

the gay trade unionist

newsletter of the nsw gay trade unionists' group

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September '79



Nurses' Association Pushes FoL Conference

The September issue of "The Lamp", the journal of the NSW Nurses' Association, carried a 4 page spread to promote the Festival of Lights "Total Child Care" Conference. The Conference is intended to "paint a broad picture of child abuse."

However, if the broadness of the "Lamp" article is anything to go by, the gay community can expect nothing less than a "poofa bash".

The FoL have invited special Detective Lloyd Martin from Los Angeles as well as well known anti-gay propagandists Janet Coombs and Dr Jean Benjamin to speak at the Conference.

"The Lamp" article quotes the work of Lloyd Martin at length. Martin and the Los Angeles Police Dept's "Sexually Exploited Child Unit" issued false statistics purporting to show that 70% of the children molested in Los Angeles were male. In fact the figure was 22%, and the LAPD Chief Gates, consequently admonished Martin.

Dr John Whitehall, the author of the article however, gives the impression that all child molestation is of young males by older males, and most of this occurs outside the family. The facts are:

- (A) 90% of all reported child molestations are committed by adult males on minor females. Most molestations of male minors are committed by men in close relationship to the victim as well by men who molest children of both sexes. (1,2,3.)
- (B) 75 - 85% of child molestations are committed by members of the family or friends of the victims. (1,2,3,4.)

He not only dishes up sensationalist tit-bits but adds the rejoinder "A middle aged woman was heard to say after hearing Martin's address 'I was shocked. I've got to get out of here to get myself together.' She was depressed: but also angry. Determined that these things should stop." Whitehall neatly equates sexual child abuse and homosexual child abuse and paedophilia and incites the "decent" reader to stand up and fight homosexual child abuse.

The average reader of the article still has many misconceptions about male homosexuals being child molesters, and this act of incitement will mean increased mental and physical abuse of homosexual nurses.

Free publicity in a union journal is a major coup for the FoL, but what of the responsibilities of the Editor? "The Lamp" is a journal of an Association which "promotes the interests of all members in professional, educational and industrial matters" and "to remain non-political and non-sectarian". Publishing inciting biased material clearly is at odds with these aims, not to mention the professional ethics of publishing unfactual material.

What of the political implications of the FoL "coup"? It means that the trade union movement is giving official sanction to anti-homosexual bigotry. This is even more alarming when Rex Jackson, Minister of Youth and Community Services will be opening the Conference and that the NSW Labor Council will be represented knowing that the FoL are using them to give their cause legitimacy.

REFERENCES

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2. "Oregon State Department of Human Resources Task Force on Sexual Preference." (1977) Portland, Oregon.
3. "Protection of the Child Victim of Sex Crimes Committed by Adults." American Humane Association, Vincent de Francis (1965).
4. "Humanistic Treatment of Father Daughter Incest", by Frank Giaretto, in Helfer, R.E. (ed) "Child Abuse and Neglect." (1976) Ballenger Publications.

Anti-Gay Protest at WA Trades & Labor Council

Delegates from 4 WA unions walked out in protest at an address given to the WA Trades and Labor Council on homosexual discrim. on the 5th June.

The address was given by Jeff Hayler, a member of the Aust. Social Welfare Union. In the address Jeff cited WA figures of discrimination in employment against homosexuals to argue for union policy to guarantee rights for homosexual members and to educate the rank and file to stamp out misconceptions about lesbians and gay men.

Mr J. Harding, a state organiser for the Federated Clerks Union explaining to the press why his union had walked out in protest said that the FCU did not pay Council affiliation fees for such debates.

However, the meeting continued and called on all unions in WA to support a joint CAMP - ASWU survey of unions and employers on the problems facing homosexuals in the workplace.

Melbourne City Mission Discriminates Against Gays

An applicant for a job as a Residential Youth Worker with the Melbourne City Mission, was turned down for the job after he stated that he was homosexual.

During the course of interviews with the Mission's Social Worker, and with conversations with members of the staff at the Mission, the question was raised with the applicant, Tony Collins, how he was going to cope with a hostel full of "nubile young ladies." Tony explained that the issue of sexual overtures from the girls was not a problem as he was homosexual.

