The purpose of the Daughters of Bilitis

A women's organization for the purpose of promoting the integration of the homosexual into society by:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications—this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

The Ladder

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Cover: "Carol" by Kay Tobin

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Gene Damon, whose "Lesbiana" column and occasional longer book reviews and articles have been appearing in THE LADDER since early 1957, explains: "Once when I was eighteen and full of the brashness bred by lack of self-confidence, I went into a library to kill time. Inspired by a whim, I asked the attractive librarian on duty if they had THE WELL OF LONELINESS (which I already owned). I was hoping for a shocked reaction. Instead, she coolly assured me that they had not only that book but others in the same line, and she reeled off several titles. That was fourteen years ago. Now I have hundreds of other books - and I still have the same reader's advisor."

Leo Ebreo, a writer and editor, got a B. A. at Columbia and an M. A. at New York University. He lives on Manhattan's upper west side in a small furnished room, with his large electric typewriter under a hanging light in the center of the room. His writings, under various names, have appeared in COMMENTARY, TANGENTS, and other publications. He is a frequent contributor to THE LADDER. He says, along with Leigh Hunt's Abou Ben Adhem: "Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

Amateur writer and professional immigrant, Jocelyn Hayward was born in England, has in the intervening 33 years taken out residence on three continents, achieved little more than a well-thumbed passport, four languages, and a lot of large photograph albums. Now living in Vancouver, B. C., she believes the travel bug has taken Its last bite, and intends to leave her suitcases in the storeroom and turn to a few other hobbies - like writing and reading, music, motoring, cooking, camping, cats, and the countryside, for a start. "Fragments of Recognition" is her first contribution to THE LADDER.

Franklin E. Kameny, a native of New York City, is now a resident of Washington, D. C. He formerly lived in Tucson, Arizona, in Cambridge, Mass., in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. He is a physicist (optics) and astronomer by profession, with a Ph.D. in astronomy from Harvard University. As founder of the Mattachine Society of Washington, its past president, a past member of its Executive Board, and currently chairman of its Committee on Governmental Concerns and on Picketing and Other Lawful Demonstrations, he has been instrumental in giving to that organization its strongly activist approach and its civil-libertarian flavor, based on a detailed, carefully constructed, self-consistent philosophy and ideology which he has developed. He is also one of the two co-chairmen of the Washington Area Council on Religion and the Homosexual, and an active member of the Washington chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. In the spare time left over from homophile movement activities, he enjoys dancing, gardening, classical music, reading, theater, and travel.

Fragments
of Recognition

Jocelyn
Hayward

The Child is on a holiday visit with a maiden aunt. The Child lives much among maiden aunts and mountains.

This day the Maiden Aunt has come home from a walk to find the Child writing a letter.

"Who are you writing to, dear?"

"A school friend."

"Is she a nice girl?"

The Child is quickened with emotions a size too big for her yet. She does not understand them. But she understands guilt instinctively and without tuition. "Quite a nice girl."

"What is she like, dear?"

She is the most wonderful being in the world. She is captain of the swimming team and she sings "Ich Liebe Dich" like a mountain stream in the morning. She is old enough to have a figure and go to dances. And she has allowed the Child a place in all this wonder.

"Oh - just quite a nice girl."

And the Child goes to make tea for the Maiden Aunt who has such faded eyes that she has forgotten - if she ever knew - what it is like to have emotions a size too big. And such tranquil hands that she surely can never have known guilt.

When the Child comes back with the tray of tea and fruit-cake, a terrible thing has happened. A breeze has blown her letter to the ground and the last page has landed at the feet of the Maiden Aunt.

"Do you," she inquires, "habitually send 'all your love always' to quite nice school friends?" Her voice is faded as her eyes, shaded as her eyes.

Terrified by the challenge of the truth, the Child is driven back so hard upon it that it becomes an untruth. "Oh yes - just always!"

"Will you have some cake?" the Maiden Aunt asks. "If I remember rightly, I rate just 'love'. No quantity or duration specified."
"I'm not hungry, thanks."

The Maiden Aunt cuts herself a careful piece of cake. The Child is uncomfortably aware of an unspoken conversation in progress between them.

The Maiden Aunt looks up suddenly.

"I had a school friend who was quite nice. I used to sign my letters with all my love. But I was scared of 'always'. I always have been. But I think you have more courage than I do. I hope so." She picks up a prim crumb. "Dear, change your mind about the cake? It's quite nice."

"I know. It's terrific." The Child has an appetite after all. And the Maiden Aunt's faded eyes are quite blue.

The Student is on the Psychiatrist's couch. The couch is green; it is clammy, like the Psychiatrist's hands. The room's green curtains are half-drawn and as usual the couch is positioned so that the one strip of light is in the Student's eyes.

But she can hear the Psychiatrist breathing through the hairs in his nostrils. And she can hear the trotting feet of the college matron somewhere behind her in the room's green depths. They are eager to march on the Student's disgrace, those feet.

"And how have our migraines been?"

"The same." If he wants part ownership of her migraines, let him work for it.

"And our nightmares? Have we been riding a black mare again?"

"Stallion."

"Yes, you ask what she's been doing nights!" The college matron is so rigid with righteousness, it almost throttles her voice. The Student, drifting down a green world, feels a current of fear.

The college matron's moment is not yet. "Madam," the Psychiatrist says, "I permit your presence this one time because you insist. But silence we must have - verstehen? Now, my dear, the dream. . . . Do we recollect the colour of the jersey we wear when riding the horse?"

"Yellow."

"Significant! And our gloves?"

"I don't know."

"A pity. A dark or light colour? You should be making notes."

