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THE HOMOSEXUAL MENACE

THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY IN COLD WAR AMERICA

The persecutions of gay men and lesbians during the McCarthy era are the essential political context for understanding the work of Harry Hay and his colleagues, described in the previous essay, in launching a gay freedom struggle in the United States. The 1950s were a grim period for gay men and lesbians. Neither before nor since has oppression against us been so intensely concentrated. "The Homosexual Menace" traces the history of that era.

I also intended that this exploration of a particular moment of gay history would begin to suggest the importance of including the study of homosexuality into the larger work of interpreting the history of the United States. Knowledge of this episode, I am convinced, can give us a more nuanced and accurate perception of Cold War America. Sexuality, gender, and the family are not separate, isolated subjects, but integral to understanding the whole of a society's history.

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Over the last two decades, new social historians, feminist historians, and historical demographers together have shifted the focus of the discipline away from its traditional concern with politics, war, and diplomacy toward an examination of what might broadly be called the private realm. Gradually, this reorientation has expanded to include the sexual. Community studies, the reconstruction of family

life, examination of marriage patterns and fertility rates, the investigation of the domestic sphere in which many women moved, the exploration of popular culture, and other topics often intersect at the point of sexuality. Historians have pursued these connections and are now directing more attention than ever before to the study of erotic life.

Meanwhile, events since the 1960s have alerted us to the importance of sexuality as an area of political contention. Eroticism in contemporary America is clearly more than a private matter. During the 1970s both women's liberation and gay liberation became major social forces in part by their assertion that the personal is political. They succeeded in mobilizing millions of women and men around sexual concerns. In local, state, and national politics, issues of abortion and reproductive rights, rape, sexual harassment, and homosexuality stimulated intense debate, and in many cases substantive changes in policy and public attitudes took place. By the late 1970s, moreover, the victories of the feminist and gay movements had provoked a backlash. A well-organized, well-financed movement, often referred to as the New Right and strongly grounded in Christian fundamentalism, attempted to erase the changes of the previous few years. With sexual issues as its motivating force, the New Right provided much of the energy behind Ronald Reagan's successful campaign for the presidency. During the 1980s sexuality moved even closer to center stage in American politics, as the issues of abortion, gay rights, pornography, and, most recently, AIDS, have polarized Americans.

The contemporary scene certainly suggests that it is worth investigating the intersection of sexuality and politics in the American past—how sexuality has worked its way into politics and, conversely, how politics has impinged upon sexual expression. In this essay I would like to turn attention to the 1950s, the decade when Cold War tensions were at their height, and explore a moment when the American political system seized upon one particular aspect of sexual life. Throughout these years the state mobilized considerable resources against homosexuals and lesbians. The image of the homosexual as a menace to society sharpened in the 1950s and the sanctions faced by gay men and women intensified. In the first part of the essay I will examine the anti-homosexual campaigns of the Cold War era and then move on to suggest what lay behind them.

I

Homosexuality made its unexpected debut as an issue of Cold War domestic politics in February 1950. During hearings before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Under Secretary of State John Peurifoy mentioned that most of the

ninety-one employees who had been dismissed for reasons of “moral turpitude” were homosexuals.¹ The revelation could hardly have come at a less fortunate time for the Truman administration or for gay Americans. The previous few months had witnessed a series of events that encouraged the exploitation of fears about national security—the Communist victory in China, the detonation of an atom bomb by the Soviet Union, the conviction of Alger Hiss on charges of perjury, and the trial in New York of Judith Coplon for espionage. A few days before *Peurifoy* testified, Senator Joseph McCarthy had delivered his famous Wheeling, West Virginia, speech in which he claimed that the State Department was riddled with Communists. Eager to discredit President Truman and the Democrats, Republicans saw in *Peurifoy*’s remarks another opportunity to cast doubt upon the administration’s competence to safeguard the nation’s security.²

In the succeeding months the danger posed by “sexual perverts” became a staple of partisan rhetoric. Several Republican senators charged that homosexuals had infiltrated the executive branch of the government and that the Truman administration had failed to take corrective action. Governor Thomas Dewey of New York, the Republican presidential candidate in 1948, accused Truman of condoning the presence of sex offenders on the federal payroll. When the officer in charge of the District of Columbia vice squad testified at a Congressional hearing that thousands of “sexual deviates” worked for the government, pressure for an investigation built. Finally, in June 1950 the Senate authorized a formal inquiry into the employment of “homosexuals and other moral perverts” in government.³

