



interrogationists."

Kameny is recognizably an historic figure, the first to initiate major gay protests of the Pentagon's bigoted policies. Starting with his public announcement, as Mattachine president, on August 28, 1962, and, for many years thereafter, Kameny almost single-handedly shaped gay reforms now operative in most departments of the U.S. Government. It was also he who, in the early Sixties, initiated the very first challenges to Pentagon policies, stunning his adversaries with an intellectual breadth and strategic understanding that included the first use of non-violent public protesting, and made him a wonder to every other early movement pioneer. Even those who disagreed with Kameny had, finally, to acknowledge him as the most unrelenting and painful thorn ever to stick his sharp scientific mind into the already flattened feet anti-gay government rulings.

When President Clinton ordered the lifting of a long-time ban disallowing government security clearances for gays, Kameny (since the 1950's he'd had led the battle for gay men and lesbians to obtain such security clearances) got well-deserved front-page recognition in news dailies, including the New York Times. Finally, in a difficult and treacherous combat zone, Kameny's long-waged struggles had finally paid off with the quick, bold stroke of the Democratic president's pen.

Kameny's passionate 1960's introduction of non-violent activist methods, mounting a variety of barricades, was responsible for changing, according to almost every American gay history book, the course of gay and lesbian history. Today, Kameny feels discomfited by the slow pace of the military's gay reforms. As a new century draws near, he still adds his considerable weight to the movement's strategic debates, always a respected and formidable face at any table where negotiations between bureaucratic bigots and gay representatives have been called.

Frank Kameny wants it made clear that the military struggle ought now to be supplemented by a second frontal charge, one more activist-oriented. This, he would regard, not as a replacement for legal maneuvers, but as a supplement for snail-paced moves against the military's continuing intransigence. Kameny has hopes for "tougher" strategies, those that will hit opponents closer to home, personalizing the battle, widely publicizing the names of those who busy themselves promoting the anti-gay policies.

According to the aforementioned study's newly-gathered statistics, as Kameny points out, current-day lesbian and gay dismissals from military service (due to vague charges and discriminatory accusations) have risen sharply ever since the Pentagon's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy went into effect three years ago. The disgruntled military officials who most draw Kameny's ire, have been given carte blanche to conduct covert investigations, ferreting out gay and lesbian service personnel, many of whom have impeccable records.

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy has not only been an abject failure, according to Kameny, but it is also the principal smoke screen behind which the military has been able to "get away with slovenly monitoring of what is going on while it is actually going on." The gay legal establishment, he believes, has "thus far maintained a monopoly" on all aspects of the conduct of challenges to bigots in the military who, he is willing to say, are guilty of 'treasonous' behavior" Kameny blithely justifies his charges of "treason," he says, because those who ferret out gay men and lesbians deprive the nation of the services of highly competent individuals, of proven ability to contribute, and are therefore lowering the very quality of the Service. "Such lowering," insists Kameny, "gives aid and comfort to our enemies, which is, in fact, the Constitutional definition of treason." The irrelevancy of such

now-active anti-gay military crusaders with an emotionally-charged epithet, one like "treason" that will make them pointedly uncomfortable, especially if bandied about in the media.

"To the extent that local resources permit," says the brilliant 71-year old movement strategist, "there should be picketing of military bases at which particular cases are occurring." Kameny also favors picketing the homes of persons he calls "individual malefactors involved." "Being awakened at 3 AM by a bull horn in front of his residence," muses Kameny, or "denouncing him by name as a bigot or a traitor, will give pause to any homophobic commanding officer. Hearings should be packed with booing gay citizens." Kameny calls also for deluging military snoops with "virulently critical, hostile, irate letters and phone calls, denouncing them by name in the most lurid and intense terms, non-stop..."

"Once the pattern has become established, and word has begun to get around inside the military," that aggressive sexual investigators and persecutors have been made to feel very uncomfortable, and are going to become objects of national ridicule, denunciation and contempt, the cases, insists Kameny, will begin to fade away.

The reason for personalizing the struggle this way, says the Harvard-educated scientist, is that an activist approach must take into consideration what will hurt its foes most. "Government agencies," says Kameny, "do not feel pain." but named and hounded officials, the bigots, he believes, do feel pain, and they ought to feel it.

© 1997 BEI; All Rights Reserved.

For reprint permission give credit to website:

**[gaytoday.badpuppy.com](http://gaytoday.badpuppy.com)**

e-mail [gaytoday@badpuppy.com](mailto:gaytoday@badpuppy.com)