

OUT OF THE PAST

Gay and Lesbian History

*from 1869 to the
Present*

by Neil Miller

1995

VINTAGE BOOKS

A Division of Random House, Inc.

OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE LIBRARY
1600 CAMPUS ROAD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90041
New York

For Jane and Rob



First Vintage Books Edition, February 1995

Copyright © 1995 by Neil Miller

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Published in the United States by Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, and simultaneously in Canada by Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.

Pages 658-660 constitute an extension of this copyright page.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Miller, Neil, 1945-
Out of the past : gay and lesbian history from 1869 to the present
/ Neil Miller.—1st ed.

p. cm.
"A Vintage original."

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-679-74988-8

I. Homosexuality—History. I. Title.

HQ76.25.M56 1994

306.76'6'09—dc20 94-10739

CIP

Book design by Rebecca Aidlin

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL
MANUSCRIPT BY
RANDOM HOUSE OF CANADA
PRINTED IN CANADA

THE 1980s: THE AGE OF AIDS

THE FIRST INDICATIONS that something was wrong came in January 1981, when a thirty-one-year-old gay man arrived at the emergency room at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles with a fungal infection in his throat that almost completely blocked his esophagus. Two weeks later he developed *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP), a lung infection previously seen almost exclusively in cancer or transplant patients. Immunologist Dr. Michael Gottlieb was mystified. At about the same time, Dr. Alvin Friedman-Kien, a New York University dermatologist, was examining a gay man for Hodgkin's disease and noted some unusual purplish-red spots on the man's legs. Other physicians dismissed them as bruises, but to Friedman-Kien, they appeared to be Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), a rare form of skin cancer usually found in older men of Mediterranean ancestry. Two weeks later, Friedman-Kien saw another similar case, again in a gay man. He telephoned a colleague in San Francisco, who reported that he had encountered two such cases among gay men there. In the summer of 1981, Gottlieb and Friedman-Kien detailed their findings in an article in the Centers for Disease Control's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Whether the patients in question had PCP or Kaposi's sarcoma or both, the physicians noted that they all showed an unexplained lowering of immune function.

At first no one quite knew what to make of the new disease—or even what to call it. Was it perhaps, as some physicians suggested, the result of using amyl nitrates (“poppers”), the sexually stimulating inhalants popular among many gay men? Or was the new disease the result of “immune overload,” in which the body was exposed to so many kinds of diseases—syphilis, gonorrhea, hepatitis, for example—that the immune system simply collapsed? Was it caused by a virus? And if so, were there perhaps one or more cofactors needed to trigger its effects? Was it transmitted sexually or could it be spread by casual contact as well? How long was the incubation period? And was it always fatal?

The new disease was dubbed the “gay cancer”; it was called

"Saint's disease," a reference to the popular New York gay club frequented by many of the group first diagnosed; it was also referred to as Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID). When it was revealed that members of other groups—hemophiliacs, Haitian immigrants, recipients of blood transfusions, intravenous drug users, the sex partners (and sometimes children) of those carrying the virus, and millions of heterosexual men and women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—were also infected, it was clear that the disease wasn't necessarily "gay" after all. It was given a new name—Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS.

In January 1983, two years after the first cases were seen in the United States, researchers at the Pasteur Institute in Paris isolated what they believed to be the virus that caused the disease. A year later, Dr. Robert Gallo in the United States announced that he had done the same. The French called it LAV; the Americans called it HTLV-III; eventually the nomenclature settled on was HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). Two more years later, in March 1985, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration licensed the first test to detect the antibody to the virus.

In the intervening period, scientists had learned a great deal about AIDS. They learned it was spread through blood or blood products, through sharing of hypodermic needles, and through sexual contact involving an exchange of body fluids. They determined that it could not be spread through casual contact and that unprotected anal sex was the most "efficient" way to transmit the virus, with the receptive partner most at risk. They estimated that the incubation period for full-blown manifestations of the disease could be many years—five, ten, even fifteen. But although scientists learned all this, in a relatively short period of time, they still couldn't find a way to prevent AIDS or treat it.

Soon, the numbers in the United States began to grow alarmingly: 1,300 infected as of April 1983, by official count; 8,797 by the middle of 1985, with half of them already dead. Of the number of recorded cases, more than 70 percent were gay and bisexual men. By 1985, surveys indicated that extremely high percentages of sexually active gay men had tested positive for HIV: 50 to 60 percent in some studies in New York City and San Francisco, 25 percent in Pittsburgh and Boston.

The first reaction in the gay community came in an article in the August 24, 1981, issue of the *New York Native*, the city's gay newspaper, written by the novelist and screenwriter Larry Kramer. Headlined "A Personal Appeal," the article began, "It's difficult to write this without sounding alarmist or too emotional or just plain scared." Kramer went on:

Today I must tell you that 120 gay men in the United States—most of them here in New York—are suffering from an often lethal form of cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma or from a virulent form of pneumonia that may be associated with it. More than thirty have died.

By the time you read this, the necessary figures may be much higher.

The men who have been stricken don't appear to have done anything that many New York gay men haven't done at one time or another. We're appalled that this is happening to them and terrified that it could happen to us. It's easy to become frightened that one of the many things we've done or taken over the past years may be all it takes for a cancer to grow from a tiny something-or-other that got in there who knows when from doing who knows what.

Within the gay community early reactions varied—from the urgency of Kramer's appeal to confusion to outright denial. Toward the middle of the decade, once the antibody test was in place and more was known about transmission, a numbed kind of adjustment to living with the disease had taken hold. Then, by 1987 and '88, with so little progress being made and the Reagan administration seeming so uncaring, the accommodation to the dalliness of AIDS gave way to a wave of anger and protest.

It was obvious from the beginning that some of the sexual practices of gay men played a crucial role in the transmission of AIDS within the gay community. But because, for so many homosexual men in the post-Stonewall period, gay identity and culture had been expressed almost entirely in sexual terms, the new disease cut to the very heart of gay liberation. It threatened an entire way of life. Within the gay community (and without), the struggle to stop the spread of AIDS became a struggle over sex.

In New York City, Larry Kramer found himself at the center of

this struggle. Kramer had written the screenplay for Ken Russell's highly successful film version of D. H. Lawrence's novel *Women in Love*. He was also the author of *Faggots*, a novel whose portrait of the New York-Fire Island world of "fast-lane" gay men had been harshly criticized in the American gay press as moralistic and self-floating. (The Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop in New York City refused to stock the book for that reason.) Three of Kramer's friends had been among the early casualties of the disease. So in August 1981, shortly after Drs. Gottlieb and Friedman-Kien had published that first article about AIDS in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Report*, Kramer brought Friedman-Kien and some eighty gay men together for a meeting at his New York apartment. There they raised \$6,635 for Friedman-Kien's research. On Labor Day weekend, members of the same group canvassed Fire Island. They staffed tables on the docks of the resort communities of the Pines and Cherry Grove, handing out brochures to arriving vacationers and trying to raise more money.

Six months later, Kramer brought a smaller group of gay men together at his apartment. Virtually nothing was being done about the disease, he told them. It was time to start an organization that would educate the gay community, take care of the sick, and fight for the rights of people with AIDS. The result was the organization to be known as Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC).

His reputation as a critic of gay male sexual mores, however, had made Kramer a controversial figure. He quickly came under attack for his suggestion in the *New York Native* that there might be a connection between the new disease and "one of the many things we've done or taken over the past years." To some sexual liberationists, this was heresy. In a December 21, 1981, letter to the *Native*, playwright Robert Chesley warned darkly:

Read anything by Kramer closely. I think you'll find that the subtext is always: the wages of gay sin are death. I ask you to look closely at Kramer's writing because I think it's important for gay people to know whether or not they agree with him. I am not downplaying the seriousness of Kaposi's sarcoma. But something else is happening here, which is also serious: gay homophobia and anti-eroticism.

Despite the personal attacks on Kramer, within a year Gay Men's Health Crisis had established itself as the nation's premiere AIDS-

service organization. It gave out some three hundred thousand "Health Recommendation" brochures and set up an AIDS hotline; its programs offered legal and financial assistance, crisis intervention counselors, and individual and group therapy. It also set up a program of volunteer "buddies" to visit, do chores for, and provide emotional support for those who were sick. These programs became a model for AIDS-services organizations that sprung up in large cities around the country, largely started by gay men and lesbians. In that first year, GMHC had raised \$150,000, in a community previously characterized by great reluctance to fund gay organizations and institutions. In its second newsletter, GMHC's board wrote, "We have never encountered so much love between men as we have felt in GMHC, and watching this organization grow in response to our community's terrible new needs has been one of the most moving experiences we have ever been privileged to share."

But there were things that GMHC was not doing that Larry Kramer believed it should be doing. Right from the start, Dr. Friedman-Kien had told Kramer that it was essential that gay men stop having sex or at least use condoms. Kramer wanted GMHC to take this public stance, but the GMHC board—on which Kramer served—was reluctant to do so. Kramer also wanted GMHC to be more confrontational in pressing the city of New York to provide funding for AIDS services (the city was doing nothing); again, GMHC's board hesitated. Kramer found himself in the midst of ongoing battles with other board members, notably Paul Popham, the closeted executive at McGraw-Hill who served as board president. In these confrontations, the popular, consensus-oriented Popham prevailed over the tempestuous Kramer. As Bruce Nussbaum wrote in his investigative account of the AIDS epidemic, *Good Intentions*, Kramer was someone who "lived with furies inside him. Every few minutes they rose up, and Kramer spiked into a hot, blistering anger. A calm would then settle on him, only to be replaced with yet another outburst. . . . Larry Kramer was the Vesuvius of anger. He was one of the angriest men on earth. Kramer saw injustice everywhere. It was almost like an affliction."

The battles with Popham and other board members reached their culmination when New York Mayor Ed Koch finally consented to meet with two GMHC board members. Kramer assumed that he and Popham were the obvious choices to talk to the mayor, but Popham worried that Kramer might harangue the mayor and sabotage the meeting. Another board member was chosen to go in

Kramer's stead, and a miffed Kramer quit the board. (He would write his own version of these conflicts in his play *The Normal Heart*.)

Exasperating as he could be on any number of occasions, Kramer's "furies" served the gay community well, especially when his essay "1,112 and Counting" appeared in the *New York Native* in March 1983. The five-thousand-word article, the longest the *Native* had ever run, was a passionate call to action against AIDS. It began: "If this article doesn't scare the shit out of you, we're in real trouble. If this article doesn't rouse you to anger, fury, rage, and action, gay men may have no future on this earth. Our continued existence depends on just how angry you can get." The article concluded with the names of twenty dead men whom Kramer knew personally.

