



GAY ALLIANCE FOR EQUALITY

P.O. BOX 3611, SOUTH POSTAL STATION, HALIFAX, N.S., CANADA B3J 3K6

October 9, 1979

the Body Politic
Box 7289, Station A,
Toronto, Ontario
M5W 1X9

Dear sisters and brothers:

We wish to express our concern at the decision of the Body Politic to carry a paid advertisement for the CBC radio network in the October issue.

As you know, CBC radio has for several years maintained a policy of refusing all Public Service Announcements from gay organizations. This has had serious consequences for gay and lesbian groups in smaller centres where mass media are few, conservative and overwhelmingly anti-gay. Here in Halifax, we are denied access to all the local daily newspapers and to all but one of the radio stations. CBC's anti-gay policy denies us a much-needed channel for reaching gay people and the general public.

As you are also aware, the Canadian University Press (CUP) has for the past three years voted to maintain a boycott of all CBC radio advertising, a policy which has been the result of much hard work by gay activists in the Gay Alliance for Equality, and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition (CLGRC), and by gays and our straight supporters on the staffs of many university papers. The struggle to gain the support of the student press has resulted in conflicts with certain papers and their funding student unions. The policy has been maintained, however, and support won for the wider struggles of lesbians and gay men.

As well, this boycott has the official support of the CLGRC, of which you are a member.

Needless to say, your decision to carry the CBC ad places us in a very awkward position. Our credibility as a movement is undermined when, having asked for and received the support of non-gay organizations, support which costs these groups many of thousands of dollars (CBC had been a major advertiser in university papers), our own leading periodical breaks the boycott.

Carrying this ad serves the interests of CBC. The Corporation has been trying to bolster its liberal image, an image tarnished by our exposure of its anti-gay policies, while refusing to correct these policies. In fact CBC's position has been entrenched in its official Programme Policy. The

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appearance of this ad in the Body Politic is good PR for CBC - it encourages the illusion that CBC is accessible to gay people, when in fact it allows us airtime only on its terms and at its discretion.

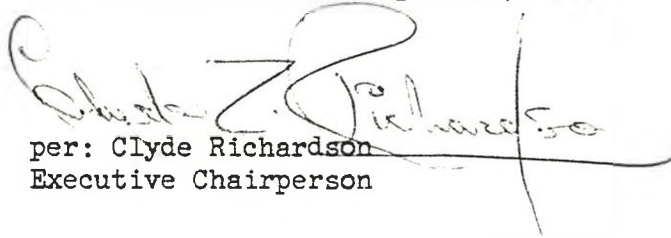
We recognize that the series of programmes announced by the advertisement is one of significant interest to gays across Canada. We suggest that gays could have been advised of the series through a regular news item, which could also have made reference to the Corporation's discriminatory policy and to the advertising boycott in effect against it. We also recognize the difficulty of operating a non-profit publication such as yours with limited funds. However, the revenue generated by this ad is small compared to that lost by student papers through the boycott, papers which are themselves often short of funds.

Most serious, in our minds, is the fact that this decision was taken without consultation with either the GAE or the CLGRC.

We view your acceptance of a CBC radio advertisement as a serious breach of movement solidarity, and as a direct contradiction of CLGRC policy. Furthermore, we view your failure to consult with either GAE or the CLGRC as at best negligent and at worst, insulting. We ask that you print a full response to our concerns in the next issue.

Although we see this event in a very serious light, we wish to assure you of our continued support for your struggle for full justice and the dropping of all charges against the directors of Pink Triangle Press. We also wish to express our sincere gratitude for the excellent work you have done as the journal of the Canadian gay movement.

In solidarity,
the Gay Alliance for Equality, Inc.



per: Clyde Richardson
Executive Chairperson

CLR/at

c.c. Atlantic Region of Canadian University Press
Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition
Canadian University Press
Dalhousie Gazette
groups listed on the Body Politic Community Page