The report that the Senate released in December 1950 painted a threatening picture of homosexual civil servants. Significantly, the senators never questioned the assumption that government employment of gay men and women was undesirable; instead, they treated it as a self-evident problem. The investigating committee offered two closely connected arguments to buttress its conclusion that homosexuals should be excluded from government service. The first pertained to the “character” of the homosexual who allegedly lacked “emotional stability” and whose “moral fiber” had been weakened by sexual indulgence. Homosexuality took on the form of a contagious disease that threatened the health of anyone who came near it. Even one “sex pervert in a Government agency,” the committee warned,

tends to have a corrosive influence upon his fellow employees. These perverts will frequently attempt to entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices. This is particularly true in the case of young and impressionable people who might come under the influence of a pervert. . . . One homosexual can pollute a Government office.

The second rationale for exclusion concerned the danger of blackmail. "The social stigma attached to sex perversion is so great," the committee noted, that blackmailers made "a regular practice of preying upon the homosexual." Already morally enfeebled by sexual indulgence, homosexuals would succumb to the blandishments of the spy and betray their country rather than risk the exposure of their sexual identity. The only evidence the committee provided to support its contention was the case of an Austrian intelligence officer early in the twentieth century.⁴

The homosexual menace remained a theme of American political culture throughout the McCarthy era. In committee hearings legislators persistently interrogated federal officials about the employment of "sex perverts." Right-wing organizations combined charges of Communist infiltration with accusations about sex offenders on the government payroll.⁵ Lee Mortimer, a columnist for the Hearst-owned *New York Daily Mirror*, published a series of sensationalistic "Confidential" books that capitalized on the homosexual issue. Lesbians, according to Mortimer, formed cells in schools and colleges that preyed upon the innocent. They infiltrated the armed services, where they seduced, and sometimes "raped," their peers. Mortimer warned that "10,000 faggots" had escaped detection and that the government remained "honeycombed in high places with people you wouldn't let in your garbage wagons." The pens of right-wing ideologues transformed homosexuality into an epidemic infecting the nation, actively spread by Communists to sap the strength of the next generation.⁶

The Senate report, as well as the rhetoric and articles on homosexuality, served as prelude to the imposition of heavier penalties against gay men and women. During the 1950s the web of oppression tightened around homosexuals and lesbians. An executive order barred them from all federal jobs, and dismissals from government service rose sharply. The military intensified its purges of gay men and lesbians. The Post Office tampered with their mail, the FBI initiated widespread surveillance of homosexual meeting places and activities, and urban police forces stepped up their harassment.

Dismissals from civilian posts in the federal government increased as soon as the sexual pervert issue arose. From 1947 through March 1950, they had averaged only five per month, but in the next six months the figure increased twelvefold. Within weeks after Eisenhower's inauguration, the Republican president issued an executive order that made homosexuality sufficient and necessary grounds for disbarment from federal employment. In addition, all applicants for government jobs faced security investigations, and the number of homosexuals and lesbians who never made it past the screening process far exceeded those whose employment was terminated. States and municipalities, meanwhile, followed the lead of the federal

government in demanding moral probity from their personnel. The states also enforced rigorous standards in the licensing of many professions. Corporations under government contract applied to their workers the security provisions of the Eisenhower administration. The Coast Guard enforced a similar system of regulations for merchant sailors, longshore workers, and other maritime laborers. One study in the mid-1950s estimated that over 12,600,000 workers—more than twenty percent of the labor force—faced loyalty-security investigations.⁷

The military, too, intensified its search for homosexuals and lesbians in its ranks. During the late 1940s discharges for homosexuality averaged slightly over 1,000 per year. But in the atmosphere of heightened concern for national security that the Cold War provoked, even the military worked overtime to purge homosexuals. Separations averaged 2,000 per year in the early 1950s and rose to over 3,000 by the beginning of the next decade. Exploiting the sense of terror and helplessness that an investigation provoked, military authorities often trampled upon the rights of gay and nongay personnel alike.⁸ Late in 1950, for example, the military began a “housecleaning” of lesbians at its bases in the South. As one corporal under investigation reported:

Eleven girls were called in and questioned as to their alleged homosexuality . . . The girls being sick of the worry and strain of being under suspicion and being promised by a very likable chap Capt. Dickey of the OSI (Office of Special Investigation) that they would receive General Discharges if they confessed, all proceeded to do so and after confessing were informed that it wasn't enough to incriminate only themselves—they must write down also someone else with whom they had homosexual relations—this done they waited and at the end of January they were all out with Undesirables.

