

This article was taken from the publication **Fast Forward**, 1st February 1988. Likely a successor to **Pulse Magazine**, it was a free weekly newsletter published by the Loughborough Students' Union in the second half of the 1980s.

Content copyrighted to Loughborough Student Union and used with their permission.

Archive reference LSU_PN5.

CLAUSE 28.

HYSTERICAL PREJUDICE.

CLAUSE 28 - HYSTERICAL PREJUDICE

Sweeping and wide ranging powers, supported by MPs from all parties, seem set to destroy many of the gains made in recent years by lesbian and gay people in local government and education. Clause 28 was added to the Local Government Bill at the last minute and was passed at the committee stage on the 8 December 1987. The tabled amendments read:

A local authority shall not:

- (a) Promote homosexuality or publish material for the promotion of homosexuality.
- (b) Promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship by the publication of such material or otherwise;
- (c) Give financial or other assistance to any person for either of the purposes referred to in paragraphs (a) or (b). Nothing above shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the purpose of treating or preventing of disease.

Under the guise of banning the mythical encouragement of homosexuality, clause 28 is probably the biggest British Government attack on minority civil liberties. Publicity, teaching, funding, other help (eg room use) and all local authority "promoting" homosexuality are to be banned. The clause's exclusion on "treating or preventing the spread of disease" implies the Government thinks even AIDS work may be defined to "promote" homosexuality.

The effects of the Local Government Bill becoming law would mean:

- * Increased fear, hatred, discrimination and scapegoating. Violence, since clause 28 includes the use of arson, CS gas, chains, clubs and bottles. Teachers, youth workers, clergy, etc are threatened. Grants, often given by narrow votes, are likely to be lost, which would mean the closure of places like the grant-aided lesbian and gay centres.
- * Equality work practically halted, eg housing, employment, social services, police, education, health and the abolition of all local authority lesbian and gay units. In education, people will still be taught self-hate with the banning of material in schools giving accurate information about homosexuality, along with gagging of lesbian and gay teachers who will be prevented from speaking out about their lives. Parents rights (precious to the Government) for the mothers who are lesbian will be ignored.

- * Information, adverts and policies welcoming lesbians and gays among others could be inhibited (job adverts, counselling and advice, legal help etc), Free access to information is impeded.
- * The lesbian and gay voluntary services would be endangered due to them being primarily funded by local councils.
- * Arts projects are threatened if they display work by lesbian or gay artists (eg Hockney, Gilbert and George).
- * Censorship of books would mean only approved ones could be in libraires and schools. Plato, E M Forster, Fay Weldon, James Baldwin, Jean Genet, etc are all at risk.
- * Film, play and performance censorship is likely in the many local authority funded venues.
- * Social venues may be hit as the few safe cafes, pubs, clubs, etc often need local authority licences.
- * Businesses in local authority premises may be interfered with
- * AIDS education work will be reconsidered as authorities will be unsure what is lawful, and so funding for any gay initiatives on AIDS may cease.
- * Rights to assembly will be violated if authorities cannot allow rooms and parks for meetings, festivals, rallies, conferences etc.
- * Counselling and advice will be problematic if social services and advice bodies can't refer lesbians and gays to L & G organisations.
- * It is unclear what the status of lesbian and Gay Student Societies will be, especially as most Student Union funding comes from local authorities.

Clause 28 is badly phrased and dangerously illiberal act that could be implemented by June 1st 1988. It is especially worrying that the clause will be used as a weapon to attack already beleaguered gay men and lesbians. Since the advent of AIDS gay people have increasingly been objects of hatred and scapegoating. There are many influences at work in our society which would restrict the civil and human rights of gay men and lesbians who want to live in peace and safety like other citizens. The clause is frightening because it will legitimise prejudice, bigotry and hatred.

HELP US TO STOP CLAUSE 28 BY INSTRUCTING THE EXEC TO FIGHT AGAINST THIS AMENDMENT. AT THE RECONVENED U.G.M. MONDAY, FEB 1ST, 6 P.M. STEVE BIKO AUDITORIUM.



LOUGHBOROUGH LESBIAN & GAY G R O U P

FIRST THEY CAME FOR THE JEWS
AND I DID NOT SPEAK OUT
BECAUSE I WAS NOT A JEW.

THEN THEY CAME FOR THE COMMUNISTS
AND I DID NOT SPEAK OUT
BECAUSE I WAS NOT A COMMUNIST
THEN THEY CAME FOR THE TRADE UNIONISTS
AND I DID NOT SPEAK OUT
BECAUSE I WAS NOT A TRADE UNIONIST

THEN THEY CAME FOR ME
AND THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT
TO SPEAK OUT FOR ME.

Written by Pastor Niemoeller, a concentration camp victim of the Nazis, this testimony about events in Thirties Germany is seen by many as having implications for what is happening to minority groups in Britain today.

JOIN THE L.S.U LESBIAN & GAY GROUP ON
FEB 20th AT A DEMO & BENEFIT IN MANCHESTER.
THIS IS A HUMAN & CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE
...Fight for the right to be exactly WHO you WANT to be!

The competition is open to everyone and there are two categories of entry:

- Category A - Creative Writing
- Category B - Illustrated Creative Writing

Each Category is subdivided:

- Group 1 - Adult (17+)
- Group 2 - 11 - 16
- Group 3 - Under 11 years

Closing date May 31st 1988.

Entrants may submit up to 3 entries but each entry must be accompanied by a separate form and the appropriate fee.

For more details see Claire Davidson in the Union office.

CHARWOOD ARTS COUNCIL Writing Competition