



Kurt Starke

Gay East

Homosexual men in the GDR

With an introduction by Bert Thinius
and an interview with Eduard Stapel

The Leipzig-based sex researcher Kurt Starke presents the results of a unique empirical study here. He succeeded for the first time in conducting a study on the behavior of East German homosexual men in the former GDR, which provides a representative insight into this previously taboo area. The survey of 546 gay men, who willingly answered 227 questions, yielded surprising insights into their sexual behavior, their position in society and their partner relationships. The clearly structured factual material is preceded by an essay by the Berlin philosopher Bert Thinius, who describes the special position of gays in the history of the GDR and reports on their organizations and activities. This is supplemented by a detailed interview with Eduard Stapel from the Gay Association in Germany.

Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin

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Gay East: homosexual men in the GDR/ Kurt Starke. With an introduction by Bert Thinius and an interview with Eduard Stapel. - 1st ed. - Berlin : Links, 1994
ISBN 3-86153-075-9
NE: Starke, Kurt; Stapel, Eduard

Christoph Links Verlag - LinksDruck GmbH Zehdenicker
Str. 1, 10119 Berlin, Tel. (030) 281 61 71
Cover design: TriDesign, Berlin using a photo by GEZETT
(motif: Wall Gallery in East Berlin)
Typesetting: Olthoff, Berlin
Printing and binding: WB-Druck, Rieden am Forggensee

ISBN 3-86153-075-9

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of a society can be recognized by its attitude towards its minorities. The pseudo-democratic world finds it difficult to cope with otherness. In calm times, minorities are simply ignored. In turbulent times, all resentment is directed at the other and the other. Majority is then power, and power then degenerates into entitlement, arrogance and being right. Intolerance is seen as strength, diversity is misinterpreted as disorderliness, minority is turned into inferiority, the unusual is rejected as antisocial. Ultimately, this conceals a disregard for human individuality, a lack of acceptance of the individual in his or her unique, unmistakable personality. If this is true, then with regard to homosexuality, the starting point for everything else, for the evil and the usual, for the impossibility or the possibility of progress, is to be sought precisely in these basic relationships and not in homosexuality. To the extent that the sexual socialization and self-discovery of homosexuals is facilitated and to the extent that they are naturally treated as equals, homosexuality will disappear as a social problem, along with all the horrible problems that follow.

Information on the authors

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Departure from the gray hiding place.

Arrival in the colorful ghetto?

*Marginal notes on the experiences of gay men
from the GDR and East Germany*

From Bert Thinius

East, the other same?

Why the ghetto? Gays have long been of general interest. Some characteristics of their lifestyles and culture that used to be called "peculiarities" are now considered prototypical or exemplary for modern society. These include the assertion of the self-purpose of a sexuality uncoupled from procreation, the separation of sexual and affective bonds, the rationalization of sexual life (gay subculture enables maximum orgasm frequency with minimum time expenditure). They also transform a general aspect of modern urban culture into the sexual: the possibility of meeting people very intensively without having to get to know them personally. After all, they have a high degree of mobility, their partner relationships are comparatively loose, self-determined and multifaceted, and the partners are on a relatively equal footing. Unburdened by the constraints of exclusivity and duration, in their relationships their career or, to put it more positively, their individual development takes precedence over the demands of the partnership.¹ But they remain the gays. The others.

Was GDR society modern? At first glance, the situation of gays there seems to be aptly described by the image of a "gray hiding place". The country was gray anyway, and

Gays were still particularly hidden in it. Until 1989, forty years later, only three books dealing explicitly with homosexuality were published there. Until the end of the GDR, gays had no political organization, no newspaper, no developed infrastructure of gay culture.

For the superficially stereotypical view of the West, gay life between Zittau and Usedom is as it was in the West before 1969. It is nothing different, but the undeveloped same and longs for nothing other than to become the same. Thus the journey to the East appears above all as a journey through time. The only people who remained in the GDR, in which the "stink of the sedate Blockwart state prevailed", in general are those who, the "cowardly sense of order", privilege-loving philistines and fools who seriously "believed that the GDR was the better, the anti-fascist state in Germany, that Marxism-Leninism was the superior ideology".²

And the West? At first glance, the situation of gays in West Germany seems to fit the metaphor of a "colorful ghetto". Tons of colorful books by gays for gays, colorful magazines and newspapers, gay bookstores and gay publishing houses, gay sex stores and bars in every city, gay switch-boards and clubs, saunas and safer sex posters, gay dating agencies, gay telephone lines, gay insurance companies, gay travel companies and much more. It is possible to spend 24 hours a day for a lifetime in purely gay contexts. Once a year, on Christopher Street Day, gays march garishly on all the streets, "as fun guerrillas in the jungle of patriarchy".³

A more differentiated view, however, recognizes that an infrastructure of gay life has developed under relatively liberal conditions in which being gay is no longer reduced to sexuality alone.

West and East are to become a united country. The impression is fixed that West is the finished part and East has to adapt to it. The East is being evaluated. Cities, roads,

Stations are renamed, monuments demolished. The dominant form of its **utilization is decomposition**. And decay seems to require the thorough **decomposition** of everything that was the GDR.

This westernization would not function so smoothly if there were not moments of deep understanding in the East that made us feel: that's all right.

The value system that what is done in the West is better is made in the GDR. Since 1971 at the latest, an economic policy was pursued in society that promoted a structure of needs in the GDR similar to the FRG, without being able to satisfy them at "Western level". Individuals' lust for Western money had its basis and its model in the state's lust for foreign currency. For intellectuals, books, magazines and even newspapers were of extraordinary value not only because of their special content, but also because they tended to be irreplaceable. There is only a gradual difference between the Western books in special cupboard compartments and the galleries of Western beer cans on the cupboard walls of every petty bourgeois.

In 1990, when many still believed that the unification of the two German states would be a process in which they would negotiate conditions, goals and pace with each other over the long term, it made sense to ask what both sides had to contribute. It seemed relatively uncontroversial that the GDR regulations on abortion and homosexual relationships were better suited to the self-determination of individuals than the laws in force in the FRG and should therefore adopted as the more progressive ones for the whole of Germany. The extent to which this was then lamented and argued about and what came out of it is one of the embarrassing, perhaps also enlightening moments of what followed the so-called Wende.

That pasts are described by those whose pasts they are is not the norm in the world. Fossils are witnesses to past histories, but they do not write them.

The proximity to the object acts partially as a blindness, the attempt

attempts to gain distance are more or less unsuccessful. What would be needed as an analysis becomes a chronicle at best. The documentation of what is moderately understood and the collection or telling of related stories appear to be a way out. Individual attempts, like the following, will remain one-sided because they look at very complex things from a certain perspective, because they select, omit, shift weights. Good if they challenge others.

§ 175 (1)

From a shared past

"Unlawful fornication committed between persons the male sex or between humans and animals is punishable by imprisonment; loss of civil rights may also be imposed."
(§ 175 of the Imperial Penal Code of 1871)

For centuries, criminal prosecution of homosexual acts has been the most visible sign of discrimination. It also has a long and inglorious history in Germany. The paragraph quoted above was introduced in 1871 with the Imperial Criminal Code for the entire German Reich, citing the legal awareness of the people, which judged homosexual acts "not as a mere vice, but as a crime".

During the Weimar Republic, humanist scientists and artists, sexual reformers such as Helene Stöcker and Magnus Hirschfeld, homosexual emancipation movements as well as the KPD and SPD called for the abolition of this "shameful paragraph". In October 1929, the 21st Reichstag Committee decided by 15 votes to 13 to abolish the paragraph that criminalized "simple homosexuality" between adults. The resolution was not implemented.

The Nazis tightened the penal provisions extremely in 1935 and tried to solve "the problem" of homosexuality by eradicating homosexuals.

After 1945, the two German states had to decide

how to deal with this legacy. The FRG adopted the fascist paragraphs 175 and 175a into its own penal code because it was felt that they did not contradict the Basic Law.⁷

Things were little better in the GDR. some states had passed laws immediately after 1945 which essentially restored § 175 to its pre-1935 version⁸, the criminal senate of the Supreme Court called upon to decide in 1949 came to the conclusion that §§ 175 and 175a in the 1935 formulation were typically National Socialist, because they abandoned the penal-logical and scientifically logical line of the reform efforts and the earlier drafts and the "legal-historical development, which both in Germany and elsewhere in Europe amounted to the restriction of the penal provisions applicable to homosexuals, had been broken off and turned into its opposite".⁹ Although the threat of imprisonment as a normal punishment (§ 175a) was judged to be "typically National Socialist" and condemned, it was confirmed that the "special protection of youth" through higher penalties for "qualified cases" was a "sound legal policy idea".

Gays in both parts of Germany not only had reason to rejoice at the new beginning after 1945. What threatened everyone in the abstract actually happened to many: They had survived fascism, possibly survived the concentration camp and were once again treated as criminals, thrown into prisons.

But being completely outside of what was socially desirable also brought incredible freedom and defiant autonomy in a strange way. Nevertheless, experiences like the following must have been rather rare: „I moved into this apartment in the early . Before I moved in, the section representative went from household to household, where young men lived, and informed me: "First backyard, middle, two stairs, right, someone like that is moving in from the next first. Watch out. He couldn't have done a better job of advertising for me. It was just under two weeks before I heard the first shy knock on my door..."¹⁰

In the GDR, "simple homosexuality" (between adults) had hardly been punished since ¹⁹⁵⁷¹¹, but the corresponding paragraph was only removed from the penal code in 1968. What remained was § ¹⁵¹¹², which was intended to ensure the "special protection of young people". This remained in force until 1988, when the special treatment under criminal law was finally abolished. In the FRG, "simple homosexuality" has been exempt from punishment since 1969, while homosexual relationships between adults and young people were punishable until 1994. A special feature, however, was that § 151 of the GDR covered homosexual acts in general, while the corresponding FRG paragraph only criminalized those between male partners.

GDR in the fifties, sixties and seventies

"There is a particular danger of young people being seduced by so-called homosexuals. (...) In some cases, this abnormal drive may be innate or at least predisposed; far more important, however, is the example, i.e. the seduction. (..) The following case also shows what pernicious influences young people can come under: in a small town in the district of Leipzig, a circle of friends of four young people around 18 formed not long ago. Their main interest was sport, but later they began masturbate each other and enter into homosexual relationships. (...) They broke into a church together without any intention of stealing. There they behaved in an indescribable manner. The oldest of the group was undoubtedly the seducer. Abnormal homosexual behavior and criminal offenses are not infrequently ."¹³

What was written about homosexuality in "sex education" books in the 1950s and 1960s is to have influenced the attitudes of today's grandparents and parents more than their experiences in dealing with homosexuals could have done. On the one hand, because in the GDR the "officially" written word always tended to take on a normative character, and on the other, because gays and lesbians in the public

almost never appeared in everyday life. But when they did appear, the perception was probably shaped more by judgement than by the actual situation.

The unbelievable antiquatedness of the publicly dominant views on homosexuality cannot be excused by the "state of knowledge" at the time. It was not knowledge, but fears, monstrous fantasies and an authoritarian, misunderstood "educational mission" that formed the framework. The demonization of homosexuality was obviously intended above all discipline the majority of the "healthy" population: „Before our eyes stands one goal: the socialist family, socialist marriage. According to Engels, Lenin and the experience of the Soviet Union, marriages will in most cases be lifelong marriages."¹⁴

Neither Engels nor Lenin nor Soviet experience would have confirmed this assertion, but due to the weight of the words Engels, Lenin and Soviet experience, the author apparently believed that he no longer needed arguments and a reference reality.

Another phenomenon is that the less was known about homosexuality, the more clearly it was explained: "Genuine homosexuality is based on a malformation of the gonads, and consequently does not belong under the care of judges, but under that of doctors."¹⁵ And: "The number of these genuine homosexuals is small; greater is the number of those who, through unfavorable environmental influences, seduction, especially during the growth period, feel more strongly attracted to their own sex. They are helped by curative education and psychotherapy."¹⁶ Those who are so sure of themselves not only express opinions, but also recommend generally valid behavioral norms: "We do not want to despise genuine homosexuals, but pity them; we want to lead seduced, inauthentic homosexuals back to the right and proper path with the means of our care and education; the routine, unscrupulous seducer, however, deserves not pity or concern, but exclusion from society, whose high concern is to protect the youth of our people."¹⁷

The division of labor roles seemed to be reversed. Sexology experts, who, among other things, also had to produce knowledge on the basis of which reasonable laws could be made and humane judgments found, were so impressed by the existence of outdated paragraphs as if they were attir laws which it was their highest duty to comply with. The authors of the Dictionary of Sexology argue along the same lines, albeit more cautiously: "Homosexual activity is punished in the GDR when there is a considerable danger to society. This is always the case under § 174 a StGB..."¹⁸ These authors must be given credit for the fact that they no longer find "simple homosexuality" between adults "dangerous to society", although it was still formally punishable in 1964.

