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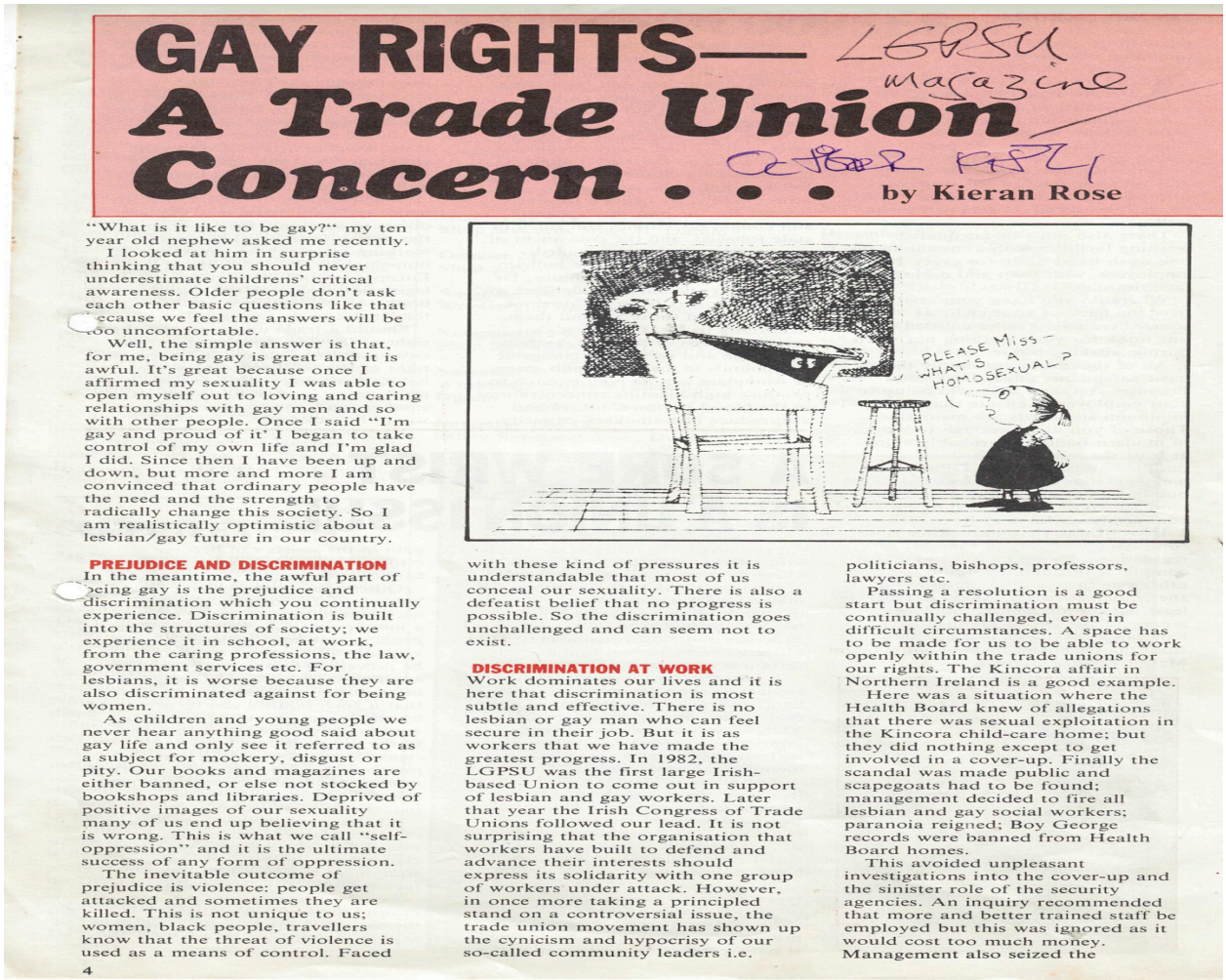
LGPSU and Lesbian and Gay Workers Rights

Kieran Rose February 2020

“Trade Union policy on lesbian and gay rights is an integral part of overall trade union policy to fight dicrimination and protect workers rights”
ICTU ‘Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace’ 1987



GAY RIGHTS— A Trade Union Concern . . .

LGBSU magazine

by Kieran Rose

“What is it like to be gay?“ my ten year old nephew asked me recently.

I looked at him in surprise thinking that you should never underestimate childrens’ critical awareness. Older people don’t ask each other basic questions like that because we feel the answers will be too uncomfortable.

Well, the simple answer is that, for me, being gay is great and it is awful. It’s great because once I affirmed my sexuality I was able to open myself out to loving and caring relationships with gay men and so with other people. Once I said “I’m gay and proud of it’ I began to take control of my own life and I’m glad I did. Since then I have been up and down, but more and more I am convinced that ordinary people have the need and the strength to radically change this society. So I am realistically optimistic about a lesbian/gay future in our country.

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

In the meantime, the awful part of being gay is the prejudice and discrimination which you continually experience. Discrimination is built into the structures of society; we experience it in school, at work, from the caring professions, the law, government services etc. For lesbians, it is worse because they are also discriminated against for being women.

As children and young people we never hear anything good said about gay life and only see it referred to as a subject for mockery, disgust or pity. Our books and magazines are either banned, or else not stocked by bookshops and libraries. Deprived of positive images of our sexuality many of us end up believing that it is wrong. This is what we call “self-oppression” and it is the ultimate success of any form of oppression.

The inevitable outcome of prejudice is violence; people get attacked and sometimes they are killed. This is not unique to us; women, black people, travellers know that the threat of violence is used as a means of control. Faced with these kind of pressures it is understandable that most of us conceal our sexuality. There is also a defeatist belief that no progress is possible. So the discrimination goes unchallenged and can seem not to exist.

DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

Work dominates our lives and it is here that discrimination is most subtle and effective. There is no lesbian or gay man who can feel secure in their job. But it is as workers that we have made the greatest progress. In 1982, the LGPSU was the first large Irish-based Union to come out in support of lesbian and gay workers. Later that year the Irish Congress of Trade Unions followed our lead. It is not surprising that the organisation that workers have built to defend and advance their interests should express its solidarity with one group of workers under attack. However, in once more taking a principled stand on a controversial issue, the trade union movement has shown up the cynicism and hypocrisy of our so-called community leaders i.e. politicians, bishops, professors, lawyers etc.

Passing a resolution is a good start but discrimination must be continually challenged, even in difficult circumstances. A space has to be made for us to be able to work openly within the trade unions for our rights. The Kincora affair in Northern Ireland is a good example.

Here was a situation where the Health Board knew of allegations that there was sexual exploitation in the Kincora child-care home; but they did nothing except to get involved in a cover-up. Finally the scandal was made public and scapegoats had to be found; management decided to fire all lesbian and gay social workers; paranoia reigned; Boy George records were banned from Health Board homes.

This avoided unpleasant investigations into the cover-up and the sinister role of the security agencies. An inquiry recommended that more and better trained staff be employed but this was ignored as it would cost too much money. Management also seized the

1. Summary

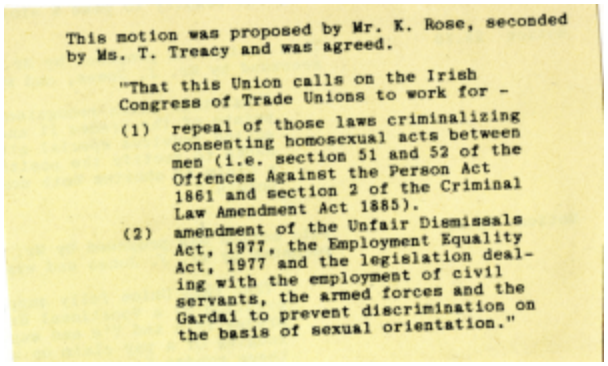
The trade union movement was hugely important in progress for LGBT people in Ireland from the early 1980s, when we had few supporters but many powerful enemies. This history is largely unrecognised and unwritten, significant exceptions to this are Orla Egan and the Cork LGBT archive, the research of Philip O'Connor, Patrick McDonagh and others. David Joyce of ICTU put together a detailed slideshow of documents, photos etc for a 2019 LGBT Pride event "Union Pride - celebrating our past, building a better future" with a panel discussion with me and Clare Moore NIC/ICTU chaired by Seamus Dooley (NUJ/ICTU).

The LGPSU was key to trade union progress for lesbian and gay workers, this brief summary focuses on the 1980s, and does not include for example the great role of IMPACT in the marriage equality referendum success.

Crucial moments were the ICTU and LGPSU resolutions of 1982, the ICTU lesbian and gay rights seminar of 1985, the ICTU 5 point programme of 1986, the Employment Equality Agency in 1986 supporting sexual orientation to be included in its legislation, the publication of ICTU policy 'Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace: Guidelines for Negotiators' in 1987, the Civil Service anti-discrimination policy of 1988, all contributing significantly to later progress such as; Labour Party Equal Status Bill 1990 includes sexual orientation, the equality-based gay law reform in 1993, the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Unfair Dismissals Act 1993, and later Equality legislation etc

2. LGPSU Resolution 1982

In 1982 the Cork Branch adopted a motion proposed by me and Tricia Tracey calling for gay law reform, and amendments to the Unfair Dismissals Act, the Employment Equality Act and legislation dealing with the employment of civil servants, the armed forces, and the Gardai to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This later became the programme of GLEN when it was established in 1988, and was largely achieved in the 1990s with an equality-based gay law reform, amendments to the Unfair Dismissals Act, and Equality legislation introduced.



This motion was proposed by Mr. K. Rose, seconded by Ms. T. Treacy and was agreed.

"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).

(2) 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."

1982 LGPSU resolution

The motion got high profile and positive media coverage (unusual at the time) when it was adopted at the Annual Conference in May 1982. It got ‘overwhelming support’, and was passed by the ‘vast majority’ after ‘a contentious debate’. One delegate said that; ‘if Cork have a problem with homosexuality then let them go away and solve them quietly without publicity’. **Tom Bogue, President of the Union**, spoke strongly in favour of the motion saying ‘we have a repressed minority’. I worked with Tom in Cork County Council and he was a great supporter, especially when I publicly came out.



Cork Examiner, Friday, May 14, 1982

Union supports change in law on homosexuality

OVERWHELMING support for the repeal of laws criminalising homosexual acts between consenting men was expressed yesterday at the annual conference of the 17,000 member Local Government and Public Services Union in Tralee.

After a contentious 20-minute debate, the vast majority of the delegates raised their hands to back a Cork motion calling for changes in the laws.

One opposing delegate, Mr. Tom Henn, Limerick described the motion as "nauseating", but no more than six people in the conference hall at the Mount Brandon Hotel, went against it.

Another speaker described Mr. Henn's contribution as 'bigoted rubbish" and Union president Mr. Tom Bogue, Cork, said that the executive was strongly urging the conference to adopt the motion.

Also passed was a Cork addition to the motion seeking an amendment of the Unfair Dismissals Act, The Employment Equality Act and legislation dealing with the employment of civil servants, the armed forces, gardai and public servants to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The matter is now to be referred to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Moving the motion, Mr. John Murphy, Cork, referred to a recent statement by Mr. Jack Marrinan, Secretary of the Garda Representative Body, criticising the fact that a well known homosexual was recently allowed to address a national youth conference.

Mr. Murphy said that such a statement was grossly unfair. He (Mr. Murphy) knew of one homosexual member of the union who would be regarded as a criminal under the present law.

Mr. Murphy told the conference that there were no statistics to prove that homosexuals were involved in more criminal acts than heterosexual people.

"If one is engaged in homosexual acts, a criminal prosecution could follow which means that people like civil servants, teachers and gardai are open to losing their job ", he went on.

Mr. Henn, speaking against the motion, said he was proud to be a member of L.G.P.S.U. all his life. He had a "love affair" with the union for 35 years, but, in view of the motion, he was now inclined to call it off.

"I am very surprised to see this motion in the name of the Cork branch. I am nauseated to see it in the name of the branch during the presidency of Tom Bogue", he declared. "If Cork have problems with homosexuality then let them go away and solve them quietly without publicity".

Entering the debate, Mr. Bogue recommended the adoption of the motion. He regretted a trend which polarised people into groups. A significant proportion of the entire population was homosexual and members of the union were no different.

"We have a repressed minority. They are repressed by laws and attitudes which are widely held throughout the community", he stated.

Replying to the debate, Mr. Murphy referred to statements about the Kincora House scandal, Belfast. Minors, he maintained, were just as likely to be assaulted by hetrosexuals as by homosexuals.

FURTHER INFORMATION FROM CORK GAY COLLECTIVE

Call to repeal legislation on homosexual acts

THE IRISH TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1982

A MOTION calling for the repeal of laws criminalising homosexual acts between consenting men was passed overwhelmingly at the annual conference of the Local Government and Public Services Union (LGPSU) in Tralee yesterday writes **John Maddock.**

The motion, put forward by the Cork branch, asked that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions work for the repeal of the laws — Sections 51 and 52 of the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861 and Section Two of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885.

As well, it seeks the amendment of the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977, the Employment Equality Act 1977 and the legislation dealing with the employment of civil servants, the

spoken. **Mr. Tom Bogue**, the Union's President said the executive board was supporting the resolution and urged its adoption. It referred to a subject which affected some of the Union's members because a proportion of the population were homosexuals and he had no reason to believe that that proportion was not reflected among the Union's members.

Since the motion had been put forward, there had been no m any snide remarks about it. The Union was committed to preventing its members from being discriminated against and the present legislation could affect their job prospects and job security.

Mr. Tom Henn (Limerick) said he was surprised to see a

Irish Independent, Friday, May 14, 1982

Union backs rights of gays

By Peter Murtagh

HOMOSEXUAL acts should not be illegal, according to the second largest trade union representing public employees. The Government should introduce laws banning discrimination against people because of their sexual orientation, the union also decided yesterday.

A motion seeking these changes was passed almost unanimously at the annual conference in Tralee.

The motion, from the Cork branch, called on the Government to repeal sections of the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, which make homosexual acts illegal and punishable by life imprisonment.

The motion also called for amendments to the Unfair Dismissals Act, the Employment Equality Act and legislation dealing with employment in the civil service, the armed forces and the gardai "to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation."

