

Protest from Phillip Adams

Insofar as I can decipher his prose, Axel seems to be accusing me of a short-back-and-sides attitude to homosexuality (Vol. 1 No. 4). Not so. Or not quite so.

Ten years ago I began lobbying MPs for a Wolfendon-style enquiry into homosexual law reform. I even tried to organize a lecture tour by Peter Wildblood. Subsequently, and partly as a result of my efforts, the Victorian Fabian Society did hold a series of public lectures on the subject. And I distinctly remember talking to a number of homosexuals prominent in television, theatre and public life asking them to stand up and be counted. Sadly they declined.

*Later I tried to have both male and female homosexuality sympathetically treated in my film *The Naked Bunyip* only to run into the predictable censorship problems. And over the years I've written many articles urging homosexuals to organize themselves into a pressure group.*

*As a matter of fact, had Axel checked the *Camp Ink* files he'd have*

found that I was one of its earliest subscribers.

However, I do not see that my sympathy for homosexuals requires me to sign any sort of blank cheque. While there are many homosexuals who I like and admire there are others I find either irritating or despicable. In the same way I am pro-semetic but reserve the right to dislike the odd Jew if he happens to be obnoxious.

Which brings me back to the question of Ken Russell who may or may not be a homosexual. In my piece I criticized Russell for the hatred of women that can clearly be seen in certain of his works. In short I find his obscene treatment of female characters as odious and indefensible as the Vice Squad's treatment of inoffensive queens.

*As a matter of fact, *Camp Ink* might be interested in reprinting the attached article which I wrote for the *Australian* some years back. As I remember it appeared in a somewhat censored form.*

to general hilarity. Australian television has long been decorated by comperes and comedians who make much of limp-wristed innuendos. It's all a bit of a giggle. But confront the same Australians with the reality of homosexuality — with one of the crueller jokes that can be played on the human being — and suddenly it's not so funny. Only in recent years has there been any softening of attitude, but there's been no softening of the law.

Homosexuals call the police "lily law" with a facetiousness that fails to conceal their fear. They know the law completely loses its cool when it comes to the question of their particular deviation. Where crimes like incest, rape and murder are defined in the statutes with admirable detachment, homosexual lovemaking is described as "the abominable crime of buggery" (ironically lesbianism is not illegal for the simple reason that those drafting the law found themselves unable or unwilling to explain to Queen Victoria just what Lesbians did). Taking their cue from this vehement phrase, many policemen make the harrassment of homosexuals their own particular crusade. And methinks that in some instances they protest too much — but often their motives would not bear "psychiatric examination". Solicitors with experience of such cases report that in many instances the constables acting as "agent provocateurs" in places like the crystal palace take an interminable time in making an arrest.

Moral Danger

A few years back a man arrested in such circumstances "fell" from the first floor window of a police station and died his skull smashed on a fire hydrant. Whether or not he was a homosexual, he happened to be a brilliant leukaemia specialist. So what did society gain? I know of a case where a middle-aged school teacher who'd always suppressed his tendencies yielded to the temptations of a young policeman and was subsequently dismissed by the Education Department. Others have been under departmental pressure to resign even after acquittal, on the assumption that anyone suspected of homosexual tendencies presents a moral danger to the boys in his class. Apart from the confusion of homosexuality with pederasty — a quite different deviation — this is utterly illogical. To be consistent, any male teacher known to be a heterosexual should be dismissed, for

The Attached Article

Near a well-known gymnasium in Melbourne there's an underground public lavatory which its homosexual habituaries call the pop-up toaster. Near the Camberwell Town Hall there's another which caters to a better class of perve. With those small bottle green lenses set in the brickwork, it's called the crystal palace. A lonely lavatory by a suburban golf course is better known as Ida Lupino's road house. And near a big public library you'll find the Reading Room.

Giving witty names to these squalid, furtive hangouts is just one way in which the homosexual expresses the dichotomous nature of his character and culture. Another is found in the use of that key word 'gay'. It's not so much an adjective as a self-inflicted wound. How accurately it catches the brittle, forced quality of their social world.

Destructive Vindictiveness

The homosexual is a contradiction not only in social terms and sexual terms but in personal terms. While fervently identifying with the idealism

and romanticism of Oscar Wilde, he'll live a life of sexual opportunism, of destructive promiscuity. While pleading for community tolerance and understanding, he'll treat his fellow homosexuals with bitchy vindictiveness. While scorning the squares for their hangups and dishonesty — while insisting on the normalcy of his condition — the homosexual remains torn by guilt.

But sex is always a seething hot-bed of contradictions, no pun intended. As we know, Victorian prudery concealed Victorian pornography. Scratch a censorial politician and you'll often find a dirty old man. A few days ago I heard a bloke in a pub say "homosexuals is rats — they ought to be kicked to death" prior to delivering a paean of praise to the concept of mateship. Needless to say he was unconscious of the irony.

A Cruel Joke

Australians like homosexual entertainments. They crowd to "Boys in the Brand", "Midnight Cowboy", "Les Girls". Every Saturday night hosts at a thousand square parties do ballet dances (in pot-lid bras). At every other footy social the team will dress up in tutus and mince around the stage

posing a potential treat to young female students.