In his book *And the Band Played On*, Randy Shilts describes "1,112 and Counting" as "marginably one of the most influential works of advocacy journalism of the decade." Even the city government of New York took notice: Two days after the article was published, Mayor Koch and Health Commissioner David Sencer announced the formation of an Office of Gay and Lesbian Health Concerns. In some respects, the new office was merely a bureaucratic sop, but it showed the power of Kramer's rhetoric.

The influence of "1,112 and Counting" was felt as far away as San Francisco. It was there that the apocalyptic political battle of the early AIDS years took place—the conflict over closing the gay bathhouses. The lines were drawn in early 1983 in a controversy over whether information about the prevalence of AIDS in San Francisco's gay community should be released at all. In January of that year, two researchers from the University of California Medical Center prepared to release findings that showed that one out of every 333 gay men in the Castro had been diagnosed with AIDS. But, according to Randy Shilts's account, when the researchers held meetings with a group of gay physicians and representatives of the city's three gay Democratic clubs, the consensus was against publishing the findings; they feared publication would cause an antigay backlash. Nonetheless, the study was leaked to Shilts, a reporter at *The San Francisco Chronicle*, who ran the story.

Soon after, the Harvey Milk Democratic Club voted to publish a pamphlet warning about sexual transmission of AIDS. The club also tried to convince bathhouse owners to post warnings about high-risk sex. The bathhouse owners refused. Meanwhile, the Milk club's Bill Kraus had written a letter to the *Bay Area Reporter*, the

local gay newspaper, that echoed Kramer's "1,112 and Counting." Kraus wrote: "We believe it is time to speak the simple truth. . . . Unsafe sex is—quite literally—killing us. . . . When a terrible disease means that we purchase our sexual freedom at the price of thousands of our lives, self-respect dictates it is time to stop until it once again is safe." (An aide to California Congressman Philip Burton until Burton's death in 1983, Kraus emerges as one of the heroes of *And the Band Played On*.)

In March 1984, gay activist Larry Littlejohn announced that he planned to file an initiative petition to ban all sexual activity in San Francisco's gay bathhouses. Only 7,332 signatures were needed to put the proposition on a citywide ballot; once that happened, there was no doubt that it would pass. All eyes turned toward Mervyn Silverman, the city's public health director. One side of the gay community, specifically the Harvey Milk Democratic Club, vehemently wanted him to shut down the baths; the other side, including the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club and the city's gay press, were just as vehement in insisting that the bathhouses remain open.

There were approximately thirty publicly licensed bathhouses, bookstores, and clubs in San Francisco where gay sex took place. Only 5 to 10 percent of gay men went to the baths, according to surveys. Yet the fate of the bathhouses quickly became the overriding issue in the gay community. Those who favored shutting the bathhouses saw it simply as an issue of saving lives, compared to which all other considerations were secondary. Those who wanted to keep them open believed that the bathhouses represented sexual freedom and gay liberation—everything gay people had been fighting for since Stonewall and before. Once the baths went, the bars could be next and after that, who knew? There were also individuals and institutions with an economic interest in keeping the baths open—the bathhouse owners, obviously, but also San Francisco's gay newspapers, which were heavily dependent on bathhouse advertising.

The rhetoric, particularly on the pro-bathhouse side, reached extraordinary heights. At a public meeting, one opponent of bathhouse closing screamed at Larry Littlejohn, "You have given the Moral Majority and the right wing the gasoline they have been waiting for to fuel the flames that will annihilate us!" Another accused Littlejohn of "genocide." Shortly after a group of proponents of closing the baths officially requested Public Health Director Silverman to do so, the *Bay Area Reporter* editorialized, "The Gay Liberation movement in San Francisco almost died last Friday morn-

ing at 11 A.M. No, that's not quite it. The Gay Liberation Movement here and then everywhere else was almost killed off by sixteen gay men and lesbians last Friday morning. The group, whose number changed by the hour... signed a request or gave their names to give the green light to the annihilation of gay life." The newspaper then published a "traitor's list" that included Harry Britz, the city supervisor who was Harvey Milk's successor; Bill Kraus; and Larry Littlejohn, "father" of the initiative.

In early October 1984, after a series of delays, Dr. Silverman finally ordered the closing of the baths, comparing them to "Russian Roulette parlors." "These fourteen establishments are not fostering gay liberation," he said. "They are fostering disease and death." Much legal wrangling followed this decision—at one point, a Superior Court judge told the bathhouse owners they could reopen if they hired monitors and removed patrons who engaged in high-risk sex. But once Silverman made his decision, the bathhouse fight was essentially over. The baths never reopened. Eventually the issue just faded away.

Beyond the merits of the arguments on both sides, the bathhouse controversy signified whether San Francisco's gay community was ready to face up to AIDS; as such, it was a turning point. (New York and Los Angeles closed their bathhouses a year later.)

Meanwhile, other important developments were taking place. In the midst of the controversy over the bathhouses, in April 1984, Dr. Robert Gallo announced his finding that HIV was the cause of AIDS. A year later, Margaret Heckler, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, announced the licensing of the antibody test. It was now evident what caused AIDS and how the disease was transmitted; no one could claim anymore, as some had done right up to the end of the bathhouse battle, that HIV was not spread by unsafe sex. Despite its imperfections, the antibody test meant that gay men could now find out whether or not they were HIV-positive. The hysteria surrounding the epidemic began to abate somewhat. Gay men in San Francisco—and in other cities around the country—now had to live with AIDS as an everyday fact and adjust their lives accordingly. In an interview with author Frances Fitzgerald in *Cities on a Hill*, San Francisco psychotherapist Leon McKusick suggested that the gay community was going through the same stages many individuals did when they were confronted with a life-threatening illness—denial, bargaining, and, finally, acceptance.

"The community has now accepted AIDS," he said. The personal began to overtake the political—at least for a while.

In April 1985, when she returned to the Castro after covering the bathhouse controversy the year before, Fitzgerald found a very different place. The tourists had vanished, as well as a number of the most expensive gift stores and boutiques. Among the gay men she had known the year before, dogmatism (about issues like the closing of the baths) had disappeared, and denial had been replaced by an "extraordinary stoicism." She wrote:

The gay bars were still there, and on Saturday mornings the street would fill up with young men... Most looked like all other men of their age, and most were clearly doing Saturday errands, having been at work all week. The Castro was still a gay neighborhood, but it had lost its "gender eccentricities." It was a neighborhood much like the other white, middle-class neighborhoods surrounding the downtown... [It was] stable and domesticated.

When novelist Andrew Holleran returned to New York City for periodic visits during the 1980s, he found the city "shrunk to a single fact." It was a cemetery. At the end of a day spent visiting friends in hospital rooms—"intelligent, brave, accomplished men breathing oxygen through tubes, staring at a brick wall," Holleran would run, not walk, straight to a porno theater on Fourteenth Street and Second Avenue called the Metropolitan. Nothing else quite provided the same degree of comfort. It was like crawling back into the womb—"dark and quiet and calm." To Holleran, the Metropolitan and places like it were all that he felt were left of male homosexuality, or at least the central—sexual—aspect of male homosexuality. By 1987, the bright lightbulbs of safe sex had replaced the legendary darkness of the place: There were mostly black and Puerto Rican men watching heterosexual porn movies and a few desultory sexual acts going on in corners—"no clumps, no orgies; none of the feeding frenzies that, even before the plague, made one wonder what it all meant." For Holleran, the Metropolitan provided an escape from the reality of gay New York in the eighties; it was also home.

AIDS presented an enormous personal challenge to gay men, both the sick and the well. Those who had made sex and sexual

encounters the key ingredients of who they were and how they thought about themselves were compelled to refashion their lives, to find new areas of meaning. For a long time, confusion reigned. There were those like Holleran who would obsessively visit old haunts and cruising spots, go through the old motions, but with the excitement and the sense of conviction gone out of it all. There were those who denied anything was happening and risked their lives to prove it. Others retreated into celibacy; still others grabbed on to the first monogamous relationship in sight.

The thirtyish owner of a small Boston computer firm exemplified many of the dilemmas of gay men of the period—and some of the solutions. Until AIDS arrived, this man had led a comfortable life. He didn't have a lover, but he and his closest friend spent many an evening at the Bird Sanctuary along the Charles River, where anonymous sex with other men was easily available. But when, within a period of two months, his two closest friends were both diagnosed with AIDS, he realized he couldn't lead his life as before. He stopped frequenting his cruising haunts and eventually became involved in a relationship. He started playing volleyball in a gay sports league. He began to question his life. Before AIDS, he said, "the future was always bright. Things were always looking up." Now he was asking the question "How should a man live?" Should he push to build up his company? Just enjoy himself? Try and create something more lasting in terms of community organizations or institutions? If AIDS hadn't come on the scene, if he hadn't seen two close friends cut down in the prime of their lives, he would never have asked those questions. He marched in his first gay pride march. He started volunteering at the AIDS Action Committee—Boston's version of Gay Men's Health Crisis. It marked the first time he had gotten involved in any kind of gay-oriented community organization.

Still, the foundation of his life had changed. For people his age, he noted, "Sex was such a big part of our identity. You have to redefine things. I had a fairly comfortable self-image and lifestyle that has been radically altered. As it turns out, the things I have changed to are a lot more enjoyable." Still, he said, "I am in mourning. Those days seem fun in retrospect. I am not so sure they actually were. But I hate having things taken away from me."

By the middle of the decade, safe sex had established itself as the norm for most gay men. There was a growing sense that a sexual middle ground was possible—that one could reduce the number of sexual partners, forgo high-risk sexual practices, and still lead a

relatively satisfying sex life. For those who still wanted an updated version of seventies gay mores, "jerk-off parties" and commercial JO clubs came into fashion. At one New York JO club, the public-address system blared, "No Unsafe Sex, No Drugs," and an employee walked around conspicuously making sure people obeyed the rules. AIDS-service organizations around the country began offering "Eroticizing Safer Sex" workshops.

Even if sex became more secure than it had seemed at the beginning of the epidemic, a different kind of community began to emerge, one that didn't revolve primarily around sexual pickups and cruising. Becoming an AIDS "buddy" replaced being a disco bunny as a rite of passage for many gay men. As the bars and cruising areas declined in importance, new kinds of organizations and institutions rose to take their place: Twelve-step groups, sports leagues, and gay churches and synagogues. A sense of social conservatism set in. With less need to be at the center of the action, gay men began to settle outside the confines of the gay ghettos. In Boston, for example, gay social and political groups were formed in a number of the city's outer neighborhoods, such as Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, and Allston-Brighton.

