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## 8 Gay and Lesbian Activism in France

### *Between Integration and Community-Oriented Movements*

OVER THE past decades we have witnessed the emergence of many identity-based movements in Western Europe and the United States. Having confronted the world with the slogan "Black is beautiful," the civil rights movement in the United States inspired oppressed groups all over the world to creep out of their shells. No longer asking for sympathy, these groups proudly and vehemently demanded equal treatment and recognition of their right to be different. The feminist movement was, of course, among the front-runners, sparking a process of cultural change that has reverberated to the present day. But there were other minorities, such as the disabled, immigrants, gay men, and lesbians, who also started to take action.

This wave of emerging identity movements has repeatedly been interpreted in terms of the concept of "new social movements"—so much so, in fact, that a new social movements (NSM) paradigm has even developed (Pizzorno 1978:277–98; Touraine 1978; Offe 1985; Melucci 1989). It contends that the prime objective of these movements is to bring about cultural, rather than political, change (Melucci 1980: 220), casting the NSMs as the champions of a new, postmaterialist world. This concept has, however, endured a torrent of criticism (Cohen 1985; Klandermans 1986; Kuechler and Dalton 1990; Rucht 1991: 355–84), mainly because many older movements, such as the trade unions with their flourishing workers' culture, were similarly characterized by a profound sense of identity (D'Anieri, Ernst and Kier 1990; Tucker 1991).

This objection does not wholly invalidate the NSM theory, however; it merely implies that these new movements are not new in terms of their compelling sense of collective identity. Instead, their novelty seems to lie in the specific constellation of movements dominated by (parts of) the new middle classes, whose goals are predominantly nonmaterialistic (Kriesi 1989; Duyvendak 1995a: 19).

A significant characteristic of some of these new movements, such as the peace and environmental movements, is that identity of the members is of only secondary significance (Nelles 1984). Within these instrumental move-

ments, collective identity is little more than a (transient) product of collective action. It is not a fundamental mobilizing factor, and it is certainly not their *raison d'être*. In other new movements, however, the identity of members plays a vital role. These new, "exclusive" movements (Zald and Ash, 1966: 330–31) are characterized by a "politicization of personal identity." They include the feminist, gay, and many immigrant movements, which all advocate an identity-based political strategy (Duyvendak 1994).

It bears mentioning, however, that social movements based on the collective identity of a specific group do not have equal opportunities to develop in their respective countries. (Fillieule and Péchu 1993). France is especially interesting in this regard, because the prevailing republican tradition of egalitarianism and universalism conflicts with the pursuit of a specific group identity and the representation of particular desires and interests (Hoffmann 1963; Ambler 1971; Hazaseerigh 1994). In this chapter we discuss how this tradition has affected the development of the French gay and lesbian movement.

The gay and lesbian movement is an identity movement that combines elements of subculture and movement in an intriguing manner. It is a subcultural movement par excellence (Koopmans 1995). Gays and lesbians develop a positive self-identity through participation in the movement: the common sexual orientation serves as an incentive for individuals to mobilize and organize collectively. A subcultural movement that is the exclusive provider of the collective good its members need does not suffer from free riders (Duyvendak 1995b: 167). But at a given moment the gay and lesbian movement may be confronted by free riders, especially if its efforts are successful. Although direct participation is an indispensable prerequisite for sharing any collective benefits at the start of the emancipation process, "parasitic" behavior may arise as an option later on. As subcultures become increasingly *commercialized*, people can share collective identities outside the movement. Under such circumstances, many gay organizations can survive only by becoming more pleasure oriented and less political. Gay journals in particular will show a tendency toward commercialization, by publishing more erotic material and less political information. In this chapter I assess the extent to which the shifting relationship between subculture and movement may be attributed to either endogenous dynamics or exogenous factors, such as the republican tradition.

### OLD AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN FRANCE: THE STATUS OF "IDENTITY"

France is fairly similar to other Western European countries in terms of the quantitative aspects of political protest (that is, in terms of the sheer

number of movements and activists). It does, however, deviate in a qualitative sense. For instance, the dynamics of protest are fundamentally different. In France, demonstrations are not organized by specific groups with numerous members who systematically take to the streets for a specific purpose. Instead, political action is the domain of individual citizens, most of whom are not members of any organization. For a brief period they are induced to participate in mass mobilization, formulating ever more general goals, as they move through the spiral of protest toward head-on confrontation (Fillieule 1997, 1998). Furthermore, "traditional" objectives remain predominant in the protest actions of social movements in France, leaving very little room for new objectives. Ideological permanence may be attributed to both the formal political structure and the informal political culture of the system. All new movements are confronted with this problem, whether they are instrument oriented (the environmental, peace, and solidarity movements) or identity oriented (the feminist, squatters, gay, and lesbian movements) (Duyvendak 1995a; Fillieule 1998).

Concerning the status of identities, there are lessons to be learned from the development of the dominant, *old* movements. First, we may conclude that France is not fundamentally opposed to all identity-based politics, because identity has been a key issue of the traditional conflicts. Corsicans and Bretons, farmers, Catholics, and workers (Fillieule 1993) all foster a deep-seated sense of collective identity. In fact, many of them even consider acknowledgment of their identity to be the prime objective of their struggle. In light of the aforesaid, it is easy to refute the contention that identity-based politics is primarily the domain of the new movements. It also seems logical—perhaps even more so than for other countries—that France should be confronted with political strife based on collective identities. A society that swears by egalitarianism offers disgruntled citizens a powerful discursive weapon that allows them to organize themselves as a group in order to demand equal rights. There is therefore no reason to draw the a priori conclusion that identity-based politics will be less common in a universalist political culture than it will be in a particularist culture. After all, any French minority group that feels slighted has the right to demand equality.

It is also instructive to note that the older movements pursue a specific type of identity-based strategy: movements based on particular collective identities demand *equal*, rather than *special* treatment. They demand the same rights as the majority. The groups in question are engaged in a struggle against disfranchisement; they too wish to become real French citizens.<sup>1</sup> Even those groups that are proud of their unique identity often formulate their pride in general, universal terms. For ex-

ample, Catholics will state that they are true Frenchmen and -women, workers will state that they are real republicans. On one hand, the Jacobin, egalitarian tradition grants groups of citizens the freedom to unite temporarily and demand equal rights. On the other hand, this tradition makes it impossible for such groups to maintain their appeal for support and preservation of their specific group culture. One may conclude, therefore, that it is (and always has been) impracticable to pursue a multiculturalist policy (Gutmann 1992; Taylor 1992; Seidman 1993: 105–42) in France.

The degree of freedom granted to *new*, identity-based movements in France is thus limited for two reasons. First, the legitimacy of identity-based political action is always temporary and conditional. This implies that it is tolerated as long as it is directed toward eradicating inequality or toward erasing the societal discrepancies and disadvantages that fuel the group's discontent. Second, the available space for new movements is limited, because the political field is already occupied by the aforementioned traditional identities. In terms of the prevailing political logic, however, these traditional political identities should have been of a temporary nature. Instead, they have become highly stable entities, as a result of the stagnation of the political system. This constitutes an intriguing paradox: although the French political system makes no provision for the permanent accommodation of specific collective identities, these identities have proved extraordinarily persistent, because of the obstructive dynamics of the political system.

These circumstances force the new movements not only to formulate their demands in terms of the republican rhetoric of universalism and egalitarianism but also to forge alliances with the dominant discourse of the older movements. In concrete terms, this prompted many new movements to seek the shelter of traditional leftist parties and movements in order to learn to speak the language of the left-wing political family (Duyvendak 1995a: 203–9).

