

Socialist Youth/Party says organise to fight back against HOMOPHOBIA!

“I'm sure people knew I was gay you know, I did walk up through [a rural village] and people would be calling faggot and stuff like that. It did kill me a lot hearing... the words... and I was afraid as well, I felt very alone inside ...” - Gay & Lesbian Equality Network

There may be more openness about gay sexuality in Western society today than perhaps there has ever been. Nevertheless, this story is similar to that of thousands of other LGBT people in Ireland and reflects the reality that, despite the important progress which has been made, homophobia is still prevalent in Irish society. The reality of the day to day lives of many LGBT people is still one of fear and repression. In a recent study, 80% reported having been verbally abused due to their sexual orientation and 40% have physically attacked. More than half of LGBT school students report homophobic bullying in their schools. Discrimination in the workplace and in services are still widespread and workers in church-run institutions, such as schools and hospitals can be legally discriminated against because of their sexuality. Equality legislation needs to be extended and the cutbacks to the Equality Authority should be reversed. Schools must provide proper sex education with information about different sexual orientations and gender identities.

Marriage Rights Now!

Gay people are still denied basic equality when it comes to marriage and adoption. The Socialist Party and Socialist Youth support the right of same-sex couples to adopt children and to marry, with the exact same rights as heterosexuals. Nothing less should be accepted. It is clear we cannot trust the government or political establishment generally to deliver on this issue. The fact that the Green Party sold out their support for gay marriage in order to get into government with Fianna Fail shows that the promises of the establishment parties can't be trusted. Despite the lobbying efforts of LGBT organisations, the government has dragged its feet for years on introducing even the inadequate Civil Partnership bill. The same government which is imposing an absurd law against 'Blasphemy' and has let the church off the hook for its role in the abuse of children in industrial schools, isn't likely to stand up to religious bigots on the issue of marriage and adoption rights. Instead of just lobbying, LGBT people need to get active and build a fighting, grassroots movement which will force the issue on the agenda and pressure the government to act.



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Fight back needed

However, the fight against homophobia needs to go further than just seeking to win legal reforms. The recession has led to vicious attacks on the jobs, living standards and public services of working people in an attempt to make them pay the price for a crisis caused by the rich. Gay people can't afford to be neutral towards this. How can, for instance, the extra resources needed to educate and train teachers to tackle homophobic attitudes and bullying in schools be dealt with adequately when cuts in education budgets are being carried out? We need proper investment in public services so that the specific needs of LGBT people can be catered to.

For a long time, many have believed that Irish society was becoming gradually more progressive and that homophobia would eventually die out. Now with a huge economic crisis facing society, there is a real danger of things going backwards in terms of gay rights. Politicians and bosses seek out scapegoats to distract from the problems their policies have created. The election of two MEPs for the homophobic and racist BNP in England shows the dangers that exist. Instead, we need an alternative society which removes the basis for homophobia and discrimination. A socialist society, where the huge wealth that exists is controlled democratically and used for the benefit of all instead of the enrichment of a few would remove the desperate conditions that create the basis for this kind of division and allow for people to live together in solidarity not bigotry.

Socialist Party calls for:

Full marriage and adoption rights for gay couples

End homophobic bullying in schools. For training for staff and a programme of non-discriminatory sex education to tackle this

For trade unions to seek to fully integrate LGBT workers and campaign vigorously against discrimination in the workplace

An end to cutbacks in services such as the Equality Authority and proper investment in all services which assist the LGBT community

For LGBT rights organisations to link up with the fight for a socialist alternative to the chaos, inequality and prejudices created by capitalism

A united campaign to build mass action to scrap all anti-gay laws and to outlaw all forms of anti-gay and anti-transgender discrimination and prejudice

A socialist society to provide the basis for eradicating bigotry

I am interested in joining the Socialist Party / Youth I would like more information

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