

NOTES for a more coherent article

by David McReynolds

Months ago, before this issue of WIN was being discussed and before the "Gay Power" street action in the Village and before the trees were cut down in Queens, I had decided, for reasons that remain as mysterious to me as the seasons, that I had to make public the fact that I am homosexual. Originally I was simply going to "drop the remark" into a longer political article, noting that times had changed so greatly that I could deal with my own sexual life thus briefly. But things are not, after all, that easy.

The kids could not care less, either about any personal statements I might make or about this issue of WIN. They are neither more nor less homosexual than I recall them 20 years ago, they are just far less hung up about the matter. But tolerant as the kids may be, they do not pay my salary at WRL and they do not, by and large, send in the extra contributions needed to keep WIN going. That money comes from an older generation. Do I have the right, as a staff member of WRL and an associate of WIN, to threaten the public image of one of America's oldest and largest pacifist groups, or make the raising of funds more difficult for WRL and WIN, by a "personal honesty" of this kind? Am I not imposing upon the WRL and WIN a burden that it would be better I did not impose?

I have a hunch that younger people will not even grasp my qualms at this point—and they will be right—for they have not yet confused a concern with honesty and directness with a concern for preserving an organization committed to honesty and directness. And so, even at this late moment, I choose not only to be more open and honest than I have been, but to stretch WIN and WRL a little, also, as they are, willy nilly, forced to deal with my "irresponsibility" on this matter.

It is not, of course, that I have been dishonest. There is not a single one of my friends who is unaware that I am queer. Nor did I ever hide that fact from the WRL staff and Executive Committee. But I held back from a public statement because (a) my private life is my own



business and (b) I didn't want to hurt the organizations with which I was involved. The entire matter of my queerness would be much safer to discuss if I were not really queer, but neatly repressed, confessing to a life of sin buried in the past. Happily for me, but perhaps not so happily for those groups with which I am associated, I am an active, un-sublimated homosexual whose private life is such that it entitles me to something close to an infinity of prison terms. I am a walking ton of potential prison terms. I come into your church to talk to your youth about morality and they have a right to have the goods on me. If the law is no damn good (and in this case it is neither good nor effective—I feel no guilt at all for my sexual conduct which is everywhere illegal except in Illinois—yet often feel tremendous guilt for being lazy, wasting time, etc., activities which are everywhere legal, including Illinois), let us violate it with a certain honesty. And I do not find it honest to let my personal friends and working associates know I am queer while keeping that fact a secret from those to whom it might matter most deeply as they seek to evaluate my advice and counsel—the youth I urge on to action against this government. My life must be all of a piece or it is shoddy.

As for the argument that everyman's private life is his own to live as he chooses, I am not sure that applies to public figures and I know it does not apply to a pacifist who believes in truth and honesty. I have to say to you, the congregation of men and women that I encounter day by day, that I will be perfectly happy to live my sexual life in secret at such time as it is legal, but it is impossible for me, finally, to continue to play a game which makes me a kind of Establishment Queer, keeping silence in public because I know I shall be left alone in private.

(These are notes. They will weave in and out. I have found myself unable to write an article on any other topic once I had determined to write this. At first I said I would wait until after the WRI Conference was over, then I said I would just wait until my speaking trip for the AFSC was over. And now I know that I had to write this before I could write anything else. The Crazies have erupted, SDS split, the Panthers been subjected to murderous government persecution, the Middle East tottered on the brink of a new war, soldiers jam the stockades—and yet my head, my pen, my typewriter are stuck with this stupid, bourgeois article which, having finally begun, has taken two weeks to complete. And even so, it is not, at the last, an article at all. These are notes to be shared with the brothers and sisters of WIN. Perhaps later I'll polish them and my thoughts and do a proper article for some magazine.)

