

## Sex, Shame and West German Gay Liberation\*

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In 1978, the first edition of *Medicine for Gay Men* was released, a manual on gay sexual health and practice, produced by a collective of gay medical students, three of whom were also members of the action group *Homosexual Action West Berlin* (HAW). The editors stated that their motivation was to provide sorely-needed information on sexually transmitted infections, but more importantly to help dispel the fear of their own bodies and its illnesses that was held by many gay men.<sup>1</sup> According to the editors, ‘gay sex—that means sex between men—is often experienced in a listless and uptight fashion. The taboo of our sexuality, especially that of the arse, limits our capacity to sensually appreciate our bodies’.<sup>2</sup> There was evidently a demand for the manual, since by 1982 the publication was in its fourth edition. That 1982 edition would include a short section on Kaposi’s Sarcoma and a deadly cancer that seemed to be particularly prevalent among young gay men, for which there was at present no explanation and little understanding.<sup>3</sup> What the authors were referring to was soon to become codified as HIV/AIDS. The authors noted panic already present in the gay scene and ‘sensationalist reports in the heterosexual press’.<sup>4</sup> This foreshadowed the infamous front-page story in *Der Spiegel* in June 1983, which declared that the ‘homosexual plague’ had now reached Europe.<sup>5</sup>

The perceived need for a manual such as *Medicine for Gay Men* indicates that gay sexuality had not been experienced as some kind of unproblematic, joyous free-for-all in the 1970s. This applies to the lived experience of homosexual men, but especially to the place of sexuality within homosexual politics. Only rarely does one find no-holds-barred expressions of gay desire during the decade. Instead, a tremendous ambivalence about homosexual desire and gay sexual practice can be discerned. This ambivalence is one example of how the onset of gay liberation in West Germany in the early 1970s did not bring with it a linear shift from ‘cautious’ to ‘radical’, from ‘closeted’ to ‘visible’ or from ‘shame’ to ‘pride’. Gay liberationists often thought they were ushering in a dramatic transformation, not least because they were furiously reacting against an older generation of homosexuals who had called their movement *homophile*, with the aim of downplaying the sexual and thereby detoxifying same-sex

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<sup>1</sup>Autorengruppe schwule Medizinstudenten, *Sumpf Fieber: Medizin für schwule Männer* (Berlin, 1978), unpaginated foreword.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* All translations are my own.

<sup>3</sup>‘Das Karposi-Syndrom’, in Die schwulen Medizinmänner (eds), *Sumpf Fieber: Medizin für schwule Männer* (Berlin, 1982), pp. 155–7.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup>‘AIDS: Eine Epidemie, die erst beginnt’, *Der Spiegel*, 23 (1983), pp. 144–63.

love.<sup>6</sup> But ambivalence about homosexual desire should not be seen as a line of demarcation between ‘gays’ and ‘homophiles’, and thus equated with a transition assumed to have taken place in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Rather, this ambivalence represents a crucial if overlooked element of continuity in homosexual politics.

The history of homosexual emancipation can be read as the history of a quest for respectability. Laurie Marhoefer argues that a basic dilemma—‘the choice between a more radical movement and a narrower one based on respectability, privacy, assimilation, and citizenship claims’—was already present in the Weimar era movement and has continued—with ebbs and flows—throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>7</sup> Most often, this quest for respectability is associated with the postwar homophile movement, for instance in its disavowal of gender transgression and male prostitution.<sup>8</sup> But gay liberation, too, was not immune to pulls towards respectability and conformism. By viewing the 1970s primarily as the period when the closet doors were ripped off their hinges, when gays and lesbians threw off decades of shame and oppression and strode proudly into a future of visibility and sexual abundance, we are forced into a historiographic straitjacket.

This article contributes to a reassessment of gay liberation by focusing on how matters of sex and desire featured in the gay press and the gay movement in 1970s West Germany. First, it will focus on the gay press, exploring how editors sought to present a sanitized representation of homosexuality, which often flew in the face of the erotic demands of their readers. This analysis reveals the continued appeal of young or very young male bodies, which it then proceeds to situate against the backdrop of the ways in which the topic of ‘paedophilia’ was dealt with in homosexual politics. Third, the article will assess the equivocal position of sex and desire within gay male activism, focusing on how the political valorization of mutuality and reciprocity led to debates over erotic sensibilities that did not seem to match this agenda, including sado-masochism. In conclusion, it will consider the interrelationship between ‘pride’ and ‘shame’, and show that gay liberation was anything but a mere hedonistic interlude.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, this article raises questions not only about the history of homosexual politics, but also about the writing of this history. Taking seriously Heather Love’s contention that the most problematic aspect of gay and lesbian historiography to date has not been ‘its attachment to identity’ but rather ‘its consistently affirmative bias’, this article seeks to show how sex, shame and disreputable desires can be put back into the picture of West German gay liberation.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>A rich body of work has recently emerged to reappraise the 1950s and 1960s and challenge the narrative developed by gay liberationists. See for example Julian Jackson, *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics and Morality in France from the Liberation to AIDS* (Chicago and London, 2009), and Jennifer Evans, ‘The 1950s as Radical In-Between’, in Matt Cook and Heike Bauer (eds), *Queer 50s* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 13–28.

<sup>7</sup>Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto, 2015), p. 213.

<sup>8</sup>On the West German case, Burkhardt Riechers, ‘Freundschaft und Anständigkeit: Leitbilder im Selbstverständnis männlicher Homosexueller in der frühen Bundesrepublik’, *Invertito: Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Homosexualitäten*, 1 (1999), pp. 12–46. John D’Emilio invoked the phrase ‘retreat to respectability’ to characterize elements of the homophile movement in the United States, in his seminal *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–70* (Chicago and London, 1983), pp. 75–91.

<sup>9</sup>My wider research project pertains to gay politics in 1970s West Germany, rather than gay and lesbian politics. After some initial cooperation in the early part of the decade, gays and lesbians tended to organize separately in the 1970s.

<sup>10</sup>Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 45.

## I: Sex and Desire in the Gay Press

In May 1969 the *Bundesrat* ratified a reform of Paragraph 175, thus finally putting an end to the application of the 1935 National Socialist version of the law criminalizing male homosexuality.<sup>11</sup> Homosexual law reform was a prerequisite for the unfolding of the gay movement, but it also facilitated the emergence of the commercial gay press.<sup>12</sup> *Du&Ich* ('You & I') was the first on the scene, in late 1969, followed by *him* in May 1970. Unlike journals associated with the homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which were forced to rely on subscriptions alone, these magazines could be placed on public view, offered for sale at newspaper kiosks.<sup>13</sup> A self-defined 'good old-school German' would denounce *Du&Ich* in 1970 in the following way:

Some of the photos are disgusting and obscene. Sex is of course very nice, but it must remain normal. Otherwise where will we end up in Germany? We should leave this dirtiness to the French and the Italians. Germany must remain clean, including in the sexual sphere.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that the man in question had evidently taken the trouble to look past the front cover suggests that his own sexual desire may not have so neatly fitted into the realm of the 'normal' and the 'clean'. However, of greater interest than the existence of abusive correspondence sent to gay magazines is the fact that such language was not rejected wholesale by gay publicists themselves.

In a December 1970 editorial, readers were reminded that *Du&Ich* was a homophile, not a homosexual magazine.<sup>15</sup> Editors did not want to underline the sexual component of homophilia, but instead to give expression to homophile feeling and disposition (*Geistesart*).<sup>16</sup> Anything else threatened to damage the reputation of homophiles among the wider public; it was therefore crucial that the magazine proved its 'cleanliness', a quality so sorely lacking in the so-called 'sex papers of "normal" character'.<sup>17</sup> In this vein, the first chief editor of *Du&Ich*, Udo Erlenhardt, fulminated in a 1970 editorial that homosexuals who call themselves gay (*schwul*) were 'degrading themselves'. For Erlenhardt, society's image of the homosexual remained characterized by the 'gay swine', buying or selling himself at the train station.<sup>18</sup> Homophiles needed to challenge this image: 'we will be understood and accepted by society according to the manner in

<sup>11</sup> Coming into effect in September 1969, the reform legalized male homosexual relations between men who had reached the age of 21; a further liberalization in 1973 reduced the age of consent to 18.