Altogether, at least three dozen women received separations at Lackland, Kessler, and Wright-Patterson Air Force Bases. The cost in human suffering hidden behind these numbers, and the thousands of other discharged women and men, defies calculation. Two of the women caught in the investigation mentioned earlier committed suicide; the others carried a burden that one study called “a life stigma.”⁹

Since most homosexuals and lesbians could mask their identity, the presumption that they imperiled national security led the government to adopt extraordinary measures to break their cover. In 1950 the FBI, responsible for supplying the Civil Service Commission with information on government employees and applicants, established liaisons with police departments throughout the country. Not content merely to screen particular individuals, it adopted a preventive strategy that

justified widespread surveillance. Cooperative vice squad officers supplied the bureau with records of morals arrests, regardless of the disposition of a case. Regional FBI offices clipped press articles about the gay subculture, gathered data on gay bars, compiled lists of other places frequented by homosexuals, and infiltrated gay rights organizations such as the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. Agents sometimes exhibited considerable zeal in using the information they collected.¹⁰ In an affidavit submitted to the American Civil Liberties Union, one former employee of the federal government described how the FBI hounded him for over a decade after he left his civil service job. Agents informed his employers and coworkers about the man's sexual identity, and he experienced merciless ridicule at work. When an arm injury left him disabled, he was denied vocational retraining by the state of Illinois because of his homosexuality. As late as the early 1960s, FBI agents visited him at home in an effort to extract the names of homosexual acquaintances.¹¹

The Post Office, too, participated in extralegal harassment. Using obscenity statutes as a rationale, the department established a watch on the recipients of physique magazines and other gay male erotica. Postal inspectors joined pen pal clubs that were often used by male homosexuals as a way of meeting one another, began writing to men they believed might be gay, and if their suspicions proved correct, placed tracers on the victim's mail to locate other homosexuals. A professor in Maryland and an employee of the department of highways in Pennsylvania lost their jobs after the Post Office revealed to their employers that the men received mail implicating them in homosexual activity.¹²

The highly publicized labeling of lesbians and homosexuals as moral perverts and national security risks, and the antigay policy of the federal government, gave local police forces across the country free rein in harassing them. Throughout the 1950s lesbians and gay men suffered from unpredictable, brutal crackdowns. Women generally encountered the police in and around lesbian bars while men also faced arrest in public cruising areas, but even the homes of gay men and women lacked immunity from vice squads. Newspaper headlines would strike fear into the heart of the gay population by announcing that the police were combing the city for nests of deviates. Editors often printed names, addresses, and places of employment of men and women arrested in bar raids.¹³ Arrests were substantial in many cities. In the District of Columbia they topped 1,000 per year during the early 1950s; in Philadelphia misdemeanor charges against lesbians and homosexuals averaged one hundred per month. Arrests fluctuated enormously as unexpected sweeps of gay bars could lead to scores of victims in a single night. New York, New Orleans, Dallas, San Francisco, and Baltimore were among the cities that witnessed sudden upsurges in police action against homosexuals and lesbians in

the 1950s. A survey of male homosexuals conducted by the Institute for Sex Research revealed how far police action extended into the gay world: twenty percent of the respondents had encountered trouble with law enforcement officers.¹⁴

In some localities the concern about homosexuality became an obsession. In Boise, Idaho, the arrest of three men in November 1955 on charges of sexual activity with teenagers precipitated a fifteen-month investigation into the city's male homosexual subculture. A curfew was imposed on Boise's youth, and the city brought in an outside investigator with experience in ferreting out homosexuals. Over 150 news stories appeared in the local press, and newspapers in neighboring states gave prominent coverage to the witch-hunt. Gay men fled Boise by the score as the police called in 1,400 residents for questioning and pressured homosexuals into naming friends.¹⁵