The interest in gay sports was reflected in the establishment of the Gay Games. The creation of Tom Waddell, a San Francisco physician and former Olympic decathlete, the first Gay Games took place in San Francisco in 1982. (The U.S. Olympic Committee successfully sued to bar the use of the name "Gay Olympics.") Gay Games II, held in San Francisco in 1986, featured some 3,500 athletes from 37 states and 17 countries. Later Gay Games were held in Vancouver in 1990 and New York City in 1994. The New York Games, coinciding with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall, attracted 11,000 participants and were among the gay "mega-events" of the nineties.

The prominence on the scene of gay and lesbian religious groups went beyond the already-established MCC churches (270 congregations in ten countries by the late 1980s). An association of gay Pentecostal churches was established, with congregations in Oklahoma City, Houston, and Dayton, Ohio. There was a black gay evangelical church in Washington, D.C., that in many ways seemed indistinguishable from black churches anywhere. Gay and lesbian synagogues started up in a number of cities. The San Francisco synagogue even featured a religious school for the children of its members.

Another striking development was the forging of closer bonds between lesbians and gay men. Lesbian separatism was proving increasingly less viable; gay male culture didn't appear as sex-focused and thus as alien to women as in the past (some lesbians were experiencing a sexual revolution themselves—see "The Great Lesbian Sex Debates," page 467); and the AIDS crisis underscored the need for mutual caring. So the two communities—so divided in the 1970s—began to move closer together. Moreover, the "lesbian baby boom" of the late 1980s—with many women having children through artificial insemination—brought growing numbers of lesbians and gay men into coparenting arrangements.

Many of the social changes in the lives of gay men might have occurred anyway if AIDS hadn't come along. The aging of the "baby boom" generation, the more conservative social climate, the gradual lessening of social hostility toward homosexuals, an increasing sense of self-confidence and self-esteem, were all factors in pushing gay values more toward the "stability and domesticity" that Frances FitzGerald had seen in the Castro. But the arrival of AIDS unquestionably accelerated the process, individually and collectively.

In his book *States of Desire*, written before the onset of AIDS, Edmund White seemed to anticipate the shift. He wrote:

I can picture wiser people in the next century regarding our sexual mania as akin to the religious madness of the Middle Ages—a cooperative delusion. I feel that homosexuals, now identified as the element of our society most obsessed with sex, will in fact be the agents to cure the mania. Sex will be restored to its appropriate place as pleasure, a communication, an appetite, an art; it will no longer pose as a religion, a reason for being. In our present isolation we have few ways besides sex to feel connected to one another; in the future there might be surer modes for achieving a sense of community.

As the eighties began, the combination of the AIDS epidemic, right-wing backlash, and the election of Ronald Reagan (allied to the Religious Right) as president threatened to halt the political gains the gay and lesbian movement had made in the previous decade. Antigay forces were quick to take advantage of public concern with AIDS, equating homosexuality and disease. Syndicated columnist (and later, presidential candidate) Pat Buchanan was in

the forefront. "The sexual revolution has begun to devour its children," he wrote in a May 1983 column. Homosexuals, he said, were "a community that is a common carrier of dangerous, communicable, and sometimes fatal diseases." Buchanan pronounced AIDS to be "nature's revenge. . . . The poor homosexuals: they have declared war on nature and nature is exacting an awful retribution." The July 1983 issue of *Moral Majority Report* featured a cover with a typical white American family—Mom, Dad and two children—wearing surgical masks. The headline read: AIDS: HOMOSEXUAL DISEASES THREATEN AMERICAN FAMILIES.

Meanwhile, *Human Events*, the right-wing weekly, was taking an even more incendiary path, reporting that "there has even been speculation that AIDS victims could deliberately contaminate the blood supply, thus spreading the condition into the general population, as a way to make certain that there is increased pressure on the federal government to find a cure." In Texas, a group called Dallas Doctors Against AIDS was working toward reinstating the state sodomy laws, with public-health concerns as its rationale. In Nevada, in the summer of 1983, the Pro-Family Christian Coalition attempted to cancel the annual Gay Rodeo on the basis that it was a health hazard.

The newest version of the disease model of homosexuality—combined with public fears about the spread of AIDS through blood transfusions and food handling—led many gay men to fear a national witch-hunt, even quarantine. That never happened, of course. In fact, a surprising degree of gay political and social progress continued in many parts of the country. In 1983, at the height of public AIDS hysteria, Boston and Minneapolis elected their first openly gay city councillors—David Scondras and Brian Coyle. That same year, Key West, Florida, a resort town that was experiencing an influx of homosexual migrants, elected an openly gay man, Richard Heyman, as mayor. Despite the negative social impact of the epidemic—the increase in violence against homosexuals, for example—AIDS helped give the gay community increased visibility. It seemed to create as much sympathy as it did fear, giving homosexuals a human face. When actor Rock Hudson died of AIDS in 1985, there was a shift in the national attitude toward the disease. At least in terms of public rhetoric, AIDS became the nation's "number-one health priority." In many segments of society, support for AIDS causes became chic, especially when actress Elizabeth

Taylor began associating herself with efforts toward finding a cure as a board member of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR).

It was only after the death of Hudson—five years into the epidemic—that President Ronald Reagan delivered his first policy speech on AIDS. Afraid to antagonize its supporters on the Religious Right, unwilling to marshal federal resources on social issues, the Reagan administration stubbornly refused to allocate any significant research or education money toward AIDS. Year after year through the 1980s, the Reagan administration would propose a niggling amount of money to fight the disease; Congress would then significantly increase AIDS funding over administration objections. In its proposed 1986 budget, made public just before Hudson's death, the Reagan administration proposed *reducing* AIDS funding by 10 percent, at a time when the numbers of cases of AIDS in the United States were doubling every six months.

The twin effects of the epidemic and the Reagan administration's neglect strengthened the gay community as a political force during this period. Before AIDS, few gays and lesbians had participated in their own civil rights struggle. The emphasis placed by activists on repeal of the sodomy laws and passage of antidiscrimination legislation failed to galvanize most homosexuals. The issues were too abstract. The gay middle class tended to look down on the movement as too "radical" and were loathe to support it, financially or otherwise. Lesbians, in many cases, identified more with women's issues than gay issues. National gay organizations were weak; over the years no visible national leaders had emerged (Harvey Milk came closest). Only when there was an external threat—Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign or the Briggs Initiative in California—did the community mobilize to any significant extent.

But AIDS changed all that, bringing into the movement many gay men—and lesbians, too—who had never participated in any gay political activity before. It was literally a matter of life and death. The involvement of many middle-class gay men in AIDS-services organizations around the nation led inexorably to political activity once it became evident that the Reagan administration was unwilling to commit significant resources to fight AIDS. Wealthy gay men who had never taken gay organizations seriously in the past opened their checkbooks when their friends started dying. Lesbians who had worked on women's health issues and could

identify with government neglect regarding AIDS began to feel they might have a place in the mainstream gay rights movement. The death of so many gay male activists created a void that lesbians began to fill. In San Francisco, for example, where gay politics had been entirely a male preserve, lesbian rights lawyer Roberta Achenberg ran a strong but unsuccessful campaign for a state assembly seat in 1989. The following year she was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, along with another lesbian activist, Carole Migden. In 1990, civil rights attorney Donna Hitchens, also a lesbian, was elected to the San Francisco Superior Court, defeating a sitting judge.

The two main national organizations—the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign Fund—benefited from the new concern about political issues. By 1988, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), which gives money to political candidates who support gay rights and AIDS issues, became the ninth largest PAC in the country. In 1983, the organization had raised \$325,000; in 1988, its budget was \$2.1 million. In the 1988 campaign, nearly 125 senators and congressmen accepted HRCF contributions. As they pushed for AIDS funding, the epidemic provided both national gay organizations visibility and credibility they had never had before. Suddenly, Congress and government departments were paying attention, even if the White House wasn't.

The changing situation brought new issues to the fore, notably parenting and family issues. This was due in part to the "lesbian baby boom." But AIDS was a major factor as well: As more and more gay men became sick, recognized ties became important to prevent a dying man's assets and possessions from reverting to his parents or other members of his "family of origin." Issues like domestic partner legislation and bereavement leave became new priorities for the movement. As early as 1982, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to mandate that "domestic partners" of city employees be treated the same as spouses of married workers in terms of health insurance and bereavement leave (The bill was vetoed by Mayor Dianne Feinstein.) By the 1990s, a number of cities ranging from Seattle to Minneapolis to New York City permitted gay and lesbian couples to register their partnerships. In its last days, the administration of New York City Mayor David Dinkins offered gay and lesbian city employees health benefits for

their domestic partners. And, in 1994, Vermont extended health and dental coverage to unmarried heterosexual and homosexual partners of state workers, becoming the first state to do so.

Overall, the 1980s were mixed in terms of gay political progress. In 1986, after fifteen years of trying, New York City passed its first gay civil rights bill, 21-14, a major victory for the movement. On the other hand, Houston repealed its law, in part due to public apprehension about AIDS. In 1989, Massachusetts became the sec-



The struggle of Karen Thompson (right) to become the legal guardian of her lover, Sharon Kowalski (in wheelchair), emerged as a major lesbian cause célèbre in the 1980s. Kowalski, of St. Cloud, Minnesota, had become a quadriplegic and had suffered brain damage as the result of an automobile accident. After the accident, Kowalski's parents prevented Thompson, her lover of four years, from having any contact with her. Eventually, Thompson prevailed in a court decision that highlighted the growing importance of "family issues" among lesbians and gay men. The two women are pictured together in San Francisco in June 1990. (© Rick Gerhart, Impact Visuals)

ond state in the U.S. (after Wisconsin) to enact a gay rights bill. But the state's governor, Michael Dukakis, also promulgated the state's first executive policy to discriminate actively against homosexuals, by barring gays from being foster parents. Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts became the first member of the U.S. House of Representatives to come out of the closet of his own free will. (His colleague Representative Gerry Studds had revealed his homosexuality a few years before, after being censured for having sexual relations with a House page.) But no one else in Congress was rushing to follow their examples.

