

# STATEMENT ON WORKING WITH PRIDE



## THE BLACK AND PINK TRIANGLES

The Black and Pink Triangles are symbols which were used by Nazi Germany to identify the lesbian and gay people in their concentration camps. Tens of thousands of homosexuals wore those symbols to their deaths in gas chambers. These remain the symbols of one of history's most extreme examples of homophobia and a reminder of the need to undertake a struggle against homophobia in all its forms.

## HOMOPHOBIA

Homophobia is still alive and well within the community as well as within the workplace. Many lesbian and gay workers are systematically denied jobs and accommodation, physically bashed and some even killed simply because of who they are. Discriminatory laws and continued institutionalization of homophobia is present in all aspects of society. Many employers capitalize on discriminatory legislation against lesbian sisters and gay brothers by openly denying them benefits to their same sex partners and their families or termination their employment when they find out their sexual orientation.

Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are everywhere: they work beside us, they are active in our unions, they are our neighbours, they are church members, community activists, professionals, athletes, elected officers and politicians. They are our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, spouses and our friends.

Over the last few years, the CAW has made some giant steps forward in the fight against homophobia in the communities and in the union as well as in the workplaces. Some workplaces, through bargaining, have been able to obtain same sex spousal benefits and pensions. Since 1995, there have been workshops for same sex spouses on lesbian and gay issues at the CAW Human Rights Conferences, regionally and nationally, as well as at the Women's Conferences.

In 1994, a lesbian and a gay man from the CAW were appointed by the CAW to the CLC Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Working Group. In 1995, a CAW representative was appointed by the CAW to the OFL Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Working Group.

The CAW Education Centre's library in Port Elgin has educational videos and materials on lesbian and gay issues. The national union has compiled a mailing list for lesbian and gay activists and sends out a *Black and Pink Triangle* mail out periodically. The national has helped establish lesbian, gay and bisexual caucuses in BC and Ontario.

Through the CAW's support, the caucuses have designed and produced a national pin and banner representing CAW Gay Pride and Solidarity. These banners are visible at gay pride events and at labour demonstrations.

As a union, the CAW is committed to fight homophobia at all levels and build solidarity.