The Student cannot remember. The college matron snorts faintly.

"Are they then of leather? I am trying to help you. This is very important. It could be the key to--"

The college matron can wait upon victory no longer. "Is that all you concern yourself with - dreams and gloves? Is this how you've both been wasting your time on these appointments? Well, don't waste any more, doctor - the college doesn't intend to! This girl has been deceiving us, under our noses! If you want one more question, why not ask her about last night? Ask her about how I found another girl in her room, about the circumstances under which I found them, about how long this has been going on! Ask her that!"

The Student breathes out, deeply and carefully. She is actually grateful to the college matron. So should the Psychiatrist be. Truth must have a value to a man so concerned with the correctness of colour. And the leper did not ask for his sores, must have wanted to show them to the healing sun.

But the Psychiatrist is standing up. He draws back the curtains and the sun behind them is old and dusty.

"Take her away," he says. "When she stops these nasty little habits, I might be able to help her. Now take her away."

"I told you," the college matron says, "that nobody would have anything to do with you when they knew what you were."

On the way back to the college, the Student begins another migraine.

The Journalist is travelling on an assignment. She is not alone. They have stopped overnight at a small-town hotel. The Journalist tips him. Remembers a name left in the bedroom. Coming out into the corridor she meets the Hall Porter, he holds her coin. "I should think you'd want to give a little more."

The Journalist, young in poise, fears giving offense, instead gives a second coin.

"Even so," says the Hall Porter. "Look here a minute."

He points upward. A fanlight above the bedroom door is open. It reflects a clear image of the room beyond.

"I was up and down here early this morning," he says.

The Journalist, old in fear, says nothing.
"Your bags was quite heavy too, for a little feller," the Hall Porter prompts. "Bad luck about that fanlight being open at just that angle."

The Journalist notices an unobtrusive piece of tape holding the fanlight open at just that angle. She decides not to notice it. One can have far, far too much of truth, she decides. Which is one reason - the other is shame - why she takes out a note. "It's all I have."

She walks away down the corridor with care as to the straightness of her spine. It seems ridiculously to matter.

But truth has not finished with her. He catches at her arm. A smile lifts his sad moustache.

"It's nothing personal," he wants to assure her. "In fact, me and Hans the pastrycook has quite an understanding, if you follow. Maybe that's why, soon as you checked in last night, I recognized you."

In the car the Journalist, at last, is angry. But it is too late. It is always too late.

The Editor sits in a hot seat. Her predecessor, a man, was fired for homosexuality. The Editor leads a containerized, careful existence. But even containerization cannot quite conceal 31 unmarried years and no repentance.

The man who did the firing has a secretary. She is a large lady, much given to High Church ritual and the adopting of stray cats. She is a twin pillar of righteousness, supporting a wrathful God on one hand and a bigoted employer on the other.

She has come to pay the Editor a visit. She discusses generalities - the Pope's Easter message, the price of knitting wool, and the Accounts Division's filing system. She then turns to the Editor's predecessor.

"Poor Larry," she says surprisingly. "Always on the defensive. He thought we were all his enemies. And it wouldn't have been proper for us to tell him otherwise. One's more intimate life is given far too much importance these days, don't you think? It's just a fragment of the whole personality after all. If only such people could recognize that they have friends." Her earnest gaze is bland as butter. "You do make good tea up here - and I hope I'll be invited again."

The Secretary departs ceremonially upon her way. The Editor reflects that discretion as well as dignity sometimes walks whaleboned. And that truth needs no utterance to be absolute.

She calls for more tea. And relaxes a little in her hot seat.

The Writer is working on a book that asks to be written. It is about recognition and understanding and tolerance. It is an attempt to be faithful to the old dictum that the purpose of art is the furtherance of understanding.

The Writer's Friend brings in coffee. "What are you working on?"

"A book."

"May I read?"

The Writer nods. The Friend reads a couple of pages. She puts it down silently. The Writer looks up. There are tears in the Friend's eyes. "What's up?"

"It's about us!"

"Well - people like us."

"It's us. Are we really like this?"

"We must be. You recognized us."

"How could you? Isn't it enough to have to live with a secret behind these walls? Do you want it staring at you from every bookshop too? Are you proud of what you are or something?"

"I don't think I'm ashamed."

But the Writer allows herself to lose interest in the project. And it is by no means entirely the Friend's fault. This was a book that asked to be written. But maybe it asked too soon.

It is laid aside in a closet. One day a few months later, when space is at a premium, it is taken out and thrown away.

These are some of the fragments which remain - and which memory has refused to throw away.
IS HE TENDER TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS?

An intellectual skirmish erupted over statements about homosexuals that appeared in the book THE NOBLEST CRY: A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1965). Charles Lee Markmann, author of this non-official history, puts forth in his pages such forceful opinions as the following:

"One further type of purge deserves to be noted - the official purge based on sexual dissent. McCarthy's and others' efforts to make homosexual a synonym for subversive were on the whole lamentably successful in the State Department, in the armed services and in 'defense' industries; the backwash has reached even into the White House in the case of the unfortunate Walter Jenkins, victim of a multitude of injustices by his colleagues and superiors: victim of police spying, victim of a monstrous prejudice skillfully inflated in the unlettered populace, victim of a nationwide publicity for which there was no ground.... For him, unfortunately, the ACLU could do nothing. But for those homosexuals of the District of Columbia who have been fortunate enough to be unentrapped, unspied on and undenounced, the Union won a worthwhile victory, the defeat of a Congressional bill to prevent fund-raising by the Mattachine Society (of Washington), which attempts to educate the public mind to a semblance of a civilized attitude toward the homosexual." (pp. 226-227)

