

the love of man and woman that includes no physical expression.

William A. Percy

NERO (37–68)

Roman emperor. Exiled as a result of the disfavor of the Emperor Caligula, the boy Nero and his ambitious mother Agrippina were rehabilitated and allowed to return to Rome after the emperor's death in 41. Several years later Agrippina married the emperor Claudius and, on his demise in 54, was able to secure the throne for her son. Guided by the philosopher Seneca, the empire then entered an auspicious period of sound government. Growing bored of the tedium of rule, however, Nero became addicted to luxury and to his artistic pursuits—he imagined himself a distinguished poet and performer. He constructed for himself a great palace known as the *Domus Transitoria*. This proved insufficient, and Nero apparently ordered a large part of Rome set on fire in 64, to serve as a site for the construction of his Golden House. As foreign relations became more difficult, his connections with the Senate soured, and the plots against him required increasingly repressive measures. A revolt by the army and Senate caused him to commit suicide, uttering the words, "What an artist is perishing in me." His death ended the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

Nero's appetite for luxury and self-indulgence emerged in his sexual escapades. After enjoying sexual relations with his mother (or so Suetonius claims) he grew tired of her when she disapproved of his liaisons with the freedwoman Acte and the glamorous sophisticate Sabina Poppaea. He then devised a special collapsing boat on which he sent her with great ceremony for a short cruise. But Agrippina escaped and swam to shore, where she was dispatched. Nero had a youth, Sporus, whom he castrated and treated as his wife. Sporus was escorted through the streets, receiving the homage due an empress.

Reversing roles, Nero made his husky freedman Doryphorus marry him (though dispensing with the castration).

Nero's many misdeeds have earned him an infamy outstanding even for the profligate age in which he lived. Recent historians, however, have sought to redress the balance. His early years were marked by a serious effort at governmental reform. Unlike his cruelty, his sexual irregularities no longer seem monstrous. And Nero presided over what has been called the Roman architectural revolution, the beginning of the great phase that made the empire's accomplishments in this field unsurpassed. The image perpetuated by Henryk Sienkiewicz' novel *Quo Vadis* (1896) and by Hollywood films is not confirmed by sober historical analysis.

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Warren Johansson

NETHERLANDS, THE (HOLLAND)

A European kingdom of fifteen million Dutch-speaking inhabitants, the Netherlands has in recent times acquired a reputation as the most tolerant country in the industrialized Western world on the subject of homosexuality.

History. The (northern) Netherlands emerged as a national entity (the Republic of the United Provinces) during the Eighty Years War (1568–1648), a revolt against the Spanish Habsburg empire, which separated them from the southern Netherlands (Belgium). A great commercial and maritime power, until 1795 they were a loose federation of seven virtually independent provinces. The House of Orange, by no means a monarchy, held only limited rights. Until 1748 the princes of Orange, the so-called *stadtholders* (vice-

roys), held no hereditary office but each time had to be appointed by each of the provinces separately.

A process of unification of the seven provinces started in 1795 when, after a decade of democratic uprisings, a French invasion put an end to the old system and turned the United Provinces into the Batavian Republic. In 1806 Napoleon made the Republic one of his satellite kingdoms with his brother Louis Napoleon as its monarch. After an annexation by France in 1810, the end of the Napoleonic era in 1813 saw the restoration of the House of Orange, now turned into a monarchy, and a short-lived (1815–1830) reunification with the southern provinces.

During the nineteenth century the Netherlands gradually changed into a parliamentary democracy with universal suffrage (including women) finally established in 1917. From an almost absolute monarchy in the early nineteenth century, the House of Orange changed into a constitutional monarchy. From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards the country grew from an agricultural into a modern industrialized nation. It remained neutral in World War I, but was invaded by Nazi Germany in 1940 and occupied until the end of World War II in 1945.