As well as being hunted by the law, homosexuals are denied its protection in other matters. Queens are frequently blackmailed or bashed and afraid to seek police help. I know of one 'married' homosexual couple who have been robbed by hustlers on three occasions. First they were beaten up and then their flat was cleaned out. And because they were unwilling to report these occurrences to the police they were also unable to claim on insurance. Heads I win, tails you lose. And many Melbourne homosexuals live in terror following the murder of two of their number by known midnight cowboys. However, for all their fear they were more afraid of talking to police. This situation will continue as long as an archaic and absurd law remains in force.

I should make it clear that I don't believe that changing the law will do much to lighten the homosexuals burden of guilt. He will still dread exposure to his family, his employers and his square friends. But it would certainly help. If nothing else, it would remove one excuse for the homosexuals tiresome self-pity. And it would enable the homosexual society — and the individual homosexual relationship — to stabilise itself. Overseas examples make it clear that far from encouraging mass sodomy, changing the law tends to encourage more responsible behaviour on the part of queens. Going by British and Danish experience, the majority of homosexuals want to be as respectable and conformist as the majority of heterosexuals.

Plaster Ducks

Even as things are, many local queens try desperately to immitate the social mores of their heterosexual neighbours. I know of two — a plumber and a builder — who live together in a neat triple fronted brick veneer with all mod-cons. Their twin beds have chenille covers, the compulsory plaster ducks soar aloft on pastel paintwork. And on Sunday mornings they have open house for their all-male friends (Mavis, Cloe, Daphne and the rest) come around, drink beer and discuss the footy. They'd certainly celebrate a change in law with a few drag parties, but ultimately it would only strengthen them in their suburban resolve. By and large a change of law would help queens live with the community, even if it didn't make it much easier for them to live with themselves.

To define homosexual behaviour as criminal is as farcical as it's unjust. I might as well condemn celebrities. After all, their sexual behaviour is just as unnatural and exotic. And here's a terrifying thought for stalwarts of our vice squadrons. Might'nt throwing a homosexual into prison be rather like hurling brer rabbit into his briar patch?

A Murky Silhouette

To a large extent the homosexual can blame himself for his invidious position in the Australian community. We live in a time where political change in such areas comes about through the manipulation of elite opinion. For example, the mass of the population may approve capital punishment but few governments dream of hanging. Where other minority groups — the conservationists, the abortion law reformers and so on — have organized the committees of dowagers, clerics and other worthy's, the homosexuals have never given themselves a voice. Would the Wolfendon report in the UK have got off the ground without the courage and energy of men like Peter Wildblood? Certainly not. Politicians and others were initially reluctant to associate themselves with this cause, presumably fearing that their own masculinity would be questioned. But once intelligent, articulate homosexuals were willing to stand up and be counted, things got moving and the law was changed. Now in America, organisations like the Mattachine Society organise lectures, meetings and publish magazines to focus attention on the homosexual's plight. They even picket government offices for refusing to employ them. In contrast, Australian queens sit around feeling sorry for themselves. Not only do they lack a magazine or forum, but if a homosexual is willing to appeal on television its likely to be a murky

silhouette, a dramatic device that tends to make them look as sinister as their detractors could possibly wish. I have spoken to many leading and ostentatiously camp Australians of theatre and allied areas — people who are widely known as queens — but they are unwilling to take that next step, to initiate a useful public debate. If they did, they might find some parliamentary back-benchers with enough guts or eccentricity to champion their cause. Just as Wildblood in England.

Famous Poofers

Homosexuals like to chant inventories of famous poofers — Tchaikovsky, Michaelangelo, Plato and every other film star. They find security in such exulted numbers, genuinely believing themselves to be more creative, more sensitive than squares. They're not of course, although you could argue that they try harder. Perhaps because they can't have kids (a real emotional problem for many of them as expressed in such camp plays as Staircase and the alleged first draft of Virginia Wolfe). They try desperately to prove themselves in other creative areas. Certainly if we were to remove the homosexual contribution from theatre, design, fashion, television, decor and the Australian novel, we'd have a much duller society. I suspect that the homosexual contribution has been at least as significant as the much wanted influence of the migrant. Any way you look at it, they've got a case.

Right now we're all very cross about banned books, banned films. But when you think about it, perhaps we should be even crosser about banned people.

Phillip Adams
(Vic.)

Spartacus is coming

SPARTACUS is Europe's leading homosexual organisation. We have lots to offer you. A monthly glossy magazine, male nude photos, books, novels, posters, even camp Christmas cards. We have a problems service, and an International Gay Guide. Find out what we can do for you. Write: Spartacus, 1st & 2nd Floors, 46 Preston Street, Brighton, Sussex, England. Send \$1 for big range of illustrated Brochures. \$2 Sample copy of Spartacus magazine, or \$12.25 for a 12 issue subscription and membership. Spartacus is for you. Australian Spartacus is being planned. You can be a founder member of Spartacus Australasia — join now.

"CAMP Ink." CAMP Ink, vol. 2, no. 6, Apr. 1972. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/FPQCEM222507086/AHSI?u=slnsw_public&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=a46088e6. Accessed 26 Sept. 2022.