The union represents health board workers, local authority employees and psychiatric nurses and it is believed to be the first time that a union affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions

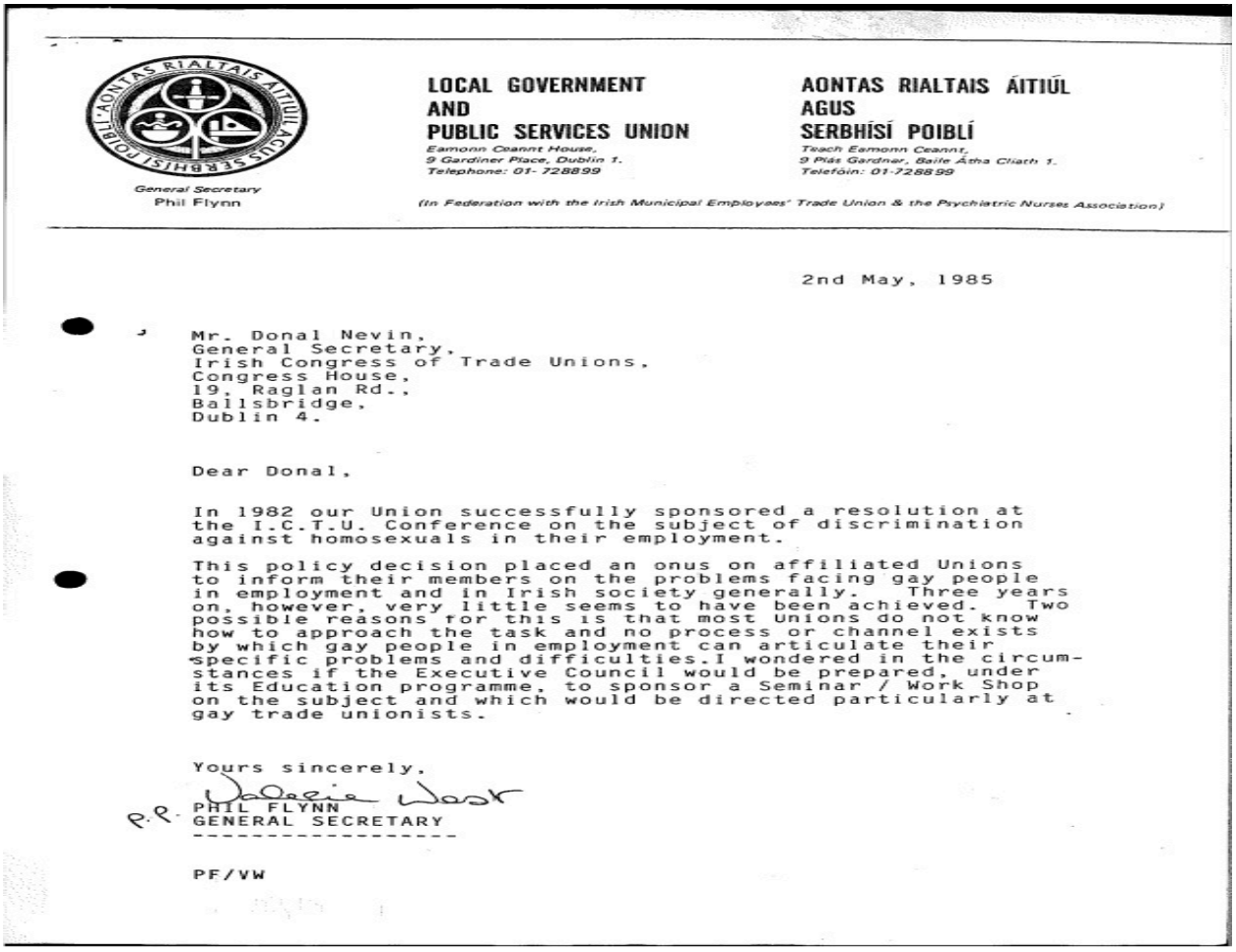
This LGPSU equality agenda was to be achieved in the next fifteen years or so and the trade union movement played a huge role. Leo Flynn in a paper c2000 referring to the establishment of the Equality Authority in 1999, the Unfair Dismissals Amendment Act 1993 etc. writes that these changes are ‘little short of phenomenal’. ‘Yet less than a decade ago sexual activity between males was still criminalised ….’ There has been a ‘rolling programme of legislative and policy reform’. The recent developments in Irish law are ‘extraordinary’. ‘Without being wildly

optimistic, it is clear that the legal situation of same-sex coupls in Ireland is on the cusp of major change' he wrote[1]

3. ICTU

Phil Flynn General Secretary of the Union was also a great supporter of lesbian and gay workers and lobbied Government on our behalf, as well as working within ICTU. He spoke at a workshop organised by the Cork Lesbian and Gay Collectives at the ICTU 1984 Conference in Waterford, giving us great practical advice on our campaign. Arising from that and a subsequent meeting with Phil I wrote to Phil on 23.4.85 enclosing a proposal for a workshop on discrimination against lesbian and gay workers, and a summary report of the Waterford meeting. Phil Flynn wrote to Donal Nevin on 2nd May 1985 calling for a seminar in order to make progress on the 1982 resolution which he wrote that the Union had 'sponsored'. Donal Nevin, General Secretary of ICTU, wrote back on 9.5.85 saying he 'saw no reason why our Trade Union Education and Training Committee should not arrange, say, a half-day workshop on the subject'. **The holding of this workshop opened the door to all subsequent progress.**

[1] 'Can the Transition to Individual Protection be Extended to Recognition of Relationships?: Same-Sex Couples and the Irish Experience of Sexual Orientation Law Reform Leo Flynn (c2000), Legal Secretary, Court of Justice of the European Communities



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General Secretary
Phil Flynn

(In Federation with the Irish Municipal Employees' Trade Union & the Psychiatric Nurses Association)

2nd May, 1985

Mr. Donal Nevin,
General Secretary,
Irish Congress of Trade Unions,
Congress House,
19, Raglan Rd.,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.

Dear Donal,

In 1982 our Union successfully sponsored a resolution at the I.C.T.U. Conference on the subject of discrimination against homosexuals in their employment.

This policy decision placed an onus on affiliated Unions to inform their members on the problems facing gay people in employment and in Irish society generally. Three years on, however, very little seems to have been achieved. Two possible reasons for this is that most Unions do not know how to approach the task and no process or channel exists by which gay people in employment can articulate their specific problems and difficulties. I wondered in the circumstances if the Executive Council would be prepared, under its Education programme, to sponsor a Seminar / Work Shop on the subject and which would be directed particularly at gay trade unionists.

Yours sincerely,

p.p. Valerie Wash

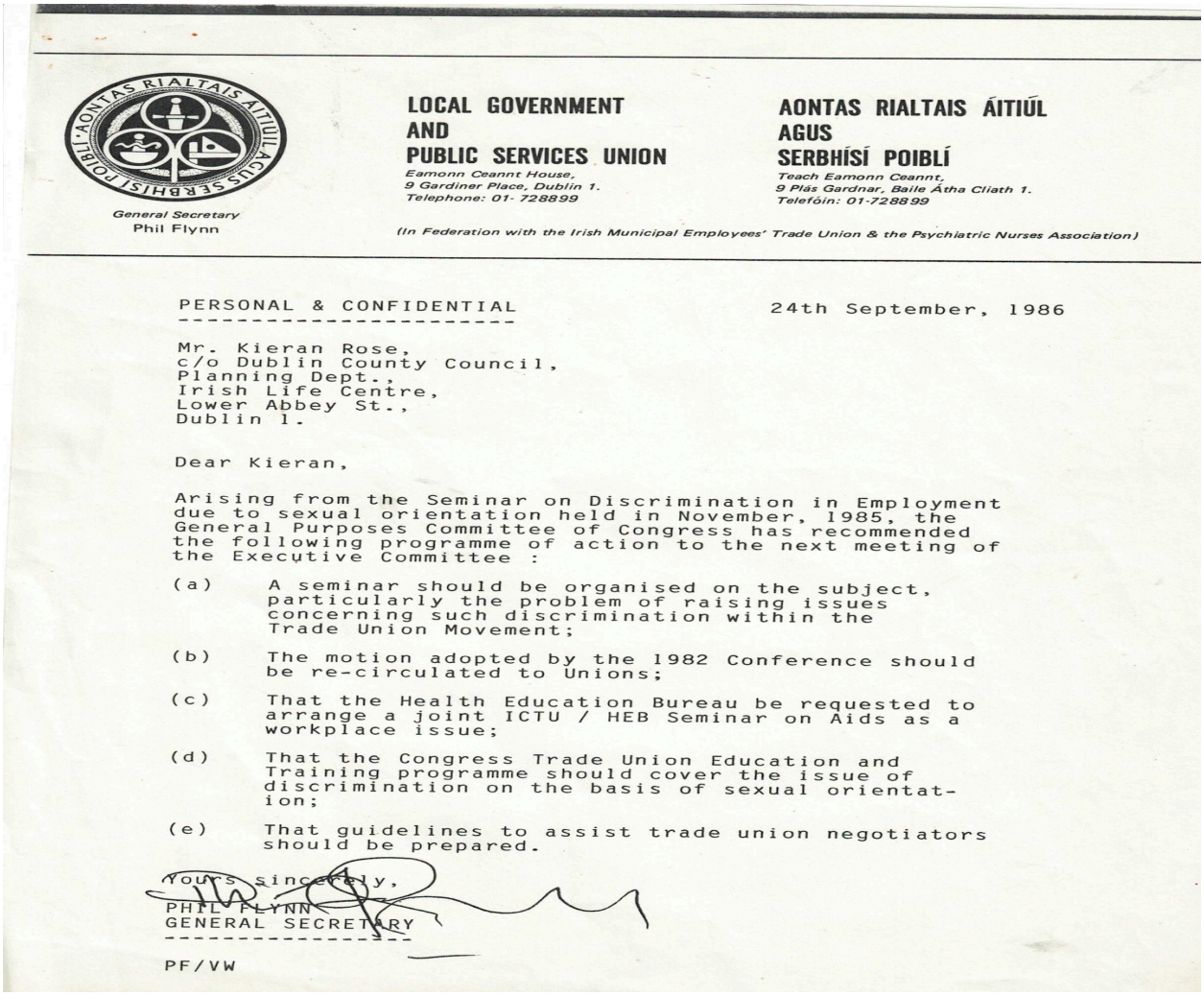
PHIL FLYNN
GENERAL SECRETARY

PF/VW

Kevin O'Driscoll, a senior official in the LGPSU, was also a great supporter and worked effectively on the ICTU Education and Training Committee, against some resistance, to ensure that a productive workshop was organised. On 16.10.1985 Michael O'Halloran ICTU Education and Training Officer writes to Kevin setting out the agenda for the workshop including that its purpose was to enable trade union representatives 'to discuss how unions might take a positive initiative to implementing the [1982] policy'. I spoke at the workshop which was held on 29 **November 1985. The workshop made a number of recommendations for further action** including that a working group be set up to progress actions (reports available). Kevin also worked doggedly on the General Purposes Committee of ICTU against some resistance to achieve their agreement in September 1986 to a ground-breakig 5 point action programme by ICTU including that 'Guidelines for Negotiators' be prepared.

The Northern Ireland Committee of ICTU also held a workshop in June 1986 attended by representatives of NIPSA, ASTMS, NUPE, NAPO (a report of 28.7.1986 by Ann Hope and Marie Quiery, ASTMS is available). Northern Ireland trade unions played a significant role in defending gay works during the fall out of the Kincora controversy.

On 24.9.86 Phil Flynn writes to me stating that; ‘ Arising from the Seminar on Discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation held in November 1985, the General Purposes Committee of Congress has recommended the following programme of action to the next meeting of the Executive Committee’. **This 5 point programme** including most importantly that Guidelines be prepared, a seminar be organised, the 1982 motion to be re-circulated to all Unions, the ICTU training programme should include issues of sexual orientation, and that a joint ICTU/Health Education Bureau seminar on HIV/AIDS in the workplace be organised. This was a major breakthrough, and a big improvement on a previous ICTU 3 point programme of July 1986 (see Appendix and see separate article; ‘IDATU Union: Progress for Lesbian and Gay Workers 1980s’).



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General Secretary
Phil Flynn

(In Federation with the Irish Municipal Employees' Trade Union & the Psychiatric Nurses Association)

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

24th September, 1986

Mr. Kieran Rose,
c/o Dublin County Council,
Planning Dept.,
Irish Life Centre,
Lower Abbey St.,
Dublin 1.

Dear Kieran,

Arising from the Seminar on Discrimination in Employment due to sexual orientation held in November, 1985, the General Purposes Committee of Congress has recommended the following programme of action to the next meeting of the Executive Committee :

(a) A seminar should be organised on the subject, particularly the problem of raising issues concerning such discrimination within the Trade Union Movement;

(b) The motion adopted by the 1982 Conference should be re-circulated to Unions;

(c) That the Health Education Bureau be requested to arrange a joint ICTU / HEB Seminar on Aids as a workplace issue;

(d) That the Congress Trade Union Education and Training programme should cover the issue of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation;

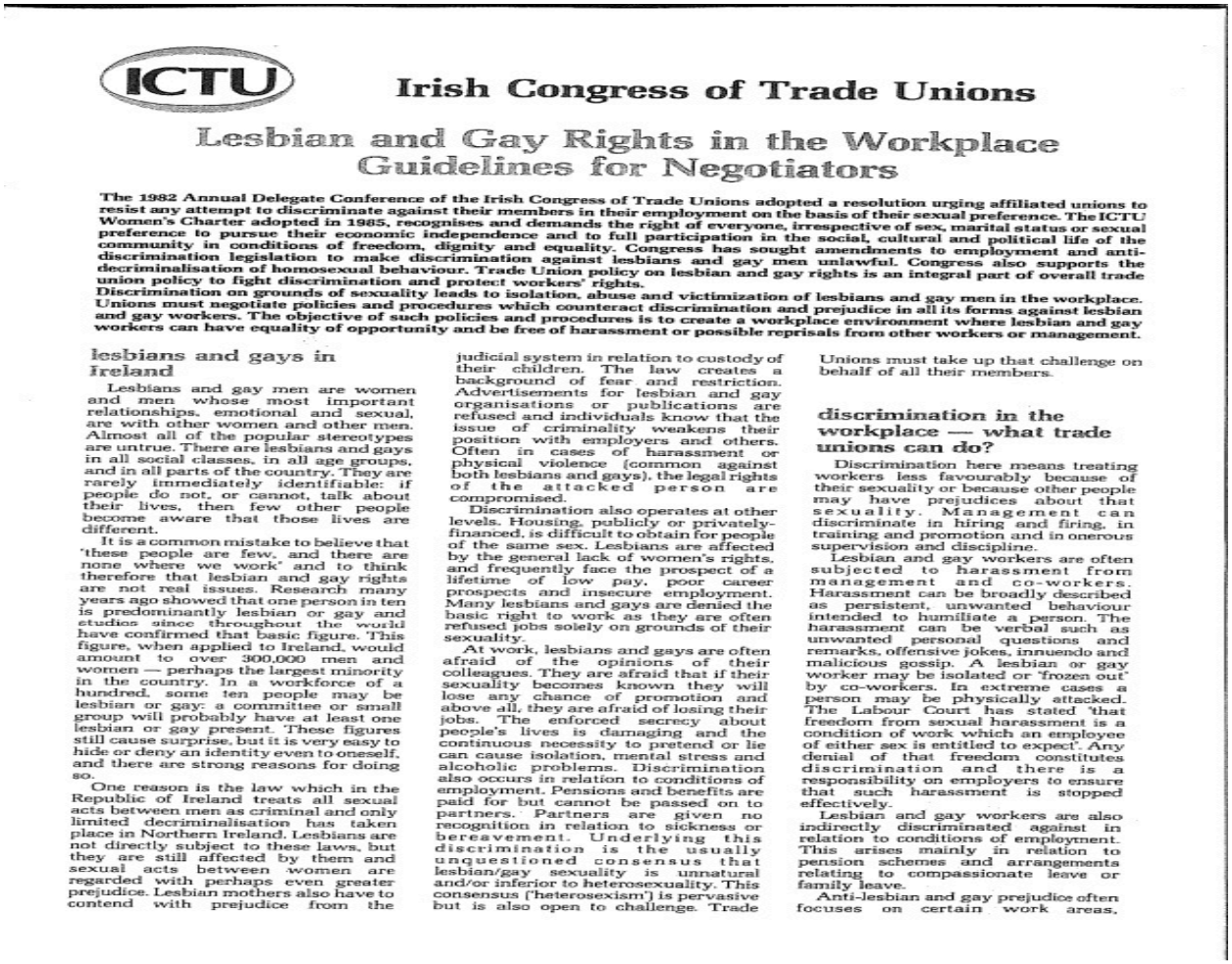
(e) That guidelines to assist trade union negotiators should be prepared.