One area where AIDS had a particularly negative effect was in attempts to repeal sodomy laws, still on the books in almost half the states. Progress was stalled because legislators in few of these states were disposed to vote for sodomy law repeal, lest they be accused of contributing to the spread of AIDS. Given the situation, activists had hoped that the Supreme Court would overturn the remainder of these laws, providing a "quick fix." In 1986, however, an increasingly conservative Court upheld the Georgia sodomy statute in the case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*, affirming that individual states had the right to make laws declaring private sexual activity by consenting adults a crime. Justice Lewis Powell provided the decisive vote in the Court's 5-4 decision, unquestionably the major gay legal setback of the decade.

On Columbus Day weekend, 1987, hundreds of thousands of gay people marched on the nation's capital in a dramatic show of strength. Although it did not receive the publicity that a similar march would receive in 1993, the U.S. Park Police estimated that two hundred thousand people were in attendance; march organizers claimed six hundred thousand. Presidential candidate Jesse Jackson was among the speakers. The event featured the unveiling of the Names Project Quilt, composed of almost two thousand panels commemorating people who had died of AIDS. It was the size of two football fields, crisscrossed by pathways of canvas that enabled visitors to view each panel. (Roy Cohn, Liberace, and Rock Hudson each had their own panels.) The brainchild of San Francisco politico Cleve Jones, the quilt was an impressive symbol of the community pulling together. The weekend's activities were an expression of collective exhilaration and sadness. But the number of marchers and the emotions of the event failed to translate into national political clout: Three days later, both houses of Congress voted over-



The unveiling of the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt provided the most emotional moments of the 1987 lesbian and gay march on Washington. (© Donna Binder, Impact Visuals)

whelmingly to support an amendment by North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms to ban the use of federal funds for educational projects or programs that “promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexual activity.”

On a Tuesday night in March 1987, six months before the March on Washington, the decade entered a new phase. The setting was the monthly speaker’s series at New York’s Lesbian and Gay Community Center. Onstage, once again, was Larry Kramer, who started off by asking everyone on one side of the audience to stand up. “At the rate we are going, you could be dead in less than five years,” he informed them. “Two-thirds of this room could be dead in less than five years.” He went on to excoriate the Food and Drug Administration for its slowness in testing and approving experimental AIDS drugs. A billion dollars was being thrown at AIDS, but it was not buying anything that could save the two-thirds of the people in that room, Kramer said. There were now thirty-two thousand cases of AIDS in the United States. Something had to be done. He went on:

Today’s front page of The New York Times has an article about two thousand Catholics marching through the halls of Albany today... That’s advocacy!... Why are we so invisible, constantly and forever!...

Did you notice what got the most attention at the recent CDC conference in Atlanta? It was a bunch called the Lavender Hill Mob... They protested. They yelled and screamed and demanded and were blissfully rude to all those arrogant epidemiologists who are ruining our lives.

The speech was vintage Kramer—emotional, impolitic, always somehow on target. But this time it seemed to have caught the popular mood. The audience proposed following up Kramer’s rhetoric with action. Two days later, three hundred people met and established a new organization—the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). The group decided to focus on one issue—to fight for the early release of all experimental drugs that could treat AIDS. Its motto would be “United in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis.” It was time for action—for screaming and yelling and being “blissfully rude,” as Kramer would have it. The politics of anger had arrived.

Soon after ACT UP’s founding, the new organization got the opportunity to show its mettle. Burroughs Wellcome, manufacturers of AZT, the only drug licensed to treat AIDS, announced that it was pricing AZT at ten thousand dollars for a year’s supply. To ACT UP members, that price tag smacked of profiteering. So 250 people marched on Wall Street. They hung an effigy of FDA Commissioner Frank Young in front of a church in the heart of the Financial District. They passed out leaflets condemning Burroughs Wellcome for its pricing of AZT. Then they did something that hadn’t been done before at gay rights or AIDS demonstrations—they sat down in traffic in the middle of rush hour, completely tying up lower Manhattan.

The Wall Street demonstration was a turning point. In June, sixty-three gay activists were arrested in front of the White House, protesting Reagan’s AIDS policies. ACT UP chapters were established in Los Angeles, Boston, and Philadelphia. Civil disobedience tactics began to spread from AIDS issues to gay issues that weren’t directly related to AIDS. The day after the March on Washington, some 650 gays and lesbians were arrested on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court, protesting the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision up-

holding the state sodomy laws. (Interestingly, the majority of those arrested were women, a sign that lesbians were increasingly a force in gay politics—and a particularly militant force.) A few months later, in Boston, four hundred members of a group called Mass Act Out disrupted Massachusetts State House proceedings for several hours to protest the state senate's refusal to pass a gay rights bill. Fourteen demonstrators were arrested, including eight who handcuffed themselves to chairs in the visitors' gallery.

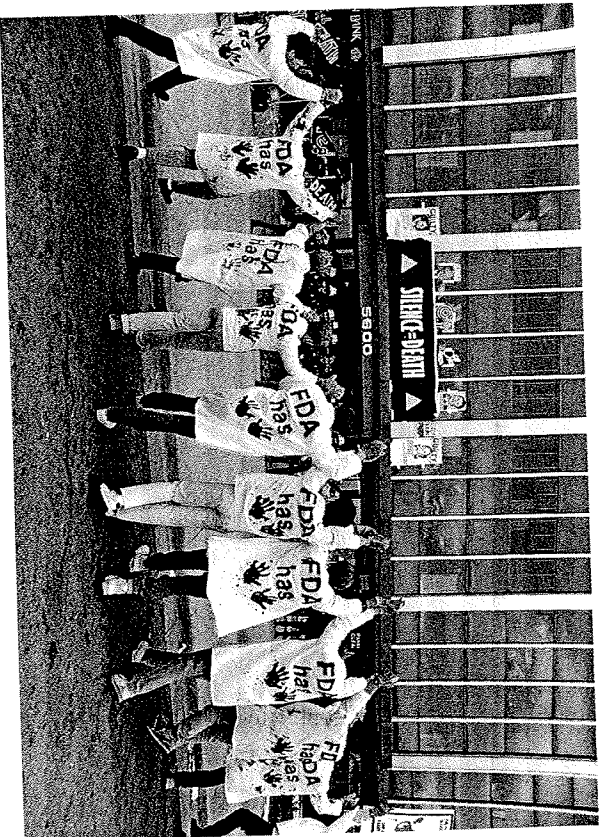
ACT UP represented a new generation in gay politics. Many of its members were gay men in their twenties who had never been involved in gay political activity before. A large number were HIV-positive. As Andrew Sullivan noted in an article in *The New Republic*, "The combination of hearing death and political activism makes for a unique phenomenon. ACT UP is not merely a brigade of gay rights activists. It is not even a countercultural crusade for the rights of others. It is a movement primarily designed to prevent the demise of its own." Not everyone in ACT UP was HIV-positive, to be sure. Large numbers of lesbians joined in, especially in the vanguard New York City chapter; many of the women were veterans of feminist and left-wing organizing and brought a political savvy that the male neophytes lacked. ACT UP meetings tended to have the flavor of those of the old Gay Liberation Front—they were long, anarchic, with decisions made by a laborious consensus process. The movement created a distinctive visual style, a kind of AIDS aesthetic, from its SILENCE = DEATH logo featuring a pink triangle against a black background to the "uniform" of short hair, white T-shirt, jeans, and boots favored by many of its male participants.

ACT UP "demos" were known for their keen sense of political theater and an ability to attract media coverage. Most famous was its October 1988 effort to shut down the Rockville, Maryland, headquarters of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, where over a thousand people participated in a series of minidemonstrations over a nine-hour period. At one of the day's protests targeting the FDA's refusal to release sixty experimental drugs to people with AIDS, ACT UP members held a "die-in" in front of the agency. They lay down on the street and held paper "tomstones" over their heads that read: I DIED FOR THE SINS OF THE FDA; DEAD—AZT WASN'T ENOUGH; DEAD—AS A PERSON OF COLOR I WAS EXEMPT FROM DRUG TRIALS; I GOT THE PLACEBO—RIP. By the end of the day, 176 people had been arrested. And if ACT UP didn't exactly shut down the FDA, they came close. A quarter of the agency's

employees failed to show up that day; those who did come to work spent much of their time staring out the window to catch a glimpse of the demonstration taking place outside.

Within a few years, the combination of ACT UP protest activities and the analytical work of the organization's Treatment and Data Committee produced major changes in the FDA approach to experimental drugs. Drug regulation was eased; drugs proven safe but not yet proven effective were made available to AIDS patients on a "parallel track." Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, actually began attending ACT UP meetings. Grass-roots organizations, like the Community Research Initiative, put further pressure on the FDA by doing their own drug research; drug undergrounds called "buyers' clubs" provided people with AIDS access to drugs they wouldn't have otherwise been able to obtain if they relied strictly on government protocols.

But if ACT UP could claim success on issues like drug policy, in other areas the organization's activities frequently seemed self-



Members of the ACT UP protest in front of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, October 1988. (© Marilyn Humphries, Impact Visuals)

indulgent and counterproductive. Andrew Sullivan noted the organization's "Manichean vision," which made it an article of faith that there existed "no moral difference between negligent complicity in the AIDS crisis and the act of murder." This was particularly true regarding ACT UP zaps of the Roman Catholic Church. Journalist Michelangelo Signorile describes a zap of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the German prelate, who was in New York for a speaking engagement at the invitation of that city's John Cardinal O'Connor. Ratzinger had written a paper for the Vatican that described homosexuality as a moral evil. As Ratzinger rose to speak at St. Peter's Church, a group of eight people in the crowd leaped to their feet and began to chant, "Stop the Inquisition!" Someone else yelled, "Antichrist!" and "Nazi!" Signorile himself jumped onto a marble platform, pointed at Ratzinger, and shouted, "He is no man of God—he is the Devil." Then there was the December 1989 zap at St. Patrick's Cathedral that featured ACT UP members stomping on communion wafers. Such behavior might have brought ACT UP media coverage, but it antagonized the public and turned strained relations between the gay community and the Roman Catholic Church in New York City into permanent enmity.

By the end of the decade, ACT UP radicalism spawned a new organization called Queer Nation that, through street theater and confrontation tactics, took gay visibility to dizzying new heights. Queer Nationals invaded shopping malls, singing "It's a Queer World, After All"; held "Kiss-ins" at predominately straight bars and restaurants; marched through hostile neighborhoods, like Brooklyn's Bensonhurst, to protest gay-bashing. Queer Nation reveled in making use of parody and humor to make its points. In her book *Family Values*, San Francisco Queer National Phyllis Burke describes a "Heterosexual Questionnaire" that she and other Queer Nation members distributed to shoppers in one "action" at a suburban mall:

What do you think caused your heterosexuality?

