IV:


As the sixties drew to a close, the American political establishment found it increasingly difficult to conduct business as usual. Passionate opposition to the Vietnam War inspired even more militant tactics than had the civil rights movement. This conflict led to Lyndon Johnson's surprise announcement in March 1968 that he would not seek another term in the White House. The assassinations of Martin Luther King in April, which provoked riots in Washington and in other cities, suppressed by the National Guard, and of Robert Kennedy in June of 1968, added to the violent and confrontational atmosphere. In August what some have called a "police riot" occurred outside the Democratic National Convention center in Chicago, when officers overreacted and assaulted hundreds of unruly, chanting demonstrators. To many, this incident was proof that the norms of liberal democracy were breaking down. Students, first at Columbia on April 23, 1968 and then on many other campuses, revolted, occupying buildings and paralyzing the educational process. It was in this climate, both dire, after Nixon defeated Humphrey, and hopeful, that a new and vigorous phase of the struggle for gay rights began.
As early as January 1967 and August 1968 incidents occurred in the Los Angeles area that intensified the radical mood of the movement. Next, a chanting mob of angry demonstrators shouting slogans of liberation and threatening revolution claimed to spearhead what they named the "gay community", whose members they exhorted to "come out!" proudly.

**Stonewall**


This quasi-legendary event is today hailed as the beginning of a new and incomparably more visible phase: gay liberation replaced homosexual emancipation. Each June marches and rallies in ever more cities across the nation commemorate the anniversary. One of the major slogans of the new movement was exactly "Come out!"--a call for defiant activism, for proud self-affirmation, and for a loud and angry gay presence in politics. Instead of hiding in subterranean darkness, members of the pariah community now revealed their identity--and more importantly, their political commitment--in a multitude of ways. Public protests, demonstrations, and parades became the order of the day, first in the United States, then in England and other
English-speaking countries, and finally in non-Communist Europe. From the outburst of gay liberation in the summer of 1969 a direct line runs to the slogan of Queer Nation, the radical group founded in 1990, "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" No longer would we endure in silent humiliation the insults and wrongs that Christian society had inflicted and was inflicting upon us.

The Gay Liberation Front that formed in July 1969, shortly after the Uprising, took as its theoretical model the liberation fronts (particularly the Vietnamese FLN, or National Liberation Front) that in many countries of the Third World--usually under Communist leadership--were fighting for national independence and freedom from imperialist domination. Without actually resorting to killing, bombing, or even much destruction of property, it mimicked the rhetoric and the mass demonstrations of those more violent organizations. Closer to home, it also found inspiration in the movements for equal rights for African-Americans, for women, for ethnic minorities.

The gay liberation movement was guilty of profound self-deception, especially the short-lived Marxist-inspired Gay Liberation Front (1969-73). With no memory of earlier phases of homosexual emancipation, it fielded no coherent program of its own, only a set of ideological hand-me-downs from these models--which seldom if ever reciprocated the support that the gay activists tendered to what they believed was a common cause. The economic grievances of the Communist-led peasantry in the
Third World simply did not parallel the pariah status of the gay underworld in the United States, even if the latter leaned towards, if it did not yet join, what came to be called the "rainbow coalition." In fact, the mass of the population in Third World cultures either has no conception of what Americans mean by "homosexuality," or detests those who invert gender roles with a loathing that no words in any human language could ever fully express.

This situation reflects one of the paradoxes of the American left (pace Adam). For the last three-quarters of a century it has largely adopted the terminology, the rhetoric, often the specific demands of Marxist-Leninist parties around the world. Yet these are in essence collectivist, authoritarian organizations with highly centralized leadership and control, while the spontaneous belief system of the Americans derives from a native tradition of anarcho-individualism. In other words, the two sets of movements are not variants of a single ideology, but are antipodes--and heading in opposite directions. A hundred years from now historians will wonder how they could ever have imagined that they had anything in common. Moreover, Marxism in its political analysis gave a privileged role to antagonism between classes--groups united by common economic interest. To make matters worse, in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, just as in the works of the Church fathers, there is not one sentence on the subject of homosexuality that is even slightly positive--not even one. The
mirror image of the gay Christians, the "gay Marxists" could only cherish the pathetic wish that it had been otherwise. The Marxist-Leninist tradition rejected homosexuality, which throughout the 1970s remained a crime in all major Communist countries. Some imprisoned homosexuals in concentration camps for "reeducation," or as in Cuba, stigmatized us as mentally ill and subjected us to various exclusionary policies—which were dutifully mimicked by Stalinists and pseudo-Maoist groupuscules in the United States itself. All of them formally rejected gay liberation. Even in the East Central European satellite states which—in the lingering aftermath of the pre-1935 sexual reform movement—repealed the laws against sodomy, the regime allowed no organizations, no gay media, no active campaign of enlightenment. The uninhibited, hedonistic "lifestyle" flaunted by the Western counterculture not only remained anathema to the Communists to the bitter end, but was clearly identified with the "bourgeois way of life" which the revolution had forever abolished. Drugs of every sort combined with Marxism vulgarized to the nth power blurred and distorted even what little perception the activists of the Gay Liberation Front had of reality. If they had carried their campaign to the streets of Havana or Moscow, they would quickly have been thrown into a prison—or else an insane asylum—as "enemies of the people."

As a result of being integrated into a consumer society, the proletariat of classical Marxism had in the United States long since lost interest in socialism. In the advanced countries
Marxist thinkers could look for the cadres of the future revolution only to students, women, homosexuals, and sundry alienated or marginalized elements. This mentality had as little in common with anything that Marx himself believed or advocated as with the peasant-based "liberation movements" of the Third World, but amounted to what some observers styled "comic book Marxism."