Yours sincerely,

PHIL FLYNN
GENERAL SECRETARY

PF/VW

A working group chaired by Patricia O’Donovan (ICTU) was set up in December 1986 to prepare the Guidelines and Christopher Robson (UPTCS) and Kieran Rose (LGPSU) were on the working Group.



ICTU

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace Guidelines for Negotiators

The 1982 Annual Delegate Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions adopted a resolution urging affiliated unions to resist any attempt to discriminate against their members in their employment on the basis of their sexual preference. The ICTU Women's Charter adopted in 1985, recognises and demands the right of everyone, irrespective of sex, marital status or sexual preference to pursue their economic independence and to full participation in the social, cultural and political life of the community in conditions of freedom, dignity and equality. Congress has sought amendments to employment and anti-discrimination legislation to make discrimination against lesbians and gay men unlawful. Congress also supports the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour. Trade Union policy on lesbian and gay rights is an integral part of overall trade union policy to fight discrimination and protect workers' rights.

Discrimination on grounds of sexuality leads to isolation, abuse and victimization of lesbians and gay men in the workplace. Unions must negotiate policies and procedures which counteract discrimination and prejudice in all its forms against lesbian and gay workers. The objective of such policies and procedures is to create a workplace environment where lesbian and gay workers can have equality of opportunity and be free of harassment or possible reprisals from other workers or management.

lesbians and gays in Ireland

Lesbians and gay men are women and men whose most important relationships, emotional and sexual, are with other women and other men. Almost all of the popular stereotypes are untrue. There are lesbians and gays in all social classes, in all age groups, and in all parts of the country. They are rarely immediately identifiable: if people do not, or cannot, talk about their lives, then few other people become aware that those lives are different.

It is a common mistake to believe that 'these people are few, and there are none where we work' and to think therefore that lesbian and gay rights are not real issues. Research many years ago showed that one person in ten is predominantly lesbian or gay and studies since throughout the world have confirmed that basic figure. This figure, when applied to Ireland, would amount to over 300,000 men and women — perhaps the largest minority in the country. In a workforce of a hundred, some ten people may be lesbian or gay: a committee or small group will probably have at least one lesbian or gay present. These figures still cause surprise, but it is very easy to hide or deny an identity even to oneself, and there are strong reasons for doing so.

One reason is the law which in the Republic of Ireland treats all sexual acts between men as criminal and only limited decriminalisation has taken place in Northern Ireland. Lesbians are not directly subject to these laws, but they are still affected by them and sexual acts between women are regarded with perhaps even greater prejudice. Lesbian mothers also have to contend with prejudice from the judicial system in relation to custody of their children. The law creates a background of fear and restriction. Advertisements for lesbian and gay organisations or publications are refused and individuals know that the issue of criminality weakens their position with employers and others. Often in cases of harassment or physical violence (common against both lesbians and gays), the legal rights of the attacked person are compromised.

Discrimination also operates at other levels. Housing, publicly or privately-financed, is difficult to obtain for people of the same sex. Lesbians are affected by the general lack of women's rights, and frequently face the prospect of a lifetime of low pay, poor career prospects and insecure employment. Many lesbians and gays are denied the basic right to work as they are often refused jobs solely on grounds of their sexuality.

At work, lesbians and gays are often afraid of the opinions of their colleagues. They are afraid that if their sexuality becomes known they will lose any chance of promotion and above all, they are afraid of losing their jobs. The enforced secrecy about people's lives is damaging and the continuous necessity to pretend or lie can cause isolation, mental stress and alcoholic problems. Discrimination also occurs in relation to conditions of employment. Pensions and benefits are paid for but cannot be passed on to partners. Partners are given no recognition in relation to sickness or bereavement. Underlying this discrimination is the usually unquestioned consensus that lesbian/gay sexuality is unnatural and/or inferior to heterosexuality. This consensus ['heterosexism'] is pervasive but is also open to challenge. Trade Unions must take up that challenge on behalf of all their members.

discrimination in the workplace — what trade unions can do?

Discrimination here means treating workers less favourably because of their sexuality or because other people may have prejudices about that sexuality. Management can discriminate in hiring and firing, in training and promotion and in onerous supervision and discipline.

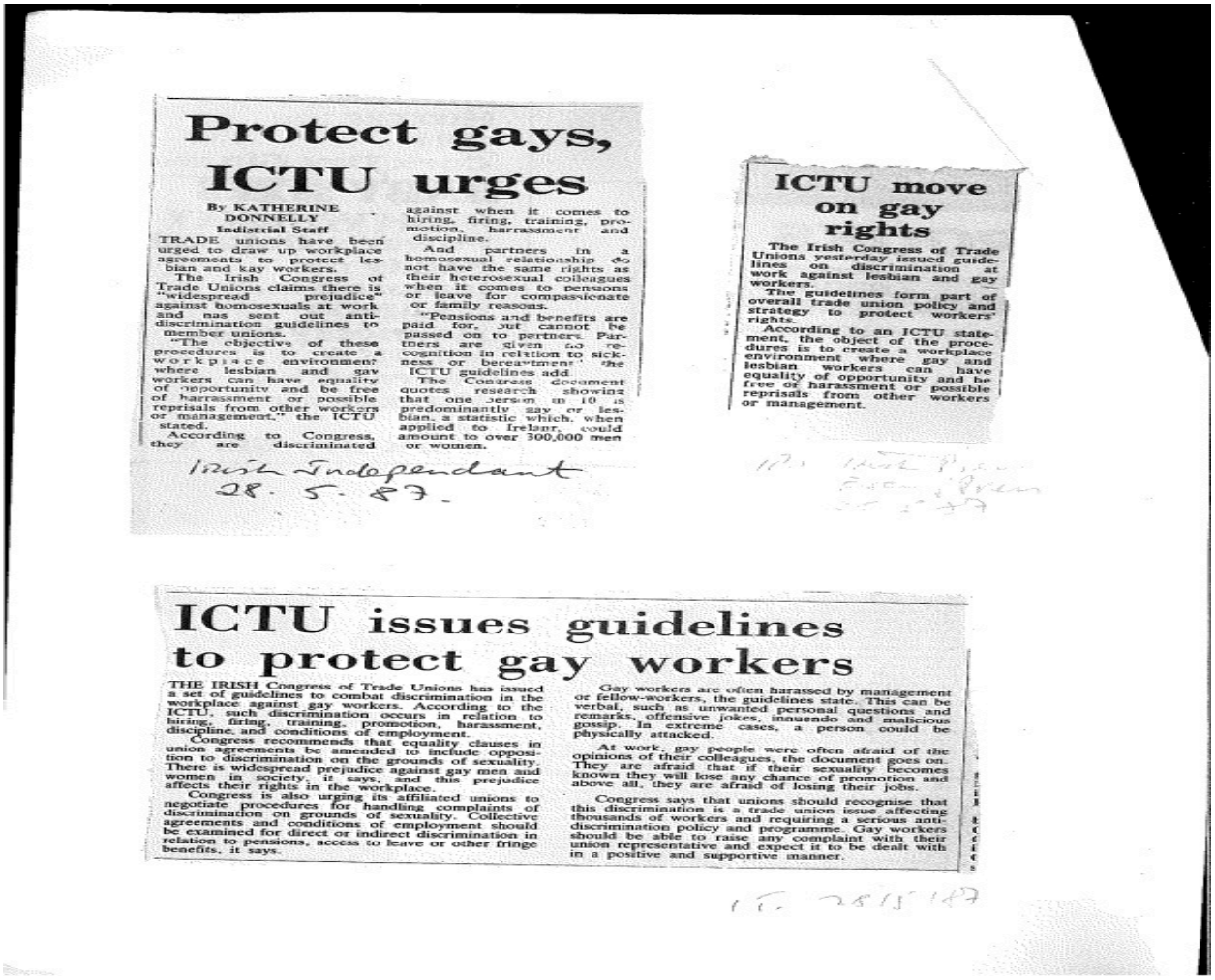
Lesbian and gay workers are often subjected to harassment from management and co-workers. Harassment can be broadly described as persistent, unwanted behaviour intended to humiliate a person. The harassment can be verbal such as unwanted personal questions and remarks, offensive jokes, innuendo and malicious gossip. A lesbian or gay worker may be isolated or 'frozen out' by co-workers. In extreme cases a person may be physically attacked. The Labour Court has stated 'that freedom from sexual harassment is a condition of work which an employee of either sex is entitled to expect'. Any denial of that freedom constitutes discrimination and there is a responsibility on employers to ensure that such harassment is stopped effectively.

Lesbian and gay workers are also indirectly discriminated against in relation to conditions of employment. This arises mainly in relation to pension schemes and arrangements relating to compassionate leave or family leave.

Anti-lesbian and gay prejudice often focuses on certain work areas,

In May 1987 ICTU published **'Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace: Guidelines for Negotiators',** a very strong and radical policy. This was the first time a powerful national organisation had come out with a detailed policy in favour of equality.

The launch of the Guidelines was well covered in the national media (28.5.1987) which was very important in winning over public opinion and elected representatives and building the narrative of equality for lesbians and gay men.



Protect gays, ICTU urges

By KATHERINE DONNELLY
Indistrial Staff

TRADE unions have been urged to draw up workplace agreements to protect lesbian and kay workers.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions claims there is "widespread prejudice" against homosexuals at work and has sent out anti-discrimination guidelines to member unions.

"The objective of these procedures is to create a workplace environment where lesbian and gay workers can have equality of opportunity and be free of harrassment or possible reprisals from other workers or management," the ICTU stated.

According to Congress, they are discriminated against when it comes to hiring, firing, training, promotion, harrassment and discipline.

And partners in a homosexual relationship do not have the same rights as their heterosexual colleagues when it comes to pensions or leave for compassionate or family reasons.

"Pensions and benefits are paid for, but cannot be passed on to partners. Partners are given no recognition in relation to sickness or bereavement" the ICTU guidelines add.

The Congress document quotes research showing that one person in 10 is predominantly gay or lesbian, a statistic which, when applied to Ireland, could amount to over 300,000 men or women.

Irish Independent 28.5.87.

ICTU move on gay rights

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions yesterday issued guidelines on discrimination at work against lesbian and gay workers.

The guidelines form part of overall trade union policy and strategy to protect workers' rights.

According to an ICTU statement, the object of the procedures is to create a workplace environment where gay and lesbian workers can have equality of opportunity and be free of harassment or possible reprisals from other workers or management.

ICTU issues guidelines to protect gay workers

THE IRISH Congress of Trade Unions has issued a set of guidelines to combat discrimination in the workplace against gay workers. According to the ICTU, such discrimination occurs in relation to hiring, firing, training, promotion, harassment, discipline, and conditions of employment.

Congress recommends that equality clauses in union agreements be amended to include opposition to discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. There is widespread prejudice against gay men and women in society, it says, and this prejudice affects their rights in the workplace.

Congress is also urging its affiliated unions to negotiate procedures for handling complaints of discrimination on grounds of sexuality. Collective agreements and conditions of employment should be examined for direct or indirect discrimination in relation to pensions, access to leave or other fringe benefits, it says.

Gay workers are often harassed by management or fellow-workers, the guidelines state. This can be verbal, such as unwanted personal questions and remarks, offensive jokes, innuendo and malicious gossip. In extreme cases, a person could be physically attacked.

At work, gay people were often afraid of the opinions of their colleagues, the document goes on. They are afraid that if their sexuality becomes known they will lose any chance of promotion and above all, they are afraid of losing their jobs.

Congress says that unions should recognise that this discrimination is a trade union issue affecting thousands of workers and requiring a serious anti-discrimination policy and programme. Gay workers should be able to raise any complaint with their union representative and expect it to be dealt with in a positive and supportive manner.

The 1987 Guidelines were the basic building block for future progress and were used extensively by GLEN in our campaign for an equality based gay law reform, for equality legislation, and job protection. They heavily influenced the Civil Service Circular (12/88) of June 1988 which states: 'discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or medical condition will not be tolerated in the civil service'.

Christopher Robson has a very interesting article, ‘Anatomy of a Campaign’, where he analyses GLENS campaign for equality, and the hugely important role of the trade unions. Regarding the 1987 Guidelines he writes how it was ‘an unapologetic and radical charter of rights’. ‘It also gave a mandate to the ICTU to intervene on our behalf in negotiations with government. They have done so ever since, to powerful effect’. One example is that on 24th May 1991 Peter Cassells General Secretary of ICTU wrote to the Minister for Justice that; ‘Congress would like to reiterate its concern at the inordinate delay in dealing with this matter [i.e. gay law reform] which affects the quality of life of thousands of Irish citizens’.

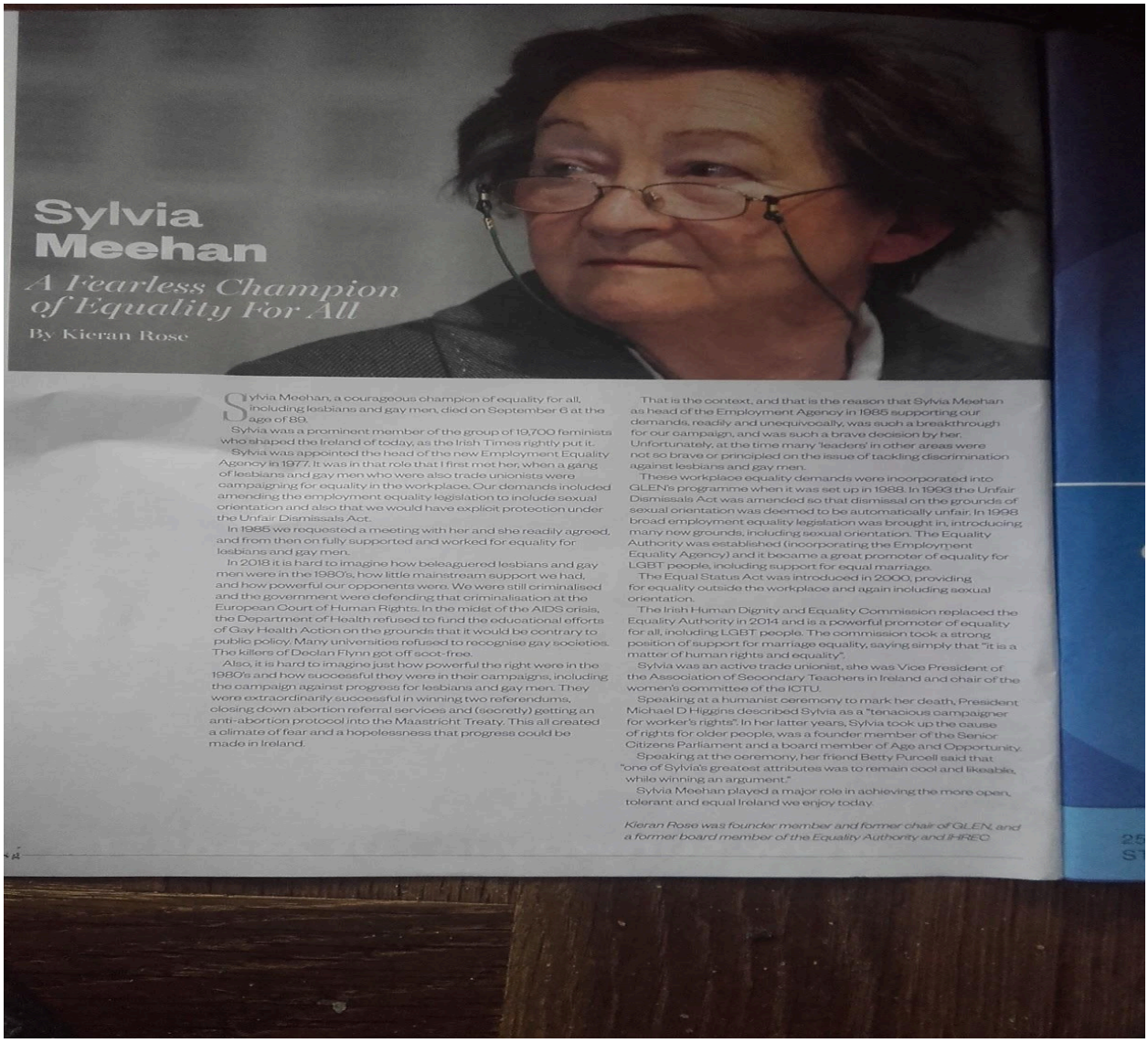
Chris continues: ‘The ICTU guidelines helped with the civil service policy: both were incorporated into ‘Equality Now for Lesbians and Gay Men’ (ICCL, 1990), which in turn was presented in its entirety to the Law Reform Commission. Right up to the end of the campaign all these documents, and many more, have worked as interconnecting elements in a comprehensive platform’. (See ‘Lesbian and Gay Visions of Ireland: Towards the 21st Century’ 1995, Ide O'Carroll, Eoin Collins (eds)) They were quoted in the gay law reform debates by Senator David Norris.