Most child molesters are heterosexual. Do you consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexuals? Heterosexual teachers, particularly?

Is it possible that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of people of the same sex? Maybe you just need a positive gay experience.

In line with its emphasis on gay visibility, Queer Nation pioneered the use of "outing" in an effort to push prominent gay people out of the closet, plastering New York City with pictures of closeted celebrities that read "Absolutely Queer." Outing violated the long-standing gay liberation tenet that held that although it was desirable for people to come out, they should do so at their own pace and their privacy should be respected. The major gay and lesbian organizations condemned the tactic, and the mainstream media was queasy. Washington Queer National Michael Petrelis held a news conference in which he attempted to "out" a number of senators and congressmen. The media showed up, but no one printed Petrelis's list. The New York gay magazine, *OutWeek*, edited by Michelangelo Signorile, was a major proponent of outing. *OutWeek's* revelation of millionaire businessman Malcolm Forbes's homosexuality shortly after Forbes's death brought notoriety to the magazine and to Signorile. Signorile stated that one reason he wanted to "out" Forbes so soon after his death was "I felt that the historical record had to be corrected quickly, before a slew of biographies came out falsely saying that Elizabeth Taylor had been Forbes' lover." After *OutWeek* folded, *The Advocate* printed Signorile's article revealing that Pentagon spokesperson Pete Williams was gay. *The Advocate's* editor, Richard Rouliard, was opposed to outing but claimed that Williams's situation was a "singular case" in view of the U.S. armed forces' policy of discrimination against gays and lesbians. In 1992, *The Advocate* found yet another exception, outing a Louisiana congressman with an antigay voting record; the congressman was easily reelected, however.

As with ACT UP, there was a sense of exhilaration and theatricality about Queer Nation that captured the imagination of many gays and lesbians, particularly the younger generation. The social conservatism that characterized the middle of the decade was fading, and Queer Nation encapsulated the new mood. But the organization's "in your face" tactics antagonized many others. Randy Shiltz called Queer Nationals "brownshirts" and "lavender fascists." Some AIDS activists disparaged them as an "ACT UP for Negatives," who didn't know quite what to do with themselves. The increasing use of the word *queer* in place of "gay and lesbian" among the younger activists rankled many who remembered the term as an epithet. And outing divided the community. Yet as the

decade ended, it was groups like ACT UP and Queer Nation that seemed to have the initiative. As the queer rap went:

We're here.

We're queer.

Get used to it.

We're here.

We're queer.

We're fabulous.

The AIDS decade had brought about extraordinary changes within gay and lesbian life—creating a deeper sense of community, putting gays in the public eye, restoring the fractured coalition between gays and lesbians. The community's response to the AIDS epidemic impressed the general public (and gays themselves) with a sense of homosexual men as courageous, caring individuals, not the frivolous pleasure-seekers that had been the image of the decade before. The Reagan and Bush administrations' appalling neglect of AIDS strengthened homosexuals as a political force and pushed certain sectors of the community into a militancy that hadn't been seen since the earliest days of gay liberation. ACT UP and Queer Nation tactics may have antagonized many, but they were symptomatic of gays' and lesbians' growing self-confidence and determination to stick up for themselves. There was no doubt that as the nineties dawned there was now a stronger, more committed gay community, hardened by adversity, that was poised to play a greater role in American life.

An Excerpt from Randy Shilts's *And the Band Played On*

Randy Shilts's And the Band Played On, published in 1987, remains the most influential book written about AIDS. It is a sweeping history of the early years of the epidemic, from the

first reported cases of the disease to the death of actor Rock Hudson. The book is also an investigative account that indicts the U.S. government, the scientific establishment, the blood banks, and some of the leaders of the gay community for their inaction in the early years of the epidemic. Shilts (1951-94) was a reporter for the daily San Francisco Chronicle (the first openly gay reporter for a major U.S. daily newspaper) and covered the AIDS crisis almost from the beginning; his massively documented Conduct Unbecoming, a portrait of the experience of gays and lesbians in the U.S. military over three decades, was published in 1993. He himself was diagnosed with HIV, just as he finished writing And the Band Played On. The following excerpt from that book represents his tribute to the courage and fortitude of San Francisco's gay community during the 1980s:

THE LOUDEST OVATIONS of the day [the 1985 San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade] came not for politicians or entertainers, but when the rally's master of ceremonies announced the release of two San Francisco gay men who had been among the twenty-nine Americans held hostage by terrorists in Lebanon. The two men, who had been aboard TWA Flight 847 on an Athens-to-Rome leg of a world tour, had spent most of their captivity living with the terror that their fundamentalist Moslem captors would learn that they were gay and kill them, as they had killed an American serviceman on the flight.

Early in their captivity, San Francisco news organizations learned that hostage Jack McCarty had worked as a chef for the Elephant Walk on 18th and Castro streets, one of the city's most famous gay bars, before embarking on the tour with his lover, postman Victor Ambury. With unprecedented restraint, local news organizations withheld reporting on this angle of the story, fearing the gay story would result in the two hostages' deaths.

In the long days of captivity, McCarty and Ambury were kept in dark, rat-infested basements while the terrorists played Russian roulette with the hostages, again and again. When other hostages began to crack, some of the Americans turned to McCarty, who had seemed preternaturally calm. McCarty could not tell them the reason he could handle the prospect of imminent death—that he was a gay man from San Francisco. Instead, he adopted the role of

unofficial counselor to the other hostages. It was a role to which McCarty was accustomed; he had been a Shanti Project [a San Francisco AIDS-services organization] volunteer.

Throughout the ordeal, the forty-year-old chef recalled Scott Cleaver, a twenty-seven-year-old whom he had counseled as part of his Shanti work. McCarty had watched Cleaver muster incredible strength and courage to fight his terminal disease, and McCarty promised himself he would be as brave in the hands of these terrorists. The fortitude was something he shared with the other hostages, and it helped them all survive.

When Amburgy and McCarty stepped off the Air Force plane after their release, while a quarter-million lesbians and gay men celebrated Gay Freedom Day in San Francisco, they walked down the ramp arm-in-arm. They loved each other, and they were proud they loved each other, and they had survived in part because of the strength they had developed as gay men in San Francisco.

The Vatican Cracks Down

THE 1980s were a time of turmoil within American churches over the issue of homosexuality, as institutions traditionally condemnatory of same-sex relationships attempted to come to terms with changing social mores. The liberal Unitarian Universalists were offering church blessings to gay and lesbian couples. The Episcopal bishop of Newark, John Shelby Spong, called on his church to "open its eyes to reality" and do the same. The United Church of Christ formally ordained as a minister an openly gay man who was involved in a three-year relationship with another man. On the other hand, in the United Methodist Church, considered progressive on most social issues, a lesbian minister was put on trial in 1987 before a jury of thirteen Methodist clergy, charged with being a "self-avowed, practicing homosexual." Thirty-five Presbyterian churches around the U.S. declared themselves "More Light?" churches, and in defiance of church rules barring homosexuals as church officers, were ordaining openly gay and lesbian ministers, elders, and deacons. Within a number of religious denominations, gay and lesbian

groups—Dignity (Roman Catholic), Integrity (Episcopal), Affirmation (Methodist), Lutherans Concerned, and Presbyterians Concerned, among others—were pushing hard for their denominations to support gay rights and ordain gay and lesbian clergy.

But it was within the Roman Catholic Church that the debate was the fiercest. Under the stern leadership of Pope John Paul II, the Vatican was cracking down on dissent in a wide variety of areas, including homosexuality. The Reverend John J. McNeill, a Jesuit who, in his 1979 book, *The Church and the Homosexual*, had argued that monogamous and stable homosexual relationships could be morally good, was forbidden from writing or speaking publicly on the subject, and was later expelled from his order. Vatican curial officials stripped Father Charles E. Curran of his license to teach theology at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle lost his prerogatives in five key administrative areas. Both Curran and Hunthausen had dissented from Vatican views on sexual morality, including homosexuality. In St. Cloud, Minnesota, the Reverend Bill Dorn was dismissed from his post as the co-pastor of the Newman Center at St. Cloud University after writing in the diocesan newspaper that the Church has "a responsibility to develop a theology of sexuality that sees sexuality as a blessing and understands homosexuality as being part of a gift." Shortly after, Father Dorn publicly announced that he was gay and was ordered to take an indefinite leave of absence from the priesthood.

In the past, the Vatican had made a distinction between homosexual *inclinations*, which it regarded as "morally neutral," and homosexual *acts*, which were viewed as sinful. But in an October 30, 1986, document issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the office charged with preserving the orthodoxy of Catholic belief, Rome significantly toughened its position, declaring that even an inclination toward homosexuality was "an objective disorder." The document stated:

Therefore special concern and pastoral attention should be directed towards those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that living out this orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option. It is not... It is only in the marital relationship that the use of the sexual faculty can be morally good. A person engaging in homosexual acts therefore acts immorally.

The declaration also included an allusion to AIDS. It noted that advocates of gay rights did not appear to be concerned that "homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of people." Although AIDS was not mentioned by name, a senior Vatican official told *The New York Times* that the document's language was "certainly" referring to the epidemic.

But the passage in the document that most affected the lives of gay and lesbian Catholics was the one that stated that all support should be withdrawn from any organization that undermines the teaching of the church on homosexuality, "which are ambiguous about it or which neglect it entirely." The group to which the Vatican referred was Dignity, the organization of gay Catholics that had one hundred chapters nationwide with five thousand members. Among other support activities for homosexuals, Dignity celebrated special masses in Catholic churches throughout the United States and Canada.

Quickly, bishops across North America moved to bar Dignity from celebrating mass on church property. Dioceses that rescinded permission for Dignity masses included Atlanta, Minneapolis, Buffalo, Brooklyn, Pensacola, and Vancouver. In Washington, D.C., Archbishop James A. Hickey ordered that Dignity no longer be permitted to use a chapel on the Georgetown University campus for weekly mass; Dignity had been holding mass at the chapel for the previous eleven years. In New York City, the archdiocese pressured the Church of St. Francis Xavier in Greenwich Village to discontinue Dignity masses, which had been taking place for eight years and drawing two hundred to three hundred people. "I would see no other way to interpret the decree from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith," said New York's John Cardinal O'Connor. O'Connor gave the sanction of the archdiocese to a small group for homosexuals called Courage, which, unlike Dignity, insisted on celibacy for gay men and women.

