

merchant vessels. This was considerably cheaper than building large numbers of cruisers to deal with German commerce raiders, but Seligmann shows that Churchill was not interested in arming all of Britain's merchant ships. He hoped that a relatively small number of the new defensively armed merchant ships could be used to police the trade routes and offer a degree of extra protection to unarmed merchant vessels. As the problems with this policy became increasingly apparent, Churchill's enthusiasm for the scheme began to wane, and by 1913 the Admiralty was again considering the idea of commissioning fast British liners as auxiliary cruisers in wartime.

The history of the Royal Navy in the years 1900–14 has become a lively and controversial field in recent years, and this book is a noteworthy addition to the growing body of scholarship critical of the revisionist arguments advanced by scholars such as Jon Sumida and Nicholas Lambert. The volume undermines their influential account of the origins of the battle cruiser and challenges their claims about the centrality of France and Russia in the Admiralty's calculations. But on the whole, Seligmann treats the revisionists gently: he does not stop to consider how his findings will affect their conclusions about the broad direction of British naval policy during the Fisher era, even though the implications are considerable. What is most impressive, however, is that Seligmann is able to show with equal force that traditional histories of this period have also misunderstood key aspects of British naval policy. The book will be essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the Royal Navy in the Fisher era.

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DONNA SMITH. *Sex, Lies and Politics: Gay Politicians and the Press*. Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press. 2012. Pp. 239. \$65.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2013.109

In the weeks leading up to the 2012 elections in the United States, commentators and observers on both sides of the Atlantic contrasted attitudes toward homosexuality in the major British and American political parties. In the United States, members of the more conservative of the two major parties competed with one another to find the strongest terms to denounce recent measures that improved the legal status of gay men and lesbians. By contrast, in the United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron embarked on a series of activities that seemed intended to demonstrate the newfound inclusivity of his party. "I don't support gay marriage despite being a Conservative, I support gay marriage because I am a Conservative," Cameron announced at the 2011 party conference. Civil partnerships for same-sex couples in the United Kingdom have been legally recognized since 2004, when Parliament passed the Civil Partnership Act, a measure introduced by the Labour government but which also received considerable cross-bench support from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat opposition. Historians, political scientists, and sociologists, among others, have offered a variety of competing interpretations to explain the shifting framework of public opinion and policy implementation. In her 2012 study, *Sex, Lies and Politics: Gay Politicians and the Press*, Donna Smith investigates the way in which the newspaper press in Britain has shifted its presentation of gay politicians. She successfully demonstrates that there has been a steady move away from the intolerance and ridicule that dominated coverage in the decades up to the 1980s toward a partial acceptance of diverse sexualities in the 1990s, with a marked decrease in the amount of sensationalism and scandal mongering in the late 1990s and afterward.

Smith is an associate lecturer in politics and science for the Open University, having received a PhD in that field from the Open University in 2009. Her work employs case-study analysis along with conceptual modeling to advance her thesis of a three-stage progression of change.

She analyzes the last sixty years of press coverage of gay political scandal through “three interconnected frames within an overarching frame of representation: the move toward representation; acceptability over time (in relation to ‘heterosexual public space’); and mediated personas as ‘constructed reality’” (205). The first section of the book includes some interesting if rather abstract discussion regarding changing understandings of what is public and private in a political leader’s life. Jürgen Habermas and Jean Baudrillard are only two of a number of theorists who Smith invokes in a presentation of her theoretical framework. Those who are less interested in the intricacies of contemporary communication theory may be more interested in the pages that follow the initial pages of theory and diagrams.

The second and third sections of the book are more narrative in approach. Part 2 investigates the “Traditional Representation” of homosexuality in the press, with a short but generally helpful synthetic analysis of significant individuals and controversies from the 1885 Labouchere Amendment through the Jeremy Thorpe scandal of the 1970s and Peter Tatchell’s bye-election campaign of 1983. Smith is most interesting and detailed in dealing with the period of Margaret Thatcher’s administration, which witnessed a period of dramatic change in public perceptions of what was suitable and unsuitable for open discussion. In the post-Stonewall era, when some public celebrities like Elton John were tentatively emerging from the closet and when the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS epidemic spread fear and uncertainty, many popular media outlets became more overtly negative in their presentation of homosexuality. The author offers selected quotations from the headlines of that period that nicely reflect the freewheeling voice of the popular press in that era. For example, there was this intriguing page 1 story in *The Sun* in November 1987: “SIXTY-FIVE MPS ARE POOFTERS REVEAL ONE WHO IS.” (Throughout the text, Smith employs all-caps for indicating headlines, and the headlines are—appropriately—employed very generously throughout, because so much of the meaning of a newspaper story is encapsulated in the attention-grabbing lure at the head of the story.)

Part 3 is the longest and perhaps the most interesting, dealing with the period from 1990 to 2010. It takes up roughly half of the total length of *Sex, Lies and Politics*. One of its chapters, suggestive of the entire theme of the final third of the book, is titled “The (Slow) Advancement of Gay Equality.” Perhaps the material is too recent to be dealt with historically, yet it is important to understand the general trends toward press acceptance of gay political figures. There are helpful summaries of the careers and newspaper coverage of such representative figures as Peter Mandelson (Labour Party maven, frequent cabinet minister, and key ally of Tony Blair) and Simon Hughes (Liberal Democrat MP for Bermondsey since 1983 and deputy leader of his party). In this more recent era, however, it is a real limitation of Smith’s study that she does not deal with other media, neither radio, television, nor the Internet. It would surely be interesting to gauge the impact of the new media upon the old in regard to presentation and coverage of homosexuality. Throughout the text, the author cites both upmarket broadsheets like *The Times* and the *Guardian*, as well as down-market tabloids such as *The Sun* and the *News of the World*. Readers may find the index of the book to be particularly useful in this regard, in that it allows readers to locate easily relevant references in a wide variety of newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Independent*, and many others. *Sex, Lies and Politics* does not, however, concern itself with the ownership of the press: the names of Lord Rothermere, Robert Maxwell, and Rupert Murdoch (among other proprietors) are notably absent from the index.

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