

*"I returned a ghost; I remained a ghost:"<sup>i</sup>*

-The Enduring Persecution of Queerness in Germany from Hitler to Adenauer

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The Holocaust Capstone

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“An unnatural sex act committed between persons of male sex or by humans with animals is punishable by imprisonment; the loss of civil rights might also be imposed.”<sup>ii</sup> -Paragraph 175

On the eighteenth of February, 1937 Heinrich Himmler addressed an S.S. guard audience at Bad Tolz, Bavaria. His speech there expressed the concerns of the Third Reich regarding homosexuality, in the sense that it undermined the “generative power” of the nation; men sleeping with men produced no new reinforcements for the Nazi war machine. The persecution of any dissenter to the Nazi cause was pervasive, and the persecution of gay men was especially harsh and continued into the 1960s through augmentation of Nazi law codes. This allowed the codified language of the Third Reich to be implemented in the Holocaust, survive through the Cold War, past the Wall, and even into German Reunification.

Homosexuality served as a scapegoat for German failure and trauma. Especially, effeminate homosexuals were seen as a threat to the state, Fascist and Democratic alike, for their gender non-conformity. This lack of conformity threatened the Nazi conception of defined gender space in which sexual and gender roles were aligned with conventional sex to serve the Reich in a common goal: world domination through procreation. As Judith Butler states, “for bodies to cohere and make sense, there must be a stable sex expressed through stable gender...that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality”<sup>iii</sup> Nazi ideologies regarding homophobia were focused in the

practice of heterosexuality for the state. However, the older and longer-lasting notion of preservation of social order of bourgeois and proletariat in the German city, in which sexual and gender role alignment were necessary if the society was to succeed according to the patriarchy benefiting from this structure. While the threat of Jewish population was rendered as an invasive force, one from without, the homosexual problem was more troubling, as it came from *within* Germanness.<sup>iv</sup> The idea of a corrupted *volk* was inconceivable to the Nazi high officials, and was met with terrific, if unsteady, force.<sup>v</sup>

The conservative viewpoint of German society at this time based in a complex network of religious expectation and cultural norms exploited for state purposes. The foremost of these purposes was to maintain and increase the population of the state, from the extremes of the Nazi desire for an Aryan warrior nation, to the aim of economic stability of the Democratic Republic of West Germany under the Adenauer administration, following the war.

The basis of fascist and German cultural homophobia is amplified and supported by German cultural discourse. "Nazi homophobia, [...] was neither a momentary aberration nor a separate vector of power, since it occurred and was deeply embedded in material practices under specific sets of social, cultural, and ideological conditions."<sup>vi</sup> Denounced by Nazi leaders as elite decadence and by post-war conservatives as a threat to the children of the nation, the underpinnings of these resentments are shadowed. It is hard to equivocate the cases of homosexual persecution to any general trauma. The cases, in their scarcity, offer a unique and intimately individual window into a specific set of experiences. In the horror and

incredible scope and scale of the Holocaust, the facelessness, the 'ghost' quality of the victims can overwhelm the person who *is* the victim. In the memories of the gay survivors, through a common terror, individual experiences are made all the more overt by their scarcity.

The western world of the time was hardly opposed to the persecution of homosexuality. Most western nations took views similar or identical to those of the Third Reich regarding homosexuality. This environment (in Germany) of intolerance to queerness, though having been codified in law before the rise of the Nazi party, experienced a break in the 1920's when German cities became a haven for the homosexuals of Europe. "Before the Second World War, homosexual emancipation was largely a German phenomenon."<sup>vii</sup> This phenomenon being so prevalently German, incongruent with so much of the perception of the Germany of this time period as being a very hostile environment, can be attributed to several factors. First of these is the overall turmoil that the whole of the European continent experienced in the interwar period. The wake of World War I left several gaping holes in the fabric of European society. The first schism being the sheer loss of life. The total loss of life for the war exceeds thirty seven million, with 7,142,558 dead from Germany alone.<sup>viii</sup> The incident of this extremely high loss of life alone caused much of the allowance for bending of societal, and sexual, norms in this period.