This assimilation of new issues by older movements contradicts the concept of a zero-sum relationship between old and new issues (Brand 1985a, 1985b: 306–34; Kriesi and Duyvendak 1995: 3–25). The concept therefore requires qualification. After all, even in France there is scope for new issues, despite the fact that they must be formulated in terms of the traditional antitheses. However, new organizations that did make an all-out solo bid to place their issues on the political agenda have failed, indeed, almost without exception.<sup>2</sup> An empirical account of the factors that forced the French gay and lesbian movement to present itself as a left-wing element illustrates the assimilation of "new" issues into "old" movements.

## FROM REVOLUTION TO INVOLUTION, 1970-81

It is difficult to fix a precise date when the French homosexual movement was born. A tentative start was made with the publication of the journal *Futur* in the period after the Second World War. But this remained almost unknown to the outside world, as all publicity for it was forbidden by the state. Homosexuality had no place in French *political* life, in contrast to cultural life, in which it was, and is, a source of inspiration.<sup>3</sup> Contact between the authorities and gays was absolutely one-sided: the authorities initiated every interaction on the basis of repression.

This particularly difficult situation improved to some extent in 1954, when the *Arcadie* journal was established. Some authors consider this the starting point of the gay movement (Bach 1982, 1988; Cavailhes, Dutey, and Bach-Ignasse 1984); others (for instance, Girard 1981) consider that neither the journal nor CLESPALA (Club Littéraire et Scientifique des Pays Latins),<sup>4</sup> the social club that was affiliated with *Arcadie*, constitute a *movement*. Nevertheless, *Arcadie* is important in that it does constitute a reference point for all subsequent organizations. André Baudry, its leader from start to finish, dictated a(n) (a)political line<sup>5</sup> about the self-help nature of *Arcadie*<sup>6</sup> which stressed the *equality* of hetero- and homosexuals: *l'homosexuel est aussi un homme social*.<sup>7</sup> In the contact that developed slowly with the outside world, *Arcadie* followed a so-called key-figure policy. Public activities were absolutely impossible under the repressive conditions of the day, but, even when the political climate became a little less wintry after May 1968, *Arcadie* maintained its strategy: for the improvement of the homosexual condition, homophiles were advised to behave as "normally" as possible.

The highly confrontational style of the Comité d'Action Pédérastique Révolutionnaire (Committee for Revolutionary Homosexual Action), at the Sorbonne in May 1968 and, more important, that of the Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire, or FHAR (Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action) after 1971, were contrary to *Arcadie's* strategy. "Whereas *Arcadie* rejected the effeminates, the queens, the transvestites and the transsexuals, the FHAR in return gathered together a rich variety of behaviours" (Girard 1981: 91). It strongly opposed the *clandestinité digne et virile* (dignified and manly clandestineness) of *Arcadie* in an attempt to fight the stigmatized identification of homosexuals with a pathological condition. In contrast with *Arcadie*, it considered *la différence* as something positive. "Abnormal" sexuality was no longer something to be hidden; it was instead something to be shown in public. In that respect, the founding event of the FHAR is highly significant: the interruption of a radio broadcast on "*l'homosexualité, ce douloureux problème*" (the

painful problem of homosexuality) on 10 March 1971. "That is not true; we are not suffering at all!" shouted the activists, and their first press communiqué declared that "homosexuals are fed up with being a 'painful problem.'"

Because the FHAR was born out of the turmoil of the 1968 movement, it was strongly linked to Marxist ideology: "In a world based on sexual repression and on such foul obscenities as work, all those who are unproductive, those who make love exclusively for pleasure and not for production of an industrial army reserve have no other alternative but to perish or revolt" (pamphlet cited in Hamon and Rotman 1982: 329). The FHAR stressed not only the political character of homosexuality but also its revolutionary potential. *Notre trou du cul est révolutionnaire* (Our assholes are revolutionary) as FHAR spokesman Guy Hocquenghem put it.<sup>8</sup>

This radical assertion is evidence of the fundamental ambiguity from which the movement could never escape: on one hand the strategy aimed to construct a new identity based on overturning the stigma associated with being homosexual and asserting gay pride;<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, the movement refused to limit its action to the building of communities, extending the struggle to highlight the economic and political exploitation of the capitalist order. Thus, there was, for example, the hostility of the organization to the commercial development of gay meeting places (bars, clubs, and saunas), which was not in accord with its harsh denunciation of capitalism.<sup>10</sup>

This ambiguity shows itself also in the FHAR slogan "*Le droit à la différence*," which added an entirely new element to French politics. After all, groups demanding "the right to be different" were something of a novelty within the political culture of egalitarian France, and such demands had certainly never been made in combination with an attack on dominant, heterosexual normality.<sup>11</sup> The FHAR clearly refused to bow to the republican logic, which held that minorities should strive to obtain the same rights as the majority. Instead, the FHAR turned this logic upside down: the minority not only demanded the right to be different but also argued that the majority should change. This countercultural trend, which also emerged in many other Western European countries at that time (Duyvendak 1991: 124-34; Adam 1995), was not likely to last very long in France. In the first place, the political establishment interpreted the emphasis on collective identity as an appeal for equality, because variety or pluriformity was (and is) not seen as a legitimate political objective in itself. Therefore, in contrast to the gay and lesbian minorities in the Netherlands and (even more so) the United States, which demanded to be recognized as minorities (Meijer, Duyvendak, and Van Kerkhof 1991; Seidman 1995), the dominant political culture in France forced the gay and lesbian movement

to speak the language of egalitarianism. In order to achieve its political goals, the French gay and lesbian movement, therefore, had to join the majority, instead of turning against the dominant "normality." In concrete terms, this meant they had to join the left-wing family, which brings us to the second reason underlying the transience of the French movement's bid to be different. The coercive solidarity within the left-wing bloc forced the FHAR to generalize its demand for "*le droit à la différence*." This meant that the right to be different should be seen to apply not only to homosexuals (male and female) but to all minorities. Paradoxically, the generalization of "*le droit à la différence*" led to uniformity. In terms of the left-wing, *gauchist* ideology, all affiliated groups were different in the same way: they were all victims of capitalism. The FHAR consequently adopted the slogan "Their struggle is our struggle," effectively erasing any possible distinction between its own struggle and those of other groups.

In its ambiguity, the FHAR managed to balance pleasure with policy interest, organizing parties and meetings simultaneously at the same venue; its revues *Le Fléau Social* (The Social Plague) and *L'Antinorm* were interesting mixtures of anarchistic chaos and Trotskyist consistency.

New organizations became increasingly involved exclusively in political activism, aggravated by the fact that many entertainment institutions (bars, journals, and the like) were still repressed by the police and politics. The FHAR faded away in 1973, to be replaced by the Groupe de Libération Homosexuelle (GLH). Within this group a struggle developed between those who favored a political line in the "antinormality" tradition of homosexuality, GLH-Groupe de Base (GLH-Grassroots Group), or GB, and those who argued for more pragmatism GLH-Politique et Quotidien (GLH-Politics and Daily Life), or PQ. Of all these tendencies, GLH-PQ survived and even succeeded in building a network of local organizations. Besides organizing a great number of activities with other contemporary movements (prochoice, feminist, antimilitarist, anti-nuclear energy), it also organized the first massive demonstrations in the streets of Paris and ran gay candidates in local and national elections.