Not surprisingly, the leftist trend faded in favor of the single-issue Gay Activists Alliance, which at the close of the Vietnam War splintered into a broad and ever-expanding spectrum of organizations committed solely to bettering our lot within the framework of established American institutions. From the two score that existed on the eve of Stonewall, the gay rights movement has in twenty-three years blossomed into a myriad of groups as diverse in their origins, as complex in their identities, as multi-faceted in their aspirations as America itself.

*The Seventies in the United States*

From 1969 onward "gay" replaced "homophile" or "homosexual" as the code word of choice and community, with its left-wing popular associations, replaced minority, the legalistic concept of the old gradualist elite. Some of the "old fogies," often Mattachine members who had never fully come out, resisted this change of nomenclature--but to no avail. Claiming to represent the gay community, brash young militants demanding acceptance took to the streets in hundreds, unlike the cautious handful of
older intellectuals petitioning for toleration. One of the organizers of the first gay pride march in New York City (June 1970) stated: "We're probably the most harassed, persecuted minority group in history, but we'll never have the freedom and civil rights we deserve as human beings unless we stop hiding in closets and in the shelter of anonymity." In a rash of enthusiasm, many optimistically supposed that droves of prominent closeted gay men and women would come out. Then they would serve as role models for gay youth and give the lie to religious homophobes and to those who psittacinely denigrated us as morally depraved or mentally ill. The world would have to admit that those attracted to their own sex included prestigious members of every elite. Sadly, self-interest prevailed: very few celebrities--and no really prominent ones--came out, even before a backlash gathered steam in the second half of the decade.

How central the idea of "coming out" was emerges from the title of one of the first gay liberation periodicals, *Come Out!*, which produced some seven issues during its brief existence. Another gay periodical was named *Out*. As yet, however, *out* and its derivatives carried only a voluntary connotation.

Before Stonewall only a handful of American notables had come out as homosexual: Gertrude Stein and her circle of lesbians in Paris; Maxwell Bodenheim in the Greenwich Village of the 1930s; Robert Duncan, a poet, who some would say was not of the first rank, in 1944, perhaps the first to do so in America under his own name rather than under a pseudonym. Barbara Gittings and
Frank Kameny had both courageously gone public in the late fifties. Suddenly, people of some prominence surprised the public by coming out. The scientist Dr. Bruce Voeller, a founder of the National Gay Task Force, and the novelist Merle Miller came out, both in 1971. So did Martin Duberman, Distinguished Professor at Lehman College of the City University of New York, and the Minnesota State Senator Allan H. Spear, both in 1972. No celebrities came out, no really famous person, whether film or television personality, professional athlete, ranking politician or administrator, financier or industrialist, cleric or military leader. Those few who did come out, such as the American athlete David Kopay and the British actor Dirk Bogarde (except perhaps the Italian film directors Luchino Visconti and Pier Paolo Pasolini), were not in the front rank. Perhaps it was utopian to expect such conduct at the higher echelons. When at Stonewall the oppressed finally fought back, it was not the middle or the upper class but was rather street people, transvestites, naive youths, hustlers, and ribbon clerks. Such denizens of the submerged "counter-culture" had little--or nothing more--to lose. The open, politically conscious, publicity-seeking gay liberationists threatened those who by tacitly agreeing to "remain in the closet" had reached a psychological and social *modus vivendi* with a hostile society.

In the early seventies gay liberation scored victory after victory, despite the reticence and even the resistance to new tactics and leaders by old-time activists and established gay
professionals. Suddenly, with so many lending their support to the cause, conditions began to change with unexpected rapidity. In 1973, after Frank Kameny had staged a zap action at its convention, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its official list of psychiatric disorders, but left as a compromise in its resolution the clause "sexual orientation disturbance." The APA panel, which included the implacable homophobes Charles W. Socarides and Irving Bieber (1908-1991), for the first time confronted an openly gay member, Ronald Gold, the public relations director of the Gay Activists Alliance. Instrumental like Kameny in removing the sickness label from homosexuality, Gold swayed his audience partly by ridiculing the caricatures of the homosexual touted by his opponents:

If you were an employer, a landlord, or a judge, would
I get a job or an apartment or the custody of a child
if you thought I had "wild self-damaging tendencies"
and "onslaughts of paranoid ideation" [Socarides] or
"grossly defective peer-group relatedness" and "rage
reactions disproportionate to the provocation."

In 1973 the New York Court of Appeals mandated that the bar admit an openly gay member. The following year New York City witnessed hearings on a proposed gay rights bill, openly supported by politicians as well as by intellectuals, legal experts, public health officials, and labor leaders but opposed with all its political might by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.
Thanks to the tireless campaign by the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights under the leadership of Andy Humm, the passage of the antidiscrimination ordinance in 1986 made the city the fiftieth jurisdiction to have such a law. The United States Civil Service Commission changed its policy and admitted homosexuals. The ramparts were tumbling down one after another. Gay ghettos, to which refugees had been fleeing rural and small town America since the nineteenth century, burgeoned in every major city. Famed as a bohemian quarter since the 1920s, Greenwich Village became the major East Coast center as Hollywood and San Francisco's Castro blossomed more in the war's aftermath. During the seventies though, even Boston, St. Louis, New Orleans, Chicago, Seattle, Houston, Orlando, Philadelphia, Dallas, Miami and other lesser cities had expanding gay ghettos. By 1992 nearly thirty cities held their own gay pride parades. These visibly and publicly celebrated the new ethos--coming out collectively. With America in the lead, more people showed their true selves in the seventies than in all previous history.