"Far in advance of the national board of the Union, the National Capital Area affiliate (in Washington, D.C.) has formally called on the Government to abolish its discriminatory policy that bans from employment any past or present homosexual and even anyone to whom latent homosexuality is imputed by the so-called personality tests devised by commercial 'psychologists' and 'sociologists' to whom ambivalence is a frightening word, human nature is terra incognita and folk-myths about the psyche of the active homosexual are gospel. The affiliate affirms the right to sexual freedom in private, discredits the specious argument that the presence of a homosexual destroys the morale (not the morals) of the heterosexuals (whom the Federal Civil Service Commission apparently considers exceptionally vulnerable and unstable) and points out that vulnerability to blackmail and coercion is roughly the same in all three sexes. In addition the affiliate emphasizes the inevitable and inexcusable spying and entrapment to which Government resorts in order to preserve intact the heterosexuality of its payrolls." (p. 397)

These and other pointed comments on homosexuals vis-a-vis law and government so jarred Roger N. Baldwin, founder of the ACLU who reviewed the book in the October 1965 issue of the Union's national newsletter CIVIL LIBERTIES, that Baldwin accused Markmann of being "tender toward homosexuals beyond any concern of the ACLU with the law."

But author Markmann had the last word - and it was surely "the noblest cry" of the altercation. In his retort to Baldwin, partly quoted in the next issue of CIVIL LIBERTIES, Markmann declared that he is "neither more nor less tender toward the homosexual than toward anyone else who does not truckle to the mass...which, left to itself, would strip the homosexual of all rights."

For 45 years, the American Civil Liberties Union has been actively defending for all citizens the democratic liberties embodied in the Bill of Rights. Charles Lee Markmann's THE NOBLEST CRY is a comprehensive and provocative history of this remarkable organization - and is recommended reading.

LA FUGA (The Flight)

An Italian Cinematic Portrayal of the Lesbian

Italian lesbians? Are there any? Seeing "La Fuga" is hardly a way to find out. It is a patent fiction far removed from any reality. The story line resembles the paperback dreadfulness about sinful lesbian romance that flood the dirty-book shops.

Beautiful (and rich, rich, rich) young married woman with child drifts away from husband and drifts closer and closer into terrible and dangerous alliance with tall, handsome (but female) interior decorator. As she drifts she has recurring Freudian dreams about missing trains. She doesn't like not catching the trains. She doesn't like it one bit. So she goes to an analyst. Italian analysts? Yes ma'am. Well now, this rich girl drifts closer and closer to the handsome interior decorator and further and further and further away from her husband, and all the time she is dreaming about the trains (in overexposed near-white film like the Cocteau visits to the underworld in "Orpheus").

What will happen? Nothing good - naturally - of such damnable and hellish affections. This is a male-written, male-oriented screenplay.

And yet, impossibly, the movie is forgivable. It is graced with two handsome women playing the leads. The stars and cameramen (on location in Rome and on the Amalfi coast) let the mechanical story line go for long periods, and the sequences when the two women exchange affection and enjoy the sunlight...
World of Italy have a realism which obliterates the mechanical plot. Special credit must be given to Anouk Aimee for rescuing an impossible story through her acting, projecting with spirit and intensity the possibility of lesbian affection.

Also to be noted, in the continuous battle against censorship, is a torrid love scene between the women. A little too romantic and into-what-depths-an-I-falling for this viewer's taste, but a good sign that the way may be cleared for greater frankness about physical relations between women.

- Reviewed by Leo Ebreo

WALLS

Love has walls
petal thin.
If they keep
you and me In,
we must tend our slender stem
as honey bees
(with powdered knees)
touch tenderly
the golden seed
that graces them.

- Christine Cummings

FOR MARIANNE

Green, my love is green
as a tart apple
as a little leaf uncurling
As thoughts of you
(born in the past
and dreaming towards the future):
How you tossed your head
and the ripe heavy hair
fell blanketing creamy shoulders;
How I took your soft white hand
and kissed the palm
leaving a small red wound.

It is right that I
should slay the white hart
as I have been slain;
Only for you is my love green
as the delighted laughter
of a very small child.

- Jane Kogan

Cross-Currents

In Butler County, Ohio, homosexual children are considered as dangerous as pyromaniacs. "We show affection," boasts Leonard Ziglar, director of the Butler County Children's Home which houses and tries to help children in need of care and attention, most of them from broken or inadequate homes. But there is no affection available for two specified classes of youngsters. The Middletown (Ohio) Journal reports that "Only fire-setters and homosexuals are automatically and necessarily excluded" from the home. What happens to needy children who set fires or are categorized as homosexual, was not reported.

The Manager-Hamilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. has agreed to an out-of-court settlement to ECHO (East Coast Homophile Organizations) of $500 for damages. The hotel had cancelled, at nearly the last minute, reservations for facilities for ECHO's 1964 conference in Washington.

HOW TO BEAT PERSONALITY TESTS is an "invaluable" book, according to James Ridgeway, associate editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC. In his review in the February 26 issue, Ridgeway passes along to the reader some of author Charles Alex's examples of the kinds of questions used in personality tests and his sardonic advice on how to answer them. Ridgeway notes, for instance:

"Psychologists are keen on sex; in general, remember when answering such questions to select the most heterosexual answers possible. Thus: true or false, "The best times in my life have been with men rather than women." If you are a man, the answer is false" - because supposedly the best times in anyone's life are one's sexual encounters. Similarly, "to the question, 'A good pal is the finest human relationship possible,' one would answer false. To do otherwise would suggest a less than perfect confidence in marital relationships."