In its political discourse, GLH-PQ expressed strong sentiments against the PCF (the French Communist Party). As a matter of fact, if left-wing groups had, albeit reluctantly, taken on board gay and lesbian demands insofar as they were conceptualized in terms of class, the PCF remained opposed to gay liberation, even "disguised" in anticapitalist terms.<sup>12</sup> During the second half of the 1970s, the gay movement made inroads into the more moderate parties of the Left, which "deradicalized" the discourse of the movement: the total politicization of homosexuality faded away. Homosexuals moved away from a partly countercultural position toward a more *instrumental* approach.

At the end of the 1970s, an umbrella organization was established, comprising sixteen gay and lesbian organizations, with the exception of the *Arcadie* group. This so-called CUARH, or Comité d'Urgence Anti-Répression Homosexuelle (Emergency Committee against the Repression of Homosexuals), openly supported the candidacy of François Mitterrand for the presidential elections in 1981. On one hand, this showed a certain moderation in the political opinions shared by lesbian and gay activists; on the other hand, it clearly indicated that the movement was still highly politicized, which implied, in terms of the French political opportunity structure, that they were highly dependent on the Left and, more specifically, the Socialist Party. In some countries liberal parties also showed some sympathy toward lesbian and gay issues, at least to the extent that they were formulated in terms of equal rights (for example, in Germany and the Netherlands), but in France only the Socialist Party opened itself to the gay and lesbian movement at the end of the 1970s. Apart from this umbrella organization, some other new organizations and publications emerged, such as *Gai Pied*, providing structure and publicity for the subculture. Whereas in the CUARH, men and women cooperated in promoting their common interests, these new, subcultural organizations were nonmixed.

On the lesbian side, one of these organizations was *Lesbia*, whose journal paid at least as much attention to lifestyle issues as to the world of politics. *Lesbia-Magazine* is to date the most successful lesbian "organization." It can be considered the successor of many attempts to establish an independent journal for lesbians in France, attempts that failed because of the extremely marginal position of lesbians in French social and political life and because of the ideological fights between several groups of lesbians over politics, feminism, and (non)cooperation with gay men.

Whereas many lesbian women were strongly involved in the feminist movement during the 1970s, both the "heterosexualization" of French feminism at the end of the 1970s and the growing political opportunities for gays and lesbians at the start of the 1980s stimulated, on one hand, the development of a mixed, interest-oriented movement (CUARH) and, on the other, the growth of radical, countercultural lesbian groups—Lesbian Archives, autonomous projects, and so on (Mossuz-Lavau 1991; Gonnard 1997). After 1980, lesbians were no longer very eager to participate in a rather hostile, declining feminist movement. (Simone de Beauvoir wrote in 1980, "Lesbians are presenting their specific and limited group interests as the interests of feminists in general"[cited in Martel 1996: 417].) Their cooperation with gay men was not long lasting either, however. After the successes reached by the CUARH (discussed below), there did not seem to be a further reason for mixed organizations.

Moreover, any political organization seemed outdated after the realization of the goals of the movement at the start of the 1980s. Not only radical lesbian organizations disappeared during the 1980s but the more moderate as well. It was only after the resurgence of the gay movement at the end of this decade (as a result of AIDS) that lesbians manifested themselves publicly again. In particular the organization of the film festival *Quand les Lesbiennes Se Font du Cinéma* at the start of the 1990s showed the increasing visibility of lesbians and the tendency to organize non-mixed, cultural activities. A Coordination Nationale des Lesbiennes was established, providing a network for both political and social activities.

The more intense cooperation between lesbians and gays around 1980 can be understood from the perspective of changing political conditions in a climate that had been rather repressive until then. Two legal texts demonstrated the discrimination against homosexuals, in comparison to heterosexuals, in France. Article 331, paragraph 3, of the Code Pénal punished by fine and imprisonment any "indecent or unnatural act with an individual of one's own sex under the age of twenty-one years" (eighteen years after the age of adulthood was lowered), even though heterosexual relations were allowed from the age of fifteen years; Article 330 of the same code imposed higher penalties for an act of indecency when it concerned persons of the same sex. At the instigation of H. Cavaillet, the Sénat voted for the abrogation of these two clauses on 28 June 1978, but the bill was not submitted to the National Assembly for another two years. The provision abrogated Article 330 but refused to amend Article 331. On 4 April 1981, the CUARH organized a national demonstration in Paris in favor of the abrogation of the law in question. It was a tremendous success; ten thousand people, many of them women, attended the first mass demonstration of gays and lesbians in France. Soon after, Mitterrand adopted a campaign position in favor of abrogating the law, and on 20 December 1981, following his election on 10 May, the National Assembly repealed the law ("Homosexualités" 1981).

The success provided by the PS reinforced the instrumental wing of the gay and lesbian movement. This process was accelerated further by the foundation of homosexual groups either within or closely linked to political parties like *Homosexualité et Socialisme* and *Gais pour la Liberté* (both PS-oriented) and (right-wing) *Mouvement des Gais Libéraux*. However, the climate of *reform* was not particularly stimulating for mass mobilization. Although at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, French gay and lesbian movement mobilization was the strongest in Europe, the subsequent decline was indeed even more dramatic.

The rapid successes of the movement after Mitterrand's election, concurrent with both the dominance of the instrumental wing within the

CUARH and the flourishing gay commercial subculture, led to the rapid decline of CUARH. As a matter of fact, this wing had already become isolated because the gay community generally gave priority to social and cultural activities. This was so because the left-wing government itself looked after homosexual interests and had cleared away all judicial impediments to the development of the gay and lesbian subculture. CUARH's membership declined after 1982, and the regional groups disappeared. Its journal *Homophonies* survived until 1986 but faced strong competition from nonmixed magazines, which were better able to balance interests with pleasure.

The good relations that existed between the CUARH and mainstream politics precipitated the disappearance of *Arcadie* in 1982, which by that time found itself hopelessly outdated. *Arcadie's* obsolete character came to the fore in June 1981, one month after Mitterrand was elected, when it protested against the closure of the police department that had specialized in the control of gays. *Arcadie* complained about the loss of the good contacts it had developed with some key figures in this (repressive!) corps: "*Arcadie* had not realized that the gay movement could count on nondiscriminatory attitudes from the police, even if this needed time and considerable action on the part of the movement" (Bach, 1982: 71). At the same time, *Arcadie* ceased to function as a meeting place, because the commercial circuit was booming and people were no longer forced to meet behind closed doors.

It is interesting to note that the commercial circuit was also too competitive for the meeting places developed in the early 1980s—subsidized by the Ministry of Culture<sup>13</sup>—which faded away during the second half of the decade. In addition, the rather intellectual journal *Masques*, which was neither commercial nor parliamentary-political, disappeared. The success of the CUARH's policy of "equal rights" outdated not only the antinormality discourse so eloquently formulated by the FHAR and its successors (Duyvendak 1991: 124–34), but also *each* normality and *all* collective sexual identities: "Even more fundamentally, the future of homosexuals rests in the disappearance of the very concept of homosexuality itself, which *ipso facto* implies an end to heterosexuality and, therefore, all sexual normality" ("Années 80" 1985: 31).