Kevin O’Driscoll organised a weekend training coure on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation on 6-8 November 1987 addressed by Patricia O’Donovan on ICTU policy, Michael D. Higgins TD and Kevin (see 5 page report and recommendations) which were adopted at the 1988 conference of the Union. I proposed the motion ‘That this Union adopt the recommendations of the seminar on gay and lesbian rights on Union policy and work through the ICTU for their implementation ‘ Dublin County Council Branch May 1988.

Dublin Council of Trade Unions in December 1989 passed a Motion from LGPSU Dublin County Council Branch proposed by myself supporting GLEN’s equality programme of gay law reform and equality legislation.

4. **Sylvia Meehan and the Employment Equality Agency**

On behalf of the ‘Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work’ group I wrote to Sylvia Meehan Chair of the Employment Equality Agency on 27.7.86. Sylvia replied on 5.8.86 saying she would be ‘very interested’ to meet and that it would be ‘very helpful’ if she could receive copies of the recommendations of the ICTU 1985 seminar. Subsequently in October 1986 the EEA recommended to Government that the Employment Equality Act 1977 be amended to include sexual orientation, this was a major breakthrough for a State agency to come out unequivocally in favour of equality, at a time when the Right were in the ascendant. Sylvia Meehan was a fearless champion of the rights of lebian and gay workers (see article I wrote for GCN October 2018)



Sylvia Meehan

A Fearless Champion of Equality For All

By Kieran Rose

Sylvia Meehan, a courageous champion of equality for all, including lesbians and gay men, died on September 6 at the age of 89.

Sylvia was a prominent member of the group of 19,700 feminists who shaped the Ireland of today, as the Irish Times rightly put it.

Sylvia was appointed the head of the new Employment Equality Agency in 1977. It was in that role that I first met her, when a gang of lesbians and gay men who were also trade unionists were campaigning for equality in the workplace. Our demands included amending the employment equality legislation to include sexual orientation and also that we would have explicit protection under the Unfair Dismissals Act.

In 1985 we requested a meeting with her and she readily agreed, and from then on fully supported and worked for equality for lesbians and gay men.

In 2018 it is hard to imagine how beleaguered lesbians and gay men were in the 1980's, how little mainstream support we had, and how powerful our opponents were. We were still criminalised and the government were defending that criminalisation at the European Court of Human Rights. In the midst of the AIDS crisis, the Department of Health refused to fund the educational efforts of Gay Health Action on the grounds that it would be contrary to public policy. Many universities refused to recognise gay societies. The killers of Declan Flynn got off scot-free.

Also, it is hard to imagine just how powerful the right were in the 1980's and how successful they were in their campaigns, including the campaign against progress for lesbians and gay men. They were extraordinarily successful in winning two referendums, closing down abortion referral services and (secretly) getting an anti-abortion protocol into the Maastricht Treaty. This all created a climate of fear and a hopelessness that progress could be made in Ireland.

That is the context, and that is the reason that Sylvia Meehan as head of the Employment Agency in 1985 supporting our demands, readily and unequivocally, was such a breakthrough for our campaign, and was such a brave decision by her. Unfortunately, at the time many 'leaders' in other areas were not so brave or principled on the issue of tackling discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

These workplace equality demands were incorporated into GLEN's programme when it was set up in 1988. In 1993 the Unfair Dismissals Act was amended so that dismissal on the grounds of sexual orientation was deemed to be automatically unfair. In 1998 broad employment equality legislation was brought in, introducing many new grounds, including sexual orientation. The Equality Authority was established (incorporating the Employment Equality Agency) and it became a great promoter of equality for LGBT people, including support for equal marriage.

The Equal Status Act was introduced in 2000, providing for equality outside the workplace and again including sexual orientation.

The Irish Human Dignity and Equality Commission replaced the Equality Authority in 2014 and is a powerful promoter of equality for all, including LGBT people. The commission took a strong position of support for marriage equality, saying simply that "it is a matter of human rights and equality".

Sylvia was an active trade unionist, she was Vice President of the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland and chair of the women's committee of the ICTU.

Speaking at a humanist ceremony to mark her death, President Michael D Higgins described Sylvia as a "tenacious campaigner for worker's rights". In her latter years, Sylvia took up the cause of rights for older people, was a founder member of the Senior Citizens Parliament and a board member of Age and Opportunity.

Speaking at the ceremony, her friend Betty Purcell said that "one of Sylvia's greatest attributes was to remain cool and likeable, while winning an argument."

Sylvia Meehan played a major role in achieving the more open, tolerant and equal Ireland we enjoy today.

Kieran Rose was founder member and former chair of GLEN, and a former board member of the Equality Authority and IHREC.

5. 1990 Labour Party Equal Status Bill, precursor to our Equality legislation

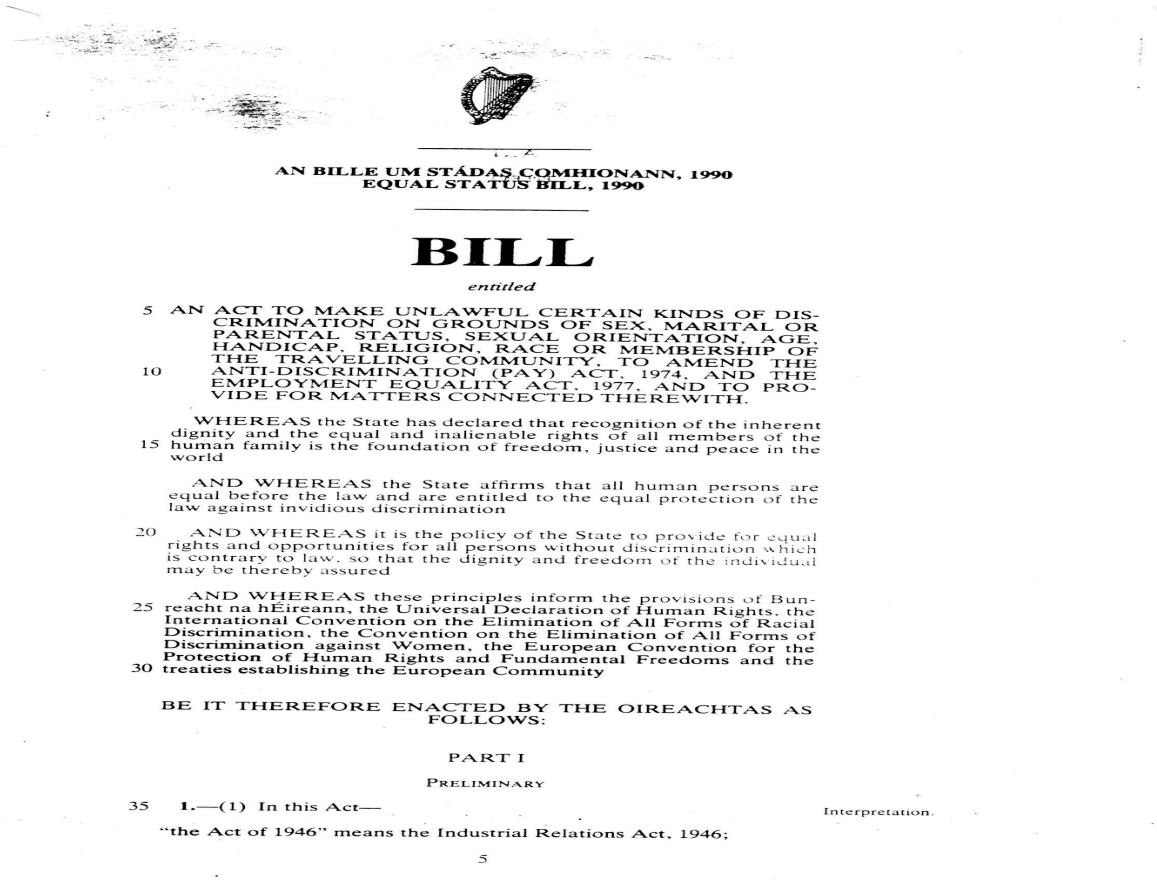
The ICTU Guidelines also fed into the ground-breaking Labour Party Equal Status Bill of 1990, the precursor of our current Equality legislation. The Labour Party published an Equal Status Bill in 1990 including sexual orientation etc, narrowly defeated in the Dail in 1992 by 63 votes to 67. This Bill (which included employment issues) was a model for the subsequent equality legislation introduced by Minister for Equality and Law Reform Mervyn Taylor.

GLEN lobbied for inclusion of sexual orientation and other grounds in that Bill and indeed gave them the Ontario Human Rights Act on which the Bill is based. Finbar O'Malley was the Labour

Party legal advisor at the time. I met Niamh Breathnach who was spokesperson at the time and she became a champion (from memory, the original intention was just to extend the Employment Equality Act to include services).

Sponsoring the Private Members Bill in 1992, Dick Spring Leader of the Labour Party said in the Dail: “This legislation sets out wider areas of discrimination than any legislation previously brought before the House. It sets out to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion, age, handicap, race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origin, including membership of the travelling community. It is only right that these provisions should be very wide. It is extremely important to ensure that this Bill is totally inclusive and that there are no exclusions. The second object of the Bill is to make discrimination unlawful not only in the workplace but also in education, in the provision of goods, facilities and services, including recreational, banking and other financial services, ntertainment, accommodation, transport and the services of any trade or profession and in the disposal or management of premises.”

Michael D Higgins also spoke supporting the Bill
https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/1990/14/?tab=debates



AN BILLE UM STÁDAS COMHIONANN, 1990
EQUAL STATUS BILL, 1990

BILL

entitled

AN ACT TO MAKE UNLAWFUL CERTAIN KINDS OF DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF SEX, MARITAL OR PARENTAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE, HANDICAP, RELIGION, RACE OR MEMBERSHIP OF THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY, TO AMEND THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION (PAY) ACT, 1974, AND THE EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACT, 1977, AND TO PROVIDE FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

WHEREAS the State has declared that recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world

AND WHEREAS the State affirms that all human persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law against invidious discrimination

AND WHEREAS it is the policy of the State to provide for equal rights and opportunities for all persons without discrimination which is contrary to law, so that the dignity and freedom of the individual may be thereby assured

AND WHEREAS these principles inform the provisions of Bunreacht na hÉireann, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the treaties establishing the European Community

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:

PART I

PRELIMINARY

1.—(1) In this Act— Interpretation.

"the Act of 1946" means the Industrial Relations Act, 1946;

5

Campaign for Equality: GLEN was instrumental in setting up the Campaign for Equality in 1991 which was an alliance of all groups vulnerable to discrimination including womens groups, people with disabilities, Travellers, to campaign for broad-ranging equality legislation and for an equality-based gay law reform.

The campaign was launched in October 1991 in the European Communities offices with speakers including; Monica Barnes, Chair Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights; **Patricia O'Donovan, Assistant Secretary General ICTU; Sylvia Meehan, Chief Executive, Employment Equality Agency;** and representatives from GLEN, the Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group; Forum of People with Disabilities; Council for the Status of Women and others.

The Employment Equality Bill 1996, and the Equal Status Bill 1997 were introduced by Mervyn Taylor, Minister for Equality and Law Reform and passed in 1997. "They were central to the Rainbow Coalition's raft of anti-discrimination legislation and sought to eliminate discrimination on nine grounds including gender, race, religion, disability and membership of the Travelling community in employment and in the provision of services. They were referred to the Supreme Court ([by President Mary Robinson], where both were found to be unconstitutional on

three grounds.
https://www.irishtimes.com/news/president-has-sole-discretion-to-decide-on-supreme-court-referral-1.287977

Amended equality legislation was subsequently enacted during the following Dáil term, i.e. the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000. The Equality Authority was set up under the Employment Equality Act 1998 and was established in October 1999. The Equality Authority replaced the Employment Equality Agency, and had a greatly expanded role and functions. In November 2014, the Equality Authority was merged with the irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to form **the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)**

6. Other LGPSU

I organised a worshop on gay issues at the **1984 LGPSU Conference in Bundoran** when I was part of the Cork Branch delegation. Subsequently I was asked by Bernard Harbor the editor of the LGPSU magazine 'Reporter' published in October 1984, 'Gay Rights - A Trade Union Concern'. At the time it was very difficult to get positive coverage of gay issues and this magazine went to workplaces throughout the country. I attended the NALGO lesbian and gay conference in Manchester sponsored by the Executive and the Cork Branch of LGPSU 20th-21st October 1984 (see 2 page report). THe Cork Branch LGPSU gives donation to Gay Information Cork and writes to Cork Examiner urging them to accept ads from Gay Information Cork, which they had been rejecting (1984). IMPACT policy document 'Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men' February 1995 was adopted by CEC on 27.1.95. 'A discussion document on the rights of lesbians and gay men was presented to and discussed at the 1993 Equality Conference' (Paddy Keating).

Fergus Finlay was the full-time official in Cork and I went to him to get his support before I came out publicly on radio. I was on temporary contracts with Cork County Council at the time, he was very supportive. Later GLEN had intensive contacts with Fergus on the need for an equality-based law reform and equality legislation when he was chief advisor to Dick Spring Leader of the Labour Party and Minister for Forign Affairs in 1990s. The Irish Government as part of its Presidency of the Commission got sexual orientation back into the Amsterdam Treaty with Dick Spring as Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1997. GLEN particularly Christopher Robson lobbied Noel Dorr and others to have sexual orientation included. Article 13 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and other and this gives the EU a competency in these matters. This was a breakthrough, and Ireland was responsible. Previously sexual orientation was dropped from the draft Treaty under the Dutch Presidency. In the lead up to the marriage equality referendum GLEN asked Fergus to address a number of meetings on effective campaigning strategies. Fergus later was on the Yes Equality Strategy Committee.

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

Bandaban LGPSU 1824

KIERAN ROSE

CORK BRANCH

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 INTRESTS 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 INTRESTS 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.

1984 LESBIAN & GAY ACTION

'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.