Ridgeway says that he once met a government psychologist who claimed that the outrageous questions on personality tests are really intended to measure the subject's "worldliness" - that is, whether the subject has sense enough to not answer honestly the kooky or baited questions but to guess what the "right" answer is in the view of the government tester.

Ridgeway warns that while the government "recently promised to save most employees from answering questions on personality tests...this is not likely to affect the tests' growing popularity elsewhere, particularly in business circles."
LAW REFORM --- ALMOST

In 1957, England's government-appointed Wolfenden Committee urged elimination of criminal penalties for homosexual acts in private between consenting adult men. (Lesbian sex acts are not illegal in Great Britain.) In the eight years since, several moves to bring the law in line with the Wolfenden recommendations have failed - including a House of Commons defeat last year just after the House of Lords had approved reform.

A reform bill was again introduced in the Commons in February by Humphry Berkeley, a Catholic and a Conservative who charged the present law encourages blackmail - "about the filthiest crime in society." With impressive support from Cabinet members and others, the bill passed the critical second reading by a good margin. "Surely some of us will feel better that one more of our tribal persecutions has been abandoned," said a confident NEW STATESMAN writer. But the bill never got its final reading. A general election was called and Parliament was dissolved in March. Now any reform of the law on homosexuality will have to be re-introduced in the newly-elected Commons. By whom? Mr. Berkeley lost his seat in the election.

PICKETING: THE PROS AND CONS

During the summer of 1965, for the first time in history, several homophile organizations sponsored picketing demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere, primarily to protest the Federal government's anti-homosexual policies (especially in the Civil Service, in the military services, and in the State Department) and the steadfast refusal of government officials to meet with spokesmen for the homosexual community to discuss the government's discrimination against homosexuals.

The demonstrations were planned and conducted with great care. But the tactic itself evoked controversy within the homophile movement. Many people felt the tactic was not advisable. At this time, when those organizations that adopted picketing are preparing to demonstrate again this year, THE LADDER presents a sample of views pro and con. The following comments were made by heterosexual supporters of the homosexual cause.

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(Statements made by Dr. Ernest van den Haag, psychoanalyst, educator, and social philosopher, at the East Coast Homophile Organizations conference in New York City in September 1965)

I think that picketing is harmful, inasmuch as I do not believe it is likely to gain more public sympathy or support for the goals homosexuals want to achieve.

I understand why some homosexuals want to picket. The feel they are right and they want to advertise that they are right. It's a very natural feeling. They want to be active, to get something done. But it seems to me that the intelligent pursuit of any cause is distinguished from the unintelligent pursuit, by asking oneself whether the means used to achieve the goal are suitable to achieve it - or likely to defeat it or impair it. I see no reason at all to believe that picketing will be of any help to homosexuals.

I do not believe that the Negro cause, for instance, has been greatly fostered by picketing and such activities. It's the other way around. Let me point out that the whole business of picketing and so on started after the legal decisions that were really decisive, and that picketing has not achieved a thing for the Negro that has not been achieved by the court decisions. It may have speeded up the carrying out of some of these decisions. It may also have delayed it.

Picketing certainly has lost as much public sympathy as it has gained for the Negro. And in this respect the Negroes are in a far stronger position than are homosexuals. There are more Negroes in the first place, and the degree of public sympathy on which they can count, at least in the North, is for a variety of reasons much greater. Hence I do not think the Negroes do their cause as much harm by picketing as I think homosexuals are likely to do if they picket. I also feel that picketing has been of more help to Negro leaders than it has been of help to Negroes.

Picketing is not presenting an argument; it is not making a legal point. It is merely drawing attention to something. This tactic is useful when there is general agreement that the something to which attention is being drawn is wrong. This agreement doesn't exist regarding the homosexual cause.

Picketing merely indicates that the picketers think they are being treated unjustly. No one in our society doubts that homosexuals think they are being treated unjustly. The question is whether other people think so?

So I don't quite see what is being achieved by homophile picketing, except blowing off steam. What usually is the purpose of picketing? Picketing is a way of advertising - which, it is assumed, will lead to a determinate reaction of the desired kind. Now do you really assume that picketing in the cause of freedom for homosexuals is likely to lead to this reaction? I don't think you would be right in making this assumption. I think you would be misjudging the public temper.

The public temper at this point is not such as to say that homosexuals ought to picket and to insist, by public means, on having the same rights as heterosexuals. A long time will have to pass, and a great deal of preparatory work will have
to be done, to persuade the public that homosexuals ought to have the same rights. Then, when at least a substantial segment of the public is so persuaded, and homosexuals in a particular instance are denied these rights - then picketing may make a great deal of sense. Right now it doesn't.

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(Statements made by Gilbert M. Cantor, lawyer and member of CORE and the American Civil Liberties Union, during his speech at the East Coast Homophile Organizations conference in New York City in September 1965)

In these times, it appears that all liberal causes tend to analogize themselves with the Negro freedom movement and to emulate it insofar as possible, because of the sweep and the excitement and the effectiveness of that movement. There are certain points of great similarity between the homophile movement and the Negro freedom movement which facilitate that identification. It is clear, from the picketing tactics used recently by some of the homophile groups, that the emulation is taking place. I think it is important to recognize the similarities and the differences between the two groups.

Like the Negro people in America, the homosexual minority is a group whose members are the subjects of prejudice and the victims of discrimination. However, in the area of housing, it would appear that homosexuals suffer less than Negroes. In the area of education, clearly homosexuals suffer less than Negroes. In the area of employment, the homosexual suffers less than the Negro. There is, to be sure, a cost to the homosexual's advantage here. The price to be paid is the effort of constant concealment, and it is an unfair price to pay for merited employment. But at the same time, it is a choice not available to the person who is perceived, through skin color, as a Negro.