In the 1970s the United States gained a dominant position in the international movement with an impressive series of gay organizations and triumphs. In spite of Nixon's election the civil rights movement, much more visible than the gay movement, advanced more rapidly and boldly than ever. Its repeated successes in courts, street demonstrations, and government directives fired other minorities. Latinos, Asians, and even American Indians backed up demands for justice and redress of
past wrongs with threats of riots. The women's movement, adopting less violent means, but
benefitting from greater numbers, surpassed those of the ethnic minorities. Although gay
activists continued to deem us a minority to be recognized and protected by antidiscrimination
laws, their widening demands included not just toleration but acceptance of the community's
values and lifestyles. In both the number of its active members and in progress achieved, the
organized gay movement lagged behind the other groups, even though we made more gains than
ever before (or since). We received no benefits from affirmative action and little legal protection
against discrimination. Sexual orientation was not yet included with religion, race, color, sex,
national origin, and other criteria. The sodomy laws were by 1990 repealed or declared
unconstitutional in half the states, but remained on the books in the others. Even in the 1990s
homophobic legislators in New York and other states echoed obscurantist religious groups in
rearguard actions against the inclusion of sexual orientation in antidiscrimination bills.
From its beginning, gay liberation transformed
the meaning of 'coming out.' Previously coming out
had signified the private decision to accept one's
homosexual desires and to acknowledge one's sexual
identity to other gay men and women. Throughout the
1950s and 1960s, leaders of the homophile cause had
in effect extended their coming out to the public
sphere through their work in the movement. But only
rarely did they counsel lesbians and homosexuals at large to follow their example, and when they did, homophile activists presented it as a selfless step taken for the benefit of others. Gay liberationists, on the other hand, recast coming out as a profoundly political act that could offer enormous personal benefits to an individual. The open avowal of one's sexual identity, whether at work, at school, at home, or before television cameras, symbolized the shedding of the self-hatred that gay men and women internalized, and consequently it promised an immediate improvement in one's life. To come out of the 'closet' quintessentially expressed the fusion of the personal and the political that the radicalism of the late 1960s exalted (D'Emilio, 1983).

Coming out--and even more, going public--became a crucial strategy in forging the movement. It often proved cathartic. The anger and exhilaration that individuals felt when relieved of the gnawing fear of discovery made them politically militant. Those who came out took a decisive step. Their public visibility exposed them to all the recriminations of which an intolerant society was capable, and thus conferred a vital stake in the movement's success. Such visible activists also acted as magnets that enticed others to come out. Once out, they could not easily resume the mask. Coming out created "an army of permanent enlistees," as D'Emilio observed.
For the ideologists of gay liberation, coming out in the new style was entirely novel. All but the fewest had not the faintest inkling of Ulrichs in the Germany of the 1860s or even of Hiller in the Wilhelmine era. They did not even remember what Cory (whom a resurgence of religious guilt drove to desert the movement completely at the end of the 1960s and to turn its embittered foe in the 1970s) had written in 1951 in *The Homosexual in America*. They understood coming out as a break with the ingrained tradition of secrecy and deception—and a perilous one at that. In this mixed climate thousands nevertheless came out to one degree or another, if not all entirely. We joined organizations that held public meetings, wrote letters to officials, testified in great numbers and without using pseudonyms before legislative committees, and demonstrated, marched, and rallied on a scale that exceeded the wildest dreams of ten years earlier. Now visible in droves, we flocked to ghettos where our sense of collective identity was continually reinforced, not least by businesses catering to our special interests, places of recreation of all sorts, and periodicals that replaced the grapevine of yore. As a result, overt homophobia became unfashionable among sophisticated, avant garde heterosexuals. Police harassment, if it did not virtually disappear, greatly relented. In 1972 New York's Mayor Lindsay forbade police entrapments, which had run to over one hundred a week in 1966. Blackmail, for centuries our bane, also virtually disappeared,
albeit statistics, of course, remain unavailable. Even gay-bashing may have abated in spite of ever increasing obviousness and overall activity. The traditional code of silence about others' orientation allowed those who so opted to stay in the closet. No one of prominence was outing by fellow homosexuals against his wishes in the seventies, or in the eighties until the very end (only a few obscure people by vindictive rivals) and none at all in the name of gay liberation, but myriads came out of the closet on their own.

However, even so not one truly famous or powerful person came out. The lack of visible celebrities hindered the drive for public acceptance. One of the most highly placed who did come out was Howard Brown, Mayor Lindsay's Health Commissioner, but only after he suffered a nearly fatal heart attack, which compelled him to abandon his political apathy. As he lay recovering, acutely conscious of his mortality, he reaffirmed his homosexuality: "I found that I was not afraid to die. And I saw that if I could overcome the greatest of all fears, I should also be able to overcome the fear of standing up to declare and defend my identity as a homosexual" (Brown, 1976). The public was often appalled at the long-haired, wild-eyed militants until Brown, the epitome of staid respectability, who had consulted with Martin Duberman and some other prominent open homosexuals, came out on October 3, 1973 to a gathering of New Jersey physicians and a phalanx of reporters. The chairman of the conference, Richard Cross, had urged him to discuss homosexuality in order that
"physicians would stop thinking of homosexuals as just hairdressers, interior decorators, and male nurses." Brown dwelt on this theme:
I have met far more homosexual physicians than I have homosexual nurses, more homosexual politicians than homosexual hairdressers, more homosexual lawyers than homosexual interior decorators. One of my best friends, for example, is a former All-American football player, a Stanford graduate, and now the president of a large New York advertising firm. I have homosexual friends who would be regarded as humanitarians, just as I have homosexual friends who have narrow and limited interests. Members of the gay activist groups have been beaten up by the police and sent to jail for their activities, just as civil rights activists were in the sixties. But I also know homosexual policemen who have been among those arresting gay demonstrators.