The war itself, and its outcomes also effected the loss of social control of the powers that be. "The sexual Mardi Gras of the era doubtless was also a result of a desperate lunge toward reexamination and reformation of values."<sup>ix</sup> The entire climate of Western Europe had turned into the environment in which existentialist

thought, in full route of despair and lack of personal hope for the future, became a prevailing philosophy. Despite the horrific times of the interwar period in regard to the massive financial inflation, famine, and war reparations that wracked the whole of Germany, there was a defined air of disregard for moral norms, as so much of societal construct was in shambles. The cities of Germany, namely Berlin and Hamburg, experienced a huge influx of homosexuals and upswing in public gay culture. The public life of a homosexual counter culture is in and of itself in this period remarkable, especially in juxtaposition with the later policies of the Third Reich. The proliferation of gay oriented publications provided a huge step in the movement of accepting a gay public. The emergence of such publications as *Die Freundschaft*, *Freundschaft und Freiheit*, *Der Hellasbote*, and *Der Eigene* from Adolf Brand<sup>x</sup> signaled the relatively incredible widespread presence of a gay counterculture coming out of the shadows and into the full light of mainstream society. This movement toward a growing tolerance and even acceptance of gay life was signaled by the industrial revolution in Germany, which as it had in the rest of North-western Europe created a mass emigration to the cities of these respective regions.

This movement, having its roots in much earlier periods, was for many incredibly welcome. "As [Magnus] Hirschfeld observed in a survey of the city's [Berlin] gay scene around 1900, 'Homosexuals from the countryside who visit such bars for the first time have been seen crying from being so deeply moved.'"<sup>xi</sup> Documentation of these reactions, and of much of the sexual information of the era is thanks in large part to, if only inspired by the work and activism of, Magnus

Hirschfeld. This intensified as, “On July 1, 1919, he [Hirschfeld] realized one of his fondest dreams by opening the Institute of Sexual Science (*Institut für Sexualwissenschaft*) in Berlin.”<sup>xii</sup> Much as Sigmund Freud did for the previously non-accredited realm of psychology, Hirschfeld attempted, with some success, to legitimize through intensive archiving the burgeoning field of sexology. “For three decades Hirschfeld and his team of legal and medical associates had assembled an invaluable collection of documents, photographs, treatises, and statistics about sex.”<sup>xiii</sup> In this sense, the fact that Hirschfeld is not a household name, like Freud, can be blamed thoroughly on the Nazi party.

“On May 6, 1933, a gang of “outraged students” stormed the famous Institute for Sexual Research, directed by Magnus Hirschfeld, the father of the new science of sexology.”<sup>xiv</sup> The destruction of the institute occurred at the highly volatile time during which the Nazi’s were posturing their strength at the command of Adolf Hitler who charged the populace to rapidity toward dissenters of National Socialism. The radicalization of German natives against their own (it will be noted that most of those persecuted under Paragraph 175 were white, native German, Christians with no perceived flaws in the eyes of the state than their sexual behavior and orientation) is as easily described as native elements of German culture, as they were channeled through the heavy magnifying glass of the interwar chaos onto the homosexual anthill. That is to say, easily while not at all.

As well as identifying the precepts that allowed for the Weimar freedom, or negatively, the *vergnügungswart*, the madness for pleasure that Hitler warned of in his Munich beer hall speeches,<sup>xv</sup> we can identify the reasons for the climatic shift

from the tropical Eldorado dance hall with its nightly population of “*Warme* (the warm ones, as homosexuals were often called)”<sup>xvi</sup> to the frigidity of the Third Reich. The climate of homophobia has its roots in German culture itself, “A man who found himself irresistibly drawn to homosexuality was often portrayed as effeminate – a *Tunte*, to use the German slang equivalent of ‘sissy’ or ‘fairy.’ Above all, he was a criminal whose social marginality made him prone to murder, child abuse, and even major political crimes.”<sup>xvii</sup> In addition to a preexistent tone of homophobia, the Nazi ideology regarding the generative power of its citizens was affronted by the notion of barren gay sex. “Jews, like homosexuals, were also marked by sexual excess, seen as being unable to control their lusts and passions...In homosexuals, under the same logic, uncontrolled physical urges were directed toward other men, which weakened society because pleasure was put ahead of the duty to reproduce.”<sup>xviii</sup> This element of homosexual identity, as traitors to the Reich, sealed their fate; the *Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität und der Abtreibung* (the Central Reich office for Combating Homosexuality and Abortion) constitutes gay men as being of equal status of traitor to those who underwent abortion. Both groups in the eyes of the regime were guilty of destruction of power of the state.