There are ways in which the homosexual is treated worse than the Negro. For example, it is not a crime to be a Negro or to live as a Negro. It is not regarded as a sin to be a Negro. And it is not considered an illness to be a Negro. These prejudicial conditions surrounding the homosexual produce less rather than more sympathy for the homosexual cause. Clearly, the majority group in society does not have the consciousness of guilt toward the homosexual which has been developed toward the Negro.

Both the homosexual and the Negro raise for the dominant group the specter of sexuality and sensuality which threatens the repressive system in which the vast majority live their thinned-out lives. It is easier for one to stay repressed if one sees no one else living a different kind of life - that is, if one lives in a uniformly repressive community.

There is another threat to the dominant culture which the homosexual represents. The whole society, including its economy, is geared to and based on the great desirability and joy of heterosexual love and sex. The homosexual shows that he prefers something else. A diminished demand tends to lower the price of a product - hence the homosexual's preference devalues heterosexual love and sex, and thus threatens a central value of the heterosexual world.

The consequence of all I have described is that one cannot in all cases throw up a picket line or take other forms of direct action with the expectation of public response similar to the response to direct action in the Negro freedom movement. A miscalculation of this kind can backfire and cause more harm than many good works can balance. Perhaps the heterosexual participants in or friends of the homophile movement can help it to avoid these miscalculations by bringing to bear a dual or a different perspective. I think, for example, it may be better to picket over an issue of employment than over, say, an issue of a hotel cancelling its agreement to house a homophile conference.

It is possible to have direct action activities which can have a favorable effect on the community. I only think that it's very important to choose on what issue, and in what place, and with which people of course, and in what manner, to make this effort. It's a very sensitive decision.

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(From a letter to the editor of THE LADDER written in September 1965 by Rev. Ted McIlvenna, then president of The Council on Religion and the Homosexual Inc, in San Francisco and Director of the Young Adult Project of the Glide Foundation)

First of all, let me state quite emphatically that I am not against picketing. In fact, I feel that many times picketing may be the only symbolic, orderly way to get certain issues in front of the general public. This is a right we as Americans have, and one which I have exercised many times and encouraged others to do likewise. (See editor's note below.)

My (earlier) comments (against picketing by homophile organizations) were mouthed in a context of a particular social climate in San Francisco where I felt the timing ill-advised due to lack of preparedness and general support of the homophile movement here. I expect that the future will hold a number of types of protests, and I would encourage the groups on the East Coast as well as on the West Coast to consider this an acceptable means of encounter.

(Ed. note: It is to be noted that to demonstrate by picketing is a right, not a privilege to be granted at the sufferance of civil authorities. The homophile demonstrations in 1965 were all fully lawful ones. In each case, the top police authorities of the appropriate city were notified well in advance - but this is not to imply that permission to demonstrate was needed or sought from the police or any civil authority.)

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Picketing is a sign of visibility. It is in a sense a form of advertising. I think - to jump in where angels fear to tread - I would recommend selective picketing as more advantageous than disadvantageous.

When Miss Van Cott (president of New York Chapter of DOB) contacted me to ask me to address this chapter, she very kindly sent me a copy of THE LADDER (October 1965) on which there was a cover showing a number of individuals picketing. And frankly, that picture made a tremendously favorable impression on me, in that there are excellent models of Americans protesting.

Look at that cover of THE LADDER. You know, it shows that the picketers have only one head, two arms, two legs - like anyone else! Most people are ignorant about homosexuals; they just don't know about you. They think the homosexual is something like the caricature of a Bolshevik, with a beard and a bomb in his hand. You have to disabuse the public of such an image. And picketing is one way of doing it. It has the advantage of giving you publicity.

But publicity can be good or bad, so I would certainly court and woo favorable publicity, and I would cold-bloodedly put my best representatives forward. I don't have to spell that out. I mean, if we're having someone from Brooklyn College represent the college let's say a student, we're going to pick a neatly-dressed student, a reasonably articulate student, one who does not antagonize by negative qualities.

So I would recommend that you select your best representatives. By best, I mean those closest to the group you want to influence. In short, cold-bloodedly, you should put forward the individuals with the highest education, with the key jobs (if they're willing to risk themselves). You should put forward - forgive me - clean-cut appearing individuals.

Identify yourselves favorably. Take the individuals who are anti-you, and give them, in your picket lines, somebody who looks as much like themselves as possible. Give them someone whom they would have to look up to if that individual were in their own group. You should not antagonize them by putting - once again forgive me - your worst foot forward. Is this fair? No. Is it reality? Is it politic? I think so.

You certainly should discriminate about where and when and why to picket. You shouldn't picket just for the hell of picketing, but should pick major issues and major spots, I would say. I would go for a minimum of this particular practice, but I certainly would use it.

I will tell you what hit me hard. I'm 51, and I just had never thought of sexuality in terms of discrimination until some young lady got up, during the question and answer period at my Cooper Union lecture last year, and tied in homosexuality with discrimination. I'd just never thought of it that way before.

What is needed is making yourselves heard. Picketing is going to be just one part of your campaign, one way of flagging attention. It's an attention-getting device. Then that has to be followed up by qualified speakers on your side of the fence, putting forth objectively, unemotionally, your major points.

On the question of the appropriateness of picketing at this time: So as not to be on the fence, I would still suggest that it is appropriate, if selectively, judiciously, skillfully, and infrequently done.