In New York City, Dignity New York's president, Timothy J. Coughlin, described himself as "angry and hurt" at O'Connor's action. "We've done what the Archdiocese has failed miserably to do—give gay and lesbian Catholics a sacramental life, a sense of community, pastoral care, and a ministry to persons with AIDS," he said. In New York and other cities, Dignity simply moved its services somewhere else. The last Dignity masses were often emotional occasions. In Minneapolis, for example, at the final Dignity service at the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota, Dig-

nity members stripped the altar and took down the chalice and banners and Easter candles. Carrying ceremonial ornaments in their arms and singing, Dignity members marched out of the church and across the street to the Episcopal university center, where they had been granted approval to hold services. In Manhattan, the last Dignity mass at the Church of St. Francis Xavier was similarly emotional and surprisingly euphoric.

But despite the gestures of defiance, the Vatican had succeeded in its aim: expelling gay groups from Roman Catholic churches. It just wasn't the same to celebrate mass in the chapel of an Episcopal church. The Vatican had created a new diaspora—a diaspora of gay and lesbian Catholics.

The Great Lesbian Sex Debates

IT WAS RITA MAE BROWN who back in 1975 first called attention to the lack of sexual options for lesbians when, disguised as a man (fake mustache and all), she snuck into a gay male bathroom in New York City called Xanadu. There was no such thing as a lesbian bathroom, and Brown thought that was a pity. She wrote in the Boston weekly *The Real Paper*:

I do want a Xanadu. I want the option of random sex with no emotional commitment when I need sheer physical relief. . . . It is in our interest to build places where we have relief, refuge, release. Xanadu is not a lurid dream, it's the desire of a woman to have options. Like men we should have choices: deep, long-term relationships, the baths, short-term affairs.

Brown's was a voice in the wilderness of the 1970s, when sex was viewed as almost extraneous to the task of building a Lesbian Nation. Many lesbians were involved in political activities and institutions—the anti-porn movement, Take Back the Night marches, rape crisis centers—that attempted to combat the sexualization of American culture and the abuses of sex. But by the early 1980s, some lesbians were beginning to reevaluate prevailing lesbian

mores concerning sex and relationships—mores that dictated serial monogamy and frowned upon butch/femme role-playing, sadomasochism, and anything that smacked of the inequalities of heterosexual relations.

There seemed to be good reason for a reevaluation, for lesbian couples, by all accounts, weren't having sex very often. In the book *American Couples*, published in 1983, University of Washington psychologists Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz found the frequency of sexual relations among the 788 lesbian couples they surveyed to be far less than it was for heterosexual or gay male couples. Among lesbian couples who had been together for between two to ten years, they found that 37 percent had sex once a week or more, compared to 73 percent for their gay male and married heterosexual counterparts. In part, such findings may have reflected differences in socialization between men and women, in particular cultural messages that discouraged women from viewing themselves as sexual beings. But some were convinced that the lesbian-feminist insistence on sameness and equality between sexual partners may have played a part in diminishing erotic feeling and sexual pleasure.

The subject came to the forefront in April 1982 at a lesbian conference called "Towards a Politics of Sexuality," held at Barnard College in New York City. Instead of presenting women as victims of sexual abuse and violence, conference participants portrayed various kinds of sex as enjoyable and affirming—including butch/femme and S&M. To some women, even to suggest this was heresy. The conference was picketed by members of the organization Women Against Pornography (WAP), who passed out flyers denouncing several speakers as "perverts."

Soon, the new lesbian sex radicalism turned into a full-scale movement. In 1984, two lesbian porn magazines were launched: *Bad Attitude*, published in Boston, and *On Our Backs*, based in San Francisco. (Two lesbian S&M magazines emerged as well.) Both *Bad Attitude* and *On Our Backs* featured erotic stories and illustrations; one issue of *On Our Backs* even offered a parody of a *Playboy* centerfold called "Bulldagger of the Season," a reference to a slang term for a butch woman. Boston and San Francisco—two cities where lesbians and gay men tended to work together politically—became the centers of the new movement, perhaps indicating the influence of gay men on their lesbian counterparts. Lesbian bars in San Francisco began featuring burlesque shows,

something unheard of in the past. By the middle of the decade, the first porn videos made by women for women were produced.

Susie Bright, the *On Our Backs* editor, whom the *San Francisco Chronicle* described as an "X-rated intellectual," emerged as the ideologue of the new sex radicalism. She stressed the importance of lesbians freeing themselves from the antisexual "yoke"—the *Well of Loneliness* depiction of the lesbian as "the noble soul who will always put her principles above her sexuality." Exploring sex was akin to women breaking into a nontraditional job, she argued: "There is the sense of confidence, the sense of accomplishment, the power." Many lesbian-feminists didn't see it that way, however. They believed that efforts to "spice up" lesbian sex through butch/femme and S&M "validated the system of patriarchy, in which one person has power over another or objectifies her," as Lillian Faderman characterized their viewpoint. And they argued that sex radicals like Susie Bright were "deluding themselves and other women into believing that male images, fantasies, and habits were desirable for women, too."

Passions on both sides of the debate ran high. Joan Nestle, exponent of the butch/femme revival, claims that one member of Women Against Pornography went to Queens College, where Nestle worked, and warned students and faculty that Nestle was into S&M and "unequal patriarchal power sex." The popular women's music festivals were scenes of bitter confrontations over S&M workshops. Even the National Organization for Women joined the fray, reaffirming its support of lesbian rights but condemning issues like pornography, public sex, and sadomasochism, "which have mistakenly been correlated with Lesbian/Gay rights by some gay organizations."

By the late 1980s, however, the lesbian sexual revolution seemed to have peaked. Lesbian burlesque lost its audience; most of the sex magazines folded. A San Francisco bathhouse that had featured a lesbian night soon dropped it for lack of interest. The impact of AIDS put a brake on lesbian sexual experimentation, too, even though few, if any, cases of AIDS were believed to have been transmitted through sex between women.

As a result of the sex debates, however, many lesbians felt less constrained to follow the dictates of political correctness, and there was a greater freedom to talk about sex. The breakdown in conformity in sexual matters was another sign of self-confidence in lesbian community-building; it also was an indication that lesbians

and gay men were drawing closer together. But Rita Mae Brown's "dream" that lesbians would abandon serial monogamy and take a much more uninhibited approach to sex went unrealized. "The encouragement of the sexual radicals was not sufficient to counter the greater forces of their female socialization," writes Lillian Faderman. "Thus lesbian sex radicals have remained a tiny minority within a minority."

Michel Foucault

WHEN THE AMERICAN NOVELIST EDMUND WHITE asked French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault (1926–84) how he got to be so smart, Foucault ascribed it, rather modestly, to his attraction to other boys. "I wasn't always smart, I was actually very stupid in school," Foucault told White. As a result, he was sent to a new school where "there was a boy who was very attractive who was even stupider than I was. And in order to ingratiate myself with this boy who was very beautiful, I began to do his homework for him—and that's how I became smart, I had to do all his work to just keep ahead of him a little bit, in order to help him. In a sense, all the rest of my life I've been trying to do intellectual things that would attract beautiful boys."

At the time of his death from AIDS in June 1984, Foucault was the most famous intellectual figure in France, perhaps in the world. He had written more than twenty books and had a profound impact on a number of disciplines—philosophy, history, criticism, political theory, and the history of sexuality. In his book *Madness and Civilization* (published in France in 1961), he examined Western attitudes toward insanity since the Middle Ages; in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), he took a critical look at the emergence of the "enlightened" modern prison; in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976), he questioned the accepted notion that the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries had been characterized by sexual repression. He was engaged in many of the political issues of his time: At various points, he was a Maoist, a crusader for the rights of prisoners, and a gay liberationist. "In the

eyes of his admirers, he had replaced Jean-Paul Sartre as the personification of what an intellectual ought to be: quick to condemn, determined to expose abuses of power, unafraid to echo Émile Zola's old battle cry, 'J'accuse!';" noted James Miller in his biography *The Passion of Michel Foucault*.

Associated with the poststructuralist French philosophers, Foucault rejected the liberal, humanistic view that saw history as an unending march of progress. He contended that human beings, instead of being "free," as Sartre believed, were at the mercy of historical forces. Power was the decisive factor in human relations, and attempts to improve or replace institutions were futile, only perpetuating them in different forms. As Foucault scholar Alexander Nehamas notes, the cornerstone of the philosopher's thinking (and what was particularly revolutionary about it) was his insistence that all human situations—as well as our opinions, habits, and institutions—are products of history, though we may be convinced that they are natural facts. "No philosopher has ever matched his ability to find history where others find nature, to see contingency where others see necessity," writes Nehamas. "He was the master at revealing the emergence of radically new objects—insanity, illness, even the human individual—where others had detected only a difference in the treatment of unchanging realities."

Foucault applied these ideas to sexuality, arguing once again that it was historical forces that created or "constructed" homosexuality as a concept and an identity. As noted earlier, he argued that the nineteenth century—with its relentless categorization of sexual "perversions"—had, instead of repressing sexuality, actually done the opposite. In the case of homosexuality, the early sexologists had transformed the sin of sodomy into the "personage," the "species" of the modern homosexual. Although Foucault noted that this development brought about increased social controls, the new categorization had another, more encouraging, effect:

It also made possible the formation of a "reverse" discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturalness" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified.

Foucault's depiction of homosexuality as a social construct challenged assumptions that homosexuality and homosexuals had al-

ways existed as concepts from antiquity down to the present day. Although his work did not create the debate between "essentialists" and "social constructivists" among gay historians, Foucault's arguments made the constructivist view irresistible to many.

Although he resisted being known as a "gay" philosopher, in his later years Foucault became increasingly open about his homosexuality. He was one of the founders of the French magazine *Gai Pied* and contributed an essay to its first issue. He publicly campaigned for the enactment of a uniform age of sexual consent in France for heterosexuals and homosexuals, which was finally achieved under the Mitterrand government in 1981. In the early 1980s, he granted interviews to American gay publications, in which he argued that homosexuals had to create their own cultural forms. In a 1982 interview with *Christopher Street*, he said:

It's not enough as a part of a more general way of life, or in addition to it, to be permitted to make love with someone of the same sex. The fact of making love with someone of the same sex can very naturally involve a whole series of choices, a whole series of other values and choices for which there are not yet real possibilities. It's not only a matter of integrating this strange little practice of making love with someone of the same sex into pre-existing cultures; it's a matter of constructing cultural forms.

The lover and companion of most of his adult life was Daniel Defert, political activist and (later) sociology professor, whom he met in 1960 when Defert was a philosophy student. "I have lived for eighteen years in a state of passion towards someone," Foucault said, referring to Defert, in a 1981 interview. "At some moments, this passion has taken the form of love. But in truth, it is a matter of a state of passion between the two of us."

