

GAY TRADE UNIONIST GROUP NEWSLETTER

THE TEACHERS FED.

No 4 Jan/Feb. 1979

THE INSIDE STORY....

I was involved in the formulation of the Teacher's Federation Sexual Discrimination Policy from the beginning and I think that some points should be made to draw attention to several areas which should not be overlooked.



RANK & FILE SUPPORT

From September 1976, when a motion to set up a committee was passed at school level, to December '78, when the final vote was taken at Annual Conference, rank and file support was strong. For example, the motion to set up the committee to formulate policy was passed by the Inner City Teachers Association without dissent, Associations representing more than one in 7 of of the membership supported the draft policy before it went to Conference., and the final vote was decided by a show of hands.

PRECEDENTS FOR ACTION

Other teaching unions, most notably the 3 Victorian teaching unions, had already formulated policy in this area, and this in turn followed the precedents set by the A.U.S., the American Psychiatric Association and teaching unions in the U.S.A.

The findings of the Royal Commission on Human Relationships appeared whilst policy was being drawn up, and it was gratifying to see that the draft policy was in line with its recommendations. Nor should we forget the lessons that we learned from such cases as the Penny Short case and the Greg Weir case, both involving the victimization of student teachers, and the Michael Clohesy case, that of a teacher in a catholic school.

AN OPEN COMMITTEE

The committee made every effort to keep Federation members and other interested people informed about what we were doing, and we actively sought peoples involvement, comments and criticisms at every stage. Two drafts were published in "Education", the Teachers Federation journal, and circulated to all Federation Associations. Then the final draft that was submitted to Annual Conference was published in "Education".

The most obvious effect was that the correspondence about the issue in "Education" revealed how poor the arguments against it were. However, a much more important fact was that this openness drew comments, and in one case, sharp criticism, that enabled us to improve the draft policy immeasurably. The same must also be said about the contributions of people in the mini session which discussed the draft at Annual Conference, and the final amendments accepted by the plenary session. I think that it was an education to us all that opposition to the draft policy was so weak in numbers and drive. It showed how much attitudes have changed.

A CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY

The policy demands civil rights for people regardless of sex, sexuality and marital status; it does not ask people to approve of various lifestyles or sexual acts. We took the view that people are entitled to think what they like about these things. What is important is that they respect and defend people's civil rights regardless of sexual differences, and this is what the policy demands.

.....2.

CHILD EXPLOITATION CONDEMNED

The policy is uncompromising in condemning any exploitation or persecution of teachers or students (point 8). The section on law reform, especially points 10b, 10c and 10d, are particularly relevant to the rights of children. This I believe was a most important section of the policy, drawing a firm line against child exploitation, and reassuring people about the scope and purpose of the policy.

CONCLUSION

The strong stand taken by Australian teaching unions against anti-homosexual prejudice reflects the strong and growing body of opinion which insists that gays must have equal rights before the law. It also shows that the old myths and fears are collapsing. Perhaps one of the most revealing points was made by a rabidly anti-homosexual and anti-Federation leading article in a suburban newspaper.

It had to admit that the opposition to the policy was "not as strong as might be expected".

YES - PEOPLE ARE LEARNING.

By our special Teachers Federation correspondent.

GAY TEACHERS IN VICTORIA

THE SMALL PETITION - A PROPOSAL TO BAN GAY TEACHERS IN VICTORIA.

A petition organised by George Small in Victoria threatens to outlaw gay groups and ban gay teachers in Victoria.

Publicity for the petition first appeared in the January issue of NEW LIFE a national evangelical Christian newspaper, accompanied by an editorial against the booklet, YOUNG GAY AND PROUD, and the Melbourne Gay Teachers and Students.

Sensational front page stories -Homosexual Education in Our Schools?, and Homosexual Education; Public Opinion Big NO, and letters from the religious profession, fanned the publicity for the petition.

One union, the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria (TTAV) was singled out as supporting moves to introduce "homosexual education in schools".