Legislation. Lack of centralization and the indistinctness of "the crime" make it hard to obtain a general view of legislation concerning same-sex behavior in the period prior to the unification of the nation and the law. In the absence of a central legislature each of the provinces (or parts of them) was responsible for its own legislation. Only some of them had articles of law against sodomy or unnatural acts. In the absence of—or next to—such explicit articles, Roman and Mosaic law, legal comments, and tradition could be applied. All of them provided capital punishment for sodomy. The *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (1532) of the Habsburg emperor Charles V, to a certain extent authoritative in the Netherlands, provided that bestiality and sodomy should be

punished by burning at the stake (article 16). Legal texts or comments in many cases included under a single heading such different things as masturbation, rape, bestiality, parricide, arson, as well as sexual acts with Jews or Saracens. Where the articles were explicit, they usually referred to sexual acts with animals, between men or between women, and to non-procreative, "unnatural," sexual acts involving members of both sexes.

Soldiers and sailors were subject to martial and admiralty law respectively. The 1590 *Articul-Brief*, meant for the military forces, threatened those who had committed sodomitical acts, whatever these were considered to be, with the death penalty, as did admiralty law at least from the early eighteenth century onwards.

It was not until 1730 that a wave of persecutions of sodomites swept through the country and prosecutions indeed had already started, where the province of Holland (because of the diversity of punitive measures) felt the need for anti-sodomy legislation. On July 21, 1730, an edict was issued which stipulated that those who had committed sodomy should be executed publicly, leaving the method of execution to the discretion of the judges. A week before, on July 14, 1730, the province of Groningen granted anonymity to whomever denounced anyone suspected of the *crimen nefandum*. (Since only two men were executed in the city of Groningen in that year, the announcement can hardly be considered to have been successful.) In 1764 a slightly modified version of the edict of 1730 was issued in Holland, whereupon Amsterdam especially was hit by a new wave of persecutions.

In 1777 A. Perrenot, legal adviser to Stadtholder William V, published anonymously the treatise *Bedenkingen over het straffen van zeekeere schandelijke misdadaad* (Thoughts About the Punishment of a Certain Shameful Crime). In this he pleaded for the abolition of the death penalty for sodomy in the enlightened tradition of Beccaria and Voltaire. Sodomy, though a

sin, in his opinion could not be considered a crime. Far from being a **Bentham**, he still wanted sodomites guilty of seduction to be imprisoned. Perrenot's treatise was soon followed by another anonymous pamphlet, *Nadere bedenkingen over het straffen van zekere schandelyke misdaad* (Further Thoughts About the Punishment of a Certain Shameful Crime), whose author argued sodomy to be a crime because it weakened male power and thus the power of the state. For practical reasons he argued against the death penalty: if sodomites were imprisoned and occasionally shown to the public in shameful clothes, employed in cleaning toilets and doing other filthy jobs, it would inspire more horror of the crime to the public than the short-lived impression of a public execution.

In 1798 separation of church and state was declared. It inspired a member of the Amsterdam Court, J. Gales, to publish a treatise in which he rejected the possibility that this separation automatically meant the abolition of the 1730/1764 edicts. Indeed, no such abolition followed.

Between 1795 and 1809 a new national criminal code was drafted, coming into force in the latter year. It threatened those who were guilty of unnatural acts with man or beast with a long term of imprisonment and banishment from the kingdom, and maintained the death penalty for those guilty of seducing others. The new criminal code had little or no effect since a necessary restructuring of the legal system still had to be prepared. Besides, with the annexation of the Netherlands by France in 1810 and the introduction of the French penal code in 1811, the 1809 code became redundant. The French code, which contained no article against sodomy, was left in force until 1866 despite new drafts of a Dutch criminal code that still provided penal sanctions against same-sex behavior.

The criminal code of 1886, because of liberal dominance in parliament, did not provide a penalty for same sex behavior, but set the age of consent for all

sexual behavior at fourteen. Yet all through the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries local legislation against public indecency and sexual acts in public made it possible to prosecute those who had given public offense.