If Foucault broke down barriers and challenged received ideas in his intellectual work, he did so in his personal life as well. He experimented with drugs, such as LSD. In the mid-1970s, while a visiting professor at Berkeley, Foucault became intrigued by San Francisco's gay S&M and leather subculture. James Miller suggests that Foucault's experiences in the S&M scene helped him develop his ideas about sexuality. In the bars and bathhouses of San Francisco's Folsom Street he saw new forms of sex (like fisting) evolve and older forms reinterpreted; this may have led him to the view that sex is socially constructed. Miller also claims that Foucault,

long fascinated with death, sought it, perhaps welcomed it, in the bathhouses of San Francisco in the early years of the AIDS epidemic. He also suggests, with little substantiation, that Foucault may have deliberately spread AIDS to other men in those bathhouses.

Foucault's friend Hervé Guibert wrote a novel called *To a Friend Who Did Not Save My Life*, which features a character based on Foucault. The character returns to Paris from San Francisco with a hacking cough, extolling the virtues of the city's bathhouses:

That day, I said to him: "There mustn't be a soul left in those places, because of AIDS." "That's what you think. On the contrary, there have never been more people in the bath-houses, and it's become extraordinary. That hovering threat has created new complications, a new tenderness, new solidarities. Before, no one exchanged a word; now people talk to each other. Everybody knows exactly why he is there."

When Foucault died in June 1984, it was front-page news in every major French newspaper; one newspaper, *Libération*, even put out a special twelve-page supplement devoted to Foucault's achievements. The word AIDS was never mentioned, however. After his death, Daniel Defert established France's first national AIDS organization.

The Contradictions of the Gay Conservative: Terry Dolan

WHEN CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL ACTIVIST John Terrence "Terry" Dolan (1950–86) died of AIDS in December 1986, two memorial services took place. At one, held at Washington, D.C.'s, Dominican House of Studies, his family and political associates—including Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and syndicated columnist Pat Buchanan—paid their last respects. At the other, at St. Matthew's Cathedral, mourners included the openly gay former congressman Robert Bauman and fifty of Dolan's (mostly gay) friends; the Reverend John Gingrich, the cathedral's liaison with the gay

community and Dolan's priest for the last six months of his life, celebrated mass.

The separate services pointed up the dilemma of being a gay political conservative in the United States, especially at a time when the Republican Party had allied itself closely with the Religious Right. Dolan had played a crucial role in the Reaganite ascendancy of the 1980s. As the founder and director of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), he was among the first people to take advantage of post-Watergate campaign finance laws that put no limitations on the amount of money an independent organization could spend to support a political candidate. In the 1980 election campaign, NCPAC targeted for defeat six of the most liberal Democratic members of the Senate. The organization spent \$1.2 million, using a new and shocking strategy at the time—negative advertising. Four of the targeted senators—George McGovern, Frank Church, Birch Bayh, and John Culver—were defeated, tipping control of the Senate to the Republicans for the first time in twenty-five years. (Only Alan Cranston and Thomas Eagleton survived.) NCPAC also contributed \$2 million to Reagan's presidential bid that year.

The 1980 campaign victories made the young Dolan a hero to the political Right—and anathema to many fellow gays and lesbians. (All the defeated senators were far more likely to support gay rights issues than those who replaced them.) Larry Kramer claims to have thrown a drink in his face at a cocktail party. But Dolan can't be dismissed as just another self-loathing gay-baiter of the Roy Cohn—J. Edgar Hoover school. It is true that he publicly denied being gay, even after a young federal employee named Richard Anderson signed an affidavit stating that he had had sexual relations with Dolan. But Dolan called himself "a constitutional conservative" and, in a 1982 interview with *The Advocate*, he said that "some of the rhetoric that some of my friends on the right have used on gay activism has been excessive" and "sexual preference is irrelevant to political philosophy."

Despite his organization's ties to the Religious Right, Dolan insisted that NCPAC itself never engaged in attacks on homosexuals. And yet the group did send out a fund-raising letter over the signature of Representative Phil Crane, which said, "Our nation's moral fiber is being weakened by the growing homosexual movement and the fanatical ERA pushers (many of whom publicly brag

they are lesbians)." Dolan later apologized for the letter and claimed that it had been written without his knowledge or approval.

It was a difficult balancing act. In his last years, Dolan was said to be one of the prime movers behind the formation of a group of gay conservatives called Concerned Americans for Individual Rights (CAIR). Friends argued that he was moving increasingly toward the closet door. In an interview with the *Washington Post* after Dolan's death, Leonard Matlovich, gay military activist, said, "Terry was beginning—it's a long process. I can't condemn him for that. He was having more and more courage all the time. . . ." But it is difficult to imagine that he could have kept his position at NCPAC if he came out.

Rumors about Dolan's private life did make it into the newspapers, and this unquestionably hurt his political standing within the conservative movement. Until his death, he denied having AIDS, claiming he was suffering from anemia and diabetes. (His family continued to deny it.) However, newspaper obituaries in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* listed AIDS as the cause of death.

Dolan was not the only prominent gay right-winger of the Reagan period. Another was Carl "Spitz" Channell, whom White House aide Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North used to solicit contributions from wealthy conservatives to finance military assistance to the Nicaraguan contras. National Public Radio reported that some of the \$10 million that Channell raised was paid to male companions of his organization's executives, including Channell himself, for unspecified services. Channell was indicted in the Iran-Contra scandal and pleaded guilty of conspiring to defraud the government. He later died after he was hit by a car while crossing a Washington street. Still another prominent conservative, Representative Robert Bauman, lost his bid for reelection after receiving a suspended sentence in 1980 for soliciting sex from a teenage male prostitute. Bauman then came out of the closet. The American Conservative Union, the organization he had founded, attempted to remove him from its board after he spoke out in support of gay rights.

Dolan's life and death indicate how much being a gay conservative had changed from previous decades. Dolan was clearly under pressure from other gays to come out. There was a supportive network of like-minded people ready to back him up. He felt he had to apologize for any appearance of "gay-baiting." And the media was less willing to cover up for him as it had done for

homosexuals in prominent positions in the past. Death from AIDS provided the ultimate "outing."

Still, to be an American conservative and a Reagan supporter in the 1980s meant living in the midst of contradictions, especially as the Republican Party became increasingly identified with the Religious Right. It meant supporting an administration whose policies might actually kill you. Dolan died before he could find a way out of these contradictions—as those two memorial services showed.

The Gay Fiction Boom of the 1980s

IN THE 1970s, mainstream book publishers in the United States remained cautious about crowding their lists with books on gay themes. Still, the few gay novels that were published during the decade had an enormous impact on gay and lesbian audiences: Patricia Nell Warren's *The Front Runner* (the 1974 best-seller about a love affair between a gay track coach and his star runner); Rita Mae Brown's lesbian coming-of-age novel, *Rubyfruit Jungle* (originally published by a small women's press before it was released as a mass-market paperback in 1977); and Andrew Holleran's haunting 1978 portrait of "fast lane" gay culture, *Dancer from the Dance*. The success of these novels (and that of Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story*, published in 1982) was an early indication that books aimed at a gay and lesbian audience could sell—and find some straight "crossover" audience, too.

Hungry for reflections of themselves and their lives that they couldn't find at the movies or on TV, gays and lesbians continued to take their images from fiction, as they had since *The Well of Loneliness*. At the same time, small gay and lesbian presses began to thrive, in the manner of women's record companies. By the early 1980s, virtually every gay community of significant size had its own bookstore, which often functioned as a community center as much as anything else.

By the mid-1980s, publishers were discovering a large gay male book-buying audience, particularly for fiction. St. Martin's Press was the pioneer in the area, thanks to openly gay editor Michael

Demmey; he later started St. Martin's own gay paperback line, Stonewall Editions. Bill Whitehead, an editor at Dutton, published Edmund White. (White was in a class by himself, particularly once Vladimir Nabokov named him the American writer he most admired.) Under the editorial guidance of gay literary "talent scout" George Stambolian, a series of anthologies called *Men on Men* showcased the works of less-established gay male writers. *Christopher Street* magazine excerpted new works of fiction, promoting prepublication interest. There was suddenly an enormous number of titles to choose from, including all kinds of gay genre novels—mysteries, gothics, Regencies, science fiction.

Despite the earlier success of *Rubyfruit Jungle* (and the continuing popularity of Rita Mae Brown's novels), major publishers remained leery of lesbian fiction—the lesbian book-buying audience was not thought to be as large or as affluent as that of gay men. As a result, small presses, like Florida's Naiad Press, remained in the forefront of lesbian publishing. (Genre novels were particularly popular among lesbian readers.) But change was in the offing there as well, as when Naiad author Sarah Schulman "jumped" from the small press to the mainstream with a gritty and slang-filled lesbian detective novel, *After Delores*, published in 1988. Moreover, older, more established lesbian writers like May Sarton, who hadn't written about lesbian subjects in the past, began to do so.

As all this was happening, the kinds of gay fiction being written were changing, too. The homosexual "problem" novel, in the manner of *The City and the Pillar* or *Giovanni's Room*, was no longer dominant. As the novelist and short-story writer Richard Hall noted in a 1988 essay in *The New York Times Book Review*, gay writing had evolved since World War II from "a literature of guilt and apology to one of political defiance and celebration of sexual difference." In fact, by the late eighties, a number of gay writers had gone even further, taking characters' homosexuality as a given and leaving it at that. The "high art" tradition of much of the earlier gay writing (Proust, Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes) was fading, replaced by more personal, smaller-scale realism. Gay novels didn't necessarily have to be artistic or experimental anymore to get published or to be taken seriously.

The kinds of characters that previously had been the norm in fiction about male homosexuals—the doomed heroes of *Dancer from the Dance*, the hustlers of John Rechy's *City of Night*, the romanticized criminals of French writer Jean Genet's works—were

found less frequently as well. Writers like David Leavitt, Peter Cameron, Armistead Maupin, Stephen McCauley, and Christopher Bram mixed gay and straight characters, wrote about "ordinary" gay people, domestic life, and, increasingly, unusual family configurations. These themes reflected the "normalization" of gay life in the 1980s. Novels with lesbian heroines appeared on the lists of mainstream publishing houses: Meg Wolitzer's 1986 novel, *Hidden Pictures*, concerned two lesbians who move to the suburbs. British writer Jeanette Winterson's novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, published in 1985, concerned a young girl growing up in an evangelical Christian family in the industrial Midlands. As Richard Hall wrote in his essay:

Finding a family of sorts has become the chief interest of characters in much gay fiction. Protagonists are settling down with relatives, heterosexual women, buddies, lesbians, lovers. Children, the final imprimatur to family life, are being borrowed, adopted, created by artificial insemination. Everyone is trying to get along under one roof. The sexual outlaw, long a staple of gay fiction . . . is giving way to the sexual in-law.