UNION BACKDOWN

TTAV President, Peter Crooke, on February 15th denied this in a statement to the Ballarat News. He stated that "TTAV is not in a position to control (distribution), the question of what material is used by teachers is a matter for the Education Department and the individual teachers themselves."

This was in contrast to earlier statements and union policy of supporting sex education programs where heterosexuality and homosexuality are presented equally.

Citizens Against Social Evils (CASE) have since held meetings to mobilize opposition to YOUNG GAY AND PROUD.

PETITION

As well there is the George Small petition. This petition says that the Hamer Government should take immediate action to curtail:-

1. The distribution of material from the Melbourne Gay Teachers and Students Group.
2. The formation of such groups in any school, and the operation of existing groups.

3. Screenings of homosexual education films including, "Homosexuality- a Film for Discussion", "Jenny" and "Brad" and "any other films depicting homosexuals" and "experimental" matter on homosexuality in school libraries.

4. "The holding of any meeting or function associated with any homosexual groups.

"And that your government will remove all homosexuals and other persons who are actively involved in promoting homosexual behaviour, whether in schools or in the community from teaching positions including colleges of advanced education and from involvement in curriculum development.

----- More news will follow. or you can contact GT&SG, P.O.Box 35, FITZROY VICTORIA, for the latest information.

.....3.

THE REAL REASON WE
DON'T STOCK GAY NEWS
IS- IT JUST ISN'T DIRTY
ENOUGH



Colin Wheeler

-3-

GAY TRADE UNIONISTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Gay Trade Unionist Group is holding its Annual General Meeting on Sunday March 11th at 2:30 p.m. at CAMP, 33A Glebe Point Road GLEBE.

DON'T BE SHY OR RETIRING, ALL POSITIONS ARE UP FOR RE-ELECTION, SO COME ALONG AND PARTICIPATE.



"But I'm a gay fascist."

To give members and readers some idea of what goes on at meeting of the group the newsletter will carry a brief summary of events of the monthly meeting in each newsletter.

The meeting was held at CAMP, 33A Glebe pt Rd, 18/2/79.

A. A NATIONAL GAY TRADE UNIONISTS CONFERENCE.

will be held in August before or after the National Conference in Melbourne. GTUG will be represented by 2 members on the organising committee set up by ACSPA.

B. MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLICITY DRIVE

Union journals, migrant, Labor party, suburban and provincial papers will be sent a press release on the activities of the group.

Designs for a poster and drafts of an information booklet are invited at meetings of the group.

C. CASES OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRADE UNIONISTS

Cases of exploitation in the gay commercial scene in Sydney and in Newcastle will be investigated. Cases of non-union labour exploitation are invited from readers and members.

D. CCL QUESTIONNAIRE

A draft was examined. This will be sent out to unions first. GTUG will help financially, and with follow up work. Any volunteers?

E. REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.

it has been decided to have regular monthly meetings

instead of the poorly attended and not very well advertised fortnightly meetings.

THE NEXT MEETING AND AGM WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 11, SUNDAY AT 2:30 PM AT CAMP, 33A GLEBE POINT ROAD, GLEBE.

WHATS ON

SATURDAY 10TH MARCH
8p.m. Dance to Dico at CAMP

WEDNESDAY 21ST MARCH
CCL Meeting to work on GTUG questionnaire, 6p.m. 149 St Johns Rd Glebe

SUNDAY 11TH MARCH
GTUG Annual General Meeting 2:30 p.m. at CAMP

SUNDAY 25TH MARCH
Representatives of the Wireless Listening Institute of Australia will speak to Lamba Listening from 2:30 p.m. to 5p.m. at Acceptance, 46 Oxford St, D'hurst

SUNDAY 25TH MARCH
Gay Health and Welfare Workers Group meets at CAMP at 2:30 p.m.
For more details contact the GH&WWG P.O.Box 272 Mascot

Every Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Tin Sheds at Sydney University, Gay Solidarity meets. Planning for Gay Pride Week 79 in under way.

ISSUED + AUTHORIZED BY N.S.W.
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