It would not be worth dealing with those outdated views if they had not had far-reaching consequences for the lives of many individuals who ended up in the hands of doctors, psychotherapists or judges because of their attempts to live homosexually.

A "case study", the first love of a man in the early sixties in a small town in Thuringia: "When I met him, he was a fun-loving, open-minded guy. My idol for many years. But our honey moon didn't last very long. The law was still in force and the police busted a 'homosexual ring' in the area. They came across my boyfriend in the process. He was summoned to the police station and interrogated, the summons came via the management. A scandal. His girlfriend, who had actually brought us together in the first place, now intervened: 'Stop it now, you'll both go to prison if you carry on like this. She managed to get him to go to a neurologist to get injections for homosexuality. I was totally insecure. There was no one I talk to about it, no one I could trust. My boyfriend withdrew from me. The injection treatment was abandoned and replaced by psychotherapy. The doctor insisted: 'This only works if they don't practice at the same time.' He talked him into feelings of inferiority and the need to change.

He moved in with an older woman and later went to a sanatorium to care for the sick. He attempted suicide twice..."¹⁹ Almost every gay man who grew up in the 50s and knows these and similar stories from his circle of acquaintances.

The prevailing opinion was so uncontroversial that voices of reason capitulated without expressing themselves publicly. In 1956 Ludwig Renn had written to Rudolf Klimmer⁽²⁰⁾: "The fundamental error of our republic ... is the regimentation of individual things. (...) There is a very harmful conception of the relationship between society and the individual that treats people in a pre-individualistic way instead of recognizing the differentiation desires and lifestyles as a fact that, like modern taste, can no longer be reversed. Many would like to take action against this false, inhibiting attitude towards people, and we have seen some of this happen quite explosively in Poland and Hungary. Of course, as an individual and in certain areas, it is sometimes possible to achieve something, but I believe that it particularly difficult in the field of sexology with its old taboos. As far as freedom of writing is concerned, things are changing right now. The inhuman, the incitement to war, to hatred of nations and races, and also the immoral are rightly forbidden. This is the point. I don't know what is considered immoral. The other day a member of the Polbüro was shown around an art exhibition and he was visibly embarrassed at the sight of an ordinary female nude, but without passing any judgment. So even there the Middle Ages have yet to be overcome. I believe that little can be achieved in your field at the moment."²¹

This was all before the liberalization of criminal law in 1968, but even after that the patterns did not change fundamentally.

Kurt Bach, who was to become one of the most radical campaigners for full equality in the , wrote in 1974: "What is normal? Where are the limits? Some incorrect postures can be overcome by medical-psychological measures. The most common maladjustment 1st is homosexuality. (...) The earlier such a person reveals his or her

The more the wrong attitude is noticed, the more successful medical treatment can be (...) Public opinion is usually against homosexuals. One should distance oneself from this. Homosexual behavior is not 'criminal', 'pernicious', 'sinful' ...

One should not befriend homosexuals or seek out their company, but neither should one denigrate them. We want to respect all human personalities and judge them by their achievements, by their character. "²²

The GDR had been protected and confined by its wall since 1961. More than in more cosmopolitan societies, its development must therefore be explained by itself. However, a major impetus for change in the situation of homosexuals initially came from outside. Uschi Sillge, one of the first activists of the GDR lesbian and gay movement, describes it like this: "Rosa von Praunheim's film 'It is not the homosexual who is perverted, but the situation in which he lives' was shown on West German television in January 1973. East Berlin lesbians and gays also saw it and felt ... encouraged to get involved, to organize. A group of lesbians and gays made themselves known in 1973 with a banner reading 'We homosexuals of the capital welcome the participants of the X. World Festival and are for socialism in the GDR' on their way to the closing event. Their intention was thwarted by the security forces. A year later, the Homosexual Interest Group Berlin (HIB) was founded. The group wanted to work along the lines of the citizens' initiatives operating in West Germany. However, this was impossible in the GDR at the time. Nevertheless, the participants became active in many areas. The interest group submitted petitions to the police, the People's Chamber and other institutions. In 1976, it prompted the URANIA to organize a forum on the subject of homosexuality. (...) The friends met more or less regularly for discussions and socializing in the basement of the Gründerzeit Museum Lothar Berfelde's in Berlin-Mahlsdorf. (...) The interest group saw itself as a family of choice for lesbians and gays. "²³

Lothar Berfelde alias Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, the host of the event

rin, remembers it like this: "I think it was 1974 when a scientific lecture on homosexuality was given for the first time in the East Berlin City Library. Thoughtfully, I descended the stairs afterwards. As I stepped out of the door, a babble of voices reached my ears. In the street, men and women were pantomiming the words: How do we actually live? No assembly allowed, no advertising opportunities. At first I stood on the sidelines and followed the discussion. Then I approached them and offered: 'Yes, children, if you're looking for a place to get together, you can come to me in Mahlsdorf. You don't have to pay rent, just a bit for light and heating. That's how the discussions and get-togethers began in the museum, behind which the State Security sensed the worst conspiratorial excesses. "²⁴

The group now had a domicile and kept developing new initiatives until finally, in 1978, a lesbian meeting planned throughout the GDR was taken as an opportunity to ban further gatherings in the Mahlsdorf house: "A few days later I received a letter from the city council for culture:

'Mr. Lothar Berfelde is hereby prohibited from holding any kind of meetings and events in the Gründerzeit Museum. "²⁵

The group disintegrated, but many of the members did not give up so easily. Some tried to contribute to changes in consciousness in their country by writing, others decided to take practical steps and persisted in demanding justifications from the "competent authorities" who had to decide whether to allow or deny events, meetings and organizations. The history of this laborious struggle is yet to be written. A start has been with the book "Un-Sichtbare Frauen" by Uschi Sillge²⁶.

Danger from risk group

"From the population, but also through their own observations, the security authorities ... that a number of public toilets, especially in the city center, were primarily used by homosexuals to look for partners, but also to carry out homosexual manipulations, and that there was a tendency for homosexuals to use the toilets.

had already led to physical confrontations between heterosexual males and homosexuals." (Gerhard Fehr)27

Homosexual initiatives in the Protestant church became operational more quickly than in the "state" areas. Initially in Leipzig, then in 1983 in Berlin and other cities, self-help groups were formed. The state authorities, increasingly confronted with demands from lesbians and gays to join together and hold public meetings, found themselves in a decision-making crisis. For a long time, lesbian and gay activities, which were perceived as a disturbance of the socialist order, were met with repression. Their applications were simply rejected. In a structure in which the entire society was to be consciously and systematically shaped only by the party in a leading role, any unplanned initiative from below was initially perceived as opposition and disruption. The "organs" of state power were also aware of homosexuals primarily as a security risk and a source of infection for venereal diseases. State security also began to take an interest in them because they had "Western contacts

and because homosexuals made up a high proportion of those wishing to leave the country".²⁸ The East Berlin researcher Günter Grau found a action plan in the Gauck authority under other .

Under the title: "Fundamental political-operational tasks to prevent the political abuse of homosexually inclined persons ..." was demanded:

Developing concrete information on homosexually inclined persons using contacts to the criminal investigation department, but also to doctors, psychologists, marriage and sex counselors,

- Recruitment of gays and lesbians as unofficial employees,
- Use of existing IM (especially D. in the church sector) to strengthen resistance within the church against homosexual groups,
- operational 'processing' of the organizers and inspirers. "29

In 1983, a dissertation was written at the Department of Criminalistics at Humboldt University on behalf of the Berlin Magistrate's Department of the Interior as a "confidential official matter" in order to

::Groups of persons ... who are suspected of being criminals and whose attitudes are conducive to antisocial behavior.

can occur, ... for reasons of security policy".³⁰ The author regretted "that so far no special experience has been

of this group of persons with the People's Police or the public prosecutor's office".³¹ He considered it "absolutely necessary

It is essential" to "investigate this risk group on all sides and to take up targeted criminal investigation" in order to minimize the

"to further increase order and security in the capital",³² because: "There is no doubt that ... the large group of

homosexuals in the capital, who strive for the freedoms of like-minded people in the Western world, are involved in

phenomena of criminality. The effort they make in their daily lives, the desire to constantly have new partners and the need

to always have large sums of money at their disposal give rise to the suspicion that they are seeking additional sources of

income by committing crimes and other means.

³³ For pages, with reference to dubious research, all the usual prejudices and phobic

Fantasies strung together. If no more evidence can be found despite the greatest contortions, the author knows this too:

"Homosexuals always combine, depending on the situation, the wider, but also in individual cases the closer working area

to find a partner." But, he marvels: "More and more homosexuals not experiencing any difficulties when their

disposition becomes known to their colleagues. They are often popular because of their helpfulness and are particularly good at

with female colleagues." The brave criminalist simply can't stand it, voila: „A fact diametrically opposed to the socialist way of life

is that homosexuals favor and take advantage of each other in the workplace. Even if this circumstance is not always

recognizable and does not occur on a daily basis, it nevertheless exists in general. It has been observed several

times that in administrations, among artists, but especially in the

In the restaurant business, one homosexual follows another." And, how offending for the fact hunter, who is certainly not spoiled by GDR gastronomy: "It is not uncommon for a person of interest to the homosexual to be courted by several homosexual waiters at the same time. It can happen that other guests are neglected and that the 'interesting guest' is served several free drinks and a meeting is arranged in the restaurant. "³⁴ This "confidential official matter" could have a successful textbook for cabaret events in 1983. If it wasn't laughed at, it was partly because no one except a few initiates got to read it, and partly because these abstruse thoughts a widespread functionary attitude that blocked the efforts of lesbians and gays to work their way into society "from below". Even today, the conclusions the author drew from his "findings" are no laughing matter:

"The group of homosexuals

- are people with strongly converging sexual interests and organizational aspirations,
- are the main source of infection for syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases due to their many sexual contacts,
- are people who often behave conspiratorially towards their environment from a young age and act ruthlessly and always to their advantage in their efforts to attract homosexual partners,
- are criminally endangered persons who acquire additional funds through theft, fraud and speculative crimes in trade and especially in the catering trade and maintain contacts with people with criminal records and antisocial elements,
- seeks homosexual contacts with foreigners, especially from capitalist countries, the FRG and West Berlin, and also tries to extend these contacts for personal gain and possible emigration,
- is active in all areas of our society and, thanks to her sociability and her endeavor to be involved in every

opportunity to get to know new partners for sexual manipulation, people of particular interest to the class enemy and his agent headquarters. "³⁵ (Grammar and spelling of the original text of the dissertation have been retained - B.T.)

The criminally logical conclusion: "In principle, a successful fight against these high-risk groups can only be waged if all organs and departments responsible for order and security in the capital Berlin work together. risk groups. It is necessary to observe and register the development and further behavior of homosexual persons in the capital and to keep their activities under control through constant overviews and assessments. It is also important for order and security to know the meeting places, venues and events of this group of people and to initiate measures to gather information. (...) Existing contacts with foreigners, especially those from capitalist states, must be registered and monitored in order to counter illegal applicants and possible hostile activities by homosexuals. "³⁶

The extent to which the scenario of the cooperation of "all organs responsible for order and security" was played out will be clarified to some extent from the documents of these organs and the personal files of those under surveillance, which have since become accessible. Many of those involved did not experience it directly. In any case, it seems that even those who commissioned the work no longer considered the demands made in it to be in keeping with the times and, above all, not "socialist". At the beginning of the 1980s, a development had begun with regard to the treatment of homosexuality and homosexuals in the GDR that ran counter to the direction desired in that dissertation. The Department of the Interior of the Berlin Magistrate apparently felt compelled to change its strategy. The following year, it commissioned a study from Humboldt University in which scientific findings on how to deal with homosexuals "in accordance with socialism" were to be compiled.

Princely enlightenment - or integration from above

In the fall of 1984, when there was an international about essentialist and constructionist approaches to concepts of homosexuality, a group of academics at Berlin's Humboldt University pondered whether they should call themselves the "Interdisciplinary Working Group on Homophilia". The term homosexuality did not seem "socially acceptable", let alone the words lesbian and gay. The majority of the members "homosexuality" as a term, but the study they then wrote was given the proper title: "On the situation of homophile citizens in the GDR (analysis of the phenomenon and proposed solutions)".

The group, which was initially led by a forensic ^{psychologist}³⁷, included doctors, sociologists, a cultural scientist, a pedagogue, another psychologist, a theologian and two representatives of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Differences that had clearly emerged in initial discussions were pushed into the background in favor of the rapid development of a practicable position paper. The result was a patchwork of compromises and concessions to the "security needs" of state authorities.

