

bizarre practices that would later occupy **Krafft-Ebing**. He disavowed personal involvement in the sexual life that he described so piquantly: *Lasciva est mea pagina, vita proba*, "My page is wanton, but my life is pure." He seems to have known happiness and pain both, but never passionate love. The poet had some close female friends, but was deeply moved by the beauty of young boys and sings their charms in various poems. In Martial's character—bisexual by nature—the homosexual side came out very strongly. A boy with the pseudonym *Dindymus* figures in a number of the epigrams, and like the Greek poets before him he writes of the perfume of the boy's kiss (xi, 8), but also of the disappointments which the lad made him suffer (xi, 73).

The homosexual types disparaged by the ancients—the passive-effeminate homosexual and the active-viraginous lesbian—are mercilessly satirized in his epigrams, which flagellate the *cinaedus*, the *fellator* and the *tribas*: the master who is sodomized by his slaves, the fellator with stinking breath, and the hyper-masculine tribade. Martial acknowledged that he himself desired a male who was neither too coarse nor too effeminate—the golden mean. The aesthetic element predominated in his affection for boys, as in his brief and graceful epigrams on Domitian's cupbearer (ix, 12 and 16). Though unmarried himself, he urged married men to devote themselves to their wives, no longer to younger males. Martial's work remains as a detailed record of the sexual life of the ancient world, of Rome in its heyday, a treasury of the Latin vocabulary of sexuality, and as a model for the erotic epigram in centuries to come. The entire collection survived the medieval period and continued to amuse classical scholars, as well as to inspire poets in the vernacular languages of Europe.

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Warren Johansson

## MARXISM

Stemming from the writings of **Karl Marx** (1819–1883) and **Friedrich Engels** (1820–1895), the political philosophy of "historical materialism" emerged in the *Communist Manifesto* to revolutionaries in 1848. Today their views, or versions of them, are official policy in the countries of "actually existing socialism"—in the Warsaw Pact nations of Eastern Europe, as well as in Yugoslavia, **Albania**, the People's Republic of **China**, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, **Cuba**, and Nicaragua. Outside these countries vigorous schools of Marxist thought have flourished, notably late nineteenth-century revisionism, democratic evolutionary socialism, and twentieth-century Trotskyism, as well as so-called "Western Marxism" and "Euro-Communism" which had a considerable impact on academic circles in the 1960s and 70s.

*Foundations.* The ideas of Marx and Engels fermented from radical thought in Restoration Europe, which included positivist, empiricist, **anarchist**, utopian socialist, and Christian-socialist strains. Unlike the individualist utopian **Charles Fourier**, Marx and Engels showed little interest in sex and sexual orientation; indeed they were typical Victorians in this respect. There can be little doubt that, as far as they thought of the matter at all, Marx and Engels were personally homophobic, as shown by an acerbic 1869 exchange of letters on Jean-Baptiste von Schweitzer, a German socialist rival. Schweitzer had been arrested in a park on a morals charge and not only did Marx and Engels refuse to join a committee defending him, they resorted to the cheapest form of bathroom humor in their private comments about the affair. Similar lack of subtlety characterizes their views on the pioneering homophile theories of **Karl Heinrich Ulrichs**, in which they confused uranism with **pederasty** and pederasty with **pedication** (anal intercourse).

The only important sexual passage, however, in the corpus of work pub-

lished in the lifetimes of the two founders occurs in Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884): "Greek women found plenty of opportunity for deceiving their husbands. The men . . . amused themselves with *hetaerae*; but this degradation of women was avenged on the men and degraded them till they fell into the abominable practice of pederasty (*Knabenliebe*) and degraded alike their gods and themselves with the myth of Ganymede." Engels' tracing of the problem to heterosexual infidelities is curious in view of his own record of amorous adventurism. Of course there is no truth in the innuendo propagated by a widely reprinted modern cartoon showing Marx and Engels walking hand in hand as lovers.