It was only in 1911, when Christian influences permeated Dutch politics, that a new Morals Statute included a discriminatory provision: Article 248bis added to the Criminal Code set the age of consent for same-sex behavior at 21, fixing that for heterosexual behavior at 16, and providing an imprisonment for offenders. This provision was abolished in 1971 after the so-called Speyer Report had ascertained that no youth became a homosexual because of early homosexual experience.

With the exception of the period of Nazi occupation of the Netherlands (1940–45), no law prohibiting homosexuality as such was ever reintroduced. Regulation 81 of the German occupiers provided for punishment of all same-sex behavior with imprisonment. This regulation, like other exactments of the occupation, was abolished immediately after the Liberation.

Prosecutions. Until the eighteenth century prosecutions because of same-sex behavior in the Netherlands were a rare phenomenon. Some verdicts are known from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century courts in Utrecht. In the same period some cases with political overtones are known to have been tried in The Hague, one of them involving the president of the States of Holland. Most cases prior to the eighteenth century deal either with men who had sexual relations with children or with misuse of marriage, for instance women dressed as men who "married" other women. Until 1795 all cases in which women were involved dealt with cross-dressing.

Best known are the prosecutions of 1730. The discovery of a nationwide network of sodomites caused an avalanche of verdicts. Courts all over the country dealt with some 300 people, about half of

them by default. Seventy death penalties were carried out. The most notorious were the 1731 prosecutions led by the country squire Rudolph de Mepsche in the Groningen provincial counties. On September 24, 1731, 22 men and boys from Faan and other nearby villages were put to death after dubiously obtained confessions. Several others were kept in prison without a verdict until 1747. The case caused wide disbelief and political upheaval. De Mepsche was accused of an attempt to get rid of political opponents.

Less known is the fact that in Rotterdam as early as 1702 two men were put to death and in 1717 a small local network was discovered which led to the banishment of several people. Equally less known are waves of prosecutions later in the eighteenth century. Such waves occurred in 1764–65 in Amsterdam and in 1776 in the province of Holland, in both cases following the discovery of networks of sodomites. Especially between 1795 and 1798 prosecutions in Amsterdam reached a new peak in a number of isolated trials (without the death penalty), which for the first time involved women, who without any reference to cross-dressing were accused of sexual acts with one another. Prosecutions stopped in 1811 with the introduction of the French penal code. Altogether throughout the eighteenth century some 600 people were prosecuted because of same-sex behavior.

In the eighteenth century capital punishment was only applied when anal intercourse with an ejaculation in the body of a partner was considered proven by a confession and eyewitness accounts or confessions of accomplices. Other genital acts, or the absence of either a confession or some other part of the necessary evidence in charges of anal intercourse, resulted in long-term solitary confinement.

To obtain a confession the courts had torture (shin screws or whipping) at their disposal, though this was subject to rules. It could only be applied in cases that might result in a death penalty (anal inter-

course) when eyewitness accounts or confessions of accomplices were available. Moreover, bailiffs had to ask their court's permission to submit a suspect to torture. A confession obtained under torture had to be repeated "free from pain and restraint."

Until 1795 in sodomy cases the rules for torture were observed even more than usual, with the exception of the trials in the village of Faan in the province of Groningen, where suspects seem to have been beaten up regularly and at least one man died as a result of torture. Judicial torture was abolished in 1798.

Before the eighteenth century, death penalties for sodomy were usually carried out by burning at the stake. In the eighteenth century garroting, the usual punishment for women guilty of a capital crime, was mostly applied to sodomites as well. In this period no sodomite was burned alive. The last death penalty for sodomy in the Netherlands was carried out in Schiedam in 1803. Prosecutions in the Netherlands in the eighteenth century, though no doubt the severest in the early modern period in Europe, were never systematic, but the result of accidental discoveries.