The content and wording of the text was tailored to the addressees, i.e. the upper management levels of the SED and the state. This was not just a tactic, but an expression of the view that the unfortunate situation of homosexuals in the GDR (the areas of discrimination were clearly named in the analysis section) had specific social causes and could ultimately only be positively changed by consciously shaping the conditions of society as a whole. The SED was regarded as the central subject of this shaping and the state as its instrument. This explains why part of the argumentation amounted to explaining to the SED why the freer development of homosexuals was also in their own interests. It was reminded of its traditions³⁸ and allies as well as its goal⁽³⁹⁾. Above all, however, an appeal was made to their well-understood economic interests: "The shaping of the de

The development of socialism, the consolidation of the socialist peace order and the mastery of comprehensively and intensively expanded reproduction require the utilization of the potential of all citizens, their full commitment and their carefree identification with socialist society. It is therefore of the utmost importance for our society to deal with the particularities and living conditions of specific groups in such a way that no obstacles to the social integration and life activity of these citizens arise. This also applies to the group of homophile citizens (= homosexuals). Like all citizens, they should feel objectively and subjectively comfortable under socialism. "⁴⁰

The scientific value of the study was already low at the time. It was more important that the authors came from recognized scientific disciplines, because this ensured that

The most important thing about that study, however, was the catalog of practical political demands for improving the situation of homosexuals in the GDR. At the same time, it was disastrous as an "integration program from above" that hardly provided for equal dialogues with lesbians and gays who were moving on their own.⁴¹

Drawing on the tradition of intervening thought and with the best of intentions, the activists in the group not only wanted to spread their insights theoretically, but also to contribute to their practical implementation. Training courses were held for employees of marriage and sexual counseling centers, for judicial officials and employees of cultural institutions in order to impart "scientific knowledge and humanistic attitudes" on the subject of homosexuality so that they would be able to contribute to the productive "socialist" integration of "homosexual citizens" in their areas of responsibility. Further courses were planned for the Berlin police and for employees of the housing authorities. One did not materialize because the Berlin police chief decided that in the anniversary year (750 years of Berlin), his colleagues did not have time for such additional workloads, the other because the workload was too high.

group itself had fallen into a crisis. The main content of the internal disputes related to the issue of recognizing homosexuals as subjects of their emancipation and integration, the direct inclusion of lesbians and gays in the group's work and cooperation with the self-help groups that had emerged more or less spontaneously. One result was the replacement of the leader and the reconstitution of the group. Although several lesbians and gays who were not employed at Humboldt University were now included in the group, its self-image did not change fundamentally. It still claimed to design and help realize THE theoretical concept for the "emancipation and integration of homosexuals under socialism". The plan was to produce "recommendation material" in the form of the "handbooks for the socialist leader" that were common in the GDR, a kind of loose-leaf collection in which the most important findings and "guidelines" were to be compiled in a clear and easily understandable way. A contribution to the topic of princely enlightenment appropriate to the GDR structures. The preparations for this did not progress beyond the draft stage.

The group's work took place in a contradictory situation that sometimes paralyzed the individuals. Their actual task would have been to produce scientific findings. However, the gap between the enlightened attitude that homosexuals were "completely normal people" and had the same rights as everyone else, and the social reality in which they lived, was so great that they developed little need for further theoretical debate, especially given the relative seclusion of international discourse. Instead, it seemed necessary to intervene and reform the long-disgraced practice according to better insights. This was also predominantly the expectation that the members faced from those "affected". In some respects, they resembled a volunteer fire department: here talks with a housing association manager who wanted to prevent a gay couple from moving in together, there a letter to an SED district secretary who wanted his gay co-worker to move in together.

The first time I was fired, I had phone calls with an editor-in-chief who still found it against socialist morality to publish dating ads for lesbians and gays,⁴² lectures, discussions, etc.

Perhaps at some point it will be of interest to reconstruct those stories in detail. This sketchy narrative is intended to show how different the perspective, the self-image, attitude towards society, the state, etc. was at that time. Despite all the distance, there was a fundamental identification that made words like "our society", "our history", even

"our state" made this possible without further ado. A brief look at the last research concept developed in the GDR in 1988/43 may illustrate this.

The first sentences: "Interdisciplinary research into homosexuality aims to make necessary theoretical, practically effective and directly practical contributions to the further development of our society. Revolutionary economic, political and intellectual-cultural changes are the essential content of the shaping of a developed socialist society as a social organism. Its goal is the free development of everyone oriented towards the free development of all;⁴⁴ the central means is comprehensive intensification. (...) This places new demands on the creative abilities of social subjects and the subjectivity of individuals."⁴⁵

This was not just slave language to gain official legitimacy from those in power, but for the most part identification with the content. The aim was to align one's own plans with changes that were considered necessary throughout the country. The vanishing point was not the bourgeois society of the West, but the better, i.e. more communist socialism, which promoted and needed the "free development of everyone". Despite all the verbal contortions that came about through the abundant use of phrases such as those used in SED party conference and plenary speeches, what looked most like tactics was meant seriously: on the one hand, people were convinced that socialism would hinder its own development if it discriminated against "its" lesbians and gays, and on the other hand that lesbians and gays would not be able to develop freely.

and gays could only really develop freely they oriented their own development towards the needs of society as a whole. It was only within this framework that artistic positions were formulated.

Here is an example of such a construction: "For a long time Aspects of social structure as well as gender equality and social equality were the subject of scientific analysis and practical politics in the GDR. In contrast, the extent to which there are specific problems in the development of individuality and personality among homosexuals has hardly been researched **scientifically** and dealt with practically. The lack of social awareness of this leads to uncertainties in dealing with them, allowing historically outdated negative prejudices to persist, which, insofar as they determine attitudes and practical behavior at all levels of society, result in various forms of discrimination and self-discrimination, which are hardly ever dealt with productively by the majority of individual homosexuals, but which necessarily lead to conflicts and conflict resolution variants that are associated with reductions and deformations of their personality development, and thus also with losses of social development potential, because: 'Socialist society itself becomes all the richer, the richer the individuality of its members unfolds'⁴⁶, is a sentence that also applies in its inversion." And:

"Society's relationship to homosexuality is essentially an expression of the economic and political interests of the classes and the state, is an aspect of their relationship to sexuality in general ... Society's relationship to homosexuals is the result of its relationship to homosexuality and a particular aspect of its position on deviations from the norm and on sexuality as such. This problem area is not primarily to be dealt with sexologically, but politically, sociologically and psychologically."⁴⁷

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that some of the questions also went beyond the must-pot of immediate practical applicability by questioning the apparent self-evidence of the gender order. Thus we find in the research concept

as a matter to be clarified: "Why do people in certain phases of their lives consider themselves exclusively homosexual or heterosexual, although homosexuality and heterosexuality only denote the extreme points between which the concrete sexual orientation of each individual lies?" And finally: "The absolutization of heterosexuality in the majority results in the absolutization of homosexuality in a minority. Concepts aimed solely at integrating a particular minority into society are therefore not viable in the long term. From a social perspective, it is primarily about the integration of homosexuality into human sexuality in general. The social integration of homosexuals is a partial aspect of this. The complete integration of homosexuality into human sexuality, the abolition of the polarization of forms of sexuality, is the abolition of homosexuals as a special, 'different' group of people. The social recognition of homosexuals as subjects and as equals is the *egin_n* of this process."⁴⁸

Cooperation with lesbian and gay emancipation groups working within the Protestant church remained a relatively taboo area. There is a note in the minutes of a meeting in June 1988: "Dr. A. referred to the need for communication and cooperation with homosexual groups that have settled under the umbrella of the Protestant Church. Without their mediation, many of those affected would be unable to be reached through social AIDS prevention. If we don't take the initiative and try to gain influence, it will happen on its own, which can cause damage under certain circumstances. I am thinking, for example, of questions such as: What behaviors are propagated in connection with AIDS? What arguments are used? How are the so-called 'flaps' evaluated? etc. These are questions that need to be answered in a uniformly coordinated manner in order to achieve effective health care."⁴⁹ No wonder that "cooperation and communication" did not work with this leadership claim, even it was only meant tactically in order to obtain "permission" to cooperate.

Integration from below (1) Gays in the church

The initiative to organize gays within the Protestant church came from Leipzig, where the

The "Homosexuality Working Group" was founded in the Protestant student community. This was followed in 1983 by the "Gays in the Church" group in Berlin. The opening of the institution of the church to openly gay people provoked controversial disputes. Its structure is comparable to the tensions in the state, political and cultural areas of the entire GDR society, some of which followed simultaneously, others shortly afterwards. The pressure from below was initially met with the articulation of an information deficit. In order to "reduce it", the church leadership of the regional church of Saxony asked the Theological Studies Department at the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR for an orientation guide. In May 1984, the study written by Manfred Punge is published: "Homosexuals in the Church?"⁵⁰

Punge's work, which was "only intended for use within the church", represented the most radical break with the "generally accepted" assessment of homosexuality in the GDR. In his foreword he writes: "The study ... takes sides with the homosexual minority and that the disastrous history of condemnation and persecution of homosexuals should not be continued. (...) Behind this is a factual decision resulting from the theoretical study of the subject. The final decision, however, was made by people with their very personal fates, homosexual women and men, whom I got to know through my work in the 'Homosexuality Discussion Group' in Berlin."⁵¹ The presentation of his thoroughly researched views is consistently aimed at the unrestricted equal treatment of homosexuals as members of the congregation, as employees of the church and as to be ordained.⁵²

Punge's report on a conference held by the Protestant Academy Berlin-Brandenburg in 1982 on the subject of "A plea against deep-seated prejudices - homosexuals and heterosexuals in society" had already triggered a "flood of contradictions" within the Protestant church.⁵³

The attitude that still seemed to dominate is made clear in an article that appeared in the central church newspaper in March 1985. It reads: "Homosexuals are here, they are our fellow human beings and fellow Christians. According to credible information from medical science, they cannot be held responsible for their difference, it does not depend on their will, they are therefore subjectively blameless. Objectively, they are in a culpable entanglement and must therefore endure a tragic situation, as has been imposed on individuals time and again for thousands of years. (...)

The homosexual suffers from an inability that prevents him from being what man should normally be and according to his destiny. It must be made possible for him to bear his suffering in the church and to experience the help of the church. (...)

Homosexuals belong to the oppressed, the suffering, those in need of help. However, the church cannot provide this help by serving as an organizational basis for a militant-missionary minority ideology, as has often been shown in previous events and group formations. The church must be careful not to become the starting point for homosexual organization, agitation and even a

to become a 'movement'.⁵⁴

For the activists of the early gay movement, such resistance was above all a challenge to intensify and expand their work. Initially, they differed from similar attempts outside the church primarily in that they took the situation of the individual - the "suffering of the afflicted creature" - as their starting point and demanded the full civil rights of the individual much more vehemently. They did not make pleas, but asserted their positions with confidence: "We must see our political commitment in the absolute context of our situation as gays. We must make ourselves known and make our demands, be it in the mass organizations of the state, in the church or in the peace movement. We have to learn to act as representatives of the gay minority and to commit ourselves as gays wherever we get involved. The gays

The society in which we live will have to learn to reckon with us. SCHWULE IN DER KIRCHE and the working group in the ESG in Leipzig are just the beginning. There are still few of us who are prepared to take action against our oppression, to become open and to develop trust. Resignation and fear of consequences are still real phenomena among many gays. But there are still no prerequisites for the elimination of fear and mistrust, prerequisites for the elimination of the daily crime against a minority. Since no social interest group has so far been interested in creating these conditions, we will have to create them ourselves. We would have reason enough, and this too must not be concealed, to become militant and reject dialog with the majority. If we are now working to enter into dialog with the Protestant church, this is not something we can take for granted. Not all of us understand why the church is only now beginning to consider its co-responsibility for one of the worst prejudices within Western culture as questionable, not all of us are prepared to leave our personal bitterness behind ... This paper is intended to help start a dialogue that must be consistent and whose concern is to criticize a morality that excludes certain groups of people, their feelings and difficulties. Gays in the Church believe that it is not too late for this and that not only we, but also the heterosexual majority, have the chance for more freedom through our fight for equal rights. There must be no more taboos that prohibit people from freeing themselves from old and rigid constraints that prevent them from developing into responsible and self-confident members of society. "55

At that time, the Protestant church saw itself as a "church in socialism". The gays also based their reform ideas on this. An INFO-BRIEF states: "Since its foundation in the summer of '83, our working group ... also has a political profile: the struggle for emancipation has led to open-minded interest from state authorities and already to successes. We do not want to live against, but WITHIN the state, we see ourselves

itself as part of the realization of socialism. In this sense, we want to make our dissatisfaction productive. "56

They defined themselves as part of socialism, but at the same time distanced themselves from certain norms that the GDR state tried to enforce as binding for the defense and protection of socialism. In cooperation with peace initiatives within the Protestant church, the gays also defined their commitment as peace work: "We are of the opinion that emancipation of the gay minority and peace work belong together in a natural way. We start from the ... attitude that peace work ... must be a process of understanding within the social orders of the world, which questions and overcomes social, ideological and moral barriers. We believe that understanding must be the beginning ... to break down prejudices and fears of contact. (...) But we also mean such essential questions as

- Masculine behavior and soldierly structure
- Homophobia as a social phenomenon and a preventive measure against a free culture of encounter between the sexes
- role behavior and to inform about the terror taking place against minorities. (...)

