The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



David Berry
For a dialectic of homosexuality and revolution
2003

Retrieved on September 26, 2010 from raforum.info
Conference on “Socialism and Sexuality. Past and present of radical sexual politics”, Amsterdam, 3–4 October 2003.

theanarchistlibrary.org

For a dialectic of homosexuality and revolution

David Berry

2003

day means to struggle againt this capitalist and phallocratic society (the mode of intersection of these three remains to be discussed).

Oppressed as we are, our relation to the world is not only different, it incriminates this world which excludes us and it raises questions which, whilst specific, in no way concern exclusively homosexuals and lesbians. For example:

a. Since the labour movement promotes a bourgeois morality which entails the oppression of the homosexuals (and women) within it, we are led to ask ourselves questions about the existing organizations of the working class and about the nature of the society they hope to build.

b. What of the attitude towards so-called marginal struggles, considered as, at best, secondary to the central political struggle and implying the non-recognition of social movements (women, homosexuals, regionalism, etc.) which are seen either as factors of division or potential allies?

c. And despite the speeches, despite the struggles fought primarily by women, the reduction of the social revolution to the question of the relations of production.

Pierre Hahn, a leading left-winger in the gay lib movement and a founder member of the FHAR:

> More than to any other, homosexuals are grateful to you — and I more than anyone — for everything you have done for them, and that at a time when to speak out in such a way brought with it great disrepute. [...] But your most valuable contribution is a life's work which is at once political (in the traditional sense of the word) and sexological: it is *La Peste brune* plus Kinsey; it is Fourier and the texts against colonialism; it is, above all, you yourself.[105]

APPENDIX

"Behind the masks (Manifesto of Masques, a review of homosexualities)"[106]

Composed of homosexuals, men and women, who have experience both of political activism and homosexual activism, the *Masques* collective was born of our rejection of the separation of these two practices, a rejection of the limitations imposed by such a separation, of the ossification which it induces, and which we are convinced, after two years of debate and of practice, we must attempt to transcend.

This separation has it roots in the 80 years of struggle waged by homosexuals and lesbians harassed by bourgeois repression with the complicity, the silence, even the support of the organizations claiming to represent the working class. Rejection, but also the desire to go beyond: for us, to struggle against heterosexist society to-

[105] 'Une lettre du regretté Pierre Hahn', in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.42–44, quote p.43.

[106] From *Masques. Revue des homosexualités* no.1 (May 1979), pp.2–3. The editorial committee seems to have consisted of five men (including P. Hahn) and one woman. Guérin was a contributor and was interviewed for the first issue.

Contents

Living two lives: homophobia in the socialist and labour movements . . . 7
"The disalienation of each individual." For a dialectic of homosexuality and revolution. . . . 8
The left and homosexuality: a critique . . . 9
For (homo)sexual liberation: Guérin's critical engagement wth "sexology" . . . 15
Kinsey . . . 16
Anarchist individualism: Stirner and Armand . . . 17
Fourier . . . 18
The revolutionary potential of psychoanalysis: the early Freud . . . 20
For a synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalysis: Reich . . . 20
Women and patriarchy . . . 23
Androgyny and bisexualism . . . 26
Homophobia as racism . . . 29
For a total revolution . . . 30
The gay liberation movement: a critique . . . 33
Conclusion . . . 38
APPENDIX . . . 42

commitment to sexual and especially homosexual liberation, and an attempt both on a theoretical and on a practical, organizational level to bring these two aspects of total social revolution together.

The issue of homosexuality acquired ever greater importance in Guérin's life, and, in an interview he gave at the age of 75, he made the following remarks about a collection of essays, which he evidently thought might be his last, entitled *Son testament*:

> I may well not live many more years, and as a precaution I have been keen to let it be known that I would like my last publication, my last thoughts, to focus on my love of boys. Having already written books on a great number of different subjects, having a great deal of experience of political activism and having very strong political views, I could have produced a synthesis of my thoughts about revolution, antimilitarism, anticolonialism, etc. If I was insistent that my last book should be called *His Testament*, it is because I think that homosexuality has played such a primordial rôle in my life, that it has haunted me day and night from the age of 15, that that is the message I wish to leave behind. The fact that I am married, a father, a grandfather, bisexual, homosexual, [...] it seems to me that this is what I must leave behind as the final expression of my life as a writer and as a man.[104]

Finally, to conclude, I can do no better that to quote an assessment of Guérin's contribution in the form of a letter to him from

[104] 'Interview à la revue *Homo 2000*, 1979' extracted in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.64–5, quote p.65. *Son testament* (Paris: Encre, 1979) is divided into two parts, the first bringing together a selection of autobiographical texts, the second a set of texts by or about 'precursors': Plutarch, Shakespeare, Fourier, Balzac's Vautrin, Sacher-Masoch and Gauguin.

and Owen who have rejected the class-struggle in industry, or from a women's movement which from the nineteenth century to the present has been seldom entirely happy with the definition of radical priorities offered by even the most revolutionary of males."[102] Quite apart from the fact that this claim is at least in part questionable, Sedgwick also seems to have been ignorant of Guérin's writings on sexuality other than the autobiographical texts. For, although Guérin adhered to the orthodox Marxist argument, as expounded by Engels, according to which the patriarchal family, private property and the state were both coterminous and historically determined, it is precisely in the Utopian Fourier, in the individualist anarchists Armand and Stirner, in Reichian psychoanalysis and in the liberal sexologist Kinsey that Guérin found the ideas he needed to produce a critique of labour movement homophobia and to tie this up with a socialist critique of bourgeois patriarchy. Sedgwick concluded his analysis of the contradictions in Guérin by arguing that:

> In his more personal, experiential writing, Guérin is unwittingly correcting the entire theoretical orientation of his public socialism: his oscillation between a masculine public sphere of production and a quasi-feminine world of the heart is the penalty of the double life forced on him by society's ban.[103]

This is doubtless true of an earlier period in Guérin's life. But surely what characterizes Guérin's activism and his non-autobiographical writings from the 1950s onwards, and particularly after his coming out in 1965, is his move away from Marxism-Leninism and towards anarchism, away from the point of production and towards a breaking down of the artificial barrier between the "public" and the "private", towards a growing

[102] Sedgwick, p.210–11

[103] Sedgwick, p.217

Daniel Guerin's engagement with "sexology" from the 1950's and his contribution to the theorization of sexuality and gender from a historical materialist perspective.

> Only a true libertarian communism, antiauthoritarian and antistatist, would be capable of promoting the definitive and concomitant emancipation both of the homosexual and of the individual exploited or alienated by capitalism.[1]
>
> [Je] me définirais, s'il fallait absolument se définir, un marxiste libertaire qui n'ai cessé, depuis des années, de soutenir la nécessité d'une synth èse entre marxisme, anarchisme, psychanalyse.[2]

As the French revolutionary Daniel Guérin (1904–1988) once remarked, the European labour movement's record with regard to homosexuality has not, on the whole, been positive.[3] Nor have the marxist tradition's attempts to theorize sexuality and heterosexism and their relationship to class and class conflict been entirely satisfactory. Guérin is a rare example of a marxist revolutionary and a bisexual who dared to address these problems rigorously and very publicly at a time when to do so was to invite opprobrium from all quarters — including most of his supposed comrades. Although by 1968 he could be seen as the "grandfather of the French homosexual movement"[4], Daniel Guérin has always been better know outside gay circles for his rôle in the revolutionary movement. On the revolutionary left of the Socialist Party in the 1930s, he was

[1] Homosexualité et révolution (Paris: Le Vent du ch'min, 1983), p.25

[2] "Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui" (1969), p.28.

[3] "Le mouvement ouvrier et l'homosexualité". Guérin made similar remarks in an interview with the same title published in Gérard Bach, *Homosexualités: Expression/Répression* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1982), pp.99–102.