<sup>12</sup> On the West German gay movement, see Michael Holy, 'Historischer Abriss der zweiten deutschen Schwulenbewegung 1969–1989', in Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht (eds), *Neue Soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn, 1991), pp. 138–60, and the collection of essays in Andreas Pretzel and Volker Weiß (eds), *Rosa Radikale: Die Schwulenbewegung der 1970er Jahre* (Hamburg, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Of the post-war homophile journals, only *Der Kreis* (published from Switzerland) and *Der Weg* managed to achieve any longevity whatsoever, before ceasing publication in 1967 and 1970 respectively. On the post-war homophile movement, see Clayton Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality in West Germany: Between Persecution and Freedom 1945–69* (New York, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> *Du&Ich*, 2 (1970), p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Du&Ich*, 12 (1970), pp. 10–11. Both *Du&Ich* and *him*, briefly, had small sections for lesbian readers.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> 'Die schwule Sau', *Du&Ich*, 1 (1970), p. 4. On the train station as a site of prostitution, see Jennifer Evans, 'Bahnhof Boys: Policing Male Prostitution in Post-Nazi Berlin', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (2003), pp. 605–36.

which we present ourselves'. Erlenhardt's position could not be clearer: 'I say it hereby loud and clear: I don't belong to the gays'.<sup>19</sup>

Publicists had to tread a thin line between offering cultural and political coverage and satisfying the erotic demands of their readers, and at an affordable price. *him* badly misjudged the inclination of its readers in early 1973, when editors described the publication so far as a 'good product in poor packaging'.<sup>20</sup> From now on, there would be fewer nude photos, to make way for extended editorial content seeking to raise homosexual consciousness.<sup>21</sup> As a sign of what to expect, there followed a lengthy report on human rights abuses in Vietnam.<sup>22</sup> Two months later, *him* had received 1798 letters on this shift in content, and editors were forced to admit that they had underestimated the importance of images to their readers.<sup>23</sup> One reader, Walter S., suggested a compromise, whereby images of clothed models would replace nudes: '*him* tries to make clear to heterosexuals and homosexuals alike that the homosexual is first and foremost a human being, that he is not "gay by trade", that he doesn't only fuck, but also thinks, feels, loves, suffers and works'.<sup>24</sup> The vast majority, however, demanded a return to semi-nude or nude representations of the male body, and saw reportage in the vein of the Vietnam article as a poor substitute. Michael H. argued that there was nothing immoral about erotic photography, and continued 'if we want to emancipate ourselves, then only on condition that we are accepted as we are—and nude photos belong to *our* sexuality too!'<sup>25</sup> Another reader emphasized that erotic images were all the more important for the lonely, the old, and those who live in rural areas far away from any gay bar; for these constituencies images served as a 'modest substitute for that which is unfortunately unattainable'.<sup>26</sup>

*Du&Ich* faced the same balancing act as *him*. One reader wrote to the magazine praising the second issue and calling for further moves towards the ideal of a 'homophile *Spiegel*'.<sup>27</sup> Others were evidently less interested in international coverage and investigative journalism than in titillating images. According to the magazine's own analysis of 759 letters received in early November 1972, over 40% criticized the magazine's choice of photos, the most common complaint being that there were insufficient images of 'young or very young' models.<sup>28</sup> Minority voices could be found, with one man complaining not about the lack or style of erotic images, but about their excessive presence in the magazine: 'Have you really failed to notice that you are gradually degenerating to a lousy porn number?'<sup>29</sup> In early 1973, a disappointed subscriber lamented that the magazine's photos were degenerating into a 'monotonous parade of cocks'. Yet he did not seek a less graphic or more academic publication, but rather more images of

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> 'Gute Ware in schlechter Verpackung', *him*, 3 (1973), p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> 'Le Bouc, 120 Jahren Verbrechen am Volk von Vietnam', *him*, 3 (1973), pp. 8–11.

<sup>23</sup> 'Briefschwemme', *him*, 5 (1973), p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Du&Ich*, 1 (1970), p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Du&Ich*, 1 (1973), p. 16. These made up 273, or 36% of the total.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

'beautiful arses' instead.<sup>30</sup> Most of *Du&Ich*'s photos portrayed nearly nude models, but it seems that they were not as explicit as readers would have liked. After a reform to Paragraph 184 of the penal code came into effect in 1975, many readers expected that they would now be able to enjoy images of erect penises: editors were forced to disappoint them, stating that were this change to be made the magazine could only be sold in sex shops rather than in newspaper kiosks.<sup>31</sup>

Part of this balancing act involved seeking to avoid drawing further ire from the authorities. In 1970, *him* was faced with an attempt by the Federal Minister for Health, Family and Youth, Käte Ströbel (SPD), to have it placed on the index of 'youth-endangering materials'. This would have banished the publication from the public sphere; indexed materials could not be placed on public display and instead had to rely on subscriptions or under-the-counter sales, just as their homophile predecessors had done.<sup>32</sup> Yet, even after the gay press had established and defended itself, one does not find an unequivocal recognition of erotic desire and sex acts. In 1977, the chief editor of *Du&Ich*, Alexander Ziegler, was forced to defend himself following comments he had made at a podium event, to the effect that most of the blame for discrimination against homosexuals should be placed at the door of that minority of homosexuals who insisted on frequenting cruising grounds, toilets and 'seedy dives'.<sup>33</sup> According to Ziegler, when the mainstream press wrote about 'gays', this caused associations with rent boys, 'arse-fuckers', blackmail, train station toilets and make-up: 'outgrowths' that represent 'no more than 2% of our minority'.<sup>34</sup> This disavowal of ostensibly opprobrious sexual behaviour and gender presentation was a running theme throughout the decade. Anal sex was found particularly problematic: Ziegler seems to be suggesting here that fewer than 2% of homosexuals practised the behaviour. He had evidently forgotten research published in his own magazine a few years previously. A survey of 5000 *Du&Ich* readers had revealed that 34% of 18–25 year-olds regularly practised anal sex, with almost 85% of those 40 years or older doing so.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, 43% of the respondents stated that they regularly sought sex in public toilets.<sup>36</sup> According to *The Common Homosexual*, a sociological study of 789 male homosexuals, an estimated 64% had practised active anal sex at least once in the previous twelve months (mid-1970 to mid-1971); 52% had practised passive anal sex.<sup>37</sup>

According to *The Common Homosexual*, the erotic ideal of West German homosexuals was represented by men of a strikingly young age. Respondents were asked both for the preferred age of their sexual partners and their upper limit; 47% indicated their ideal was represented by men aged between sixteen and twenty, with 30% opting for between twenty-one and twenty-five.<sup>38</sup> If we include the 6% who selected an age of fifteen

<sup>30</sup> *Du&Ich*, 1 (1973), p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> *Du&Ich*, 2 (1975), p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ströbel justified her indexing request by reference to the danger posed to youth by the magazine's 'sexual-ethical misorientation' (*Fehlorientierung*), *him*, 6 (1970), pp. 14–18.

<sup>33</sup> *Du&Ich*, 6 (1977), p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> Ferenz Bauer, 'Wie liebt der homosexuelle Mann?', *Du&Ich*, 10 (1974), pp. 8–11 (p. 9).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Dannecker and Reimut Reiche, *Der gewöhnliche Homosexuelle: eine soziologische Untersuchung über männliche Homosexuelle in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt/Main, 1974), p. 204.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

or younger, over half of those surveyed favoured sexual partnerships that in principle remained illegal at the time the research was carried out.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the breakdown of these results reveals that only 26% of those surveyed would have even countenanced a relationship with a man older than thirty-five.<sup>40</sup> Reflecting these erotic preferences, both *him* and *Du&Ich* displayed a marked fascination with young male bodies. The latter carried regular exposes on the life of male prostitutes and on sexuality in boarding schools, in which (to put it mildly) titillation and erotic fascination overshadowed any residual ethnographic sensibility.<sup>41</sup>

Figure 1 shows an advert from a Danish pornography mail-order store that depicts two of the dominant homoerotic aesthetics of the period (Figure 1). On the one hand, images of cherubic young men and boys continued to exert an appeal, and in this example they were evidently available in overtly racialized forms; photos of ‘boys’ available to order included those described as ‘Arabian’, ‘Marac’ (i.e. Moroccan) and ‘Sambal’ (i.e. South-East Asian). On the other hand, this youthful aesthetic was accompanied by a growing trend towards the depiction of hyper-virile leathermen, with bulging muscles and sexual organs, à la *Tom of Finland*.<sup>42</sup> Three of the pornographic series listed on the right side of the advert specified that scenes depicted were of a ‘Sado’ (i.e. sado-masochistic) nature, with another mentioning leather. For all the many readers

**KNABEN:**  
 JOY BOYS Nr. 1-2  
 PICCOLO  
 AMSTERDAM  
 MON AMOUR  
 ARABIAN BOYS Nr. 1-7.  
 COQ Nr. 1-7  
 MALE MODELS bis Nr.49  
 BRANDAL, Zeichnungen  
 HIPPI HOMO, Zeichng.  
 MAROC BOYS  
 SAMBAL BOYS

**MÄNNER:**  
 GROTESQUE Nr. 1-2  
 (Sado)  
 KICK Nr. 1-7 (Leder)  
 BIZAR Nr. 1-3 (Sado)  
 TSAR Nr. 1-3 (Sado)  
 PAGAN Nr. 1-8  
 HOMO-TRIANGLE  
 IRON BOYS  
 BOYS IN THE BAND  
 HOMO-ACTION Nr. 1-3  
 DING DONG, SERVUS,  
 BIMBO  
 MÄNNER-CLIMAX  
 Nr. 1-3

JEDES MAGAZIN KOSTET DM 15,- + DM 2,50 BEI VERSAND PER NACHNAHME  
 ODER EINSCHREIBEN. 3 MAGAZINE = DM 50,-  
 TOPSY-FILME: „ONLY A DREAM“ 40m Farbe = DM 125,- (8mm), 40m s./w. = DM 65,- (Super8)  
 FOTO-SERIEN = DM 15,- (z. Bsp. 8 versch. boys erregt = DM 15,-)  
 KATALOGE NUR GEGEN VOREINSENDUNG VON DM 5,-  
**MIKE IVERSON - POSTFACH 41 - 6300 GRAASTEN - DÄNEMARK**

Figure 1: Pornographic advert.

Source: *Du&Ich*, 2 (1972), p. 35.

<sup>39</sup>Until 1973, when the age of consent for homosexual behaviour was reduced to 18.

<sup>40</sup>Dannecker and Reiche, *Der gewöhnliche Homosexuelle*, p. 123.

<sup>41</sup>*Du&Ich*, 3 (1972), pp. 10–13; 8 (1975), pp. 30–3; 9 (1975), pp. 24–6. ‘Deutschland – deine Internate’, *Du&Ich*, 12 (1972), pp. 10–14; ‘Wenn Lehrer ihre Schüler verführen (und umgekehrt)’, *Du&Ich*, 1 (1973), pp. 18–20; ‘Erziehungsheime’, *Du&Ich*, 1 (1976), pp. 8–11.