Police investigation of homosexual activity was of no particular strength during the Weimar period, as Paragraph 175 was effectively dormant in the matter of prosecution of homosexual activity. Rather it is the Third Reich, especially the years from 1933-1941, and the post-war period from 1949-1969 that had expressly targeted homosexuals for their “aberrant” behavior. Heinz Heger recalls his summons following his romantic involvement with the son of a Nazi high official: “It

was Friday, about 1 p.m., almost a year to the day since Austria had become simply the 'Ostmark', that I heard two rings at the door. Short, but somehow commanding. When I opened I was surprised to see a man with a slouch hat and leather coat. With the curt word 'Gestapo', he handed me a card with the printed summons to appear for questioning at 2 p.m. at the Gestapo headquarters in the Hotel Metropol."<sup>xix</sup> This event, typifying the *Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität* policy to target gays who may have been perceived as some threat to their community, is echoed in the post war years in the police exercises targeting gay men engaging in public displays of their sexuality.

'Cruising,' that is searching for casual sex, in public spaces represents a particular, and necessary, piece of gay culture. Many cities have particular districts and meeting places for the allowance of sexual contact between gay persons, who otherwise would have no outlet for their shamed orientation and desire. Pierre Seel, a resident of Alsace, at that time in France, reported his watch stolen to local authorities. He had had it stolen by a man with whom he intended to bed, or rather have in the park, at Steinbach Square. This area was so notorious for gay cruising that the officer registered Seel as a homosexual after interrogation. "I had entered the police station as a robbery victim, and I left as an ashamed homosexual."<sup>xx</sup> For Seel, it was a frying pan into the fire ordeal as the documents of his local police station in Mulhouse were turned over to the Nazis upon the invasion of Alsace and Lorraine in June of 1940. On May 2, 1941, the Gestapo called on Pierre to appear the next morning at their offices. "After violently shutting my file, the SS man facing me instantly called me *Schweinehund* (dirty bastard), filthy faggot. The interrogation



was only just starting.”<sup>xxi</sup> After ten hours of questioning that rotated between Seel and the other local gay men arrested, “The machinery of violence accelerated. Outraged by our resistance, the SS began pulling out the fingernails of some prisoners. In their fury, they broke the rulers we were kneeling on and used them to rape us.”<sup>xxii</sup> After these measures cracked the arrested men, they were transported to the Schirmeck “protective custody” camp. Though named such, in 1938 the Gestapo had the power to direct those arrested under the auspices of 175 to be sent to concentration camps,<sup>xxiii</sup> which Schirmeck was without any doubt. After six months (during which he witnessed the murder of his lover<sup>xxiv</sup>) Seel was transferred to compulsory military service for the Reich, which he miraculously survived.

Many elements of research on the specific targeting of homosexual men under the Nazi regime demand that a certain objectivity be maintained. For one, it must be acknowledged that it was, as voiced by Elie Wiesel, that while not all victims of the Holocaust were Jews, all Jews were victims. In addition, sexuality must be viewed within the frameworks of race, class, and gender to understand the position of the individual, and therein their particular experiences in the larger event of the Holocaust.

“Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation

of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power.”<sup>xxv</sup>

Within this framework of attempting to understand the complexities of sexuality and gender, the complexities of homophobia in the Third Reich take on new significance. Through a critical historical lens, it is seen that sexuality is less a rigid structure but rather a dynamic and fluid construction, one that is constantly in flux, as is evidenced by the repeated policies (in the Nazi regime and West German reform era) to attempt the governance and reform of gender roles, sexual orientation, and reproductive rights. Even when viewed through the historical lens, it is imperative to research whose history is being displayed, or has been written. The homosexual history of the Holocaust is a relatively new field of historical scholarship, and as such has less background in universally accredited study. This is also due to the fact that the scholars representing queerness in any historical arena are working uphill against the very institutions that have time and again aligned against queer representation or actively attempted to discredit the field.

