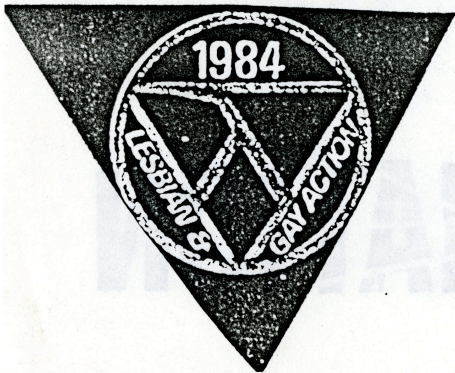


LESBIAN AND GAY WORKERS REPRESENT 10% OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS UNION. WHAT THESE 1,700 WORKERS NEED NOW IS PRACTICAL AND DETERMINED SUPPORT. WE ARE ASKING THE UNION TO WORK TOWARDS:

- * 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 DISMISSALS 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.



'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.



Claiming an Identity

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

KIERAN ROSE

CORK BRANCH

DISCRIMINATION

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.

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

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LESBIAN AND GAY WORKERS IS LINKED IN WITH ISSUES WHICH AFFECT ALL WORKERS. RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL WORKERS AND OF THE ORGANISED LABOUR MOVEMENT. MORE AND MORE THE PRIVATE LIVES OF WORKERS AND THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ARE SEEN AS GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL OR LOSS OF PROMOTION. THERE APPEARS TO BE A CONCERTED PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO GET WOMEN OUT OF THEIR JOBS. SEXISM IN THE WORKPLACE AFFECTS ALL WOMEN AND GAY MEN.

DISCRIMINATION