

GOVERNMENT

This subject has two main aspects: homosexuals in government and the actions of government with respect to homosexuality. The coming of modern regimes based on "the consent of the governed" would have seemed to promise improvement in this often adversarial relationship but, as the contemporary struggle for gay rights shows, this is far from the case. Insofar as the residual ignorance and hatred of homosexuality among the masses offer a tempting opportunity for reactionary propagandists and demagogues, rational arguments that can sway the educated go unheard. Conversely, earlier authoritarian regimes often allowed some room for aristocratic homosexuality that was subsequently lost; such "zones of licence" were particularly fostered when the rulers themselves were prone to take same-sex favorites.

Historical Perspectives. The first indication comes from a surprisingly early source. The last great pharaoh of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, Pepy II (2355–2261 B.C.), conducted an affair with his general Sisine. Much later the controversial pharaoh Akhnaten (reigned ca. 1372–1354 B.C.) has been held by some to have combined sexual variation with his better-known innovations in religion and art. Beginning in ancient Sumeria Mesopotamia saw the emergence of institutions of state-supported cult prostitution, male and female, attached to the temples. In some instances the inmates received a regular salary. This institution became controversial in ancient Israel, and the suppression of the male cult prostitutes (*kēdēshīm*; sing. *kādēsh*) may be said to constitute the first state interference in homosexuality.

In ancient Greece the pederastic institution played an important role in state building, and not a few of the boys whose names appear on vases followed by *kalos* ("handsome") later became generals, admirals, and statesmen of the Athenian polis. Some Roman emperors were noted for their minions. Alongside such

notorious pairs as Nero and Sporus, Helio-gabalus and Hierocles, stands the noble relationship of Hadrian and Antinous.

The minion habit recurred in medieval and early modern Europe with Edward II and James I of England, Henri III and Louis XIII of France. More influential than royal minions were powerful politicians who used their office for their own purposes, including Lord John Hervey (1896–1743), who was Vice-Chamberlain to the household of George II for ten years, and Jean-Jacques Régis de Cambacères (1753–1824), archchancellor under the First Empire who was responsible for the creation of the Napoleonic code.

Traditionally homosexuals in government service have had an affinity with the diplomatic corps, perhaps because the practice in masking their feelings to conceal their sexual orientation is good preparation for diplomatic discretion. In any event it is interesting that nineteenth-century British history provides information on two foreign secretaries. Robert Stewart, Lord Castlereagh (1769–1822), committed suicide after confessing his homosexuality to George IV. Archibald Philip Primrose, Lord Rosebery (1847–1929), who himself had a homosexual secretary, was rumored to have been involved with Lord Alfred Douglas.

Modern Times. Modern nations, where rumor and the media can conspire to spread sexual innuendo, have whispering campaigns to discredit politicians who are claimed to be sexually deviant. Until recent decades the favorite accusation was adultery, homosexuality apparently having been believed either unlikely in holders of high office or statistically quite rare. As homosexuality has come to be more discussed and familiar, such diverse figures as Hitler, Stalin, and Adlai Stevenson have been accused of having homosexual affairs. In the absence of evidence such claims must be dismissed as the product of smear campaigns.

In the United States, **Walt Whitman** was discharged on June 30, 1865, from a job in Washington after his supervisor discovered a book of immoral poems in his desk (*Leaves of Grass*). The ensuing gilded age is largely an era of silence, though there are reports of cruising grounds in Washington, D.C. In 1918–21 the United States Navy was involved in the suppression of a complex scandal at Newport, Rhode Island. The New Deal saw such individuals as Sumner Welles, under secretary of state, and Senator David Walsh of Massachusetts implicated. Persistent rumors have circulated about the person of J. Edgar Hoover, who was the immensely powerful director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 1924 to 1972. Although Hoover never married and had a life-long buddy relationship with his subordinate Clyde Tolson, it has not been possible to learn the true nature of his sexuality, and probably it never will be.

In 1950 Senator Joseph R. **McCarthy** of Wisconsin began a vociferous and unprincipled campaign against communists and homosexuals in government. A spurious legitimacy was lent to this by such cases as the Austrian double agent **Alfred Redl** before World War I and the recent **Burgess-McLean-Blunt** scandal in Britain. It was rarely pointed out—except by homophile activists—that the only reason that gay people in government service are subject to blackmail is the existence of archaic laws. In most advanced countries these laws have been eliminated, while (perhaps not coincidentally) the leading sex scandals in the diplomatic corps have been heterosexual. After **McCarthyism** had died down, another case made the headlines, that of an aide to President Johnson, **Walter Jenkins**, who had been arrested in a public restroom. No one knows how many civil servants accepted discharge in silence. However, **Frank Kameny**, a government astronomer, decided to fight back after his dismissal in 1957. Although Kameny never was reinstated, his experiences made him a gay activist, one of the

most vocal and vigorous of those prominent in the 1960s.

Openly Gay Office Holders. The more militant phase of the gay movement (after 1969) with its demand "Out of the closets!" made possible the first openly lesbian and gay elected officials, **Elaine Noble** and **Alan Spear**, state representatives in Massachusetts and Minnesota, respectively. Somewhat later Wisconsin representative **David Clarenbach** was able to achieve both decriminalization and a gay rights bill in his state.

In San Francisco the 1978 homophobic murder of openly gay elected supervisor **Harvey Milk**, and Mayor **George Moscone**, together with the judicial treatment of their murderer, produced local riots and nationwide outrage. From this time forward, however, gay politics have been a central and irrepressible feature of the Bay City. In Southern California a newly incorporated City of West Hollywood seems to be largely, though not completely, gay.

In the 1980s a new frankness in the media regarding the sexual behavior of politicians has sometimes had unfortunate results, witness the 1987 **Gary Hart** affair. In the U.S. House of Representatives a closeted conservative Republican, **Robert Bauman**, was hounded out of office, but openly gay Democrats **Gerry Studds** and **Barney Frank** of Massachusetts seem secure in their districts.

In the British House of Commons **Maureen Colquhoun** and **Chris Smith** have both been open about their sexual orientation. In Norway the Conservative lawmaker **Wenche Lowzow** is lesbian. For understandable reasons, given the pressures of public office, most gay and lesbian lawmakers chose to remain in the closet everywhere, but anecdotal evidence suggests that they are numerous.

Wayne R. Dynes

GRAFFITI

Since classical antiquity, the art of writing has afforded the opportunity to