7. **The Union of Professional and Technical Civil Servants** also played a major role, UPTCS later merged with the LGPSU to form IMPACT, now Forsa. ‘An AIDS Policy for the Civil Service’, Civil Service Circular 12/88 was negotiated by Christopher Robson and Tom Lacey of UPTCS and others. It states: 'discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or medical condition will not be tolerated in the civil service'. This was a huge breakthrough, and ironic as we were still criminalised by the State. As Christopher notes it was issued in July 1988, four months before the Strasbourg judgement. ‘If the government considered such protection necessary for its own workers, then the argument for its extension to everyone else became unanswerable’ according to Christopher Robson. The policy was subsequently extended to all the public sector.

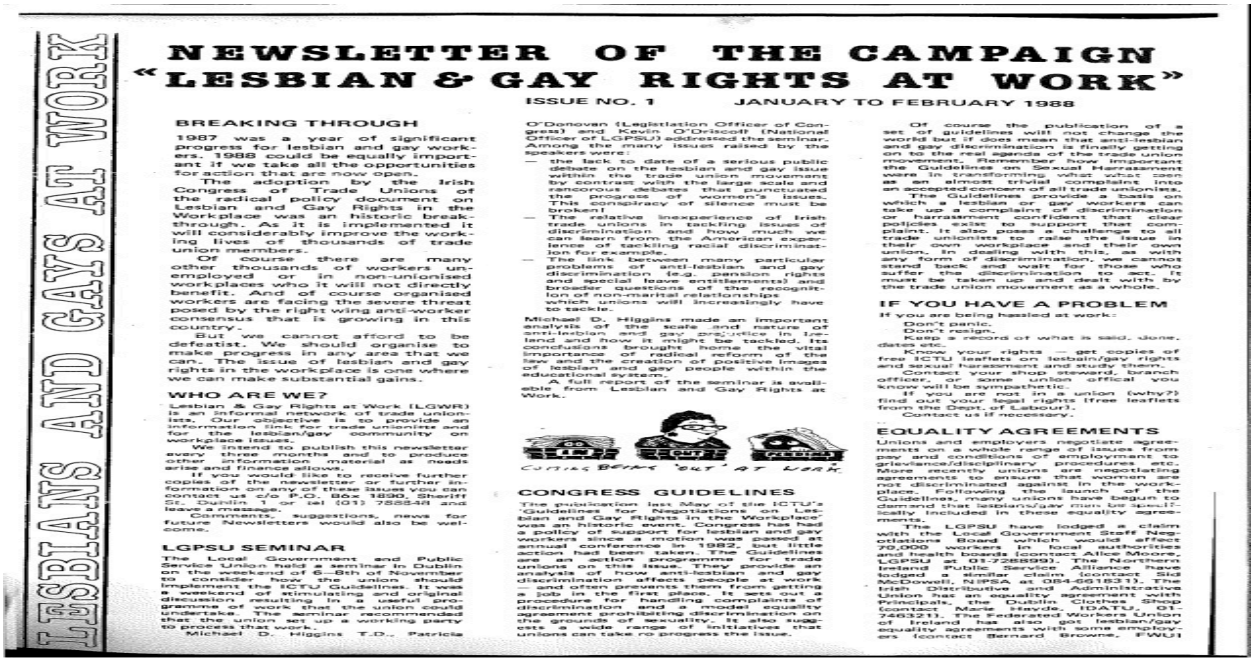
The inclusion of ‘sexual orientation in the Circular was used in the Seanad debates (30th November 1988) to support the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Bill; such inclusion was being opposed by the then Minister for Justice Gerry Collins. In the Dail on the 15th November 1989 the Minister for Justice Ray Burke (suddenly) accepted the sexual orientation amendment to general acclaim from all speakers.

8. ‘Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work’

‘Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work’ was an informal group of lesbians and gay men set up on 3.5.86 to campaign on issues of equality in the workplace, and in particular to follow-up on the recommendations of the ICTU 1985 seminar on lesbian and gay rights in the work place. In a sense this informal group was carrying out the policies and objectives agreed at the trade union workshop and adopted at the First National Gay Conference held in Connolly Hall Cork in 1981.

The meeting was held in LGPSU Head Offices and was briefly addressed by Kevin O’Driscoll, a national officer of the Union. It was agreed to draft a leaflet and that I be the convenor. A newsletter was produced in August 1986.

Individual trade union activists continued to work within their own Unions. For example, a report of a meeting held on 25.5.88 said that a motion proposed by Chris Robson calling on UPTCS to implement the ICTU Guidelines was passed at their ADC, there was some debate and this got media coverage. LGPSU passed a similar motion proposed by Kieran Rose on behalf of the Dublin County Council Branch. (see separate article on this group).



LESBIANS AND GAYS AT WORK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CAMPAIGN
"LESBIAN & GAY RIGHTS AT WORK"

ISSUE NO. 1 JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 1988

BREAKING THROUGH

1987 was a year of significant progress for lesbian and gay workers. 1988 could be equally important if we take all the opportunities for action that are now open.

The adoption by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions of the radical policy document on Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace was an historic breakthrough. As it is implemented it will considerably improve the working lives of thousands of trade union members.

Of course there are many other thousands of workers unemployed or in non-unionised workplaces who it will not directly benefit. And of course organised workers are facing the severe threat posed by the right wing anti-worker consensus that is growing in this country.

But we cannot afford to be defeatist. We should organise to make progress in any area that we can. The issue of lesbian and gay rights in the workplace is one where we can make substantial gains.

WHO ARE WE?

Lesbian & Gay Rights at Work (LGWR) is an informal network of trade unionists. Our objective is to provide an information link for trade unionists and for the lesbian/gay community on workplace issues.

We intend to publish this newsletter every three months and to produce other information material as needs arise and finance allows.

If you would like to receive further copies of the newsletter or further information on any of these issues you can contact us c/o P.O. Box 1890, Sheriff St., Dublin 1 or tel (01) 7858491 and leave a message.

Comments, suggestions, news for future Newsletters would also be welcome.

LGPSU SEMINAR

The Local Government and Public Service Union held a seminar in Dublin on the weekend of 6–8th of November to consider how the union should implement the ICTU Guidelines. It was a weekend of stimulating and original discussion resulting in a useful programme of work that the union could undertake. The seminar recommended that the union set up a working party to process that work.

Michael D. Higgins T.D., Patricia O'Donovan (Legislation Officer of Congress) and Kevin O'Driscoll (National Officer of LGPSU) addressed the seminar. Among the many issues raised by the speakers were:

- the lack to date of a serious public debate on the lesbian and gay issue within the trade union movement by contrast with the large scale and rancorous debates that punctuated the progress of women's issues. This conspiracy of silence must be broken!
- The relative inexperience of Irish trade unions in tackling issues of discrimination and how much we can learn from the American experience of tackling racial discrimination for example.
- The link between many particular problems of anti-lesbian and gay discrimination (e.g. pension rights and special leave entitlements) and broader questions of the recognition of non-marital relationships which unions will increasingly have to tackle.

Michael D. Higgins made an important analysis of the scale and nature of anti-lesbian and gay oppression in Ireland and how it might be tackled. Its conclusions he brought home the vital importance of radical reform of the law and the creation of positive images of lesbian and gay people within the educational system.

A full report of the seminar is available from Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work.

Comics Beware 'Out' at Work

CONGRESS GUIDELINES

The publication last May of the ICTU's 'Guidelines for Negotiations on Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace' was an historic event. Congress has had a policy of support for lesbian and gay workers since a motion was passed at annual conference in 1982, but little action had been taken. The Guidelines are an action programme for trade unions on this issue. They provide an analysis of how anti-lesbian and gay discrimination affects people at work — and often prevents them from getting a job in the first place. It sets out a procedure for handling complaints of discrimination and a model equality agreement prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. It also suggests a wide range of initiatives that unions can take ro progress the issue.

Of course the publication of a set of guidelines will not change the world but it does mean that anti-lesbian and gay discrimination is finally getting on to the real agenda of the trade union movement. Remember how important the Guidelines on Sexual Harrassment were in transforming what was seen as an almost trivial complaint into an accepted concern of all trade unionists.

The Guidelines provide a basis on which a lesbian or gay workers can take up a complaint of discrimination or harrassment confident that clear policies exist to support that complaint. It also poses a challenge to all trade unionists to raise the issue in their own workplace and their own union. In dealing with this, as with any form of discrimination, we cannot stand back and wait for those who suffer the discrimination to act. It must be taken up and dealt with by the trade union movement as a whole.

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

If you are being hassled at work:

Don't panic.
Don't resign.
Keep a record of what is said, done, dates etc.
Know your rights — get copies of free ICTU leaflets on lesbain/gay rights and sexual harassment and study them.
Contact your shop steward, branch officer, or some union official you know will be sympathetic.
If you are not in a union (why?) find out your legal rights (free leaflets from the Dept. of Labour).
Contact us if necessary.

EQUALITY AGREEMENTS

Unions and employers negotiate agreements on a whole range of issues from pay and conditions of employment to grievance/disciplinary procedures etc. More recently unions are negotiating agreements to ensure that women are not discriminated against in the workplace. Following the launch of the Guidelines, many unions have begun to demand that lesbian/gay rights be specifically included in these equality agreements.

The LGPSU have lodged a claim with the Local Government Staff Negotiations Board which would affect 70,000 workers in local authorities and health boards (contact Alice Moore, LGPSU at 01-726599). The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance have lodged a similar claim (contact Sid McDowell, NIPSA at 084-66183). The Irish Distributive and Administrative Union has an equality agreement with Principals, the Dublin Clothes Shop (contact Marie Hayde, IDATU, 01-746321). The Federated Workers Union of Ireland has also got lesbian/gay equality agreements with some employers (contact Bernard Browne, FWUI

9. Seanad Debates on ECHR Judgement 1990

This was a debate (12th December 1990) on the need for gay law reform following the ECHR ruling of 1988 striking down the anti-gay laws. The Minister for Justice Ray Burke spoke quite positively.

Senator John A. Murphy said: 'I find it hard to evade the conclusions of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network in their letter to Senators which I received this morning when they say that: "Not only must the criminalisation of homosexuality be removed but there must be anti-discrimination laws as well"'

Senator Upton referred to the Labour Party Equal Status Bill and also to the ICTU 'Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace' policy. Senator O'Toole referred to the long-standing policy of the trade union movement in favour of gay law reform. HIV/AIDS was an issue that came up in a lot of these debates.

10. Unfair Dismissals Act

The inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected ground in the Unfair Dismissals Act was part of the LGPSU motion adopted in 1982 and a key objective of GLEN and previous campaign groups. GLEN campaigned very strongly to have sexual orientation included in the Unfair Dismissals Act and part of this campaign was to get various trade unions and others to write to the various Ministers for Labour supporting this demand, and these Ministers included; Ruairi Quinn, Bertie Aherne, Brian Cowan, and finally Mary O'Rourke. Phil Flynn wrote to Brian Cowan Minister for Labour on 8th April 1992 recommending that sexual orientation be included in the

Unfair Dismissals Act. According to Christopher Robson in his article ‘Anatomy of a Campaign’; ‘No file we were told was ever bigger in the Dept. of Labour.’

The Unfair Dismissals (Amendment) Bill including sexual orientation was introduced into the Senate on 10th March 1993 by the Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise and Employment Mary O'Rourke, who GLEN had met some time previously. Ruairi Quinn was the senior Minister in that Dept. Interestingly the gay law reform Bill was not introduced into the Oireactas until 15th June 1993.



IMPACT
The Public Sector Trade Union

Joint General Secretaries: Phil Flynn and Greg Maxwell 9 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1. Telephone 728899 Fax 728715

8 April, 1992

Mr. B. Cowan, T.D.,
Minister for Labour,
Dept. of Labour,
Davitt House,
Adelaide Rd.,
Dublin 2.

Dear Minister,

RE : REVIEW – UNFAIR DISMISSALS ACT

I write in connection with the review which you are currently carrying out of the Unfair Dismissals Act and specifically to reiterate the earlier request that you amend the legislation to outlaw dismissal on grounds of "sexual orientation".

While such cases are difficult to establish we are satisfied that an already vulnerable group in our society are made more vulnerable by the absence of such a provision.

Yours sincerely,

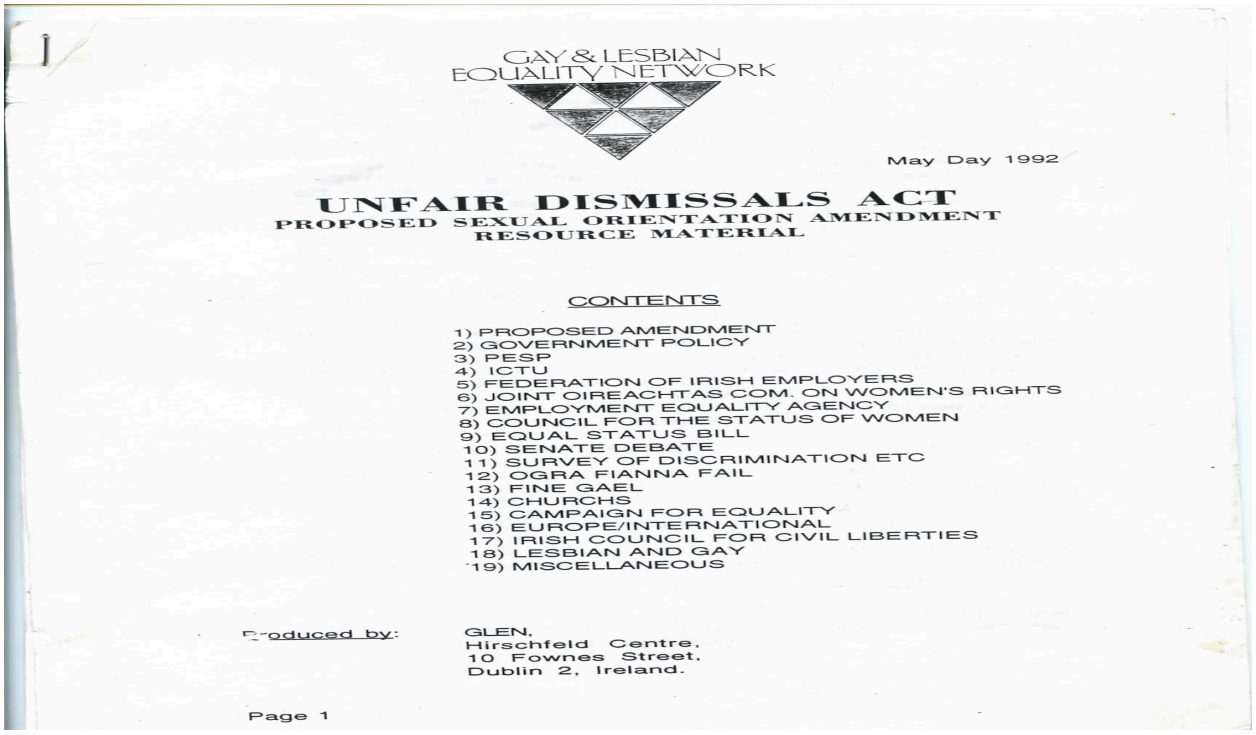
PHIL FLYNN
GENERAL SECRETARY
(INDUSTRIAL)

pf/vw

The Minister also said that the Bill was the **‘first step’ towards enactment of legislation by Maire Geoghegan Quinn (gay law reform) and Mervyn Taylor’s equality legislation.** The Minister referred to the inclusion of ‘sexual orientation’ in the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act.