It cannot be in keeping with our ideas of partnership to engage combat and competition with members of the same sex (especially men), which is the lifeblood of any form of preparation for war. (...) Peace is respect for the rights of others. "57

A dispute about whether the working groups were church groups or only came together "under the umbrella of the church" could at least be settled by the articulated self-image: „Gays in the Church see themselves as a Christian working group, i.e. the gays who initiated it and carry out the work are in the majority Christians who see their work as a task from the Gospel. However, we are open to everyone, regardless of their world view. "58

Another significant aspect of the work of the gays in the church was that they publicized the discrimination they experienced in everyday life. For example, in the INFO-BLATT already quoted, under the heading "Crime Scene", one can read: "Berlin, Marx-Engels-Forum. Time: March 20, 1986, around 7.00 pm. On my way home I meet some younger people. One of them recognizes my gay sign (our double male sign) on the cuff of my coat and calls out to his companions: 'There, a homo! Now various word games begin, culminating in the sentence: 'That belongs in the dustbin!' A story that almost every gay man knows in one way or another. What shocked me the most was that they were in the re cht: 'He should be taken to the police station' was one comment. What worried me even more was the reaction. tion of passers-by. It ranged from shamefacedly looking the other way to blatantly gleeful approval. I ask: Where does this latent willingness to engage in anti-homosexual pogroms among some citizens come from? I ask further: How would a VPS officer have reacted if I confronted them with this situation and reported them to the police for insulting them? "⁵⁹

From the very beginning, "Gays in the Church" have endeavored to take a view critical of patriarchy, have sought cooperation with the women's movement and have explicitly opposed the particular discrimination against queers, especially by gays themselves. Faggots, so-called "effeminate homosexuals", seem to be the particular horror of norm-worshipping and role-defending straight men, as well as a provocative projection surface for self-hating gays striving for clichéd masculinity.⁶⁰

However, the fact that gays in the church addressed patriarchy obviously did not mean that they were free from patriarchal patterns of thought and behavior. One lesbian describes her perception: "In the working groups we largely experience a true reflection of social mechanisms. Male dominance is not questioned at all, or where it is, women encounter the same defensive reactions as everywhere else. This is not surprising as long as men everywhere benefit (whether consciously or unconsciously!) from the customs and laws that harm women. "⁶¹ The experience that "the silence

sterns in the women's movement have far less fear of contact with us lesbians than men in the homosexual movement have with us women"⁶², obviously had the effect that the attempts to create a "mixed" but unified homosexual movement were abandoned, lesbians organized themselves in the Independent Women's Association after the fall of communism and gays joined together in the Gay Men's Association.

Integration from below (II) Homosexual citizens

A special feature of the Berlin gay initiatives outside the church in the 1980s was that they were led by a lesbian. In her book "Un-Sichtbare Frauen "⁶³, Uschi Sillge describes in detail the sometimes Schwejkian petty war that lesbians and gays who did not want to organize within the framework of the church waged with the authorities. Their situation was paradoxical. They were convinced that the realization of their interests would serve the "consolidation of the socialist order" in the country, and yet they had to assert them against the representatives of this order. The first group, which served as a model for those that followed, was the Berlin Sunday Club. In its statutes it states under aims and tasks: "The work of the club is directed towards the development of a culturally rich socialist community life and contributes to the development of the socialist way of life. As a meeting place especially for homosexual citizens, it responds to the needs of these men and women for social contact, sociability, information and communication on the subject of homosexuality and thus contributes to the identification of those affected, to finding a partner and to stabilizing partnerships. Homosexual and heterosexual citizens should learn tolerance and acceptance through conscious encounters with each other in order to be able to deal with homosexuality properly. The social integration of homosexual citizens into our society is to be promoted through targeted, high-level club work in accordance with existing interests. The club's events are open to all visitors. "⁶⁴

When evaluating these "goals and tasks", it must be taken into account that they were written for representatives of the real socialist power⁶⁵, who had to approve the association as a club in order to be allowed to meet in public spaces.

What became possible in Berlin after years of wrangling was no easier elsewhere. Wherever lesbians and gays knocked, they were turned away. In most cases, only the "directive from above" helped. Following this strangely understood democratic centralism, the "Interdisciplinary Working Group on Homosexuality" at Humboldt University, among others, intervened by writing directly to the "princes", who then "set the course". Here is an excerpt from a letter to the First Secretary of the Central Council of the FDJ: "Comrades and youth friends from Leipzig, who are trying to found a club for homosexual citizens run by volunteers, asked us ... to comment on their project, the realization of which has met with resistance, and have written you and to responsible officials in their area. We consider the initiative to found such a club in Leipzig to be timely in principle and in line with the requirements of the further development of our socialist society. Of course, we are aware that this should not promote the striving for a GDR-wide organization of homosexuals. For this very reason, when we communicated with the magistrate of the capital about our attitude towards the 'Sunday Club', we spoke out in favor of fully integrating this club (run by homosexuals) into an existing cultural center and thus into existing state and social structures. This is intended to prevent the club from becoming politically independent, while at the same time ensuring its relative independence in terms of the special interests of homosexual citizens. This is the direction in which things are now developing (...)

There is now sufficient evidence that homosexuals achieve better and more stable social integration when they also have direct opportunities to communicate with each other. The step of self-identification, which is still difficult for each individual today

The acceptance and social socialization of sexual orientation can hardly be mastered by someone who is only dependent on reading educational literature. In view of the small number of homosexuals in relation to the total population and their purely external unrecognizability, finding life partners is also a particularly complicated problem for them. Traditional anonymous meeting places, which only exist for men anyway, can in no way be regarded as a solution in keeping with socialism ... (30.6.1988)"

The Central Council issued instructions and the people of Leipzig were given their Sunday club, which was later renamed RosaLinde. It was also ordered that all youth clubs in the GDR had to a monthly event on the subject of homosexuality. An absurd situation: while for years lesbians and gays had tried in vain to officially in such facilities, there were now formal "event offers" in many places, but no one to realize them. Nevertheless, this situation was interpreted as a success of the unrelenting pressure from below and was preferred to the opposite.

The Berlin Sunday Club was very popular for a long time. Special interest groups formed relatively quickly. As time went on, differences in interests became clearer and more articulated. Some activists split off and founded the "Courage" group, which first became known to the public through its special commitment at the last Whitsun meeting of the FDJ⁽⁶⁶⁾.

After "independent" clubs and working groups of this kind were founded in several cities, they began to network. One form of networking was the supra-regional

Interest Group Theory" (IGT). In its principles it formulated, among other things: "The ideological basis the work of the IGT is the theory of Marxism-Leninism. The political basis for the work of the IGT is identification with the fundamental goals of the development of socialist society in the GDR. "⁶⁷ Issues discussed in this group included questions about the understanding of integration, the specific conditions for the development of the individuality of homosexuals under socialism and their "emancipation as subjects",

for necessary forms of communication. The "necessity of a comprehensive critique of the ideal of marriage and family conveyed without alternative in the GDR" was also emphasized.⁶⁸

This group also initiated networking with the church working groups. In theses for the discussion, the results of which, however, were no longer put into practice, it was stated: "The principle of competition also contradicts the foundations of socialist society in areas of the superstructure. Therefore, the cooperation between church and non-church working groups should focus on concern for people. As stand, the principles of relations can only be: as much cooperation as possible, as little duplication of work as possible, openness and mutual respect as the basis of all activities."⁶⁹

A thorough reconstruction of the various approaches called "integration from below" here will probably confirm the impression that the similarities were greater than the differences.

It is striking that it took committed heterosexuals both inside and outside the church to achieve decisive progress.

The assessments of the situation gays are almost identical. Their assessments are similar, which could have something to do with the fact that the same literature sources (Dannekker/Reiche, Hoquenghem, Siems, Lautmann) were used. It is noticeable in the arguments that (except in the founding paper of the working group "Gays in the Church") more understanding is expressed for the prejudices and fears of heterosexuals than for the anger, impatience and frustration of homosexuals. An integration tactic?

Last but not least, it is remarkable that gays and lesbians initially tried to find common approaches in almost all areas. However, to the extent that patriarchal structures became the subject of analysis and criticism, the separation also progressed.

Today, only in the Sunday Club do lesbians and gays work completely together. They try out "multisexual ways of thinking

approaches" and organize interesting experiments to transcend gender boundaries.⁷⁰

Crossheads [Non-Conformists]

Most of those who were committed to gay interests in the GDR had support. For some it was groups in the Protestant church, for others it was groups of like-minded people in state institutions, mass organizations or parties. Their assessments of the catastrophic situation of gays were almost identical, their demands were similar, their goals were little different. What was different was their position in the old system, their perspectives and therefore: their strategies. Both pointed out real grievances and criticized them. For some, this also meant (despite their fundamental commitment to socialism) resistance to an established system of feudo-socialist-patriarchal structure, while for others, criticism was still intended as a defense of the real-socialist project, as it was ultimately intended to serve its improvement. After 1989, both went through more or less severe identity crises, because whether in dissociation or identification - they were connected to GDR socialism. In the FRG, they now find themselves in "reversed roles". Those who were resistant at the time have jobs in the civil service or established political organizations and parties, while those who were "close to the state" at the time are unemployed or are shuffling from project to project on ABM jobs. For both, a partial devaluation of their past has taken place. Those who experienced resistance in the GDR no longer need it because they are now established, while those who could use it never practiced resistance sufficiently.

The "queer heads", those committed individualists who are easily perceived by outsiders as "lone wolves", are different.

They open up paths on which others walk. Because they do not Once they are "integrated", they need no tactics and think further ahead than those who pass them by. At first glance, their efforts are hardly successful because they always want "too much". They stick to their guns even when the political situation changes.

systems, as troublemakers, as doubters, as uncompromising observers of everyday power games. Their experiences do not devalue themselves, and yet they are constantly renewing them. In resistance to domination. Their names do not appear in the collective histories, but their thoughts have helped to write those histories.

For example Olaf Brühl⁷¹

In 1985, he published a series of articles in the Mecklenburgische Kirchenzeitung, whose criticism went deeper and further than most of what was later published on the subject of homosexuality in the GDR. After citing a biblical quotation affirming homosexuality (David to Jonathan), he came to the point, i.e. to one of the main causes of the homosexual discrimination experienced in everyday life, the fear of one's own homosexual desires: "Of course, many will say that they don't feel any homosexual desire in themselves. They may be right, but it is only convincing when they can confront homosexual phenomena without fear and aggression. (...) If you react (to homosexuality) with anger or indignation, it is very similar to reacting with fascination or lust. Both mean that there is a homosexual component hidden under the façade of your heterosexuality."⁷²

He presented the Nazis' latent homosexual ideal of masculinity as a counterpart to the extermination of homosexuals in the concentration camps and the common sense of the normal petty bourgeoisie as a framework condition that made it possible.

He formulated the vision of a society liberated from role constraints: "The emergence of a new, less authoritarian and less aggressive generation from the shackles of the outdated patriarchal class society of the bourgeois type - in a world of togetherness to be won ... in which humanity is not only liberated from class rule, but also from the rule of potency with all its constraints and repressive mechanisms of the finest kind. Both sexes must be freed from their humanly long inadequate behavioral corsets - and with them fall

Questions such as the 'problem of homosexuality' are automatically consigned to the grave of black history."⁷³

He told stories about people's ability to leave their roles behind: A heterosexually defining man obsessed with the image of a girl ends up loving her twin brother. A man who introduces himself as gay to a woman in a special encounter sleeps with her.

The ideas he conveyed to the GDR public were hardly received. The gay groups could also do little with them, as such ideas seemed to call into question their contested minority status as "equal others", their special, nature-based identity.

But he did not give up trying to influence the "gay circles" and encourage them in their outward activities. He gave lectures, led discussions, read from gay literature that was inaccessible to many at the time to gays in the church, in student communities and in a state youth club for heterosexuals.

For him, the presentation of gay culture was above all a means to propagate non-bourgeois models of life, ways of being outside established (marriage) institutions, ask for possibilities of livable solidarity and sensuality.

At the second workshop "Psychosocial aspects of homosexuality", he gave a lecture entitled "The observer sees nothing": "The observer sees nothing". He called for self-reflection on the part of those scientists who talk about "homosexuality". His assumption as to why "especially in our society within the ... Discourse on homosexuality", was why "the methods of historical materialism and dialectics are abruptly suspended": „Undoubtedly this is an expression of the fact that the scientists concerned are men, and demonstratively heterosexual ones at that. Men who, as specialists, represent recognized authorities within academic, official structures."⁷⁴

And again he attacked the attribution of homosexuality to the "minority of homosexuals": "Obviously, it is not enough to place the members of a society somewhere on

the spectrum of the Kinsey scale ... and, according to the motto DIVIDE ET IMPERA, to groups according to color values. I suggest ... shifting the scale, which is a theorem, into the personality and thus making determinations in thinking and consequently also in living and loving

... to more open possibilities and requests. SECURITIES THEMSELVES ARE THE PROBLEMATIC

and the emancipation of discriminated sections of the population is only possible through the emancipation of discriminated personality traits of the entire population ... possible."⁷⁵

He brought the connection between anti-homosexuality and anti-femininity into the discussion, and his reflections on the indivisibility of emancipation, on the relationship between individual and social progress, led him to the point: "The coming out - here the most topical problem of the homosexuality debate - must therefore be abolished: for better or worse by means of a coming out society as a whole ... "⁷⁶

His contribution was not printed in the conference material published later. The GDR had its coming out, it no longer exists. Olaf Brühl continues to doubt. His reflections, based on Theweleit, Vinnai and others in the traditions of psychoanalysis and critical theory, were unwelcome in the East and out in the West. But he is not limited to words, he makes films, stages plays and operas about the detachment of the sexes from their roles. Anti-bourgeois, patriarchy-critical provocations of so-called normality.