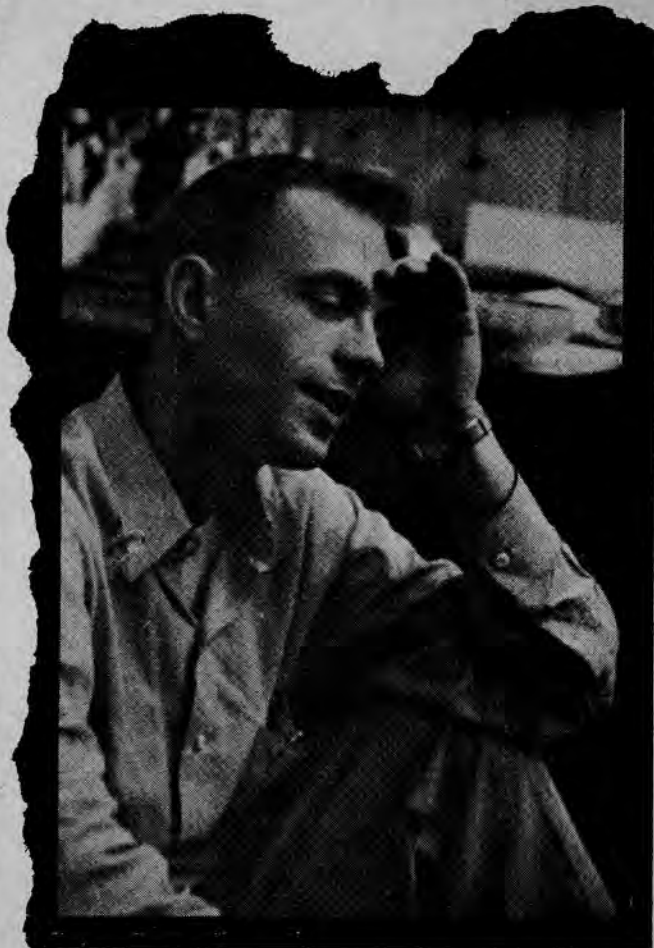
It is hard to write this. It has become a three miltown a day article. I find myself waking each morning at six or seven a.m., caught up in dreams and occasional nightmares. To dredge into sexuality of any kind is to touch an area of guilts and loves and memories we have buried in our minds, a sea wind sweeps up from the unconscious, a night breeze wakes us from sleep.

How do I explain that I am not sophisticated but part of Middle America, that my religious life began in the fundamentalism of the Baptist Church and the temperance movement, that I am part of that America which elected Nixon, that my grandparents, still alive, came to California from Kansas by covered wagon at the turn of the century, my great-grandmother was an evangelist to the Mexicans, my father and grandfather are both colonels, that I was not raised on Dr. Spock, that I am of American stock so old and proper even in its poverty that my late aunt Ettamae was the first of the family ever to be divorced, that no one smoked and the family was privately scandalized because my aunt Alice and uncle Don were known to serve an occasional glass of port to friends and had once even offered it to grandfather?

That is my own universe, where I was the first born child on both sides of the family, destined to be all those things which the first child of two large families must be, and becoming instead pacifist, socialist, and queer. That universe of childhood is light years distant but I am bound to it by singular ties, so when I move to make public my failure as the first born son my mind is caught at, snagged in a host of old guilts, of those private prayers for salvation uttered when in my youth and confusion I knew I found young men attractive, that I had to lay my hands on them, but could not bear to

believe I was queer. Those years of waiting to be 17, then 18 and then 19, because the books on sex told me my homosexuality was a phase and at some point I would find women attractive, but my "phase" would not pass and the horror, which I can feel even now, as I realized I was queer. A Baptist, first born son, saved Christian, temperance worker for the Lord, old line American, of decent and honest parents and grandparents and greatgrandparents. Queer. To put this in writing is almost to mock my ancestors but, much more, it is to be cut off from the generations to come. Some will understand. Most will not. It is to hold onto the generations of the future, of life itself, that I accept being queer but refuse to be gay.

This issue of WIN will inevitably lead some to think the radical movement—or at least the radical pacifist movement—is loaded with queers. Wrong. We don't have as many as statistics say we should. On the WRL letterhead and the WIN masthead there are a total of about 60 names (weeding out duplicates that appear on both lists). So far as I know, there are only three homosexuals on that combined list, which is below the national average for truckdrivers, readers of *Playboy*/*Esquire*/*National Review*, members of the Marine Corps, and American Legionnaires. It is just that pacifists are more permissive, making it possible for the individual homosexual to act more openly. That is, the most distant reader of WIN knows I'm queer because I am admitting it in print. But who knew about Johnson's

