

# Politics

## MALICE TOWARD SOME

**I** HAPPEN to be pro-life," Dan Quayle said during a relatively civil moment of his televised debate last week with Al Gore and James Stockdale. And so he is, even if a remark he made earlier in the campaign—that he would advise his daughter against terminating a (hypothetical) pregnancy but would support her in whatever decision she might make—suggests that he does not understand the implications either of his own position (which is that abortion should be illegal except in cases of rape, incest, or a threat to the mother's life) or of his party's (which is that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances). There is one issue of human sexuality, however, on which the Vice-President might be said to be unequivocally pro-choice. On the September 13th broadcast of ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," he was asked whether he thought that homosexuality was rooted in nature or in society. "My viewpoint is that it's more of a choice than a biological situation," he answered, and went on to say, "It is a wrong choice. I do believe in most cases it certainly is a choice."

It is impossible to know whether Mr. Quayle truly believes this. But the theory that homosexuality is a matter of choice—"life-style choice," in the usual formulation—is indispensable to the prejudice against homosexuals. This year, the Republican Party has given voice to this variety of bigotry in all its forms, from the virulent, through the modulated, to the very mild. The virulent form got unprecedented exposure at the Republican Convention this summer, most notably in the speeches of Patrick Buchanan and Pat Robertson. The modulated form was expressed in the Party's platform, which opposed extending civil-rights protections to gays and allowing them to serve in the armed forces. The mild form has been the specialty of the Vice-President and of President Bush himself, who told an interviewer the week before the Convention that homosexuality is "a life style that in my view is not normal" and "not right."

If by "not normal" the President meant that homosexuality is uncharacteristic of the majority—that it deviates from the mean—he was surely correct, but only in the sense that it is also "not normal" to have gone to Yale or to have a vacation house in Maine. But if "normal" means "occurring naturally"—one of its dictionary definitions—then he was surely wrong. Homosexuality occurs naturally in every human society, and in roughly the same numbers regardless of the level of social tolerance. Recent scientific evidence suggests, moreover, that sexual orientation correlates closely with genetic factors. A study that was conducted by Michael Bailey, a psychologist at Northwestern University, and Richard Pillard, a psychiatrist at Boston University School of Medicine, and was published last December in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* showed that a man has a fifty-two-per-cent chance of being gay if he has an identical twin—that is, a twin fully sharing the same genetic make-up—who is gay, but only a twenty-two-per-cent chance if he has a fraternal twin who is gay, and merely an eleven-per-cent chance if he has an unrelated, adopted brother who is gay. Bailey and Pillard have since conducted a similar study of women, with strikingly similar results. "In contrast," they write, "research on social factors has been fruitless."

What does correlate with "social factors" is not homosexuality itself but the degree of suffering that is imposed upon homosexuals for being homosexuals. Even in our society, a remarkably tolerant one by global and by historical standards, there is almost certainly no such thing as a homosexual—male or female, acknowledged or "closeted"—who has not at some point in his or her life felt, at the very least, the anguish of self-reproach or of fear of rejection. If the experience of actual human beings is any guide, it is

both preposterous and callous to speak of homosexuality as just another choice of life style. Homosexuality is not an illness, not a contagion, not a moral failing. It is simply a predisposition. One gay man, a forty-one-year-old lawyer who recently "came out" in a newspaper interview in which he disputed Mr. Quayle's view, put it this way: "You can say in some sense I choose to write with my right or left hand, but the point is that it is such an automatic decision. That's how I see homosexuality."

The Republican Party is no exception to the rule that any large aggregation of people has its share of homosexuals, as George and Barbara Bush, if not Dan Quayle, know perfectly well. The lawyer who drew the interesting parallel between sexual orientation and handedness is John Schlafly, who says that he shares most of the political views of his mother, the veteran conservative leader Phyllis Schlafly. The Log Cabin Federation, a national organization of gay and lesbian Republicans, has six thousand members. (It has declined to endorse the Bush-Quayle ticket.) The roster of prominent Republicans known to be gay has included Roy Cohn, the lawyer; Representative Stewart McKinney, of Connecticut; and Terry Dolan, the celebrated New Right fundraiser—all of whom died of AIDS. Robert Mosbacher, one of George Bush's oldest friends, the principal fund-raiser for his three Presidential campaigns, and a former member of his Cabinet, has a forty-three-year-old daughter, Diane, who is a publicly proclaimed lesbian.