For example Klaus Laabs⁷⁷

At the beginning of 1983, gay men gathered in Berlin apartments to discuss how they could change their situation in society together. One of the first questions was about the official framework for future meetings. The majority opted for the Protestant church, especially as gays in Leipzig were already working there. Others tried unsuccessfully for a while at the Kulturbund or in neighborhood committees. Some of those who did not want to "join the church" decided to a self-awareness group to talk about

to become clearer about their interests and opportunities. Klaus Laab_s was one of them. Convinced that he had to fight for the acceptance of gays in his own environment, wrote a position paper in April 1984, which he presented to his party organization at Humboldt University for discussion in order to persuade the SED to take a principled stand on the homosexuality issue. Here is an excerpt:

"Comrades,

Many people have left the GDR in recent weeks and months. (...) For many ... it may have been a desperate step - after being worn down by conflicts and disregard, having lost faith in an equal existence in their, our country. I am thinking here of homosexuals, who are obviously to be found in above-average numbers among those wishing to leave the country. According to an instruction from the FDJ district leadership of our university for the secretaries of the FDJ's basic organization homosexuals are so-called preferentially dismissed from GDR citizenship 'because they think they have to organize themselves politically'. Since I think so too - a conviction that contributed to my joining the party of the working class over 13 years ago - questions arise for me ...

The efforts of GDR homosexuals to become independent social organization are still not supported. If they did manage to form groups, such as the Homosexual Initiative Berlin (HIB), they were even forcibly suppressed. The only possibility for homosexuals to organize themselves in the interest of social emancipation are the homosexual self-help groups within the Protestant church ... Does our party want to turn homosexuals into a fighting reserve for the priests? Or is a solution to the problem to be hoped for through the rapid and thorough deportation of homosexuals? Can our socialist country afford to marginalize every 25th of its citizens?

(...)

The solution to the social problem of homosexuality on the The basis of socialist humanism and the communi

- bruc.h, Göttingen 1990
 Psychosocial Aspects of Homosexuality, III. Workshop, op. cit., rau,
 G. (ed.), *Lesben und Schwule, was nun? Chronicle- Documente -
 Analysen - Interviews*, Berlin 1990
- 131 in: Soukup, J.J., *The GDR. The gays. The awakening*, op. cit. p. 15
 132 *ibid.* p. 92
 133 *ibid.* p. 99f
 134 *ibid.* p. 105f
- 135 Joint Declaration, in: *Psychosocial Aspects of Homosexuality, III.
 Workshop*, op. cit. p. 100ff
- 136 Equal rights for homosexuals? Question to the parties for the
 election in March 1990, unpublished.
- 137 From the statutes of the umbrella organization for homosexual
 interest groups, 1990, unpublished.
- 138 "The groups that declared their willingness to work in the umbrella
 organization did nothing for it beyond their blanket declaration of
 support for the umbrella organization." - Uwe Zobel, one of the
 Jniriatoren in an interview from May 1990, unpublished.
- 139 The SVD relies on democratic centralism and professional politics.
 The plan was to have an association consisting of individual
 members who would organize themselves into regional groups and
 elect speaker councils at the individual levels (district level, state
 level, GDR level), which would shape and determine the work of the
 association between the micro-government meetings or association
 conferences and represent the association to the outside world." -
 Karsten Friede!, co-initiator of the SVD, in an interview from May
 1990, unpublished.
- 140 Initiative for a gay and lesbian house in Berlin, unpublished.
- 141 Minutes of the Berlin Round Table of March 1, 1990
- 142 cf. alia: BVH, *Schwule Wahlprüfsteine* 1994;
 SVD, *Schwule Macht '94*; Election test stones for the 1994
 Bundestag election (*Materialieu der Verbände*)
- 143 Bochow, M., *Einstellungen und Werthaltungen zu homosexuellen
 Männern in Ost- und Westdeutschland*, Discussion paper at the
 26th German Sociology Conference, Düsseldorf, 30.9.1992,
 Manuscript
- 144 Bochow, M., *Attitudes and values ...*, op. cit., p. 2
 145 *ibid.*
 146 *ibid.* p. 3
 147 *ibid.*
 148 *ibid.* p. 4
- 149 Uhle, J., *Einstellungen ggegenüber Homosexuellen, insbesondere
 schwulen Männer*, Manuskript 1988, unpublished, p. 5
- 150 Bochow, *Attitudes and values ...*, op. cit., p. 8
- 151 Laabs, K., *Interview* 1993, unpublished.

From the "Homosexuality" working group of the Protestant student community in Leipzig to the gay association in Germany

**Interview by Kurt Starke with Eduard Stapel (SVD)
 on April 19, 1994**

*Starke: When would you date the beginning of the gay movement
 in the GDR?*

Stapel: Actually with the first attempts by the Dresden doctor
 Klimmer in the 1960s¹, although I don't know much about him.
 As far as I know, nothing happened in the . Then there were the
 attempts by the Homosexuellen Interessengemeinschaft Berlin
 from 1973. And at the end of the with Uschi Sillge in Berlin.² As
 far as the beginning of the institutionalized movement is
 concerned, that would be 1982. But before that, attempts had
 already been made.

What happened in 1982?

The founding of the first "Homosexuality" working group of the
 Protestant student community here in Leipzig.

You founded it?

Yes - with some friends, for example Christian Pulz.

Why did you found it?

Yes, that is a question! I had always thought that being gay is a
 very personal story: as long as I'm alone, nobody has to know that
 I'm "a gay". But when there are two of me, then everyone can and
 should know, that's what I wanted

not hide. At some point in 1981 I realized that it doesn't work like that. I first have to tell others that I'm gay. Saying that and making something of it only occurred to me once I had cleared up this mental error in my head.

Then perhaps this founding initiative is also to my diaconal streak. After realized that it quite good for me to open up, I told myself that I had to something like this for others, in groups. From one day to the next. So actually it's all to do with my own personal history and not with big ideas.

If it is a movement, then it has something to do with society. If it has something do with society, then it also has something do with politics ...

Yes, but I hadn't noticed that before. I had already read books on the subject and understood the political background to some extent. But I hadn't really worked on it yet. It was only gradually that the foundation became important to me for political reasons.

What did you call yourselves at the Protestant Student Community?

In the student community and also in other church institutions, there were working groups that dealt with issues, e.g. Bible study group, disability study group. It made sense to add homosexuality as another group. So quite banal.

The second reason was that we had to have institutional protection from the state. That's why I always made a point of calling it the "Working Group of the Student Community". For political reasons, we had to defend this to the state again and again. So: this is our church work, and you can't interfere with that. And today I am saying this in order hold the church accountable. Many people think that now, after the revolution, since everything is democratic, this church work is no longer necessary, that it is no longer necessary.

is now possible within the social framework. But I would like the church to stick to that. That was not "under the umbrella of the church", that was actual church work. Many church people and church leaders want to get rid of it today. That is precisely what I want to prevent.

And finally and mainly, the groups should be called working groups because they should also be working groups, i.e. not casual meetings of gays, but work by gays on the problem of homosexuality/anti-homosexuality, as I call it.

Why did the church just do it back then? I mean, the church has its own relationship to homosexuality. I asked myself: Why does the church of all places take care of homosexuals?

There is simply no such thing as "the" church. When it comes to such issues, there is a range from total rejection to agreement. It was not immediately possible to set up such working groups everywhere. But here in Leipzig in particular, there was a student pastor, student representatives and the parish council who, after we explained this to them, agreed and said that this was exactly what had to be done, that the church had to work things out and make up for deficits. That's how it worked out in many places. In the end, there were 22 such church working groups throughout the GDR.

Would you see this as a certain democratic function of the church in the GDR? Simply taking care of a minority that has a difficult existence in society. To offer a free space for this minority. Democracy is of course always also politics, but in this case the democratic and human functions come together. Is that what you could call it? Yes. I think so. There were certainly people within the church who thought they could infiltrate the GDR with the help of homosexuals. And there were not only gay and lesbian groups, but also human rights, ecological, peace, women's and many other groups that worked entirely in the spirit of this function of the church ...

All hot topics ...

All hot topics. But the fact that such groupings were possible at all was to the fact that the eight Protestant regional churches in the GDR were fairly democratic. The local congregation decided what to do. Even if the church leadership was of the opinion that homosexual groups didn't belong there, the congregation could say, we'll do it the consistory, the regional church office and the bishop can stand on their . On the one hand, these working groups were possible because the church was (and hopefully still is and will remain) democratic. On the other hand, I think that this work itself and the church contributed to democratization in the GDR through such work, or at least to the emancipation of population groups such as homosexuals, who otherwise would not have expressed themselves in this way, would not have learned democracy in this way.

In the , and especially in connection AIDS, I was asked again and again why the FDJ didn't take care of homosexuals, why the city councils were so opposed, why it was so difficult to create meeting places, etc. I could never really answer that. I could never answer that properly and said they were fools ...

There is certainly a lot of stupidity and prejudice involved. But over 40 years, I don't trust the Politburo and the Central Committee be permanently stupid. There must have been a strategy behind it. That's my guess. Whether there really was one, I don't know. There is also the question, for example, of why Stalin reintroduced the homosexuality paragraph, which had already been abolished. It can't have been just stupidity. Perhaps it had something to do with the way minorities were treated in general, with scapegoating.

Perhaps also with the special position of the sexual in society and with the special position of homosexuality in sexuality, connected with the idea that - if sexual pleasure is already latently suspect - at least homosexual pleasure is dirty, useless, unnatural?

Possibly, I don't know. It's all unresolved. I had a conversation, quite a long one, with Schabowski and I kept pestering him: "Now tell , you were in the Politburo, who decided where and why." He told me that as long as he was in the Politburo, homosexuality had never been an issue. I should contact the Minister of Research or the Minister of Higher Education or the Minister of Health. was probably also a dispute between Seidel (head of the health department in the Central Committee) and Politburo member Hager (responsible for science), who were always saying to each other: "It's your issue, it's your issue." I would have liked to talk to Hager about it.

non-church working groups came into being towards the end of the : How did you relate to these groups?

I thought it was good, because one of our goals had been achieved, namely to de-taboo the issue with the state. On the other hand, it was important that the topic was also present in groups outside the church. The only thing that bothered me was that there were no working groups or working groups (they didn't have to the same name) that with a topic every two weeks. That was my goal: a gay adult education center. For the gays to learn something about the subject. The non-church groups essentially did culture. They probably wanted to do it that way to attract people - gays don't always want to work on just one topic. They were probably not allowed to do some things either. These non-church groups worked to ensure that gays could live better within the narrow boundaries here in the GDR, while we wanted to expand the boundaries considerably.

How to expand?

That everything becomes more democratic. I would then clearly place us in the civil rights movement. We were also in contact with other groups, with human rights groups and others. We were represented as church working groups at "Frieden konkret" and at the Ecumenical Assembly. We feel part of the revolutionary movement before 89.

What happened next? You didn't stay in Leipzig. That was a coincidence. I went to Magdeburg, where I continued my training. The real event for our rapid expansion was the Luther Year 1983 with seven church congresses. The state always didn't want one central one, so seven were held in the Luther Year, from Rostock to Dresden. There were markets of opportunity at the church congresses, and we tried to promote our work there. It didn't always work, and it wasn't without problems. But we were eventually able to present ourselves at five church congresses. That was the decisive point for the rapid spread of the "homosexuality" working groups. The other thing is that I drove around the area and gathered people together. I to the flaps in Dresden, Erfurt or Halle and said: Do you want to stand around here forever? Come on, let's form a group like this.

Really?

Yes, by the way, that's how we started here in Leipzig. I stood at the flap at the town hall and spoke to people. Some said you must have a bird. But a few also let themselves be tempted, for whatever reason. I hardly knew anyone until then. But once you know one person - it's like a snowball - you soon get to know the circles of friends behind them. And from this mass of gays, you found enough people (at least at that time) who wanted more than just coffee dates and parties and instead wanted to talk about the issue itself, learn something - there weren't any books at the time, at least not enough - and also wanted to achieve something politically.

Did the working groups work together?

