



The Echo of a Growing Movement

by Donald Webster Cory & John P. LeRoy

Labor Day weekend, 1963, was probably one of the most stimulating and informative to hit the city of Philadelphia for many years. Not only did ten thousand psychologists from all parts of the country pack the city's hotels and facilities, but for the first time in the history of the homophile movement, four independent, autonomous homophile organizations combined their funds, personnel, and talent to set up a conference program which few prior affairs, even the many on the West Coast, could match.

The ten thousand or more psychologists were all gathered in Philadelphia that weekend for the annual convention of the American Psychological Association. The New York and Washington Mattachine societies, the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, and the Janus Society of Philadelphia and Delaware Valley had joined forces some months earlier to form a loose federation, the East Coast Homophile Organizations, which soon became known as ECHO. And here was this infant ECHO, already holding a con-

ference, letting the psychological profession, as well as the general public, know that homosexuals can and do, in an organized way, assert their rights, provide for enlightened discussion, and handle the study of their problems with candor and discretion. So strong was the reaction to all this that the conference was almost never held at all.

An excellent job of advance publicity was done to attract interest in the event, with one significant breakthrough: the *New York Times* for the first time agreed to carry an advertisement of such a meeting—an ad in which the word “homosexuality” prominently appeared. Two Philadelphia radio stations carried programs on the subject: WPEN and WCAU. The latter, a CBS affiliate, had a panel discussion, with three ECHO speakers as guests, while WPEN broadcast brief interviews with several members of ECHO affiliates.

“Homosexuality—Time for Reappraisal” was the topic of the conference. As the time for the meeting drew near, the management of the Drake Hotel, where the meeting was to be held, received several telephone calls asking about the meeting, and became panicky. “We can’t have sex discussed at this hotel,” a manager stated, and the emphasis surely should have been on the word “discussed.” But after many meetings, with lawyers and others, and after advance payment was demanded and given, the management did relent.

ECHO officers gave brief talks of welcome, made introductions of the active representatives of the constituent groups who were present, and then embarked on the program. The first speaker announced was R. E. L. Masters, author of *The Homosexual Revolution, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality*, and other works. Unable to be present at the meeting, Mr. Masters had sent his

talk, which was read. His topic: “The Homophile Movement and the Effeminate Homosexual.” The speaker contended that homophile organizations, such as Mattachine and ONE give little aid and encouragement to the effeminate homosexual, the transvestite, and the transsexual. Feeling that their presence would generate too much public distaste and antipathy toward all homosexuals, the leadership, Mr. Masters contended, considers these people a liability. But in rejecting them, he maintains, the organizations display bad faith, for the movement is presumably for the benefit of all homosexuals.

Next on the program was Donald Webster Cory who traced the history of the homophile movement up to the present day, commenting on some of its sociological aspects, pointing out some of the obstacles in its path, and underlining its accomplishments.

Looking at the movement as it exists today, Cory summarized what he felt to be the greatest difficulties and obstacles:

1. Insufficient leadership and incentive.
2. Many deepgoing emotional problems faced by homosexuals, giving rise to neurotic interaction within the leadership groups.
3. The tendency of the organizations to present homosexuality, not as it is, but in a form believed to meet ready public acceptance.
4. The belief of some that any kind of publicity, no matter how bizarre and absurd, constitutes a breakthrough, especially if it is presented over mass media. The mention of homosexuality is confused with the content of the message.
5. An obsequious attitude adopted toward speakers and guests, with fear of offending anyone who might turn out to be somewhat friendly, resulting often in the organizations’ becoming a party to the distortion

rather than the correction of the image.

6. The myriad of inept and superficial writers, posing as authorities, cashing in on the sensationalist value of the theme, to titillate the public.

7. A failure of the organizations to sharpen their goals, so that they are frequently either too trivial and short-range, or utopian and long-range.

8. As a result of these and other factors, the organizations encounter difficulties in maintaining a high level of interest over any continued length of time.

The homophile movement, Cory pointed out, is today a reflection of only a very small part of the American homosexuals.

On the credit side, Cory noted several achievements of the movement:

1. Homosexuality has been raised to the level of legitimate social protest, worthy of serious discussion, and is no longer confined to an area of gossip and malicious tittering.

2. The conferences of the homophile organizations are deeply respected, meetings are held in important places and are advertised and taken seriously by professionals.

3. The organizations have provided subjects and have assisted in pioneering research, cooperating with professional groups, and thus helping to bring light on this entire area.

4. The organizations have ventured outside the confines of their own group, and have elicited the aid of, and in turn have been approached for cooperation by, the American Civil Liberties Union, public health authorities, and other social welfare, public and quasi-governmental agencies.

Cory called for a consistent and humanitarian ideology; the building of the image of homosexuality that would be realistic, acceptable to the

public, and to the homosexual himself.

Following a luncheon, Reverend Edward Lee of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church of Philadelphia presented a talk entitled, "The Church and Homosexuality" which was in turn followed by a panel discussion on the research taboo in homosexuality. Presiding over the panel was Dr. Wardell B. Pomeroy, collaborator of the late Dr. Kinsey and for many years a prominent leader of the Institute for Sex Research. The participants were Dr. Harold Greenwald, New York psychoanalyst, author of *Call Girl* and other works; Dr. Robert A. Harper, Washington clinical psychologist, and author of *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy: 36 Systems* and other books and papers; and Dr. Irving Jacks, a prison psychologist from the Philadelphia area.

At a well-attended evening banquet, the guest speaker was Dr. Albert Ellis, one of the most prolific writers and best-known figures in the field of sex research, widely known for his liberal views. In fact, the chairman introduced Ellis, in what sounded like a preview of next year's nominating jamborees, as "the next President of the United States, the candidate of the United Party for Sexual Freedom, Dr. Albert Ellis."

"Homosexuality—and the Right of a Man to be Wrong" was the title of the address, and this brief title summarizes Dr. Ellis' viewpoint. The homosexual is wrong: he is neurotic (if not borderline psychotic), fixated unrealistically on self-defeating behavior, a short-range hedonist, and is unable to come to grips with reality in the most self-fulfilling manner, but he still has an inherent right to pursue this self-defeating course in life without calumny and punishment by his fellow-men.

On Sunday afternoon, concluding

day of the conference, four additional speakers from divergent professions were on the program: writer, physical scientist, lawyer, psychiatrist.

Artemis Smith, the author of several popular novels on the female homosexual theme, spoke first, followed by Franklin E. Kameny, president of the Washington Mattachine, a scientist who holds a doctorate from Harvard.

Following a brief intermission, Charles Roisman, a Philadelphia attorney, took the rostrum. He observed that if anyone in the city of Philadelphia practiced brotherly love,

he would be charged with incest. When a police officer testifies against a homosexual, the attorney noted, the defendant is almost always found guilty, and is sometimes sent to a mental hospital, where his opportunities for homosexual activities are enhanced.

The final speaker of the conference was Dr. Wainwright Churchill, a psychoanalyst who set the tone for the entire conference and whose remarks gave to the affair a ringing affirmation of the crying need for a truly objective appraisal of the phenomenon of homosexuality.

MOTHER

I had rather
you took from my hands
a dram of poisoned
hate,
vile and dreadful bane.
I had rather
that
than these lowered lids
of
shame.

Robert Barufaldi