

# TWELVE MONTHS PAST - - -

by john ware

Twelve months ago the Campaign Against Moral Persecution received its first publicity and recruited its first members. We are using these events as an excuse to celebrate our birthday. During the month the branches throughout the country will be throwing birthday parties at which we will look back over the past twelve months and pat each other on the back for a job well done.

I believe we can honestly accept the pats on the back for on many levels the Campaign Against Moral Persecution has been a success.

In terms of sheer numbers we can have no complaint. Only six months ago we were optimistically hoping for 1,000 members by Christmas. Now it seems certain that we will achieve, if not exceed twice this figure. At the end of August we had approximately 1,500 members nation-wide and we are still recruiting at the rate of about 150 per month.

Unfortunately our active members do not form as representative a sample of homosexuals as we would want. They come mainly from middle class backgrounds. Fortunately, however, most of us realize the importance of attracting and involving people from all walks of life. How this can best be done remains a problem but we do and must at all times recognise that people other than those who subscribe to middle-class values are welcome and indeed essential to our campaign.

While we acknowledge that our recruitment campaign is at fault in this area we can not however be held solely responsible. It is extremely difficult to reach large sections of the community while the media remains hostile to us. Most newspapers in Australia will neither report on our activities nor run a \$90.00 advertisement which as part of our public education programme is not overtly aimed at homosexuals. The few papers that do report, are papers like the 'Australian', the 'Review', and 'The Bulletin' which of course, means that we reach only a small section of the population, the middle class earlier referred to. This is in many cases little better than "preaching to the converted". The people we need to reach read the larger circulation dailies. The few non middle class members we have recruited have mostly come in response to such advice columns as "Suzy" in the "Daily Mirror" (the stablemate of the "Australian"). By and large the "paper you can trust" the "Daily Telegraph" and other interstate dailies seem to have entered into a conspiracy of silence, probably in the belief that if they close their eyes long enough we will go away.

In spite of this newspaper conspiracy we are becoming widely known and indeed, our opinion is being sought on many issues effecting homosexuals.

Recently when the Anglican Synod of the A.C.T. issued a statement to the effect that homosexuality should not be a criminal offence but rather should be treated as a mental disorder, radio stations in most Capital cities sought and broadcast our opinion without any prompting on our part. For the first time in Australia homosexuals have a voice and, more to the point, a voice that is being taken seriously.

We have also been reasonably successful in our public speaking campaign. Speakers from each branch have been invited to address at least one outside group a month. The speakers have always been received with enthusiasm and the questions asked have been mainly sympathetic. Again, of course, this has been largely "preaching to the converted" and in the future we must seek ways of being invited to address potentially more hostile audiences such as the R.S.L., Rotary and Leagues Clubs.

One particular disappointment has been the reaction of professional helpers (psychologists, social workers, etc.). Some regard us as a great help to them in their work of getting homosexuals to accept themselves with dignity and they have no hesitation in referring people to us. The majority however offer no co-operation at all. There are a variety of reasons for this: some have built their careers around the manipulation of homosexuals into inadequately functioning heterosexuals; some believe we are sick mainly because they have met only sick homosexuals; some are themselves homosexuals and fear exposure as such if they associate in any way with a homosexual society; and of course, some react, as most of the wider community react, with sheer embarrassment.

The N.S.W. branch recently sent a form letter to all the professional staff of one particular mental institution. The letter stated our views on homosexuality, asked for theirs and in the case of the two coinciding invited them to act as professional helpers within C.A.M.P. NOT ONE PERSON REPLIED. Indeed some were angry and embarrassed that we should send such a letter to them. "Why me" they were heard to remark. To my mind this is an appalling reaction. Surely professional helpers at least, should be able to react more unemotionally to the question of homosexuality. That they cannot indicates that their training is inadequate and that they are unfit to offer professional help. I feel that we can expect little help from the helping professions. A few individuals will assist but by and large they must be regarded as a puppet army, manipulated by the institutions for which they work.

Thankfully the Churches have been more positive in their response. Many clergy through their active involvement with CAMP are providing an increasing number of members with the non judgemental attitude, confidential ear and positive help one would have expected from the so-called professional helping bodies.

## FURTHERING OUR AIMS

People who responded to the publicity we received twelve months ago were sent a card which contained as well as an invitation to join the campaign, a list of our four principal aims. These four aims were:

1. To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas relating to homosexuality. Initially this will take the form of a magazine which will supply a means of communication between homosexuals as well as between homosexuals and the wider community.

*Eventually club rooms will be obtained.*

2. To provide a number of services such as legal, medical, and employment advice and information. A legal assistance fund will be established so that as many police prosecutions as possible can be challenged.
3. To agitate for law reform.
4. To entertain. The society is intended to be serious but not dreary. Many of our activities will be pure entertainment.

Our present situation clearly shows that we have worked steadily towards the furthering of these aims without losing sight of any one of them.

