.O. Box 39, Cork) and it lists the various motions passed at the final session. However most of these motions were utopian and very little action resulted from them.

This year the conference must focus less on theoretical discussion and passing of motions and concern itself with a realistic way to fight against the oppression of lesbians and gay men. This past year has seen that oppression increase and many people at this years conference will be more aware that gay liberation involves a lot more than getting the law changed.

The two most serious issues have been the Kincora 'scandal' in Belfast and the police harrassment of gay men in Dublin. In the North, the uncovering of the goings-on twenty years ago at Kincora Boys School brought out the latent homophobia of the media. Nothing else seemed to matter to them except that the sex involved was of the gay variety, and the consequent effect on gays in the North has been serious. Also, when the European Court of Human Rights stated that the laws in the North be brought in line with those in Britain, both Protestant and Catholic churches alike, bitterly protested. It it hoped that many Northerners will attend the conference to elaborate and discuss the future of gays in the North.

In Dublin the brutal murder of Charles Self provided the Gardai with a golden opportunity to have a witch hunt of gay people, whether they had any link with Charles Self or were a possible suspect. This was followed by the Gardai conference passing a motion which linked the new strength of gay men and lesbians and the Woman's Right to Choose Group with the increase in crime, and called for greater police strength to combat this 'upsurge'. This, allied to their call for the right to arrest on suspicion and detain, represents a frightening move towards even greater police powers and even less civil liberties for all (and gay people will obviously be hit hardest). While a small group, The Gay Defence Committee protested against the recent witch hunt only a fraction of gay people were involved, and it is important that this conference sets up a solid group which will monitor and act on any future developments or issues of this nature.

Also on the negative side during the past year was the continuing split between the three major gay organisations, NGF, NIGRA, IGRM, and a further split of the Cork IGRM from its Dublin 'headquarters'; discussion was initiated at the first conference to form an umbrella group which would include all groups and provide a more unified way of tackling g ay repression, but nothing has happened. Both organisations continue to function on a largely social scale and the lack of involvement in organising this years conference in Dublin shows this as did their inability to act strongly against the witch hunt. The nature and function of these organistations must also be questioned at the conference.

Some positive developments have been made in the last year however. The opening of the Womens Centre has provided a badly needed centre for women to meet in and has provided a single venue for many different groups. Gays Against Imperialism was formed shortly after last years conference (at which a motion about opposition to the H-Blocks was not allowed to be put!) and was involved in the H-Block struggle. Liz Noonan ran in the two general elections in the past year as a lesbian-feminist candidate and apart from being the first candidate to emphasise the rights of lesbians, was also the only candidate to stand firmly on womens issues. There have been many oth er changes and developments in Ireland over the past year but the overall effect has been negative.

It is extremely important that this conference discusses those developments seriously, as well as the general oppression which we have to live with. And it is equally important that positive action is taken - not just that another fifty motions get passed.

The Conference is to be held in Trinity College, Dublin as there were not sufficient people or facilities available anywhere else. Dublin is a useful venue as regards social facilities and accommodation and it is hoped that a large number of lesbians and gay men will attend. Rather than have multitude of workshops, there will be four main workshop sessions concerning personal liberation, gays in a patriarchal society, gays at work and structures for development. There will be one open workshop session during which anyone can hold a discussion on a particular issue.

GAY PRIDE WEEK

Friday 18th-Sunday 20th .
National Gay Conference.

Monday 21st.
Reception and unveiling of Pink Triangle . 7pm
Free Film - 'Sunday, Bloody Sunday' 6 & 8.45pm

Tuesday 22nd
Poetry , Mime , Bookstall etc. 7pm.

Wednesday 23rd
'60's' Disco 10-2am.

Thursday 23rd
Treasure Hunt 7pm
'Ova' in concert 9pm - Women Only
Women's Disco - 11-2am

Friday 25th
'Ova' in concert 9pm (mixed)

Saturday 26th
Gay Pride Carnival , St. Stephen's Green 2pm
Pub Zap - Meet Hirschfeld centre 8pm

Sunday 27th
Gay Pride Picnic - Merrion Square 3pm.

(All events in Hirschfeld centre unless otherwise STATED)

QUAY CO-OP

The quay Co-Op was started to provide a non profit making facility in Cork for people committed to exploring new ways of working and sharing of ideas, skills and facilities.

