

contrast to Homeric practice. High-born women were segregated. Thus the estates of the nobles would not be overly subdivided, resulting in their impoverishment. When Sparta entered a crisis, "Lycurgus" visited Crete and imported along with the adviser Thaletas most of its institutions: a concatenation of interlocking institutions—segregation of women, institutional pederasty, athletic nudity, messes for males, late marriages, and herd membership for boys. Thereafter the Spartans became invincible in battle and athletics. Soon other lawgivers imitated the system in a less rigorous fashion. Solon imported a modified version of it to Athens with the aid of the Cretan Epimenides. Then, it seems, poets and artists began to ascribe pederasty to the gods and heroes. Perhaps under Solon's beloved and successor Peisistratus and his pederastic sons the *Iliad* was emended to include its two brief references to Ganymede, for those tyrants certainly had the text altered to stress the early importance of Athens, since they had Homer recited at the annual Panathenaic festival. Plato set his last major dialogue *The Laws* on Crete, where ironically an Athenian instructed a Cretan and a Spartan on how to make a good constitution which would bar pederasty as unnatural.

The brief revival that Crete enjoyed in the archaic period ended before the beginning of the classical era, perhaps in part because the Persian Empire's seizure of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, cutting off Greek trade with Egypt and the Levant, which had made Crete central, rendered it instead peripheral.

No Cretan works are extant before the third century B.C., so that the scholar must rely on mainlanders for information, but they are virtually unanimous that pederasty was first institutionalized in Crete, either in the Minoan period by gods and legendary heroes, or in the archaic period as a device against overpopulation. A nineteenth-century German hypothesis that Dorian warriors on the steppes of Central Asia institutionalized

pederasty and introduced it, iron, cremation, and other institutions when they overran and settled the peninsula ca. 1200, a theory now discredited, rests on the observation that most Greeks thought that their ancestors borrowed the institution from Crete and Sparta, but proponents of the "Dorian" origin cannot show that it also existed from the time of their first settlements in other Dorian areas. Early Spartan poets such as Tyrtaeus (b. ca. 650 B.C.) show no trace of it; rather Tyrtaeus ridicules "an effeminate." In fact all the earliest pederastic writing that survives is non-Dorian.

After being under Rome, the Byzantine Empire, Venice and Ottoman Turkey, Crete gained independence and joined Greece as a consequence of the First Balkan War in 1912. The strong survival of pederasty and other forms of homosexuality in modern Crete, subject of novels such as Nikos Kazantzakis', may perhaps best be traced to the long Turkish occupation.

William A. Percy

### ✓ CREVEL, RENÉ (1900–1935)

French novelist and essayist. His mother encouraged him in his education after his father's suicide in 1914. While writing a Sorbonne doctoral dissertation on Diderot, Crevel rejected the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and embraced Paris of the twenties.

In 1921, Crevel founded the short-lived literary review, *L'Aventure* (chance, surprise, adventure, or love affair), which was followed by *Dés* (Dice). In 1924 he joined the surrealists after they disrupted a Dada play in which he was acting. Crevel introduced automatic writing, interpretation of dreams, hypnotism, and other novelties into the surrealist circle. He pursued chance, spontaneity, luck, the unconscious, dreams, sex, revolution, love, unintended consequences, and other ruses in order to transcend common sense and definition.

Crevel put great hopes in the Association of Revolutionary Artists and Writers. The Stalinist iron of socialist realism, however, shattered the effort to reconcile revolutionary art and politics. At the Congress meeting in Paris in 1935, a Russian poet denounced the surrealists as pederasts; André Breton, the pope of surrealism, expelled Crevel from his circle for being a homosexual; Crevel put his head in a Paris oven and expired in the arms of Salvador Dali.

In his sexual life, René faced equally great contradictions. He had a passionate love affair with Eugene MacCown, an expatriate American painter, of whom Crevel wrote, "He was sent to punish me by the people I have hurt." Crevel celebrated the promiscuous homosexuality of working class bars, parks, quays, and the back alleys of Paris—what he called an "anonymous continent." At the same time he was jealous when his lover turned from him to a tattooed hustler. He nonetheless believed that every erotic activity was subversive which rebelled against "the reproductive instincts."

An example of the political sexual contradictions Crevel faced can be seen in the matter of Louis Aragon (himself a closet pedophile), arrested after he published a revolutionary poem, "Front Rouge" (Red Front) (1931), celebrating communism. Confronted by Crevel, André Gide refused to sign a petition against Aragon's arrest. Gide responded, "When I published *Corydon*, I was prepared to go to prison. Ideas are no less threatening than actions. We are dangerous people. To be convicted under this government would be an honor. However, if Aragon were convicted, he would deserve prison no less than Maurras" (a fascist). Gide talked of working behind the scenes; Crevel called for public protest against great infamy.

René Crevel's obscurity in the English-speaking world arises from multiple causes. Because he was a Trotskyist, the communists have suspected him; because he was an outspoken homosex-

ual, the surrealists have avoided him; because he was a communist, academics have red-listed him; because he celebrated promiscuity, gay liberationists have neglected him. His works have recently been reprinted; two of his sex novels have been translated into English, and gay liberation publications (*Masques*, *Christopher Street*, and Boston's *Gay Community News*) have devoted critical attention to his work. What his closest friend Salvador Dali wrote in 1954 remains true: "René Crevel offers a new bombshell in the genre of confrontation."

Charley Shively

### CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT

This was an act of the British Parliament (48 & 49 Victoria c. 69) which in its eleventh clause provided a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years, with or without hard labor, for any male person guilty of an act of gross indecency with another male person in public or in private. This clause had been introduced into a bill directed against prostitution and white slavery by Henry Labouchere late on the night of August 6, 1885. Accepted without debate, the clause became part of a bill that was rushed through the third reading the following night, August 7, and passed.

Under the existing Offenses against the Person Act of 1861 (24 & 25 Victoria cap. 100) only buggery = anal intercourse was punishable in English law, though in 1828 Sir Robert Peel in his reform measures had made "any penetration, however slight" sufficient for conviction, contrary to the earlier holding of the courts that proof of penetration and emission was required. The effect of the new statute was that any and every form of male homosexual expression, if only "filthy and disgusting" enough to offend the feelings of a jury, became criminal. It was under this law that Oscar Wilde was convicted in May 1895, spending a full two