<sup>42</sup>The first direct reference to the erotic artist that I have found in the West German gay press dates to 1976. ‘Mehr als ein Sex-Shop’, *Du&Ich*, 7 (1976), p. 39. According to Burkhardt Riechers, illustrations by Tom of Finland also occasionally appeared in *Der Weg* in 1969. Riechers, ‘Freundschaft und Anständigkeit’, p. 35.

who demanded younger male models, Michael S. was not alone in preferring ‘hard, tattooed, well-endowed men’ instead of ‘milksofs in swimming trunks’. His letter to *Du&Ich* continued: ‘I loathe hairless bodies [. . .] Well, are you a homo paper or a rag for paedophiles?’<sup>43</sup>

Certainly, this advert is evidence of the commercial attempt to cater to all and of the burgeoning domestic and international pornography trade.<sup>44</sup> But aesthetic shifts and erotic evolution are not commercial or sexual phenomena somehow disconnected from the ‘real’ business of homosexual politics. Analysing the commercial gay press sheds light on the endurance of intergenerational desire and the deep-seated ambivalence about desire that prevailed in this period: whether gay desire—and what manifestations thereof—should be affirmed and emboldened, or kept behind closed doors. As will be shown, both intergenerational desire and the growing visibility of sado-masochistic preferences were to prove contentious issues within the gay movement, too. This reveals another example of continuity—rather than rupture—in homosexual politics.

## II: Intergenerational Desire and Paedophilia

In the midst of the federal election campaign in 2013, the German Greens became embroiled in a scandal over their past. The party stood accused of having turned a blind eye to paedosexuality, by pledging implicit (and occasionally, explicit) support in the 1980s for those who sought to have the age of consent reduced or removed altogether.<sup>45</sup> Seeking to limit the electoral damage, the Greens commissioned a historical enquiry, led by political scientist Franz Walter. The subsequent report was released in November 2014, and found that in the early 1980s the Greens had supported revisions to the penal code in several local and regional election platforms, revisions that would have legalized paedosexual relationships.<sup>46</sup> The timing of the debate was not incidental, and motives at hand were mostly party political. Unsurprisingly, the CDU in Hesse suddenly stopped raising the issue as soon as the Greens came into question as possible coalition partners in the regional government.<sup>47</sup> This has led to accusations that Christian Democrats were seeking to gain political capital from the topic of child abuse, while ignoring unfavourable aspects of their own party’s history with regard to sexual politics, not least the failure to criminalize rape within marriage until 1997.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Du&Ich*, 7 (1977), p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> See especially Elizabeth Heineman, *Before Porn was Legal: The Erotica Empire of Beate Uhse* (Chicago, 2011). Beate Uhse, West Germany’s largest erotica company, advertised in the gay press as early as 1970. *him* (Dec. 1970), p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> This instalment of a recurring scandal was launched by the refusal of the president of the Federal Constitutional Court, Andreas Voßkuhle, to give the laudatory speech for Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who had been awarded the Theodor Heuss Prize for political engagement. ‘Die sind alle meschugge,’ *Der Spiegel*, 20 (2013), pp. 26–9.

<sup>46</sup> Göttinger Institut für Demokratieforschung, ‘Die Grünen und die Pädosexualität: Ergebnisse des Forschungsprojekts’ <[www.gruene.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Dokumente/Ergebnisse\\_Gruenenstudie\\_2014.pdf](http://www.gruene.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Ergebnisse_Gruenenstudie_2014.pdf)> (accessed 24 Nov. 2014). See also Franz Walter, Stephan Klecha and Alexander Hensel, *Die Grünen und die Pädosexualität: Eine bundesdeutsche Geschichte* (Göttingen, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Göttinger Institut für Demokratieforschung, ‘Die Grünen und die Pädosexualität’, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Margrit Gerster, ‘Endlich: Vergewaltigung in der Ehe gilt künftig als Verbrechen’, *Die Zeit*, (16 May 1997).

It did not take long for the gay movement to become implicated in the scandal. Writing in *Der Spiegel*, Ann-Katrin Müller argued that the gay movement had also been instrumentalized by paedophile activists: ‘In the 1970s and 1980s numerous gay magazines openly promote[d] sex with children, full of images of naked boys’.<sup>49</sup> As we have seen, one can certainly identify a powerful fascination with young—or even very young—male bodies in the pages of the gay press, but the interpretation that gay magazines ‘openly promoted sex with children’ is misleading and inaccurate, symptomatic of the failure to distinguish between intergenerational desire, paedophilia and child abuse.<sup>50</sup> Müller implied that the German Lesbian and Gay Federation (LSVD) had failed publicly to distance itself from paedophiles and events in the 1980s, without noting that the LSVD was not even founded until 1990, and then in East Germany, not in the Federal Republic.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Müller fails to place homosexual intergenerational desire in the context of the same phenomenon among heterosexuals. The construction concluding her article—‘the former alliance of gays with paedophiles’—is as accurate and as meaningless as, say, ‘the former alliance of straights with paedophiles’.<sup>52</sup> The sexualization of adolescent girls was a component part of the West German ‘sex wave’. Consider the wildly successful film franchise ‘Schoolgirl Report’, which claimed to take a paedagogical look at the sexual experiences of female school pupils aged fourteen to twenty but is in fact better described as ‘simply pornography’.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, in 1977, *Der Spiegel* itself used an image of a naked girl on its front cover to advertise its report ‘The *Lolitas* for sale’.<sup>54</sup>

Müller was on safer ground in arguing that it was hard to find a contemporary gay activist who liked to dwell on this aspect of gay history.<sup>55</sup> The same applies to historians. As David Halperin and Valerie Traub have noted, gay and lesbian historians display a continuing reluctance ‘to delve into topics that risk offering new opportunities for the denigration and demonization of homosexuality’.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, there is a powerful temptation to avoid ‘subjects that seem to vindicate antigay prejudice or that simply do not lend themselves to the requirements of gay self-affirmation’.<sup>57</sup> Evidently, research into issues of intergenerational desire and paedophilia represents a risky undertaking in the contemporary climate, and even those explicitly commissioned to conduct such

<sup>49</sup> Müller, ‘Die Allianz’, *Der Spiegel*, 35 (2013), pp. 59–60 (p. 59).

<sup>50</sup> Here, I use ‘intergenerational desire’ as a loose placeholder for desire between older and younger males (referring to adolescents as well as boys). That is, I am not just interested in sexual activity, but the larger field of sexual desire, including how it is expressed and represented. As will be shown, what ‘paedophile’ meant was hotly contested in this period.

<sup>51</sup> Norbert Blech, ‘Der Spiegel, Alice Schwarzer und die Päd-Homos’, queer.de blog (25 August 2013) <[http://www.queer.de/detail.php?article\\_id=19899](http://www.queer.de/detail.php?article_id=19899)> (accessed 1 December 2014).

<sup>52</sup> Müller, ‘Die Allianz’, *Der Spiegel*, 35 (2013), pp. 59–60 (p. 60).

<sup>53</sup> Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton and Oxford, 2005), p. 144. There were thirteen instalments between 1970 and 1980. See further Annette Miersch, *Schulmädchen-Report: Der deutsche Sexfilm der 70er Jahre* (Berlin, 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Unlike every other front cover, the image in question has been removed from the magazine’s online archive. The cover story is also not available. *Der Spiegel*, 22 (1977). See <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/index-1977.html>> (accessed 1 December 2014).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> Halperin and Traub (eds), *Gay Shame* (Chicago, 2009), p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

research remain affected by this, such as the lead researcher of the enquiry into the Greens' past. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the very first line of Franz Walter's online biography foregrounds his heterosexuality and fatherhood; by way of comparison, only two of his forty-six departmental colleagues have any information provided about their marital or family status.<sup>58</sup>

In a 2012 article, Daniel Marshall ponders what role oral history might have in deconstructing 'the old, sad, and untrue stereotypes of homosexuals (and especially gay men) as pedophiles and queer young people as victims' and in claiming 'the possibility and importance of non-sexual intergenerational relationships'.<sup>59</sup> His interviewees were active in the Australian *Gay Teachers and Students Group*, set up in 1975 in Melbourne. They told Marshall of the pernicious (but in their case, energizing) impact of the stereotype that homosexuals exploited and 'recruited' children, a discourse internationally prominent at the time as a result of Anita Bryant's 'save our children' campaign.<sup>60</sup> The association between male homosexuality and paedophilia is certainly 'old, sad, and untrue', but that does not mean that intergenerational desire was a phenomenon entirely absent from gay liberation, the impression given by accounts such as Marshall's. In fact, there was wide support within gay liberation for the liberation of childhood sexuality, and this often coincided with a measure of tacit or explicit support for the rights of self-defined paederasts or paedophiles.