President and Mrs. Bush welcomed Dee Mosbacher to the White House in 1989, and the President was photographed with her and the woman her father calls her spouse. And the record of Mr. Bush as President did show, intermittently, some slight consideration for homosexuals, especially with respect to the AIDS plague. According to Administration figures, which have been the subject of much debate, federal AIDS spending has increased under Bush; and Bush has invited gay leaders to the White House for two bill signings, and, with his wife, visited AIDS patients in the hospital. That sort of thing was dropped as soon as the White House entered what Mr. Bush calls "campaign mode." And if in the weeks before the election the Bush-Quayle organization has dropped its attacks on homosexuals, along with most of the rest of its "family values" baggage, it was not from pangs of conscience. It did so purely as a result of realizing that the strategy had become politically counterproductive, driving away moderate voters, who, whatever their discomfort with gay culture, dislike conspicuous displays of intolerance. The earlier attacks have not been repudiated, and they ought not to be forgotten.

"The conservative movement had to find another enemy" after the fall of Communism, Marvin Liebman has suggested. Mr. Liebman, sixty-nine years old, is an elder of that movement: the groups he has helped found include, among many others, Young Americans for Freedom and the American Conservative Union. Mr. Liebman, who two years ago announced that he was gay, in a letter to *National Review*, has said that "homosexuals poisoning society" have been drafted to fill the void. "The rhetoric is almost word for word what they used about the Communists: schools, Hollywood, media elite," he said. "Those code words used to mean Jews, but now they also mean gays."

Communism, of course, actually was an enemy of the values that American society is supposed to stand for. The mistake some conservatives made was, instead of just opposing it, to conflate it with liberalism. Homosexuality and homosexuals are the enemies of no one. When those who should—who must—know better indulge the reflex to demonize, they disgrace only themselves. ♦

REPRINTED FROM THE NEW YORKER OCT. 1992



ASSYRIAN CAVALRY

Christinnity might be a good thing, if anyone tried it. G. B. Shaw



## DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT!



No On Hate/ Portland-Metro PAC



is jubilant that the OCA did not collect enough valid signatures to get their anti-gay initiative on Portland's May ballot. Join us, with your time and money, to stop them from amending Oregon's Constitution.

Contributions:  
No On Hate PAC  
P O Box 2725  
Portland, OR 97208

To get involved, call:  
222-9885



**DELORES STRICKLAND**  
for County Commissioner

Reprinted from OREGON VOTERS' PAMPHLET (or favorite entry)

## Measure No. 9 STATE OF OREGON

### ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

According to the book of Leviticus in the Bible, oyster-eating, crossbreeding cattle, shaving a beard, wearing clothing made of mixed fibers, cursing one's parents and adultery are just as immoral as homosexuality. If the OCA's "No Special Rights" Committee wants to take one of the 3,000-year-old laws of ritual holiness from Leviticus and put it into the Bill of Rights in the state constitution, they should be sincere enough to put all the rest of Leviticus into the constitution as well. It's a simple matter of respect for these historic laws to treat them consistently.

We at the Special Righteousness Committee are just as offended by oyster-eating, shaving and mixed fibers as the OCA is offended by homosexuality, and we have just as much right as the OCA does to change the state constitution to require government discrimination against people whose behavior we don't like.

My friends, do you want the public schools teaching your children that shaving is a legitimate and equal alternative style to a normal and healthy beard? Would you want to be forced to hire an oyster-eater to direct your church choir? Adam and Eve wore fig leaves—100 percent fig leaves—and this is divine proof that those disgustingly unnatural cotton/polyester blends are sinful. And when the OCA was analyzing the threat to traditional family values, we don't know how they managed to overlook adultery! Why, there's a lot more adultery than homosexuality going on out there, and extrapolations from OCA statistics show that 90 percent of the people who have engaged in sexual perversions are heterosexual ("straight").

The state condones adultery by not punishing it with death as required by Leviticus. It promotes oyster-eating by licensing seafood restaurants, and it allows people to take mixed fibers out of the closet and to flaunt them right out in public without being fired or evicted! The state is encouraging sin!

If the OCA can have the special right to make their personal moral agenda into public policy, then anyone else also should be able to amend the state Bill of Rights to eliminate basic human rights for people who they don't like.

Let's put ALL of Leviticus into the constitution! A "yes" vote is the first step in facilitating our militant moral agenda.

AGREE WITH US OR BURN IN HELL!

Special Righteousness Committee  
P.O. Box 1851  
Portland, Oregon 97207

(This information furnished by M. Dennis Moore, Chair, Special Righteousness Committee.)

(This space purchased for \$300 in accordance with ORS 251.255.)

The printing of this argument does not constitute an endorsement by the State of Oregon, nor does the state warrant the accuracy or truth of any statement made in the argument.

**Coffee Cabana**

"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER..."

AVANTIE NAME

219 N. HEMLOCK CANNON BEACH

Cotton Basics  
Unique Rayon Prints

**El Mundo for Women**

• Portland 3556 SE Hawthorne / 239-4605  
• Cannon Beach 215 N Hemlock / 436-1572