During the nineteenth century same-sex behavior was liable to prosecution only in case of public indecency, sexual acts in public places, which could be punished by imprisonment or sometimes led to confinement in a lunatic asylum. In the second half of this century such prosecutions increased tenfold as a result of improvements in policing, the introduction of rules concerning the use of public lavatories, and changes in the design of the latter which made activities in the lavatories visible from the outside.

The history of Article 248bis is one of a trail of **blackmail**, ruined reputations, and derailed careers. The number of trials under this article gradually grew from about fifty per year before the war to several hundred per year in the first decade after the war. In 1936 the case of General Treasurer Ries became notorious. He was

accused by a minor, fired from his office, and abandoned by the government, even though the accusations against him were withdrawn. Equally notorious was a series of 1939 prosecutions in the Dutch East Indies (**Indonesia**), which were covered by Dutch newspapers in a sensational manner.

Contrary to popular belief, prosecution of homosexuals by the Nazis during the Occupation was rare. Only a small number of trials in regard to Regulation 81 are known to have happened, usually resulting in a few months of imprisonment. The number of trials under Article 248bis decreased compared with the number of such trials before the war. Homosexual behavior was left to the Dutch police, who were no more repressive than before the war. Though a couple of raids on pubs where homosexuals gathered did occur, historians so far have failed to uncover any case in which a homosexual was sent to a concentration camp, just for being a homosexual. Which does not mean to say that no Dutch homosexual was sent to a concentration camp, but that such a person was there either for being Jewish, as a member of the Resistance, or for political reasons.

Social Organization. The earliest references to a sodomite subculture have been traced to the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Public buildings like the City Hall in Amsterdam, a park in The Hague, and public lavatories in different cities were widely used by sodomites as meeting places from the last decades of the seventeenth century onwards.

It was especially through the trials of 1730 and those in later years that the extent of the subculture came to the attention of the authorities (and modern historians). To a large extent sodomite contacts were organized through a network in which men of all classes and ranging in age from 20 to 60 participated. Most of the participants (or at least those that are known because they were prosecuted) occupied professions that easily could bring them in

touch with numerous other people: they were merchants, shopkeepers, peddlers, footmen. Many were married. The women involved in persecutions in the 1790s did not form a network or a subculture and were of a poorer, sometimes prostitution, background. Only some of them were married.

Brothels and pubs existed in The Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Leiden. Special go-betweens provided footmen for gentlemen. Public buildings like the Amsterdam City Hall, the Bourse in Amsterdam, churches, theatres, as well as numerous lavatories which sometimes were specially nicknamed, city walls, specific streets, the underbrush in and outside city walls: all were known to sodomites as places where they either could have sex or find a casual partner.

At some of these places they used special codes to make contact with one another, like tapping with one hand on the back of the other, or putting the hands on the hips and hitting with the elbow against that of somebody who did the same thing.

In some places rituals existed, e.g., a group of sodomites in Haarlem used to elect one of them when they met under a tree and gave him the first choice of a partner. Though drag was not as popular among sodomites in the Netherlands as in England, some were described by accomplices or witnesses as effeminate.

The eighteenth-century subculture was essentially a street culture and by its very nature an urban one. Sodomite contacts in rural areas seem to have had an even more casual and much less organized character. In the village of Faan, men and boys more or less accidentally engaged in games which included sexual acts, without being aware that these acts were considered criminal and sinful.

The nineteenth century showed a gradual growth of this street culture and it has survived well into the second half of the twentieth century. The number of pubs and brothels showed an equal growth, while at the same time coterie of male as well as

female friends, usually of higher class, either with or without a sexual purpose, came into existence. During World War II, "tearoom trade" prospered as never before, mostly owing to the blackout. Even some pubs kept their largely homosexual clientele during the war. Though still existing, the street culture now seems to be giving way to a large commercial subculture, and also to more intimate forms of homosexuality.

