

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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. William Warren Bartley, III, *Wittgenstein*, 2nd ed., La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985.

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*

Center: In Whose Interest? while co-director of the North Carolina Public Interest Research Group in 1981–82. Carl was one of the founders of the Durham Lesbian and Gay Health Project and was active in AIDS work. He died on January 22, 1986, after he rejected hospital AIDS treatment and chose to die in dignity among friends at home. In choosing the time of his death, he demonstrated his 1963 principle that people must be "confident that they have some control over the decisions which affect their lives."

Charley Shively

WOLFENDEN REPORT

The *Report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offenses and Prostitution*, published on September 3, 1957 by the British government, is known as the Wolfenden Report after the Chairman of the Committee, Sir John Wolfenden (1906–1985), at that time Vice Chancellor of Reading University. This *Report* was destined to have momentous and far-reaching effects.

Creation of the Report. In the wake of several scandalous court cases in which homosexuality had been featured, the British Parliament on August 24, 1954 appointed a committee of 15 men and women whose task it was "to consider . . . the law and practice relating to homosexual offenses and the treatment of persons convicted of such offenses by the courts" along with the laws relevant to prostitution and solicitation. The committee met on 62 days of which 32 were devoted to the oral interrogation of witnesses. All the sessions were private, not only to avoid sensationalizing of the deliberations on the part of the media, but also because "only in genuinely private session" could the witnesses "giving evidence on these delicate and controversial matters" speak "with the full frankness" which the subject demanded. The proposals with respect to homosexuality were for the time a radical innovation: of the 13 members of the Committee who had served during the

full three years, 12 recommended that homosexual behavior between consenting adults in private should no longer be a criminal offense. The *Report* did not explicitly define "consent" and "in private," leaving these words to be interpreted as they would be in the case of heterosexual conduct; it suggested that the age of consent be twenty-one; and it tried to relieve from the threat of prosecution the victim of blackmail whose homosexual activity had been revealed to the police.

For the common law countries of the English-speaking world, the *Wolfenden Report* meant a break with a legal tradition that had gone virtually unchallenged since the enactment of 25 Henry VIII c. 6 in 1533. It urged that homosexual behavior cease to be criminal, that the religious sanctions against it were not grounds for bringing it to the attention of secular courts, and that there "must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business." The signers of the document recognized that "to reverse a long-standing tradition is a serious matter and not to be suggested lightly." But the task entrusted to the Committee was to "state what we regard as just and equitable law," and that consideration of the question should not be unduly influenced by "the present law, much of which derives from traditions whose origins are obscure." This last remark evidently reflected the work of the Anglican cleric Derrick Sherwin Bailey, who had put forward arguments intended to exculpate the Christian Church of responsibility for the legal intolerance of homosexuality, preferring instead to place the onus on pagan, pre-Christian beliefs and laws.

Moreover, and against the testimony of nearly all the psychiatric and psychoanalytic witnesses, the Committee found that "homosexuality cannot legitimately be regarded as a disease, because in many cases it is the only symptom and is compatible with full mental health in other respects," echoing what Iwan Bloch