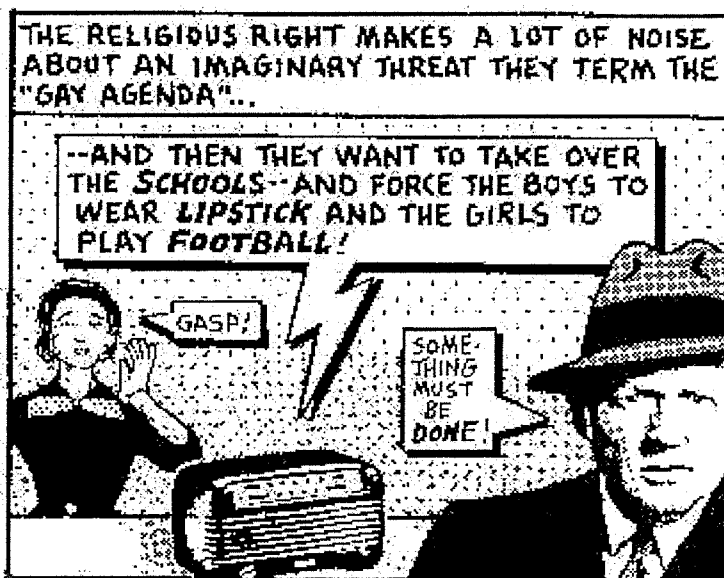


Repeal Section 28

Education breeds acceptance, not promotion

There has been something about Section 28 in the papers or on the news almost everyday for months now. Many of us are fed up with hearing about it and simply switch off or are confused as to what it is all about. I can't urge you strongly enough to take this seriously, it is up to US to do something to change the way the next generation is educated. We have all been affected by this ridiculous piece of legislation that prevents (or should I say makes teachers afraid) to discuss our feelings regarding our sexuality or to prevent us from being bullied at school. Most of you will hopefully have seen Steve's article in last issue of The Saint giving a very good and heart-felt argument for the repeal of Section 28. For those of you who missed it here is an abbreviated version and details on what you can do yourselves to support the campaign to repeal Section 28.



Section 28 began as a Private Members Bill tabled by Lord Halsbury in 1986 and was passed in 1988 as part of the Local Government Act. It has never been enforced, has been continually threatened with judicial review and is suspected of being in contravention of the European Charter for Human Rights. Its language is vague and confusing, but its message - that

gays and lesbians should only be discussed in reference to AIDS and the spreading of HIV - is clear. By banning what it describes ambiguously as the 'promotion' of homosexuality, it denies teaching staff and local authorities the ability to constructively advise gay and bisexual teenagers and prevents them from actively stopping homophobic bullying and abuse. Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that no local authority has ever been prosecuted under Section 28, though many have used it to discriminate against lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. It's simple; Section 28 is a destructive, undemocratic piece of dead legislation which has never and will never serve a useful purpose. It should be a simple matter to remove it and establish full equality for all. However, it is amazing how extreme, irrational views can overly complicate what should be a simple process of removing damaging and obsolete legislation. We have Cardinal Thomas Winning, declaring himself spokesperson for the 'moral majority' of some 750,000 Scottish Catholics of which the most recent survey shows only 236,000 actually practising. We also have Stagecoach's Brian Souter trying to illegally donate £1,000,000 to influence the government through an ill-informed hysterical media campaign. Education breeds acceptance, not promotion. The very fact that Thomas Winning believes it is possible to 'promote' homosexuality shows he could have benefited from such education as a teenager. The repeal of Section 28 isn't just about creating responsible sex education for our children - it's about basic quality of life. Our lives.

Section 28

A local Authority shall not -

- (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;
- (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.

Turn to the back page for more information on Section 28...

Would you accept condoms from this man?



Condoms are, and have been available from our very own dear VPWelfare, Calum, for sometime now. Mr Parker's prophylactic emporium has a wide range of condoms, lubricants, gloves, dental dams and femidoms to titillate and protect even our most discerningshopper...

Unfortunately, NO ONE GOES TO GET THEM!!!! What are you all?! A bunch of wimps?! They're free, they're important and above all, they're there for YOUR use. Don't be scared or stupid, be sensible and sexy!

It's not necessarily the easiest thing to do... however, it is a confidential and free service offered, which beats rushing into the bogs when no one else is around to see you use the machine. If no one continues to go to him directly, we'll either assume no one's getting any, or we'll bring the whole load to a meeting for an evening. Until then... here's something to warm yer cockles in these cold months...

THE AGE OF CONSENT

The House of Commons voted Thursday the 10th February by 263 votes to 102 to give a second reading to the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, which equalises the age of consent at 16 for all in Britain and 17 in Northern Ireland. 10 Conservatives voted for an equal age of consent (including Michael Portillo MP), 6 Labour MPs and 3 Liberal Democrats voted against. The Bill has to have a Third Reading in the Commons before going to the Lords. The Lords will debate the Bill at length but the Parliament Act can be invoked should they reject it.



Her Ladyship has been having a bit of stressful time recently, but then she heard some good news - it seems that 'nice man' (sic.) Tony Blair is equalising the age of consent between us (the queers) and those lovely hettie people. How fab! How New Britain! So here is the Lady Bracknell, again with a serious thought for us all...

...yes, his name is James, he's in the Sixth Year at Madras College - no it isn't part of the Uni. Honestly darling, it's the local comprehensive - you know all those rucked cotton shirts and teenage angst... Darling he is 17 and has the most dreamy blue eyes and as for his arse, well you can guess!... Oh, is this dictation thing on, oh, right, then in that case on I go.

