

fanatics had goaded into paroxysms of irrational fury. A subtle interaction between the authorities in church and state who manipulated the credulity of the uneducated, and the folk upon whose superstitious fears and anxieties they played, maintained the belief in witchcraft. The analogy with modern right-wing demagogues who exploit the lingering **homophobia** of those who are still in the grip of traditional attitudes is self-evident.

*Conclusion.* The witchcraft delusion has vanished from European society, apart from a few provincial backwaters where it occasionally inspires acts of violence against persons suspected of being witches. In such cases the police naturally proceed against the superstition-ridden perpetrators of the violence, not against the victims. But what the author of this article has termed the sodomy delusion held sway until the middle of the twentieth century, and has only in the last two decades begun to recede. "Moral panics" provoked by an unsophisticated community's discovery of a homosexual underworld in its midst persisted into the not distant past, and in such cases the police acted to enforce superstition and intolerance, while the victims suffered public humiliation and imprisonment, if not worse. Sporadic violence against homosexuals is often sanctioned by the mores of the heterosexual society, a form of intimidation that has been exacerbated by the epidemic of AIDS with the irrational fear of the "bearers of contagion" that it inspires. In the politics of conservative and clerical parties fear and aversion in regard to homosexuality still play a baleful role, giving them a hold over segments of the electorate whom they cannot win by more rational appeals. The record of the struggle against the witchcraft delusion may afford valuable lessons for planning the future campaigns of the gay liberation movement, and for analyzing the psychological and social processes that—even at the close of the twentieth century—keep such false

notions alive in the face of the empirical evidence that contradicts them.

The history of the witchcraft delusion in Western Europe is a dark chapter in the annals of civilization, but the success achieved by reformers in purging the collective mind of the paranoid beliefs with which Christian theology had infected it must give heart to all those who even now struggle for the same goal in regard to homosexuality.

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Warren Johansson

### WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG (1889–1951)

Austrian-British philosopher. The son of a millionaire industrialist in Vienna, Wittgenstein came to England at nineteen with the intention of studying aeronautics at the University of Manchester. Finding his bent more theoretical, he transferred to Cambridge University, where he immersed himself in logic courses taught by Bertrand Russell. In November 1912, at the behest of his fellow student John Maynard Keynes, Wittgenstein was elected to the elite secret society known as the Apostles. At that time the group was closely knit and suffused with homoerotic atmosphere. Always prickly, Wittgenstein proved a difficult member and soon stopped attending meetings.

Having joined the Austrian army after the outbreak of World War I, he was captured by the Italians. From his prisoner-of-war camp he succeeded in mailing to Bertrand Russell the manuscript of his *Tractatus Logico-Positivus*. After its publication in 1921, this austere and condensed treatise, which suggested that most branches of traditional philosophy were nonsense, was to have a catalytic effect on the emerging logical-positivist trend in philosophy. Except for one article, the *Tractatus* was the only work published by Wittgenstein during his lifetime.

After the war Wittgenstein gave up philosophy, teaching elementary school in a number of Austrian villages. In 1929, however, he returned to Cambridge where he was given a research fellowship. His classes, which were often painful exercises in self-criticism, attracted a small, but devoted following. Much of the material from these lectures went into his manuscripts, which were only published after his death. Although Wittgenstein was appointed professor in 1939, he chose to spend the war as a humble medical orderly—a career decision recalling that of Walt Whitman eighty years before. After the war he returned to being a professor at Cambridge, but said that he found it torture. Following a trip to the United States, he died of cancer in 1951.

After his death, his associates undertook the difficult job of seeing that his manuscripts reached publication. The most important of these, the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), contained major revisions of his earlier thinking, concentrating on questions of language and the nature of philosophy itself. During the third quarter of the twentieth century, Wittgenstein was probably the most influential philosopher in the English-speaking world, and his ideas existed in a fruitful tension with the school of analytic philosophy. This acclaim did not prevent his teacher Bertrand Russell from denouncing his later works as “mental beds”—invitations to shirk the problems that Russell

still regarded as important. As Wittgenstein's reputation slowly faded in England and America in the late seventies and eighties—in part owing to the reception of French contemporary thought—it gained influence in central Europe.