The magazine is now in its eleventh month. Its quality has gradually improved to the point where we are no longer embarrassed by asking 25 cents for it. The content, which in the early days mostly consisted of American material, is becoming more and more local as it is being used by members to express their opinions. Each month we spent quite a bit of money sending the magazine to various opinion makers throughout the country. Clearly the magazine is well on the way to fulfilling its function as a means of communication between homosexuals and between homosexuals and the wider community.

The club rooms set up in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland have proved essential in promoting a sense of community. It is hoped that the Western Australian branch and the proposed South Australian and Canberra branches will have club rooms in the near future. It is in the club rooms that we are slowly gaining the confidence to reject societies' definition of us as sick and to see ourselves more realistically as an oppressed minority.

Our second stated aim is also being furthered. Groups within each branch have worked very hard collecting the names of well vetted lawyers, doctors, and other experts who can be called upon at any time should members require legal, medical, spiritual or employment assistance. Unfortunately few homosexuals, as yet, have the confidence to fight oppression and discrimination, but some have and with our help were able to get some measure of justice. It is hoped that in the near future homosexuals who find themselves the victims of police harassment will shout out and make use of our resources.

Other groups are investigating ways to best further our third aim, namely law reform. I have been told that we can expect some positive and exciting plans of action in the very near future. Recently the W.A. Government (Premier Tonkin before election had promised homosexual law reform) called upon the Perth branch for information, which is now being considered by the Labor causes in that State.

It must be obvious to all that our fourth aim is being furthered.

Indeed, some would claim that we are concentrating too much energy on social functions. I am inclined to agree. But unless members display a lot more generosity and dig a little deeper, then social functions will remain as necessary to the furthering of the other three aims. Social functions raise money, not very much but at least enough to allow us to pay the rent and excess printing costs. It would be a pity if C.A.M.P. folded or became a purely social club simply because of lack of money.

Clearly then, our original aims are being furthered. But would it really matter if they were not? Isn't it enough that we exist? What is the Campaign Against Moral Persecution all about? I suspect that each member would give a different answer to this question and indeed, a different answer at different times. This, I believe, is how it should be. We should resist all attempts to categorise us. We are a movement, not an organisation or a club and as such we can not yet know who we are, what we are, or why we are. We must be able to stretch

ourselves and explore our fully extended personalities. This will not be possible unless we think of ourselves as a movement and reject attempts to box us in or organize a bureaucratize us out of existence.

I have frequently been asked why Christabel and I formed CAMP and how it came about. This our birthday issue seems a suitable place to publish the reason or history behind the foundation of CAMP at least from my side.

I offer an extract from an address I gave in Newcastle where among other things I touched on the founding of CAMP.

I apologise for the nature of presentation. The address was aimed at a particular heterosexual female audience and I ask you to bear this in mind while you are reading it.

**Paper Presented to the Hunter Valley Branch of the Women Graduates' Association in Newcastle. July, 1971.**

The easiest way to irritate and to kill any discussion is to use the form or argument which goes . . . I know because I was there. For example in an argument about the existence of God it is quite common to hear one of the participants claim, "I know that God exists because I have felt His presence."

All one can do when faced with arguments of this type is to shut up or to be rude and throw things.

As I want you neither to shut up nor to throw things I will state quite clearly that I am not an expert, nor do I consider myself an expert on homosexuality.

To say I am an expert simply because I am a homosexual would be as foolish as your claiming that you were all experts on 'femininity' because you are women.

Indeed, the fact that I am homosexual might allow me to gain a better understanding of homosexuality than most people, but it could just as easily hinder my understanding. So as a self-confessed ignorant, homosexual all I can present to you is an outline of my circumstances and my thinking which led me to join forces with Christabel Poll in launching the Campaign Against Moral Persecution.

Before continuing I would like to state that although I do not know what homosexuality is about neither does anyone else. Indeed, no one will know what homosexuality is about until society gives the opportunity for and encourages, homosexuals to develop fully and explore rather than hide their personalities. I am firmly convinced that if society gave homosexuals this opportunity it would not result in the moral decay of that society. It would, however, certainly change the society. Further the change would be one for the better for the relatively high mental breakdown and suicide rate amongst homosexuals is, I believe, a result of society's intolerance rather than a product of homosexuality as such.

The idea of forming C.A.M.P. occurred to me while I was doing a three years psychology course at Sydney University. During the course I was made to study various classification systems which all included homosexuality as a personality disorder. I was also made to sit through lectures on how homosexuals have, among other things, castration complexes and on how they are emotionally immature. Case study after case study was presented of homosexuals committed to mental institutions, each case study apparently supporting these views.

Dozen of theories of personality were offered to us all supposedly based upon direct observation, almost inevitably these direct observations were made on subjects drawn from the mental institutions or from people who sought psychiatric help.

There were one or two theories which did not regard homosexuality as a personality disorder. I thought that overall these theories were a lot of rubbish but I found myself in danger of accepting them simply because they were favourable

to homosexuals while I was in danger of rejecting the personality theories I found more feasible simply because they were unfavourable to homosexuals. Something like a woman rejecting the whole of Freud's theory because she could not accept the penis envy part of it.