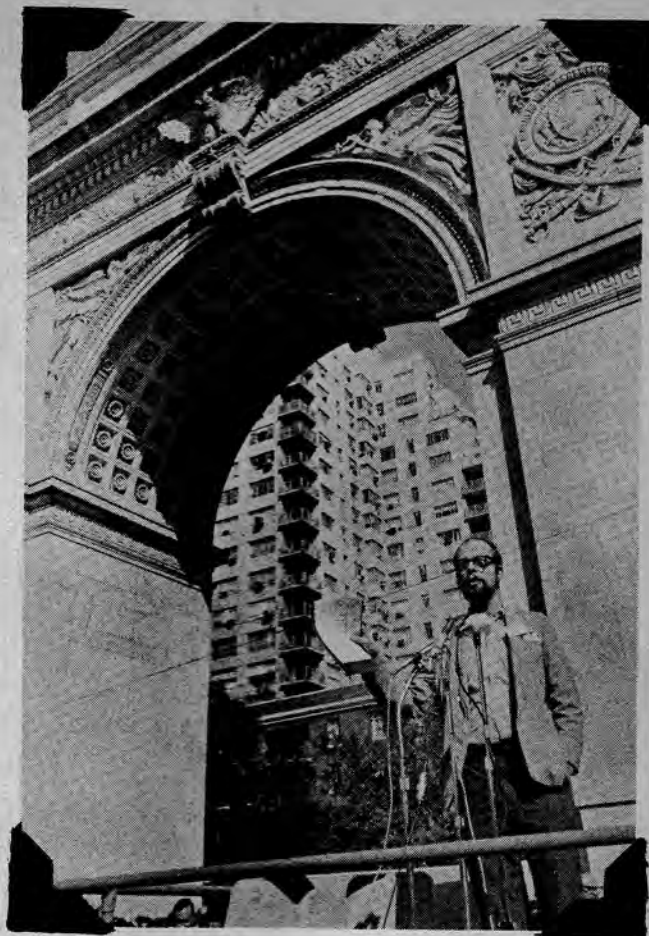


inner circle until Walter Jenkins got arrested in a men's room? (And J. Edgar Hoover, in one of his few acts of decency and courage, sent Jenkins a bouquet of flowers as he was recovering from the event.) Who realized there were "problems" in the inner circle around Ronald Reagan until Reagan accepted the resignations of key aides?

I am bored with these notes, with this article. It might be easier to take a small personal ad in *The Village Voice* "I am queer and perhaps an exhibitionist and this ad is irrational. David McReynolds." Below my window as I type there is a very attractive kid of 19 wearing an army jacket and smoking a cigar.

Jn, who is in the military, may be on the edge of a crackup, has not slept with me, and has been staying at my place in the evenings when he gets off base, was sitting around the apartment in an almost catatonic state the whole of Saturday. Late in the afternoon I told him he needed a walk and took him out. We moved up Second Avenue, past a bunch of kids painting some buildings, toward St. Marks where the Communist candidate for mayor was speaking. Then I saw a crowd gathered, not around the Communist, but around a hefty white about 45, well built, most of his teeth out, and flailing the air with his belt. It developed he had come storming out of Olga's bar, after knocking her down three times, had swung into a crowd on the street, and eventually moved off to Seventh Street where the cops picked him up. In the meantime I found Olga—whose bar, along with McSorley's, I count as "my bar"—standing furious and near hysterics talking to the cops on St. Marks. I kept telling Olga to come back and I'd buy her a drink, the cops told her to move into the bar and they would get a description of the man, I explained to the cops I had already seen the man picked up by the cops on Seventh Street, Olga broke down and started crying and I scrounged her kitchen, in which I'd not been before, for an old bar rag I could dampen and bring out to her. Off she went with the police, leaving me in charge of the bar. Fortunately—because it develops there is a knack to drawing a stein of beer which I don't have—her relief bartender, who had also been out on the street, came back almost immediately. Anyway, this explains why I went back to Olga's late that night.

I had been, for dinner, at Ann Slavitt's. An elegant dinner and very nice people. I got far too drunk. Peter Kiger, who had been there, asked me on Monday if I had gotten home okay, since I had almost been falling down drunk when I left Ann's. As a matter of fact, the rest of the evening is vague. I called Jn from Ann's, asked him if he wanted to meet me at Olga's where we did meet, and the last thing I recall is seeing two guys in the bar, one a white short nasty guy with a broken nose, young; the other a black guy, good looking, to whom I said something like "I trust you" or "I have no choice but to trust you." That is it. The next thing I know it is Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m., I am home in bed, feeling all right. I get up, go into the back room to ask Jn if he wants a



Bloody Mary for breakfast, I mix them up, and find out from Jn that I had invited both guys home for coffee, that Jn, myself, and the two of them had come home, I had collapsed into bed with the black guy and I assume both of us passed out, while the white, who turned out to be a Marine in civvies, asks Jn how much money I've got and why don't the two of them roll me. (No money, was the answer, but Jn talked him out of it and, I gather, stayed up till 8 a.m. talking with the guy when he, and the black kid, both finally left). Of all of this I remember nothing. Jn said the Marine was sitting quietly on my sink, tossing one of my kitchen knives in his hand during their discussion.

