

Financing the long-term defence of lesbian and gay culture

Re-reading Duncan's paper, it strikes me that the main thing that is necessary for a successful defence of our culture is money. Once it becomes law, Section 28 will lead to a cash crisis for a number of lesbian and gay organisations that depend on local government funds. We therefore have to consider other forms of funding.

1. The Trust

I suggest that a Trust is set up to raise money from within our community and from our supporters outside. It is absolutely essential that we capitalise upon the wide support we have gained over Clause 28 and ask people who stood up for counselling services, arts groups etc. to put their money where their mouths are.

The aim of the Trust is to raise the maximum amount of money possible for lesbian and gay organisations. Thus questions about whether the trustees are truly 'representative' of the lesbian and gay community are secondary. The main consideration is that the people involved are good at raising money. I think it would be sensible to include among the trustees some of the high-profile names who signed the Independent advert.

2. What sort of fund-raising events should the Trust organise?

I think the emphasis should be on going to where the money is. Obviously we can have benefits in gay pubs and clubs, but I envisage events like Ian McKellen's 'Acting Shakespeare' and CRUSAID'S 24-hour piano marathon which will draw in money from our straight sympathisers and also get mainstream media attention.

3. What to fund?

If we are to be successful at tapping these sources, it is essential that we are clear about where the money is going. Anything overtly political is out (besides it would jeopardise charitable status, which I believe should be sought). I see the money being spent on the following:

- (a) Arts and cultural groups e.g Gay Sweatshop, lesbian and gay poetry groups, etc.
- (b) Switchboards and counselling organisations
- (c) Youth groups (which are threatened by ILEA's abolition as well as by Clause 28)
- (d) Publications along the lines of 'Something to Tell You': the trust could fund specific research projects (on anti-gay violence for example) and could perhaps produce a regular information bulletin.

Clearly, in view of recent revelations about the LL&GC, the trustees need to scrutinize applications very carefully and must be convinced of the ability of management committee members to manage and of workers to work.

4. NAME:

Whilst it is tempting to go for something like the Homosexual Promotion Trust, we need to find a name that is funder-friendly and doesn't frighten the horses. Given the mass of support we've had from the Arts world, I suggest that the word 'cultural' is used: The Lesbian and Gay Cultural Trust, perhaps?

PD 11/3/88