

Job security for gays demanded



John Damien, fired from his civil service job for being gay.

On Oct. 21 and 22 lesbians, gay men and their supporters will be rallying and demonstrating across the country from Vancouver to Halifax for their right to job security.

The actions, organized by the National Gay Rights Coalition, will focus on the demand for the reinstatement of John Damien and will also call for the protection of lesbians and gay men in all human rights legislation.

John Damien was fired on February 6, 1975 from his job as a racing steward with the Ontario Racing Commission. The only reason given for his dismissal was that he was a homosexual. His career of 20 years in horse racing was thereby terminated by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, the government branch in charge of the Racing Commission and the Ontario government itself.

Damien's case has served to demonstrate the discrimination and

lack of job security that lesbians and gay men face constantly in the work force. Lesbian and gay workers are forced to hide their identity on the job for fear of being fired by their employers or for fear of social ostracism from co-workers.

If they come out on the job they face the possibility, like Damien, of being fired because they have no legal protection under the laws. This is the reason why one of the demands that is being raised on the Days of Protest is for the inclusion of sexual orientation in all human rights legislation in order to protect lesbians and gay men.

The gay movement across Canada has organized to support Damien and to try to win his reinstatement. Thousands of dollars for the legal defence have been raised, meetings have been held across the country and the support of trade unions, church groups, the NDP and other groups has been gathered.

However the legal defence is not enough. The Tory government is not

going to give in so easily. The National Days of Protest are intended to keep the pressure on the government and to mobilize broader support for job security rights.

Damien's case is not the only recent example of the lack of job security rights for lesbians and gay men. Early last summer Barbara Thornborrow and Gloria Cameron were dismissed from the Canadian Armed Forces solely because they were lesbians.

The Days of Protest come at an important time in Ontario. Last July the Ontario Human Rights Commission recommended in its report to the government that sexual orientation be included in the Human Rights Code.

This followed on the heels of the release of a Gallup poll in late June which showed that 52% of Canadians support, while only 30% oppose protection for gay people in human rights legislation. Since this time the mass media has orchestrated a campaign against lesbian and gay rights utilizing the so-called "homosexual murder" of Emmanuel Jacques.

As if a murder committed by a heterosexual would be labelled a "heterosexual murder" and be used to attack heterosexuals in general!

This media campaign of bigotry is aimed at trying to undermine support for gay rights and to prevent sexual orientation from being added to the Human Rights Code.

Thus the protest days will also be a protest against media bigotry. Activities for the day include a vigil at Yonge and Wellesley outside the offices of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations from noon to 7:30 p.m., a rally at Yonge and Wellesley at 8 p.m. to protest the media campaign of bigotry, and a coffeehouse at 9:00 p.m.

All supporters of lesbian and gay rights are urged to attend. And remember, the struggle for lesbian and gay rights is part of the fight for a new society in which all are free to love as they wish.

Gary Kinsman

US nuclear deterrent a necessary evil?

The last three weeks have seen something of a debate over the necessity of the United States' nuclear deterrent in these pages. Last week Cyril Cathcart became the latest to call for pacifism and nuclear disarmament in response to a letter published anonymously the week before which itself was written in response to an article critical of the Trident ballistic missile submarine program.

My anonymous friend of two weeks ago has the right idea, but for all the wrong reasons. The other two letters have one major fault - they've been critical only of American nuclear weapons forces.

Nuclear disarmament is an objective I hope to live long enough to see. Unfortunately I can't see it happening in the immediate future. It is not enough that the Americans

alone disarm, the world's other four nuclear powers (Communist China, Britain, France and most importantly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) must also do so. As of the present the Soviet Union is showing little indication it will disarm, and indeed seems to be doing its level best to increase its nuclear strike capacity.

While Greenpeace protests the construction of the Trident submarine base at Bangor, Washington and the Carter administration cancels the B-1 supersonic bomber programme, the Soviets are revamping their nuclear arms.

Until such time as all the world's nuclear equipped nations agree to dismantle their nuclear weapons stockpiles, the American nuclear deterrent will be a necessary evil. The most frightening scenario I can

conceive of is if the United States allows the Soviet Union too great a lead in nuclear weapons advantage that Soviet strategists may decide that they could knock out enough of America's second strike capability to risk launching a strategic nuclear first strike against North America (we live here too, and I doubt if the Soviet military will differentiate between Canadian and American cities and military installations, even if we were to get out of NORAD).

I hope that all the Greenpeace's and Cyril Cathcart's of the world will not give up hope for the day of total nuclear disarmament. But until the day the USSR decides to dispose of its massive and growing nuclear weapons stockpile, we (Canadians, too) need a significant American second strike capability.

David Saltmarsh



Post secondary ed - only for the affluent?

On September 21, Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities, Harry Parrott, announced the "principles" of a new student aid program to take effect next year.

Instead of making university more accessible to students, this new plan will in fact make a university education more expensive for the vast majority of students, both undergraduate and graduate.

It goes in the direction of making a post-secondary education the sole preserve of the financial elite in this province.

The Facts:

- The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) estimates that 7,200 students now receiving grants will be denied them next year.
- Grants will only be available for the first four years a student is attending a post-secondary institution regardless of how many courses the student is taking in a given year.
- Students wishing to proceed to graduate school will no longer be eligible for grants, only loans.
- It will be more difficult to qualify as an independent student (one who is not expected to receive any financial assistance from parents and is therefore eligible for more student aid).
- Parrott has not disclosed how much money parents will be expected to contribute to their children's education based on their income. If the proposals made by the Interim Committee on Financial Assistance to Students is any indication, it will be substantially higher than previously.

This latest attack on the right to an education is another step toward implementing the recommendations of the McKeough-Henderson Report, released in 1975. This report proposed how the government could react to the current economic crisis - by cutting back on much-needed social services, such as education.

The report recommended a \$155 million cut over two years in post-secondary education spending. The new student aid program, which follows the general \$100 fee increase and the differential fee increases for international students, is another step toward the government's long-term goal of shifting more and more of the cost for post-secondary education onto the individual student.

OFS is on record as favoring the abolition of tuition and the provision of a living stipend for students as a

step towards universal accessibility. In order to move toward this objective, and in opposition to Parrott's plan, we must fight for the 10 point program of the OFS, including these points:

- A student should be considered independent at age 18. The arbitrary parental contribution table should be eliminated.
- The living allowance must reflect the actual living costs in the community in which the student lives.
- The grant portion of awards must become progressively greater until the loan portion is eventually eliminated.
- The freeze on tuition fee increases for 1978-79 must be extended indefinitely.

In 1976 the OFS called a demonstration against the regressive policies the McKeough-Henderson report. Three thousand students marched in this successful action, chanting, "No to the McKeough-Henderson Report!"

This is in marked contrast to the limited success of the November 9 National Student Day and the February 10 Moratorium called to protest the \$100 fee increase.

The February 1976 *Ontario Student*, put out by the OFS, when reporting on the January 21 demonstration described the strategy that is needed.

"...The momentum is there, the movement is growing, if the readers of this paper want it, insist on it, we can bring these questions out of the backrooms and caucuses and into the popular arenas where they belong... What is necessary now is to... bring to bear our weight against the government when it next sets out to attack us."

However it is not enough to call a one-shot affair (like that of January 21) which serves only to back up a strategy of lobbying.

These public actions must be continually organized with the aim of winning over ever-greater numbers to fight for the right to an education. OFS must call a province-wide, centralized protest action to launch a campaign demanding:

- No to the proposed student aid program.
- Fight for the 10 point program of the OFS as a step toward universal accessibility.
- Education is a right, not a privilege.

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