Ever since intercourse between two men was decriminalised, lets face it we can hardly call what they did all those years ago 'legalisation', there has been a major discrepancy between the law for hetties and for gay men (note: the only legislation affecting dykes is child protection stuff!). Whereas the law for straights allows for consent to sex from age 16, you had to be 21 to get close to another man, now thankfully that has been brought down to 18. Soon it will be 16. All the better for equality I can say.

Thankfully the new law will also decriminalise the under age partner, whereas currently any boy engaged in underage gay sex will be treated as a criminal, where no such circumstance exists with hetties. The law is not there to protect, it is there to placate and persecute.

However for this Queen we are going to take a different track. We already know the arguments about equality and the legal situation, and we cannot fail to laugh as the Lord's try to defeat a Government sponsored Bill, it will pass, and there is nothing they can do about it! Ab fab! What we are going to discuss, briefly, is whether or not 16 is too young. That is, should anyone hettie or gay be deemed con sensual at 16. After all we hear the arguments from Doctor's, Sociologists, Psychologists &c. that 16 is "too young to know about sexuality" - we are not mature enough to make these 'decisions' they tell. We agree. The law should be changed to accommodate people maturing at different rates. Quite frankly if we are not old enough to vote, get a mortgage or credit card - then we are not old enough to choose whether or not to have sex, get married - I mean if you're hettie you can have a family at 17! It's mad, and they say that the queers are irresponsible.

Being quick, for once, I think that if you want to have sex at 16 it shouldn't be an offence, but it should be an offence for anyone over the age of 18 to have sex with someone younger than that. That way we can protect people, whether gay or straight, at a fragile stage in their social and emotional development. A bit controversial, and the argument could rage on forever. What do we all think?

Bracknell



Events

•Monday 28th February - Ann Summers Party
Chaplaincy, ladies at 7.30pm and Gentleman at 8pm - Bring lots of cash!!!!

•Wednesday 1st March - "Lesbians in Ancient Greece"
Lecture by the Classics Society, 5pm in Lower Parliament Hall

•Monday 6th March - LGBT meal
Bring along food for a buffet and a bottle of wine/beer at the chaplaincy

•10th to 12th of March - Youthcon
Edinburgh. Would be particularly suitable for those interested in becoming future committee members. Even if you're not particularly interested in the event itself, is always the opportunity for clubbing in the evening! Let us know soon if you're interested.

•Monday 13th March - Society AGM
This will elect the new committee for next year, so come along if you're interested in becoming more involved in the society!

•Thursday 16th March - Jubilee Party
Last December's AIDS day party alone raised £350.00 and was a riotous alcoholic laff). March should be no exception, when the society celebrates it's 25th Anniversary. More information to follow in the next newsletter...

Lesbian Position of the Month



No:1 The Missionary

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

To meet the requirements of our affiliation with the union we are required to produce 3 more newsletters before the end of this semester - so we need your articles and pictures. So get writing!!!!

Personal Ads

Hi, I am a French student here, in St Andrews, and I am looking for "fun". I guess you could help me. The thing is that I am Bi, and I also have a girl friend who is Bi too, but she is not in St Andrews and I need some "fun". I am 22 years old, I have brown hair and brown eyes. My high : 1.78 meters, my weight : 68 Kilos. My name is Sebastien, I am waiting for your answer! Kisses!

GWM twenty something, into pubs well the west port, social smoker, whisky drinker, tall dark and not ugly, WLTM old fashioned pool for rampant fun, must be under 6 foot dark hair well spoken arts student superficial in country house condition no contact lenses.

Please e-mail all replies/additional personals to lgbtoc@st-andrews.ac.uk. Just put personals reply or personals ad respectively in the subject column...

Recent society meetings recently have of course been dominated by Section 28, often featuring a furious postcard writing session. We've by now been able to waste about £150 of Brian Souter's cash by COMPLETELY abusing the 'Keep The Clause' freepost service. It's only a start, so continue wasting campaign funds by sending postcards to:

Keep the Clause
FREEPOST
SC0 5219
Perth PH2 8BR

...stating CLEARLY that you DO NOT support the 'Keep The Clause' Campaign... and TRY and resist the urge to be offensive! Keep it clean, to the point, but above all, keep it coming! Every four postcards wastes a pound of Keep The Clause funds...

For any more info on Clause 28, visit the stonewall website: www.stonewall.org.uk

The House Of Lords On Section 28

On Monday 7 February the House of Lords voted to keep Section 28 by 45 votes (210 to 165). The Bill will now proceed to Report Stage (it may be possible to reinstate the Repeal of Section 28 at this point) and then to Third Reading. The Bill will then go the Commons with a general debate at Second Reading (possibly at the end of March). At Committee Stage an amendment to Repeal Section 28 could be reinstated and MPs will vote on this at Third Reading (early April). The Bill will then go back to the Lords. We are hoping that the government guidelines will meet some of the concerns that the Lords raised. If 25 Lords are persuaded then we could win. Section 28 in Scotland The Scottish Parliament also debated section 28 yesterday. The Tories proposed a motion to scrap repeal, while the Executive proposed an amendment to that motion to confirm its plans to repeal section 28 and to review the curriculum guidelines on personal development, health and sex education. The Executive's amendment was passed by 88 votes to 18 with 3 abstentions.

The society meets every Monday at 8:00pm in the Chaplaincy Centre (opposite the Union). Afterwards, everyone meets in the Westport for a quick casual chat and wee drinky. We can be contacted at lgbtoc@st-andrews.ac.uk, or by leaving a note in the 'L' societies pigeonhole on the Union second floor. Although of course, it's not like you need an appointment to turn up on Monday meetings!...Don't be scared mind, we're all quite lovely!