Don't forget, however, how threatening your picketing may seem to others. When society's being threatened, they're going to fight back. So you are in for a battle. Picketing carries with it a calculated risk. I would take it - but I would be as politic about it as humanly possible.

**PICKETING: RESULTS**

Did the homophile picketings in 1965 have any concrete results in terms of the Federal government's anti-homosexual policies?

One of the demonstrations was at the Civil Service Commission in Washington, D. C. For three years the CSC had been explicitly refusing to meet with spokesmen for the homosexual community - and the last such refusal was received only three days before the demonstration. After the picketing, a follow-up letter was sent to the Commission, asking again for a meeting.

This time the CSC agreed to a meeting. It was held on September 8, 1965, between five members of the Mattachine Society of Washington (two women and three men) and two high-ranking persons officially representing the Civil Service Commissioners and designated by them to meet with the homophile spokesmen. The CSC requested a formal presentation of the homophile position and recommendations, and a 17-page statement, along with background material, was presented to the CSC on December 13, 1965. The CSC issued a four-page reply on February 26, 1966.

The special importance of this exchange is that the Civil Service Commission for the first time is formulating a public justification of its policies regarding exclusion of homosexuals from Federal employment. The Mattachine Society of Washington has prepared a reply to the CSC further challenging the government's position. Copies of the MSW statement, the CSC's reply, and the counter-reply may be obtained from Mattachine Society of Washington, P. O. Box 1032, Washington 13, D. C.
Lesbianana by Gene Damon


This play, performed in England in 1965, is wholly lesbian in content; it deals with the job and private-life difficulties of a radio actress, the Sister George of the title. It's a very funny play, and it's sympathetic to lesbianism although it apparently wasn't intended to be so. PLAYS AND PLAYERS is a well-known English drama magazine, similar to our THEATRE ARTS, and should be available in many large public libraries and university libraries.

334. NAKED POEMS - by Phyllis Webb. Vancouver, Periwinkle Press (c/o Takao Tanabe, 3939 Viewridge Place, West Vancouver, B.C., Canada, $2.25), 1965.

Miss Webb's book celebrates a return to an outdated sentiment, love - but she uses a relentless honest economy to express it. In many of her poems the eroticism is unbearably distilled by her brevity and the reader is uncomfortably close to the poet. No wasted words are used to tell the lesbian love affair of Suite I and Suite II. The third section, Non Linear, has more lines, but here again the poems are stripped, literally naked, clean of artifice. The last two sections are not as good and seem pretentious and mannered, though some of the individual poems are telling in their impact. Miss Webb is inventive and sensual and her language is as startling as her imagery.


Murder at a social tennis weekend in England. Among the guests are a lesbian pair and a male homosexual. Happily, none of the three is involved in the murder as either victim or murderer. Considerable space is given to the relationship between the two women. The author wisely does not make value judgments concerning the sex lives of any of the characters.


Two college-age lesbians spend a few days visiting at the bleak apartment of the aunt of one of the pair. The lesbian relationship is defined clearly, and there are indications that the view of loneliness they see in the elderly aunt draws the girls closer and strengthens them in their growing awareness that the world they will face after college is not so insular and protected. This sensitive, well-written story won a college contest sponsored by MADEMOISELLE Magazine.

IN DEFENSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

A Rational Evaluation of Social Prejudice

by R. O. D. Benson

(New York, Julian Press, 1965)

"I hope to provide the homosexual with a philosophy that will enable him to come to grips with his life and not feel guilty over a life-choice of homosexuality. However, much would be lost if this were the author's only intention. He hopes to confront those who are aware of homosexuality with ideas with which they may not be familiar. He hopes, in this confrontation with the unfamiliar, that the reader will be challenged to examine his presuppositions, the facts, and the logic which gives formal structure to these facts." -- from R. O. D. Benson's IN DEFENSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY.

Probably the highest praise a reviewer can give is the statement, "I wish I had written this book myself." By a narrow margin and with some grave reservations, I can say this about R. O. D. Benson's IN DEFENSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY.

This is a book that has been needed for a long time. I feel that the simple fact that it has appeared just now is important. An unapologetic, uncompromising, straightforward approach to homosexuality and to the homosexual's right to live his homosexuality, is very much called for by the present climate of opinion and by the present state of the homophile movement. I can only wish that the content of this book were better presented for the popular reader - and also in fact for the scholarly one.

There are at least four audiences for whom Benson could have written (no doubt each reader will divide up the population in his own way): (1) the in-group, intellectually knowledgeable members of the homophile movement; (2) the professionals: clergy, psychiatrists, lawyers, theologians, sociologists,
philosophers, etc.; (3) the intellectual public; (4) the general public.

Benson's discussion will say little that is really new for the first group, but will provide them with ammunition. It will almost completely miss the last group. The second and third groups will find it valuable, if they are willing to wade through a good many cogent and important arguments which unfortunately are presented abstrusely and unsystematically.

The book's eight chapters seem to fall into two sections. The first three chapters refute the standard arguments against homosexuality: (1) that it is unnatural; (2) that it is immoral; (3) that it is a sickness. Here Benson does fairly well.

The last five chapters attempt to provide strategy for gaining acceptance of the arguments presented in the first chapters. Here Benson does much less well. One might contend that he should have started with the first section, that the major contribution of his book lies there, in his defense of homosexuality.

In his opening chapter, "The Nature Argument," Benson presents arguments against the claim that homosexuality is unnatural - arguments familiar to anyone who realizes that (1) at the superficial level, we hardly perform a "natural" act throughout our lives (e.g., eating cooked food is not "natural") and so there is no rational basis for singling out homosexual acts as unnatural; (2) at a more fundamental level, we cannot in any case defy the laws of nature (i.e., the laws of physics) and so it is inherently impossible for us to do anything at all that is not "natural" - we merely use our brains, perfectly naturally, to turn the laws of nature to our own benefit.