Gay liberationists' demand for sexual liberation and for freedom from oppression was comprehensive and multi-directional. This was the context in which paedophile activists could engage with the gay movement. In 1978, the national gay journal *Emanzipation* stated that the non-paedophile should learn to accept the paedophile; the author of one article asserted that paedophilia was a crime without victims, and urged paedophiles to organize and defend themselves against discrimination, for which they should receive unconditional support from the gay movement.<sup>61</sup> According to a piece in the inaugural issue of *Schwuchtel*, the gay movement's first national journal, instead of merely opposing Paragraph 175, the gay movement must struggle against wider bourgeois sexual morality. Gays were not the only victims of this morality: paederasts were too, even if homosexuals tended to either pretend the latter did not exist or discriminate against them.<sup>62</sup> Especially towards the end of the decade, several gay action groups set up their own paederast or paedophile subsections. One of them, the *Päderastengruppe* in the *Homosexual Action Hamburg*, explained why gay activists should support their initiative: 'Have we in the gay movement arduously resisted the hetero concept of normality only now to subjugate ourselves under that of the gay scene?'<sup>63</sup> A central activist in this group, Olaf Stüben, was also the regional representative for the *German Study and Work Alliance Paedophilia* (DSAP), founded in 1977.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Profile of Professor Franz Walter, website of the *Göttinger Institut für Demokratieforschung* <<http://www.demokratie-goettingen.de/institut/prof-franz-walter>> (accessed 19 Sept. 2015). The profiles consulted are linked from <<http://www.demokratie-goettingen.de/verzeichnis/mitarbeiter>> (accessed 19 Sept. 2015).

<sup>59</sup> Marshall, 'Gay Teachers and Students, Oral History, and Queer Kinship,' in Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramírez (eds), *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History* (New York, 2012), pp. 167–83 (p. 176).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>61</sup> *Emanzipation*, 1 (1978), pp. 4 and 29.

<sup>62</sup> *Schwuchtel*, 1 (1975), p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> 'Päderasten?' (undated). Folder Hamburg–Schwulenbewegung–HAH, *Schwules Museum Berlin* archive [hereafter, SMB].

<sup>64</sup> 'Pädo-Propaganda ist strafbar', *Du&Ich*, 9 (1977), p. 52.

On the legal level, gay and paederast or paedophile activists had overlapping concerns, since even after the liberalization to Paragraph 175 in 1973 the age of consent for homosexuality was eighteen, rather than fourteen, as it was for heterosexual sex. Accordingly, it seems troubling to label a man who expressed desire for males aged fifteen to seventeen a paedosexual, unless we also adopt this label for men whose object-choice was female (even if these men found themselves on opposite sides of the law).<sup>65</sup> In any case, I use ‘paederast’ and ‘paedophile’ only when the terms were used by individuals and groups themselves; there was no consensus on what these terms meant. The DSAP, for instance, stated that ‘ours is a love without a name’.<sup>66</sup> According to the organization, the paederast (falsely) restricted himself to boys, and to boys who had reached puberty. Paedophiles, in contrast, rejected any limitations on their desire, and thus did not restrict themselves either to only boys or to only those who had reached puberty.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, the term paedophile was described as problematic, since the *-phile* implied that sexuality was something dirty (a similar move to that made by gay activists in criticizing those homosexuals who called themselves homophile).<sup>68</sup>

Paederasty’s long history has often been associated with intergenerational male relationships in Ancient Greece. *Der Eigene*, founded by Adolf Brand in 1896 and generally considered to be the world’s first homosexual journal, promoted a revival of the Greek paederastic model, with an older man befriending a male adolescent and entering into an intellectual and erotic relationship with him.<sup>69</sup> According to Clayton Whisnant, a ‘focus on erotic relationships between men of different ages’ was a tradition of the 1920s and largely disappeared in the pages of the postwar homophile press: ‘In the place of “Greek love”, postwar gay magazines increasingly included stories that emphasized the equality and similarity of the men drawn together into a relationship’.<sup>70</sup> With the 1970s in mind, I would argue that this displacement was far from total. Certainly, the appeal of the right-wing and even nationalistic discourse on the patriotic and political importance of homosocial environments and the role of intergenerational relationships within these, most popularly associated with Hans Blüher, had long since waned. The publicist Johannes Werres was among its last adherents.<sup>71</sup> Werres had been active in the postwar homophile movement, and continued his engagement into the 1970s, becoming a frequent contributor to both *him* and *Du&Ich*. For Werres, homosexual relationships between younger and older men served not only erotic but also social purposes, and in 1970 he argued that the repression of such relationships was one cause for the student revolts, growing challenges to authority, misunderstanding of sexual freedom, and increased youth criminality.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>65</sup>The current age of consent in the Federal Republic is 16 (for both homo- and heterosexual activity).

<sup>66</sup>Päderasten-Gruppe in der HAH, ‘Vorlage zur Diskussion am 10.11.79’. SMB, folder Hamburg-Schwulenbewegung-HAH.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York, 2014), pp. 101–2.

<sup>70</sup>Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality*, p. 145.

<sup>71</sup>Werres states that his form of boy-love [*Knabenliebe*] was partly based on the ideas of Blüher. Werres, ‘Als Aktivist erster Stunde: Meine Begegnung mit homosexuellen Gruppen und Zeitschriften nach 1945’, *Capri: Zeitschrift für schwule Geschichte*, 1 (1990), pp. 33–51 (p. 38).

<sup>72</sup>Under the pseudonym Norbert Weißenhagen. ‘Kann man für die Homosexualität “werben”?’, *Der Weg*, 226 (1969–70), pp. 279–81 (p. 281).

Though the majority of publicists did not share Werres' conservative politics, photos and reportage about young men and adolescents were a mainstay in the commercial gay press of the 1970s, especially in the earlier part of the decade. This was reflected in readers' feedback: with the possible exception of effeminacy, no other issue so dominated the letters pages of the commercial gay press as paedophilia. Some readers of *Du&Ich* wanted more of what was on offer: 'Certainly one can find contributions in almost every issue that touch on the topic "boy-love" in one form or another, but a certain reserve—if not to say timidity—is unmistakable'.<sup>73</sup> Others were of rather the opposite opinion. One subscriber wrote to the problems page of *Du&Ich* urging the publication to cease depicting paedosexuality as something natural, because otherwise 'normal homosexuals' like himself would be considered in the same way as paederasts: 'You preach tolerance and understanding, and what emerges is that you're bringing us all into disrepute'.<sup>74</sup> In reply, an editor stated that the letter was printed in full in order to give an example of the 'shameful intolerance' which leads minorities to denigrate themselves.<sup>75</sup>

In early 1974, the magazine went further, with an article asserting that two out of every seven West German homosexuals were paederasts, erotically drawn only to boys between ten and fifteen years of age.<sup>76</sup> In response, Walter K. would ask where on earth the editors had found their data, doubting the scientific accuracy of this claim.<sup>77</sup> Later that year, there was a marked change of tone. In October, the editors emphasized the magazine's tolerance, but argued that paedophilia should not be glorified.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps this was under the pressure of readers such as Franz G., who argued in a 1975 letter that 'normal' homosexuals should publicly distance themselves from paedophiles, since the general population still associated homosexuality with the seduction of minors: 'when the paedophiles are finally out of the picture . . . better times for us homosexuals will beckon'.<sup>79</sup> Later that year, Wilhelm H. would express his dismay at being continually 'lumped together with the abusers of boys'.<sup>80</sup>

It was no coincidence that high-profile cases of discrimination against homosexuals in the 1970s were connected to the ostensible danger posed to youth by male homosexuality. In 1974, the secondary school teacher Reiner Koepf and the church youth worker Klaus Kindel both lost their jobs on account of their open homosexuality. Gay activists presented these cases as *Berufsverbote*, 'bans on careers', part of an attempt to banish 'extremists' and 'radicals' from the civil service.<sup>81</sup> The language used in a ruling upholding Koepf's dismissal was particularly revealing. According to the court,

<sup>73</sup> *Du&Ich*, 3 (1973), p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> *Du&Ich*, 3 (1973), p. 49.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>76</sup> 'Das heiÙe "P"', *Du&Ich*, 2 (1974), pp. 2–3 (p. 2).

<sup>77</sup> *Du&Ich*, 6 (1974), p. 6.

<sup>78</sup> *Du&Ich*, 8 (1974), p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> *Du&Ich*, 3 (1975), p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> *Du&Ich*, 5 (1975), p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Referencing the *ExtremistenbeschlulÙ*, the 'Extremists' Resolution'. More commonly referred to as the *Radikalenerlass* (radicals' decree) and dubbed the *Berufsverbot* by its opponents, the measure was introduced in 1972 and permitted the screening of current and prospective civil service employees along the lines of current or past membership of radical groups, usually communist. See further Gerard Braunthal, *Political Loyalty and Public Service in West Germany: The 1972 Degree against Radicals and its Consequences* (Amherst, 1990).

the issue at stake was not homosexuality per se, since what people did in private was the business of nobody else, but that Koeppe had sought to make his 'aberrant' way of life the centre of attention in the school, creeping 'from behind, as it were' into the teaching profession as an 'agent of homosexuality'.<sup>82</sup> While the ruling stopped short of accusing Koeppe himself of engaging in relations with his pupils, it was stated that his presentation of homosexuality could contribute to the reduction of psychological inhibitions in children, thus making them liable to be seduced into homosexual acts.<sup>83</sup> The *Society for Sexual Reform* (GSR), one of West Germany's most discreetly named gay action groups, was denied permission to hold an information stall by the city of Aachen in 1973. Though GSR activists were initially successful in their appeal, the North-Rhine Westphalian Higher Administrative Court ruled in 1976 that the initial rejection of their request had been legal, and refused the group permission to appeal. The court's verdict acknowledged that the configuration of the 'intimate sphere' had been greatly liberalized, but ruled that the state can nevertheless banish matters of this 'intimate sphere' from the public arena. The verdict decreed that 'behaviours that do not conform to the norm and opinions expressed about these'—if the location in question is public—can harm the interests of the general population, and especially threaten youth in the 'undisturbed development of their sexual sphere'.<sup>84</sup>

Gay activists were keenly aware of the power of the prejudice that homosexuals preyed on boys, and sought to refute this characterization. The closer to respectability and positions of influence that gay activists came, the greater the pressure to define what was and what was not considered part of gay liberation. Ultimately, this led to the renunciation of support for the repeal of age of consent laws and the total exclusion of paedosexuals from the international gay movement in the 1990s.<sup>85</sup> In West Germany, a key flashpoint was the drafting of an anti-discrimination bill and a podium event held in Bonn in July 1980, in advance of the federal elections (at which support for the bill was one of the demands made).<sup>86</sup> All the main parties had accepted invitations, a prestigious location had been secured, and political representatives seemed to be courting the gay vote. In the event, only minutes of the discussion could take place, as members of the audience interrupted proceedings amid boos, heckling and whistling.<sup>87</sup> There were many issues at play here, including questions of institutionalization and to what extent the gay movement should accept the system of parliamentary democracy. But in the run-up to the event, perhaps the most controversial topic was to what extent (if at all) the event should represent paedosexuals as well as gays and lesbians.