Although no job contract had been signed, the Mission Social Worker indicated to Tony that he was being given serious consideration for the position and that the formal offer of a job was a mere technicality.

The Social Worker told Tony that "community attitudes did not approve of homosexuality", and that because of this it might not be possible to confirm the offer of the job.

The following day the Superintendent told Tony he was being refused the job on the grounds of his homosexuality.

THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WELFARE UNION

Tony approached his union, the ASWU whose Industrial Vice President wrote to the Melbourne City Mission about the complaint. No replies to this and a second letter have been received.

ANTIDISCRIMINATION BODIES

Tony lodged complaints with the Victorian Anti-Discrimination Bureau and the Victorian Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (The Federal Body).

The State body, stated that they were satisfied that discrimination on the grounds of sexuality did occur, but because its charter didn't include homosexuality, they could not take the matter further and referred the matter to Premier Hamer for his information. Tony has written to the Premier asking him to take action. He has not received a reply as yet. The Federal Body is still investigating the case.

COMMENT

The reason the Melbourne City Mission gave for refusing Tony Collins a job was supposed "community attitudes". For this reason gays are denied employment, or live in fear of losing their jobs - especially in areas like social welfare, nursing and education. In this area the myth of child molestation is dragged out if not reason in itself, then the reason for public bigotry and community attitudes.

The facts are that child sexual abuse is predominantly committed by adult males on minor females (90% of cases) and 57% of Australians in 1978 supported equal treatment in law for gays. Only 30% of those polled were opposed to equal treatment in law for gays.

VICTORIAN GAY TRADE UNIONISTS

Vic GTUG have taken up the case, and have begun a campaign of protest against the Melbourne City Mission, and against the law which makes the Mission's action lawful. Copies of a pamphlet on the Case, and all financial assistance can be obtained from and sent to:

Vic GTUG, Box 3, 52 Victoria Street, CARLTON SOUTH 3053

ADB Employment Policy

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board in a letter to the NSW GTUG has answered charges raised at the August 4th Seminar that it discourages "its employees from being open about their sexuality and homosexuality, and not to employ openly homosexual people."

Paul Stein, President of the ADB writes:

"There is absolutely no 'pressure' to keep one's sexuality secret. Nor does the Board have a policy of not employing openly homosexual people."

Scottish Meeting on Homosexual Workers

SCOTLAND, September: Two day schools for trade union activists is being held in October to examine the rights of lesbians and gay men at work in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The format appears similar to the ACSPA National Meeting on Homosexual Workers held in Melbourne in August. However, each is being organised by the gay community (The Scottish Homosexual Rights Group) although the Edinburgh and District Trades Council is sponsoring the school in Edinburgh.

Organisers of the two schools are intending to look at questions like, Are gays really discriminated against at work? Why have trade unions shown so little interest? Why should they? SHRG hopes that these will be discussed within the context of wider issues like gay rights in society and the development of union policies.

ACTU Congress 1979

At the ACTU Congress in September, both the Australian Social Welfare Union and the NSW Teachers' Federation had moved that the Disadvantaged Minorities Platform include the "Discrimination in the Workforce" resolution of the 1978 ACSPA Conference..

What happened? In short, it didn't come up. Along with numerous other items on the agenda that the Congress did not get around to discussing, it will be referred to the ACTU executive to be dealt with.

It may well have been fortunate that the motion did not come up as it seems that there was probably not enough preparation or prior discussion of the issues amongst the union movement for the motion to have had much chance of getting wide support.

The ACSPA motion as proposed was probably not ideal - raising issues for discussion which the general public might find controversial ("homosexuality is not a sickness") but which are not essential to our basic demands - a "fair go" and equal treatment. In future any motions probably need to be more strongly oriented towards the basic industrial issue - the right of gays at work.

STOP PRESS

Greg Reading.

THE ACTU CONGRESS

The fate of the ACSPA motion may be decided at the next meeting of GTUG on the 21st October 2.30 pm at CAMP 33A Glebe Pt Rd, GLEBE. Representatives of the NSWTF and the ASWU will be invited. Its important that YOU have a say!!