In his second chapter, Benson takes up the religious argument. He deals with the material effectively if a bit discursively. His major points are clear enough: that in current practice we select from among the Bible's injunctions and prohibitions, those we will follow and those we will ignore; that there is therefore no logical requirement that we make a special issue of any biblical prohibition which may exist against homosexual behavior. We cannot in logic pick and choose those particular biblical precepts we will and will not follow, and then claim that our choice is the only possible correct one. Benson refers to the right of each individual to use biblical precepts as he sees fit, but he neglects to discuss the question, which arises in practice, of the imposition of one person's chosen set of beliefs upon others.

The third chapter, "The Psychological Argument," deals with most of the objections to present-day psychiatric theory about homosexuality - but deals in many instances somewhat too decorously for my tastes. Rather indirectly, Benson makes the very important (though not novel) point that homosexuals have been defined into sickness by means of unreasoned and unverified assumptions based on value judgments but passed off as scientific findings.

Unfortunately, he neglects to point out the shockingly slipshod science, with its appallingly poor sampling techniques, which is manifested in almost every published study of homosexuality and homosexuals. He does not explicitly bring out the lack of adequate non-tautological definitions of sickness, although he deals with this lack implicitly and seems aware of it. In one instance, an argument based on one of Edmund Bergler's hypotheses, Benson's logic does not stand up to a careful examination.

Benson might well have dealt here again, as in the chapter on the nature argument, with the teleological argument (that is, that the ultimate PURPOSE of sex is reproduction, therefore--since this argument is frequently made use of by the psychiatrist-proponents of the concept of homosexuality as sickness.

Finally, while the strength of Benson's position does not and should not rest upon an exhaustive, point-by-point refutation of every position taken against homosexuality, it does seem reasonable to say that he should not have neglected to deal with one of the most important arguments - the "immaturity/arrestation of development" theory adopted by so many from Freud onward. Benson omits any mention of this.

It is refreshing indeed to see in this book an explicit, stated disavowal (on grounds of irrelevance) of any concern with the causes of homosexuality. For many of us who have long objected to the intellectual over-involvement by those inside as well as outside the homophile movement with the question of causation, to the primacy given to this really subordinate question, and to its being separated from considerations of the causation of heterosexuality (all the above being done, often, with the implication that homosexuality is an inferior state, to be prevented where the cause only known) - Benson's statement is a welcome one.

In his fourth chapter, "The Non-Rational: The Final Arbiter," his theme is a good one but its presentation is weak. Basically, Benson makes the valid points that (1) even in the most rigorous logical and scientific systems, including mathematical ones, there is at very bottom an element of what can be called "faith" - non-rational (though seemingly reasonable) assumptions upon which a logical structure is built; (2) in the last analysis, morals and ethics - and prejudice - are built upon such non-rational bases and hence will have to be changed by non-rational methods and appeals.

Benson's argument is well-documented but excessively detailed and not as systematically presented as one might like. His digressions into mathematics, physics, and other disciplines related only indirectly and remotely (if at all) to homosexuality, will lose him the attention of a majority of readers.

It is in his fifth chapter, "Modification of the Non-Rational by the Non-Rational," that in my view Benson fails, and for two related reasons: (1) he really proposes modifying the non-rational with the very rational; (2) he deals too narrowly and specifically with particular practical expedients.
Benson puts all his eggs in one basket. He goes overboard on the idea that widespread availability and acceptance of simple and effective means of contraception will so revolutionize our society's entire sexual morality - because of acceptance performance of the pleasure principle in sexuality - that here is the core-all for the prejudice directed at homosexuality and homosexuals. We should therefore, according to Benson, devote our efforts to ensuring general acceptance of contraception.

Here we run into one of the fallacies widespread in the homophile movement: namely, that what we are working and fighting against is NOT anti-homosexuality, but general anti-sexuality, and so we should broaden our attack. This is a facile and superficial argument. If we were dealing in a context of reason, not prejudice, this argument might well be valid. But prejudice does not follow the course of reason; it does not follow logical arguments to their conclusion but instead stops short, WHERE IT WISHES TO.

To illustrate: we can easily conceive of a society that is not only non-anti-sexual but is boisterously, uninhibitedly, zestfully anti-anti-sexual - for heterosexuality - and still is viciously and repressively anti-homosexual, even more so than our present culture is. I can see the real possibility of our culture becoming so, if the homophile movement does not continue to press effectively and strongly for a modification of attitudes on homosexuality per se.

Our society's anti-homosexuality rests upon much more than a simple rejection of the pleasure principle in sex. It rests in large measure upon sheer emotional bigotry and prejudice which are directed against homosexuality because it is homosexuality and for no other "reason," and which will not be altered by elimination of anti-sexuality or by acceptance of the validity of the pleasure principle in sex.

Thus, while a fight against the very real anti-sexuality of our society is an important and proper battle, it must remain secondary and collateral to a continuing, pointed, narrowly-directed fight against anti-homosexuality specifically. And it is to this specific fight that we must continue to devote our major efforts in the homophile movement.

Benson claims that the widespread availability of effective contraceptives will force a re-examination of existing sexual morality. He is correct, but only in regard to the very few people who consider morality something explicitly to be examined in the first place (most people do not, it must be recognized), just as he is right in saying that many of the forces of constituted authority have not even begun to realize the impact such contraceptives will have on traditional sexual morality.