Setting aside these personalia, as a general principle one may concede the possibility that flaws in the initial formulation of a theory may be eliminated in its later maturing. It remains to be seen, however, whether the "flaw" of homophobia has been, or can be excised from orthodox Marxism.

*Historical Unfolding.* As in Freudian psychoanalysis, the very question of what is orthodox in Marxism has incited an enormous debate. Marx himself ejected Mikhail Bakunin and other anarchists, all of whom by doctrine tolerated homosexuality, from the First International. Yet one is on firm ground in saying that Social Democracy (which also had non-Marxist roots) departed in two fundamental respects: it favored gradual reform instead of revolutionary upheaval and held that attitudes could be changed before the economy was transformed—thus eroding the basic Marxist doctrine of the dependency of the cultural superstructure on the economic base. In the 1890s, some Social Democrats like August Bebel and Eduard Bernstein in Germany sought to foster a more enlightened social attitude, advocating women's rights and the elimination of laws criminalizing homosexuals. Such efforts were largely conducted among intellectuals and bureaucrats who intuited

that the masses were not yet prepared to discard inherited prejudices. The Social Democrats were after 1918 to be violently rejected on other grounds as renegades by the more orthodox wing of Marxism under the leadership of Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Out of this difference arose, after the Russian Revolution, a sharp antagonism between European Social Democratic and Labor parties on one hand and Communist and Trotskyist groups on the other.

Some gay leftists have projected a rosy picture of homosexual life in Russia in the years after the 1917 revolution. Yet the abrogation of the tsarist law against sodomy was simply part of an overall rejection of the laws of the old regime, and significantly the Soviets never undertook any campaign to reduce popular prejudice against homosexuality, as they did, for example, against the inferior status of women, Great Russian chauvinism, and anti-Semitism. Also, despite much searching, no unequivocal statement in support of homosexual rights has ever been unearthed from the prolific writings of Lenin and Trotsky, even though both had lived in Western Europe at the time of the early German homosexual rights movement. Under Lenin Russian homosexuals fared no better—if even as well—as they had done in the last decades of tsarist rule, when such brilliant figures as Tchaikovsky, Kuzmin, and Kluev came to the fore.

In the 1920s some German homosexual movement figures such as Magnus Hirschfeld and Richard Linsert (the latter a minor Communist Party functionary in Berlin) were favorably impressed by reports of apparently enlightened attitudes in the Soviet Union—about which they had no direct knowledge. They would appear to have been the victims of an early disinformation campaign. Not everyone was taken in. Although André Gide proclaimed his sympathy for the Soviet Union in 1932, four years later after visiting the country he wrote openly of his disillusionment. Aware of antihomosexual legislation passed in 1934, he attempted to

bring up the matter with Stalin, though without success. On publishing his defecation from the "Popular Front" line he was attacked by French and Czechoslovak party stalwarts (who had previously lauded him to the skies) as a "poor bugger" who had mixed up "revolution and pederasty."

As early as the 1920s leaders of Western Communist parties began to float the idea that the public discussion of homosexuality, and the seeming increase in homosexual activity, resulted from the decadence of capitalism in its death throes. Homosexuality was to disappear in the healthy new society of the future. These negative attitudes also had their parallels in cultural criticism. In 1930 in the American Communist Party journal *New Masses*, Herbert Gold and others launched a campaign against "effete, fairy literature." Thornton Wilder, a principal target of the attacks, was accused of propagating a "pastel, pastiche, dilettante religion, . . . a daydream of homosexual figures in graceful gowns moving among the lilies."