Yes, we had the most diverse contacts. We also held a kind of party conference every year. Unfortunately, most of the non-church groups didn't want to or weren't allowed to work together with the church groups. We church groups every three months, and some non-church groups joined us,

But most of them don't. Simply to coordinate our work. Once a year we had a fourth, larger meeting, like a "party conference". We called it a staff meeting, and in the summer of '89 we had almost 100 people in Chemnitz, because there were three participants from each group, plus guests and other interested parties. And that summer we realized that we had now "conquered" all the district towns, or almost all of them. Now we're on to the medium-sized cities like Halberstadt, Stendal and Dessau.

The working groups were called "Homosexuality". Did that include gays and lesbians?

At first, yes. But the women soon realized that gays are also men and that they dominate and that their issues were therefore not being addressed, and because there were only a few of them. They left the work, differently in place. In some cities, gays and lesbians stayed together, but only in very few.

I first saw you at the legendary workshop "Psychosocial Aspects of Homosexuality" in 1985 in the lecture hall of the Women's Clinic in Leipzig. I asked myself how this young vicar, who was standing next to an ML teacher, a sex counselor and other illustrious people at the lectern, would feel. Did you catch a whiff of history? It was significant event for us sexologists. What was going through your mind at the time?

All I really wanted was to speak my mind properly. And I hoped that it would have some effect. Nothing more, really. I didn't know about the whole problem at the time. Erwin Günther³ told me afterwards, in bits and pieces, what was going on behind the scenes. I still don't know everything. At any rate, I didn't know anything at the time. I wasn't surprised that such an event was possible. (I did have my difficulties with the state. I wasn't allowed into schools, for example. My idea at the time was to go into schools, but a church employee wasn't allowed to do that). At the time, I didn't include this in a process of

Liberalization of the final GDR. I was just pleased that it possible to say what I thought about the subject.

On February 18, 1990 in Leipzig, 81 participants of the "Gay Association in the GDR" (SVD) was founded, which soon had 200 members. That was a big event, at least that's how I felt

...
Well, that was the heyday. For me, those were the best months of my life so far - the revolutionary months. The founding itself wasn't such a big deal for me, though, because it was just the logical consequence of what we had done before. We hadn't been an association, but the gay movement had already functioned like an association - at least in terms of content. We had already had our program for a long time. The association was just a means to an end.

What has to the gay association since then? When German unification came into sight, we renamed ourselves in the summer of '90: no longer "Gay Association in the GDR", but "in Germany", and expanded the association to the West. No unification, but simply - even before October 3 - expanded to the West. We are one of the few East German foundations to have survived unification. So the association still exists today, with the new federal states in the west that have joined. It is an "association the other way around". That's what it called. However, the program has remained, but the structures have not. We only had individual membership. The Wessis have now also enforced group membership. Osis have almost no voice in the association. There are four Osis among the nine spokespersons, and they are regularly outvoted if they disagree. It's democracy now, and we Osis are in the minority. But what particularly annoys me is that we only do lobbying, albeit quite good lobbying - we have a great press spokesperson, you can't say otherwise, and we need that too, we've always lacked it - but we no longer work with the people. So we

we will eventually be a civil rights movement without citizens because we don't look after our members.

You are now based in Cologne?

No, still here in Leipzig, in the House of Democracy. The federal office plus the office of the Saxony state association is still here. Cologne is the headquarters of the North Rhine-Westphalia regional association.

When the "Gay Association in the GDR" was founded, did you become chairman?

No. We had a spokesperson's council right at the beginning. That really has to do with revolutionary times. I was one of several spokespersons. Well, I the idea of setting something like that up and I the interested parties together. Some didn't want to be brought to this table, as always, of course. But I brought together those who wanted to. But apart from that, I was one of several speakers.

When you up the first working group, you were quite young, less than 30 years old ...

Quite late for me. Of course, you could say that if you'd had the idea earlier, who knows if it have been possible. But I think it's pretty late. I also can't forgive myself for this "error in thinking" that I've already mentioned. It's also a personal story: my father had already died when I said it at home. That's stupid, we were separated by his death and he never got to know me.

Why are you blaming yourself?

Well, I quite old before I found a man for good. If only it had occurred to me ten years earlier that I had to say I was gay! So I lived ten years without a partner, always just short friendships and flap stuff and all that. Because didn't say that. I just thought, if you find one, then publicly, then

I admit to it. But it doesn't have to be until then. It wasn't fear, but simply a misunderstanding. I didn't want to cause my parents any trouble either. And then this dishonesty, especially towards my father.

Well, for a long time I thought I was the only one. Until Praunheim's movie came on: "It's not the homosexual who is perverted, but the situation in which he lives." I think that was in '73, when I was 19, and there was another reason. I wanted to have a family, to have children. I come from a pretty good family, and I always thought families were good. That's another misconception: if you're gay and living with a partner, you don't have a family. Of course you can have a family if the policy allows adoption. I didn't think that at the time.

You're the one who was involved in organizing the gays, not the coffee party. I'll come back to the Wanim. How did this motivation develop? It took a great deal of effort. You had to travel, talk to people. That was certainly fun, but it also required a lot of energy. How were you motivated?

That certainly has a lot to do with my being a Christian. If it weren't for the gays, I would be committed to helping others. In other words, this diaconal streak. For me, church is only church if it is church for others. That touches on Bonhoeffer's theology. There are different models of church, theologically justified or unfounded, mine would be this one. And if the church does not stand up for the people and for discriminated groups, then it is not a church for me.

That is a strong motivation. A second is: Over the years, I have become increasingly aware of how bad things are for gay people. I have experienced more and more suffering, witnessed terrible fates. Professional stuff, family stuff, personal stuff, suicide stories. I've buried 15 or 20 gays. So suicide. Not only did my motivation grow, but my tone also became sharper. For example, when church leaders said, don't overdo it.

And finally I also motivated by the fact that

the state didn't want. We always tried to talk to the state. It wasn't like that: church and state - border and end. We kept shouting and saying, listen to me. It appealed to me to show them how many gays there are and how they live. And then I was always annoyed when they didn't want to understand anything and sometimes went even further against gays.

You have not been a conformist.

Not at all. It's stayed that way, hasn't it?

Keyword state. You have experience with the state. And even today we can't avoid the tiresome topic of the Stasi, a difficult subject ...

Not for me.

Why not for you?

It was completely clear in GDR times that the Stasi was listening in and reading. So when I wrote a letter, it was clear to me that it was being read or could be read. In the end, the letters were brought home to me already opened, not taped up again. We knew that. Or when we were in groups and I realized that someone was overstepping the mark politically, I always put the brakes on so that someone wouldn't run into an open knife. So I'm surprised that some of those involved are surprised today at what the Stasi did. They wouldn't have been surprised back then.

It was completely clear to me too. They also made me realize that. even put a pretty handsome boy in my bed once and then had the misfortune that he fell in love with me and blew the whistle. Some people find that "terrible" today. I thought it was all kind of funny too. But not at the point where people were being made fun of. When I was then permanently employed (as a church employee for homosexual work), I had a dual function: pastor and counselor ("gay pastor") - and group work. Whether it was counseling or groups: When they made things difficult for people who came to us and needed to counseling because of their psychological condition, I was the only one who could help them,

I didn't find that funny, of course. Or when they violated the pastoral care confession by post or by bug. I'd like to see people in court who have done that. But otherwise ...

I now know nine people who were on to me, in Magdeburg and in the Leipzig area of Thuringia, and other cities are not even included. The thing annoyed me the most was the 600 mark a year they got for their work, so I wondered what for. We had nothing to hide and we didn't hide anything. I've never worked conspiratorially in my life, except once, when swapped cars to distract the Stasi. The only time did anything conspiratorial. They got 600 marks to pass on something that was on the table. Or: How badly they worked. I don't know my personal file, but two reports. Half of the addresses were wrong, I was assigned contact points in the West that I didn't even know. And what annoys me the most: I always said: People, we'll stay in the GDR and change the system here! Don't leave the country! In one such report, it says that he is gathering the gays so that they can better force them to leave the country as a group. If you can't live that well, you don't earn 600 marks a year. I'm saying that ironically, but somehow I mean it seriously. What also annoys me today is how "the big ones" are and remain in Amrern, while a teacher, for example, is no longer allowed to be a teacher because he was set on me as an IM, but objectively did no harm at all. He actually did what we wanted, namely told the state what we were doing.

That is an unusual point of view ...

I don't quite understand all the Stasi whining.

Have you ever been summoned or arrested?

No. They could have done that before I *joined* the church. But after that, I had protection like every church employee. In that respect, as employees of the church, we always had a lot to talk about. We knew that too, and we always said that,

We do it anyway, even if we are very different from the people. We have this freedom. You have to make use of it. So if they had wanted to arrest me, they would have had to come up with all sorts of ideas. The church would have made sure that nothing happened.

You are then probably in favor of a differentiated assessment and have a very relaxed approach, also with regard to the Stasi ...

Well ... When the revolution happened, in October, I said something like this: "They all have to go." That's nonsense, of course. Firstly: Where to? Secondly: very undifferentiated, I've changed since then. Thirdly, where do you start and where do you end? Sure, you start with Honecker, but where do you end? I also stayed in this state and supported it, even if it was with my taxes. You have to find a limit. But where should it be? I belonged to the "Forum for Enlightenment and Renewal", which was brought into discussion as a tribunal (Ullmann, Thierse, Schorlemmer ...), and was its managing director. We wanted a broad popular movement. Talks about what used to be. But that completely fell through, and that's not possible. Firstly, the people who did something won't let us talk to them, they can't, because then the criminal law kicks in. And secondly, the people are not interested enough in the story. Who wants to talk about what happened in detail? So we wanted to talk, yes ... according to the Christian model of "sin and repentance", not at all with prison and such. Sure, anyone who has done something that is criminally relevant has to go to court. But our real aim was that everyone should learn something from it and that something like that wouldn't happen again.

I would like to move on to another topic, namely one aspect of your view on homosexuality. When we showed you our draft questionnaire, there was a dispute about whether we should focus more on the gayness itself or on the overall personality of the person who is gay. I opted for the latter. You were more

committed to the gay lifestyle. How do you see it today? How do you reflect on people who are homosexual? Do you see them primarily as gay or as a person as a whole?

It depends on the level I'm on at the time. If I'm working on the issue, then it's primarily the gay person. Or if he comes to me with his problems, then he is also first and foremost the gay person. But behind my working concept for the working groups is actually to liberate gayness from the lack of freedom that you are exposed to as a gay person through emancipation, participation and - not to fit *it* into approved free spaces. People should become "normal" people, equal citizens, from the outside as well as from the inside. Being gay should no longer play this dominant role. It's just a question of whether someone is ready to be coming out, that he can categorize his gayness, both for himself and for others. Or whether that doesn't work. I think it still doesn't work. You can really only assume that it makes sense for emancipated gays to see **people** as people and not as gays. Otherwise, because of their gayness, discrimination and everything that goes with it, they are always distorted and distorted people. That's the way it is.

There is this sentence: "Being gay is not a political program."

That is a big mistake.

Why?

This can only be said by someone who imagines that he is not discriminated against, or who discriminates against himself in such a way that he no longer perceives discrimination. To abolish discrimination against gays is of course a political program, because each individual and the group of gays as a whole were discriminated against_ and lived accordingly.

You immediately come back to society's treatment of gays.

Again and again.

It is clear that this is political, but ...

Otherwise maybe too. I can't separate it: Society and being gay. I don't mean that being gay is revolutionary in itself. But changing the image of masculinity, for example, is political. If you could live as gay as you are gay. And there's the question of whether society can tolerate that.

The women would definitely tolerate it.

They would tolerate it well. And the mania for masculinity would be pushed back. And thinking further: there wouldn't be men who want to conquer the whole world or who absolutely have to subdue nature. Or the men who want to show themselves in warrior poses, the gunslingers. If the whole world lived a little warmer, there would be no more wars. Well, that's a broad topic. But I'm thinking along those lines. It's just that it's a pipe dream, we won't see it in the next ten generations, if ever. I don't know.

There is a gay movement, but no straight movement ... Yes, there one. You notice it immediately when the representatives of the heteros turn to us as soon as we want something, e.g. gay marriage - and the chancellor says no. Then you have the hetero movement as a reaction. As a straight person, you don't experience it as an action. But since I opened my eyes as a gay man after I was born, I've been stuffed full of hetero propaganda. Whether by book, by movie, by the environment - whatever. It's something like a hetero movement.

Gays grow up in a heterosexually dominated society, as this book talks about. This raises the question of how to evaluate an integrative concept from this perspective. What do you think?

That depends on how you understand the term integration. If it means that one person gives up their profile in favor of the other, if the minority self-destructively adapts to the majority, then the expression that gays must be integrated into society is complete nonsense. If

However, if A and B were to merge into C, changing both, then things would look different. Then it wouldn't be a matter of grinding them down and giving them up, but of mutual acceptance and agreement and leaving them as they are, and then you would have something completely new. In order for this to happen, I advocate such an integrative concept.