The issue of homosexuality also surfaced repeatedly in Florida throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. In Miami in 1954, the murder of two homosexuals by "queerbashers" who had picked up their victims in a gay bar led the mayor to reverse a long-standing policy of closing his eyes to the existence of the establishments. In a strange twist, the individuals most in need of protection became the targets of the police, who made sweeps of the bars and beefed up their patrols of local parks and beaches. The Miami City Council passed a law mandating special attendants in movie theaters to protect youth and another that prohibited establishments selling liquor from employing or serving homosexuals. In testimony before a Senate committee investigating juvenile delinquency, the mayor of Miami called for an amendment to the so-called white slavery act so that homosexuals could be prosecuted under it. A special file containing the names of those arrested on homosexual-related charges was circulated to police departments throughout southern Florida.¹⁶ In 1958 concern spread to the state legislature as a special committee spearheaded a sensationalistic investigation in Gainesville. The committee collected several thousand pages of testimony, grilled hundreds of witnesses, and exhibited few compunctions about releasing information based on hearsay and unsubstantiated accusations. Sixteen staff and faculty members of the University of Florida eventually lost their positions on charges of homosexuality; significantly, all of them had been active in the civil rights movement in Florida.¹⁷

2

Although the preoccupation with "sexual perversion" appears, in retrospect, bizarre and irrational, the incorporation of gay women and men into the demonol-

ogy of the McCarthy era required little effort. According to right-wing ideologues, leftist teachers poisoned the minds of their students; lesbians and homosexuals corrupted the bodies of the young. Since Communists bore no identifying physical characteristics, they were able to infiltrate the government and commit treason against their country. Bereft of integrity, they exhibited loyalty only to an alien ideology that inspired fanatical passion. Homosexuals, too, could escape detection and thus insinuate themselves into every branch of the government. The slaves of their sexual passions, they would stop at nothing to gratify their desires until the satisfaction of animal needs finally destroyed their moral sense. Communists taught their children to betray their parents; “mannish” women mocked the ideals of marriage and motherhood. Lacking toughness, the effete men of the eastern establishment lost China and Eastern Europe to the enemy, while weak-willed, pleasure-obsessed homosexuals—“half-men”—feminized everything they touched and sapped the masculine vigor that had tamed a continent. The congruence between the stereotypes of Communists and homosexuals made the scapegoating of gay men and women a simple matter.

Still, the special targeting of homosexuals and lesbians during the Cold War marked a significant departure from the past. Although it grew out of a centuries-long cultural tradition that was clearly hostile to homoerotic activities, there was no model for it in America’s history. In 1920, for instance, the Senate investigated “immoral conditions” of a homosexual nature at the naval training station in Newport, Rhode Island. In important ways the political context resembled that of the McCarthy era—a world war had recently ended, a major Communist revolution had taken place, the nation was in the midst of a red scare, and Republicans were trying to discredit a Democratic administration. Yet, although the Senate report expressed intense loathing for homosexuals, it reserved its strongest condemnation for the methods used to entrap them and made no effort to arouse an anti-homosexual campaign.¹⁸

The need to explain the scapegoating of gay men and lesbians becomes even more apparent when one recalls that the initial attacks grew out of the belief that the vulnerability of homosexuals to blackmail made them likely candidates for treason. The threat to security informed the Senate investigation into their employment by the government, pushed the government to exclude them from its service, and rationalized the widespread surveillance by the FBI. Yet at no time during this period did the government present evidence to sustain its contention about blackmail. How then does one explain the massive mobilization of resources at every level of government to unmask the homosexual menace? Why did the 1950s witness so great an intensification of the penalties directed at lesbians and gay

men? The answer, I think, may be found by looking at the changes in sexual expression, gender roles, and family stability that occurred in the previous two decades.