By the end of the decade, AIDS became a central preoccupation of gay novelists. For some the subject remained almost too raw and painful to write about, yet few if any gay novels appeared without some reference to the epidemic. (Even lesbian writers like Sarah Schulman have tackled the subject.) Books that focused on AIDS often confronted the pain through humor. New York writer David B. Feinberg's *Eighty-Sixed* was characterized by an in-your-face, lacerating wit that was very much in the spirit of ACT UP; John Weir's *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Sockett* masked the pain with a humor that was sweeter and self-deprecating. British writer Adam Mars-Jones took a more minimalist approach.

Some older writers were uncomfortable with the perceived limitations of becoming known as a "gay writer." Gore Vidal mostly stayed away from the subject, insisting he wasn't gay but "homosexualist," anyway. And not all the "gay" writers reflected the trends of the decade. Two of the most admired English-language gay novelists of the 1980s, Edmund White and British writer Alan Hollinghurst (*The Swimming Pool Library*) carried forth more traditional homosexual artistic traditions. Australian Nobel laureate Patrick White's *The Twyborn Affair* and Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are*

Not the Only Fruit explored territories outside the prevailing "domestic" realism. What could be said, however, was that by the 1980s, gay and lesbian fiction was earning itself the right to be whatever its authors wanted: They could adopt different styles, tackle various genres, treat all kinds of subject matter. The only question was if—and when—the movies were going to catch up.

and how the great sex researcher conducted his interviews, I recommend Dr. Wordell Pomeroy's *Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research*. Eric Marcus's *Making History* provides an informative interview with Dr. Evelyn Hooker.

CHAPTER 18—THE AGE OF MCCARTHY: Nicholas von Hoffman's *Citizen Cohn* offers a damning (and gossipy) view of Roy Cohn. I also used the standard biographical works on McCarthy: Richard Rovere's *Senator Joe McCarthy* and Thomas Reeves's *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy*. For the effect of the McCarthy period on gays and lesbians, I recommend D'Emilio's *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, the most thorough account. Also helpful were back issues of ONE magazine.

CHAPTER 19—THE STRUGGLE FOR BRITISH LAW REFORM: Stephen Jeffery-Poulter's *Peers, Queers, and Commons* offers a detailed account of the struggle for British law reform. I also found Noel Annan's *Our Age* helpful. Andrew Hodges's biography *Allen Turing* gives a good sense of Britain during the McCarthy era. For Australia in this period, see Garry Wotherspoon's book on Sydney, *City of the Plain*; for Canada's law reform struggle, see Gary Kinsman's *The Regulation of Sexuality*.

CHAPTER 20—THE OTHER SIDE OF THE 1950S: For a literary and biographical examination of the Beats, I recommend John Tyrell's *Naked Angels*. Barry Miles's *Allen Ginsberg* offers a good look at the Ginsberg-Orlovsky relationship. The works of the Beats themselves—Kerouac's *On the Road*, Ginsberg's *Howl*, and Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, among others—are, of course, essential. For a portrait of the Tangier expatriate subculture, Michelle Green's entertaining *The Dream at the End of the World* is the most thorough work so far. Millicent Dillon's biography of Jane Bowles, *A Little Original Sin*, offers another view.

CHAPTER 21—THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FIFTIES, PART II: Lapovsky and Kennedy's examination of the butch/femme subculture in Buffalo, New York, provides a truly fascinating anthropological look at that world. Faderman's *Odd Girls* and her essay "The Return of Butch and Femme" are also illuminating. For the point of view of a black lesbian and also of a woman who felt alienated from the prevailing butch-femme culture, see Andre Lordé's autobiography, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. For a deeply felt but somewhat romanticized view of butch/femme mores and culture, Joan Nestle's *A Restricted Country* is essential. One still awaits a full-scale biography of Lorraine Hansberry that deals forthrightly with her lesbianism.

CHAPTER 22—THE HOMOPHILES: John D'Emilio's superb *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* is the definitive book on the gay movement of the 1950s and '60s. Eric Marcus's *Making History* offers a number of

interesting interviews with fifties and sixties gay and lesbian political figures, using an oral history approach. Katz contains a number of documents in this regard, as well as interviews with lesbian activists Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin. Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin's *Lesbian Woman* provides an early view of the Daughters of Bilitis by that organization's founders.

CHAPTER 23—STONEWALL AND THE BIRTH OF GAY AND LESBIAN LIBERATION: There are a number of books on this heavily documented period. Martin Duberman's *Stonewall* (1993) provides a close look at the events surrounding the Stonewall riots and the lives of some of the people who participated in them. Donn Teal's *The Gay Militants* presents a detailed account of the first year of gay liberation; Sydney Abbott and Barbara Love's *Sappho Was a Right-On Woman* tells the lesbian side. Dennis Altman's *Homosexual* offers a thoughtful summary of the ideas behind the gay (male) liberation movement; the essays in *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement* do the same for lesbians. Toby Marotta's *The Politics of Homosexuality* takes the story further into the seventies. For the spirit of the early movement, I recommend Arthur Bell's *Dancing the Gay Lib Blues* and Kate Miller's autobiographical *Flying*. The essays in Karla Jay and Allen Young's *Out of the Closet* offer a wide variety of perspectives. For the arrival of gay liberation in London, see Jeffrey Weeks's *Coming Out*. Barry D. Adam's *The Rise of a Lesbian and Gay Movement* puts the gay and lesbian liberation movement in an international perspective.

CHAPTER 24—THE 1970S: THE TIMES OF HARVEY MILK AND ANITA BRYANT: Randy Shilts's *The Mayor of Castro Street* offers an invaluable depiction of the rise of Harvey Milk and gay politics in San Francisco. For an up-close look at Milk, Moscone, and Dan White and the assassinations, I recommend Mike Weiss's *Double Play*. Shilts, in *Conduct Unbecoming*, offers a sympathetic look at military rights pioneer Leonard Matlovich; so does Matlovich's biography, *The Good Soldier*, written by Mike Hippel, with participation (and extensive quotes) from Matlovich. For Oliver Sipple, the man who saved President Ford's life, see Shilts's *The Mayor of Castro Street*.

CHAPTER 25—SEX AND MUSIC IN THE SEVENTIES: Edmund White's *States of Desire* offers a fascinating examination of gay male culture in the decade before AIDS. Dennis Altman's essays in *Coming Out in the Seventies* take a critical look at the effects of sexual liberation. But Andrew Holleran's novel, *Dancer from the Dance*, probably evokes the era better than any other work.

CHAPTER 26—LESBIAN NATION AND WOMEN'S MUSIC: Faderman's *Odd Girls* gives a good perspective on the period, while frequently

taking a critical stance. For the theoretics behind "Lesbian Nation," see Jill Johnston's book of the same name, Rita Mae Brown and Charlotte Bunch's essays, and Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." The material on women's music and its role in creating lesbian culture comes largely from interviews I conducted previously with singer Holly Near and Judy Dlugacz, head of Olivia Records.

CHAPTER 27—THE AGE OF AIDS: As with the years immediately following Stonewall, the Age of AIDS is probably the most documented period in contemporary U.S. gay history. Despite its biases, Randy Shilt's *And the Band Played On* remains the most valuable source on the early days of the epidemic. In view of the role that Larry Kramer played as the catalyst for so much of the decade's AIDS organizing, his collection of essays and speeches, *Reports from the Holocaustist*, represents an important record. Frances Fitzgerald's *Cities on a Hill* offers a superb journalistic portrait of San Francisco during the early AIDS years; Andrew Holleran's essays in *Ground Zero* provide an inside look at gay New York City. Bruce Nussbaum's *Best Intentions* examines AIDS organizing and the politics of AIDS research. Michaelangelo Signorile's *Queer in America* portrays the radicalism of ACT UP and Queer Nation from the point of view of the leading proponent of "outing." Phyllis Burke's *Family Values* gives a West Coast perspective on Queer Nation. (Burke also provides an engaging account of lesbian parenthood.)

CHAPTER 28—COMMUNISM AND FASCISM: For a look at Communism in the Soviet Union and China and its effect on homosexuals, I drew on newspaper and magazine articles from sources ranging from *Christopher Street* to the *Washington Post*. Bret Hinsch's *Passions of the Cut Steeve* explores same-sex love in ancient China, although it does not attempt to treat the modern period. For Cuba, Allen Young's *Gays Under the Cuban Revolution* is a good introduction. Cuban novelist Reinaldo Arenas's memoir, *Before Night Falls*, is a vital source, despite its violently anti-Castro tone. Extremely antagonistic to Castro but also important is the 1984 documentary film *Improper Conduct*. For Argentina, I made use of an essay on Argentine gay history by the eminent sociologist Juan José Sebreli, as well as my own reportage in *Out in the World*.

CHAPTER 29—ENGLAND: THE BATTLE OVER CLAUSE 28: Once again, Stephen Jeffery-Poulter's *Peers, Queers, and Commons* documents the period most thoroughly. Peter Jenkins's book *Mrs. Thatcher's Revolution* gives a good picture of the general political background to Clause 28. For the South Africa section, I referred to Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron's anthology *Defiant Desire*, as well as my own interviews with Simon Nkoli.

CHAPTER 30—JAPAN: I made use of biographies of Yukio Mishima by Henry Scott-Stokes and John Nathan. Mishima's novel *Forbidden Colors* presents a portrait of gay life in 1950s Japan. For a look at Japanese attitudes toward same-sex love among males in the premodern period, see Gary Leupp's forthcoming *Male Colors*. For the more modern period, see my *Out in the World*.

CHAPTER 31—THE CLINTON YEARS: For my discussion of the battle over gays in the military, I used newspaper coverage, particularly *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, as well as magazines ranging from *Newsweek* to *The New Republic* to *The Advocate*. Andrew Kopkind's article "The Gay Moment," published in *The Nation*, provides a good account of the social and cultural changes that marked the first year of the Clinton presidency. For an analysis of gay political failures of the military battle, I recommend Chris Bull's article "And the Ban Played On," in *The Advocate*, and Mark Schoof's piece, "No Quick Fix," in *Out*.