A lesbian subculture has been much slower in coming into existence and today is much smaller than its male counterpart, though it provides not only pubs but also archives, bookshops, and health organizations.

Organizations. The first homosexual movement in the Netherlands was founded in 1911 as the Dutch branch of Magnus Hirschfeld's **Scientific-Humanitarian Committee** (Nederlandsch Wetenschappelijk Humanitair Komitee—NWHK) by the nobleman and jurist Jacob Schorer in response to the introduction of article 248bis. He intended to fight this law and to give support to homosexuals whenever and wherever they got into trouble.

The NWHK published yearbooks and brochures, which were sent to students, politicians, medical doctors, and key figures in society. Schorer collected a huge library of publications on homosexuality, which was seized by the Nazis in the early days of the Occupation. Not a genuine movement per se, the NWHK was what it said it was, a committee, mostly personified by Schorer himself, financially dependent on the gifts of homosexuals who wanted to support it. Throughout its existence the NWHK met with fierce opposition from Protestant and Catholic groups. It came to an end in 1940 when Schorer wisely destroyed his membership records at the outbreak of war with Germany.

The editors of the newly founded homosexual magazine *Levensrecht* (Right to Live) also destroyed their records in

May 1940, as well as the recently-printed fourth issue of their magazine. In 1946, after World War II had ended, the editors decided to revive *Levensrecht*. The authorities were obliged to give them a permit since, having ended the publication in 1940, the editors had obviously not collaborated with the Germans. Like the editors of the Swiss magazine *Der Kreis/Le Cercle*, which the Dutch editors took as their model, they started to organize special evenings in Amsterdam and other places with lectures and cultural events for a homosexual audience. Shortly thereafter, they founded the Shakespeare Club, forerunner of the COC.

Neither the publication of *Levensrecht* nor the existence of the Shakespeare Club was welcomed by the Dutch authorities, who sought reasons to prohibit both. Through the careful policy of one of its founders, Niek Engelschman, who managed to keep on speaking terms with the vice squad of the police, and through tough negotiations, such a prohibition was prevented. The police, however, made Engelschman stop publication of *Levensrecht* before a legal prohibition was issued. Yet shortly afterwards, the board of the Shakespeare Club decided to start a new magazine, *Vriendschap* (Friendship), which was left undisturbed by the authorities. (In 1986, at the COC's fortieth anniversary, Engelschman was awarded a royal decoration by the Dutch government for his role as one of the founding fathers of the organization and for his activities in later years.)

In 1948 the Shakespeare Club changed its name to COC (Cultuur en Ontspannings Centrum, "Center for Culture and Recreation"). Unlike its predecessor, the NWHK, the COC wanted to organize homosexuals and offer them the opportunity to meet and relax in "decent" surroundings. Its principal goal was to strengthen the self-consciousness of homosexuals by acquainting them with the "great" cultural, literary, and political homosexuals of past and present and with

scientific research on homosexuality. Like the NWHK, the COC in its external policy focused on key figures in society.

Social changes, including more openness about (homo)sexuality, caused the COC in 1964 to change its rather introverted policy into a more extroverted one, reflected by its new "open" name, Nederlandse Vereniging van Homofielen COC (Dutch Organization of Homophiles COC). With a new journal *Dialog* it literally hoped to enter into a dialogue with society.

Hardly aware of things happening elsewhere in the world and without any knowledge of the **Stonewall Rebellion**, at the end of the sixties the Dutch homosexual movement went through a series of changes that were not unlike those in America. Vietnam, radical student protests, sexual revolution, the feminist movement and, not least, radical gay groups affected the COC and turned it into a more radical movement that increasingly focused on society. Homosexuality was no longer considered to be the problem of homosexuals but society's problem. Once again these changes forced the COC to change its name: from 1971 onwards it called itself Nederlandse Vereniging tot Integratie van Homoseksualiteit COC (Dutch Society for the Integration of Homosexuality COC). In 1973, having been refused in 1963 and 1968, it was granted legal status.