The amendment was widely welcomed by all political parties. One Senator said that the sexual orientation amendment ‘attracted media attention by virtue of its sexual connotation’. Senator

Joe O'Toole General Secretary of the INTO said that they had been calling for this legislation for a long time, his members were 'worried' about possible dismissals.
https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/1993/10/?tab=debates



GAY & LESBIAN EQUALITY NETWORK

May Day 1992

UNFAIR DISMISSALS ACT
PROPOSED SEXUAL ORIENTATION AMENDMENT
RESOURCE MATERIAL

CONTENTS

1) PROPOSED AMENDMENT
2) GOVERNMENT POLICY
3) PESP
4) ICTU
5) FEDERATION OF IRISH EMPLOYERS
6) JOINT OIREACHTAS COM. ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS
7) EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY AGENCY
8) COUNCIL FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN
9) EQUAL STATUS BILL
10) SENATE DEBATE
11) SURVEY OF DISCRIMINATION ETC
12) OGRA FIANNA FAIL
13) FINE GAEL
14) CHURCHS
15) CAMPAIGN FOR EQUALITY
16) EUROPE/INTERNATIONAL
17) IRISH COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES
18) LESBIAN AND GAY
19) MISCELLANEOUS

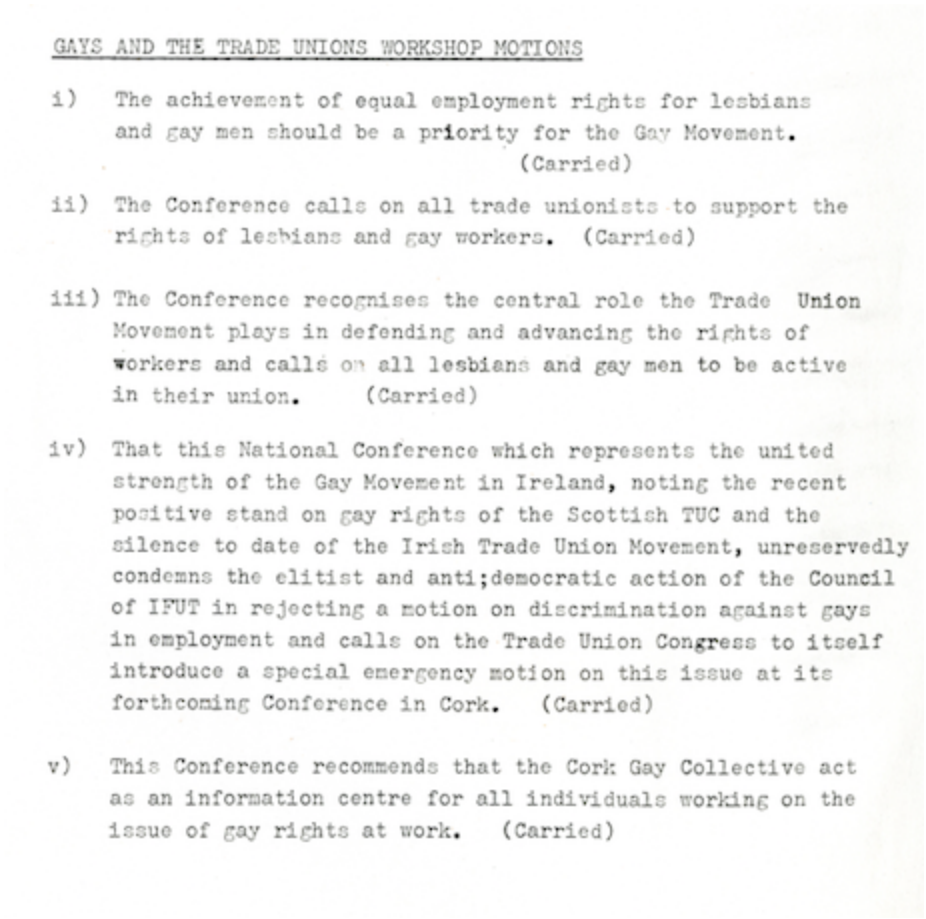
Produced by: GLEN,
Hirschfeld Centre,
10 Fownes Street,
Dublin 2, Ireland.

Appendix

Cork LGBT Archive
LGBT Workers Rights And Irish Trade Unions COLLECTION. Very good on-line collection of documents, photos. http://corklgbtarchive.com/collections/show/2

The Struggle for LGBT Workers' Rights Ireland
This is a very good summary article of 2019 by Orla Egan
https://orlaegan.wordpress.com/2019/11/05/the-struggle-for-lgbt-workers-rights-ireland-orla-egan/

See my linkedin slideshare for various documents
E.g. https://www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/trade-unions-lesbians-and-gay-men-glen



GAYS AND THE TRADE UNIONS WORKSHOP MOTIONS

i) The achievement of equal employment rights for lesbians and gay men should be a priority for the Gay Movement. (Carried)

ii) The Conference calls on all trade unionists to support the rights of lesbians and gay workers. (Carried)

iii) The Conference recognises the central role the Trade Union Movement plays in defending and advancing the rights of workers and calls on all lesbians and gay men to be active in their union. (Carried)

iv) That this National Conference which represents the united strength of the Gay Movement in Ireland, noting the recent positive stand on gay rights of the Scottish TUC and the silence to date of the Irish Trade Union Movement, unreservedly condemns the elitist and anti;democratic action of the Council of IFUT in rejecting a motion on discrimination against gays in employment and calls on the Trade Union Congress to itself introduce a special emergency motion on this issue at its forthcoming Conference in Cork. (Carried)

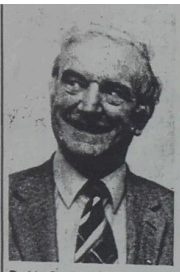
v) This Conference recommends that the Cork Gay Collective act as an information centre for all individuals working on the issue of gay rights at work. (Carried)

Trade Union workshop and Motions adopted at First National Gay Conference in Connolly Hall, (ITGWU/SIPTU) Cork 1981 which set the agenda for the next number of years

ICTU backs gay rights and divorce

ICTU annual conference

Reports from Belfast by VIVION KILFEATHER



Paddy Cardiff: paving the way for union mergers.

Delegates attending the annual conference of the ICTU in Belfast yesterday supported the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour between consenting male adults and a separate motion calling for divorce legislation to be introduced.

Both motions came in the last half-hour of the closing session of the four-day conference yesterday, and they were not opposed by anyone.

Brendan McCartin, of the Irish Federation of University Teachers, proposing the motion on homosexuality, said they should resist any attempt to discriminate against trade union members in their employment on the basis of their sexual orientation.

On the motion dealing with divorce, proposed by Josephine Walsh, of the F.W.U.I., it was pointed out that the irretrievable breakdown of marriages did occur and divorce should be allowed as a civil right.

The conference also passed a motion calling for a ban on plastic bullets in the North and another which called for the support of Congress for trade union rights in Poland.

The new Congress president, Mr. Paddy Cardiff, expressed the wish that some progress would be made in the year ahead on the rationalisation of the movement.

Congress now has 92 unions affiliated to it, and efforts are expected to be made shortly to bring about an amalgamation of some of them.

Mr. Cardiff, who is general secretary of the country's second biggest union, the F.W.U.I. said that Congress would be looking at ways of simplifying the rationalisation procedure and he hoped that a package would emerge which would make it more attractive for unions to amalgamate.

But one of the greatest problems facing the movement in the year ahead would be unemployment, he added.

Mr. Matt Merrigan, branch secretary of the ATGWU, said that the trade union movement would be opposed to the proposed 30% new flat tax rate put forward by the Irish Commission on Taxation.

Mr. Merrigan said that what the unions were seeking basically was wider bands at the lower levels which would be kept level with inflation. He said the 30% flat rate did not take into account the hierarchial situation of people in terms of wealth.

He said it would appear that the ending of P.R.S.I. would mean that there would be no P.R.S.I. benefits which could be inequitable depending on family needs and requirements.

Unless social welfare benefits were inflation-proof it could mean that in a matter of years a massive reduction in real terms of social welfare benefits in situations of unemployment and long illness could occur. It is understood that part of the commission's proposals will mean an expenditure tax ranging between 35 and 85 per cent on almost all purchases above £15,000 a year, excluding cars houses and clothing.

Leaders of the IT&GWU and the FWUI were not prepared to comment on the report today until they were satisfied that the details leaked to one Dublin newspaper were officially announced.

Mr. John F. Carroll, the ITGWU president, said that international tension in recent years had brought the awesome threat of nuclear war even closer.

He said that as the worldwide recession deepened there had been a growing temptation for governments to seize the opportunity for a Foreign Ministry adventure in order to distract public attention from political and economic problems at home. It was curious, said Mr. Carroll, how money which was unavailable to cut the dole queues could suddenly flow in abundance to finance wars abroad.

In view of the growing pressure towards war, people were faced with two basic choices. Either they accepted the inevitability of war and take sides with one or other of the main protagonists, or they reunounce war utterly and campaign positively for peace and disarmament.

The greatest threat to our neutrality had come from the process of gradual erosion as a result of our participation in the Common Market, Mr. Carroll said. Since the member states had adopted the practice of co-ordinating their foreign policies, Ireland, as the single non-alligned state in the EEC, had been drawn more and more into an unwritten political as well as economic alliance with the other nine who were all members of NATO.

Defence of the neutrality of the Irish State, rather than a bogus neutral policy by the Irish Government, was of interest to all the people of this island North and South.

Disarmament was therefore one of the most urgent demands to be made upon the international community and each government should play a stronger part in lessening international tensions so that the present criminal expenditure on weapons of destruction could be channelled into peaceful and creative wards.

"It is an intolerable crime against humanity that at a time when the vast majority of people in the world live in abject poverty so much of the world's precious resources were devoted to the cause of wars and destruction" said Mr. Carroll.

The conference is continuing.

I, Ashton Flats
Blackrock
Cork.

tel. 26891 (work)
967141 (home)

23.4.85

Dear Phil,

Enclosed is the proposal for a workshop on discrimination against lesbian and gay workers. Also enclosed is a summary report of the meeting in Waterford.

Lesbians and gay men down here working in the Quay Co-op are members of IDATU and met JohnMitchel recently at a workers co-op. seminar. Inez McCormack was very supportive when we met her - you would know the others on the Executive.

The ESBOA "pack" of leaflets is enclosed. Iread a really good booklet recently - "Nothing But the Same Old Story" (GLC funded) - this is a history of anti-Irish racism in Britain and it brought home to me how we are the subjects of racism and how we then turn on the travellers. Its in Books Upstairs or I can send you on my copy.

REPORT BACK by the GAY COLLECTIVE GALWAY

I enjoyed talking with you and came away witha good "warm" feeling - in fact I had a great time in Dublin that w[illegible] and came back with more energy and a reassessed view of personal/political things.

Best wishes

P.S. Also enclosed is a letter confirming that I went to the Manchester meeting - the person in the accounts section said that this was necessary before I would be paid.

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4

9 May 1985

Mr. Phil Flynn,
General Secretary,
Local Government and Public Services Union,
9 Gardiner Place,
DUBLIN 1.

Dear Colleague,

Re your letter of 2 May, the Motion adopted by the 1982 Annual Delegate Conference regarding job discrimination on sexual grounds urged affiliated Unions to resist any attempt to discriminate against their members in their employment on the basis of their sexual orientation. This Motion was circulated to affiliated organisations following the Conference but we have no information as to what action, if any, Unions took on the matter.

Regarding your suggestion that there should be a Seminar/Workshop arranged by Congress on the problems of discrimination against Trade Unionists on the basis of their sexual orientation, I see no reason why our Trade Union Education and Training Committee should not arrange, say, a half-day workshop on the subject. I have forwarded your request to the Acting Education and Training Officer who will take the matter up with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Donal Nevin

Donal Nevin
General Secretary

dn/mmcs

L. G. & P. S. U.
Recd. 10 MAY 1985
ATTN OF PF
FILE NO.
ACTN.

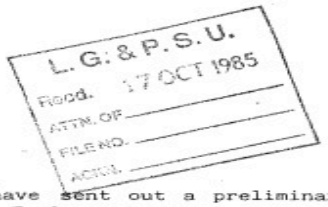
IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

Education and Training Service

31 Parnell Square, Dublin 1
Telephone: 748221

tel 728891.

Mr. Kevin O'Driscoll,
National Officer,
L.G.P.S.U.,
9, Gardiner Place,
Dublin, 1.



16th October 1985

Dear Colleague,

As you are aware I have sent out a preliminary notice for the Workshop on "Discrimination in Employment based on a Person's Sexual Orientation" and at the meeting of the Education and Training Committee on Monday 14th October, the format was approved as follows:

1. 2.00-3.00 The Social and Legal Position in Ireland.
2. 3.00-4.00 Practical Experience of Discrimination in Employment.
3. 4.15-5.00 Work in Groups.
4. 5.00-6.00 Reports and Points for Further Action.

The purpose of this workshop is to enable Trade Union Representatives to examine the policy adopted by Congress on this type of sexual discrimination and to enable them to discuss how unions might take a positive initiative to implementing the policy.

The format suggested in the memo sent to you is unsuitable for a Trade Union seminar. Such a seminar might best be organised by an affiliated union and the desirability of organising such seminars can be discussed at the Workshop.

Yours sincerely,

Michael O'Halloran

Michael O'Halloran,
Education and Training Officer.

MOH/sk

c/o Quay Co-op.
24, Sullivans Quay
Cork.

4.9.1985

Kevin O'Driscoll
L.G.P.S.U.

Dear Kevin,

Seven of us met last Thursday to discuss the forthcoming workshop on discrimination against lesbian and gay workers (two from our Union, four from IDATU and one from the ITGWU). We all agreed that it was a great opportunity and well worth putting serious work into. In particular we agreed:

I. Format	9.30 -10.30	General Introduction to issue Statement by lesbian " gay man Report on Kincora
		BREAK
	11.00-12.00	Workshops
	12.00-1.00	Reports from workshops and discussion
		LUNCH
	2.15-3.00	Structures/Policies of ICTU Progress made by Women " " " NALGO
	3.00-3.45	Workshops
	4.00-5.00	Reports and Recommendations

2. To make the most effective use of the day, background papers and speeches should be sent out to people as soon as they register.

3. If numbers are limited, priority should be given to women and also gay men

4. It is important to recognise the needs of the many lesbians/gay men who have to hide their sexuality. It should be possible for people to come without being nominated by their Branches. Great need to get wider than usual publicity for the workshop, and as soon as possible.

5. representatives should be invited from E.E.A., Y.E.A., AnCo, Dept. of Labour and also people representing the unemployed and lesbian mothers (who are unlikely to be still in Unions)

We decided to meet again on the 12.9.1985

Best wishes,

I.C.T.U. **SEMINAR ON DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT**

in relation to

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (NOV.'85)

Report from Workshop No. 3 on "The Role of Trade Unions".

In this workshop participants identified the role of Trade Unions under two headings:

(a) Their role in the education and training of full - time and lay officials, shop stewards and members on Discrimination in Employment in relation to Sexual Orientation.

(b) Their broader role in dealing with attitudinal prejudice in Irish society.