Taken together, the Great Depression and World War II seriously disrupted family life, traditional gender arrangements, and patterns of sexual behavior. The prolonged economic dislocations of the 1930s led to a significant drop in both marriage and birth rates. The inability of young adults to find stable employment and achieve financial independence from parents forced a postponement of marriage. The discrimination that married women in particular faced in the labor market encouraged young single women to remain unwed. Although birth rates had been declining steadily for over a century, the depression years witnessed an acceleration of this trend. Extreme economic hardship may have drawn some families together, but it also certainly meant that many young women and men never realized their expectation of a family of their own.¹⁹

Wartime brought the return of prosperity and full employment and, for a short time in the early 1940s, a rush toward marriage and childbearing. But far more significant were the disruptions caused by war. Families endured prolonged separations, divorce and desertion occurred more frequently, and the trend toward sexual permissiveness accelerated. Juvenile delinquency emerged as a perplexing social problem, and the rate of premarital pregnancy and illegitimacy rose. Women, especially those who were married and had children, entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers. They not only took the low-paying jobs traditionally available to them, but also filled positions that were normally occupied by men and that promised them financial security. At the same time the widespread use of psychiatrists by the government during the war enormously increased the prestige and influence of the profession. The emphasis of mental health professionals on family dynamics as a source of individual maladjustment focused concern on the instability of family life.²⁰

World War II also marked a critical turning point in the social expression of homosexuality. It created a substantially new "erotic situation" that led to a sudden coalescence of an urban gay subculture in the 1940s. The war plucked millions of young men and women, whose sexual identities were just forming, out of their homes, out of towns and small cities, and away from the heterosexual environment of the family, and dropped them into essentially sex-segregated situations—as GIs, as WACS and WAVES, in same-sex roominghouses for women workers who had relocated to find employment. Wartime society freed millions of the young from the settings where heterosexuality was normally encouraged. For men and women who were already gay, the war provided the opportunity to meet persons like

themselves, while others were able to act on erotic desires they might otherwise have denied. World War II was something of a nationwide “coming out” experience for homosexuals and lesbians.²¹

The evidence to support this contention is accumulating as the exploration of the social history of the gay subculture progresses. Lisa Ben, for instance, came out during the war. Leaving the small California farming community where she was born and raised, she came to Los Angeles to find work and lived in a women’s boardinghouse. There, she met for the first time lesbians who took her to gay bars and introduced her to other gay women. Donald Vining, a young man with lots of homosexual desire but few gay experiences, moved to New York during the war and worked at a large YMCA. His diary reveals numerous erotic adventures with soldiers, sailors, marines, and civilians who were also away from home. Even oppression could have positive side effects. When Pat Bond, a lesbian from Davenport, Iowa, was caught up in a purge of lesbians from the WACS in the Pacific, she did not return to Iowa. She stayed in San Francisco and became part of a community of lesbians.²²

These changes added up to more than the sum of the individual biographies. Lesbians and gay men in association with one another created institutions to bolster their identity. Places as diverse as San Jose, Denver, Kansas City, Buffalo, and Worcester, Massachusetts, had their first gay bars in the 1940s. The immediate postwar period also witnessed a minor efflorescence of gay male and lesbian literature. The social expression of homosexual behavior took on a substantially new form during these years as a stable urban gay subculture appeared in many American cities.²³

Finally, the publication in 1948 of the Kinsey study of male sexual behavior put in bold relief concerns about American sexual morality. The release of the huge scientific tome was the publishing event of the year. The book remained high on the best-seller list for several months, sold a quarter of a million copies, and received widespread attention in the press, popular magazines, and specialized journals. Most men, the study found, were sexually active by age fifteen. Premarital and extramarital sex was typical rather than exceptional, and virtually all men had violated the law at least once in pursuit of an orgasm. Worst of all, perhaps, were Kinsey’s conclusions about the incidence of homosexuality. Over a third of his sample had had at least one adult homosexual experience, homoerotic activity predominated for at least a three-year period in one of eight cases, and four percent of American men were exclusively homosexual. The sexual portrait of the American male that the Kinsey study sketched could only have horrified moral conservatives.²⁴

The disruptions created by depression and war, as well as the evolution of a stable gay subculture, did not occur in isolation. From the 1920s to the 1950s, the

place of sexuality in American life was also changing in profound ways. Influenced by the spread of Freudianism, marital advice literature highlighted the importance of erotic pleasure in achieving a successful marriage. Youth were enjoying greater autonomy in sexual matters. A school-based peer culture, the availability of the automobile, and innovations in mass culture allowed them to date and go steady without the chaperonage of adults. The success of the birth control movement in making contraceptives more widely available helped sustain the shift to a sexuality that was nonprocreative and, increasingly, nonmarital. And, after World War II, the spread of pornography beyond its traditional place in a marginal, illicit underground accentuated the flux in sexual values.²⁵