Some of Wittgenstein's renown derives from his reputation as one almost ascetically devoted to pure thought and exempt from any sensuality. When, in the first edition (1973) of his biography, William Warren Bartley, III, first broached the subject of the philosopher's homosexuality, the Wittgenstein establishment reacted with vengeful anger. Although his literary heirs reputedly had in their possession a coded diary containing references to homosexual encounters, they denied any sexual unorthodoxy, and sought to vilify Bartley. Their motives are hard to assess: Wittgenstein was certainly no flaming queen, and those who did not have access to the documents probably did have difficulty in conceiving him as a homosexual, a role for which they had only stereotypical models. Others may have foreseen that the philosopher's sexuality, if openly discussed, would be used by philosophical enemies to tarnish his reputation—as has happened.

The facts appear to be as follows. In his student days in Vienna Wittgenstein became accustomed to cruise in the Prater, a large public park next to the inner city. Here he met youths of the “rough trade” type which remained his preference. Later he was to continue this activity in England. However, he also had long-term affairs with men of his own class, notably with Francis Skinner. Wittgenstein was always uncomfortable with his homosexuality, which accounts for his concealing it from his close friends.

No close relationship seems to link Wittgenstein's sexual orientation and his iconoclastic philosophy. That is to say, he might have reached similar conclusions had he been heterosexual. Nonetheless, his homosexuality—or rather his insistence on remaining in the closet—

contributed to the aura of oracular strangeness which helped to make the author of highly abstruse and technical papers into virtually a household name—at least in academic circles.

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Wayne R. Dynes

### WITTMAN, CARL (1943–1986)

Gay and radical activist. A “red-diaper” baby, Wittman was born in New Jersey and attended Swarthmore College. As a campus leader, he spent summers in Tennessee supporting black civil rights, wrote for the student paper and organized student support for anti-segregation demonstrations in Chester, Pennsylvania, and Cambridge, Maryland.

The Swarthmore Political Action Committee provided a model for the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Joining the national council in 1963, Wittman played a prominent role in SDS until his departure in 1966. In September, 1963, SDS established ERAP (Economic and Action Research Project) based on his paper, “Students and Economic Action,” which was further elaborated with Tom Hayden in “An Interracial Movement of the Poor?” They called for non-hierarchical organizing: “We are people and we work with people.” Wittman joined the Newark SDS project and recalled that “Tom Hayden confidently announced that there was to be no homosexuality or marijuana in our community organizing project, and then proceeded to borrow my room to bed down with his latest woman, leaving me stunned and terrified.” (“Us and the New Left,” *Fag Rag*, 22/23 [Fall 1978], 22).

While listed as a speaker for the SDS affiliated Radical Education Project during 1967, Wittman went to the west coast where he settled into a mixed San Francisco commune of Resistance (an anti-

war group), enjoyed the psychedelic revolution and raised money hustling. During 1968 he organized war resistance events in British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington State.

Although closeted about his love for other men, Carl had begun an active homosexual life at fourteen. “Kids can take care of themselves,” he wrote, “and are sexual beings way earlier than we’d like to admit. Those of us who began cruising in early adolescence know this, and we were doing the cruising, not being debauched by dirty old men.” Wittman came out in an anti-war magazine (“Waves of Resistance,” *Liberation*, 13 [November, 1968], 29–33), where he held that resisting heterosexuality was related to resisting war.

Wittman was part of a gay contingent at a San Francisco demonstration in May 1969 against the States Steamship Line, a Vietnam war supply carrier. His essay, “Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto,” was written after the Steamship demonstration but before *Stonewall* (June 27, 1969) and was first published late in 1969. Providing an ideology for radical gay males and widely reprinted by gay and left movement groups, the Manifesto never became dogma: “the gay liberation movement is in its polymorphous, unbureaucratic, anarchistic form,” Wittman wrote gleefully in 1970.

In 1969, Wittman acquired land in Wolf Creek, Oregon, with his lover Stevens McClave, who committed suicide in 1974. Between 1973 and Wittman’s death he and Allan Troxler were lovers. In Autumn 1974 the first issue of the periodical *RFD* appeared with a cover by Allan and an article by Carl. *RFD* promised “to build some sense of community among rural gay people.”

In 1981, Wittman moved to Durham, North Carolina, where he worked in the Durham Food Co-op, was a leader in Citizens for a Safer East Durham, which closed the Armageddon Chemical plant, and helped write *Durham’s Convention*