The following recommendations and proposals were made:

(1) Seminar on Dealing with Discrimination at Workplace Level:

In the workshop it was recognised that at present in Irish workplaces gay and lesbian workers often find it extremely difficult to raise issues concerning them with shop stewards or Union Officials for fear of an unsympatetic, hearing attitudinal prejudice, ignorance, etc. The workshop recommended that the I.C.T.U. organise a one day Workshop/Seminar on Gay and Lesbian Workers to discuss this problem, with a view to making suggestions as to how best it might be dealt with, within the present trade union structure. It was recommended that this Workshop/Seminar be organised on a Saturday so that the vast majority of intending participants would not have to seek release from work, and also consideration be given to allowing participants to attend without nomination from their Union as some participants had found difficulty in obtaining nominations to attend this Seminar.

(2) Further Seminars on Discimination in Employment in Relation to Sexual Orientation

Given the level of ignorance, misinformation, prejudice etc. prevalent on this issue within the Trade Union Movement. The workshop recommended further Seminars on this subject, and also that it be incorporated in the form of "Case Studies" etc. on Shop Stewards and other Congress Courses.

Working Party on Discimination in Employment in relation to Sexual Orientation

The workshop recommended that following the Seminar a recommendation be submitted to the I.C.T.U. Executive Council for the establishment of a "Working Party on Discrimination in Employment in Relation to Sexual Orientation" and its work would comprise the following:

(a) The preparation of information leaflets, booklets etc. for distribution to Shop Stewards, members, Trade Union Officials etc. (It was noted that the E.S.B.O.A. already had a number of Publications).

(b) Drawing up of Guidelines for Negotiators on discrimination in employment in relation to sexual orientation.

(c) Monitoring of incidences of discrimination in all workplaces including workplaces which are prohibited by their contract of service from joining a union such as Garda, Defence forces etc.

.../cont.

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4

Our Reference: 1603

RECEIVED 17 JUL 1986

15 July 1986

RECEIVED 16 JUL 1986

Mr. John P. Mitchell
General Secretary
Irish Distributive and Administrative
Trade Union
O'Lehane House
9 Cavendish Row
DUBLIN 1

Dear Colleague

With reference to your letters of 9 June and 14 July 1986 concerning the seminar on discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation held in November 1985, the position is that such seminars do not make recommendations to the Executive Council as participants are expressing their personal views. In any case there are no means by which participants at seminars can formulate recommendations since seminars are precluded from taking any decisions. The seminar in question was organised as an information/ education function by the Congress Education and Training Service. Unions' views on any matter are expressed either through Annual Conference or directly by communication with Congress.

A report on the seminar referred to was received from the Education and Training Officer on 27 January 1986 and this was considered by the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 10 February. Arising from the discussion on the report the General Purposes Committee decided that a number of the recommendations in the report dealt with matters of policy and could not be accepted by Congress, but that the other proposals could be implemented. These latter were as follows:

(a) A further seminar could be organised if required on the subject of discrimination due to sexual orientation, particularly the problem of raising issues concerning such discrimination within the Trade Union Movement;

(b) The 1982 Annual Conference motion on job discrimination on sexual grounds should be forwarded to Unions who should be requested to forward information on progress made in resisting such discrimination;

(c) The Health Education Bureau should be requested to organise an education programme on sexually-transmitted diseases.

Over/

As I have indicated, participants have no function in making recommendations to the Executive Council. However, if your Union, or yourself as a member of the Executive Council, wishes to have the matter of discrimination in employment due to sexual orientation considered by the Executive Council, then the matter could be put on the agenda.

Yours sincerely

Donal Nevin
General Secretary

dn/ag

[redacted]

Employment Equality Agency
Gníomhaireacht um Chomhionannas Fostaíochta

36 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2. Telephone (01) 605966
36 Sráid an Mhóta Uacht, Baile Átha Cliath 2. Teileafón (01)605966



Chairperson
Cathaoirleach: Sylvia Meehan

Ir. Kieron Rose,
Trasmere,
9 Greenfield Road,
Sutton,
Dublin 13.

Our Ref/Ár dTag: Your Ref/Bhur dTag: Date/Dáta: 05/08/1986

Dear Mr. Rose,

Your letter arrived just as I was going on annual leave.

I should be very interested to meet you in September and it would be very helpful if prior to that meeting, you would let us have a copy of the recommendations, particularly those relating to the EEA, which were drawn up at the ICTU November Conference.

I shall be away during August but will be happy to arrange the meeting in early September. Perhaps you would ring me then.

Yours sincerely,

pp.
Sylvia Meehan
Chairperson

[redacted]

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4

F

(1)

Ms. Ellen Breen
Higher Executive Officer
Department of Labour
Mespil Road
Dublin 4

26 November 1986

Dear Ms. Breen

Your letter of 28 October to the General Secretary on the question of making discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation unlawful under the Employment Equality Act, 1977 has been referred to me for reply.

Congress policy on this question arises from the following resolution which was adopted in 1982 by our Annual Delegate Conference:

"Conference supports the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour between consenting male adults in private and as a consequence of such support urges affiliated unions to resist any attempt to discriminate against their members in their employment on the basis of their sexual orientation".

Further to the adoption of this resolution, Congress sought amendments to both the Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977 and the Employment Equality Act, 1977 to cover discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Furthermore, the Women's Charter adopted by Congress in 1985 to mark the end of the U.N. Decade for Women includes the following statement:

"The Irish Congress of Trade Unions recognises and demands the right of everyone, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, creed, political opinion, age, sex, marital status or sexual orientation to have the means to pursue their economic independence and to full participation in the social, cultural and political life of the community in conditions of freedom, dignity and equal opportunity".

Clearly, in view of these policies and statements, Congress fully supports the position of the Employment Equality Agency on this. As I have pointed out, Congress itself already has sought such an amendment to the Act.

Yours sincerely

Patricia O'Donovan
Legislation and Equality Officer

pod/lg

General Secretary: Donal Nevin

Telephone 680641

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES UNION.

TRAINING COURSE REGARDING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

6th, 7th and 8th NOVEMBER 1987

DERGVALE HOTEL / 7 GARDINER PLACE, DUBLIN 1

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY

7.30 p.m.	:	Evening Meal, Dergvale Hotel.
8.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.	:	Opening Session - General Discussion.

SATURDAY

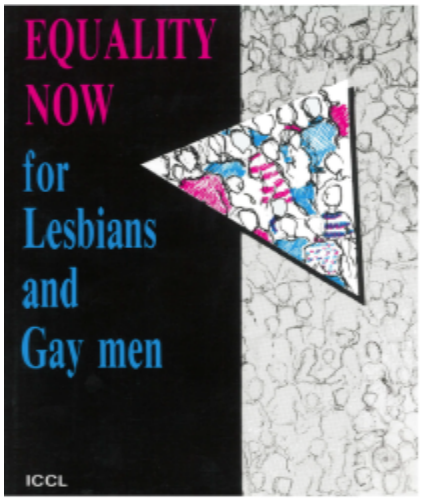
10.00 a.m.	:	Discrimination - Trade Union Response. Kevin O' Driscoll. LGPSU.
11.00 a.m.	:	Coffee.
11.15 p.m.	:	Irish Congress of Trade Unions - Position. Patricia O' Donovan, ICTU.
12.00 a.m.	:	Group Work - General Discussion.
1.00 p.m.	:	Lunch.
2.15 p.m.	:	Role Playing - Preparation.
3.15 p.m.	:	Discrimination in Society. Michael D. Higgins T.D.
4.15 p.m.	:	Coffee.
4.30 p.m.	:	Role Playing.
6.00 p.m.	:	Evening Meal.

SUNDAY

10.00 a.m.	:	Video - Discussion.
1.00 p.m.	:	Course Closes.
1.15 p.m.	:	Lunch.

oOo

EQUALITY NOW for Lesbians and Gay Men (1990)



This influential 1990 report by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties made a detailed case for an equality based law reform , and equality legislation including employment equality, and legal recognition of our intimate relationships. It included a model equal status bill for all minorities. Christopher Robson and myself were on the working group. This report built on the ICTU 1987 Guidelines stating as follows:

“The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has gone further than giving support in such cases. It has also recognised that "there is widespread prejudice against lesbian and gay workers in society generally and that this prejudice affects their rights in the workplace." Accordingly, in 1987 it took the initiative and adopted a detailed and radical document "Lesbian and Gay Rights: Guidelines for Negotiators". **These guidelines are a striking example of ICTU leadership in both national and international contexts.”**
https://www.iccl.ie/archive/equality-now-for-lesbians-and-gay-men

5

DUBLIN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS
Comhairle na gCeárdchumann Bhaile Átha Cliath

President: Paddy Teahy
Vice President: Paddy Coughlan
Secretary: Sam Nolan

44, Lower Gardiner Street
Dublin 1.

6th December, 1989.

TO: EACH DELEGATE

A Chara,

The monthly delegate meeting of the above Council will take place on Tuesday, 14th December next, in the O'Lehane Hall, Cavendish Row at 8 p.m. sharp. The Agenda is as follows:-

AGENDA

1) Minutes
2) EC Summary
3) Correspondence
4) Disputes
5) Motions

Motion from the Executive Committee:-

"Council condemns the failure of the Government to provide a substantial increase in the rates support grant to Dublin Corporation and Dublin County Council. This will result in another year of sub-standard services to the City, in particular in the areas of maintenance to Corporation houses and flats.

We also call for Trade Union resistance to moves to extend the use of private contractors by Dublin Corporation and Dublin County Council."

Passed

Motion from the Local Government & Public Services Union

"The Council welcomes the Government decision to give protection to lesbians and gay men and travellers, under the Incitement to Hatred Bill. We call on the Tradee Council to lobby the Government and others so that the Government's response to the October, 1988 decision of the European Court of Human Rights (declaring that the current anti-gay laws contravene the European Convention of Human Rights) will include:

1) Full legal equality for lesbians and gay men, including the same age of consent for heterosexuals and homosexuals.

2) Anti-discrimination legislation to give protection to lesbians, gay men and other groups vulnerable to prejudice.

We call on the Trades Council to circularise all other Trades Councils and the ICTU, requesting them to take similar action."

Passed.

Please Note:

At our November delegate meeting we passed a resolution to support the demonstration to be held in the city on Saturday, 9th December.

/Contd.....

Trustees: Eric Fleming, Ben Kearney

IMPACT
The Public Sector Trade Union

Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union
Nerney's Court, Dublin 1. Telephone: 874 5588 Fax: 874 2425

Civil Service Division

NATIONAL SECRETARY
PADDY KEATING

20 February, 1995

TO: - Each Branch
- Central Executive Committee
- Divisional Executive Committee
- Staff

Policy Document on the rights of lesbians and gay men

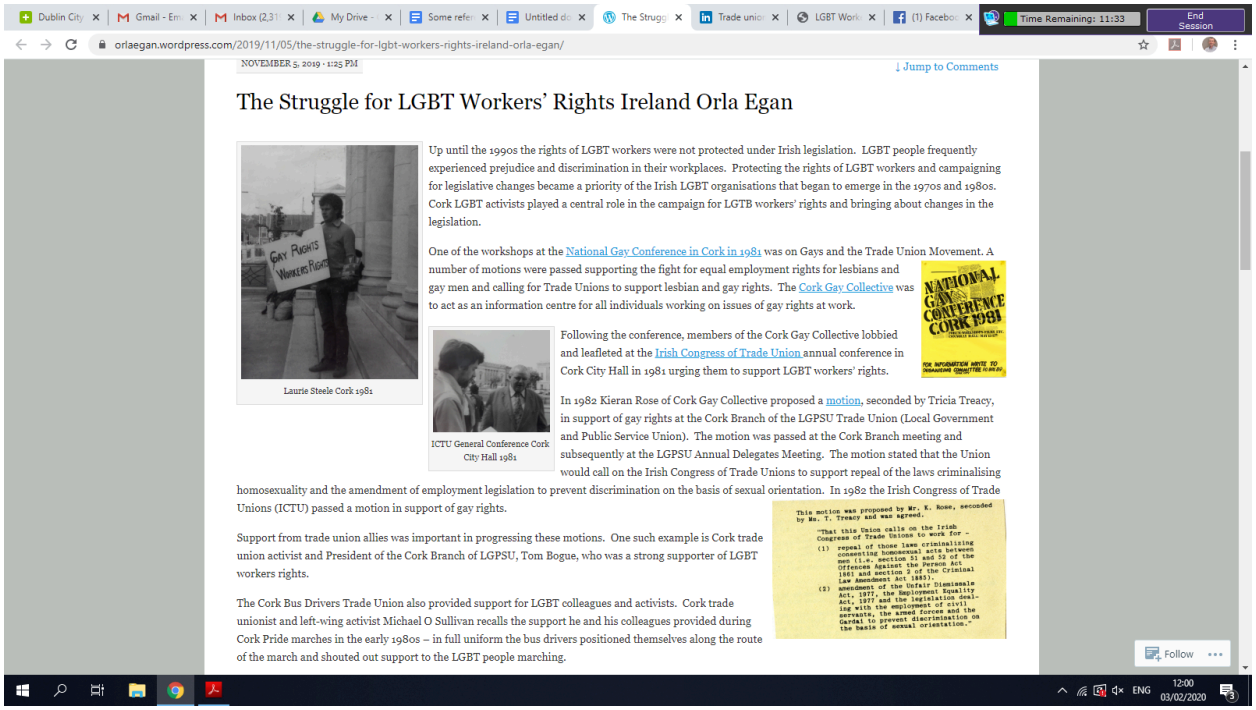
A discussion document on the rights of Lesbians and gay men was presented to and discussed at the 1993 Equality Conference.

This was referred to Branches and Divisions for views. A small number of Branches responded. The discussion document and the views of branches and divisions were considered by the National Equality Committee which reported with recommendations to the CEC.

At its meeting of 27/1/95, the CEC adopted the enclosed Document on the rights of lesbians and gay men. This document will form the basis of future Union action.

