

heightened cleavages over social questions. In the Bermondsey by-election of February 1983, when openly gay Peter Tatchell sought to be returned to Parliament as the official Labour candidate, his campaign suffered to systematic vilification at the hands of party stalwarts. In 1988 many Labour M.P.s voted for Clause 28, the notorious measure banning "promotion" of homosexuality.

Despite the checkered record in some countries, on the whole the growth of Social Democracy promoted a climate of liberalism in which, other factors permitting, a visible gay movement could flourish. In the early 1980s the French Socialist Party of François Mitterand proved receptive to a number of requests from the homosexual movement, eliminating the last vestiges of the Vichy restrictions on homosexual conduct. The Spanish Socialists under Felipe González enormously increased the whole sphere of sexual freedom. In Greece, however, the Socialist regime of Andreas Papandreou continued to repress homosexuality.

Conclusion. On the whole, the ideology of Social Democratic parties has been eclectic rather than doctrinaire, absorbing traits of nineteenth-century liberalism repudiated by the conservatives. At the same time they have been gingerly about offending lower middle-class deference to sexual "respectability," and they loathe to engage in a vigorous defense of gay rights in crucial electoral contests where the right (and sometimes the left) openly appeals to anti-homosexual prejudice. Despite these reservations, the progress achieved by the gay movement in Western and Central Europe would have been unimaginable without the intervention and support of the Social Democracy, however qualified in particular situations it may have been.

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SOCIAL WORK

This umbrella term comprises a range of professional services, activities, and methods concretely addressing the investigation, treatment, and material assistance of those perceived to be economically disadvantaged and socially maladjusted. Social work began in late Victorian England as a volunteer response to the wide disparity between the "two nations"—the comfortable class and the poor—and spread quickly to America and northern Europe. In the course of the twentieth century the field became professionalized, and today most social workers are state employees. Large claims have sometimes been made for social work: that it can cure society of its ills, and that it represents the conscience of a people, but these assertions are usually rejected as grandiose. Lacking a methodology of its own, social work has sometimes seemed a prisoner of the varying mixtures of economics, sociology, and psychoanalysis that have been imported to sustain its practice. Social work should probably be viewed not as a science but as a humanistic endeavor, though one in which the imperatives of bureaucracy loom large. At its best, however, social work avoids ascriptions of pathology, seeking to build on the strengths of clients so that they may take an active part in reclaiming their own lives.

Social Work and Homosexuality. The rise of the modern gay and lesbian movement after World War II has exposed the inadequacy of the publicly supported

social services for members of sexual minorities. It is not so much that professional social workers are **homophobic**—surveys have shown that they are less so than most segments of society—as that they are ignorant of the special needs of gay and lesbian clients, and hence prone to insensitivity, however unintentional. In part this situation reflects the earlier prevalence of the cultural norm of Western society which decreed heterosexual marriage to be the only acceptable, recognized form of sexual relationship; other types of liaison had to be hidden from the prying gaze of the neighbors, social workers, and the police. Moreover, most gay and lesbian clients, not being members of economically deprived families, or having severed conventional family ties, are seen as middle class, and hence outside the area of the social worker's concern. Of course not all students of social work are the same, and some individuals attend schools of social work as a prerequisite to the practice of **psychotherapy** with middle-class clients.

Gay Self-Help. Almost from the beginning of the **Mattachine Society**, America's first successful homosexual rights organization, the need to organize volunteers to supply **counseling** and—as far as possible—jobs and temporary economic assistance was recognized. Today this need is particularly acute with **youth**, with the elderly, and with people with **AIDS**. Many gay and lesbian teenagers feel compelled to leave home ("runaways"), or may even be pushed out by intensely homophobic parents ("throwaways"). If they are to escape the self-destructive subculture of drug abuse and **prostitution**, they need positive assistance. This has sometimes proved a sensitive issue, as caregivers may incur suspicion of impure motives. As regards older gay men and lesbians, research has shown that the stereotype of a lonely, desperate, unhappy old age is false. Nonetheless, older gay people have special needs, and these are the focus of such organizations as New York's Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE).