[4] Frédéric Martel, Le rose et le noir. Les homosexuels en France depuis 1968 (Paris: Seuil, 2000), pp.46

later heavily influenced by Trotsky, before becoming attracted to the libertarian communist wing of the anarchist movement. After 1968, he became increasingly interested in Rosa Luxemburg and councilism, and argued for a synthesis of marxism and anarchism. Guérin's engagement with "sexology", however, has been relatively neglected (other than in the work of the French historian, Sylvie Chaperon[5]. Similarly, his active commitment to homosexual liberation (especially after he came out in 1965) remains little known beyond gay circles. Jean Maitron's entry on Guérin in the *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier fran ais*, for instance, does not even mention homosexuality; and the obituary by a close associate of Guérin's, Daniel Guerrier, ironically entitled "Un militant sans frontiè res" ("An activist without borders") mentions it in one short sentence.[6] This doubtless reflects the endemic — if nowadays more carefully hidden — homophobia of the left and the labour movement; and also the persistent reluctance on the part of many historians of the left and of labour, even today and perhaps particularly in France (relative to, say, Britain and the US), to attach importance to forms of social inequality and oppression linked to gender and sexuality.[7] Guérin himself, in both his historical and theoretical writings and his political activism — whether it be in the context of antifascism, anticolonialism or homosexual liberation — adopted a consistently historical materialist, class-based

[5] Sylvie Chaperon, "Le fonds Daniel Guérin et l"histoire de la sexualité" in *Journal de la BDIC* no.5 (Juin 2002), p.10; "Kinsey en France: les sexualités masculine et féminine en débat" in *Mouvement social* no.198 (January-March 2002), pp.91–110

[6] Jean Maitron, in Jean Maitron (ed.), *Dictionnaire Biographique du Mouvement Ouvrier Franç ais* (Paris: Edns. ouviè res), vol.XXXI (1988), pp.33–5; Daniel Guerrier, "Daniel Guérin. Un militant sans frontiè res" in *Le Monde libertaire* no.705 (April 1988).

[7] On the place of feminism within the history of revolutionary movements, see, for example, the "Tribune" piece by Anne-Lise Melquiond, "Le féminisme est-il soluble dans le BLEMR?", in *Bulletin de Liaison des Etudes sur les Mouvements Révolutionnaires* no. 4 (December 1999), p.31.

> Guérin's desires have always been framed less in terms of a body than of an embodiment: the lovers pass as successor-incarnations of an active, questing proletariat, a mass of privacies summating through their plenitude and their sameness into a collective public subject. It is a myth of working-class virility which yokes Guérin's syndicalism with his sexual nature, in an idealisation which echoes the less erotic (but equally ethereal) mythology of the proletariat-as-agent heralded by a Sorel or a Lukacs.[99]

Guérin also tended (particularly through his masochism, his fetishism and his adherence to somewhat stereotypical, reductionist representations of physical beauty) to reproduce exploitative relations similar to those which have been much targeted by feminism.

To some extent, Guérin was aware of these contradictions — the contradictions, in Sedgwick's words, "between the egalitarian and emancipatory values which the Left canvasses for the reform of society, and the metaphysics of abasement, domination or objectivation which seem to characterise sexual relations of a certain intensity"[100] — and in *Eux et lui*, notably, he submitted himself to a public and painfully honest autocritique.

Sedgwick argues, quite rightly, that Guérin's linking of his homosexual proclivities with the proletariat seen as social vanguard "does not establish the radicalism of Guérin's sexual choice within the terms of sexual politics itself."[101] And he goes on to claim that our modern awareness of sexual politics has tended historically to derive not from the class-struggle-oriented Marxists and anarchists, but "from liberal feminists, or from Utopians like Fourier

[99] Peter Sedgwick, 'Out Of Hiding: The Comradeships of Daniel Guérin' in *Salmagundi*, vol.58, part 9 (1982), pp.197–220, quote p.210

[100] Sedgwick, p.211.

[101] Sedgwick, p.210.

struggle for "economic" liberation, but also the struggle for sexual liberation. "We must not wait for the Revolution, we must not wait for the proletariat to have taken power, and assume that this will automatically bring about sexual liberation." It was exactly the same, Guérin argued, with religion: "No! We must fight obscurantist fanaticism now."[96] All these struggles were "parallel" struggles within total social revolution.

Conclusion

Guérin commented once that "the driving force of my life has been love".[97] Perhaps this provides the unifying principle underlying all of Guérin's work. As he wrote in 1959 in the foreword to an essay about the censorship of homosexual writers:

> The problem in reality is not homosexuality. It is, above and beyond that, the problem of sexual liberation, or rather, more generally even than that, it is the problem of freedom. Eroticism is one of the instruments of freedom. There is within it, in the words of Simone de Beauvoir, a principle which is hostile to society, or, more precisely, hostile to a society in which man oppresses man [sic], hostile to the authoritarian society. In *Carmen*, the song goes: Love is a gypsy child./It has never, ever obeyed laws.[98]

There are nevertheless clearly some aspects of Guérin's sexual attitudes or practices which are not unproblematic, notably his tendency to objectify his sexual partners and to idealize working-class youth. As Sedgwick very eloquently put it:

[96] 'De la répression sexuelle à la Révolution', from *le Point*, Brussels, December 1968, in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.34.

[97] 'Géographie passionnelle', p.6

[98] *Missing footnote*

perspective. This paper aims to explore his attempts from the 1950s onwards to analyze the nature of sexuality and the reasons for the oppression of homosexuality, to promote (homo)sexual liberation, and his insistence that such sexual liberation could only be fully achieved as part of a social revolution. To what extent did Guérin succeed in applying a marxist analysis to these problems?

Living two lives: homophobia in the socialist and labour movements

For many years, Guérin lived what he referred to as a "cruel dichotomy".[8] With close friends and comrades, in whom he was able to confide as far as other things were concerned, Guérin nevertheless felt obliged to refrain from raising anything to do with sexuality, and it was certainly inconceivable that he should ever attempt to defend "a non-orthodox version of love"[9], even from a detached point of view. Add to this the workerist and anti-intellectual traditions of French syndicalism, and Guérin was doubly damned. Indeed the two sins — his homosexuality and his class background — were of course linked, in that it was a common misconception that homosexuality was a "bourgeois vice", similarly to the way in which it would in later years be seen as being in some way intrinsically linked to fascism. This is doubtless why Guérin put some effort into disseminating research as early as the 1950s which demonstrated that homosexuality was just as common among the working class as any other class, but which also highlighted the differential experiences of working-class and bourgeois homosexuals — both in terms of the conditions that working-class homosexuals were forced to endure in their attempts to meet other homosexu-

[8] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.11. "I felt as if I was cut in two, speaking out loud about my convictions as an activist and, by force of circumstance, feeling obliged to hide my sexual inclinations".

[9] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.11.

als (public urinals as opposed to private clubs and salons) and in terms of harassment by the authorities (as contrasted with the relative tolerance of homosexuality in bourgeois and artistic circles).[10]

"The disalienation of each individual." For a dialectic of homosexuality and revolution.

In the 1950s, Guérin moved closer to anarchism — both on a practical, campaigning level (to some extent by force of circumstance), and on a theoretical level, as his research on the European revolutionary movement since 1789 forced him to become increasingly critical of leninism. Still a historical materialist, he was active on the revolutionary anti-stalinist left; he was heavily involved in anti-colonial campaigns and worked to support the black liberation movement in the United States (he was the first French publisher of Malcolm X, for example). But starting in 1954, he began to write more and more about sexuality, and he finally came out, no longer able to bear the schizophrenic split between the two parts of his life, in 1965, with the publication of his first autobiography, *Un jeune homme excentrique*.[11] By the time he produced *Homosexualité*

[10] See, for instance, "La répression de l'homosexualité en France", *La Nef*, mars 1958, and "Pour le droit d'aimer un mineur", *Marge* no.4, November-December 1974. "Contrary to myth, homosexuality is not a 'rich man's vice'".