3

Government policymakers and business leaders approached the end of World War II with two overriding and interlocking concerns. With memories of the Great Depression still vivid, they set their minds on achieving a stable international order and a prosperous domestic economy. Postwar conditions, however, did not augur well for either goal. The Soviet Union retained hegemony in Eastern Europe, civil wars raged in China and Greece, the economy of Western Europe was in ruins, and Communists were making a serious bid for power in Italy and France. At home, the first year of peace brought a wave of strikes in basic industries, and labor militancy threatened to escalate. Inflation immediately after the war was followed later in the decade by recession.

The policies that political leaders pursued in the international arena helped to condition their response to domestic instability. The rhetoric about Communist aggression abroad inevitably fed concerns about subversion at home and justified extraordinary measures. As American Communists were pushed beyond the pale of political legitimacy, the fragile popular front of the 1930s in which New Deal liberals, progressives, and Communists worked together collapsed. The attorney general's list of subversive organizations destroyed the effectiveness of many reform efforts, and labor militancy declined as Communists were expelled from positions of union leadership. The House Un-American Activities Committee's highly publicized hearings inhibited the expression of dissent in the field of education and in cultural activity. The political spectrum both shifted to the right and narrowed considerably in the postwar years.²⁶

Accompanying these efforts were a series of initiatives that one can reasonably describe as a politics of personal life tailored to restore a different form of domestic tranquility. Some of these measures were decidedly benevolent. A generous GI Bill

of Rights and federal home mortgages, for instance, subsidized millions of young men so that they could more easily and quickly assume the role of husband and father. Other measures fell on the side of coercion, psychological or otherwise. Even before the war ended, women faced a barrage of propaganda informing them that their jobs really belonged to men and extolling the virtues of marriage and childrearing. In the media, pictures of sparkling, well-equipped kitchens occupied by young mothers with babies dangling from their arms replaced images of women in hardhats surrounded by heavy machinery. Popular psychology books and women's magazines equated femininity with marriage and motherhood. Where these methods failed, employers could simply fire women, since female workers lacked the support of either organized labor or federal antidiscrimination statutes. From 1944 to 1946 the number of women workers fell by four million.²⁷

Most extreme, however, were those currents that induced fear and promised punishment. For example, an extensive popular literature in the late 1940s described the grave threat that a surge in sex crimes posed to the women and children of America. Just as hidden enemies imperiled the security of the nation, dangerous criminals lurking in the shadows menaced the postwar family. J. Edgar Hoover himself sounded the alarm, and a dozen states convened special commissions to find ways of containing the sexual psychopath. Eventually, more than half the states passed sexual psychopath laws. Those enacted at the height of the Cold War tended to wreak havoc on constitutional rights.²⁸

When placed in this context, the Cold War era's preoccupation with the homosexual menace appears less like a bizarre, irrational expression of McCarthyism and emerges, instead, as an integral component of postwar American society and politics. The anti-homosexual campaigns of the 1950s represented but one front in a widespread effort to reconstruct patterns of sexuality and gender relations shaken by depression and war. The targeting of homosexuals and lesbians itself testified to the depth of the changes that had occurred in the 1940s since, without the growth of a gay subculture, it is difficult to imagine the homosexual issue carrying much weight. The labeling of sexual deviants helped to define the norm for men and women. It raised the costs of remaining outside the traditional family even as other, nonpunitive approaches encouraged a resurgence of traditional male and female roles. There was a congruence between anti-Communism in the sphere of politics and social concern over homosexuality. The attempt to suppress sexual deviance paralleled and reinforced the efforts to quash political dissent.

Finally, one should note the unintended consequence of the McCarthy era campaigns. In marshaling the resources of the state and the media against the more extensive gay subcultures of midcentury, political and moral conservatives unwittingly helped weld that subculture together. The penalties directed at gay

men and lesbians grew so intense that they fostered a collective consciousness of oppression. Thus, in the 1950s a gay emancipation movement first took shape, spreading slowly until the political radicalism of the 1960s infiltrated the gay world. By the end of the 1960s, a resurgent feminism and a militant gay liberation movement would usher in a new era of sexual politics, assaulting the policies and practices of Cold War America.

