

June 2016 submission to the government

The We Demand an Apology Network

Sept. 14, 2017. Updated and revised version.

Points *needed* in an official, public, state apology

Who we are? The We Demand an Apology Network, brings together people who were directly affected by the national security campaigns to purge those thought to be “homosexuals” from the public service, the RCMP (and later CSIS), and the military, with supporters and researchers. We are united in our support for a comprehensive and broad ranging official state apology and redress process and for the expunging of convictions for those convicted of consensual homosexual offences both before and after 1969. For more detail on these matters see our submission to the federal government of June 2016. Other social institutions were involved in these campaigns against LGBTQ2S+ people and apologies are required from them as well but that is not our focus here.

Language. For the kind of language that needs to be used in this apology please see the statement read by Daniel Andrews Premier of the Australian state of Victoria in his May 2016 official and public apology for the criminalization of consensual homosexual practices. Andrews stated that this “was profoundly and unimaginably wrong.” He apologized for the “lives ruined” and taking responsibility for this criminalization he stated “It all started here. It will end here, too.”

Here we focus on the points that we need to see in the official, public, state apology. This apology must be coupled with action.

- **What we are asking for is a clear, official, public state apology.** This must include that what the Canadian government did in the ‘national security’ ‘anti-homosexual’ purge campaign from the late 1950s until the early 1990s in the public service and in the military against suspected ‘homosexuals’ which included lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and other sex/gender minorities as well as their friends, colleagues and families, was *wrong*. This affected thousands of people in multiple ways and was sanctioned at the highest levels of the Canadian state (the cabinet and the Security Panel). The federal government must accept *full responsibility for this injustice* and it must commit itself to ensuring that it will *never happen again*. A simple statement of regret will not do!
- **This purge campaign affected people in various and multiple ways.** This is why the apology must be as broadly based and comprehensive as possible to cover all of those detrimentally affected by the purge campaigns in the public service, RCMP, CSIS, and the military; including all those discharged or forced to resign; all those put under surveillance; all those the RCMP or Military police tried to obtain information from about who was gay or lesbian; as well as the partners, friends, and families of those directly affected – including of those who took their own

lives as a result of this purge campaign. The government must acknowledge that all LGBTQ2S+ people in these institutions lived in fear and some still do to this day. They often lived in fear of their lives, and for their careers. Institutional cultures are slow to change in such state institutions. Hence, in order to encourage more change, the federal government must acknowledge in the widest scope its willingness to accept responsibility for what has happened and to continue to bring about changes into the future.

- **Intersecting with gender and racist forms of harassment and discrimination.** The campaign affected those who were seen as gender non-conforming, or who violated the two gender-binary system, since these gender practices were read as indications of ‘homosexuality’ and used as grounds to purge people. Often these national security purge campaigns intersected with others forms of harassment and discrimination. For instance the campaign against lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming women was tied up with broader sexist practices towards women in the public service and the military. There was often a combination of racism, sexism and homophobia in the military. The Canadian Airborne regiment was an extreme example of this in not only engaging in racist abuse and torture during their “peacekeeping” mission in Somalia but also with a history of sexism and harassment and violence towards LGBT people that extended far more broadly in the military.
- **In the public service** the apology must cover not only those who officially lost their positions because they were identified as ‘homosexuals,’ but also those investigated and interrogated; those denied security clearances or higher security clearances and whose career advancement was therefore frozen; those who were demoted as a result; and those who lost their jobs because they were identified as ‘homosexual’ and their positions then disappeared or were reorganized out of existence. The apology must include the RCMP practice of keeping information on ‘suspected,’ ‘alleged’ and ‘confirmed’ ‘homosexuals,’ their field investigations, their attempts to get those outside the public service to inform on those in government employment, including the threat of criminal code charges for consensual homosexual offences to get information on ‘homosexuals’ in the public service. This must also include the internal campaigns against ‘homosexuals’ within the RCMP (and later CSIS).
- **In the military,** a whole series of procedures were used to discharge people and to force people to leave and these must all be covered in the apology. Internal military disciplinary regulations prohibiting the employment of ‘sex deviates’ go back to World War II years but from the late 1950s were combined with national security practices against homosexuals. This included surveillance (like the military police conducted at the Turret gay/lesbian club in Halifax); interrogations; demotion in security clearances so people were forced to do work that often “outed” them on military bases; to those who resigned for other reasons; and those explicitly discharged for being gay or lesbian. Those affected who were partners, friends, colleagues or family members of those targeted must also be included. This apology must cover the intrusive questioning regarding intimate sexual practices that many suspected lesbians had to endure from the 1970s to the early 1990s from male security officers and the use of lie-detector tests. The apology must include the military police, Special Investigative Unit, practice of compiling information on ‘suspected,’ ‘alleged’ and ‘confirmed’ ‘homosexuals’ as a means to entrap and purge people. The apology must include an acknowledgment that these records will be expunged so that people’s histories do not become public information in future years. This apology must include recognition of promotions that were denied when an individual’s ‘homosexuality’ was

discovered. This must include not only people who were expelled, but also those investigated who escaped expulsion, but who also suffered because of this persecution. Various forms of administrative release were also used ranging from “not advantageously employable,” to “unsuitable for further service,” to arguments that they were released for “bona fide occupational requirements.” This apology must cover those who resigned prior to investigation because they knew they would be discovered and purged. In the military the purge campaign created the context for organized harassment and violence (queer bashing) against assumed ‘homosexual’ members of the military that the military leadership either condoned or allowed to happen and sexual violence against women in the military also took place in the context of this campaign. This must also be included in the apology.

- **Recognition.** All those people whose lives and careers were harmed and destroyed by this Canadian government campaign, and those detrimentally affected in other ways must get recognition for the problems the government created in their lives.
- **The ‘Fruit Machine.’** The government apology must include the efforts to develop the ‘special project’ (often referred to as the ‘fruit machine’) that involved the Security Panel, Health and Welfare, the RCMP and National Defence in the 1960s that attempted to ‘detect’ homosexuals so they could be denied employment or be purged. Both people recruited as ‘homosexuals’ as well as the ‘normal’ control group were affected by this research and its various tests. This research also involved such academic institutions as the Psychology Department at Carleton University.
- **Surveillance of movement organizing and social activities.** The RCMP surveillance campaign in the 1970s and early 1980s extended to cover gay and lesbian organizations that challenged state national security policies. This was related to and often part of a broader surveillance campaign directed against the feminist movement, unions, the Quebec sovereignty movement, immigrant and Black activists, Indigenous organizing, the left and others. This included the surveillance of the 1971 ‘We Demand’ demonstration, organizations like the Gay Alliance Towards Equality in Vancouver, a number of cross-country conferences, as well as lesbian dances, lesbians involved in the feminist movement and many others. These organizations themselves were often portrayed as risks to ‘national security’ simply for challenging discriminatory practices towards lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the public service and military. The apology must also be for this form of surveillance against movement and community organizations.
- **Collection of confidential information.** The government must acknowledge that the government’s security institutions whether the RCMP, CSIS, the military police, or other units amassed over the years confidential information on thousands of Canadians relating to the purge campaign. The government must make sure that these documents will be expunged to protect the lives of past, current and future people living in Canada. Those who were purged or put under surveillance as part of this apology process must have the option of viewing these records, for closure, prior to these personal records being destroyed.
- **Making government documents public.** One of the main features of the national security purge campaign in the Canadian context has been its secrecy and the lack of accessible information about it. As part of this apology *all* documents relating to the organization of this national security purge campaign must be publicly released. This will not include the names of specific

individuals or identifying information of those who were purged, or directly affected, whose confidentiality must be maintained.