[11] *Un jeune homme excentrique. Essai d'autobiographie* (Paris: Julliard, 1965). The 1972 *Autobiographie de jeunesse* was a later, unexpurgated version of this. It is true that Guérin had come out a few years earlier with the publication of a shorter and more poetic work entitled "Eux et lui" (published in Les Lettres nouvelles no.26, 21 October 1959, pp.28–39, and as a book in 1962 by Editions du Rocher, Monaco, with illustrations by André Masson), but the readership was so small it passed unnoticed by most. Guérin's archives contain congratulatory letters on "Eux et lui" from, amongst others, Aimé Césaire, Samuel Beckett, Franç ois Mauriac, Michel Leiris and André Baudry (Fonds Guérin, BDIC, F° Δ 721/8). A recent republication contains both the original 1962 version and a 1979 version of Eux et lui and Commentaires, plus Guérin's marginalia (Lille: GaiKitschCamp, 2000). For a bibliography, see my web page.

> as homosexuals, have a r™le to play in the class struggle.[94]

In *Homosexualité et Révolution*, Guérin summarized his strategy, uniting short-term reforms favouring the civil liberties of homosexuals, women and ethnic minorities with the broader and long-term aims of revolutionary socialism:

> In any case, the gains won against homophobia by its victims can only be limited and fragile. On the other hand, the crushing of class tyranny would open the way to the total liberation of every human being, including homosexuals.
>
> The task therefore is to ensure that there is as great a convergence as possible between homosexuality and revolution.
>
> The proletarian revolutionary must understand, or must be convinced, that, even if he does not see himself as directly implicated, the emancipation of the homosexual concerns him just as much as, for example, the emancipation of women and of people of colour. As for the homosexual, he must understand that his liberation can be total and irreversible only if it is achieved within the context of social revolution, in other words, only if the human race succeeds not just in liberalizing attitudes, but far more than this, in transforming everyday life.[95]

If, on another occasion, he conceded that the "essential struggle" was that against capitalism and for the liberation of the oppressed proletariat, he nevetherless insisted that this meant not only the

[94] Le Droit à la caresse, also quoted in 'Libertaires et gais'.

[95] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.25.

provocations"[89] had produced "defensive reactions and repulsion" amongst young straight men who might otherwise have been more open sexually.[90]

As has already been commented, despite his repeated assertion that "thanks to the revolution of May 68, homosexuality finally gained acceptance,"[91] and despite the fact that in theory at least the FHAR and the GLPHQ (Groupe de libération homosexuelle politique et quotidien) put the seal on the rapprochement between homosexuality and Revolution, Guérin only found an organisation which fully lived up to his expectations concerning the dialectic of (homo)sexual liberation and social revolution with the creation of the UTCL in 1978. Invited to write a regular column for *Gai Pied Hebdo* in the early 80s, Guérin felt obliged to check with the UTCL before agreeing: "Total and unreserved approval", was the Union's response[92] The UTCL itself published a pamphlet, *Le Droit à la caresse*, written by a gay activist:[93]

> There can be no liberation of homosexuality other than on the basis of new social relations, in other words other than in a new society, which is why we are allies with the labour movement in its struggle, the labour movement beng the only force capable of bringing about the necessary social change. So, if socialism is not to be a caricature of itself, we,

[89] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.23.

[90] *Paris Gay 1925*, p.54.

[91] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.23.

[92] 'Libertaires et gais', *Gai Pied Hebdo* no.52 (15–21 January 1983), p.15.

[93] Union des Travailleurs Communistes Libertaires, *Le Droit à la caresse: Les homosexualités et le combat homosexuel* (Paris: Editions «L», n.d.; Supplement to *Tout le Pouvoir aux Travailleurs* no.27 and to Lutter), 32 pp. I am grateful to comrades of the Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme in Marseille for unearthing a copy of this for me. The title of the pamphlet is evidently a pun on Paul Lafargue's *The Right to be Lazy,* which translates into French as *Le Droit à la paresse*. It includes a useful summary of the history of the homosexual liberation movement and its connections with the left and the trade union movement

et Révolution — a collection of previously published essays, interviews and extracts from longer works — in 1983, just five years before his death, the definition he provided of Revolution reflected not only the traditional, more or less apocalyptic vision of the rising up and self-emancipation of the oppressed masses, but spoke of "the disalienation of each individual", and he went on: "Hence the need to establish a dialectical relationship between the words homosexuality and Revolution." How was this dialectic to be established, and what critique of the existing revolutionary movement (and of the homosexual movement) did it imply?

The left and homosexuality: a critique

"Not so many years ago, to declare oneself a revolutionary and to confess to being homosexual were incompatible," Guérin wrote in 1975.[12] All in all, Guérin did not have a positive opinion of the European labour movement's record on homosexuality: "the record is very poor", beginning with Engels, whose study of the origins of the family discussed the possible causes of homosexuality before dismissing it as a degrading.[13]

Guérin pointed out that in the beginning, at least, revolutionary Russia adopted an exemplary attitude to sexual and homosexual liberation, but he was scathing about the USSR under Stalin and the post-1945 socialist states in Eastern Europe and Cuba. One of the reasons why the post-war generations of gays were distrustful of

[12] "Etre homosexuel et révolutionnaire", p.36

[13] 'Le mouvement ouvrier et l'homosexualité'. Guérin made similar remarks in an interview with the same title published in Gérard Bach, *Homosexualités: Expression/Répression* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1982), pp.99–102. Engels refers to the "degradation" caused by "the perversion of boy-love" — Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), p.93. Guérin nevertheless thought *The Origin of the Family* "a great book", "unjustly depreciated today by a certain school of thought" — 'Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui', p.22.

revolutionary politics, according to Guérin, was the abject failure in this regard of "actually existing socialism":

> The intransigence of the so-called "communist" regimes in this regard takes much more shocking forms than that of the capitalist countries. It is paradoxical and scandalous that the zealots of so-called "scientific" socialism should display such crass ignorance of scientific facts. It is tragic that a morbid puritanism be allowed to so disfigure the natural and polymorphous eroticism of an entire generation.[14]

But why were homosexuals persecuted under stalinism?

> The reason is that the homosexual, whether he knows or wishes it or not, is potentially asocial, an outsider, and therefore a virtual subversive. And as these totalitarian regimes have consolidated themselves by ressuscitating traditional family values, he who loves boys is considered a danger to society.[15]

As for the French left, the PCF was "hysterically intransigent as far as 'moral behaviour' was concerned"[16]; the trotskyist Pierre Lambert's OCI was "completely hysterical with regard to homosexuality"; Lutte ouvri re was theoretically opposed to homosexuality;

[14] 'Sur le racisme anti-homosexuel', *Masques. Revue des homosexualités* no.6 (Autumn 1980), pp.49–52, quote p.52.

[15] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.17. According to Jean-Louis Franc, a FAHR activist at the same time as Guérin, the Lambertists were violent towards homosexuals and the Moists even more so, whereas Lutte ouvrière activists, although the party was programmatically opposed to homosexuality, in practice behaved quite normally towards homosexuals. In conversation with the author, Linz, 14 September 2002.