By the time I pieced this all together I feel ashamed and terrified. This is the first blackout period in years, and the first really suicidal risk I had taken in even more years. The bad taste in my mind got much worse during the night. I woke very early Monday morning, trembling, on that brink of madness I sometimes touch, took a Miltown and tried to sleep, realized I was terrified of being awake but even more frightened of moving back into the forest of nightmares that sleep would be. Jn had left for his military base. I lay in bed, shaking, holding one of my cats when, about 8 a.m., there was a fumbling at the door, the lock turned and P. came in. God, I felt saved. Only those who have lain close to madness know the relief. I had not dared believe P., who so rarely comes by, would show up. He asked if I wanted coffee. I

said no, for God's sake just lie here with me, I'm frightened as hell, and I told him about Saturday night. The only reason I think P. and I are hooked together even against our wills is something like this. At a moment of desperate need he comes without warning. Early this summer I came down with a fever and for the first time in years was delirious, and being delirious I was frightened. By dawn a heavy rain came, the sound of it merging into the delerium, and at 7 a.m. P. walked in the door, soaked to the skin, having decided to take a walk that particular morning, in that particular cloudburst, at that extraordinary hour. He was drenched from the rain, and I from the sweat of the fever, and he stripped free of the wet clothes and climbed into bed to hold me and later made orange juice.

This last is—or is it—a foolish intrusion. Should I not know by now that P. is gone, his life safe now from me, secure, his own, that I am really alone. Carson McCullers thought—half-correctly—that love was a process of trying to possess someone else, that the drive to love was really greater than the drive to be loved. I am no longer so sure. I know only to whom I belong, and that is more important than knowing who belongs to me, and as it turns out no one and nothing belongs to me. Some guy asked me the other night, as a group of us were rapping about the “problem” of homosexuality, whether guys really got involved with other guys like they do with women. Yes.

The homosexual minority is different from any other. It is a basic mistake to think of the queer as another variety of Negro, Catholic or Jew. Other minorities are *visible*. Blacks stand out, can be segregated, kept from certain jobs. Even Catholics and Jews *choose to be identified*. We know these minorities because of which holy days they take off, which food they eat and which they forego. Of course, Jews and Catholics *can* “pass” into the general population, and blacks cannot, but if Jews and Catholics “pass” they have been assimilated and cease being Jews and Catholics.

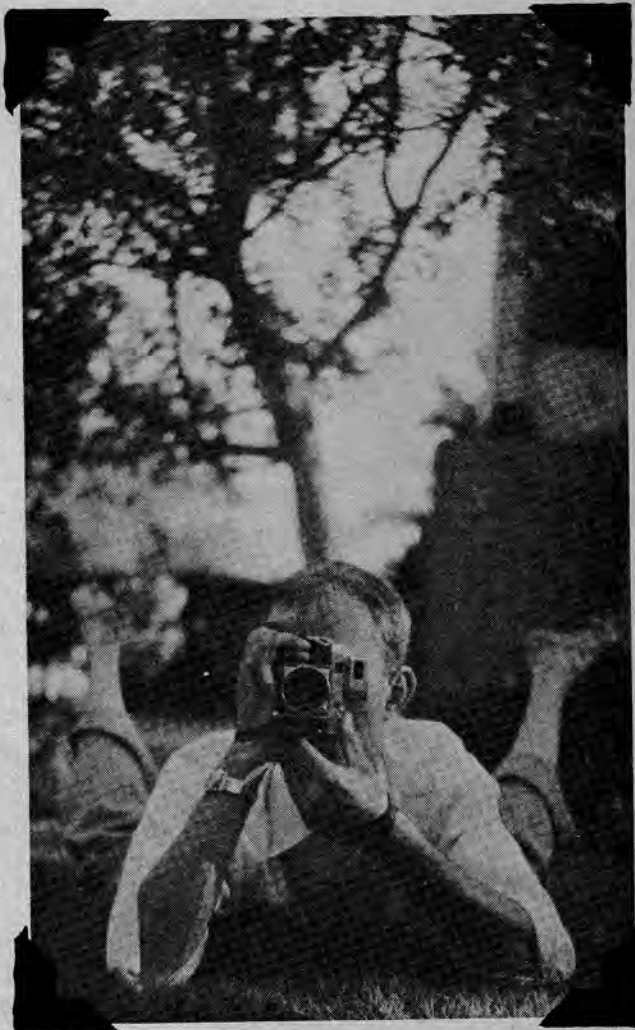
Now we come to queers. Everyone—hopefully—realizes by now that most queers are not obvious. I mean, if you met Paul Goodman walking down the street would you know, or even suspect, that he was queer? With the exception of a small handful of homosexuals, we are invisible. We are not black. We eat fish on Friday. Pork doesn't bother us. We wear no yarmulka, no cross. There is literally no personality test most of us could not pass. Therefore we are unique as a minority. We are—in five out of six cases—absolutely normal in appearance, invisible, omni-present, occurring in upper and lower classes, among blacks, Jews, Catholics, Puerto Ricans, etc. (With the exception, it seems, of the Asians, where I have, in this country, encountered few homosexuals). We do not, contrary to belief, even recognize each other on the street by some secret sign. Often it is only in the bar that we meet an old high school or college friend and turn, saying, “My God, Frank! I never thought I'd see you *here!*”