There was no gay scene in the GDR like in the West, none as publicly present. That may also been a cultural disadvantage. But as a result, I feel that neither the exclusion from one side is so obvious and so documented, nor the exclusion from the other side. How do you see that?

At the very least, we haven't built a ghetto. That's why I'm against this kind of subculture that we're now getting from the West, because it's nothing more than disappearing into a ghetto. Where people pump themselves full of loud music and anonymous, non-committal sex. In contrast, our working group concept. I was always glad that we had this diversionary maneuver.

scene" did not have here.

So the working group concept could be interpreted as a concept that is neither exclusive nor restrictive?

Yes, the gay scene marginalizes itself. I'm now experiencing this directly by comparing what I did in GDR times with what is now coming from the West. Back then, we tried to get people to integrate, i.e. through the group, through influencing society. Today, a gay disco opens and people go back to being straight during the day and sink into the discos at night. This double life is being properly consolidated again. No integration and everything, even emancipation. Well, you could perhaps say that they emancipate themselves at least for their closest circle, for a few hours at night. But that's not emancipation as I imagine it. That's why I'm so strongly against it. Of course, I have nothing against dancing and discos per se.

Is the double life in this society just a gay problem?

No. No. Almost everything that can be said about gays and society does not only apply to gays.

Society consists of many minorities and majorities. It is important to emphasize the respective constituent characteristic as a differentiating feature, and it is precisely in social science research (and also in this book) that such differentiations are taken into account. But they are also one-sided, because only one or a few characteristics are emphasized and because boundaries are constantly being drawn and can also be drawn in an exclusionary way. everyone is then always the other. Understanding ceases and all commonalities are disregarded because the other is always different. Isn't the absolutization of just one characteristic questionable?

Yes, I completely agree with that. I don't emphasize such differences because they exist - they will always exist - but because they become significant, for example as a result of prejudice and discrimination. My highlighting of these differences is only a reaction to the previous exclusion. If I were not ostracized because of my difference, this difference would not be socially problematic at all. Then there is the argument, which I take seriously, that we have to ostracize you because we don't know anything about you. I also tell gay people that if others treat you like that, then it's also because of you, because you don't tell them who you are. For example, they scold their parents for kicking them out at home because they are gay; now they are angry with their parents ... I then try to motivate them to keep the conversation : "Your parents had like that. Have you ever your parents anything? They know nothing about it or only the wrong things. They didn't learn anything about it, not at school, not in the party, not now after reunification either, you didn't say anything. But you expect them to know all this, and maybe they'll cheer." I just want to defend the parents a little here, to relativize the anger of the gays. If the parents remain stubborn, there's nothing you can do.

Which is very bad, as the results in the book show. So your approach is based on the gays' own activity, not on ducking and hiding, but on mutual tolerance and emancipatory communication?

Yes, I am against the cultivation of a victim role, against the whining pleasure of being excluded with a subsequent elitist, exaggerated "we" consciousness, against retreating to this one characteristic and for activity, openness, approaching one another, dialog.

The draft constitution of the "Round Table" in 1990 had a wonderful formulation on the legal equality of homosexuals and heterosexuals. Why was this not taken up?

There was to be no integration of East and West, i.e. into something new. They wanted to leave the Basic Law as it is. At least that was evident from the work of the Joint Constitutional Commission of the Bundestag and Bundesrat. However, some state constitutions were amended (Brandenburg, Thuringia and even Saxony, Article 18: "gender" also means "sexual orientation/identity" according to the commentary). So it wasn't entirely in vain.

The gay movement in the GDR developed quite clear positions in the 1980s. It had a program and represented it. What has remained of it? What experiences have been gathered about what works and what doesn't? What needs to be pursued further? What is the legacy of the gay movement in the GDR?

On a legal level, the case, the near-case of § 175. I attribute that to us. Us GDR people: church people, non-church people, you scientists and others. I don't know why de Maiziere and Krause it in the Unification Treaty, but at least it's there. Then I think the constitutional discussions on this in the federal and state governments are pretty important. That happened essentially through the integration of the church groups into the other emancipation groups. If

For example, if Marianne Birthler had not become a minister in Potsdam, the gender equality clause would certainly not be in the Brandenburg constitution. Or if Stolpe hadn't been involved with us for years - he defended our work against the state - if he hadn't had anything to do with it, then it probably wouldn't have made it into the constitution either. It often depends on people.

The important thing for me is that the church can also be very different from what it is in the West. However, at the moment we cannot preserve our heritage in this respect: Either the groups have gone bust, or they've left the church of their own accord and are no longer sticking with it in its gay work. The church can once again afford to have something against gays, partly because it no longer does this work. That's a shame. More should have been done.

Then our program and our experience with structures. I advocate clear structures as a means achieve effectiveness.

Yes, and then above all our educational program for gays. If only we could bring that over to the West! At least we learned in the GDR that such an educational program is good and right. I've never seen anything better.

So you still see yourself as an emancipatory enlightener?

Yes, and that includes the gays themselves, all members of the association and not just those elected, becoming politically active. For example, when I stand in a crowded gay bar in Cologne, the "gay capital" of Germany (at least in terms of the number of meeting places), I'm not content to be happy about the many gays, I say that if I had so many gays under my nose, I would have tried to motivate them to do political work long ago. So "let them dance" and we, the spokespeople, do the politics - I don't think that will be enough.

More of a basic concept?

Yes, I think a civil rights movement only works with citizens. And people who only dance may move, but they are not gay civil rights activists and don't move anything else. Citizens are those who want to learn something about themselves and others, make politics and change something. To put it in a nutshell, coming out does not happen through dancing. Neither a personal nor a social coming out. Not even if you walk around the Kurfürstendamm once a year at ^{CSD4} wearing some kind of groping ...

Notes ...

- 1 Rudolf Klirumer: On the nature of homosexuality. In: *Psychiatrie, Neurologie und medizinische Psychologie* (Leipzig) 1949/1, S. 341-348.
- 2 Ursula Sillge: *Invisible women. Lesbians and their emancipation in the GDR.* Berlin 1991.
- 3 Prof. Dr. med. Erwin Günther, Director of the Clinic and Polyclinic for Skin Diseases at the Friedrich-Schiller University of Jena, as Chairman of the Andrology Section of the Society for Dermatology of the GDR, together with Prof. Dr. med. Lykke Aresin (Leipzig) and Dr. paed. Kurt Bach (Hohenmölsen), both as representatives of the Marriage and Family Section of the Society for Social Hygiene of the GDR, to the scientific management of the conference.
- 4 Christopher Street Day. On June 28, 1969, lesbians and gays in the "Stonewall" bar on Christopher Street in New York defended themselves against a police raid.

Homosexual men in the GDR

Acknowledgments

The research project, which addressed a sensitive topic in turbulent times, was only possible thanks to the cooperation of the homosexual men interviewed. I would like to thank them placing their trust in us, the research team, for providing detailed information about themselves and for encouraging us.

Many thanks are due to the homosexual working groups and the gay association, especially its chairman Eduard Stapel, as well as all the others who helped to carry out the study.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported our research. This includes staff at the former Central Institute for Youth Research (ZIJ) and its director, Prof. Dr. Walter Friedrich, who made partner and sexuality research at the ZIJ possible. I would also like to mention my colleagues in the department and in the later Research Center for Partner and Sexuality Research, who never doubted the success of this project: Dipl.-Journ. Johanna Ludwig, Christine Mettin, Dipl.-Philol. Tatjana Mögling, Sabine Petschauer, Ing. Wolfgang Riegel, Dipl.-Päd. Kerstin Schreier, Dr. Konrad Weller, who also contributed significantly to this study within the framework of PARTNER III, and especially Dipl.Psych. Ulrike Siegel as the main collaborator in the project. Beate Wünsch deserves thanks for listing open questions.

An inimitable part of this book and the Dr. Uta Starke, University of Leipzig, was responsible for the underlying study. I would like to thank Dorle for her interest in our project.

Miesala-Edel and Frank Niggemeier (Federal Ministry for

Health), who also provided expert advice on the report manuscript.

The publisher deserves credit for taking on a scholarly report and having the courage to publish it largely unchanged, without obsessive updating, zeitgeisty concessions or reader-underestimating popular gimmicks. I consider it a stroke of luck that Bert Thinius agreed to write an introduction at short notice.

I would like to thank the homosexual men to whom I have presented the results of the research and whom I have asked for advice for their tolerance, their willingness to talk and their suggestions. I hope for a continuation.

Overview of the research project

- Population:** 546 East German men aged 14-68
(0 31.1 years)
- Method:** Anonymous postal survey using a standardized questionnaire with 227 questions (321 indicators and 32 open questions);
Return period: September 24, 1990 - January 15, 1991
- Concept and management:** Prof. Dr. Kurt Starke
- Indicata:** Prof. Dr. Kurt Starke, Dr. Konrad Weller, Dipl.-Psych. Ulrike Siegel
- Consultation:** Bernd Genennig, Irene Hackethal, Eduard Stapel, Kerstin Tews, Dr. Bert Thinius, Jens Uhle, Dr. Rainer Warczok
- Questionnaire:** Dipl.- Psych. Ulrike Siegel and Rolf Dietze †
- Implementation:** Central Institute for Youth Research (ZIJ), Dept. of Partner and Sexual Research, from 1.1.1991 as a research center of the Society for Sexual Science e.V.
Dipl.-Psych. Ulrike Siegel with the support of the gay association (Eduard Stapel) and working groups of homosexuals
- EDP:** Prof. Dr. Dr. Rolf Ludwig

Preliminary remarks

1. Goal

This book makes the results of a unique survey accessible to laymen and experts, those affected and those not affected, homosexuals and heterosexuals. It provides information on the main results of the survey of homosexual men. The results are sparingly commented on and explained to some extent. Extensive theoretical reflections are not intended. Conclusions (for theory and further research as well as for practice) are included and partly formulated, but not the actual concern. This consists of documenting a scientific investigation without any restrictions, making the results accessible above all to those who have contributed to them, presenting new findings on a difficult subject, informing, destroying legends, breaking down prejudices, promoting understanding and intervening in the scientific discussion with its own investigation.

2. Attachment

The book is a primary report - not only in the sense that the data is presented systematically and in detail for the first time, but also because it contains predominantly first-order empirical results. This is mainly done in relative frequencies and mean values. The main form of presentation is tables with simple sorting. Occasionally, scatter, contingency or correlation coefficients

and factor analyses were used. Significance tests were generally carried out. However, they are only shown in the absolutely necessary cases.

The report is primarily concerned with the evaluation of the figures. The results of the 32 open questions with the extensive verbal material are also included, without being able to reproduce them in full here. That would be a task in itself - also in terms of scope. The quotations serve primarily to supplement and illustrate.

3. Structure

The book consists of three main parts. Part A describes being homosexual in a psychological, socio-psychological and sociological context and the relationships of homosexual men to their social and personal environment. Part B deals specifically with sexual behavior. Part C focuses on the partner relationship. In addition, there is a detailed, substantive description of the population in Part D and a few summarizing remarks in Part E. This division is admittedly only rough, and there are numerous overlaps. The basic structure of the report formed by the chapters and their sections. In the section headings, the indicators on which the section is based are given in brackets.

4. Tables

The evaluation is based on a set of tables showing the response distributions of all indicators according to 19 sorting characteristics

contains. The standard table, which documents the absolute marginal totals ($n - kA =$ absolute minus no response) and at the same time provides information on the sorting characteristics and the formation rules

for summaries of indicators and type formations is reproduced here (table). The information

of **n** can therefore be omitted from the tables in the book. The text mainly refers to lines from this table. Occasionally, however, the presentation of results in the report goes beyond these figures.

5. Compare

As the gay study is linked to our partner study III, many indicators are identical. This provides ample opportunities for comparison, and these are also used. However, it is not the purpose of this report to compare the two studies. The results of the gay study should primarily stand for themselves.

Comparisons could also be made with our lesbian study. Quite apart from the fact that this has not yet been completed, such a comparison would be a separate task. It would make this primary report. This also applies to our an

their studies, e.g. the study "PARTNER III/Sexuality of Prisoners", which contains many comparable indicators, or the Hamburg-Leipzig comparative study "Youth Sexuality and AIDS", which - as a joint project between the Department of Sexual Research at the University of Hamburg (Gunter Schmidt) and our research center - was carried out at almost the same time. Earlier studies, in particular the Partner Studies I and II 1972 and 1980, are also not referred to, or only in very exceptional cases. Likewise, more recent studies, in particular the study "Youth in the City of Leipzig" 1991 and "Youth in the City of Görlitz/Borna/Geithain" 1992 as well as a Saxony-representative citizen survey 1993, which contain some indicators on sexual behavior, are used at most in the sense of trends.

When writing the report, it was necessary to check whether studies from the old federal states could be used for the purpose of comparison, in particular the Frankfurt study and that of Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe.¹ The obvious comparisons were not made.