NOTES

1. *New York Times*, 1 March 1950, 1. A more detailed discussion of these events may be found in John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), ch. 3.
2. See Athan Theoharis, *Seeds of Repression: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of McCarthyism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971); Alan Harper, *The Politics of Loyalty: The White House and the Communist Issue, 1946–52* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1969); Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, eds., *The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1974); Allen Weinstein, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (New York: Knopf, 1978); and David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Free Press, 1983).
3. For discussions of the “sexual pervert” issue see *New York Times*, 9 March 1950, 1; 15 March 1950, 1; 19 April 1950, 25; 25 April 1950, 5; 26 April 1950, 3; 5 May 1950, 15; 20 May 1950, 8; 15 June 1950, 6. See also the series of articles by Max Lerner in the *New York Post*, 10–23 July 1950.
4. U.S. Senate, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments, *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government* (Washington, D.C.: 1950). The quotations may be found on pages 3–5.
5. *New York Times*, 28 March 1951, 2; 26 June 1953, 4; 13 April 1953, 20; *Senator McCarthy's Methods*, a pamphlet published by the Committee for McCarthyism of the Constitutional Educational League, New York City, 1954, copy in Herbert Lehman papers, Columbia University.
6. Lee Mortimer, *Washington Confidential Today* (New York: 1952; Paperback Library ed., 1962), 110–19; Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, *U.S.A. Confidential* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1952), 43–45.
7. *Employment of Homosexuals*, 7–9, 12–13; Executive Order 10450, reprinted in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (April 1955): 156–58; *New York Times*, 4 January 1955,

- 15; Eleanor Bontecou, *The Federal Loyalty-Security Program* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1953), 272–99, 323–35; Ralph S. Brown, Jr., *Loyalty and Security: Employment Tests in the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 256–60; Karl M. Bowman and Bernice Engle, “A Psychiatric Evaluation of the Laws of Homosexuality,” *Temple Law Quarterly Review* 29 (1956): 299–300. The twenty percent figure comes from Ralph S. Brown, Jr., “Loyalty-Security Measures and Employment Opportunities,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (April 1955): 113–17.
8. *Employment of Homosexuals*, 8; Colin Williams and Martin Weinberg, *Homosexuals and the Military: A Study of Less Than Honorable Discharge* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 31–36, 45–47, 53; Clifford A. Dougherty and Norman B. Lynch, “The Administrative Discharge: Military Justice?” *George Washington Law Review* 33 (1964): 498–528; Jerome A. Susskind, “Military Administrative Discharge Boards: The Right to Confrontation and Cross-Examination,” *Michigan State Bar Journal* 46 (1965): 25–32.
9. Barbara J. Scammell to ACLU, 15 February 1951, and June Fusca to ACLU, 16 March and 23 April 1951, all in General Correspondence, Vol. 16, 1951, ACLU papers, Princeton University. The phrase “life stigma” comes from Williams and Weinberg, *Homosexuals and the Military*, 36. See also Allen Bérubé and John D’Emilio, “The Military and Lesbians during the McCarthy Years,” *Signs* 9 (1984): 759–75.
10. See J. Edgar Hoover, “Role of the FBI in the Federal Employee Security Program,” *Northwestern University Law Review* 49 (1954): 333–47. The information on the FBI surveillance program comes from several hundred pages of documents obtained from the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act, File Classification Nos. 94-843, 94-1001, 94-283, 100-37394, and 100-45888.
11. B. D. H., “Personal and Confidential History,” in General Correspondence, Vol. 43, 1964, ACLU papers.
12. The postal surveillance did not come to light until the mid-1960s. See Alan Reitman to Affiliates, Memo, 1 September 1965; Ernest Mazey to Reitman, 10 September 1965; and Spencer Coxe to Reitman, 5 August 1965, all in General Correspondence, Vol. 1, 1965, ACLU papers. See also *New Republic*, 21 August 1965, 6–7; *Newsweek*, 13 June 1966, 24.
13. With the exception of the Boise scandal, discussed below, local police activities against gay men and women did not receive coverage beyond the pages of local papers. It is, accordingly, a laborious process to uncover incidents of harassment. The most accessible sources are the publications of gay organizations which, beginning in the mid-1950s, covered police practices extensively. *ONE* magazine is by far the best source, with news items from around the country, but the *Ladder* and the *Mattachine Review* are also valuable sources. James Kepner, who wrote articles on police practices for *ONE*, has saved the clippings from local newspapers that readers sent to him. The clippings may be found in the National Gay Archives in Los Angeles.
14. On the District of Columbia see *Employment of Homosexuals*, 15–19; *Kelly v. US.*, 194 F.2d 150 (D.C. Circuit, 1952); 90 A.2d 233 (D.C. Munic. Ct. App., 1952); *McDermott*