[16] 'Aragon, victime et profiteur du tabou' in *Gai Pied Hebdo*, 4 June 1983, reproduced in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.62–3, quote p.63.

homme excentrique, he claimed that he had wanted to present homosexuality in as "natural" a way as possible, as being part of the life of a "normal", healthy person, "carefully avoiding the posturing dear to someone such as Jean Genet, for example, that is to say the pose of the 'outcast', the 'damned'. To pose as someone exceptional, in my opinion, is to isolate oneself from common mortals, and gives the heterosexual majority sticks with which to beat us."[85] Elsewhere, he commented that although homosexuals must have their own specific organization, they must also be integrated within a broader movement for change, like black sections within trade unions: "those who content themselves with the ghetto are making a big mistake."[86]

By the 1980s, Guérin's assessment of the state of the gay liberation movement and the gay "scene" was pretty negative:

> The recent emancipation, the commercialisation of homosexuality, the superficial pursuit of pleasure for pleasure's sake have created a whole generation of "gay" young men, profoundly apolitical, obsessed with gadgets, frivolous, characterless, incapable of any serious reflexion, uncultured, good for nothing but "cruising", corrupted by the specialist press, the mushrooming of gay bars and so on, and by the libidinous small ads, in a word a million miles from any conception of class struggle.[87]

Guérin argued that the movement's ghettoization went against the "breaking down of social barriers" and against "universal bisexuality"[88], and that its "public excesses, sometimes even its pointless

[85] 'Commentaires très libres sur les Mémoires d'un jeune homme excentrique', 17 February 1965 (unpublished bound TS held in Bibliothèque Nationale).

[86] 'Le mouvement ouvrier et l'homosexualité'.

[87] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.17.

[88] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.23.

When the FHAR (Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire) appeared in 1971, Guérin was enthusiastic, seeing the new group as the revolutionary homosexual organisation — bringing together revolutionary politics and a concern with homosexual liberation — he had always longed to see. He was, however, soon disappointed, and found it to be even worse than Arcadie: "Some completely unaware and often very stupid people — except, of course, for a few intelligent young boys such as Guy Maes and Guy Hocquenghem".[82] Guérin was particularly horrified when, at the funeral of Pierre Overney (a Maoist militant killed by security men at Renault-Billancourt), some of the more provocative members of the FHAR exposed their buttocks.[83]

Although it is apparently the case that he stood on a table at the front of the hall and stripped naked with Fran çoise d'Eaubonne during a general assembly of the FHAR (to reinforce a point being made about the liberation of the body)[84], Guérin was in other circumstances not a believer in provocation. Explaining once in a talk to fellow Arcadians his intentions in publishing *Un Jeune*

[82] Elsewhere, however, Guérin was less complimentary about Hocquenghem. Asked by *L'Etincelle* in 1977 what he thought of other "écrivains de l'homosexualité", 'homosexual writers', he replied: "Hocquenghem writes in an incomprehensible gobbledygook, Bory overdoes it, he's the clown of homosexuality, and what's more he's turning into a reactionary, he went to dinner with Giscard; as for Peyrefitte, he is despicable and odious." On Hocquenghem, Bory and Peyrefitte, see Marcel, *Le Rose et le Noir*. On Hocquenghem, see also Bill Marshall, *Guy Hocquenghem. Theorising the Gay Nation* (London: Pluto, 1996). I have as yet been unable to establish who Maes was

[83] Along with a few copies of the FHAR's paper, *L'Antinorm*, Guérin's archives also contain a 2 pp. TS document, 'Pour la constitution et l'organisation d'une tendance «politique» au sein du FHAR' ('For the constitution and organization of a 'political' tendency within the FHAR'), but I have found no further evidence of Guérin's having been involved in any attempt to reform the FHAR. He seems to have had closer links with David Thorstad, leader of the Gay Activist Movement, the left-wing tendency within the American gay lib movement. Fonds Guérin, BDIC, F° Δ 721/15.

[84] See Martel, *Le rose et le noir*, pp.45–6.

as was the Ligue communiste, despite their belatedly paying lip service to gay lib.[17] Together, Guérin argued, such groups bore a great deal of responsiblity for fostering homophobic attitudes among the working class as late as the 1970s. Their attitude was "the most blinkered, the most reactionary, the most antiscientific".[18]

In an appendix of his pioneering 1955 study of Kinsey (on the persecution of homosexuals in France), Guérin took the opportunity to argue for a change of attitude:

> Revolutionaries have proven themselves to be no more tolerant than the bourgeois with regard to homosexuality. They have, it is true, an excuse: they distrust the homosexuals in their ranks because the latter are reputed to be vulnerable to blackmail and to pressure from the police, and are therefore "dangerous" for the movement which, in the eyes of such activists, is more important than respect for the human indivdual. But they do not realize that their intolerance itself contributes to perpetuating the state of affairs which is at the root of their concern: by virtue of the fact that they also cast their stone at homosexuals, they are helping to consolidate the very taboo which makes homosexuals easy prey for the blackmailers and for the police. The vicious circle will only be broken when progressive workers adopt both a more scientific and a more humane attitude towards homosexuality.[19]

It is not asurprising that Guérin should have been attacked by the Catholic Church, but he also came under fire from the left, and in particular the French Communist Party. The trotskyist

[17] See 'Daniel Guérin «à confesse»', p.11.

[18] "Etre homosexuel et révolutionnaire", p.10.

[19] *Kinsey et la sexualité* (Paris: Julliard, 1954), appendix II: "La persécution des homosexuels en France", pp.180–6, quotation pp.184–5.

Michel Raptis (Pablo) also apparently complained in his review of the Kinsey book of an over-concentration on homosexuality.[20] Even *France Observateur*, which had first published Guérin's work on Kinsey in article form, published only hostile readers' letters, refusing to print those expressing gratitude to Guérin. As Guérin wrote of his critics in a letter to the libertarian sexologist René Guyon, whose work he much admired:

> The harshest [criticisms] came from marxists, who tend seriously to underestimate the form of oppression which is antisexual terrorism. I expected it, of course, and I knew that in publishing my book I was running the risk of being attacked by those to whom I feel closest on a political level.[21]

Eventually, Guérin had had enough, and he finally came out with the publication of *Un jeune homme excentrique*, in 1965:

> These guardians of society's "morals" have inadvertently done me a favour: they have made me face up to them without false shame and come to terms with myself more fully. Gone are the days of the fruitless and absurd split between two halves of myself: one half which was seen and another which had to remain hidden. Totality has been re-established.[22]

However, his attempt to explain the relationship between his discovery of the working class, his sexuality and his socialism, shocked and was misunderstood by many on the left:

[20] 'Etre homosexuel et révolutionnaire', p.10. I have yet to trace this review.

[21] Letter of 27 May 1955, Fonds Guérin, BDIC, F° Δ 721/carton 12/4, quoted in Chaperon, 'Le fonds Daniel Guérin et l'histoire de la sexualité' in *Journal de la BDIC*, no.5 (June 2002), p.10

[22] Foreword to *Autobiographie de jeunesse*, p.9

> they are the object, and who are haunted by the idea of suicide. I have received some deeply distressing letters from such people. The most urgent thing, since we are not going to transform the world tomorrow, is to help such unfortunate people rediscover a taste for life.[77]

The gay liberation movement: a critique

Guérin was personally never attracted to what he called "effeminate" gay men, and had an "absolute, physical horror" of cross-dressing.[78] In his *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle*, he argued that "Les 'tantes-filles' [...] ne se font pas 'femmes' comme dit Sartre, elles se font plus exactement, telles qu'elles se repésentent les femmes, c'est-à-dire 'poupées et putains'.[79] In the 1920s, most of his sexual partners were heterosexuals — or at least they saw themselves as such, and rejected the homosexual label. For these reasons, although Martel asserts that he was in a sense "the grandfather of the French homosexual movement", Guérin had never actually mixed a great deal with other declared homosexuals, other than through his association with Arcadie from 1954 and with its review of the same name, to which he contributed from 1956.[80] Although he was, as he put it, "very well regarded" within Arcadie, he found the organisation complacent, petit-bourgeois and reactionary, not least because its founder, André Baudry, maintained close links with the police and the clergy, and was determined not to "politicize" his campaign for the tolerance of "homophilia".[81] Guérin left in 1968.