Some of the militant gay kids think the cause of queers *must* be linked with that of blacks, because “if they can cut down the blacks now, they'll get us later” Nonsense. Homosexuals have survived the most rigou

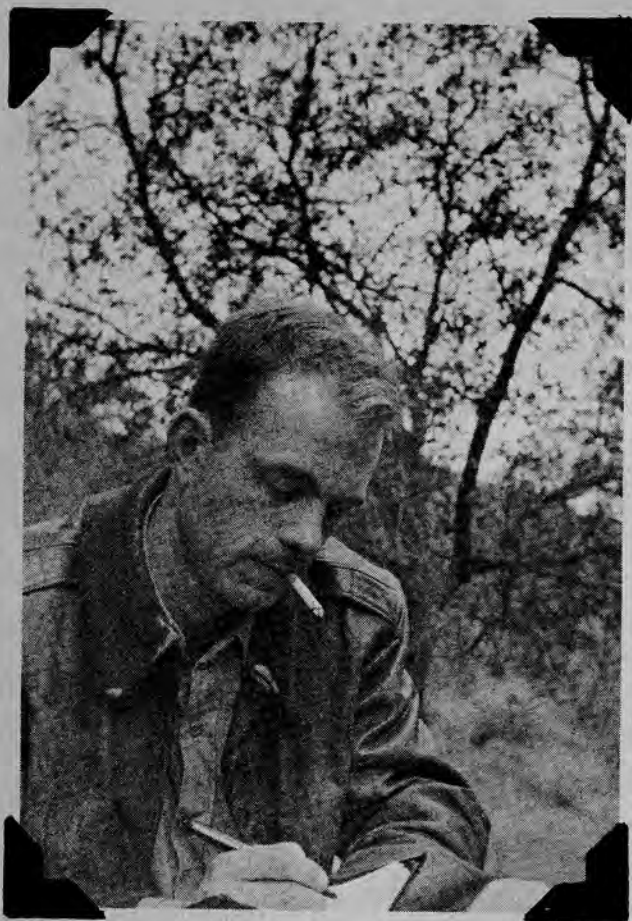
of persecutions without difficulty. It turns out we always have friends in very high places. The brotherhood touches everywhere. One supports black liberation because it is moral and right to do so, but never because these two minorities are almost the same.

Homosexuals are a reminder of the dark side in every man, the repressed parts of his psyche. We know from a study of psychology that men have homosexual drives, that these are generally absorbed into non-sexual channels, such as male friendships, men's clubs, etc. The homosexual makes visible this hidden aspect of every man, and he is therefore feared precisely by those men who cannot come to terms with their own inherent sexual ambiguity.

Homosexuals do not, incidentally, represent the “feminine” in men. It is a myth that homosexuality is feminine. Homosexuals represent a wide range of male/female characteristics, not only as a group, but within each homosexual. The man who is today, in one relationship, aggressive and dominant (i.e., “masculine”), may be, the next day with another partner, passive and yielding (i.e., “feminine”). The reason drag queens don't convince us they are women is simply their failure to project the veiled strength that is a basic part of “womanness”, just as the “bull dyke” lesbian strikes a false note because she is too tough and misses that which



is essential in the normal male—a strange, astonishing gentleness.



The normal male wants to think queers are feminine, because that re-assures him of the distance between himself and the queer. The race survives and the family exists because early on in the man's life there is a fixation on the sexual role he will play, which is that of husband and father. Playing that role demands that most men repress other possible sexual roles. The "straight" or normal male can engage in homosexual relations only with a very feminine man—someone so obviously a faggot that the "straight" man does not feel threatened.