The most prominent open homosexual in the country, as he described himself, Brown gained front-page coverage in the New York Times on October 4, 1973. Soon afterwards he wrote an article for the New York Times Magazine which he expanded into an autobiography, published posthumously.

Brown described the brutal but useless electric shock treatment administered to him by one psychiatrist and of his futile visits for nine years to another to "cure" him of his urges.

Psychiatrists, he pointed out, no longer classified the
homosexual as a sinner but as "a psychopathic inferior and moral defective." Before his death in 1975 from a heart attack, Brown wrote: "If there was one legacy I wanted to leave, it was to have helped in some way to free future generations of homosexuals from the agony of secrecy and the constant need to hide."

Many others then confidently hoped that congressmen, judges, athletes, and entertainers would follow in the good doctor's wake. As the San Francisco journalist Randy Shilts noted in his introduction to the 1989 reprint of Brown's book: "At that point Dr. Howard Brown was the most respectable person in America to openly acknowledge being gay." Brown helped to found the National Gay Task Force, the first of the centrist lobbying groups, and was also active in the Gay Academic Union founded in 1973. On the basis of his experience as with the National Gay Task Force, Martin Duberman told the Gay Academic Union that "Anyone who has worked with any gay organization. . .will tell you that even when total anonymity is guaranteed. . .it's been possible to raise only pitiful sums from those gay men who have the most to give--doctors, lawyers, professional chiefs. Even anonymously, even indirectly, even marginally, these men have refused any identification with or any contribution to the gay movement." With the end of the radical wave in 1973, however, middle-class professionals began to displace "the scruffy hotheads of the gay liberation movement." For mainstream homosexuals who had felt ill at ease with the confrontational style and leftist rhetoric of the post-Stonewall era, the new
formations helped make gay activism acceptable and respectable. Brown defined "to come out" as "giving up any effort to conceal your homosexuality." He analyzed the need for role models for gay youth and examples for a skeptical society. He hoped to start an avalanche of comings out, but explained that most were reluctant to follow his example because they lacked a legal shield against discrimination.

Despite his inspiring action and moving book, Brown never persuaded the rich and famous to come out, and in that decade no activists, however annoyed and envy-ridden they may have been, were ready to out them. Members of the middle class who took the risk of coming out watched distant celebrities benefit from both the movement and their privileged position inside the closet, so aggravating the crisis, as Brown acknowledged.

Nevertheless, for the first time local celebrities who were outed survived and even flourished in their own communities. Elaine Noble of Massachusetts and Allan H. Spear of Minnesota became the first openly gay state legislators. In those days no other prominent politicians came out of their own free will. Still, rumor incessantly shadowed others--particularly ones in the public eye. For example, before the municipal elections of 1971 a meeting of New York's Gay Liberation Front publicly discussed the homosexuality of a City Council member and the whispering campaign an opponent was trying to field against him. The subject was later elected to the United States House of Representatives and then Mayor--albeit with much malicious
innuendo in the press about his sexual preferences. Even while he was in office, the gay "City Hall gang" speculated on whether: 1) he had no sexual life at all, 2) he was served by call boys who were paid $150 a night and sworn to absolute secrecy for the rest of their lives, or 3) he had a lover who was occasionally seen at municipal functions. Publicly and even now in private life he resolutely denies his homosexuality.

A minor celebrity who did come out of his own accord in the early seventies, in the glow of the post-Stonewall period, was the National Football League player David Kopay. He appeared on many television shows and cooperated in an as-told-to biography (1977). He recounted his Catholic upbringing, sports career, failed marriage, discovery and acceptance of his homosexuality, and the aftermath of coming out. He claimed that many professional athletes are gay behind their façade of masculinity.

**Queer Nationals and the Military**

Because of the extensive efforts to separate homosexuals from the military, it had been assumed that very few of us would choose this career path, or if we did we would keep ourselves very hidden. One who was outed, but resisted the effort to separate him was Air Force Sergeant Leonard Matlovich (Hippler, 1989). His sensational public statements gained him the accolade of a *Time* magazine cover in 1975. Matlovich ultimately failed and had to make a new civilian life for himself before succumbing to AIDS in 1988.

Less publicized was the case of Naval Ensign Vernon ("Copy")
Berg III. As we learn from Gibson, as well as from Warren Johansson, who interviewed him at a Gay Academic Union conference, Berg's affair with a civilian employee of the service came to light when he was stationed on a ship near Naples, Italy in 1975. His commanding officer became so irately homophobic that he would not even let him remain on the ship. Effectively outed by the discharge, Berg too left the service.

During the 1970s the Navy began to take cognizance of purported lesbian activity among WAVES on the USS Norton Sound, a missile test ship based at Long Beach, California. Some of the unhappiness with the situation seems to have arisen from male sailors annoyed by being rebuffed in their sexual advances. During the summer of 1980 the controversy came out in the open, and sixteen of the sixty-one women aboard were implicated. As the investigation continued, the number of those accused dropped first to eight, then to four. In the end only two women, Wendy Williams and Alicia Harris, were found to have engaged in homosexual activity, but they were given honorable discharges. This witch hunt received wide coverage in both establishment and gay presses.