After the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Marxist proponents of the decadence theory added a new layer to these attacks in their myth of "fascist perversion," some purported affinity between homosexuality and National Socialism. Leftist propaganda of this type may have played a part in Hitler's decision to liquidate his homosexual henchman Ernst Röhm, thereby distancing himself from the accusation. In June 1934, for example, the exiled Marxian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich opined: "The more clearly developed the natural heterosexual inclinations of the juvenile are, the more open he will be to revolutionary idea; the stronger the homosexual tendency within him . . . the more easily he will be drawn to the right." More generally, the heterosexuality that is so salient in the Marxist tradition may be augmented by the felt link between production and reproduction. Most Marxists are, of course, heterosexual and, in keeping with the tendency of true-believer groups to exalt all their

shared traits, subject to an unthinking bias.

Despite Gide's experience, the temptations and pleasures of political pilgrimage continued as seductive as before. Wide-eyed delegations visited the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, as often as not being taken on excursions to Potemkin villages and being regaled with highly romanticized accounts of the happiness of the masses under "actually existing socialism." After Castro's rude suppression of homosexuals in Cuba, the favorite destination of these pilgrims, who included some gay men and lesbians, shifted in the 1980s to Nicaragua, yet even there the authorities would not recognize a gay organization. Gay visits to Third World Socialist countries tend to be emotionally tinged with sympathy for nonwhite peoples as an oppressed world proletariat, mirroring the gay sense of oppression at home, while freighted with a certain amount of guilt over sexual tourism—the descent of well-heeled western gay men on the impoverished fleshpots of the tropics. Somehow sympathetic visits to struggling, Third World countries are held to atone for this perceived exploitation—even as it continues to occur.

Communist parties outside the Soviet bloc have generally been unsympathetic to homosexual participation in their activities and indifferent to gay issues. The only significant exception seems to be the independent-minded Italian Communist Party, the promoter of "Euro-Communism," which has provided material assistance to gay groups and published sensitive discussions in party periodicals. In most western countries it has been Trotskyists, with their claustrophobic and faction-ridden experience of marginality, who have provided the few organizational havens open to gay people in the world Communist movement.

*Contributions of Marxism.* Despite all these negative considerations, the contribution of Marxism to the movement for gay rights and to the interpreta-

tion of homosexual behavior itself merits separate consideration. When the second gay rights movement emerged in the form of the **Mattachine Society** in Los Angeles in 1950, a number of its leaders, preeminently Henry Hay, had backgrounds in the Communist Party (CP) of the United States. Hay used the CP model for the cellular structure he designed for **Mat-tachine**. In an era in which homosexuality was illegal in every American state, the organizational structure of a political group that had, in many countries, been forced into clandestinity in order to survive seemed relevant. The American Communist Party had also been in the forefront of the early struggle against racial segregation, and this example also proved attractive: gay rights as a form of civil rights. When the civil rights movement entered its major phase in the 1960s, Marxist groups continued active but were less visible and dominant. At this time, however, they made a major contribution to the organizing of the protests against the Vietnam war, though this was also permeated by New Left, anarchist, and hippie elements. This amalgam made its effect felt on the new gay organizations that arose in the wake of the **Stonewall Rebellion** of 1969—especially the Gay Liberation Fronts of New York and other cities. At the same time Marxist influences were appearing in some sectors of renascent feminism, and through this channel came such organizational devices as **consciousness raising**.

By the middle seventies the Marxist influence on the gay liberation movement was receding, a decline reflecting recognition of its perennial marginality in American political life and the arcane, even scholastic character of many of its intellectual debates. Before the wave ebbed, however, Marxism had caused a reexamination of the fundamentally reformist cast of the earlier movement, which saw education of the electorate and the lifting of legal restrictions as virtually the only tasks and toleration as the goal. Ridiculing such a limited approach, Marxists insisted that

deep structural changes were necessary for true sexual and personal freedom and social acceptance to become possible. To be sure, many were sceptical of the specific content of Marxist promises and visions, in view of the poor performance of countries under "actually existing socialism." The imposition of Soviet-style totalitarianism in Castro's Cuba, once the cynosure of gay radicals, dashed many hopes, and rival visions came forward: anarchist, libertarian, and communitarian. But an important lesson had been learned: that a mere subtractive approach, getting rid of oppressive laws and restrictions, would not suffice. For gay men and lesbians to flourish something more fundamental was needed: not so much a political revolution as a "change of heart."