The homosexual minority disturbs men therefore, because it is, in a certain way, part of every man. We are not simply ten percent of the population, we are also ten per cent of every individual man. We may, as WASPS, hate Jews, Catholics and Negroes, but surely not because we secretly believe we may be, or may be about to become, Jews, Catholics and Negroes. But the queer we hate precisely in order that we not become him. Why does William Buckley so deeply fear and hate Gore Vidal? Because of all the public figures going in America today, Buckley's latent homosexuality is so close to the surface that Gore Vidal becomes an obsessive danger. (After reading their *Esquire* encounter, where incidentally, Gore Vidal copped out, I suddenly stopped hating Buckley. I realized that Buckley had destroyed himself utterly. It is not anger I feel now, but pity).

Do we perhaps hate queers simply because they are "different"? May I not be making too much of the "queerness potential" in each man? No, I don't think so. Cripples are different but we don't spit at them. Blind men are different but we don't smash their balls in the alley.

There is a common joke (which is not, of course, a joke but a true story endlessly encountered) in the homosexual community of the handsome young sailor who was picked up by the queer and, as he stepped off the last of his clothes before climbing into bed, he said, "I'll do anything and everything you want—only please don't kiss me, I'm not queer".

Warning: never call a queer a queer unless you know for sure that he knows he is queer. Otherwise he will try to kill you. One of the two times in my life I came close to being killed, was when, having been involved, quite reluctantly, with an older man who had "led" all the way ("Do you mind if I take off my coat", "Do you mind if I take off my shirt", "It's hot here, don't you think, I'm going to take off my shorts—why don't you", etc.), and sitting stark naked in a room with him, the two of us at opposite ends of the room, he had said "Boy, wouldn't it be nice if we had a couple of broads here". I was furious, and said "What do we want women for—we are both queer". He sprang at me from across the room, hit me twice, hard, and said "You're queer, baby, you're queer. I'm not queer. You're queer, you queer faggot, and don't you ever forget it." I survived that evening only because I can run very fast.

The reason that charges of homosexuality are not used in politics, even though such charges would be effective, is simply that all sides, left, right and center, are vulnerable. During the most bitter days of the Old Left in the 1950's the Communists called me an FBI agent, but never once did I hear them rumor that I was queer. The only group I know of, in 20 years in politics, which tried to deal with my politics by slanders on my personal life is a tiny sect of pro-war ex-socialists called Schachtmanites which momentarily control the Socialist Party. I was amused that they of all groups, would dare to dabble, haunted as they have been by this very matter in their own organization. Max Schachtman and William Buckley would make a great comedy team but it is a pity either of them are in politics. (This is a catty remark but I hope I may be permitted one in the course of this article, and I could not in fairness do less for the Schachtmanites after all they have done for me).

It will be charged that this article is nothing but personal therapy. Of course, all life is personal therapy. Therapy is trying to come to terms honestly with reality. The only time I ever saw a psychiatrist was at UCLA where I went to the shrink and told him I had nightmares, occasional hallucinations, constant thoughts of suicide, terrible feelings of guilt about my homosexuality, and an inability to wake up on the mornings of my final exams. He said (I am not kidding) "Ah, yes, those are symptoms, without a doubt. But as long as they remain only symptoms, we should not worry" I have never since had any interest in seeing a psychiatrist and cannot honestly urge confused young

men to visit them, though I suppose that psychiatrists cannot do much harm. A number of the psychiatrists I have known have been queer themselves, most of the rest have been crazy.

At the moment the best science can suggest is (a) homosexuality tends to be caused by variables in the family pattern rather than by hormone imbalance or genetic factors, (b) there is no effective cure for homosexuality, nor does it seem desirable to make a neurotic homosexual into a neurotic heterosexual, (c) there does not seem to be any "neurotic homosexual pattern" that shows up on tests.

Homosexuals do not need to be forgiven. To forgive them is an insult, for it assumes that sin is involved. There is a notion in some circles that most homosexuals rather willfully "choose" to be queer, the implication being, oddly, that queerness is really more fun than straightness. Most of us didn't choose this particular bed of nails and would have preferred it otherwise. We have come to terms with it.

The tragedy with most homosexuals is that they do not trust their friends or family enough to be honest with them.

I went to sleep last night listening to a tape of Bessie Smith—Jan has temporarily fixed the tape recorder. I slept very badly, waking twice in the middle of the night and taking a miltown. Js came by this morning, soaking wet from the rain. It seems he and Rn had been up all night at a coffee shop and Rn was still there. Js takes off his shirt, is disturbingly well built as ever, and climbs into bed while I leave for the office—he plans to sleep all day and do I have car fare for him back to Brooklyn? Ns is part of a small gang of kids that hang around my place, coming by once a week or so to talk, drink, listen to records. Have I gone to bed with them? Yes, in the beginning, but time has passed and Rn and his girl friend come by now with love beads for me, and An came over a couple of times with some airline hostess. I serve as a kind of father figure.