Yours sincerely

Paddy Keating
NATIONAL SECRETARY
CIVIL SERVICE DIVISION


orlaegan.wordpress.com/2019/11/05/the-struggle-for-lgbt-workers-rights-ireland-orla-egan/
Time Remaining: 11:33
End Session
NOVEMBER 5, 2019 · 1:25 PM
↓ Jump to Comments
The Struggle for LGBT Workers' Rights Ireland Orla Egan
Up until the 1990s the rights of LGBT workers were not protected under Irish legislation. LGBT people frequently experienced prejudice and discrimination in their workplaces. Protecting the rights of LGBT workers and campaigning for legislative changes became a priority of the Irish LGBT organisations that began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s. Cork LGBT activists played a central role in the campaign for LGTB workers' rights and bringing about changes in the legislation.
One of the workshops at the National Gay Conference in Cork in 1981 was on Gays and the Trade Union Movement. A number of motions were passed supporting the fight for equal employment rights for lesbians and gay men and calling for Trade Unions to support lesbian and gay rights. The Cork Gay Collective was to act as an information centre for all individuals working on issues of gay rights at work.
NATIONAL GAY CONFERENCE CORK 1981
Laurie Steele Cork 1981
ICTU General Conference Cork City Hall 1981
Following the conference, members of the Cork Gay Collective lobbied and leafleted at the Irish Congress of Trade Union annual conference in Cork City Hall in 1981 urging them to support LGBT workers' rights.
In 1982 Kieran Rose of Cork Gay Collective proposed a motion, seconded by Tricia Treacy, in support of gay rights at the Cork Branch of the LGPSU Trade Union (Local Government and Public Service Union). The motion was passed at the Cork Branch meeting and subsequently at the LGPSU Annual Delegates Meeting. The motion stated that the Union would call on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to support repeal of the laws criminalising homosexuality and the amendment of employment legislation to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In 1982 the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) passed a motion in support of gay rights.
This motion was proposed by Mr. K. Rose, seconded by Ms. T. Treacy and was agreed.
"That this Union calls on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to work for –
(1) repeal of those laws criminalising consenting homosexual acts between men (i.e. section 11 and 52 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and section 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885)
(2) 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 Gardaí to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation."
Support from trade union allies was important in progressing these motions. One such example is Cork trade union activist and President of the Cork Branch of LGPSU, Tom Bogue, who was a strong supporter of LGBT workers rights.
The Cork Bus Drivers Trade Union also provided support for LGBT colleagues and activists. Cork trade unionist and left-wing activist Michael O Sullivan recalls the support he and his colleagues provided during Cork Pride marches in the early 1980s – in full uniform the bus drivers positioned themselves along the route of the march and shouted out support to the LGBT people marching.
Follow
ENG
12:00
03/02/2020

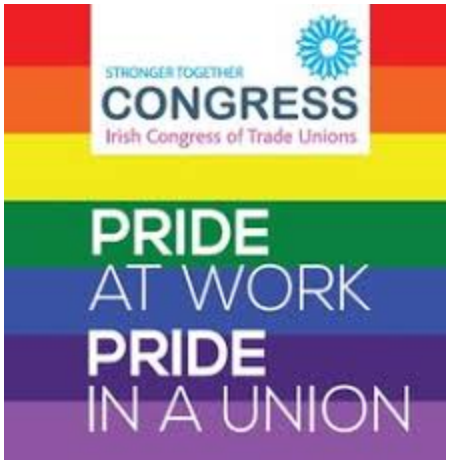

GAY RIGHTS NOW
CORK GAY COLLECTIVE
SAXON
May Day March
Cork, 1985
Photo: Kevin Doyle



Gay Rights at Work banner on Cork May Day parade 1982 (Cork Gay Collective)



Laurie Steele of Cork Gay Collective and Quay Coop and a member of IDATU outside ICTU conference City Hall Cork 1981



David Joyce of ICTU put together a detailed slideshow of documents, photos etc for a 2019 LGBT Pride event “Union Pride - celebrating our past, building a better future” with a panel discussion with me and Clare Moore NIC/ICTU chaired by Seamus Dooley (NUJ/ICTU)

Number 22 *of* 1993

UNFAIR DISMISSALS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1993

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section
1. Interpretation.
2. Amendment of section 1 of Principal Act.
3. Amendment of section 2 of Principal Act.
4. Amendment of section 5 of Principal Act.
5. Amendment of section 6 of Principal Act.
6. Amendment of section 7 of Principal Act.
7. Amendment of section 8 of Principal Act.
8. Amendment of section 9 of Principal Act.
9. Amendment of section 14 of Principal Act.
10. Amendment of section 15 of Principal Act.
11. Appeals from, and enforcement of determinations of, Tribunal.
12. Evidence of failure to attend before or give evidence or produce documents to Tribunal.
13. Employment agencies.

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH:
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR.

Le ceannach díreach ón
OIFIG DHÍOLTA FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS, TEACH SUN ALLIANCE,
SRÁID THEACH LAIGHEAN, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,
nó trí aon díoltóir leabhar.

DUBLIN:
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE.

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GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE, SUN ALLIANCE HOUSE,
MOLESWORTH STREET, DUBLIN 2.

£3.20



AN BILLE UM STÁDAS COMHIONANN, 1990
EQUAL STATUS BILL, 1990

BILL

entitled

AN ACT TO MAKE UNLAWFUL CERTAIN KINDS OF DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF SEX, MARITAL OR PARENTAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE, HANDICAP, RELIGION, RACE OR MEMBERSHIP OF THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY, TO AMEND THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION (PAY) ACT, 1974, AND THE EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACT, 1977, AND TO PROVIDE FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

WHEREAS the State has declared that recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world

AND WHEREAS the State affirms that all human persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law against invidious discrimination

AND WHEREAS it is the policy of the State to provide for equal rights and opportunities for all persons without discrimination which is contrary to law, so that the dignity and freedom of the individual may be thereby assured

AND WHEREAS these principles inform the provisions of Bunreacht na hÉireann, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the treaties establishing the European Community

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:

PART I

PRELIMINARY

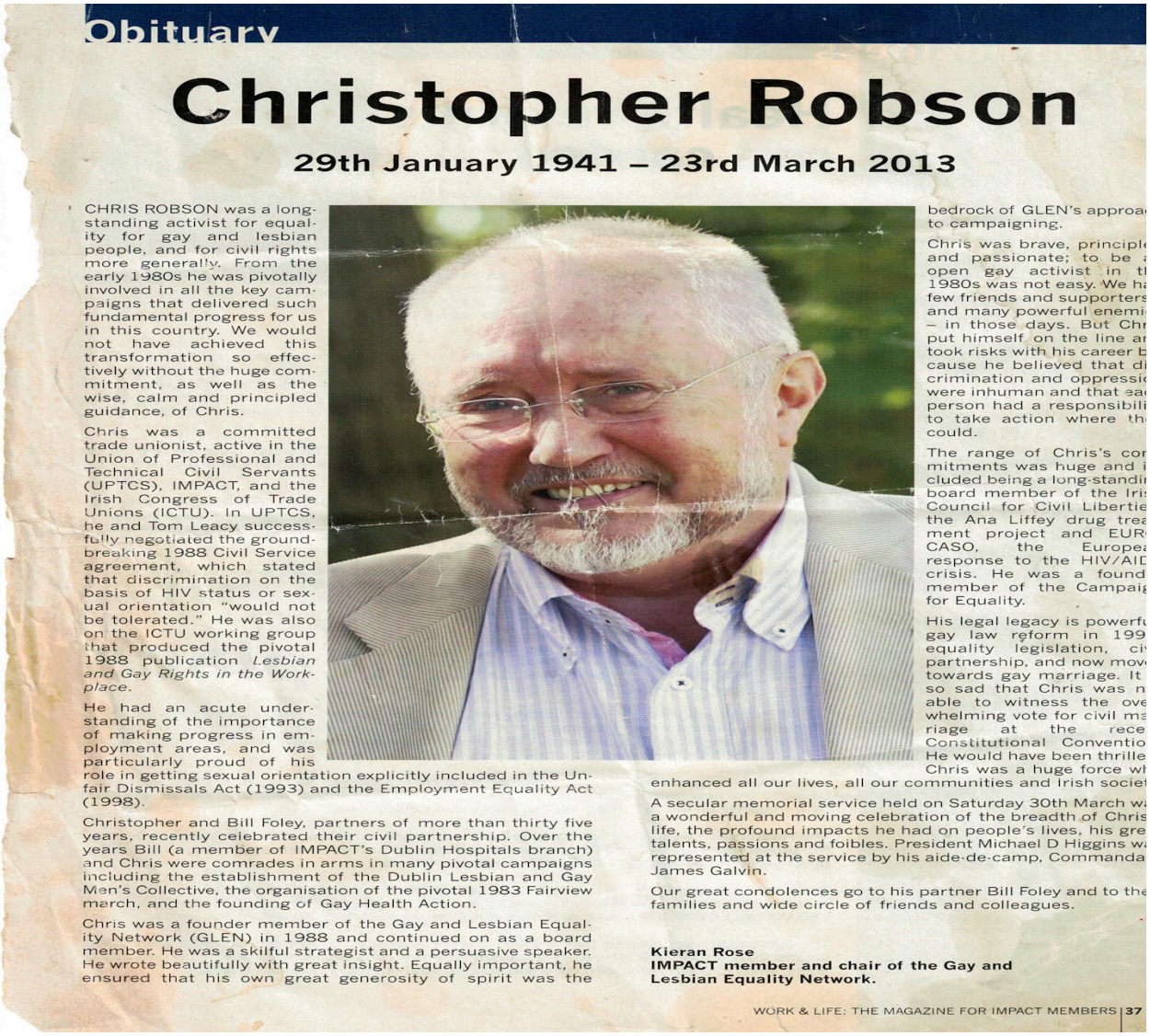
1.—(1) In this Act— Interpretation.

"the Act of 1946" means the Industrial Relations Act, 1946;

The Labour Party published an Equal Status Bill in 1990 including sexual orientation etc, narrowly defeated in the Dail in 1992 by 63 votes to 67. This Bill (which included employment issues) was a model for the subsequent equality legislation introduced by Minister for Equality and Law Reform Mervyn Taylor. The ICTU 1987 Guidelines fed into this Bill.



Christopher Robson
https://issuu.com/impacttu/docs/wlissue22/38



Obituary

Christopher Robson

29th January 1941 – 23rd March 2013

CHRIS ROBSON was a long-standing activist for equality for gay and lesbian people, and for civil rights more generally. From the early 1980s he was pivotally involved in all the key campaigns that delivered such fundamental progress for us in this country. We would not have achieved this transformation so effectively without the huge commitment, as well as the wise, calm and principled guidance, of Chris.

Chris was a committed trade unionist, active in the Union of Professional and Technical Civil Servants (UPTCS), IMPACT, and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). In UPTCS, he and Tom Leacy successfully negotiated the ground-breaking 1988 Civil Service agreement, which stated that discrimination on the basis of HIV status or sexual orientation "would not be tolerated." He was also on the ICTU working group that produced the pivotal 1988 publication *Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace*.

He had an acute understanding of the importance of making progress in employment areas, and was particularly proud of his role in getting sexual orientation explicitly included in the Unfair Dismissals Act (1993) and the Employment Equality Act (1998).

Christopher and Bill Foley, partners of more than thirty five years, recently celebrated their civil partnership. Over the years Bill (a member of IMPACT's Dublin Hospitals branch) and Chris were comrades in arms in many pivotal campaigns including the establishment of the Dublin Lesbian and Gay Men's Collective, the organisation of the pivotal 1983 Fairview march, and the founding of Gay Health Action.

Chris was a founder member of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) in 1988 and continued on as a board member. He was a skilful strategist and a persuasive speaker. He wrote beautifully with great insight. Equally important, he ensured that his own great generosity of spirit was the bedrock of GLEN's approa to campaigning.

Chris was brave, principl and passionate; to be open gay activist in t 1980s was not easy. We h few friends and supporters and many powerful enemi – in those days. But Chr put himself on the line a took risks with his career b cause he believed that di crimination and oppressi were inhuman and that ea person had a responsibili to take action where th could.

The range of Chris's co mitments was huge and i cluded being a long-standi board member of the Iri Council for Civil Liberti the Ana Liffey drug trea ment project and EUR CASO, the Europe response to the HIV/AI crisis. He was a found member of the Campai for Equality.

His legal legacy is powerf gay law reform in 199 equality legislation, ci partnership, and now mov towards gay marriage. It so sad that Chris was n able to witness the ov whelming vote for civil ma riage at the rece Constitutional Conventio He would have been thrille Chris was a huge force w enhanced all our lives, all our communities and Irish socie

A secular memorial service held on Saturday 30th March w a wonderful and moving celebration of the breadth of Chris life, the profound impacts he had on people's lives, his gre talents, passions and foibles. President Michael D Higgins w represented at the service by his aide-de-camp, Commanda James Galvin.

Our great condolences go to his partner Bill Foley and to th families and wide circle of friends and colleagues.

Kieran Rose
IMPACT member and chair of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network.

For IMPACT magazine

Christopher Robson
Born: January 29th, 1941 Died: March 23rd, 2013

Chris was a long-standing activist for equality for gay and lesbian people and for civil rights more generally for everyone. From the early 1980s he was pivotally involved in all the key campaigns that delivered such fundamental progress for us in this country. We would not have achieved this transformation so effectively without the huge commitment as well as the wise, calm and principled guidance of Chris.

Chris was a committed trade unionist in UPTCS, later with IMPACT, and also ICTU. Along with Tom Leacey in UPTCS he successfully negotiated the ground-breaking 1988 Civil Service agreement which stated that discrimination on the basis of HIV status or sexual orientation

‘would not be tolerated’. He was on the ICTU working group that produced the pivotal ‘Lesbian and Gay Rights in the Workplace’ (1987). He had an acute understanding of the importance of making progress in employment areas, and was particularly proud of his role in getting sexual orientation explicitly included in the Unfair Dismissals Act (1993) and the Employment Equality Act (1998).

Christopher and Bill Foley, partners of more than thirty five years, celebrated their Civil Partnership recently. Over the years Bill andChris were comrades in arms in many pivotal campaigns such as: the setting up of the Dublin Lesbian and Gay Men’s Collective; organising the pivotal Fairview March in 1983; and founding Gay Health Action. Chris was a founding member of GLEN in 1988 and continued on as a Board member up until the present. He was a skilful strategist, a persuasive speaker, and wrote beautifully with great insight.

As important, he ensured that that his own great ‘generosity of spirit’ was the bedrock of GLEN’s approach to campaigning. Chris was brave, principled and passionate; to be an open gay activist in the 1980s was not easy. We had few friends and supporters in those days, and many powerful enemies; but Chris put himself on the line, took risks with his career for example, because he believed that discrimination and oppression was inhuman and that each person had a responsibility to take action where they could. The range of Chris’s commitments was huge and included being a long-standing Board member of: the ICCL; Ana Liffey Drug Treatment project; and EUROCASO, the European response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. He was a founder member of the Campaign for Equality.

His legal legacy is powerful; gay law reform in 1993, equality legislation, Civil Partnership, and now moves to marriage. It is so sad that Chris was not able to witness the overwhelming vote for Civil Marriage at the recent Constitutional Convention, he would have been thrilled. Chris was a huge force; he enhanced all our lives; all our communities; and Irish society.

A secular Memorial Service was held on Saturday 30 th March, it was a wonderful and moving celebration of the breadth of Chris’s life, the profound impacts he had on people’s lives, his great talents, passions and foibles. President Michael D. Higgins was represented at the service by his aide-de-camp, Commandant James Galvin. Our great condolences go to his partner Bill Foley and to their families and wide circle of friends and colleagues.

Kieran Rose

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Campaign for Equality

GLEN was instrumental in setting up the Campaign for Equality in 1991 which was an alliance of all groups vulnerable to discrimination including womens groups, people with disabilities, Travellers, to campaign for broad-ranging equality legislation and for an equality-based gay law reform.

The campaign was launched in October 1991 in the European Communities offices with speakers including; Monica Barnes, Chair Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights; Patricia O'Donovan, Assistant Secretary General ICTU; Sylvia Meehan, Chief Executive, Employment Equality Agency; and representatives from GLEN, the Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group; Forum of People with Disabilities; Council for the Status of Women and others.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Kieran Rose

Annual Delegate Conference

LPSU

Donal Nevin

OBSERVER'S CARD



Number 22 *of* 1993

UNFAIR DISMISSALS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1993

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Interpretation.
2. Amendment of section 1 of Principal Act.
3. Amendment of section 2 of Principal Act.
4. Amendment of section 5 of Principal Act.
5. Amendment of section 6 of Principal Act.
6. Amendment of section 7 of Principal Act.
7. Amendment of section 8 of Principal Act.
8. Amendment of section 9 of Principal Act.
9. Amendment of section 14 of Principal Act.
10. Amendment of section 15 of Principal Act.
11. Appeals from, and enforcement of determinations of, Tribunal.
12. Evidence of failure to attend before or give evidence or produce documents to Tribunal.
13. Employment agencies.

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH:
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR.

Le ceannach díreach ón
OIFIG DHÍOLTA FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS, TEACH SUN ALLIANCE,
SRÁID THEACH LAIGHEAN, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,
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