[77] *Plexus*, no.26 (July 1969), pp.123–4.

[78] 'Daniel Guérin «à confesse»', p.14.

[79] *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle*, p.65, note 1.

[80] Frédéric Martel, *Le rose et le noir. Les homosexuels en France depuis 1968* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), pp.46. Arcadie had about 10,000 members at the end of the 1960s. See Martel, pp.98–117.

[81] 'Le mouvement ouvrier et l'homosexualité'.

> homosexuality. […]. The bourgeoisie as a whole will never entirely lift its ban on dissident sexualities. The whole edifice will have to be swept away in order to achieve the complete liberation of man in general (a generic term which includes both sexes), and of the homosexual in particuliar.[75]

Having said that, Guérin was not dismissive of partial gains. Interviewed in 1969, he said:

> Even at the present time, in capitalist societies, partial victories over obscurantism should not be underestimated, far from it. I see no difference between wage increases, improvements in prison regimes and in civil rights (the emancipation of women, for example) and the struggle against the repression of homosexuals, a struggle which must be fought straightaway.[76]

This acceptance of partial reforms, in a spirit similar to that of Amiens" assertion of the CGT's "double task", was motivated by his personal experience of suffering and the knowledge he had of others' suffering, particularly in the villages and small towns of "la France profonde":

> I am thinking above all of those who are imprisoned as "common criminals" for having tried to satisfy their sexuality by an act which was an expression of their true selves. I am also thinking of all those homosexuals who find great difficulty in coming to terms with themselves, in bearing the social reprobation of which

[75] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.15–16.

[76] Interview with Pierre Hahn, *Plexus*, no.26 (July 1969), pp.123–4, quote p.123. Extracts also in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.56–59.

> My background had enclosed me within the opaque barriers of social segregation; homosexuality, by making me intimately familiar with young workers, by enabling me to discover and share their life of exploitation, led me to join the class enslaved by the class I was leaving behind. This simple explanation, perhaps too simple, was not to the liking of everybody.[23]

He was accused of dishonouring not only himself, but the whole of the left, by suggesting that one had to be a "pédé" (queer) to be a socialist: "Thanks to me, people might have suspected all "leftists" of siding with the labour movement for the pleasure of "a bit of rough"!" Jean Daniel, editor of *Le Nouvel observateur*, organised a boycott, actively discouraging colleagues from reviewing the book.[24] Guérin found few defenders, and even someone such as the left-wing, gay novelist Jean-Louis Bory remained silent.[25] Guérin reported that one reader and admirer of his celebrated study of anarchism was profoundly disappointed that the author of such a "serious" work could also have penned *Un jeune homme excentrique*.[26] Indeed, Guérin's readers seem to have always fallen into one of two kinds: "I have two publics: some people buy all my books on political and social questions, whilst others are only interested in my literary and homosexual writings."[27]

[23] 'Etre homosexuel et révolutionnaire', p.10. For more detail on Guérin's 'discovery' of the working class and its relation to his politicization, see my "'Prolétaires de tous les pays, caressez-vous!': Guérin, the Labor Movement, and Homosexuality," in Gabriella Hauch, ed., *Sexuality, the Working Classes, and Labor Movements* (forthcoming).

[24] See 'Daniel Guérin «à confesse»', pp.10–14.

[25] 'Etre homosexuel et révolutionnaire', p.10.

[26] 'Etre homosexuel et révolutionnaire', p.10. Guérin's *L'Anarchisme, de la doctrine à la pratique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1st edition 1965) is widely regarded as one of the best short introductions to anarchism. The English translation (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970) was given a preface by Noam Chomsky.

[27] 'Daniel Guérin: d'une dissidence sexuelle à la révolution', p.42.

Even the organisations of which Guérin was actually a member were not beyond criticism. In 1958, before he had come out as a homosexual, but at a time when he was concerning himself more and more in his writings with questions of sexuality, material submitted both to *France-Observateur* and to *Perspectives socialistes* — the latter being the organ of the Union de la gauche socialiste, of which he was a member — was censored without his being told:

> Thus, in two papers to which I contribute and whose political positions are close to my own, it is impossible for me to raise issues of sexuality without being gagged. But the battle for the emancipation of man [sic] on all levels continues, and we shall, in the end, triumph.[28]

He commented resignedly in an interview for *Masques* that the OCL (Organisation Communiste Libertaire), of which he had been a member in the early 1970s, had simply never mentioned sexuality: "It's not hostility, but they forgive me some deviations because I've written books about anarchism." Things would only change for Guérin with the appearance of the UTCL (Union des Travailleurs Communistes Libertaires), of which Guérin would remain a member from its creation in 1978 until his death ten years later.[29]

[28] From a letter attached by Guérin to an off-print of a journal article of his held in the Bibliothèque Nationale: 'André Gide et l'amour', *Arcadie* no.49 (January 1958), pp.3–8.

[29] The UTCL was to transform itself into the present-day Alternative Libertaire in 1991. See Georges Fontenis, *Changer le monde. Histoire du mouvement communiste libertaire, 1945–1997* (Editions Le Coquelicot/Alternative Libertaire, 2000), pp.171–5

> The subjects dealt with make a whole. The libertarian critique of the bourgeois regime is not possible without a critique of bourgeois mores. The revolution cannot be simply political. It must be, at the same time, both cultural and sexual and thus transform every aspect of life and of society. […] I am against any society, even a socialist one, which maintains sexual tabous. The revolt of the spring of 68 rejected all the faces of subjugation. If the generation of May discovered Reich, it was because he campaigned at one and the same time for the social revolution and the sexual revolution.[74]

Given Guérin's belief that attitudes towards homosexuality were intrinsically linked with the rôle of the authoritarian family and of patriarchal gender rôles, he was convinced that it was unrealistic to expect to be able to eradicate homophobia without attacking the rest:

> To my mind, the homophobic prejudice, in all its hideousness, will not be countered only by means which I would call 'reformist', by persuasion, by concessions to our heterosexual enemies; it will be possible to eradicate it definitively, as with racial prejudice, only through an antiauthoritarian social revolution. Indeed despite its liberal mask, the bourgeoisie has too great a need, in order to perpetuate its hegemony, of the domestic values of the family, cornerstone of the social order. It cannot deprive itself of the help provided for it by, on the one hand, the glorification of marriage and the cult of procreation, and on the other, the support given it by the Churches, determined adversaries of free love and of

[74] *Le Monde*, 15 November 1969.

at one of the meetings concerned who had responded to comments Guérin had made about "psychological minorities":

> One will never denounce enough the good conscience, the mental comfort, the contradiction, the hypocrisy of almost all of the "people of the Left" and their pseudo-racism. For, if racism is disdain for a community different from us, the disdain for a human category because of a particularity, racism in the full meaning of the word is not only or necessarily directed at people of another colour. We must speak out against these people who believe themselves to be "generous", who are opposed to the racism of others, who are adamant that they do not look down on blacks, but who never tire of talking or writing of their disdain for alcoholics, prostitutes, homosexuals, etc… who therefore fulfil for these "anti-racists" the rôle of substitute Jew, of replacement nigger.[72]

For a total revolution

In 1969, Guérin was interviewed by François Bott for *Le Monde*. Guérin's *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle après Reich et Kinsey* and his *Pour un marxisme libertaire* had both just appeared.[73]. In later years Guérin would talk of 'libertarian communism' rather than 'libertarian marxism', in order not to offend his new anarchist friends, but it was only a change of label. He remained faithful to historical materialism and to class analysis all his life.]]Asked if this simultaneity was a coincidence, he replied emphatically "Non":

[72] 'Lettre d'un auditeur', in Daniel Guérin, *Cuba-Paris* (Chez l'auteur: 13 rue des Marronniers, Paris 16e, Mai 1968), pp.29–30, quote p.29.