There have been many cases since (over 100,000 in all since 1942). Some veterans of the Gulf War were discharged. A disproportionate number of cases involved lesbians. In some the Department of Defense has attempted to reclaim Reserve Officer Training Corps subsidies after the recipients acknowledged their homosexuality. This issue of rights of queer nationals in our
armed forces--perhaps our most homophobic secular institution--remains unresolved today, and will continue to generate further turmoil--and outings, both by authorities and by activists--until Congress or a future President acts to change the policy.

**Homophobic Backlash**

Already in the second half of the seventies a backlash against the new militancy and the substantial strides made by the gay movement set in. In 1977 Protestant fundamentalists who had been spearheading the anti-gay crusade, Anita Bryant, Ed Davis, Jerry Falwell, and Judy-Ann Densen-Gerber coordinated their campaign with district attorneys, police, and the press. They succeeded in having gay rights repealed in Miami, St. Paul, and Wichita, although they experienced a severe defeat in Seattle and in California in 1978, when voters there rejected the Briggs Initiative to exclude gay teachers from the classroom. As more and more came out of the closet and some were elected to public office, gay rights bills and ordinances were passing. More important, courts were deciding in favor of gay plaintiffs on grounds of privacy and equal protection of the laws.

The backlash had been gathering force among conservatives. The right-wing fundamentalist upsurge became evident after Reagan's election in 1980. One of the early stalwarts was the Reverend Billy James Hargis, who built a small empire in Tulsa around his Crusade for Christian Morality. In 1968 his organization published a bestseller, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* Fund-raising appeals stressed the
dangers posed by the "decline of morals and decency," above all through acceptance of pornography and homosexuality. Hargis and his allies spread their message through radio and television programs and the Christian Crusade Weekly. In 1976, however, he was accused of some of the very sins he had pilloried in others. Five students came forward to charge that he had been intimate with them. In 1974 he performed a wedding for two students: on their honeymoon they learned that Hargis had slept with both of them. After the groom told the story to the American Christian College president, three more male students came forward to say that Hargis had likewise sinned with them. They claimed that he had threatened to blacklist them if they talked. The trysts, they said, had occurred in the evangelist's office, at his Ozarks farm, and even during tours with the college choir, known as "the All-American Kids." Hargis justified his actions by citing the friendship between David and Jonathan. After withdrawing to his farm for meditation and seeming repentance, Hargis, who was married with four children, unsuccessfully attempted a comeback.

The straight world struck, not only with virulent propaganda but with a witchhunt. It was led by an octogenarian, Garrett Byrne, who fearful of not winning reelection in Boston as district attorney, aimed at the pedophiles, a group more hated and more vulnerable in America than even male prostitutes and homosexual sadomasochists. Their tactic was to discredit and stereotype gay men by outing and soundly punishing first the pedophiles, then one group after another of the "bad" homosexuals.
so that the "good" ones would not defend them, and eventually, when their turn came, no one would be left to defend them.

In 1974 a fifteen-year old gay runaway killed himself in Boston with a gun stolen from the collection of his social worker, with whom he was living. The next year the social worker killed himself with a drug overdose. The police picked up another teenager who had lived with him and induced him to identify, through snapshots that they provided him, as many men as he could who had been his partners. It came out that the social worker had participated in a kiddie porn ring which the media sensationalized. In 1977 and 1978 almost every state passed stringent anti-child pornography laws, some mandating imprisonment for mere possession of pictures of a child engaging in sexual acts.

In this climate, Byrne began making arrests. One defendant testified that since 1964 he had been involved with as many as two hundred boys, of many of whom he had taken snapshots. He announced that there was a homosexual sex ring in Revere, a working-class suburb of Boston. From pictures he identified more than 60 local boys, of whom 13, pressured by priests, psychologists, and police agreed to cooperate. Similar dragnets were instigated in Seattle and Chicago. Although when comparable hetero-sexual rings were uncovered, the names of the clients were not publicized, those of the alleged members of the homosexual ring in Revere were.

A boy who had been sexually active before his twelfth birthday became the chief witness in eight of the 24
cases.

Boston's *Gay Community News* organized a committee to seek a fair hearing for those outed. It was named the Boston Boise Committee, in reference to the scandal in Boise, Idaho where so many men were implicated in 1955. The gay novelist and historian Gore Vidal, half-brother of Jacqueline Kennedy, on April 5, 1978 addressed a fund raiser for the Boston Boise Committee, which Governor Dukakis' nominee, Robert Bonin, recently appointed Chief Justice in Massachusetts, attended. Bonin was drummed out of office for this indiscretion. On a live television talk show in Boston, where he was conducting a reading at that time, the leading beat poet Allen Ginsberg, sidestepping a request that he confine his remarks to reminiscences about his beat days, declared, "When I was eight years old I had sex with a man in the back of my grandfather's candy store in Revere, and I turned out O.K." While being hustled off the set, he screamed "Out of the closet, onto the screens!"

Denouncing pederasts, Elaine Noble, the state representative, refused to picket the concert that arch-homophobe Anita Bryant planned in Boston, but the rally forced Bryant to cancel her appearance anyway. The old district attorney was swept from office, as Mitzel triumphantly recounted. In all, only one man was convicted. Two cases were *noloprossed* (that is, the charges were dropped on account of faulty police work and lack of evidence), two others were continued without a finding, with charges to be dropped if the accused had not been arrested
within a year for the same offense, and another fell apart. Ten defendants avoided trial by plea bargaining. As a result of these victories, Elaine Noble's attempt to demarcate those whom the community should and should not defend suffered a severe setback.

