

the Civil War, was widely believed to be homosexual. Even Franco himself, rumor has alleged, had an occasional fling during his service in Morocco.

More than Mussolini, Franco resisted the theories and pressures of Hitler, whom he regarded as a despicable (and perhaps deranged) upstart. It has been argued that Franco was not a fascist at all and that he actually maintained a pro-Jewish policy, granting asylum to refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe and attempting to protect Sephardic Jews in the Balkan countries. In his last years he in fact liberalized Spain to a certain extent, allowing among other things a resurgence of gay bars, baths, and culture even before the accession of King Juan Carlos upon his death in 1975. Today Spain is one of the freest countries in Europe.

Latin America. Juan Perón in Argentina and other dictators in Latin America mouthed fascist doctrines without even the consistency of Mussolini's Eastern European imitators. Naturally Latins, like Slavs, being considered inferior peoples by Hitler, did not in general espouse racism (Hitler had to make the Japanese honorary Aryans to ally with them in the Tripartite Pact of 1937), so they had no reason to think of homosexuals in his terms. Rather, they looked upon them with amused contempt, in the vein of Latin machismo. This machismo reinforced clerical prejudice to keep social intolerance the rule in Latin America. As Perón was gaining power in 1943-44, there was some repression, perhaps instigated by the military, but after he consolidated his rule in 1947 there was little.

Conclusion. On the whole, fascism was too tradition-minded and lacking in innovative will to formulate a coherent policy regarding such a "modern" phenomenon as homosexuality. The twentieth-century demand of homosexuals for justice and equality, the homosexual emancipation movement, which was heralded in Germany as early as 1864, and was

first organized by Magnus Hirschfeld in 1897, elicited a violent and reactionary response from National Socialism and to a lesser extent from the other great totalitarian movement, Stalin's Communism. However, in countries where homosexual emancipation did not exist (and no need was felt for it in states that had adopted the Code Napoléon), a campaign of repression simply had no motive in the ideology of the rightist regimes that dominated much of the interwar period.

See also Holocaust; Nationalism.

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FASCIST PERVERSION, BELIEF IN

Fascism and National Socialism (Nazism) were originally distinct political systems, but their eventual international ties (the "Rome-Berlin axis") led to the use of "fascist" as an umbrella term by Communist writers anxious to avoid the implication that "National Socialism" was a type of socialism. Neither in Italy nor in Spain did the right-authoritarian political movements have a homosexual component. Rather it was in Weimar Germany that the right-wing paramilitary groups which constituted the nucleus of the later National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) attracted a considerable number of homosexuals whose erotic leanings overlapped with the male bonding of the party. This strong male bonding, in the later judgment of their own leaders, gave the Nazis a crucial advantage in their vic-

tory over the rival Social Democratic and Communist formations in the early 1930s.

The most celebrated of the homosexuals in the Nazi Party of the 1920s was Ernst Röhm, whose sexual proclivities were openly denounced by left-wing propagandists, but this did not deprive him of Hitler's confidence until the putsch of June 30, 1934, in which he and many of his homosexual comrades in arms were massacred. Ironically enough it was said that with Röhm the last socialist in the NSDAP died. For Communist writers as early as the mid-1920s homosexuality was an element of "bourgeois decadence," or of *le vice allemand* (the German vice), and theorists such as Wilhelm Reich who were opposed to homosexuality could claim that the right-wing youth were "becoming more homosexual." The victory of National Socialism at the beginning of 1933 then reinforced Communist and émigré propagandists in their resort to "fascist perversion" as a rhetorical device with which they could abuse and vilify the regime that had defeated and exiled them—and which they hoped would be transient and unstable.

In particular, the statute by which Stalin restored the criminal sanctions against homosexuality that had been omitted from the penal codes of 1922 and 1926 was officially titled the "Law of March 7, 1934"—a pointed allusion to the anniversary of the National Socialist consolidation of power one year earlier. Maxim Gorky is even supposed to have said "Destroy the homosexuals and with them destroy fascism!" During his exile in the Soviet Union, the leftist German director Gustav von Wangenheim (1895–1975) made a film entitled *Bortsy* (The Fighters; 1936), in which the Nazis are shown as homosexual. The reaction of the Hitler regime to all this was to enact a new and more stringent version of the notorious **Paragraph 175** in the legal novella of June 28, 1935. Under its provisions the number of convictions for homosexual activity rose

to many times what it had been at the end of the Weimar Republic.

While the subject of homosexuality was still largely taboo in the British and American press during World War II, allusions to the theme of "fascist perversion" are found in denunciations of Nazi Germany, and occasional echoes of the belief recur in left-wing propaganda of the recent decades. In the United States Maoists charged that the gay liberation movement of 1969 and the years following was an example of "bourgeois decadence" that would vanish once the triumph of socialism was achieved. Communist and Catholic organizations in coalitions of the American left have even formed ad hoc alliances for the purpose of excluding "gay rights" from the common program of the umbrella group or of keeping gay speakers off the platform at major rallies. The belief in homosexuality as a "fascist perversion" is one of the Stalinist myths of the 1930s that are belied by the historical facts but still kept alive by uncritical writings on the subject and by artistic treatments such as Luchino Visconti's film *The Damned* (1970).

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FASSBINDER, RAINER WERNER (1945–1982)

West German filmmaker, author, director, and actor. With his "anti-theatre" troupe in Munich Fassbinder set out to redefine the aesthetic experience on stage. His search quickly brought him (along with the members of this troupe who would often serve as his actors) to film. From his first films in 1969 to his forty-third in 1982, he explored the intricate connections between love and ma-