From the very beginning women had been involved with the COC, though only as a small minority. Since the second half of the seventies, when the COC started to provide special facilities for women, this minority has been growing. Yet numerous lesbians prefer women-centered organizations and meeting places.

Perceptions. Until the persecutions of 1730, neither secular nor ecclesiastical authorities in the Netherlands paid much attention to sodomy. It was considered a crime and a sin that eventually would be punished. But until 1730, the

church councils in their constant diatribes against "crying sins" (card-playing, swearing, whoring, etc.) never mentioned sodomy. Secular authorities seemed to consider sodomy as an incidental crime or, as Michel Foucault claimed, as a temporary aberration from the norm. All this changed in 1730. In several books published by ministers after the persecutions had already started, they presented interpretations of the Biblical chapters on Sodom and Gomorrah that provided an etiology of same sex behavior on both a collective and an individual level. At a collective level such behavior was mostly seen as the result of an abundance of food and the absence of enemies of the state. At an individual level such abundance made people yield to the successive stages of the "crying sins" which in the end would make the individual vulnerable to seduction into same sex behavior by an individual who had reached that (new) nadir of sinfulness already. This was supposed to have happened on a large scale in 1712–1713 during the negotiations in Utrecht to end the War of the Spanish Succession, when numerous Catholic diplomats visited the city.

Once an individual had been lured into such a behavior he would cling to these practices and seduce others. Indeed, in 1730, faced with men who had not committed their sins just accidentally but deliberately and in an organized manner, these were the questions and sometimes unprovoked answers to and from suspects on trial: how long had they persisted in their behavior and who had been their seducers? From an accidental sin, sodomy became a permanent state of sinfulness. Same-sex behavior was understood in a religious manner and the secular and ecclesiastical authorities, the general public, and the men involved in the trials referred to acts "for which cities had been destroyed."

So far as the existence of a vague sodomite identity is reflected in such statements, this may have derived from the

subculture and been acknowledged by the trials. Women seem not to have had such an identity.

As elsewhere in Europe, the Netherlands in the nineteenth century gradually put more emphasis on the prevention than on the punishment of same-sex behavior; this brought the discussion of such behavior into the sphere of medicine. Same-sex behavior became pivotal in the discussion, mostly conducted within the medical profession, of cellular imprisonment, the spread of venereal diseases, and prostitution. Yet no original contributions in the process of the medicalization of homosexuality were published in the Netherlands in this period. The writings of K. H. Ulrichs and other authors on the Third Sex in the second half of the nineteenth century became known there among physicians and those directly involved. Terms like "Urning" replaced "sodomite" and in 1892 for the first time the word "homosexuality" was used in the Netherlands, conveying the biological or medical meanings attached to same sex acts.

It was two members of the medical profession, Arnold Aletrino (also a literary author) and Lucien von Römer, who, as forerunners of the NWHK, were the first to defend "Urning rights," though the former wanted them to abstain from sexual acts, thus separating desire and behavior. Both of them believed that "uranism" originated in biological deviations, though Aletrino preferred to compare it to variations in plant life rather than see it as a perversion or sickness. Both of them published on the subject, not seldom putting their reputations at risk.

The extensive Dutch press coverage of the Oscar Wilde trial in England and later scandals in Europe provided further opportunity for homosexuals to identify with the accused. The Radclyffe Hall case and her *Well of Loneliness* (1928) provided such an opportunity for women.

The NWHK mostly followed Hirschfeld in his "intermediate type" theory, although Schorer was not espe-

cially interested in any theory about homosexuality. On the eve of World War II, such biological theories were firmly established among homosexuals. This is best reflected in the book *De Homosexueelen*, which the lawyer Benno Stokvis published in 1939. In a series of short autobiographies men and women claimed to have felt that they were different from an early age onwards. Most of the men considered themselves effeminate and in their relationships they thought of themselves in husband/wife roles, each complementing the other.