The final crunch came when a behaviourist gave us a series of lectures which included homosexuality and its treatment. The treatment was aversion therapy. Any of you who have ever house trained a dog understand the basic principle of aversion therapy. If the dog craps on the carpet you punish it and before long the dog will stop crapping on the carpet. Aversion therapy is as simple as that. It is generally done with electric shocks. Unfortunately it can only stop undesired behaviour. It can only stop homosexuals from performing homosexual acts; it cannot turn us into heterosexuals. Because of this it is a most unhumane practice being no better than castration.

This behaviourist justified the use of aversion therapy on the grounds that it is only used on voluntary subjects. However he firmly believed, and made it quite clear, that a homosexual was self destructive and incapable of living a fulfilling life. He believed pressure should be placed upon him to volunteer.

To cut a long story short, I answered an exam question of his, in which I told him that I was a homosexual, that he in fact was allowing his middle class values to influence his so-called objectivity and that I saw him and his colleagues as a very real threat to my personality.

On reflection that was probably a childish thing to do and more than likely my action reinforced his conviction that homosexuals are immature.

In any case it was at this point that I began to realise just how necessary was some sort of organisation which would encourage homosexuals openly to admit they were homosexuals. At the time as a psychology student I felt such an organisation to be necessary, if only to supply a more representative pool of subjects for researches to draw on when investigating homosexuality. More importantly I increasingly realized that it is potentially damaging to the personality to hide a major part of oneself from the majority of one's acquaintances.

This problem of the denial of self was becoming more and more real to me as I approached the end of my University course.

Before I went to University I had led a double life. I had worked in an office and had many heterosexual friends. I knew the feeling of living in terror that I would be found out; that my heterosexual friends would learn about my secret life. Now don't get me wrong here. When I talk about my secret life I do not mean that as soon as the office closed I would rush home, put on a frilly dress and take myself off to the vice spots of the city. Nor do I mean that I rushed around offering boiled lollies to small boys. My secret life consisted of going home from work, watching T.V. and arguing with my lover over whose turn it was to cook dinner.

My life style changed dramatically when I met Michael. He had been found out while he was at Queensland University long before I met him. He was thrown out of Uni and his family and friends all came to know that he was homosexual. As a result he was also thrown out of home. So by the time I met him he had been living for some time as a known homosexual. He had collected a circle of friends, mostly

heterosexual, who totally accepted him. He introduced me into this circle and I learnt for the first time in my life what it was like to be able to give complete expression to my personality.

Fortunately most of this happened shortly before I did my matriculation and went to university. I came to expect that our friends would tell any new recruit to our circle that I was homosexual and mostly they did.

Those years at university were extremely happy for me in this respect. I gained a great deal of confidence and began to realise that I did not have to apologise for my existence. But this was in the sheltered world of the university, and I realized I would soon have to face the outside world again. I vowed that I would never again lead a double life but, of course, I knew I would. The future situation distressed me considerably. It is very easy not to mention one's homosexuality. Indeed if one does one is often accused of exploiting it. This accusation is, I feel, most unfair. Here tonight I have met many people for the first time. In the course of ordinary, polite pre-dinner conversation I was able to find out that some of you are married, divorced, widowed, etc. and how many children you have. In fact none of you would be embarrassed if I simply asked you "Are you married?". I have not, however, been able to find out how many of you are homosexual or have had homosexual relations. Many of you would probably be offended if I asked you. Here is the iniquity of the situation. You can talk about your marriage and not be accused of exploiting your heterosexuality yet a homosexual can't talk about his/her marriage without being accused of exploiting his/her homosexuality. I refuse not to mention my homosexuality. It is an essential facet of my personality and to deny it is to deny myself. But by saying that I must (for sheer self preservation) inform people that I am a homosexual, I do not mean that I intend to rush up to them and hit them in the eye with "I'm a homosexual"! Rather I mean that in the usual social situation of meeting new people I must be able to talk of my marriage and my sexual preferences.

At the time of leaving University however I felt that the difficulty of "being natural" would be too great. I was sure that I would again allow a mystery to be built up around me - to be thought of as the *bachelor gay* instead of as the *gay bachelor*.

I was then, not only aware of the need for a homosexual organisation but also of the need for myself to become known as a homosexual outside the circle of friends Michael and I shared. I talked the whole thing over with Chris and we decided to launch the Campaign.

My picture was published in the papers and I appeared on T.V. and radio. Everyone slapped me on the back and called me courageous. As you have heard tonight my motives were quite selfish and hardly altruistic.

They were however one part of the set of forces behind the formation of C.A.M.P. I say one part because I cannot speak for Chris, nor for the many others who responded immediately to the publicity. We all had different motives in forming C.A.M.P. We all have on common goal - the restoration of our rights as citizens and the realization of ourselves as unfettered individuals.