But the resistance to this impact will be emotional and non-rational, for our sexual morality has become largely institutionalized and has long ago lost its direct, visible relationship with the now-mostly-invalidated logic which gave birth to it. The impact itself will be rational and also pragmatic (that is, people will make use of contraceptives but may not emotionally accept the morality of what they are doing) and so there will be conflict and equivocation and double standards. And the refined intellectual arguments which would extend the impact to ALL sexual attitudes (including attitudes about homosexuality) are not likely to prevail in any direct way.

Benson does not deal with other methods for gaining acceptance of his views on homosexuality. Throughout his discussion, he seems singularly insulated from the whole universe of practical techniques for gaining acceptance of ideas: social action, political action, use of communications media, working through those who are taken to be "voices of constituted authority," etc., etc. There is a network of interlocking, interrelated methods and approaches, no one of which alone is likely to be effective, but all of which, taken together and used well, will achieve the ends desired. Benson shows no awareness of the fact that in formally organized fashion, homophile groups are fully equipped to supply all the necessary strategy and tactics for gaining acceptance of his ideas - they just need ammunition of the kind supplied in the first part of his book.

The last three chapters - "Philosophical Addenda," "A Summary" and "Potpourri and Exhortations" - are, as their titles indicate, a grab-bag of miscellaneous ideas.

Benson's discussion of the masculine lesbian and the effeminate male homosexual, and their reasons for being "obvious," is especially good. Still, he might have completed it by considering the dilution of conventional masculinity and femininity that occurs when the homosexual (even one of conservative bearing) finds himself in a peer-group which lacks the intense preoccupation with keeping up society's arbitrarily-defined (but very real and confining) masculine or feminine image.

This is the situation the average homosexual finds himself in when in the company of other homosexuals, as contrasted with his situation when is the larger heterosexual community. It permits the homosexual to branch out into pursuits and interests and facets of personality which the larger culture suppresses by preformative use of labels synonymous with non-masculine and non-feminine. This results in the production of homosexuals who conform less closely than do their fellow heterosexuals to society's rigid, stultifying stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, homosexuals who thereby lead less limited and more interesting lives, with the development of better-rounded personalities.

Most of Benson's ideas in these last chapters certainly need to be expressed in form for public consumption, but need to be presented in much more organized fashion.

There perhaps lies the key to one major criticism of this book - the presentation of the material. A certain amount of digression, to bring in related points of significance and supporting background material, is always acceptable and usually desirable. But I feel that Benson has overdone this.
At a more fundamental level, there is another criticism. The book is over-documented, with too much use of "authorities" and too much reliance on them. Homosexuality can be defended, and Benson's arguments could be presented as an exercise in pure, clear logic, which would be beautiful to behold. Such logic stands on its own two legs and firmly so, without the need for credentials. I have yet to see an edition of Euclid which uses "authorities" to justify the reasoning presented out of pure logic.

More important, battles of "authorities" pitted against other "authorities" mean little. If a discussion is to be authoritative in its own right, as we would hope Benson's to be and to become, then it must rest upon its own authority - i.e., upon the cogency of Benson's own reasoning and not upon a derived, second-hand authority. I grant that this is an oversimplification and that a popular audience is impressed with the trappings of authority, and so there will be necessary compromises with the purity of the principle stated. Benson, however, has greatly overdone these compromises.

It is always easier to make negative than positive criticisms. Despite the negative criticisms above, I feel that IN DEFENSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY is a timely and on the whole valuable work. I recommend it highly - especially the first three or four chapters - though not unreservedly.

The path of a pioneer is always a difficult one. He makes, and bears the brunt of, all the mistakes which all his critics can see with the lucid clarity of hindsight but which they did not have the courage or the ambition or the ability to risk making themselves. If, as a pioneering work, Benson's book serves to lead the way to other books that will correct its faults, then Benson will have done a service for which we can indeed be grateful to him.

- Reviewed by Franklin E. Kameny

DOB NATIONAL CONVENTION

Daughters of Bilitis, Inc. announces the fourth annual Blanche M. Baker Memorial Scholarships. For the 1966-67 school year, there are three scholarships of $200 each, to be awarded one each by DOB's three chapters. These scholarships are open to any woman over 21 who is attending or planning to attend a trade or business school or college or university, either full or part time. The deadline for filing applications is May 15, 1966. For application forms and further information, write to any of DOB's three chapters (addresses on inside back cover).

Daughters of Bilitis welcomes contributions to the scholarship fund, for future awards. Send donations to national office.
"SAN FRANCISCO AND ITS HOMOPHILE COMMUNITY - A MERGING SOCIAL CONSCIENCE"

is the theme of the Fourth National Convention of the Daughters of Bilitis, Inc., to be held on August 20, 1966, at the Jack Tar Hotel in San Francisco, Calif.

The morning session will explore the relationships between the homophile community and the outside agencies with which it works. Speakers will include The Rev. Bernard Mays, head of San Francisco Suicide Prevention Inc.; Robert Gonzales, president of the Mexican-American Political Association and a candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors; Dr. Joel Fort, public health specialist, criminologist, and head of the San Francisco Health Department Center for Special Problems; The Rev. Cecil Williams, chairman of Citizens Alert, an organization dealing with problems of police brutality and harassment.

For the afternoon session, the tentative plan is to have representatives of city and state agencies respond to the problems they encounter in relating to the homophile community, with a round-table discussion by all participants at the end of the session.

Cost of the all-day meeting (including lunch and the banquet) is $15 per person. Reservations may be made for $5 down, with the balance in two installments of $5 each, to Daughters of Bilitis, Inc., 3470 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94110.