Apart from commercialization, the essential *subculture* was characterized by territorial concentration, especially in Paris, and a strong emphasis on sex: pleasure became an even greater binding element than it had been before, and all kinds of sexual substyles developed after the restrictions had disappeared. Although at the outset this newly acquired sexual freedom was still shown to the outside world, some years later it turned out that the drive to show just how "gay" gay life was no longer generated



sufficient incentive for mobilization. This can be illustrated by the development of the Gay Pride Parade. The number of participants had declined from ten thousand at the start of the 1980s, to two or three thousand by the second half of that decade. The character of the march underwent both a quantitative and qualitative change: whereas in earlier days political demands were expressed, as time went by the element of fun became more important. In 1985, in a public letter in *Gai Pied*, David Girard, the most significant gay entrepreneur of the day, wrote: "Everyone to the demonstration! What is certain is that we are not going to demonstrate in the same spirit as the people of CUARH. They march in order to denounce anti-homo racism. That is their right. But allow me to say that taking up a banner and marching under it chanting, "No to anti-homo racism" will not change a thing, it will not even attract sympathy. It is sad. It is grey. All of us, we come to celebrate. And what we shall defend is the right to celebrate. It is surely more communicative (and communicating), more of a tonic for the participants, and consequently more impressive and attractive for onlookers and media."<sup>14</sup> The same development, from an external, rather political orientation toward a subcultural one, can be traced with regard to *Gai Pied* (Duyvendak and Duyves 1993). In 1979 this magazine was founded by former members of the GLH-PQ who had discovered the impact of media use by the gay movement. From its beginnings, however, tension existed between political purity and sexual pleasure, which resulted in several crises within the editorial board. The booming subculture, and the growing number of people who considered themselves openly homosexual, nevertheless provided a basis for a commercially viable project. A "price" had to be paid however: the magazine dealt increasingly with issues related to pleasure, as its readers were no longer very interested in politics.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE AIDS CRISIS: FROM FEAR TO SELF-HELP, 1981-89

At the beginning of the 1980s, then, one can say that if in part the French homosexual movement failed, as the other left-wing movements born of 1968 had failed, to revolutionize society and overturn the capitalist order, at least the demands specific to homosexuals themselves were satisfied. Gay people had asserted their right to live as they wished, and, in consequence, everyone set about testing this newfound freedom. This was the situation—with a relatively weak (because successful) instrumental movement and an increasingly inward-looking, sex-oriented subculture—when HIV started to circulate.

At the moment of the spread of the epidemic, the militant tendency of

homosexual associations was limited to CUARH, with the monthly *Homophonies* and weekly *Gai Pied Hebdo* (GPH) and the Association des Médecins Gais (AMG), founded on 5 May 1981, five days before the election of François Mitterrand.<sup>16</sup> Among associations oriented rather more toward subculture, the range is somewhat richer, notably with the launch of the journal *Samourai* in 1982 and the revue *GI*, which devoted themselves to lifestyles, to cultural matters, and to the commercial services offered to homosexuals. Homosexuals also began to appear on the airwaves, with the June to September 1981 launch of a pirate radio station, Fréquence Gaie, which obtained an official permit to broadcast from May 1982.<sup>17</sup>

It is in this context that the first doctors and researchers to tackle AIDS started to group together in an association (ARSIDA) and attempted to alert homosexual organizations to the risks being run. These organizations responded to the call in different ways, and it was the *subcultural* wing that launched the first initiative with the creation in 1983 of *Vaincre le SIDA* (VLS). (Information about the first years of the anti-AIDS movements is mostly derived from Busscher and Pinell 1996).

What brought this about? The first explanation that comes to mind is that the militant tendency was then in such a state of dereliction that it had become quite incapable of taking charge of the problem, whereas the subcultural associations were flourishing. This phenomenon without doubt played a part, but equally significant was the fact that the militant arm of the movement was not ideologically ready to recognize the threat of AIDS, precisely in defense of the normalization of homosexuality only recently obtained.

Also, perhaps, it was less through organizational weakness than deliberate choice that the CUARH, the AMG, and GPH resisted the diffusion of information on AIDS. Up to 1984, the AMG and GPH were trying in effect to play down, indeed deny, the significance of the illness. Persuaded that AIDS was being used to disturb and to weaken them, they counter-attacked by refusing to take seriously what they considered to be "a paranoid panic . . . which allows homosexuals, by way of their specific illness, to go back on the list of social afflictions that they had begrudgingly left."<sup>18</sup> GPH popularized the (foolhardy) slogan "Fucking is dangerous? Isn't crossing the street?" This position, which was maintained long after medical research had categorically demonstrated that AIDS was indeed a contagious disease touching mainly homosexuals, is explained by the fact that for the most militant of the associations, the fight against discrimination had to take precedence over the dangers of the contagion.<sup>19</sup> This attitude, moreover, was not confined to France.

Therefore, as mentioned, the first reaction related to the epidemic came

from the subcultural wing, with the creation of Vaincre Le SIDA (VLS) in 1983. The association focused on the provision of services and information to the gay community by setting up a telephone hot line. The most striking feature of this first initiative, which would characterize all associations involved in the fight against AIDS up until 1989, was the often obsessional will to put forward demands that were completely devoid of all reference to homosexuality, even though many members of these organizations, and the first people affected by the disease, were principally homosexuals. Once again, as with the more militant associations, fear of stigma and of a rising homophobia were at the root of the attempts to give the cause a broader base.<sup>20</sup>

From 1985, the anti-AIDS campaign, still mainly sustained by homosexual subcultural organizations, saw a major change of direction with the creation of AIDES, an association destined to have meteoric success, taking the lead, among the associations involved in the campaign at least until 1989.<sup>21</sup> From its foundation, and without any real deviation thereafter, AIDES adopted a hostile attitude toward any identification of the association as a homosexual movement, despite the fact that the chief contributors to publications such as *Masques* and *GPH*<sup>22</sup> could be found among its founders.

For the militant homosexual organizations, their involvement in the campaign came later, once the media, following the lead of the public authorities from the summer of 1985 onward, began to recognize that AIDS in fact affected everyone, not just homosexuals.<sup>23</sup> The belated realization that gay participation in the campaign was imperative is explained in part by this increasingly universal appeal of the AIDS campaign, which posed less of a threat to the emancipation of homosexuality. At the same time, internal rivalry among the multitude of organizations forming the gay movement had hindered collective action. Strong competition within the specialized gay press of which *GPH* and *Samourai* were part, meant that *GPH*, and consequently AMG, found it difficult to establish links with VLS, supported from the beginning by *Samourai* (Busscher and Pinell 1996). Nevertheless, by 1985 *Homophonies* and *GPH* had started to give out information on AIDS without trying to play down its importance, and in the same year *GPH* published the first booklet from AIDES with advice on AIDS prevention. It was also *GPH* that welcomed the inquiry (by Michael Pollak and Laurindo) launched by the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) into the sexual behavior of homosexuals (Busscher and Pinell 1996).

From 1987 to 1988 the range of anti-AIDS associations spread; many new associations were created, notably after a schism within AIDES in March 1987. The common characteristic of these new groups was that they remained fundamentally faithful to the line adopted by AIDES con-

cerning the question of the *homosexualization* of AIDS—always excepting Santé et Plaisir Gay (SPG), which, born of an initiative of militants within AIDES, introduced into France *les jack-off parties* and tried to raise the question of homosexuality again in the debate.

In summary, during the years 1981–88 homosexual associations became involved belatedly, and often in a relatively hidden way, in the fight against the AIDS epidemic. If all the campaign associations were created and sustained at arms length by homosexuals, they persisted in regarding their action as removed from any element of gay activism and, in good republican tradition, without any reference to a so-called homosexual identity. It was only after 1989, with the arrival of a new generation, that the anti-AIDS movement began to come up against a new dynamism from homosexual activism.