- v. *US.*, 98 A .2d 287 (D.C. Munic. Ct. App., 1953). On Philadelphia, see Council on Religion and the Homosexual, *The Challenge and Progress of Homosexual Law Reform* (San Francisco: 1968), 18. On New York, see *ONE* (November 1953): 19, and Lee Mortimer's columns in the *Daily Mirror*, 12 August 1959, 3 November 1959, and 26 January 1960. On New Orleans, see Elly Bulkin, "An Old Dyke's Tale: An Interview with Doris Lunden," *Conditions: Six* (1980): 18. On San Francisco, see the *Ladder* (November 1956): 5. On Baltimore, see *ONE* (April 1955): 14, and (December 1955): 10, and *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 3 and 5 October 1955, clippings in National Gay Archives. On other cities, see *ONE* (November 1955): 8; (November 1958): 17; (December 1958): 15; and (June 1959): 13. For the ISR survey, see John H. Gagnon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), 138–39.
15. On Boise, see *Time*, 12 December 1955, 12; John Gerassi, *The Boys of Boise* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 109–19; *Washington Mattachine Newsletter* (January 1957) 1–3.
16. On Miami, see "Miami Junks the Constitution," *ONE* (January 1954): 16–21, and "Miami Hurricane," *ONE* (November 1954): 4–8; John Orr to Herbert Levy, 13 September 1954, in General Correspondence, Vol. 19, 1954, ACLU papers. See also the extensive collections of clippings from the *Miami Herald* and the *Miami Daily News*, August and September 1954, National Gay Archives.
17. Weekly Bulletin 2015, 26 October 1958; Stuart Simon to Charlie Johns, 5 February 1959; clippings; and other material on the Johns Committee in General Correspondence, Vol. 55, 1959, ACLU papers. For the final report of the investigation, which continued for several years, see *Homosexuality and Citizenship in Florida: A Report of the Florida Legislative Investigating Committee* (Tallahassee: 1964).
18. U.S. Senate, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., Committee on Naval Affairs, *Alleged Immoral Conditions at Newport (R.I.) Naval Training Station* (Washington, D.C.: 1921).
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20. On domestic society during the war years, see Richard Polenberg, *War and Society* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972); Francis Merrill, *Social Problems on the Home Front* (New York: Harper, 1948); Ruth Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis: Some Lessons from the Great Depression," in *A Heritage of Her Own*, eds. Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979); William Chafe, *The American Woman*, chs. 6–8; Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973); Roy Hoopes, *Americans Remember the Home Front* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1977); and Richard R. Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's a War On?* (New York: Putnam, 1970). On psychiatry, see Rebecca

- Schwartz Greene, "The Role of the Psychiatrist in World War II" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1977), and William C. Menninger, *Psychiatry in a Troubled World* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).
21. On the impact of World War II on homosexual expression, see Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire* (New York: Free Press, 1990). The description of wartime and military life as a new "erotic situation" comes from Williams and Weinberg, *Homosexuals and the Military*, 57.
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23. On the spread of gay bars, see Gene Tod, "Gay Scene in Kansas City," *Phoenix* (Newsletter of the Phoenix Society of Kansas City) (August 1966): 5–6; Karla Jay and Allen Young, eds., *Lavender Culture* (New York: Jove/HBJ Publications 1979), 146–54. On literature, see Roger Austen, *Playing the Game: The Homosexual Novel in America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), 93–142, and Jeannette Foster, *Sex Variant Women in Literature*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Diana Press, 1975), 324–41.
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