In the early years after the war, the COC continued to think of homosexuality in biological terms. It tried to pay attention to new theories as well, including obscure eugenic ones. Gradually such thinking gave way to a psychological (Freudian) concept. In the late sixties any concept that included an etiology became suspect and was made a taboo, though the existence of homosexuals and lesbians as a separate category still goes largely unquestioned.

Conclusion. As far as homosexuality is concerned today's Netherlands enjoys a reputation as one of the most tolerant countries in the world. The popularity of the Amsterdam "scene" with its more than 50 bars, representing many different lifestyles, rivals that of much larger cities. The Dutch government officially carries out a gay and lesbian emancipation policy and so do many municipalities, one of the cabinet ministers being responsible for coordinating such policy. In Amsterdam, the first official gay and lesbian monument (widely mistaken as a tribute to homosexual victims of Nazi persecutions) has been built with government support. At an institutional level—government, parliament, press—there seems to exist a taboo on anti-homosexuality, to which even fundamentalists have at least to pay lip service. Yet attempts in the 1980s to introduce anti-discrimination legislation concerning same-sex behavior have been frustrated by fundamen-

talist and Christian Democratic opposition and seem to have entered a deadlock. As neither Christian Democrats, Liberals, nor Socialists have a majority in parliament, no party is able to enforce its views. Christian Democrats, though in agreement with such legislation, want exceptions to be made for schools and other institutions of a Christian character, exceptions which are unacceptable to the other parties. Equally frustrated have been attempts to lower the age of consent to twelve or to grant gay couples the right to adopt children.

Long considered to be the only representative of homosexuals and lesbians in the Netherlands, the COC nowadays is no longer the only gay and lesbian organization. Homosexuals and lesbians have organized in gay and lesbian caucuses in professional groups such as in health care, teachers' and civil servants' unions, in the police forces and the army, in religious groups, groups of elderly people and youths. Special groups or organizations have been set up for gay and lesbian (mental) health especially in regard to AIDS, and against anti-gay and -lesbian violence. At three universities (Amsterdam, Utrecht, Nijmegen) it is possible to take courses in gay and lesbian studies or research. Dutch universities organized two of the world's major gay and lesbian academic events: the "Among Men/Among Women Conference" in 1983 (University of Amsterdam) and the "Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality? Conference" in 1987 (Free University, Amsterdam).

In the eighties the Netherlands entered the AIDS era. This crisis seemed to reinforce the taboo on anti-homosexual expression, as a result of a widely-proclaimed compassion toward AIDS victims. In AIDS prevention, the gay and lesbian movement has become a negotiating partner of the government, carrying out a policy of restraint.

Despite all this progress, anti-gay violence seemed to increase; the Netherlands joined other countries in their hys-

teria about child abuse and incest, creating an exceedingly dangerous atmosphere for pedophiles and homosexuals alike. Moreover, question marks should be put beside some of the government's efforts to support gay and lesbian emancipation, since they are also used to control homosexuality in a heterosexual manner. Despite these shortcomings, the Netherlands continues to point the way to true homosexual emancipation.

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Theo van der Meer

NEW ORLEANS

This major port (population ca. 600,000) at the mouth of the Mississippi River was founded in 1718 as capital of the French colony of Louisiana. Sold to the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase, New Orleans has long ranked as a major gay center and mecca for homosexuals from all over the American South.

Two main factors fostered the early development of New Orleans' exceptionally large gay community and continue to shape that community's unusual contours: the city's cosmopolitan character and its French heritage. To the diverse, largely male, French, Spanish, German, Indian, and African populations (including Jean Lafitte's pirates) assembled during the port's colonial decades, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries added successive, and still largely male, waves of Americans, Irish, Italians, Jews, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Filipinos, Latin Americans, still more French, and most recently a number of Vietnamese. And from its French colonial