### AIDS AND THE ATTEMPT TO FOUND A GAY COMMUNITY, 1989–96

At the end of the 1980s, anti-AIDS associations underwent a dual process of differentiation and institutionalization, with, on one side, the multiplication of associations orientated toward specific groups of people (hemophiliacs, blood-transfusion patients, drug addicts, and children) and, on the other, a newfound professionalization of which AIDES was undoubtedly the most striking example. This professionalization explains why these associations were founded as neither a counterforce nor even a pressure group. The administration constantly pushed to obtain subsidies and integration with government bodies for managing the epidemic, such as the Agence Nationale de la Recherche sur le SIDA (ANRS) and the Association Française de Lutte contre le Sida (AFLS). This desire to integrate into the decision-making structures of the state and the diversification of the groups of people under its charge had several effects. First, homosexual groups, inside and outside these associations, started to feel a sense of dispossession, as much from the growing degaying within the associations as from the fact that people with AIDS had been deprived of a direct voice in deference to professionals speaking on their behalf (one starts to speak of an “AIDS establishment” and of the “AIDS business”). Second, the methods of managing the AIDS problem through associations go hand in hand with a political neutrality, which prevented the adoption of any critical stance vis-à-vis the numerous and obvious deficiencies of governmental politics, especially in terms of prevention.

For these two reasons new associations were born in 1989, with the objective of giving the sick their voice back, clearly establishing a link between homosexuality and AIDS, and refusing to cooperate with the

political authorities when it was clear that they were not doing everything they could to fight against the epidemic. This regeneration of the associational setup thus had the effect of reactivating the old cleavages in the homosexual movement, opposing once again subcultural and political orientation, searching for recognition and political opposition. To these old divisions—which had led to the rupture at the beginning of the 1970s caused by the creation of the FHAR—was also added a new opposition: the opposition between a “general” model and a model based on identity and community, which, in the wake of movements on the other side of the Atlantic, defended the idea of the politics of minorities based on the claim to a specifically HIV-positive or homosexual identity. It was in this context that the associations Solidarité Plus, Positif, and AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power-Paris (ACT UP-Paris) were founded.

Created in May 1989, Positif saw itself as an “association of self-help and of solidarity, conceived for HIV-positive people, run by HIV-positive people,” with the goal to defend “all HIV-positive people who suffer discrimination and to organize the defense of the HIV-positive consumer.” The aim of the association was to think about the development of a new identity and to assert the association’s own demands—demands neglected by medical specialists and the existing associations. The same is true of Solidarité Plus, which took from American parlance the notion of People with AIDS (PWA).<sup>24</sup>

Behind the problematic claim to an “*identité séropositive*” (an HIV-positive identity), in fact, lies the claim to a *singularization* of the AIDS cause, which is advanced in the name of a strong link with homosexuality.<sup>25</sup> From this point of view, the formation of ACT UP-Paris positively overturned the associational landscape, putting the homosexual movement as such back on the map.

The structure, the organization, and the strategy of ACT UP-Paris are based on the model put forward by the association created in New York in 1987. Defining itself above all as an association of people affected by AIDS, the group used intense lobbying and direct action (demonstrations, zaps, die-ins, and the like) to put pressure on the public authorities and the sectors that were charged, to varying degrees, with dealing with the illness<sup>26</sup> for a more effective and less discriminatory campaign against AIDS. More precisely, ACT UP-Paris’s activity of denunciation articulates at once the search for greater *visibility* for AIDS and a fight against the *stigmatization* of affected people (principally homosexuals).<sup>27</sup> These two aspects are intimately tied to the struggle for a monopoly in scientific expertise, which combines simultaneously with a claim by people with HIV to take charge of AIDS themselves (what Michael Pollak [1990:84] calls “the transformation of the socio-medical assis-

tance into a self-help movement”) and a challenge to the medicalization of homosexuality.

In the same vein as ACT UP in the United States, the group aims to construct a homosexual identity and community. The justification for this path is simple: AIDS does not affect everyone in the same way, and it is the most oppressed minorities that were its first victims. This phenomenon calls for a political analysis of AIDS as revealing the multiple exclusions of our world:

In industrialized countries, AIDS did not affect in the first place just any man or woman, but socially definite categories: homosexuals, drug addicts, ethnic minorities, prison inmates, now women, forgotten by medical research; the list is not exhaustive. In this sense, AIDS is not only a human or collective drama; today it is still a drama aimed at precise social categories, defined by their practices and their differences with relation to a dominant model: practices related to socially determined and politically significant human groups. To this extent . . . AIDS has nothing to do with the mythology of previous epidemics: “all equal before death.” . . . AIDS spreads by conduits not by simple contact. So it attacks at root the very way we live our lives, and not simply our geographical situation. . . . In this way, to fight against AIDS is necessarily to call into question the founding model of our society, and to stand as a common front of minorities against the short-sightedness and cynicism of the do-gooders. (ACT UP-Paris 1994: 11–12)

However, extending beyond an attempt to widen the discourse on minorities to all minorities placed in the first line of the epidemic, it is the homosexual community that is central to the extent that the association seems, in the public eye, to be an association in defense of homosexuals rather than against AIDS:

ACT UP is often reproached for the way in which we constantly affirm our link with the gay community. Under the pretext that AIDS today concerns everyone, it would be better that we hide the fact that all anti-AIDS associations were born of the gay community and that ACT UP has been the most assertive amongst them. . . . But the fundamental position of ACT UP has been that the point of view of minorities can be asserted only from within strong communities. We cannot today start relying, in the struggle against AIDS, on those who have played into its hands for years by waiting until the epidemic explicitly affected everyone before realizing its importance. . . . To fight for the gay community, which remains closest to us, is to fight as much against those who reckon that the homosexual question is solved now and that their battle is a rear-guard action (they confuse their own privileges with the state of the world) as against those who bolt the door, taking exception, for example, to the idea of a mixed homosexual community. (ACT UP-Paris 1994: 18–19)



From this point of view, the rhetoric employed by ACT UP-Paris is very near to that of the left-wing movements of the 1960s (in its denunciation of sexual repression), but at the same time it radically distinguishes itself by its call for the foundation of a homosexual *community*, something no other movement previously sought to defend:

To set about a struggle against AIDS that aims at politically denouncing the abandonment of People with AIDS by the public authorities and by civil society, it is necessary that the queer community make of the gay movement a movement for the fight against AIDS and make of the anti-AIDS movement a gay movement. To fight against AIDS, one must therefore fight also for the thousands of shameful fools who live their sexuality badly. . . . From the point of view of the gay community, to survive, it is imperative to get out of the closet, to go out into the street asserting oneself as gay to fight against AIDS, not only because the virus is decimating its members but because AIDS threatens gay sexuality. . . . Right off AIDS has been set as the inescapable corollary to all sexuality that is not geared toward the family and reproduction, as the price to pay for pleasure: AIDS serves to orchestrate a great, repressive offensive not only against homosexuality but against sexuality pure and simple. (ACT UP-Paris 1994: 209-10)

From 1989, then, one can see that the anti-AIDS movement gave birth to a militant homosexual movement, of which ACT UP is at the vanguard. The most notable feature is that this homosexual identity shows itself not solely in the discourse held by the association but in its sociological composition as well. An unambiguous verification of this point is provided by a survey done by questionnaire to study militants in the organization (see Table 1), the results of which can be compared with those from a survey conducted by AIDES in its own grassroots support.<sup>28</sup>

In 1994, according to Table 1, more than one-quarter of ACT UP activists declared themselves directly affected by the disease. Comparing this percentage with the proportion of affected activists in AIDES (13 percent), one can deduce that ACT UP is the anti-AIDS association with a membership made up in greatest part of people with AIDS, even though the association does not provide them with direct support. However, intravenous drug users, as well as blood transfusion patients and hemophiliacs, are almost totally absent from ACT UP.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the fact that more than two-thirds of militants declared themselves HIV-negative does not serve to place them into the classic form of *solidarity activism* stemming from some notion of altruism. When members were asked what made them join ACT UP, the primary reason put forward was closeness to the illness and to the suffering of others (32 percent in spontaneous statements). It is therefore true, as Michael Pollak highlighted, that "the veritable network which feeds [the associations] . . . was created by the

TABLE 1: *Comparison between Militants in AIDES and in ACT UP-Paris, 1994*

Constituents	ACT UP			AIDES	
	Activists	Occasional Activists	Sympathizers	Total	Total
Men	76%	70%	62%	70%	57%
Homosexuals	68	62	57	62	44
Heterosexuals	21	25	34	27	45
Individuals who never used intra- venous drugs	94	96	96	96	72*
HIV-negative individuals	65	68	71	68	72
HIV-positive individuals or AIDS patients	26	27	26	26	13

\*In the AIDES questionnaire there was no distinction between hard and soft drugs.

virus itself, through people affected physically and/or psychologically" (Pollak 1990: 83).