[73] *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle après Reich et Kinsey* (Paris: Belfond, 1969); *Pour un marxisme libertaire* (Paris: Laffont, 1969)

For (homo)sexual liberation: Guérin's critical engagement wth "sexology"

For Guérin, the revolutionary movement needed to concern itself not just with homosexuality, but with sexuality in general, the libido:

> The problem which confronts us, therefore, is knowing whether the free exercice of the sexual instinct is compatible with the contingencies and demands of the revolutionary struggle.[30]

Some, like Proudhon, Robespierre and Lenin saw "virtue" as the basis of revolutionary activism and emphasised the need for continence and self-repression in the struggle against the existing order. Others, notably in 1968, argued on the contrary that "orgasm goes along with the revolutionary's furia."[31] Reich, 30 years earlier, had declared:

> On croit gagner des forces en éliminant totalement la vie sexuelle. C'est une erreur, une lourde erreur que d'exclure la sexualité comme quelque chose de "bourgeois".

What was necessary, on the contrary, was to "transformer la rébellion sexuelle de la jeunesse en un lutte révolutionnaire contre l'ordre social capitaliste."[32] Clearly, Guérin argues, excess is not conducive to effective revolutionary struggle, it is a question of balance, and this is as true of homosexuality as of any other form of sexuality:

[30] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.9.

[31] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.10.

[32] 'Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui', p.24.

> Whatever some class-struggle prudes may say, homosexuality [...] has never diminished the revolutionary's commitment and combativity, on condition, of course, that excess and promiscuity are avoided.[33]

Kinsey

The groundbreaking work of Alfred Kinsey (published in French translation in 1948 and 1954[34]) was without doubt the most important influence on Guérin in his attempts from the 1950s to formulate a critique of homophobia and put forward an argument for a more general sexual liberation. Serious studies of sexuality were few and far between in France between the 1930s and the 1950s, and the PCF's position on sexology and psychoanalysis was as repressive as that of the Catholic Church. Guérin's study of Kinsey was thus at once groundbreaking and controversial.[35] It was published first as a series of articles in the left-wing weekly, France Observateur, in 1954, then in book form the following year.[36] It represented for Guérin a major step forward in that he was able to

[33] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.10–11. This is reminiscent of Guérin's repeated expressions (in his autobiographies) of feelings of guilt at his bouts of (homo)sexual self-indulgence. Is this because of his determination in 1930 to 'sublimate' his sexual drive through devotion to the revolution? The assertions of the need to control his sexual drive is reminiscent of Baudry's invocations to Arcadie members.

[34] A. C. Kinsey et al, *Le comportement sexuel de l'homme* (Paris: Editions du Pavois, 1948); *Le comportement sexuel de la femme* (Paris: Le Livre contemporain Amiot-Dumont, 1954). *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* appeared in 1948 in the US, *Sexual Behavior in the Human female* in 1953.

[35] See Sylvie Chaperon, 'Kinsey en France: les sexualités masculine et féminine en débat' in *Mouvement social* no.198 (January-March 2002), pp.91–110, and 'Le fonds Daniel Guérin'.

[36] *France Observateur*, 23 September, 7, 22 & 29 October, 4 November 1954; *Kinsey et la sexualité* (Paris: Julliard, 1955; EDI, 1967). It would be republished again as part of *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle après Reich et Kinsey* (Paris: Belfond, 1969). The book was dedicated to Guérin's father Marcel, "who was one day taken

one occasion, he expressed satisfaction at recent cultural trends which seemed to some extent to represent a reversal of the process of differentiation of the sexes, and he was positively delighted that, as he put it, it was sometimes difficult to tell the difference between young men and women in the street. But he was also aware that such trends were limited: "We are still a long way from a symbiosis, something which, it would seem, only the Social Revolution, thanks to its equalizing and reconciling aspect, would be able to achieve."[70]

Homophobia as racism

As well as seeing parallels between the situation of women and homosexuals, Guérin argued that homophobia was akin to racism, and that in terms of the situation in which they found themselves in their everyday life, the suffering of homosexuals could be compared to that of blacks or Jews:

> One only has to read the admirable analysis offered by Frantz Fanon, in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, of the permanent dread of the Black in the face of the White's racial prejudice to understand to what extent the fate of the homosexual resembles that of the man [sic] of colour. The writer Richard Wright, as heterosexual as they come, sympathized equally with the comparable condition of the Black, the Jew and the "queer".[71]

Guérin's homosexual encounters in the colonies in the late 1920s undoubtedly played a rôle here,à la Genet.

Interestingly, Guérin chose to include in a short collection of speeches, published in 1968, a letter from a member of the audience

[70] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.16.

[71] 'Sur le racisme anti-homosexuel', p.50.

> and his melancholy at not being able to choose between the two poles was inconsolable. He had a foot in both camps. He dreamed of being the ram with the ewe and of being the ewe with the ram. Being both ram and ewe, he was neither ram nor ewe.[63]

Guérin was convinced that homophobes were in many cases repressed homosexuals: "Many intolerant and aggressive homophobes are nothing more than homosexuals who have painfully repressed their natural tendencies and secretly envy those who have chosen to give their own desire free rein."[64] He also talked of the "bisexual universality"[65], claiming that bisexuality was the natural human state:

> It certainly seems that [...] heterosexuals, conditioned by society, are bisexuals without realizing it or who censor themselves, or who, quite simply, only allow the heterosexual aspect of their lovemaking to show.[66]

Elsewhere, he clearly agreed with de Beauvoir's interpretation, namely that "la différenciation psychologique des sexes est, pour une large part, artificielle et conditionnée socialement."[67] He believed there was "a tendency towards unification, towards a reconciliation of the sexes, through sensitivity, creativity, intelligence. I think the society of the future will be a bisexual society."[68] And again: "The time will come [...] when women and men will no longer form two opposed species, when love of both sexes will be recognized as the most natural form of love [...]."[69] On more than

[63] *Eux et lui* (Lille: GayKitschCamp, 2000), pp.23–24.
[64] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.20.
[65] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.23
[66] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.8.
[67] *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle*, p.61.
[68] 'Géographie passionnelle d'une époque', p.6.
[69] *Eux et lui* (2000), p. 52.

use the opportunity to present a public defence of homosexuality. Guérin argued that if, before Kinsey, it might have been possible for socialists and communists, eager for the overthrow of capitalist exploitation, to join with Lenin in considering the sexual question of secondary importance, or as an adjunct of the central struggle, such an attitude was no longer tenable after the publication of the Kinsey Report. The puritanism attacked by Kinsey was nothing other than "a defence mechanism designed to protect a conception of bourgeois private property thanks to which the bourgeoisie was able to gain economic power, and then political power."[37] Kinsey, therefore:

> encourages us to pursue simultaneously both the social revolution and the sexual revolution, until human beings are liberated completely from the two crushing burdens of capitalism and puritanism.[38]

Anarchist individualism: Stirner and Armand

There were other influences on Guérin's thinking about sexual liberation, notably among the anarchists. In his youth, Guérin read E. Armand's individualist anarchist organ *L'en dehors*, which used to campaign for complete sexual freedom, and for which homosexuality was regarded as an entirely valid form of "free love".[39]

to task (by an over-watchful mother) for reading Havelock Ellis without hiding the fact from his children." Marcel Guérin was also bisexual.
[37] *Kinsey et la sexualité*, p.118.
[38] 'Kinsey et la sexualité, 1955' in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, pp.32–34, quote p.32.
[39] *L'en dehors* appeared weekly, 1922–39. Armand was, however, quite isolated within the French anarchist movement and his concern with sexual freedom (and in particular his willingness to accept homosexuality) were not, I believe, widespread among French anarchists. See René Bianco, 'Un siècle de presse anar-