TOTAL CHILD CARE

Peter Jackson, Minister of Youth and Community Services in the NSW Government, could not open the FOL Total Child Care Conference due to pressing prior engagements. The full story in the next GTU.

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FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION: A Series

1: NSW C'tee on Discrimination in Employment & Occupation

INTRODUCTION

Employment Discrimination Committees were established by the Federal Labor Government in 1973 on Australia's ratification of the International Labor Organisation Convention No. 111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958.

This Convention bans discrimination in employment on the grounds of:

- (a) Race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin, and
- (b) "such other discrimination, exclusion or preference (ie. discrimination) which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation as may be determined by the Member concerned after consultation with representatives of employers' and workers' organisations,"

In reply to an enquiry from GTUG, AC Jeffries, acting Executive Officer of the Committee, wrote;

"Where a homosexual person feels they have been discriminated against in employment or occupation, then this complaint is investigated on the grounds of sexuality."

So in Australia, in part (b) sexuality (homosexuality) is included, along with age, disability, nationality, personal attributes, criminal record, medical record, trade union activities and educational qualifications.

WHO ARE ON THE COMMITTEE?

The Committee has an independent Chairman (sic) appointed by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, and representatives of the Federal and State Governments and the ACTU and Employer bodies.

FUNCTIONS

- (1) To attempt to resolve by conciliation, complaints of discrimination in employment and occupation which come to the attention of the Committee.
- (2) To endeavor to change community attitudes towards employment discrimination so that discriminatory policies and practices will come to be seen as unacceptable to the Australian Community.

HOW DO YOU PROCESS A COMPLAINT?

- (1) Contact the Committee.

Commonwealth Government Centre, Chifley Square, SYDNEY.
GPO Box 2725, SYDNEY. 2001 TEL : (02) 239.3459

- (2) and put your complaint in writing. You must also authorise the Committee to investigate the complaint.
- (3) The Committee then looks at your complaint and decides whether discrimination has occurred.
- (4) The Committee then uses its "influence and good offices to try to resolve the complaint."

- (5) Failing this, the case is referred to the National Committee. Again, if they are satisfied that discrimination has occurred, parties in the dispute are invited to meet with the Committee, and the process of conciliation again takes place.
- (6) Failing this, a report is sent to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations who may decide to table the report in Parliament, "together with comments as he may consider to be desirable and appropriate."



come-out fighting!!

Gay Trade Unionists?

THE NSW GAY TRADE UNIONISTS' GROUP is a non-party-political group of gay trade unionists working in the gay community and in the trade union movement,

1. Making the trade union movement aware of the special problems of working lesbians and gay men,
2. Assisting trade unions and employee associations support members discriminated against because of their homosexuality,
3. Helping the Gay Community realise the importance of unions and employee associations to defend their rights and change community attitudes.

IF THIS BOX IS TICKED, YOUR SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP IS DUE ☐

SEND TO: GTUG, POBox 71, Newtown. NSW 2042

Name
 Address/
 Phone No.

Union

Membership \$10 Subscription to The Gay Trade Unionist \$3 ...

FREE Trial Offer (One copy of the latest issue of "GTU")

NEXT MEETING !

Sunday OCTOBER 21st, 2.30pm at 33a Glebe Point Rd., GLEBE.

NSW GAY TRADE UNIONISTS' GROUP

meetings

2.30pm/33a, Glebe Pt. Rd., Glebe

| SEPTEMBER 1979 | | | | | | |
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| DECEMBER 1979 | | | | | | |
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AGENDA

These meetings will cover:

1. Setting up gay trade union caucuses,
2. How to best defend a gay worker discriminated against,
3. Working out our demands and priorities,
4. How do we best communicate the special problems of working lesbians and gay men to the trade union movement,
5. Problems faced by gay migrant workers,
6. Contacting working lesbians and gay men in the country,
7. Publishing our "Fighting Discrimination" resource material,
8. A NSW Trades and Labor Council Research Project on Homosexual Discrimination??

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