But above all, Table 1 indicates that those actively involved are essentially gays, and this, rather than the degree of engagement, reinforces it. The comparison with the results of the AIDES survey suggests, however, that this situation cannot be explained in the same way at the end of the 1980s, when homosexuals were indeed the sole supporters of the associations (Pollak and Schlitz 1991). If before 1987, 90 percent of volunteers in AIDES were male, the situation then started to change; in 1994, only 57 percent of activists were men. The rise in the number of women in AIDES translates logically into the proportionately smaller number of homosexual men and women in AIDES than in ACT UP (44 percent against 62 percent). Among the heterosexuals, 85% are women. This *hétérosexualisation de la cause* is explained at once by an altruistic commitment to AIDES and a sizable arrival of volunteers from the health and social services, a strongly feminine sector directly involved with the infirm.

Rather than being a sign of a manifest failure of an attempt at *de-singularization* of the cause (as it was a few years ago for AIDES), the preponderance of gay members of ACT UP highlights above all the highly visible homosexual identity of the association, the importance of which has already been stressed.<sup>30</sup>

The dual concerns adopted by ACT UP—Paris—politicization of AIDS and identity building—did not fit in well with the associational and political establishment, and after 1991 ACT UP became the object of fairly virulent attacks in both these areas in which one might say they highlighted the difficulty of building up a homosexual movement on a truly communitarian basis in France.

In part, ACT UP has been accused of seeking to politicize a problem that should not be political—nobody can be held responsible for an epidemic. This accusation rests at root on a debate about homophobia. Frédéric Edelmann, in *Le Journal du SIDA*, engaged in a polemic with the association on the basis of a refusal to admit that homophobic sentiments existed in France, implying the association's vague responsibility in the selective spread of the disease. For example, in December 1993 he wrote with regard to a film on the plague as a metaphor for fascism, "This film incites, constrains even, one to ask questions about the basis on a discourse which tends, today, to confer on AIDS the status of a political debate, by distinguishing the epidemic as revelatory of the sickness within the social fabric. . . . Without mentioning a much more radical discourse which has been raised and received a fairly large following, instituting the campaign against AIDS as being essentially a political struggle."<sup>31</sup> In the same way, an interview appeared in *Le Journal du SIDA* with Alain Finkielkraut, taking up this denunciation of the politicization of AIDS in the name of the myth of homophobia:

AIDS is a catastrophe. It is not, as certain slogans from ACT UP, or as Tom Hanks, the hero of the film *Philadelphia*, say, a holocaust. This analogy contains a desire to negate fatality in the name of "everything is political," which I find dangerous. . . . We are waiting for the enemy that will allow us to exist. Here we must invoke once again Michel Foucault: homosexuals do not need homophobia in order to live. Some may need it to support the unsupportable and to give but a little sense to the absurdity of fate. Here again, I understand the movement but we cannot make out that AIDS is a homophobic conspiracy. The concept of homophobia has appeared in the West at the time when homophobic attitudes are in decline.<sup>32</sup>

In a similar vein, the desire by people with AIDS for a confrontation with the public authorities is analyzed in psychological terms as derived from fear of dying: "As for the militants, would we still dare today . . . to suggest that the appearance of AIDS was for some almost a stroke of luck, smited as they were, perhaps, that the practice of homosexuality would at last obtain . . . a (relative) right to exist?"<sup>33</sup> "Even to the extent that it designates objectives or those responsible, the politicization of the illness allows a release of anxiety and permits to escape the in-

evitable by action. If I were myself infected with AIDS, I would perhaps succumb to this paranoia. I believe however that it is demagogical to flatter it."<sup>34</sup> This violent stigmatization in fact finds its explanation in the very negative reaction on the part of most French associations to ACT UP's attempt to found a homosexual movement on the basis of the American identity/community model. The attachment of the French Left to the classic republican model, in which "minority politics" is not tolerated, is here contested in its own terms.<sup>35</sup> An analogy to this struggle can be found in the development, at the start of the 1980s, of movements like SOS-Racisme, which asserted (like the FHAR for gays and lesbians in the 1970s) a "*droit à la différence*" for French people of immigrant parents (Blatt 1995). Furthermore, it is because he had already taken a stance numerous times on the question of the right to be different that Alain Finkielkraut found himself once more solicited by *Le Journal du SIDA* in 1995 to denounce the "identity trap" into which ACT UP would like to draw gay associations and the anti-AIDS campaign:

Gays today form . . . a community of destiny. . . . To this extent, I do not believe that it is necessary to encourage, as in the USA, a "gay culture." Let us remember the warning of Michel Foucault against the identity trap. It serves to fix into identities sexual behavior, whatever it is. . . . Discretion, ambiguity, indeterminacy, decency are not, as one often believes them to be, the remnants of a repressive order or signs of inhibition, but indispensable of the art of living. . . . What seems to me to be incontestable is the manifest desire of some in this movement to constitute what Paul Ricoeur calls a "narrative identity" in explicit reference to the Jewish model of identity.<sup>36</sup>

French political tradition has clearly had a far-reaching effect on the development of the gay and lesbian movement, especially in terms of the (limited) political opportunities for gays and lesbians to manifest themselves as a collective political identity. Because this new identity was granted only limited access to politics, many homosexuals took an apolitical view of their sexual orientation. French gays and lesbians found it difficult to develop a collective political identity and seldom took collective political action, because the political establishment refused to hear—let alone support—their appeal, particularly as long as other, traditional, *cleavages* remained predominant. This has resulted in a weak movement on one hand and an almost invisible, apolitical subculture on the other—a logical consequence of the immense divide between the state and the street in France.