This article does not aim at converting anyone. In any event one does not convert with words, nor save with laws. This article is not even an article. It is a set of notes, a statement of becoming.

One major point I had meant to make in this non-article is an attack on gay society. "Homophiles" and gay publications are always compiling lists—Socrates, Caesar, Alexander the Great, Hadrian, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Walt Whitman, etc., who were queer. Yes, sure, and so what the hell. I can make up a list too, of A.J. Muste, Norman Thomas, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Eugene O'Neal, George Bernard Shaw, Pablo Picasso, and they weren't queer, and so where does that leave us?

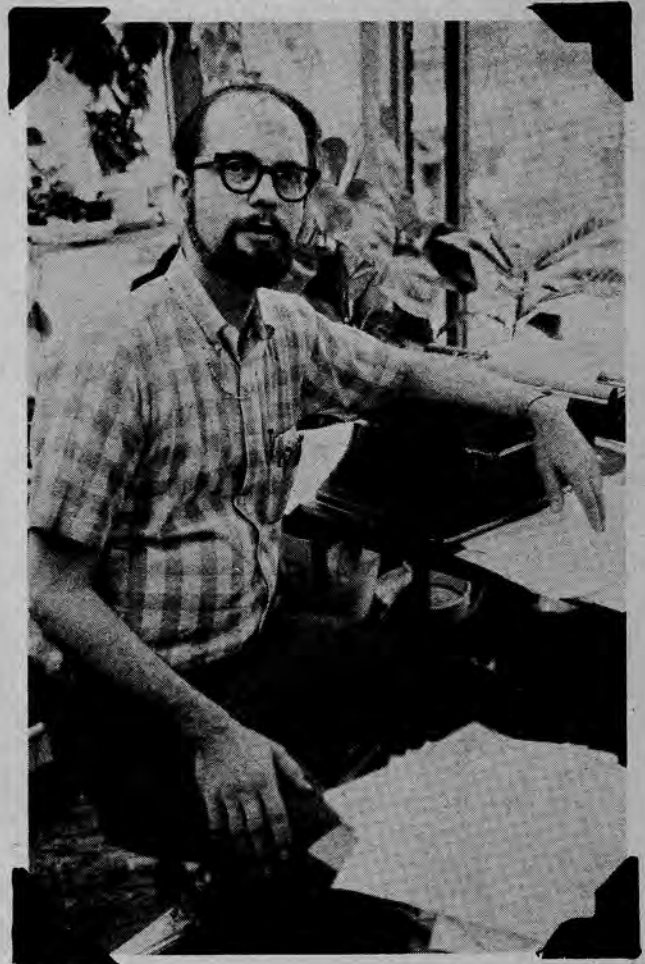
When homosexuals compile themselves into a ghetto they are sterile. The black ghetto had and still has tragic power because it is involuntary, coerced from outside, and out of the rage and sorrow of what blacks faced in white America came—among other things—jazz. There is *nothing* in the history of mankind which homosexuals as a group have contributed. Allen Ginsberg is a poet and

his homosexuality is not central to that fact. Allen's poetry is not homosexual poetry, but the poetry of a homosexual—and there is a world of difference.

There is a boring sameness of bad taste to the writing, poetry, painting, etc., produced by gay society. To the degree that interior decoration is dominated by gay society it is deadly. One can barely breath in a living room which has just won the design prize for its too much curtains, its utterly darling sofa with the divine little rug. To make love in it, or to die in it, is forbidden (see Kenneth Patchen's poem on this). Gay society isn't meant for living, for dying, or for creating. Do I dig gay society? Sure. When I get tired of life and the struggle I retreat to a gay bar, secure that reality will never penetrate there.

I said earlier that every man had a queer lurking in his brain somewhere. But I did not mean that in the sense one hears it from gay society. Bar talk will persuade you that every man is queer while the fact is that *every queer is fighting against his heterosexuality*. Women either terrify him or his relations with them must be on very "safe" terms—I confess this is true of myself. If every man potentially is a participant in a homosexual act then every queer is potentially able to make love to a woman, and is terrified of that.

Once I came home and found my roommate P. lying on the bed, naked, with a girl, also naked, not quite making love, but moving together to the music. I was



not betrayed, since P. never said he was queer, nor that he loved me. I backed out, closed the door, went downstairs to get a pint of rum, came back, drank half of it straight down. P. and the girl were dressed by then, said hello, and went out. And after they left I realized what had hit me like a wave was the trauma of realizing it was the naked *girl* on the bed to whom I had been attracted. For 24 hours afterwards I could, I think have made it with any woman of any age. Heterosexuality made absolute sense to me, in thundersouly clear ways, for the first time in my life.