The AIDS crisis has caused new organizations to be created in major cities in North America and western Europe. The remarkable social response of the gay community to this baffling disease contrasts with the situation of the intravenous-drug-user group of AIDS patients, where dependence on public sources of therapy and counseling is total.

Even gay-organized social services may display inadequate attention to some sectors of their population. Because most gay volunteers are middle class, they may not have a full understanding of those from poor backgrounds; put differently, commonness of sexual orientation may mask difference in social class. It is often forgotten that many lesbians and gay men are parents, and their concern for their offspring is a central aspect of their lives. Finally, gay men and lesbians of color may have not only economic problems but psychological ones as well; the latter stem not only from the racism of the larger society but from lack of understanding within their own ethnic communities.

Experience has shown that the gay community need not continue to rely mainly on its own largely volunteer efforts, but that real successes can be gained in sensitizing social workers employed by the state, either during their training period or in the course of their professional activity. After all, homosexuals are entitled to a return on their tax dollars just as much as any other group, and the social disorganization caused by **prejudice** against them ultimately impacts the larger community. In some cases much may be accomplished by sitting down with the (presumably) heterosexual social workers and patiently explaining the problem. However, the bureaucratic constraints of public agencies can make progress slow. Here external pressure, including lobbying efforts and voting drives, is required. The success of gay groups in organizing is known to politicians and can be used to advantage in changing the social-work profession from the top.

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SOCIOBIOLOGY

Sociobiology is the study of behavior (in human beings and animals) from the point of view of its evolution by natural selection. The term was popularized in 1975 (the field is sometimes also called "behavioral ecology"). Narrowly, sociobiology has come to mean the study of the "why" questions of behavior: why does a particular species of fish have males that act like females do just before they lay their eggs? Broadly, it can also take in the "how" questions: how do the fish's central nervous system and hormones collaborate to produce this behavior?

Nature and Nurture. There are, of course, other approaches that have been called "biological." To the lay mind, if a trait "is" biological then it cannot be changed; if the trait "is" environmental then it can be. This is a false dichotomy, and is self-contradictory. For example, an "environmental" event like a car accident can have very fixed and unchangeable consequences [such as permanent injury], while a "biological" trait such as the growing of a beard can be routinely overridden by a cultural mandate [shaving]. Establishing the steps leading up to a trait helps one to understand the trait and perhaps to change it, regardless of whether the causation turns out to "be" biological, environmental, or some combination. The sizes, shapes, and spatial distributions of footprints are all socially determined within certain limits set by the biology of walking. But if the footprints are in sand, they

are easily changed; if they are in wet concrete, they are unchangeable (short of jack-hammering) after just a few hours.

Unfortunately, this naive nature-nurture dichotomy has been widely taken up in the social sciences. The most common view is to say that biology has an influence in the womb and very early in life, but that soon after birth the family and society socialize the infant and make the influence of biology negligible. A variation of this view maintains that biology sets the limits but socialization sets the precise outcome. A few social scientists, including a few in sexology, believe so strongly in the power of socialization that they claim that students of behavior should not bother with biology at all.

This point of view is rapidly crumbling, even within the narrow confines of sexology itself. The massive Kinsey Institute study of male and female homosexuality in blacks and whites (Bell, Weinberg, and Hammersmith, 1981) attempted to correlate hundreds of environmental factors (number and age of siblings, childhood rearing practices, social class, and the like) with adult homosexual outcome and came up with almost nothing. They very nearly found that the only powerful predictor of adult homosexuality is childhood gender nonconformity, a finding that has been replicated often, both retrospectively and prospectively. This predictor is so strong that the authors of the study considered it evidence that such nonconformity is closely linked to homosexuality developmentally—i.e., that the commonest type of adult homosexuality is just the adult expression of the childhood nonconforming trait. That is a reasonable conclusion, though one cannot thereby assume that biology has been shown to be the likely cause of sexual orientation differences.

Yet sexual orientation does run in families, according to a study conducted by Richard Pillard and James D. Weinrich. If the results are extendible to the population at large, then about 20 to 25 percent of the brothers of gay men are also gay, and 20