We believe in a need for change in society to give people more control over their lives in the workplace and in the community and we are developing the building at a human, physical and organisational leval into a co-operative enterprise. We believe there is a close link between the experience of activity and the development of ideasand we shall always be seeking to strengthen it.

Some of the groups and individuals involved are active in the areas of human rights, food co-operatives, child care, book co-operatives, environmental protection and the arts.The Co-Op plans to have facilities for co-operative shops, cafe, womans workshop/ meeting space, childrens space, meeting/workshop rooms and exhibition space.

Membership of the Co-Op is open to anyone prepared to share the responsibility of running the Co-Op and maintaining the Co-Ops building. Each member has one vote only and a committee is elected by the membership to administer the Co-Op. All financial assistance received by the Co-Op from members and others is acknowledged as a loan or a donation, as the case may be, to develop the facilities of the Co-OP. Financial support does not mean control and no matter what s/he may contribute, each member has only one share in the Co-OP.

So far through the energies and generosity of the people involved we have raised over £6,000 through personal loans, donations and fund raisings. With this money we have aquired the lease of a fine though delapidated old building, and have been able to buy materials, and some furnishings. We have spent the last two months working every day and knight, restoring the building, meeting and fund raising, and now have a basic wholefood cafe and bookshop/ bring and buy shop.

There is a lot more work to be done, to provide basic facilities and furnishings, and to develop the other projects - for this we need people and organisations who support our ideals, to become involved, share ideas and if possible assist us financially.

. THE CORK GAY COLLECTIVE , THE WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE AND THE CORK ANTI-AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN MEET REGULARILY AT THE CO-OP . ANYONE INTERESTED SHOULD CONTACT THESE GROUPS AT 24 SULLIVAN'S QUAY , CORK .

ANTI-AMENDMENT

During the last election campaign the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child persuaded the three main political parties to hold a referendum - which would enshrine the right to life of the foetus under any and all circumstances . An Anti-Amendment campaign has been set up to oppose the holding of such a referendum (or the subsequent adotion of the proposed amendment) .

To many gay people this campaign may seem irrelevant .We however believe that there are fundamental links between a woman's right to control her own body and the objectives of gay liberation. These connections have certainly not been lost on either the head of the Garda representive Association , Jack Merrinan , or the editorial writer of the Sunday Tribune (see 23rd May).
Mr. Merrinan squawked about the declining moral values of the Irish nation - in particular the impudent demanding of equal rights by 'homosexuals and pro-abortionists' . He went on to link the rising crime rate with the rising militancy of these groups !

It is not possible to view the fight for gay liberation in isolation from other struggles seekingthe control of one's own body and li life . We believe the Anti-Amendment Campaign must be supported by all gay people , and there should be greater discussion of the abortion issue within the gay community.
There will be further coverage/discussion of this in the next issue.

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women speak

Sunday 27th June

'The Emergence of Feminism In Socialist Thought '
Therese Moriarty

Sunday 11th July

'The radical Feminist Current In The Women's Movement'
Pat Allen

7.30pm Women Only
Women's Centre ,
53 Dame street , Dublin 1 . Tel. 710088

Women's Right To Choose Campaign

Meeting Saturday 10th July 2-5pm

Ring Women's Centre for venue .

20721.API.S.2

QUIZ FOR THE BOYS

1. Since you came out have you spoken to a woman

   (a) Sometimes

   (b) Rarely

   (c) Never

   (d) Only to my mother/wife.

2. Which of the following would you like to design a dress for:

   (a) Eamon De Valera
   (b) Julia Vaughan
   (c) Mary Kennedy/Mary Kenny
   (d) The women of the IGN Collective.

3. If you had been born a women would you have been:

   (a) heterosexual
   (b) heterosexual
   (c) heterosexual
   (d) heterosexual

4. How would you recognise a lesbian:

   (a) hairy legs
   (b) knuckle-duster
   (c) Tattoos
   (d) You wouldn't

5. If you accidentally walked into a lesbian conference would you:

   (a) Swoon
   (b) Grab your goolies
   (c) Explain and expound the theory of lesbianism, placing it within its dialectical position in the working men's struggle.
   (d) ~~Ask if you could help in the creche~~

6. What do lesbians do in bed:

   (a) massage each other in natural wheatgerm oil
   (b) paint each others toenails
   (c) practice reef knots
   (d) Play a round of pitch and putt.

7. What do you find most repulsive about lesbians:

   (a) Their politics
   (b) Their vulgarity
   (c) Their vaginas
   (d) Their clothes