But the days passed, the old repressions returned, and I am again a queer. Not that I didn't, years ago, make it a couple of times with women, but somehow that hadn't turned me on. Perhaps it was seeing P. whom I love with the girl that allowed me to transfer sexuality for those few moments. I have always been sorry that I didn't, when I first came in the room, simply ask "may I join you?"

The black ghetto is alive, even if brutalized and repressed. Life flows from it. Children are conceived in it. The gay ghetto is a voluntary separation in which nothing lives, nothing is painful or dirty or gives birth. Gay Power is a Plastic Flower. Gay is *not* good, it is boring. It is sick in a way that queerness is not. And yet I wonder if my hostility toward faggots is not a secret statement that I am a faggot, and am holding back that element in myself.

I don't even find the gay ghetto particularly repressed or persecuted, and the cry for "Gay Power" is, in a way, an effort to draw on the strength of the blacks, and in a way that is good. Kids who struggle openly to be gay may find in the course of that struggle that their own "masculine" nature has been strengthened. I know faggot eyes too well, tragic cows seated on bar chairs, with smooth, vacant faces. They are not hunters, not in those bars. They are frightened, huddled together for strength, biting each other, turning to one another for bovine comfort. Eyes of terror, turning, watching, never focusing. Eyes without sexuality or sex. If gay power can give any inner power to those eyes, those desperate eyes that I've seen in the bars of this nation, then okay, I'm for the slogan. But I'm not for the gay ghetto. I may visit it. I found Cherry Grove fun when I went there several years ago. Riis Park is, as they say, *kicky*. But while it might be fun to visit, you wouldn't want to live there, and you don't really go there for sex.

Do I realize what I have done in this article, an article in which I have said everything except to confess I've had VD (which incidentally I've had, several times)? Does this mean I'm out of politics? No. I don't think so. I am betting on the kids. Almost every pacifist my age and older will be upset about this article and baffled at why I choose to write it and why—in their view—I choose to destroy myself and harm the organization. After all, leaders don't write frankly, except for Gandhi, who is dead and was an Indian and Indians don't count.

But I think those under 25, if they read this at all, couldn't care less. They will, if anything, respect the honesty and the courage that went into these notes.

Look, first of all, why do we expect honesty only of poets and crackpots and misfits like Allen Ginsberg and

Paul Goodman and then excuse the bureaucrats and politicians like myself? Why should we preach honesty but fail to practice it "in order to protect the organization". If the Aquarian Age has begun it has to liberate and touch even us.

Second, I don't believe in leadership. We need fewer leaders and more leaders. If that makes sense. I was criticized when, some years ago writing in *Liberation*, I admitted to being a coward. "Leaders", I was told, "don't admit such things". Right I said. They don't. The point, friend, brother, sister, is that if cowards and queers can be in the movement, so can you. If I can somehow find the courage to write this article, which is one of the genuinely courageous things I've done in my life and one of the very few things of which I am deeply proud, then why not you? The job is to open the radical movement to all of us. To normalize radicalism. To humanize resistance to inhumanity.

Do I want, with this article, to help liberate the closet queens? In part, yes. They are terrified and I would like them to risk telling their parents (who probably know), their associates, their friends. But only in very small part is the closet queen the person in whom I am interested.

I don't want to see every queer in the theater, in publishing, in the military, etc., announce themselves tomorrow, because the problem is elsewhere. I am concerned with the 15 year old boy who may be queer and terrified of it. It is desperately important that he has relatively masculine models, such as Paul Goodman, to reassure him that queerness is not disaster. But I am equally concerned with the 15 year old boy who is *not* queer but might be driven into it because he grooves on a certain guy. Bi-sexuality is not homosexuality. He should trust the beauty of his own instincts.

I want older men, now raising sons, to be honest and say "By God, he's right—there was a guy, years ago, in high school and we fooled around a little, went everywhere together, and then his family moved away and I met Karen. It's been years, and I'd forgotten. Maybe love comes in different packages and I will have to let my kid go his way, also."

I am not pushing for special tolerance for queers. I am asking all of us to be easy on each other, to let our love move less fearfully, to let the homosexual realize it isn't that everyone is gay, but that everyone is a sexual animal, which means that everyone can be a loving animal. And love has no boundaries.

—David McReynolds

