

**Brongersma, Edward** (1911–98), Dutch activist. Born to a well-to-do Protestant family from Haarlem, Brongersma became enamoured of Catholicism and of right-wing governments in southern Europe, specifically Salazar's corporative state in Portugal. After studying law, he wrote his dissertation on 'The Making of the Corporative State'. Its ideal was not socialist struggle but cooperation between workers and capitalists. In the years of World War II he did not, however, take the side of right-wing groups but started to move towards social democracy. After the War he joined the Labour Party as one of its most prominent leaders to come from a Christian background. He was elected to the Dutch Senate and the provincial council of Northern-Holland. In 1950, he disappeared suddenly from the political scene after he was indicted for having sex with a 16-year-old young man. (This act became a crime in the year he was born; since 1971 it is no longer illegal.) Brongersma was sentenced to ten months in prison. He afterwards took up the cause of liberalising Dutch sex laws, especially concerning age of consent and pornography. From 1963 to 1977 he was back in the Senate for the Labour Party. From the 1950s on, he was involved in the COC (the Dutch homosexual organisation) as one of its main spokesmen on legal affairs. Both he and his colleague Frits Bernard were however removed from the COC journal in 1963 when the gay movement wanted to show its respectability and get rid of unwelcome minorities. They both started their own foundations for research and documentation on paedophilia. Brongersma's two-volume magnum opus, *Boy-Love: A Multidisciplinary Study of Sexual Relations between Adult and Minor Males*, appeared in 1986 and 1993. The text offers rich material but is hampered by the author's old-fashioned perspectives in defence of the love between men and boys. At the end of his life, Brongersma had to face the gradual demonisation of

paedophilia. Just before his death, by euthanasia, he was accused in the media of encouraging child abuse.

It is expected that his significant estate, consisting of letters, unpublished texts, an important library and many objects all related to man-boy love, will be the basis of a research and archival centre on child sexuality. Considering the negative climate surrounding the subject, it may be some years before Brongersma's last ideal is realised.

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