Much later, Guérin discovered the German individualist anarchist, Max Stirner. If some anarchist-communists have been a little puzzled by Guérin's interest in Stirner — generally anathema to the non-individualist wing of the movement — the answer lies in what Guérin perceived to be Stirner's latent homosexuality, his concern with sexual liberation and his determination to attack bourgeois prejudice and puritanism: "Stirner was a precursor of May 68".[40]

Fourier

Guérin was also a great admirer of Fourier, at least in so far as his arguments in favour of sexual liberation and tolerance were concerned: "I was as one with the genial Fourier when he ennobled and sanctified all sexual acts, including those he termed "ambiguous" [ie. homosexual]."[41] Fourier himself was the victim of censorship on the part of his own disciples, and his *Nouveau monde amoureux*, written in 1816–18 but suppressed by the Phalansterians on the grounds that it was immoral, was only published in 1967. Guérin was delighted at its appearance:

> The great utopian wants to see no form of attraction repressed for, an ancestor of Freud, he is too well aware of the psychological damage done by the constriction of the instincts and how unhappy we are when we are struggling against ourselves. Even more serious than

chiste d'expression française dans le monde, 1880–1983' (Doctorat d'Etat, University of Provence, 1988), 7 vols; and my *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917–1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002).

[40] Guérin, *Ni Dieu ni Maître, Anthologie de l'anarchisme* (Paris: La Découverte, 1999), vol.I, p.12. Guérin began his anthology of anarchist texts — first published in 1965 — with the 'precursor' Stirner; he also added an appendix on Stirner to the 1981 edition of his short exposé, L'anarchisme: De la doctrine à la pratique. See also *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.12; and 'Stirner, «Père de l'anarchisme»?' in *La Rue* no.26 (1er et 2ème trimestre 1979), pp.76

[41] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.15.

> are two separate sexes. For me, it is quite incomprehensible and it seems to me that this is a result of a kind of amputation carried out on this original being.[62]

This "amputation" was something he felt in his own emotional life. In the 1982 foreword for his 1929 novel *La Vie selon la chair* [*Life according to the flesh*], Guérin spoke of the lead female character Hélè ne as representing "my own feminine side". Of Hél ne and her rival Hubert — rival for the affections of another man — he wrote "I was at the same time Hélè ne and Hubert". In the self-questioning, self-critical text *Eux et lui*, he wrote — in the third person — of the deep contradictions which he discerned in many aspects of his personality:

> His eroticism was no less contradictory [...]. He was annoyed with girls for not having a phallus and with boys for having no breasts. He resented girls for stealing boys from him and boys for stealing girls from him. The division of the sexes caused him a malaise which was enough to destroy his *joie de vivre* and to alienate him from the world. He tried to persuade himself that this division was less definitive in nature than in civilisation, that custom and fashion exagerated it, that human emancipation was tending to reduce it, that man is in woman and woman in man. He even tried to savour the contrast and the diversity which are its products and which ought to have consoled him for the strange schism. But, the time not yet having come for a certain reunification of the sexes, he was tired of always hearing people talk of "man" when in fact he very clearly had before his eyes two different species,

[62] 'Géographie passionnelle d'une époque', p.6. See also Homosexualité et Révolution, p.16, note 2.

> less his femininity, his *betrayal of virility*, supposedly superior, for which the invert is not forgiven.[59]

And asked by an interviewer for the gay magazine *Homo 2000* why he thought there was so much hostility towards gay men, he replied:

> We live in post-patriarchal societies in which virility is valued more highly than femininity. One could almost say that the more heterosexual a man is, the more he despises women. Certain men are not forgiven for betraying masculinity by desiring boys; I believe that is the most fundamental reason.[60]

Pursuing a similar argument in *Eux et Lui*, he concluded: "woman had become my companion in adversity, my ally."[61]

Androgyny and bisexualism

The idea of some kind of original, pre-lapsarian androgyny was one which interested and appealed to Guérin:

> The Ancients believed in the myth according to which, in the beginning, there existed a bisexual being who was cut into two halves, each half corresponding to one of the sexes. This image has always remained very strong with me, and today, at the age of 74, I have still not been able to come to terms with the idea that there

[59] 'Kinsey' in *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.33.

[60] 'Entretiens avec Daniel Guérin', *Homo 2000* no.4, 3e trimestre 1979. A corrected TS of the text of this interview can be found in Fonds Guérin, BDIC, F° Δ 721/15.

[61] 'Eux et lui', in *Son Testament* (Paris: Encre, 1979), quoted in Homosexualité et Révolution, pp.33–34

> the individual suffering causing by the repression of the passions are the effects on society. If they are held in check, they immediately reappear in a more harmful form which Fourier called "recurrent", and it is then and only then that they create disorder: "Any dammed up passion produces its counter-passion which is as harmful as the natural passion would have been beneficial."[42]

Fourier thus lends support to Guérin's critique of Proudhon's puritanism:

> Thus the curse which Proudhon was to put on Eros on the pretext of protecting industry had been refuted in advance: in Harmony, the more each individual's tastes are satisfied, the better the community will be served.[43]

In 1975, Guérin published an anthology of Fourier's texts on sexual liberation, *Vers la liberté en amour*, with a lengthy preface which included a detailed analysis of Fourier's scattered and sketchy references to homosexuality.[44] Guérin was probably largely responsible for the new-found popularity of Fourier among the generation of 68, and the same can be said to some extent of Wilhelm Reich, with whom Guérin shared a taste for syntheses and the experience of being condemned as a heretic simultaneously by the defenders of two offended orthodoxies.

[42] 'Le nouveau monde amoureux de Fourier' in Arcadie nos. 168 & 169 (1967 & 1968), pp.554–60 & 16–23, quote p.554.

[43] 'Le nouveau monde amoureux de Fourier', p.560. 'Harmonie' was the name given by Fourier to his ideal society. On Proudhon, see 'Proudhon et l'amour «unisexuel»' in *Arcadie* nos.133 (January 1965) & 134 (February 1965), and *Proudhon oui et non* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).

[44] Charles Fourier, *Vers la liberté en amour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); preface by Guérin, pp.13–47.

The revolutionary potential of psychoanalysis: the early Freud

For a synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalysis: Reich

When Reich died in 1957, the event almost passed unnoticed in France, and as Guérin remarked, "when I published his obituary, those who learned nothing could have been counted on the fingers of one hand."[45] Only two of Reich's books had been translated into French by the time of his death, so Guérin's knowledge of German gave him an advantage over most of his compatriots here as it did in the study of Marxism. Guérin was particularly impressed by Reich's "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis" (first published in 1934) and *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality* (1931).[46] Reich was for Guérin the direct heir of an early, revolutionary Freud, inspired by the 1907 essay, *"Civilized" sexual morality and modern nervous illness*. What Guérin admired in Reich was his attack on the socially conservative aspects of Freud's theories, notably, again, the notion of "sublimation", that suppression of the sexual instinct was necessary for civilisation, and Reich's emphasis on "antisexual" attitudes as being historically determined:

> In his opinion, the repression of sexuality has social and economic origins, not biological ones. Sexual repressiveness appeared with the beginnings of class society and the institution of private property and patriarchy. It was installed by a particular social

[45] 'Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui' in *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle*, p.19.