Apparently, a compromise had been reached whereby the gay, lesbian and paedophile movements were to have two representatives each on the podium (alongside the invited

<sup>82</sup> Full text of verdict printed as 'Im Namen des Volkes', in Peter Hedenström (ed.), *Schwule sich emanzipieren lernen: Materialien zur Ausstellung* (Berlin, 1976), pp. 16–18.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>84</sup> Verdict of the NRW *Oberverwaltungsgericht*, 15 March 1976. SMB, NARGS box one, folder 'Dokumentation Aachener Info-Tisch-Fall'.

<sup>85</sup> David Paternotte, 'The International (Lesbian and) Gay Association and the Question of Pedophilia: Tracking the Demise of Gay Liberation Ideals,' *Sexualities*, 17 (2014), pp. 121–38. See also Joshua Gamson, 'Messages of Exclusion: Gender, Movements, and Symbolic Boundaries,' *Gender and Society*, 11 (1997), pp. 178–99.

<sup>86</sup> 'Homosexuelle zur Bundestagswahl: Parteien auf dem Prüfstand'. SMB, folder Bonn–Beethovenhalle.

<sup>87</sup> Transcript of audio recording, in Dieter Bachnik and Rainer Schädlich (eds), *Alle Schwestern werden Brüder* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 222–41.

representatives of the political parties). Because the paedophile representatives were also supposed to be homosexual, the DSAP pulled out of proceedings.<sup>88</sup> Drafting the anti-discrimination bill had seen a rare measure of cooperation between gays and lesbians.<sup>89</sup> But this became frayed over the question of whether the bill should demand only the repeal of Paragraph 175 or the repeal of the entire sexual criminal code. The lesbian group *L74* would only countenance a liberalization to Paragraphs 174 and 176, so that intergenerational relationships would not be subject to prosecution providing that they were voluntary, non-violent and consensual.<sup>90</sup> This move was rejected by paedophile activists, who demanded the complete repeal of these laws. Nevertheless, the *Lesbian Action Centre* (LAZ) still supported the podium event, subject to the provision of gender parity on the podium and a female chair. The group did not oppose the inclusion of paedophiles, since they were ‘those of us most criminalized and those who sit in jail because of their sexual orientation’.<sup>91</sup> *L74*, though, did withdraw their backing for the event. According to the group, Paragraph 176 pertained in 80% of cases only to heterosexual paedophile relationships, which almost always involved an adult male forcing his sexuality onto a female child.<sup>92</sup> In their eyes, lesbian paedophilia did not exist, and they were not convinced by the ‘idealized presentation of gay paedophile relationships’. The podium event could not be supported if it provided a platform for paedophiles, who were using the occasion as a Trojan horse.<sup>93</sup>

In a resolution passed in March 1980, the group underlined its opposition to any future cooperation with paedophiles, but also its refusal to work with any constituency that failed sufficiently to distance itself from paedophile excesses—all those groups ‘which due to pure fear of refusing their solidarity to other minorities’ end up marginalizing their own interests.<sup>94</sup> It is precisely this issue that can explain why sections of the gay movement, and the wider New Left of which it was a part, offered support to paedophile activists.<sup>95</sup> The dominant erotic aesthetic of the time was indeed strikingly young—for homosexuals and for heterosexuals—but erotic inclinations were less important than the overwhelming anathema attached to the refusal of solidarity to oppressed groups. Similarly, the expression of solidarity for activists suspected of terrorist violence should not be read as implying support for terrorism, but rather articulating opposition to what was perceived as state oppression.<sup>96</sup> If the state was not prevented

<sup>88</sup> Gerhard Beier-Herzog, ‘Anmerkungen zur Veranstaltung in der Beethovenhalle’, *AHA Info* (July/August 1980), pp. 19–25 (p. 20).

<sup>89</sup> On the West German lesbian movement, see Gabriele Dennert, Christiane Leidinger and Franziska Raucht (eds), *In Bewegung bleiben: 100 Jahre Politik, Kultur und Geschichte von Lesben* (Berlin, 2007) and Ina Kuckuc [pseudonym], *Der Kampf gegen Unterdrückung: Materialien aus der deutschen Lesbierinnenbewegung* (Munich, 1977 [1975]).

<sup>90</sup> ‘Entwurf der L74 für ein ADG’ (undated). SMB, AHA Sammlung, box Juristengruppe/Antifa-Gruppe.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Stellungnahme von Frauen aus dem LAZ’ (February 1980). Printed in Bachnik and Schädlich, *Alle Schwestern werden Brüder*, pp. 84–5.

<sup>92</sup> Isis, ‘Abgesang auf Beethoven’, *Unsere kleine Zeitung*, 4 (1980). Reprinted in Bachnik and Schädlich, *Alle Schwestern werden Brüder*, pp. 116–118.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>95</sup> On the gay movement’s place within the New Left, see Craig Griffiths, ‘Gay activism in Modell Deutschland’, *European Review of History*, 22 (2015), pp. 60–76.

<sup>96</sup> Most radically, after graphic images of the starved RAF member Holger Meins circulated after his death in prison in 1974. Petra Terhoeven, *Deutscher Herbst in Europa. Der Linksterrorismus der siebziger Jahre als transnationales Phänomen* (Munich, 2014), pp. 268. See also Leith Passmore, ‘The Art of Hunger: Self-Starvation in the Red Army Faction’, *German History*, 27 (2009), pp. 32–59.

from persecuting paedophiles, so the understanding went, other identity groups or political groups would be next in the firing line.<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, the liberation of childhood sexuality was axiomatic for the New Left.<sup>98</sup> Challenging authority was not just about police and judges but also parents and schools; hence the importance placed on anti-authoritarian child-rearing.<sup>99</sup> According to Peter Schult, the most outspoken self-identified paederast in the 1970s, intergenerational sex did not instil hierarchies but rather *counteracted* them.<sup>100</sup> His was an ‘emancipatory, anti-authoritarian form of paederasty’.<sup>101</sup> Whether figures such as Schult had internalized this understanding or merely arrived at a cynical rationalization remains something of a moot point. One gets a flavour of just what was felt to be do-able in this period and in this milieu from the brazen advert placed in the Munich-based leftist magazine *Blatt* in May 1979: ‘Damn it! I’m still looking for a room in a shared flat . . . Uli, 25, paederast (ergo flat with children preferred)’.<sup>102</sup> In response, an irritated reader suggested that tolerance had its limits, and that the tolerance of *Blatt* editors was being sorely abused by certain people.<sup>103</sup>

Peter Schult was an active figure in the leftist scene in Munich, and a frequent contributor to *Blatt*. His regular encounters with the law led to obvious discomfort and disquiet among his New Left colleagues and readers of *Blatt* and similar journals.<sup>104</sup> An account in the Frankfurt-based *Pflasterstrand* of a teach-in that had been held on Schult’s behalf described the awkward silence that fell over the room when Schult read out a poem on the topic of ‘screwing a 15 year-old rent boy’.<sup>105</sup> The author was evidently ambivalent on the issue, but ended up arguing that the struggle against sexual oppression could not consist of calling for punishment through the bourgeois justice system.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, a reporter covering one of Schult’s many trials did not express any shared erotic interests with the accused, but wrote ‘I couldn’t judge. Also, I don’t want to’.<sup>107</sup> Such accounts can be read as an echo of that famous slogan associated with 1968, ‘It is forbidden to forbid!’ As Julian Bourg has charted with respect to the French context, this radical antinomianism would increasingly come up against the recognition that

<sup>97</sup> A point Lucy Robinson has made about the British context and support for the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE). Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain* (Manchester, 2007), p. 136.

<sup>98</sup> On the West German New Left generally, see Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Berlin, 2014) and Michael März, *Linker Protest nach dem Deutschen Herbst: Eine Geschichte des linken Spektrums im Schatten des ‘Starken Staates’, 1977–9* (Bielefeld, 2012).

<sup>99</sup> *Berliner Kinderläden: Antiautoritäre Erziehung und sozialistischer Kampf* (Berlin, 1970). See also Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, pp. 162–74.

<sup>100</sup> Peter Schult, ‘Ein Staatsanwalt sieht rot—oder, ein Plädoyer für die Liebe’, in *Der Fall Peter Schult: Ein Sittenprozess in Bayern* (Munich, undated pamphlet), pp. 13–16 (p. 16). SMB.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>102</sup> *Blatt*, 145 (1979), unpaginated personals section.

<sup>103</sup> *Blatt*, 146 (1979), p. 62.