The far-reaching effect of the universalist, republican tradition on the gay and lesbian movement was proved once more when AIDS reared its

ugly head (Favre 1992). Whereas most other Western countries soon realized the need to combat AIDS in a specific, focused manner, the French government refused to develop prevention campaigns directed solely at male homosexuals (Altman 1988; Duyvendak and Koopmans 1991; Duyvendak 1995c). The development of a target-group policy proved to be well nigh impossible in a republican country (Pollak 1988; Arnal 1993). Even the organizations founded to assist HIV-infected people and AIDS patients tried to avoid being labeled "homosexual," despite the fact that almost all of their members and patients were homosexual, especially at the start of the epidemic (Pollak and Rosman 1989; Hirsch 1991). Claire Ernst analyzed the situation as follows: "The enduring influence of the French republican model of citizenship and politics is evident in the gay community's response to AIDS. The reluctance of AIDS organizations to 'own' the disease, and to interpret it as a civil rights issue, and to instead view it as a health problem is testament of the degree to which identity-based politics remain illegitimate in France. While French AIDS organizations certainly recognize the ways in which the disease poses a threat to civil rights, this threat is viewed as a general one. AIDS poses a threat to the universal human rights of all French citizens, not to the right of French gays" (1995: 17). Even under these extremely difficult circumstances, however, since the beginning of the 1990s, a series of indicators seem to herald a renaissance in the homosexual movement in France—a renaissance centered on the identity/community model proposed by ACT UP-Paris. A Gay and Lesbian Center has opened in Paris, a successful Gay and Lesbian Film Festival has been organized since 1995, demonstrations commemorating the deportation of homosexuals during the Second World War have taken place, the Gay Pride events of June 1995 and since have proved to be spectacularly successful, a Gay Night is being broadcast on the television channel Canal Plus—all these elements indicate the community slant of what can well be called a "gay and lesbian movement." Moreover, there have been efforts to have the New Left government pass a law on gay marriage (the "Contrat d'Union Sociale et Civile"). A first bill was promoted by a faction of the Socialist Party in 1990. After hesitations and changing majorities, the New Left government, after its election in 1997, decided to enact the law before the end of its term.

It is not certain, however, that a movement founded on the notion of community and of minority interests can maintain itself in France, as the failure of the FHAR in the 1970s and the "differentialist" antiracism movement in the 1980s demonstrated. The risk of failure is as great, whether for the anti-AIDS movement that gave way to a resurgence of a homosexual movement (and not the other way around) or for an association like ACT UP, which must manage simultaneously a permanent tension between its homosexual

identity and its principal aim, the fight against AIDS. From this point of view, the homosexualization of AIDS as much as the "AIDSification" of homosexuality presents a problematic challenge to these movements today. The future of the gay and lesbian movement in France in the coming years depends on the political opportunities to manifest oneself as being different. "In contrast to the United States, which provides a rich substrate for group differentiation, and in contrast to the Dutch state, which recognizes specific groups as political actors, the French state often approaches specific groups with a view to privatizing them, repressing them, dispersing them, or subjecting them to centralized, hierarchical control. France may be a nation of individuals, but all these individuals are French men first and foremost; only in second instance are they men or women, bourgeois or working class, gay or heterosexual, Catholic or Muslim" (Seidman 1995: 72).

## NOTES

1. The exceptions are the few regionalist groups whose struggle reached such high levels of radicalization that they wished to dissociate themselves from France.
2. In fact, only one organization has been partly successful: the left-wing, Catholic trade union, the Confédération française du travail (CFDT) (Hamon and Rotman 1982). Since 1968, this union has criticized the dominant political culture, which makes it so difficult to broach new issues. Even the Parti Socialiste (Socialist Party), or PS, was unsuccessful in this regard, mainly because it strove to compete with the Communist Party by imitating it as much as possible. As a result, the PS was the most dogmatic socialist party in Western Europe until the early 1980s, thus obstructing the emergence of a New Left and granting hardly any latitude to the new social movements. The CFDT took a different approach. It tackled the dominant position of the Communist trade union, the Confédération générale du travail (CGT), by being "different." The CFDT broached various nontraditional trade union issues, such as *autogestion* (autonomy), environmental policy, women's rights, and the dangers of nuclear energy. The CFDT presented itself as a mouthpiece for the antistatist *deuxième gauche*, as "*le parti de la société civile*" ("La CFDT" 1980).
3. In France, famous authors and other artists have traditionally been able to deal relatively openly with issues related to homosexuality (Marcel Proust, André Gide, Marcel Jouhandeau, Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet, Michel Foucault, Colette, Dominique Fernandez, Michel Tournier, and Hervé Guibert). However, this openness has little bearing on the public's rather hostile attitude toward homosexuality. Researchers who overplay this cultural tradition neglect the fact that these extraordinary people have rather exceptional points of view, which are not generally shared by the broader society. Although their contribution may have been of support to the emancipation movement as a whole, most writers did not take an active part in it. This was because they had artistic freedom and were not directly confronted with discrimination and related problems in their work (which

is why the category of "gay literature" did not develop in France as it did in the United States, for instance).

4. The English translation is Literary and Scientific Club of the Latin Countries. As in many other countries, we see that under repressive circumstances homosexual organizations favor the use of labels with a high protection value, either suggesting literary groups (in the Netherlands: Shakespeare Club), or scientific organizations (Scientific-Humanitarian Committees in Germany and Holland prior to World War II).

5. The statement "*Arcadie* attempts to be apolitical: it does not believe that improvements in the fate of homosexuals should automatically be linked to the victory of such a party, or of such an economic doctrine" is repeated in every publication of *Arcadie*.

6. "*Arcadie* enables homosexuals to meet each other, to escape from their loneliness" (*Arcadie*, no. 273[1976]:12).

7. This translates as "The homosexual is also a social man" (*Arcadie*, no. 273 [1976]:12).

8. This visible manifestation of homosexuality on the street (the CGT's May Day demonstration was disrupted) meant a split within the movement in France between the radical *pédés* and the homophiles of *Arcadie*, whereas, for instance, in the Netherlands the main homosexual organization, Cultural and Recreational Center (COC), was capable of incorporating these opposition tendencies (Tielman 1982: 165; Warmerdam and Koenders 1987: 341).

9. "We are more than 343 sluts; we have been fucked by the Arabs. We are proud of it and would do it all again", and "One can never be too gay" are some of the slogans published in the twelfth issue of *Tout*, quoted in Girard (1981: 89).

10. To illustrate that point, suffice it to say that FHAR activists were the first to stigmatize the development of a gay subculture as creating a "homosexual ghetto."

11. The FHAR (1971) published the *Rapport contre la normalité*.

12. In the first half of the 1970s, Pierre Juquin, in those days spokesman for the PCF, formulated the party's position as follows: "I did not know that homosexuality, glorified in the left-wing movement, has an especially radical position. . . . But the cover of homosexuality or drugs never had anything to do with the workers movement. Each of them actually represented the opposite of the workers movement." (quoted in Girard 1981: 96-97). By 1977 the PCF's position had become somewhat more liberal: "We must revise legislation, not because homosexuality in itself would have either a liberalizing or revolutionary value (that would seem absurd to me), but because homosexuals have as much right to live in peace as any other citizens of our country" (Girard 1981: 138).

13. Whereas the more interest-oriented organizations, which desperately needed support for their survival, did not get much money, the entertainment side, which developed pretty well autonomously, was subsidized by the left-wing government. This shows that this government did not realize the value of *intermediary organizations*; only inwardly oriented organizations, such as the Fédération des Lieux Associatifs Gais, which were built on participation and not representation were, in fact, subsidized.

14. *Gai Pied*, no. 174 (1995):61.

15. Data from the annual readers research by *Gai Pied* in cooperation with Michael Pollak showed that in 1983, 25 percent of readers considered *Gai Pied* too political, 30 percent would have liked to see more erotic or pornographic pictures, and 36 percent wanted more "pictures" in general. The 1986 results indicated that the readers thought that attention given to politics—which had already diminished considerably—was still too much.

16. This association was founded on a militant ticket with the primary goals of encouraging positive representation of homosexuality in the medical field and struggling against venereal diseases. From this point of view, the militancy of the association goes hand in hand with an orientation tending toward a form of communitarian self-help in the same vein as the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in the United States.