[46] In his 1968 talk on Reich — published as 'Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui' — Guérin compared contemporary psychoanalysts' distaste for 'Civilized' sexual morality and modern nervous illness to contemporary trotskyists' distaste for Trotsky's 1904 critique of Lenin's organizational theses.- 'Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui', p.21

So, argued Guérin, it was not only article 331 of the Penal Code which must be attacked, but also all those concerning patriarchy: the authority of the "head of the family", divorce, contraception, artifical insemination, abortion, prostitution and so on. The genealogy of the existing legal situation was clear: De Gaulle in February 1945 had perpetuated Pétain's law of 1942, which itself must be seen in the context of the reactionary Code de la Famille introduced by decree in July 1939 and which attacked all sexual activity outside of the family "where, according to our monogamous civilisation, sexual life must be enclosed."[56]

For Guérin, it was bourgeois society which was responsible for the "detestable division of the sexes", for pushing to an excessive extent the differentiation between the sexes: "It has been happy to reduce woman to the level of a doll, a "bimba", a sexual object, a pin-up girl, whilst simultaneously accentuating the opposite traits in the male — macho, conceited, boorish and tyrannical."[57] "Bourgeois society, built on the family, will not readily give up on one of its last ramparts."[58]

There were thus clear connections between patriarchal society's oppression of women and its oppression of homosexual men:

> Patriarchal society, resting on the dual authority of the man over the woman and of the father over the children, accords primacy to the attributes and modes of behaviour associated with virility. Homosexuality is persecuted to the extent that it undermines this construction. The disdain of which woman is the object in patriarchal societies is not without correlation with the shame attached to the homosexual act. It is doubt-

[56] 'La répression de l'homosexualité en France', pp.1–2.

[57] *Homosexualité et Révolution*, p.16.

[58] Homosexualité et Révolution, p.8.

group, that of polygamous chiefs, in whose hands, thanks to the accumulation of dowries paid by their wives, economic power now resided. In modern times, such repression remains indispensable in order to safeguard the two essential institutions of society: monogamous marriage and the family. It constitutes one of the means of economic enslavement. The sexual revolution is only possible through social revolution.[47]

For Reich, Freud's early theory of the libido and his courageous attacks on antisexual oppression had been played down, sanitized and rendered acceptable to the bourgeoisie — his clientele — such that Reich could draw a parallel between the fate of psychoanalysis at the hands of Freud and his successors and Marxism at the hands of the reformist socialists and stalinist reaction. The erection of the "reality principle" into an absolute simply enabled it to be used as a tool by the ruling class to maintain its domination and to negate the revolutionary potential of psychoanalysis. Similarly, the Œdipus complex was seen as a biological given by Freud, whereas for Reich it was the product of particular historically determined forms of society and the family: "Dans une société socialiste, le complexe d'Œdipe doit disparaître du fait mê me que sa base sociale, la famille patriarcale, s'effondrera."[48] Similarly, the theory of the original murder of the father, reinforced the notion that patriarchy and its antisexual ethic were part of human nature, rather than historically determined.

Although Reich had, in his time, been attacked by both Marxists and psychoanalysts, Guérin would insist in a debate in 1969 that it was precisely this uncomfortable position astride both schools of thought which was now his strong point. Psychoanalysis destroyed the bases of religion and of bourgeois sexual morality in the same

[47] 'Hommage à Wilhelm Reich', pp.15–16.
[48] 'Hommage à Wilhelm Reich', p.15.

me sexe (published in 1949 and attacked by both communists and catholics), and, as was made explicit in his 1969 essay on the sexual revolution, he was clearly in favour of women's sexual liberation:

> La femme qui pendant des si ècles, a été soumise" à l'esclavage du patriarcat, condamnée" à *subir* le mâle," être l'objet passif de son désir et de son choix, privée par lui de la liberté sexuelle dont il s'arrogeait le monopole, est en train de s'affranchir des derniè res entraves psychologiques qui dénaturaient et emprisonnaient sa sexualité. Elle sera (elle est déjà) tout aussi précoce dans sa vie sexuelle que l'homme, tout aussi polyandre que l'homme est polygyne, tout aussi capable que l'homme de s'intéresser" à la beauté plastique du sexe opposé.[54]

Several of Guérin's later writings on sexuality and homosexuality also raise the linked questions of gender identity and patriarchy. In 1958, Guérin argued in a discussion of the repression of homosexuality in France that the question had to be seen as just part of a much broader set of issues:

> I insist on maintaining that the homosexual cannot and must not be seen as a separate problem, and that the liberation of the homosexual must not be seen as the egoistic demand of a minority. Homosexuality is just a particular form, a variation, of sexuality and must be considered in the broadest context. […] The prejudice with which this mode of behaviour is besmirched derives, in large part, from patriarchal society's depreciation of femininity, considered as "inferior". Seen in this way, the cause of the homosexual is the cause of woman.[55]

[54] *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle*, p.79.
[55] 'La répression de l'homosexualité en France', p.1.

way that Marxism destroyed outdated values through its materialist philosophy and through a revolution in the economic system:

> A Marxism which sought to emancipate man [sic: l'homme] without including sexuality in its analysis and liberating man on the sexual level as well would be disfiguring itself, it would be incomplete. A purely biological or purely clinical sexology which paid no attention to the social context and to dialectical materialist analysis would produce only half-truths.[49]

Guérin's only serious criticism of Reich was his relatively conservative position on homosexuality, namely that homosexuality was an aberration caused by restrictions imposed on "normal" heterosexual relations. Here Guérin preferred the more libertarian implications of Kinsey's findings — although Kinsey himself was no apologist for homosexuality and was criticized by Guérin for not taking sufficient account of the socio-historical aspect of the question. As for Reich's later work, Guérin commented in an interview for the first issue of the French journal *Sexpol*:

> J'ai admiré beucoup le Reich marxiste se dégageant de l'emprise stalinienne et, tout en restant marxiste, développant ses idées et son action autour de *Sexpol*. Par contre, partir de sa rupture complè te avec toute notion marxiste, j'avoue que je me méfie, surout parce que je n'ai pas les connaissances scientifiques nécessaires pour émettre un jugement sur la théorie de l'orgone.[50]

[49] 'Wilhelm Reich aujourd'hui' in *Essai sur la révolution sexuelle*, pp.17–28, quote p.21. This is the text of an introduction to a debate organised in Brussels by 'Liaison 20' on 29 November 1968.

[50] 'Daniel Guérin «à confesse»', interview with Gérard Ponthieu in *La revue Sexpol* no.1 (20 January 1975), pp.10–14, quote p.14.

Women and patriarchy

Guérin has been criticized for neglecting the question of women's oppression:

> The most serious difficulty raised in Guérin's combination of radicalism and gayness is hardly touched on in his memoirs. This is the simple issue of whether the celebration of male homosexuality is supportive, or on the contrary obstructive, in that larger question of sexual politics: women's emancipation.[51]

It is certainly true that women are strikingly absent from Guérin's autobiographical writings, and that his representations of the working class and of the world of work tend to be male-centred and focussed on the point of production. Nor have I as yet found any evidence in Guérin's archives of any links with feminists, apart from some brief correspondence with the American trotskyist and feminist anthropologist, Evelyn Reed.[52]

Nevertheless, as a historian of the French revolution Guérin did resurrect the *Société des femmes républicaines révolutionnaires*, and interpreted its destruction by the Robespierrists as a clear indicator of reaction.[53] He was also, of course, a great popularizer of Fourier, for whom, famously, the progress made by any society could be measured in terms of the degree of emancipation of the women in that society. He was an admirer of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxiè*

[51] Peter Sedgwick, 'Out of hiding: the Comradeships of Daniel Guérin' in Robert Boyer, & Georges Steiner (eds.), *Salmagundi: A quarterly journal of the humanities and social sciences*, 58–9, special issue on homosexualism (June 1982), pp.197–220, quote p.215.

[52] Reed's publications (all with Pathfinder, New York) include *Woman's Evolution from Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family* (1992), *Problems of Women's Liberation: A Marxist Approach* (1972) and an introduction to a 1972 edition of Engels' *The Origin of the Family*.

[53] *La lutte de classes sous la Première République, 1793–1797* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), vol.I, pp.271–8