<sup>104</sup> Schult, ‘und streichelte unter anderem...’, *Blatt*, 115 (1977), pp. 14–15; Helmut, ‘Sex & drugs & rock’n Roll’, *Blatt*, 145 (1979), pp. 12–13; *Blatt*, pp. 147, pp. 69–70; ‘Welche Moral? Der “Fall” Peter Schult’, *Autonomie* (October 1976), p. 1; Schult, ‘Für eine sexuelle Revolution: wider die linken Spießler’, *Autonomie* (February 1977), pp. 86–96.

<sup>105</sup> *Pflasterstrand*, 3 (1977), p. 23.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>107</sup> Evi K, ‘Peter Schult’, *Blatt*, 146 (1979), p. 6.

desire had its limits. For example, if French feminist activists had generally focused on the attainment of reproductive rights at the start of the decade, this focus was soon to be accompanied and then displaced by efforts to have rape taken more seriously by the criminal justice system.<sup>108</sup> A growing emphasis on rights—which included the rights of children—would be one factor influencing changing definitions of sexual liberation, and the process of ‘sorting out’ what did and did not belong in the project of gay rights.<sup>109</sup> This ‘sorting out’, however, was not something that arrived only *after* the 1970s, not a response to the often presumed ‘anything goes’ of gay liberation. Rather, questions of inclusion and exclusion formed an underlying current, running through the very heart of gay liberation.

### III: Sex and Desire in the Gay Movement

Benno Gammerl has argued that the 1970s saw a transition towards greater equality in homosexual relationships, with sexual partners increasingly being of a similar age and physique.<sup>110</sup> The appeal of paederastic relationships had not only been intergenerational but also hierarchical: what the younger partner could learn from the older, more mature, more intelligent partner. Instead, there was a new-found focus on egalitarianism, and on tenderness, or being affectionate (*Zärtlichkeit*).<sup>111</sup> Even those homosexuals who foregrounded their masculinity in contact ads generally sought equally masculine partners.<sup>112</sup> In the American context, David Halperin has argued that mutuality and reciprocity were the new erotic watchwords of gay liberation: ‘Hence, successful sexual relationships involved equal partners of the same age, the same wealth, and the same social standing, each of them doing everything with and to the other with perfect reciprocity’.<sup>113</sup>

*Zärtlichkeit* has more often been associated with the women’s movement and lesbian activists in particular than with the gay movement. In September 1974, *Der Spiegel* entitled its front cover story on lesbianism ‘Women love women: the new tenderness’.<sup>114</sup> Within the prevailing New Left ‘emotional regime’, men were presented as being especially emotionally deprived, incapable of being tender or affectionate.<sup>115</sup> Writing in a special sexuality issue of *konkret* in 1979, Alexander von Streit criticized ‘propaganda’ from other lesbians, including an undue focus on faithfulness, stable relationships and emotional connections; anything that did not fit into this schema,

<sup>108</sup> Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal, 2007), p. 193. Bourg also explores French paedophilic discourse, pp. 204–18.

<sup>109</sup> On ‘sorting out’, with respect to sex and gender, see David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* (Durham, NC and London, 2007).

<sup>110</sup> Benno Gammerl, ‘Früher war mehr Lametta? Schwule Perspektiven auf die siebziger Jahre’, paper presented at *Sonntagsclub*, Berlin (4 Nov. 2013).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Benno Gammerl, ‘Frau Muskel-Typ: Herr Hexe und Fräulein Butch? Geschlechtlichkeiten und Homosexualitäten in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts,’ in Julia Paulus, Eva-Maria Silies and Kerstin Wolff (eds), *Zeitgeschichte als Geschichtsgeschichte: Neue Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt/Main, 2012), pp. 225–45 (p. 239).

<sup>113</sup> Halperin, *How to be Gay* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), p. 52.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Frauen lieben Frauen: Die neue Zärtlichkeit’, *Der Spiegel*, 36 (1974), p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Joachim C. Häberlen and Jake P. Smith, ‘Struggling for Feelings: The Politics of Emotions in the Radical New Left in West Germany, c.1968–84’, *Contemporary European History*, 23 (2014), pp. 615–37 (p. 622).

such as aggression, sado-masochism and penetration was rejected and denounced as aping male sexuality.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, Siegfried Schäfer provided an example of this in the very same publication. According to Schäfer, in lesbian relationships the emotional connection was key, a phenomenon inverted in gay male sexuality:

Many homosexual men immediately have sex with each other; friendship or tenderness is rarely a prerequisite, at best sometimes the consequence . . . With lesbian women it rarely comes to the compulsive overemphasis and overvaluation of sexuality, as can be found with so many homosexual men.<sup>117</sup>

Schäfer's account tells us less about the reality of male homosexual relationships than about the strategic gains evidently felt to be won by defining lesbian sexuality against what was seen as its polar opposite, disassociating lesbianism from the opprobrium attached to male homosexuality in the process. Nevertheless, gay activists were also far from comfortable with aspects of gay male sexuality, especially those elements that were not readily reconciled with an egalitarian model of intimacy. Mutuality and reciprocity may have been the sexual forms valorized, but they did not totally eclipse those erotic acts and sexual subjectivities brought into disrepute. This includes intergenerational desire but also sexual behaviour and modes of self-presentation that suggested bipolarity, the adoption of asymmetrical sexual roles. This was one issue influencing the debate on gender transgression and effeminacy, which was not compatible with the model of masculinity favoured by many gay activists.<sup>118</sup> Equally, activists were confronted by the growing visibility of a sado-masochistic scene, pointing to the popularity of what represented (at least on the surface) the *least* reciprocal and mutual of sexual practices.

In West Berlin, a particular flashpoint was the opening of *Knolle* in late 1975, a bar often frequented by leathermen and furnished with one of the first dark rooms in the country. A HAW activist described the bar as 'one of the most extreme expressions of male-fascistoid sexuality'; in its darkened cellar only silhouettes could be made out, in order to cover up any potential tenderness between men, and thus protect patrons from having to question their masculinity.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, the author associated *Knolle* with other ostensibly retrograde developments that he thought emanated from the United States: a growing militarism and Nazi cult in the gay scene, along with leather, 'certain forms of male pornography' and, curiously, sex aids such as cock rings or poppers.<sup>120</sup> In reply, another activist criticized this perspective, arguing that what he identified as the 'pink HAW norm' was damaging the gay movement, since it excluded all those who did not exhibit the 'correct' consciousness, along with those who wore leather, suits or indeed anyone who just came across as conformist.<sup>121</sup> The darkness of what was referred to as

<sup>116</sup>Von Streit, '... als ob Lesbischsein sich nur im Bett abspielt', *Sexualität konkret* (1979), pp. 74–6. On the marginalization of butch-fem lesbian sexual culture, which involved the shunning of polarized sexual roles and penetrative sex, see Nan Alamilla Boyd, 'Talking about Sex: Cheryl Gonzales and Rikki Streicher Tell Their Stories', in Boyd and Ramírez, *Bodies of Evidence*, pp. 95–112.

<sup>117</sup>Siegfried Schäfer, 'Lesbierinnen: Was sind das für Frauen?', *Sexualität konkret* (1979), pp. 71–3.

<sup>118</sup>See Betty Luther Hillman, "'The most profoundly revolutionary act a homosexual can engage in": Drag and the Politics of Gender Presentation in the San Francisco Gay Liberation Movement, 1964–1972', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 20 (2011), pp. 153–81, and Craig Griffiths, 'Konkurrierende Pfade der Emanzipation: Der Tuntentstreit (1973–5) und die Frage des "respektablen Auftretens"', in Pretzel and Weiß, *Rosa Radikale*, pp. 143–59.

<sup>119</sup>'Männer lasst das Knollen sein kommt herauf und reihst euch ein!', *HAW Info*, 20 (1975), pp. 60–2.

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>121</sup>Claire [pseudonym], 'Zur SM-Diskussion: Thesen zur Funny', *HAW Info*, 22 (1976), pp. 18–19.

the 'screw room' was more about preserving anonymity than masculinity, and any frustration caused by anonymous sex was less than that caused by rejection. It was not the patrons of *Knolle* who needed to change, but activists themselves: 'we [need to] learn to fulfil our own desires and to recognize that the rejection of queens and of trade [*Tunten und Kerle*] is a rejection of part of ourselves'.<sup>122</sup> Frank Ripploh, who would later go on to direct the cult gay film *Taxi zum Klo* (Taxi to the Toilet), posited that the reason so many activists reacted aggressively to the 'leather monsters' was their sense of inferiority.<sup>123</sup> According to Ripploh, 'perspective gays' (*Durchblickschwule*) such as himself tended to demonstrate their critique of consumerism through their 'scrap heap look'; this, along with their fondness for leftist clichés, cost them the 'most beautiful fucks'.<sup>124</sup>

The debate within the gay movement over sado-masochism was influenced by the ghostly presence of the National Socialist past. The individual who had castigated *Knolle* admitted to having masturbated to thoughts of being tortured by a member of the SS, interpreting this as the unwanted product of his oppressed situation.<sup>125</sup> Two other HAW activists defended sado-masochism, writing that the desire to whip or be whipped had nothing to do with reactionary politics whatsoever, and that claims to the contrary were shameless and represented a trivialization of fascism.<sup>126</sup> The editorial collective of *Schwuchtel* seconded the view that no particular political trajectory should be read into sado-masochism, but rejected the notion that fascism cannot be explained from a consideration of the sexual.<sup>127</sup> In this, the editors were recapitulating a (mis) understanding held by many New Left figures, that National Socialism was not only characterized by sexual repression, but could also be explained by it.<sup>128</sup> At times, this discourse had homophobic overtones. In *The Function of the Orgasm*, wildly popular in the student movement, Wilhelm Reich claimed that sexually satisfied heterosexuals had tended to oppose the First World War, whereas 'latent or manifest homosexuals' were among the most sadistic and the most brutal recruits.<sup>129</sup>

For Erich Fromm, whose texts were also widely disseminated in the student movement, sado-masochistic impulses were linked to the popularity of the National Socialists and Hitler in particular, adored because of his strength and supremacy. Moreover, according to the Frankfurt School author, sado-masochism was particularly to be found among the 'petit-bourgeois authoritarian type' and among homosexuals.<sup>130</sup> The contemporary link between sado-masochism and authoritarianism may have been further underlined by Pier Paolo Pasolini's unrelentingly graphic film *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, which depicted the sexual depravity of Italian fascist libertines.<sup>131</sup> The

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>123</sup>Peggy von Schnottgenberg [pseudonym], 'Hilfe, ich liebe große Schwänze, Sperma, Schweiß und Leder', *Schwuchtel*, 4 (1976), pp. 2–3 (p. 2).