From the crisis, two organizations emerged. The still controversial North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) was founded in Boston on December 2, 1978. It advocates complete abolition of age-of-consent laws even though this stance would justify heterosexual pedophilia (Mitzel, 1980). Boston's Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAAD) has ever since fought for the rights of its constituency in New England.

Nothing like the Boise or Revere trials, the largest and most spectacular outings in court in postwar America, has recurred. They resemble the scandals and trials in eighteenth-century London and Amsterdam except that the penalty was no longer death. The gay organizations' intervention helped to halt the Revere witch hunt in its tracks. The consequences of this victory are still with us and have probably discouraged subsequent police dragnets for adult sexual partners of teenagers. Of course, these cases, like the ones in Boise, did not involve prepubertal boys, so that a distinction can be made between pederasty and pedophilia, the latter involving pre-pubescent children. Opinion among gay leaders and the public is far more averse to pedophiles than to pederasts (insofar as they are distinguished at all), but contrariwise the courts tend to
punish homosexual pedophiles much more harshly than heterosexual pedophiles. In point of fact pedophiles tend to be bisexual and often married and to pursue prepubescent children of both sexes, while the pederast, if he is bisexual, is usually attracted to adult women, not to teenaged girls. This was the finding of a survey conducted by Mag PIE, the journal of the British Paedophile Information Exchange, in the mid-1980s.

On the Margins of Politics

On the afternoon of September 22, 1975 several thousand people gathered outside the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco to see President Ford. At three-thirty he emerged and waved at the crowd before entering his limousine. At that point a deranged woman, Sara Jane Moore, pulled out a .38 revolver and shot at him. Instantly a man lunged at the gun. A shot rang out, followed by screams and confusion. Secret Service agents hustled away the unharmed president. The man who saved Ford's life by deflecting the shot was a 33-year old ex-Marine. Attempted assassinations are always big news, and Oliver Sipple was lionized. Journalists in quest of information on the hero's life soon learned that he had worked in a San Francisco gay bar. He had campaigned for the nationally famed gay politician Harvey Milk and had been active in one of the "imperial courts," social service organizations revolving around drag events. The newspapers took to calling him the "gay vet" and the "gay ex-Marine." Proudly claiming Sipple as their own, San Francisco gay activists insisted that the White House
failed to honor him because of his homosexuality.

Sipple's mother, a conservative Baptist living near Detroit, was hardly pleased. She secluded herself. Eventually she decided never again to speak to her son. The rest of his family followed suit. All this, the publicity and the family ruckus dealt Sipple a severe blow. Distressed, he brought a $15 million lawsuit charging several newspapers with invasion of his privacy. In particular he alleged that in disclosing his sexual orientation, journalists had ruined his relations with his family. The press had been "unthinking, unfeeling, barbaric, and morbid."
The battle dragged on until, in 1980, a superior court dismissed the suit. The judge ruled that the plaintiff had, by his heroic action in defending the President, become a celebrity and so forfeited his right to privacy. The lesson seemed to be that if one has something to hide--and "Had conscience tongues what back would go unwhipped?"--it is unwise to be a good samaritan. This incident shows how someone even halfway "in the closet" must shun attention as deftly as would an undercover agent or spy: he is forbidden to become a "limited public person," one who has been thrust into the media spotlight by an event or issue not of one's own choosing (McBride, 1992). Sipple's relations with his family never improved. Suffering from pneumonia, he died alone in a Bay Area roominghouse in 1989. Fred W. Friendly, Edward R. Morrow professor emeritus at the Columbia University School of Journalism, and Deni Elliott,
director of the Ethics Institute at Dartmouth College, have both written essays about the outing. Friendly declared: "After thinking about Sipple's dilemma for 15 years, I have concluded that the press had a legal license, but no ethical justification, to rip away the harmless mask that protected his sexual orientation" (Gross 1991, p. 353).

Richard Nixon's Supreme Court nominee, the Floridian G. Harrold Carswell, was not confirmed by the Senate because of his mediocrity and conservatism. Later he was arrested for soliciting in a men's room in Florida. Retired General Edwin L. Walker, another conservative stalwart, suffered a similar fate in Texas. Thus even the rich and powerful continued to be ensnared. Routine outings by the police continued but now became politically insignificant in comparison with those who came out on their own.

Two Outings from Opposite Poles

It is a commonplace that homosexuals are found at all points on the political spectrum. Accidents of personal fate determine sexual orientation wholly independent of one's political and economic beliefs. No party or faction has a monopoly of gay adherents. The truism that "politics makes strange bedfellows" was never more ironically demonstrated than in the almost simultaneous outing of two antipodes, one an organizer of a neo-Nazi movement in the Chicago area, the other a charismatic leader of the New Left.

Frank Collin, who founded the National Socialist Party of
America, a tiny Chicago-based neo-Nazi group, had a strange, disturbing career. He advocated that all African-Americans, Jews, and Latinos be forcibly deported. Seeking to draw attention to themselves, Collin and his followers appeared in the street in full Nazi regalia: brown shirts, black boots, and armbands with swastikas. During the mid-seventies his organization succeeded for a while in sowing division in the ethnically mixed Marquette Park neighborhood.

A legal maneuver in 1976 forced Collin's group out of their stomping grounds in the Chicago park. He then decided to take them to the city's environs. After rejecting several localities, he announced a particularly outrageous plan. He would march his followers through Skokie, a largely Jewish suburb inhabited by Holocaust survivors. The town authorities legally blocked the march. However, the American Civil Liberties Union took up the neo-Nazis' case. That principled decision caused no little controversy within the liberal organization. After protracted legal maneuvering, Collin's group was authorized to demonstrate, but not in Skokie. The pathetic neo-Nazi march in Chicago that ensued betrayed his group's weakness.

