



RED AND LAVENDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIALIST LESBIANS/MALE HOMOSEXUALS

No.2. January 1, 1977.

OUR CONFERENCE.

Since the last Red and Lavender we have received more information on the National Conference on Homosexuality, Socialism and Feminism, which supersedes the information given then. The Conference will be held in Melbourne, organized by the Melbourne Socialist Homosexuals. In accordance with the intention of the Socialist Caucus at the Second National Homosexual Conference held in August 1976, our Conference will be open only to persons self-identifying as (a) socialists and (b) lesbians or male homosexuals.

The Organizing Collective proposed the dates Friday April 29, Saturday April 30 and Sunday May 1. This weekend is uniquely suitable, coinciding as it does with the international working class and socialist commemoration of May Day. The holding of the Conference on this weekend will permit the large-scale participation of socialist homosexuals as an organized grouping in the Melbourne May Day march for the first time.

The following agenda has been proposed as a basis for discussion. It is not the final agenda for the Conference.

1. Lesbians and male homosexuals in the class struggle:
 - a) the relation between lesbians and homosexual men
 - b) strategy and tactics for work with non-socialist lesbians and homosexual men
 - c) strategy and tactics for work with the working class - the NSW BLF experience
2. Homosexuals in socialist political parties:
 - a) a session in which homosexual party members tell us
 - why party work
 - what support they get within their party
 - b) OR invitation to party Left to present their views and an understanding of their practise
3. Cost/benefit analysis in terms of time, energy and being bought off, of lesbians and homosexual men working in parties (and the Australian Union of Students)
4. Strategy and tactics for Third National Homosexual Conference
5. Australia 1977: analysis of Australian situation and development of socialist strategy and tactics which incorporate assumptions of women's and homosexual liberation
6. Evaluation of Australian lesbian and male homosexual struggle
7. Men and the anti-patriarchal struggle:
 - a) men and pro-feminist politics
 - b) relations with heterosexual men
 - c) the Males Against Sexism strategy
 - d) men and violence, psychological and physical - rape, invasion of space, use of violence
 - e) youth, age, beauty - sexual objectification, competitive sexual individualism and isolation; the political economy of beauty
 - f) the sex/emotions dichotomy
8. Evaluation of schools, university, etc. situation
9. Relations with other oppressed minorities, eg. blacks
10. Sources of lesbian and male homosexual oppression
11. Another look at "personal is political" in terms of the state and state power
12. Booklet on homosexual sexual practise and the politics of relationships
13. Bisexual self-identity and sexual practise: the "political homosexual" question
14. Socialists and the therapy question:
 - a) therapy at all? if so, what sort?
 - b) questions of consciousness
15. Separatism and homosexual chauvinism
16. The international situation

Further information about the Conference may be obtained from the Melbourne Socialist Homosexuals, c/- 234 Amess Street, North Carlton, Victoria 3054.

TRIBUNAL ON HOMOSEXUALS AND DISCRIMINATION.

By any liberal's standards, the CAMP's Tribunal on Homosexuals and Discrimination (November 27-28, 1976) was a success. Since Sydney Gay Liberation has withered to virtually nothing, the CAMP has replaced it as the main gay liberation group in Sydney. CAMP = gay liberation? Yes, the radical rhetoric that was once the characteristic of Gay Liberation, of militant liberalism with a dash of radical feminism, is now put more vocally by the CAMP. Most of the submissions were full of moral indignation and plea for equality that marked Gay Liberation in the good old days.

And just as Gay Liberation's message was well received by the student and young petit-bourgeoisie, so the CAMP's message to the liberal bourgeoisie (as represented by the fourtribunalists) was well received. The report of the four was couched in liberal principles and advocated liberal solutions. All of which socialists support, let's remember ("Manifesto of the Socialist Homosexuals"). Indeed one of the recommendations was to eliminate sexuality from laws so that only violence and undue influence remain offences, a position more advanced than most social democrats or even homosexual law reformers.

But from a socialist viewpoint, the Tribunal had a number of weaknesses.

a. Its very assumption was that by attracting media attention people would be exposed to our ideas and lose their prejudices once they realized how oppressed we are. Apart from depending on the generosity of the media (and on this particular instance the devaluation of the \$ occurred on the Sunday, becoming the news item of the week - the crisis of capitalism strikes again!), this assumes that social change occurs through moral outrage from the oppressed and a moral reawakening of the oppressor. It was a plea for tolerance.

b. The composition of the panel reflected the political perspectives of the liberal, native bourgeoisie (Cairns, Gilling) and aristocracy of labor (Egan, Gietzolt); the dominant conservative fraction was not represented. Strategic conceptions based on appealing to the liberal bourgeoisie can easily end up as an extra-parliamentary tail of the reformist Labor Party. So the Tribunal was noticeably not a venture to forge alliances with the working class for homosexual liberation.

c. There was no opportunity for audience participation. Albeit there were few homosexuals in the large auditorium, but none of us had the chance to question the witnesses or (heaven forbid) the panelists. Everything was structured in advance, down to the green tablecloths and tribunalists' name plates, for the benefit of the media. 'Social change' through respectable community leaders not mass action and grass-roots struggle.

Craig.

DATES.

Monday, January 3. 8pm, CAMP Center, 33a Glebe Point Road, Glebe. General meeting, Socialist Lesbians/Male Homosexuals.

Wednesday, January 5. 4.30pm, Qantas House, Chifley Square, Sydney. Picket in solidarity with two trade unionists being taken to court in Fiji by Qantas for striking.

Monday, January 17. 8pm, CAMP Center, 33a Glebe Point Road, Glebe. General meeting, Socialist Lesbians/Male Homosexuals.

Monday, January 31. 8pm, CAMP Center, 33a Glebe Point Road, Glebe. General meeting, Socialist Lesbians/Male Homosexuals.

Articles for Red and Lavender must be no more than 750 words. Articles must be signed but names will be withheld on request. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the Socialist Lesbians/Male Homosexuals, Sydney. Readers' responses are welcome and should reach the editorial working group before the last week of each month, preferably typed.