17. It was with the coming to power of the Left that the airwaves started to be liberalized and pirate radio stations received broadcasting licenses. *Fréquence Gaie* was taken over by *GPH* in 1987 with the idea of turning it into a profitable enterprise. It then became *Futur Génération*, until April 1990, when it again changed its name, to *FG 98.2*. Its commercial success was by this time assured.

18. "Gais toubibs en colloque" 1982. In March 1982 Dr. Lejeune wrote that "since the beginning of the year, barely a week has passed in which the press has not blasted out headlines on a disease which is now afflicting us, we poor gays. Worse than the plague and gangrene combined. . . . One thing is certain, homosexuality is good for business. We have become a consumer product. A French dermatologist announces four cases of Kaposi sarcoma. The plague? No, these cases have been diagnosed and treated over several years" (*Gai Pied Hebdo* [GPH], no. 37 [March 1982]).

19. This attitude, which might seem surprising in retrospect, can be fairly well explained in the context of the day: in part, knowledge about AIDS was still vague, and homosexual militants have traditionally been suspicious of moralizing talk and reference to normalization in medical science; in part also, the manner in which the press represented AIDS in the early years of the epidemic tended toward a cautious attitude: one hears talk of the "gay cancer," and it was principally the "traumatizing" practices of homosexuals to which the cause of the disease was assigned (poppers, sodomy, and so on). (On the media coverage of AIDS in France, see Herlich and Pierret 1988, and Mercier 1993).

20. "It will be the pioneers of '68 who will be the first to mobilize, perhaps because they are also the first to be affected. These people undoubtedly have no need to assert their homosexuality high and wide. Confronted with AIDS, it is only natural for them to turn outwards, to put the experience of exclusion to good use to avoid others also becoming victims of it; not to shut themselves away once again avoiding latent pressure from those who are already pointing the finger at them and suggesting that they shut themselves back up in the closet. They are simply demanding that the law be respected, that discrimination should not be added to the worry of being ill. Departing from the principle that he no longer has any taste for the subtleties of his own homosexual identity, but wishes above all else to be considered as a "normal" ill person, with nothing—in the end—to distinguish him from others." (Ph. E., quoted in *SIDA*, no. 6, [July-August 1989]: 14).

21. If associations came to be formed after this date, it is undoubtedly due to the discovery, of HIV itself (1984) and to the development of a test for HIV (1985), which made tens of thousands of people aware of the deadly threat surrounding them. Previously, the only people really interested in the discovery of an effective treatment were those positively diagnosed as having AIDS, and many of these could not engage in the campaign because of the state of their health. Those diagnosed as HIV-positive but not yet showing symptoms of full-blown AIDS were obviously more strongly motivated to campaign.

22. "Daniel Defert, sociologist and companion of Michel Foucault, was the founder of the association. The hallmark of Foucauldian thought partly explains the refusal to homosexualise the cause—but without invalidating the hypothesis set out above with regard to VLS. AIDES relies in particular on the idea that the anti-AIDS movement must rely on AIDS-sufferers themselves, those who attest in the flesh to the disease, and not on those who are most susceptible to become victims (homosexuals). Questioning the position of AIDS-sufferers with regard to medicine and medical knowledge counts more than the question of a homosexual identity in Michel Foucault's philosophy" (see Busscher and Pinell 1996, 22).

23. Although since 1983, the French press, has referred to the 4 Hs (homosexuals, Haitians, hemophiliacs, and heroin addicts), no article has been dedicated to the last two categories. It was not until August 1985 that *Libération* dedicated its first article to drug addicts, followed by *Le Monde* in February 1986. And it was only very belatedly, in 1987—after Minister of Health Michèle Barzach made AIDS a "great national cause" and announced at a press conference that "among AIDS patients, in 32 percent of cases, the persons affected are heterosexual"—that the mainstream press started to examine the case of heterosexual AIDS sufferers (the February 1987 edition of *Libération* and the March 1987 editions of *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *Le Point*, for example).

24. It was during the same period that the project of the États-Généraux du SIDA was launched, allowing HIV-positive people to speak out and escape from the technocratic discourse of the associations. "There are some things that cannot be delegated, to understand how we stand on the things we are living through. One cannot ask people who, for a whole heap of reasons, remained detached from the illness to speak for us," declared Alain Vertadier, one of the committee leaders, during a demonstration on 17 and 18 March 1990 in Paris. Quotation on Positif from interview with Jean René Grisons, *Journal du SIDA*, no. 89 (1990).

25. "Today, while AIDS finds other footholds in society and hits the heterosexual population, homosexuals have little by little and almost unconsciously integrated the illness into their condition. Strangely, even they who vehemently denounce the slightest linking of AIDS with homosexuality today manifest a fairly paradoxical desire to appropriate it for themselves, as if it represented a coveted heritage, now that they have in some way domesticated it. Many speak of a new homosexual consciousness, a new identity; of an enrichment, indeed of the chance to set about organizing a new "militancy." . . . One moreover speaks of "profiting" from AIDS to make homosexuality something banal, to constrain the heterosexual authorities to take into account the homosexual reality, and to recognize it" (Ph. E., quoted in *SIDA*, no. 6 [July–August 1989]: 14).

26. I refer especially to government agencies, the hospital sector, the pharmaceutical sector, medical laboratories, associations of doctors and chemists, and insurance companies.

27. An exposé setting out the political manifesto of ACT UP can be found in ACT UP–Paris 1994.

28. This survey by questionnaire was undertaken by Olivier Fillieule in the framework of a working group on activism in France at the Paris Institut d'études politiques (IEP). All results are analyzed in Fillieule (forthcoming). The ACT UP questionnaire was distributed in 1994; 221 questionnaires were received or collected. By varying degrees of militant involvement, we have distinguished three categories among those responding: activists, who participate regularly in action or in commissions (33 percent of the total, or seventy-three people); occasional activists, who participate only in large-scale demonstrations and at weekly meetings (35 percent, or seventy-one individuals); and finally sympathizers, who participate rarely but subscribe to *Action* (32 percent, or seventy-one persons). Only 42 percent of sympathizers live in the Paris region, as opposed to 94 percent of activists and 80 percent of occasional activists. All respondents form the mobilizable potential of ACT UP.

29. It is important to note on this matter the chronic difficulties faced by the drug-addiction commission, particularly in being heard by the rest of the movement. From this point of view, the explanation of the quasi absence of drug addicts from ACT UP certainly does not stem solely from any disinterest in taking action that is generally and unfairly assigned to them (for an example, see Pollak, 1989: 83).

30. The communitarian tendency of ACT UP is also demonstrated in the editorial line of the monthly *Têtu*, clearly inspired by the American model, launched in July 1995 by Didier Lestrade, a founding father of the movement.

31. *Le Journal du SIDA* (December 1993): 3. See also the fairly violent reply of ACT UP in *Action*, the journal of the association (no. 21 [January 1994]: 9).

32. *Le Journal du SIDA*, no. 72 (April 1995): 39. See also ACT UP's response in the words of Agnès de Luna (*Le Journal du SIDA*, no. 73 [May 1995]: 42).

33: *Le Journal du SIDA* (December 1993).

34: *Le Journal du SIDA*, no. 72 (April 1995).

35. See also the editorial of Gérard Dupuy (1995) in *Libération*, an article by Pascal Bruckner (1995) in *Le Monde*, and the public debate started by Martel 1996 (see also "Les homosexuels" 1996; *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 25 April 1996). For an analysis of the reasons that France is fundamentally reticent about the communitarian model, in the tradition of the principles of the République, see also the sophisticated analysis in Ernst 1995.

36. *Le Journal du SIDA*, no. 72 (April 1995).

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