Standard table with marginal totals

		n	Education requirement Response position
TOTAL		546	
AGE	19 - 25	145	306.19 - 25
	26 - 30	148	306.26 - 30
	31 - 40	141	306.31 - 40
	over 40	85	306.41 - 99
LOCATION	Berlin	125	317.1
	Big city	228	317.2 (over 100,000 inhabitants)
	Medium / small town	141	317.3
	Rural community	47	317.4
TERRITORIAL ORIGIN	always big city / Bin.	179	never big city / bin.
	big city/ bin.	173	35.1v2+317.1v2
	city/ bin.	175	35.3v4+317.1v2 35.3v4+317.3v4
PARENTS	both to skilled worker	134	313.1v2v3+ 314.1v2v3
	Va and Mu different	190	Remainder
	both intelligence	98	313.5v6v7+ 314.5v6v7
QUALIFICATION (selection)	Skilled worker	152	309.3
	HS graduate	159	309.6 (without doctorates)
EDUCATION	without Abitur	244	307.1 v2
	with Abitur	289	(307.3)
PARTNER STATUS	with a permanent partner	298	175.1
	without a steady partner	222	175.3
LIVING STATUS	common household would like to	150	183.1
	does not want to	112	183.2
		50	183.3
PARTNER MOBILITY	1- 5 Partner	83	168.001 - 005
	6- 20 Partner	164	168.006 - 020
	21 - 100 partners	178	168.021 - 100
	over 100 partners	90	168.101 - 999
KNOWLEDGE PARENTS DECISION?	both emer	214	14.1+ 20.1
	one / questionable	169	14.1 v20.1
		119	14.2 v 14.3 v20.2 v20.3
PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE	is not difficult	157	11.3
	somewhat heavy	207	11.2
	Very heavy	170	11.1

		n	Education requirement Indicator. Response position
EMPLOYMENT IN WORKING CIRCLES 0. A.	regular meetings u !e elmä ig wur c like does not want to	121 117 127 173	91.1 91.2 91.3 91.4
CURRENT SENSITIVITY	(very) happy sth:i.l.lückl.ich not g i.icky	154 214 172	265.1 v 2 265.3 265.4
TREUSEIN MEN AGAINST	always been faithful not always	150 333	170.2 170.1
ANONYMOUS SEX	experienced several times does not want to	253 228	114.2 114.4
LIBIDO	very strong strong something	155 305 77	94.1 94.2 94.3
AFFINITY TO MEN	very strong strong / somewhat	411 134	103.1 103.2 v 3
AFFINITY TO WOMEN	not at all something	389 153	104.4 104.2 v 3
DREAMS AND PHANTASIES	only of men predominantly from M.	444 94	105.1 105.2 v 3

for three reasons. Firstly, I wanted to present the results in their own right and explain them impartially on their own merits, without measuring them against other results and without adopting approaches and transplanting interpretations retrospectively. The highly commendable and important works of Martin Dannecker and Michael Bochow were therefore not on my desk when I wrote this report (but were three meters away on the bookshelf). Secondly, I reluctant to establish a dictatorship of the now over the then. Thirdly, a first report simply cannot do the difficult comparative work, including the necessary theoretical discussions. This must be reserved for further work - an appealing task.

6. Previous history

This book and the research on which it is based have a long history.

Our first partner study in 1972 focused on (heterosexual) romantic relationships in adolescence and also included some indicators of sexual behavior.² The PARTNER I questionnaire contains the word "opposite-sex" once, but never "same-sex" or "homosexual". This was not yet an issue at the time. Our second partner study in 1980 was quite different: PARTNER II on current and habitual sexual behavior and also contained questions on homosexuality⁽³⁾.

PARTNER II showed us that it not possible to do justice to the love and life of homosexuals with a survey based on the population as a whole, i.e. with a predominantly heterosexual approach, for statistical reasons alone, but more importantly for reasons of content and methodology. The idea of an independent survey therefore emerged. This idea was kept alive and promoted in particular by the three legendary workshops of the Andrology Section (Erwin Günther) and the Marriage and Family Section (Lykke Aresin, Kurt Bach) "Psychosocial Aspects of Homosexuality" in 1985, 1988 and 1990.⁴ AIDS and the associated public discourse on homosexuality provided further and very strong impetus. We approached the topic theoretically, became involved in the current discussion and in activities to de-taboo and decriminalize homosexuality (expert reports, lectures, conference papers, expert opinions⁵, scientific and popular articles, radio and television reports), included questions on homosexuality in various ZIJ studies, in particular in the Student Interval Study Performance (SIL) launched in 1982, supervised dissertations on the topic and carried various methodological tests. Finally, in addition to the 12 questionnaires of the Partner Study III, we designed another one for gays and another one for lesbians. In the meantime, we collected

addresses of gays, obtained written declarations of willingness to participate in the study, contacted the gay association and working groups of homosexuals and provided information about the purpose of our study at events and in the media. While we succeeded in launching the gay study in the same year as PARTNER III, the lesbian study was only able to go into the field a few months later due to the turmoil of the times (including the closure of the ZIJ on December 31, 1990).

We were all impressed by the response to our study. Most of the questionnaires were received quickly and - despite their considerable length - were carefully completed. Often the sender was indicated, although this was not explicitly requested (to ensure anonymity). This was one of the proofs of trust, which was mainly in the form of the figures and the verbal, often extraordinarily concrete and open testimonies. In some cases correspondence took place. Many interviewees encouraged us to continue the work and offered their cooperation. One respondent from the Erzgebirge region enclosed 20 marks. For us, the members of the research team, and especially for me personally, the reaction of the interviewees in a situation that was highly uncertain for us, their support and their trust, are among the most moving experiences in our research careers. We felt obliged to live up to the responsibility this entailed and to continue the project under all circumstances.

7. Reporting

Although many people were interested in the evaluation of the study, especially the respondents themselves were hoping for information, a funded project did not materialize. Nevertheless, we secured the data, began with the statistical processing and evaluation, gave talks in homosexual working groups (Chemnitz, Halle, Berlin, Leipzig) and our first impressions of the results in an article.⁶ With the discussion of the results, we were able to start working on the study.

In the course of the debate on § 175, the expert report "Homosexuality" was written, in which (a few) results of the study are processed.⁷ On the occasion of an evaluation of AIDS-relevant results of PARTNER III⁸ supported by the Federal Centre for Health Education and the evaluation of the Hamburg-Leipzig interview study "Youth Sexuality and AIDS"⁹ (including the discussion with the Hamburg colleagues, but also those from New York and Vienna), it became clear to us again and again how important it is to process the results and make them accessible; the material was, so to speak, burning under our nails. We received encouragement from many sides, especially from colleagues in our Society for Sexology and on the occasion of scientific contacts at national and international level. Discussions at the AIDS Center of the Federal Health Office also provided many suggestions. Finally, the Federal Ministry of Health provided the decisive colon by sponsoring the report in the form of a grant. Unfortunately, this in no way ensured publication; nothing could be done without a printing subsidy. And it also seemed appropriate to me to find a publisher that had the same home as the interviewees. However, the relevant publishers in the new federal states were all in manifold difficulties or were unable to act. Ch. Links Verlag Berlin had caught my eye, mainly because it had already published several books on homosexuality, and this publisher finally agreed.

8. Concerns

The aim of the book is - as emphasized at the beginning - initially a very simple and purely practical one: the results of the study are to be documented and made public. The statements in the report are therefore primarily of a two-digit relation: an indicator and - by means of an indicator - a measurement result that is as precise as possible. The statement obtained from the wealth of data is intended to establish the invariances and essentials of the respective things and relations (e.g. an attitude). In

In a further step, which is already much rarer in this report, an explanation of the findings, a classification and, here and there, an evaluation will be given. This evaluation, as well as the selection of questions and the entire direction of the research, is not merely intended to gain elitist knowledge, but rather this gain in knowledge should take on an enlightening dimension. The research should ultimately be useful for the people affected by the topic, especially the interviewees themselves. The report feels primarily committed to them.

One of the interviewees is quoted here as an example:

Four years ago I would not have filled out this questionnaire out of shame, but today I have accepted myself to the extent that I admit to being different. I hope that this study will help society to finally stop prejudicing and stereotyping homosexuals and that we will finally be accepted for what we are and want to be, quite simply people with emotions and thoughts, with hopes, dreams and fears. Sometimes I fear that this will remain a pipe dream, but one should always hope. The more we accept ourselves as homosexuals and step out of isolation, the more we force society to reflect on long-outdated moral concepts. I found some of your questions a little too intimate, although answered them as truthfully as possible. The poor relationship to love and sexuality in our society certainly also plays a significant role. Perhaps the result of this study will be that there is no such thing as the typical homosexual, just as there is no such thing as the typical heterosexual. I see myself as proof of how diverse human life can be. One should learn to understand homosexuality much more as an enrichment of human sexuality than as a degeneration." (Technologist, 28)

Notes

- 1 (1) Michael Bochow: How do gays live today? Report on a survey commissioned by the Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe. AIDS-Forum D.A.H., Vol. II, Berlin 1988
(2) Michael Bochow: AIDS and gays. Report on the second survey commissioned by Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe. AIDS-Forum D.A.H., Vol. IV, Berlin 1989
(3) Martin Dannecker: Homosexual men and AIDS. A sexological study on sexual behavior and lifestyle. Series of publications by the Federal Minister for Youth, Family, Women and Health. Volume 252. Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne 1990
(4) Martin Dannecker: The homosexual man under the sign of AIDS. Hamburg 1991
- 2 K. Starke: Young partners. Leipzig 1980
- 3 The results are presented by S. Schnabl and K. Starke in the section "Homosexuality" of the book K. Starke/W. Friedrich: "Love and sexuality up to 30", Berlin 1984.
The material of the homosexual subpopulation in particular was analyzed in R. Warczok's dissertation B "Sociological Aspects of Human Sexuality - with Special Consideration of Same-Sex Sexual Perception and Behavior" (Berlin 1985). Rainer Warczok then also carried out preliminary work on the content and organization of our study (especially with regard to initial addresses via advertisements); he was at its cradle, but unfortunately was soon no longer available. During this initial period, there was not only approval, but also fundamental objections to the planned study: In May 1988, the delegates of the central staff meeting of gay groups in Karl-Marx-Stadt formulated their concerns, their mistrust and their fears in an open letter to Rainer Warczok. Günter Grau reminded me of this in a letter dated March 23, 1993. Günter Grau had also communicated his critical attitude directly to me at the time. It was important to me to dispel and positively dispel the concerns through the solidity of the investigation.
- 4 (1) Psychosocial aspects of homosexuality. Joint conference 1985, edited by E. Günther. Friedrich Schiller University Jena 1986.
(2) Psychosocial aspects of homosexuality. II. Workshop 1988, edited by E. Günther and K. Bach. Friedrich Schiller University Jena 1989.
(3) Psychosocial aspects of homosexuality. III. Workshop 1990, edited by E. Günther. Friedrich Schiller University Jena 1991. Erwin Günther also initiated a workshop in the context of these workshops in 1987.

- a postal survey of homosexuals. See S. Wagnitz/
D. Weber: Homosexual Partnerships - Com.ing-out Study III
Dissertation A. Jena 1991
- 5 For example, the exposé of the DEFA feature film "Coming out"
and the first DEFA documentary on homosexuality, the 1988 film
"Die andere Liebe", for which the ZIJ also carried out a reception
analysis. See K. Weller: "Die andere Liebe" - an investigation of
the movie. In: Psychosocial Aspects of Homosexuality. III.
Wo.rkshop 1990. Friedrich Schiller University Jena 1991
- 6 In: Leipziger Volkszeitung of 31. 5.1991
- 7 K. Starke: Homosexuality. Research Center for Partner and Sexual
Research. Leipzig 1991
- 8 K. Starke/K. Weller: Aids in the public consciousness of East and
West Germans. A comparison. Research report. Research Center for
Partner and Sexual Research 1991
- 9 Adolescent sexuality. Social change, group differences, areas of
conflict. I-edited by Gunter Schmidt. Contributions to sexual
research 69. Stuttgart 1993

O. The investigation (methodological part)

0.1 Approach and content

The aim of this survey is to investigate the living situation of East German homosexuals and especially their partner and sexual behavior. As an extension of the main PARTNER III study, the gay study focuses on the same content (see 0.7), taking into account the special features and analyzing them.

It considers sexual behaviour (including the respective particularities) as social behaviour of the personality as a whole, which, like this, is socially conditioned and realized under certain circumstances. The study focuses on the differentiations within the population surveyed; this is one of its most important starting points. It assumes that behavioral dispositions develop through one's own activities under changing living conditions and that everyone has their own individual life story. Current behavior depends on habitual personality traits and the scope for action and decision-making.

In this sense, the study focuses on the life situations of homosexual men as East Germans and as gays in East Germany. The aim is to make statements about a minority in the GDR and at the same time to use the example of this minority to make statements about life in the GDR. This is part of the major task of differentiated analysis and evaluation of history.

In detail, this involves

-for the self-confidence of homosexuals as homosexuals.