From the controversy America's National Socialist Party garnered much publicity. The press blew it out of all proportion. The spotlight led to a highly embarrassing disclosure: Frank Collin was outed as a Jew. The FBI released information disclosing that he had been born Frank Cohn. He was purportedly a holocaust survivor's son. If this allegation is
true, he would be one of a handful of American Jews to commit the ultimate act of self-contempt--to revile one's own group by joining its worst oppressor. These cases demonstrate how self-hatred is not unique to gay people, but is a far more general phenomenon: some members of oppressed groups do internalize the very belief system that assails and demeans them. Their documented presence, anomalies though they may be, reinforces the case that queer nationals who consciously harm others of their ilk should be identified and exposed.

Worse was in store for Frank Collin. He was outed as a pederast. At the end of 1979 the media reported that the police
--this time acting on information furnished by the American Nazi Party--had arrested him for taking indecent liberties with boys between 10 and 14. Collin was tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison for seven years on these charges. Not surprisingly, in this scandal's wake the remnants of the party formally expelled him.

A leftist leader during the 1970s, Allard K. Lowenstein (1924-1980) became something of a celebrity as a result of his opposition to the Vietnam War. He even served in Congress (D., NY) from 1969 to 1971. After that he had positioned himself too far to the left to succeed in what radicals scornfully term "electoral politics." As time went on, he also had increasing difficulty reconciling his public persona with his private longings. A friend of his pointedly commented on the character of his household (Cummings, 1985):
The more I hung around the Lowensteins' house, the more I noticed that there was an extraordinary number of incredibly good-looking young men involved with the 'crusade.' They had a 'look' about them; preppy (or Ivy League), thick necks, broad chests, etc. Definitely country club material. Some were so perfect they could have been models. I'd never seen people who looked like that before. Often two or three would be living in the Lowenstein house... Every now and then Al--this nonviolent man--would wrestle with one of these hunks. I wondered about this, but not too much.

Cummings had befriended a Californian, Doug Chandler, who told him that when working in Indonesia he became friends with Al. In the room they shared Doug awoke one night to find Al on top of him. Doug rejected the advance. After this revelation Cummings felt that he had to protect Al's reputation. When a newscaster reported that Al had been shot, Cummings thought that the hit man must have been a former lover of Lowenstein's.

A fellow antiwar activist, the Reverend William Sloane Coffin (dubbed "Sarcophagus" by certain dissident parishioners at his Riverside Church), said: "I hope the gay issue and Al will not be sensationalized. There were lots of guys from that period who had wives and kids but who turned out to be gay. It wasn't socially acceptable so they hid it." But as Cummings noted, it was more than socially unacceptable. It made one virtually
unemployable, unable to obtain security clearance. A homosexual was conversely a liability to a political party or cause, a source of potential embarrassment in all directions. Though vanity about his good looks induced him to roll up his sleeves to show off his impressive biceps, Lowenstein's cover was the usual image of asexuality. Privately he claimed that all he wanted from other males was to hold them and be held by them. Never in fact, his intimates later felt, was he able to have a rewarding, satisfying sexual relationship with another man. But hiding in the closet he could not fight openly for gay rights. Lowenstein discussed his experiences with Bruce Voeller. He feared that his coming out might have an adverse impact. "From the outset," said Voeller, "he said he was in the process of 'coming out' and discovering things about himself. He said he was attracted affectionally to men." He wondered whether people could have a heterosexual affair and a family, if the spouse knew how he felt. Voeller, whose coming out had shattered his own marriage, could not assure him. He emphasized that many, some even celebrities, led closeted lives, and told him that "the grapevine" had Lowenstein as a closeted homosexual. That "grapevine," he intoned, was quite accurate.

On March 14, 1980 a disturbed young man, Dennis Sweeney, assassinated Lowenstein. Sweeney instructed Jesse Zaslov, his attorney, to say that Lowenstein had approached him one night during the civil rights struggle and made advances in a hotel. Sweeney claimed that he had spurned those overtures. The court,
however, dismissed this episode as a possible motive or excuse for the murder. The revelation triggered a series of controversies in the media which outed the dead Lowenstein. Debating the issue of Lowenstein's sympathy for the gay cause, James Wechsler, editor of the *New York Post*, claimed that he was a disinterested advocate, while Voeller maintained that Lowenstein's hidden sexual identity (bisexual or homosexual) underlay his ideological affinity.

In the *New York Native* of July 14, 1981 gay journalist Larry Bush championed the view that Lowenstein had been a closet case:

As he struggled with his sexual identity, so also must those who chronicle his life give due respect for the many unanswered questions about sexual identity in general. . . . We would be better served by thoughtful consideration of what these issues mean as public figures reclaim their private lives, and moralistic crusaders seek to make private lives public for all citizens.

In a curious way this analysis anticipated the controversy that was to erupt when outing came to the fore.