Universities, eugenicists, historians, and physicians all played roles for the promotion of Nazism, and those who did solidified their place among the privileged hierarchy of the system. The main goal of the Reich was to monitor the population and produce new, “ideal” members of that population. An illustration of this, from a gay survivor no less, is chronicled thus:

There were a dozen such institutions in the Reich, The name, made up out of whole cloth, was a typical Nazi neologism combining *Leben* (life) and *Born*,

(wellspring). The wellspring of life, the fountain of youth, was actually a factory for blond babies created by mating carefully selected partners of pure Aryan stock. [...] I was witnessing one of the Reich's long term programs: its goal was to put an end to marriage and family by creating a direct link between procreation and Nazism.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Whether Pierre Seel was sent to this "resort" in Pomerania as part of a homosexual re-education program, or simply to witness the splendor of the Aryan race was a mystery even to him, but it does reveal some interesting points between the Reich and post-war West Germany.

The use of the Reich as humanity for such animalistic purposes is without a doubt monstrous. Largely present is the idea that women provided the Spartan woman's ideal of giving birth for the state, without any concern of her own needs. Thinking critically, one also arrives at the fact that women's subservience to their husbands and to the state is only separated by one degree in conservative regimes. Through this lens, though, can still be seen alarming correlations to conservative dogma concerning women's roles in the home, and women's roles in the Reich.

Gender-specific treatment with respect to homosexuality was based on the different assessment of male and female sexuality in general and can be traced back to the unequal status of men and women. The Nazi state assumed that women were "naturally" dependent on men, especially in terms of sexuality, and efforts were made to reinforce this as far as possible. Based on a centuries old patriarchal tradition that declared passivity a female trait, a self-assured sense of female

sexuality, including homosexuality, was unfathomable. All of this led a majority of Nazis to believe that female sexuality did not represent a threat to the “German national community.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

The lack of equality between sexes, and the failure to recognize gender deviance among any women, are implicit to one another. The patriarchy, showing itself here in the form of Nazi men, presume to know through their unequal privilege that which they do not know, due to their deliberate separation from and judgment at a distance of women. In an ouroboros cycle, Nazi men viewed the possible threat of women’s sexuality, and then, by undermining the validity of women’s autonomy without men, assure themselves the threat is not real. “Most lawyers and politicians also agreed that the danger to the state posed by ‘seduction’ among women was ‘by far not as great’ as with gay men, since “a seduced woman was not permanently withdrawn from normal sexual intercourse, but retained her usability in terms of population policy.”<sup>xxviii</sup> The language is clear: women exist solely for the use of men and are wholly dependent on the will of man. Her body and the very will of her being can be bent to the will or wants of the patriarchal male, whether this be her husband, or a state commissioner requiring the service of her womb to create soldiers for world domination.

Again, as with all pieces of the Holocaust puzzle, intersections run every way. “The Nazi state laid claim to total control over reproductive behavior and human life, which had extremely different consequences, depending on one’s respective position in the “value” hierarchy.”<sup>xxix</sup> This meaning, just as gay men deemed to be Aryan would be re-educated for use

in the war machine, so would Aryan women, were they to be fundamentally out of line. Rather than treating lesbianism as a medical condition as with gay men, homosexual women were simply disappointing; not living up to their full potential as women. Lesbian women in this sense are fortunate to have survived the intensive persecution of gay men, but one should not go so far with what this fortune means. Having a higher chance at survival was only due to the Nazi ideology that women were little more than chattel, without any real internal will or if any, no agency or autonomy with which to externalize that will.

Directly following the war, the gay men of Berlin experienced a (relatively) great deal of freedom. Albrecht M. remembers, "Yeah...those of us who had made it through the Third Reich, naturally we weren't afraid afterwards. Sure, we had to be careful and so on, but in Berlin one was not nervous at all thanks to the connections with Allied gay men."<sup>xxx</sup> The destructive end of World War II allowed for a roughly similar zeitgeist to that of the interwar period, though much more frantic, laced with severe violence and civil disorder, and short-lived. This renewed openness of sexuality could not last for a long amount of time. The scale and scope of this war had been of a different tone completely, and more organization and restrictive policies were had on the German state. As the Allied powers began to sort through the rubble, both physical and socio-political, of the war, entrenched values began to rise to the surface, with the express aid of a conservative post-war government.