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup>'Männer lässt das Knollen sein kommt herauf und reißt euch ein!', pp. 60–2 (p. 62).

<sup>126</sup>Wilfried and Michael, 'Einige Gedanken zum Knolle-Artikel im HAW-Info 20', *HAW Info*, 22 (1976), pp. 21–2.

<sup>127</sup>*Schwuchtel*, 5 (1976), p. 1.

<sup>128</sup>See especially Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*.

<sup>129</sup>Reich, *Die Funktion des Orgasmus: Zur Psychopathologie und zur Soziologie des Geschlechtslebens* (Vienna, 1927), p. 168.

<sup>130</sup>Fromm, 'Sozialpsychologischer Teil', in Max Horkheimer (ed.), *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (Paris, 1936), pp. 77–135 (pp. 125–36).

<sup>131</sup>Released shortly after the director's death in 1975. The film and the manner of Pasolini's death (apparently, murdered by a male prostitute) were often discussed as interwoven issues. See for example Peter Jacob, 'Schönheit aus Elend', *Du&Ich*, 3 (1976), pp. 13–14.

associations—confused and ill-defined but potent nevertheless—between sado-masochism and fascism informed the discomfort of some gay activists with sado-masochistic desire among homosexuals. Some may have internalized these associations; for others, it was more a case of seeking not to provoke latent prejudice. Indeed, this affected even those individuals who identified with elements of the sado-masochistic scene. Hans Eppendorfer, the chief editor of *him* from 1976, became known to a wider audience under the name ‘The Leather Man’, through a series of interviews with the novelist Hubert Fichte.<sup>132</sup> According to Eppendorfer, at a leather gathering in Hamburg in 1970 there had been a room furnished with a gas oven and a trench, and he agreed with Fichte that this had ‘something of the concentration camp about it’.<sup>133</sup> He saw some leathermen as potential concentration camp guards, since behind their leather there existed a pronounced ‘craving for recognition’.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, the wider leather scene was described in its current form as ‘simply purely fascist’.<sup>135</sup>

In July 1977, members of the *General Homosexual Action Alliance* (AHA) were invited to *Knolle* for ‘leather coffee’ by the Berlin branch of the MSC (Motor Sport Club).<sup>136</sup> A spokesperson reassured AHA activists that the MSC encompassed the entire political spectrum, from extreme left to extreme right, and that their members favoured the whole gamut of (homo)sexual activity, not just sado-masochism.<sup>137</sup> The only thing their members had in common was their style of attire, a mechanism of publicly avowing their sexuality.<sup>138</sup> Through this display of homosexual desire, MSC members argued that they possessed greater self-consciousness than the typical gay activist.<sup>139</sup> Encounters with such individuals may have influenced the author of a position paper submitted before an AHA meeting, which posed the question of whether being political was becoming a surrogate for being gay, with the provocative statement ‘being involved in gay politics is [seen as] a morally superior substitute for the free acting out of sexual needs of all kinds, which [activists] find themselves incapable of’.<sup>140</sup> Looking back at the 1970s, a former member of the HAW recounted in our oral history interview how his homosexuality was often lived out on a cerebral rather than a physical level, describing himself as a *Theorieschwuler*, translating as ‘theory gay’—or even ‘theoretical gay’.<sup>141</sup>

Gay activists’ frequent discomfort with explicitly sexual matters may appear surprising, but this indicates their profound misgivings about the commercial gay scene,

<sup>132</sup>Hans Eppendorfer, *Der Ledermann spricht mit Hubert Fichte* (Frankfurt/Main, 1977). The interviews took place in 1970, 1973 and 1976.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 203–4.

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>136</sup>Elsewhere, the acronym MSC was given as ‘motorcycle club’ and ‘motorsport and contacts’. In any case, the MSC was less an organization for motor-sport enthusiasts than a loose umbrella group for leathermen, the majority of whom seem to have identified as homosexual. See further ‘Bei Uns sitzt das Leder noch Stramm’, *Die Zeit* (2 Sept. 1977).

<sup>137</sup>Michael Faist, untitled report on AHA-MSc meeting (17 July 1977). SMB, box AHA two.

<sup>138</sup>Clayton Whisnant states that one appeal of leather to homosexuals was that it ‘contained a sexual message, yet offered a rebuke to effeminacy’. Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality*, p. 150.

<sup>139</sup>Faist, untitled report on AHA-MSc meeting.

<sup>140</sup>Undated document, ‘Leitfaden für ein Gespräch über das “Politische” und das “Unpolitische” in uns’. SMB, box AHA two.

<sup>141</sup>Erwin Kirchner (pseudonym). Oral history interview (28 Aug. 2012).

sexual liberalization and the 'sex wave'.<sup>142</sup> According to the *Homosexual Action Hamburg*, the gay scene was 'inhuman'.<sup>143</sup> Gay bars offered only a climate of competitiveness and a portal to a dream-world and the consumer society; instead, homosexuals needed to create new 'forms of communication', to bring them out of their isolation.<sup>144</sup> In a position paper by the Frankfurt-based group *Rotzschwul*, any sense of freedom, escape or happiness in the gay scene was described as but an illusory solution to the desperation and unhappiness that prevailed among homosexuals.<sup>145</sup> Cruising grounds in parks, toilets and saunas were characterized by fear and the absence of affection or tenderness.<sup>146</sup> In these misgivings, gay activists were closer to homophile activists and the gay press than they cared to admit. Just as with the gay movement, the gay press owed its existence to sexual liberalization and the sex wave, but voices could be found that were critical of these developments. An article in *Du&Ich* in 1973 did not deny that liberalization had taken place, but stressed that one must differentiate between libertinage and freedom.<sup>147</sup> Constant change of sexual partners militated against 'real friendship', and liberalization brought the danger that emancipated sexual behaviour would be exploited and manipulated by commerce.<sup>148</sup>

#### IV: Pride and Shame

As Benno Gammerl argues, historians need to interrogate the 'gay success story' (*schwule Erfolgsgeschichte*), a narrative that portrays gay activists in a heroic light and credits gay liberation with rescuing homosexuals from their shame-filled existence. First, this implies casting the years before 1970 in an 'all too inauspicious and dreary light', in order to present the successes of gay activism in the 1970s in an even more positive manner.<sup>149</sup> Second, it can fail to give due consideration to structural changes and the transformed social context in which gay activists found themselves.<sup>150</sup> Accounts that stress the formation and significance of pride are not exactly wrong; but gay pride is perhaps best analysed alongside its unwanted sibling, gay shame. As Eve Sedgwick has expressed, we cannot hope to eradicate shame: 'therapeutic or political strategies that aim to get rid of individual or group shame may "work", but they cannot "work" in the way they say they work'.<sup>151</sup> Gay liberation may have seemed to possess a 'magical power' to 'transmute shame into pride, secrecy into visibility, social exclusion into outsider glamour', but as Heather Love reminds us, 'We can turn shame into pride, but we cannot do so once and for all: shame lives on in pride, and pride can easily turn back into shame'.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>142</sup>On the 'sex wave', see Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, pp. 141–83, and Heineman, *Before Porn was Legal*, pp. 101–28.

<sup>143</sup>HAH, 'Zur Situation der Homosexuellen', May 1972. SMB, IHWO Box One.

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup>Rotzschwul, 'Die homosexuelle Subkultur', p. 6. SMB, folder Frankfurt.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>147</sup>Ludwig, 'Unter uns gesagt', *Du&Ich*, 2 (1973), p. 60.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>149</sup>Gammerl, 'Mit von der Partie oder auf Abstand? Biografische Perspektiven schwuler Männer und lesbischer Frauen auf die Emanzipationsbewegungen der 1970er Jahre', in Pretzel and Weiß, *Rosa Radikale*, pp. 160–76 (p. 160).

<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>151</sup>Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham and London, 2003), p. 63.

<sup>152</sup>Love, *Feeling Backward*, p. 28.