*Overseas*

Events in the United States after 1969 completed a transformation that had begun in the early postwar era. Efforts in West Germany to recreate the pre-Hitler sexual reform organizations in the 1950s and 1960s had ended in failure. Too much had changed since 1933 and even more since 1897. The new wave from the United States revived the movement, however with
little continuity with the Weimar era. Although Communist countries such as East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary had repealed the laws enacted by the Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs, their regimes would not tolerate a gay rights movement like that of the 1920s. But in the English-speaking world, where activists were for all intents beginning entirely afresh, the our movement took shape, found ideologists, leaders, novelists, poets, researchers—and when the tide of change became irresistible, emerged onto the political scene of the 1970s. By then America served as the focal point and exporter of gay liberation to the rest of the globe. Following other trends and fashions initiated in American popular culture, the new paradigm of gay life and ideology spread rapidly abroad, first to Europe and then to Japan and the Third World. "Come out!" found a Spanish equivalent in the journal *Afuera!*, so that the metaphor spread beyond the limits of the English-speaking world. London and Paris soon had their own periodicals, pride parades, and ghettos. The timid old guard in western European countries and in Canada and Australia was as appalled as its American counterparts had been by the new confrontational tactics and by the hedonistic abandon of the liberated new generation. Coming out of the closets and into the streets, bold, aggressive youthful leaders shoved them aside.

**The Heyday of the Gay Community**

By the end of the 70s the notion of the "gay community" was firmly established. The rapid victories won since Stonewall had
confirmed the brash tactics of the new leftist leaders. Demonstrations, replete with "zaps" and street theater, became the order of the day. Zaps are surprise actions, quick confrontations with minimal advance notice in contrast to carefully planned, publicized, and orchestrated demonstrations. Virtually all segments participated in the Gay Pride parades which "dykes on bikes" sometimes led and where only the NAMBLA contingent was now and then excluded. A joyous carnivalesque atmosphere often reigned.

Meanwhile, hedonism flourished, stimulated by the ubiquitousness of recreational drugs of every sort as well as penicillin. Instant gratification was to be found in bathouses, the back room bars, certain parks, piers, and warehouse areas, even in the back of parked trucks emptied overnight and lined up to receive produce the next morning. Rampant sex in men's rooms and movie houses, and on beaches rewarded the bold. Promiscuity among gay men exceeded even the wildest exploits of heterosexual groupies. Never anywhere in all of history had contact with one's own sex been so readily available as in the America of 1980.

Dismayed observers imagined that the reign of uninhibited sex, drugs, and pleasure of every kind had ushered in the universal depravity that is foretold to precede the Second Coming of Christ and the last judgment. But over all this unblushing eroticism lay the specter of disease--not then a threatening specter. So far from taking precautions, most gay men allowed
themselves to be infected again and again, blithely expecting a visit to the specialist and the proper injection to ready them for the next orgy. What then was their dismay and rage when stricken by AIDS, they discovered to their horror that the physicians could do nothing for them. Major European cities in were not far behind: Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, Paris, and Barcelona rivaled London and the American metropolises. Baths, bars, parks, motion picture theatres and the like flourished across the whole of Western Europe. Although Italy, Greece, and southern Spain remained more traditional, tourists made Taormina, Mykonos, and Ibiza resemble Fire Island and Provincetown.

In spite of the stunning diversity, since even some males developed faithful unions that resembled straight married couples, and lesbians in general tended to more fidelity and less promiscuity, the rhetoric of a gay community predominated. A certain egalitarianism, inspired by the civil rights movement, permeated "the community." The clone, an imitation look-alike of a construction worker, replete with boots, blue jeans, plaid shirt, and mustache became the rage. The old fancy dress with suit and tie or effeminate mannerisms went out of style. The image projected was strength, proletarian and comradely.

*The Seventies in Retrospect*

In this decade most gay people, it is true, signally failed to come out to the public. One expression of the annoyance which some activists felt at this reticence was a song which they sang
at the Republican nominating convention in 1980 to the tune of "Frère Jacques":

Gay Republicans, gay Republicans,
Where are you? Where are you?
Hiding in the closet, hiding in the closet,
Peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo!

The Canadian John Alan Lee summed up the situation at the end of the seventies in his perceptive article:

In terms of the "power elite" or whatever equivalent term one wishes to apply to those in Canadian society who have power in the major institutions--business, government, education, religion, law, and trade unions, for example--not one truly influential, highly placed homosexual has yet gone public. Thus the illusion is maintained that there are no homosexuals at these rarified levels of society, despite the fact that any well-informed homosexual knows such individuals who have come out at least . . . occasionally at the bars, at gay parties. . . .

The implication is that a time of crisis is ahead for those who have gone public--a time when the truly powerful homosexuals in our society will have to decide whether to throw in their lot with the gay liberation movement and come out of the closet, or to throw their weight, as assumed heterosexuals, to moral entrepreneurs instigating a backlash, hoping to destroy the public gays without being themselves destroyed in the ensuing conflict (Lee 1977, p. 67).
Lee referred to Edgar Z. Friedenberg's analysis of the reaction of closeted individuals in high positions to those who have torn off the mask as one of ressentiment: "a disposition to fear, envy, and punish others, arising out of the bitterness of realizing one's own surrender of authenticity to those whom one allows to *use* for purposes other than one's own." Insightful and prophetic words indeed! This interpretation perfectly defined the social and psychological parameters of the impasse that at the end of the 1980s would lead to activists' outing "closet cases in high places."

Who could have doubted in 1980 that complete success would soon come to the gay rights movement? Who could have imagined that a specter far more horrible than Communism would soon stalk our happy community and strike down many of our promising leaders as well as thousands of our rank and file? If only AIDS had not descended on us at the beginning of the eighties, what might we not have achieved? But the plague years that decimated our ranks while society and government watched complacently were to transform the self-indulgent, pleasure-loving community of the 1970s into a "Queer Nation" at war that would no longer wait interminably for its prestigious members to come out. The suffering and death inflicted by AIDS made the homophobia of other queer nationals intolerable and led to the new phase of outing by activists.