Some of the graduate students who had been converted to Marxism in academia went on to assume tenured teaching jobs. These scholars formed what has been called the "Marxist academy," and the periodicals they created were sometimes hospitable to gay scholarship. Some who found a home in this milieu held that Marxism could make a fundamental contribution to the understanding of homosexuality itself. They argued that studies of homosexual behavior had neglected the element of **class** and class struggle, which in the standard Marxist view is the chief motor of social change. While feminists had rightly criticized this exclusive model, pointing out that gender, sexual orientation, and race are also of prime importance, there can be no doubt that class differences have been neglected even in sociological work on homosexuality. Influenced by the solidarity proclaimed by the gay movement, much empirical work tends to assume a unitary model of "the homosexual" and "the lesbian."

Some scholars influenced by Marxist dialectic advanced a more fundamental criticism of what they regarded as a mistaken notion of "unchanging gayness." Noting the anachronism that results when present-minded concepts of

gay people are projected back into the past, they boldly proposed that there is no single nature of homosexuality that is stable across time. It has been shown that the broader attempt to derive this demolition of the whole idea of human nature from the writings of Marx and Engels themselves is shaky, and that it really belongs to the thought of Georg Lukacs and the "Marxist-humanist" trend of revisionism that succeeded him. Also, it proved difficult to find a "historical materialist" grounding for the changing concepts of homoerotic behavior, an accommodation to the well-known Marxist sequence of slave-owning, feudal, capitalist, and socialist societies. What caused the shifts in same-sex paradigms remained mysterious. Moreover, this attack on the unchanging nature of homosexuality—on "essentialism," as the assumption of uniformity has been called—was not restricted to Marxists. The Social Constructionists, as the opponents of "essentialism" styled themselves, included symbolic interactionists, pragmatists, and nominalists. Still, when all is said and done, academic Marxism deserves credit for bringing into question assumptions of the historical uniformity of homosexual identities and relationships, and for asking scholars to seek an understanding of the place which these occupy within the larger framework of social change.

Finally, Marxism has made a contribution in an unexpected quarter—in the realm of theology. The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise in Latin America of "liberation theology," strongly influenced by the Marxist critique of oppression. Some scholars have sought to adapt this perspective to the emerging theology of the gay churches, where it may well serve as a useful corrective to traditionalism and liturgical preoccupations.

As this last aspect shows, the Marxist influence on homosexuality has often been indirect, mediated by feminism, by the New Left, or by liberation theology. It seems that Marxist theories

must be adapted or reformulated before they can function in the study of same-sex behavior. Moreover, Marxist concepts seem more suited to posing questions than to providing firm answers. The greatest weakness of the Marxist approach is the difficulty in correlating the changes in homosexual behavior and the attitudes toward it with the technological and economic determinism that is the very heart of Marxism, not to speak of the inability (or better refusal) of Marxian thinkers to incorporate the biological dimension of human existence into their reasoning. All the same, the Marxist contribution, whether direct or indirect, has served to broaden horizons and to strengthen the trend to supplant the present-mindedness and provincialism of the gay movement and gay studies on 1950s lines with a new outlook that is potentially subtle, critical, and multicultural.

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Wayne R. Dynes

## MASQUERADE

See **Mardi Gras and Masked Balls.**

## MASTURBATION

Broadly defined, masturbation is tactile sexual stimulation obtained by means other than intercourse.

*Techniques.* Masturbation is harmless, legal, and carries no risk of disease. Typical masturbation, involving pleasurable stroking, caressing, or massaging of the genitals and other parts of the body, is healthy fun and cannot be overdone. Soreness or chafing heals easily if treated gently, and use of a lubricant reduces irritation. For men an oil, including household oils (Crisco, cooking oil, baby oil) and some hand lotions, will work well;