Drawing on Sedgwick's definition of shame as revolving around the pain of non-recognition, Deborah Gould has argued that a desire for relief from shame can 'create a pull toward social conformity, and specifically toward adoption of mainstream political norms'.<sup>153</sup> This might be one way to explain periods of conformism within homosexual politics, most often associated with the homophile movement. Martin Dannecker, one of the key figures in the West German gay movement, has contended that homophiles were driven by an insatiable desire for recognition.<sup>154</sup> Eager to appear as normal as possible, homophiles sought to refute defamatory stereotypes but in so doing ended up enmeshed in homophobia themselves: 'shame, convention and decency, in the name of which homosexuals were denigrated, resembled for most of them positive categories'.<sup>155</sup> In contrast, gay liberation has been viewed almost exclusively through the optics of gay pride.<sup>156</sup> According to Dannecker, gay activists in the 1970s made a radical break with the politics of recognition. Rather than attempting to refute the perception of homosexuals as perverse and abnormal, activists sought instead to seemingly *confirm* these perceptions through the manner of their actionism, paroles and theories.<sup>157</sup> In his influential *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*, Dennis Altman posited that the very essence of gay liberation was self-affirmation.<sup>158</sup> The archetypal expression of this self-affirmation in West Germany came with Rosa von Praunheim's *Not the Homosexual is Perverse, but the Society in Which he Lives*, co-written with the aforementioned Martin Dannecker.<sup>159</sup> First screened in 1971, and broadcast on national television in January 1973, the film was a key factor in the expansion of the gay movement.<sup>160</sup> The film concluded with footage of a commune of naked gay men, alongside calls directly aimed at homosexuals: 'out of the toilets and into the streets!' and 'be proud of your homosexuality!'.<sup>161</sup>

The 1970s, the decade of gay liberation, did not see 'shame' supplanted by 'pride'. There were certainly striking elements of self-affirmation, but this was not accompanied by a no-holds-barred acceptance and celebration of gay subjectivity and gay desire. Activists, alongside other gay men, remained ill-at-ease with aspects of their homosexuality. The very denomination 'homophile' was intended to downplay the centrality of the sexual to homosexuality. That this manoeuvre was rejected by activists who preferred to use *schwul* does not mean that those activists can therefore be described as having celebrated all aspects of gay desire. In fact, a rather censorious tendency can be observed in gay liberation. *Not the Homosexual* was intended as an attack on several aspects of homosexual life and was consciously provocative. Yet the three-fold

<sup>153</sup>Gould, 'The Shame of Gay Pride in Early AIDS Activism', in Halperin and Traub, *Gay Shame*, pp. 221–55 (p. 224). See further Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, p. 36.

<sup>154</sup>Dannecker, 'Der unstillbare Wunsch nach Anerkennung: Homosexuellenpolitik in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren', in Detlef Grumbach (ed.), *Was heißt hier schwul? Politik und Identitäten im Wandel* (Hamburg, 1997), pp. 27–44.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>156</sup>For important countervailing tendencies, see the collection of essays in Halperin and Traub, *Gay Shame*.

<sup>157</sup>Dannecker, 'Der unstillbare Wunsch', p. 42.

<sup>158</sup>Altman, *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* (London, 1974), p. 188.

<sup>159</sup>*Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation in der er lebt* (Bavaria Atelier, 1971).

<sup>160</sup>On Praunheim, see Randall Halle, 'Rainer, Rosa, and Werner: New Gay Film as Counter-Public', in Brigitte Peucker (ed.), *A Companion to Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 542–63.

<sup>161</sup>Cited directly from the film. A copy is available at the SMB.

description of homosexuals as 'whores' and language such as 'park fuckers' and 'urinal gays' (*Pissbudenschwule*) speaks also of a distinctly judgemental tone, which may have been influenced by shame about gay sexual practices. The film's narrator suggested that because homosexuals cannot marry each other, they in fact had greater freedom at their disposal than heterosexuals.<sup>162</sup> But rather than taking advantage of this, homosexuals remained stuck at a psycho-social stage described as 'infantile'. In adopting this position, the film would thus echo a central trope used to discredit same-sex sexuality in psychoanalytic thought.

Sebastian Haunss has remarked that the activists who defended a free and unrestrained gay sexuality in the face of calls to the contrary during the HIV/AIDS crisis were often those who a decade earlier had been far from comfortable with aspects of gay sexuality, especially the phenomenon of anonymous sex in the gay scene.<sup>163</sup> In some cases, a more straightforward continuity in attitudes can be observed. Rosa von Praunheim achieved notoriety for an article in *Der Spiegel* in 1984, in which he placed much of the blame for the worsening HIV/AIDS crisis at the door of promiscuous homosexuals. 'Every infection we cause can mean manslaughter', opined Praunheim, bemoaning that the freedom won by those who went on the streets in the 1970s was lived out by most gays 'in discos, orgy bars and commercial sex'.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, connections with an earlier period can be posited. In his analysis of the Swiss homophile journal, Hubert Kennedy has argued that *Der Kreis* propagated a vision of 'the ideal gay man': he who followed a 'code of conduct' that stressed responsibility, gender normative behaviour and respectability.<sup>165</sup> Gay liberation, too, had its own rules and regulations, its own tacit code of conduct. One of the more infamous lines in *Not the Homosexual* came towards the end of the film, with the narrator screeching 'Let us be more gay! The false half-gays must find the courage to become whole gays'.<sup>166</sup> The 'whole gay' of gay liberation, its 'ideal gay man', was to be politically conscious, should reject sentimentality and apathetic consumerism, and show solidarity with fellow gay men facing discrimination, and other oppressed groups.<sup>167</sup> But he must also display responsibility and discipline. While the film rejected aping heterosexual cohabitation, it argued that with the requisite discipline gay relationships could last longer than they generally did at present, perhaps two to three years. Rather than visiting parks, public toilets, saunas and bars, gay men should boycott these establishments. Gays should try to 'screw more freely' but this abandon was twinned with obligation, too: 'We must become erotically free and socially responsible'.<sup>168</sup> The latter message was picked up by *Homosexual Action Hamburg* activists, who argued that society forced roles onto homosexuals, leaving gay men with no opportunity for what was described as 'self-conscious' and 'self-responsible' behaviour.<sup>169</sup> Indeed, concerns over responsibility and respectability

<sup>162</sup>*Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers*, dir. by von Praunheim. Cited from the footage.

<sup>163</sup>Haunss, 'Von der sexuellen Befreiung zur Normalität: das Ende der zweiten deutschen Schwulenbewegung', in Pretzel and Weiß, *Rosa Radikale*, pp. 199–212 (p. 209).

<sup>164</sup>'Gibt es Sex nach dem Tode? Thesen zum Thema AIDS', *Der Spiegel*, 48 (1984), p. 228.

<sup>165</sup>Kennedy, *The Ideal Gay Man: The Story of Der Kreis* (Binghampton, NY, 1999).

<sup>166</sup>Cited from the film.

<sup>167</sup>The narrator cited specifically the black power and women's liberation movements.

<sup>168</sup>Cited from the footage.

<sup>169</sup>HAH, 'Gedanken zum Film'. SMB, IHWO box one.

were never far from the surface in gay liberation, as can be seen by the rejection of drag and effeminacy by some gay activists. Though his focus on the gay movement is slight, Gerd Koenen has thus correctly identified a ‘fluctuation between hedonism and puritanism, [between] affirmation and negation’ on the part of gay activists, a tendency he sees as defining also for the women’s movement and for the New Left as a whole.<sup>170</sup>

## V: Conclusion

During the 1970s, the lure of mainstream political norms may have been more distant than in the homophile era, but these pulls towards convention and recognition retained their power. Moreover, new pulls towards social conformity came to the fore, as gay activists attempted to shore up their position within the wider New Left. Members of the New Left sought not just to change society but to change themselves. If leftist activists sought to abolish the ‘bourgeois citizen’ within, many gay activists clearly wanted to be rid of their ‘homophile selves’. The politics of gay pride, of affirmation, did not erase the shame that endured in this period of transition, before and after homosexual law reform. This was especially the case with matters of sex and desire. Activists were confronted by a dissonance between the political ideal of mutual, egalitarian relationships and the erotic reality of continued intergenerational desire and the increased visibility of sado-masochistic preferences. This was not just something played out in the pages of the commercial gay press: contestations about which visions of homosexuality should be emboldened and which excluded do not allow us to draw neat lines of demarcation between homophile and gay, nor between the commercial and publicistic sphere and the realm of activism. Here, questions of ideology and strategy are less important than ambivalence about self and society. Activities with which gay activists did not identify—or were ashamed of—could be relegated to the lives of the vain and inglorious homosexuals of the scene, whereas any hint of the conventional, the ‘uptight’, the desire to be accepted, could be maligned as ‘homophile’. According to Eve Sedgwick, shame ‘floods into being’.<sup>171</sup> On the occasions they were flooded by shame, gay activists found in homophiles an easy target, an instrument to gain relief from their shame. Deborah Gould asks ‘How do you confront a society when you feel unrecognized and desire relief from that painful condition, when you want to be part of society but simultaneously reject it, in part because it has rejected you?’<sup>172</sup> For gay activists, homophiles could help mop up all the shame that stubbornly persisted, while they proudly got on with the task of gay liberation.

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<sup>170</sup>Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution, 1967–77* (Cologne, 2001), p. 236.

<sup>171</sup>Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, p. 36.

<sup>172</sup>Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS* (Chicago and London, 2009).

## Abstract

This article contributes to a reassessment of gay liberation by focusing on how matters of sex and desire featured in the gay press and the gay movement in 1970s West Germany. Gay liberation has often been viewed through an affirmative lens, contrasted favourably with the supposed shame-filled conformism of the postwar homophile movement. I problematize this perspective by analysing ambivalence about homosexual desire and gay (male) sexual practice, both in the pages of the commercial gay press and in gay activist publications. Using case studies of intergenerational desire—or ‘paedophilia’—and sado-masochism, I question the extent to which the 1970s saw a transition towards the ideal of mutual, reciprocal relationships. In so doing, I argue that historians of homosexual politics should not only analyse questions of ideology and strategy but also sex, desire and ambivalence about self and society. Concluding through a consideration of the interrelationship between ‘pride’ and ‘shame’, this article shows that gay liberation was anything but a mere hedonistic interlude.

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