In 1949, on September 16th, Conrad Adenauer was elected chancellor of West Germany. His policies focused on conservative, Christian values, and the

*Familienpolitik*, the family politics. To rebuild from the literal ashes of Germany, this administration aimed to repackage the traditional family structure. “Although the Nazi ideology had exalted the family as the ‘germ cell’ of the nation and had promised to protect the German family from the forces of modernism, in practice the party’s social policies encroached on familial decisions, undermined parental authority, and created rival social institutions that competed for both the time and the loyalty of family members.”<sup>xxxix</sup> This image of the traditional family bastardized by the Nazi regime was touted as the largest issue regarding the regime and served a dual purpose. In this way, the West German authorities were able to plug this message to an audience ready to accept any discourse that addressed the need to ‘fix’ the nation without addressing the genocidal atrocities of the Holocaust. In addition, the “new” family structure, though similar to the idealized family of the Nazi era and identical to the Christian nuclear family before, was poured into the design of the new home following the advertisers who structured this home to be a marketing tool in and of itself, driving the broken economy skyward as the families were urged to buy more and more products. To solidify these goals, West Germany gave the church, as the only institution to have survived the war relatively intact, a trumped-up role in Nazi resistance.

The post-war period leading the 1950’s and 1960’s was an environment hostile to the different, the aberrant. The powers that be, of the time, such as the Adenauer administration feared the already fragile population being destabilized in any way. Already contending with the Communist threat from the East, and the *halbstarke*, or hoodlums rioting in 1956-57, the act of *jugendschutz*, or of protecting

the children, became of huge importance.<sup>xxxii</sup> For the new Germany in the West, the family unit took on a new importance, no longer a warrior unit, aiming at creating automatons for the state and Fuhrer but rather, aimed to return to a Germany of the less mythic and Teutonic, and more tangible and Victorian past. “The faith placed in the power of family and marriage was interconnected in numerous ways with the image of manhood that was lifted up as the defining ideal of the Adenauer era. Eager to distance themselves from the Nazi past, West Germans put aside the image of the German soldier that had been so important for defining manhood during the first half of the twentieth century.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> Herein lies the greatest difference and similarity of the Reich and West Germany; both represent patriarchal institutions through which the power of public opinion was channeled to a vulnerable and eager audience. Audiences from both eras existed with a cultural heritage exulting the male, and the *Volk*, the true people of Germany. The innateness of mystique of the *Volksgemeinschaft* was enough to redirect Nazi attention from extermination of homosexuals to their reeducation and reassignment as functional procreators for the state. And, as Pierre Seel noted of police forces, “The surveillance of homosexuals is such an inveterate police habit that it probably didn’t occur to anyone to terminate it.”<sup>xxxiv</sup> This, while ringing true in other West European nations, is not as watertight in German waters. While all of Europe, East, West, North, and South, were quite demolished by both World Wars, the pointed dismantling of the socio-political structure in Germany following both world wars shows that the truest pieces of German homophobia do not come out of bureaucratic repetition or police habits, but out of deeper cultural influences, which are malleable to the state’s

intent. In the post-war years, the intent was to rebuild as quickly as possible. By the logic of many at this time, the most direct route to reconstruction concerned a national return to the ideals previous the wars. To strengthen the family, and by proxy the nation, “the West German *Vaterland* was discursively refashioned as a *land of fathers*.”<sup>xxxv</sup> In this “new” society, there was still no room for gender traitors or sexual deviants. As Jürgen Baumann reports, between 1953 and 1965, German police recorded 98,700 175-ers, of whom 38,000 were found guilty.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The disconnect with the homosexual past widened in the reconstruction years. “For those who *were* interested in homosexuality in the 1950’s and 1960’s, there were serious obstacles to research. Most countries have privacy laws that make it difficult to examine archival material dealing with personal information of a sensitive nature until a considerable time has passed.”<sup>xxxvii</sup> In addition to these laws, there was the “widespread notion that homosexuality was a type of illness was not the only prejudice of the 1950’s and 1960’s that connected West Germany with its Nazi past. Also important were the memories of the so-called ‘Rohm Putsch’ of the Nazi era, which continued to color Germans’ perceptions of homosexuality by linking it with criminality, sexual excess, and political betrayal.”<sup>xxxviii</sup> Here again we see the usage of homosexuality as a scapegoat, as an explanation as to why politicians would betray their constituents, why neighbors would let each other starve, why adults who otherwise seemed so normal and good could abuse children.

The queer survivors of the Nazi Holocaust are remarkably few in number. Between the reification of Paragraph 175 in 1935 and the end of the Third Reich, approximately 100,000 gay men were arrested, mostly of white Christian



background.<sup>xxxix</sup> Half of these men were convicted, and of those ten to fifteen thousand were murdered in the camps. According to Rüdiger Lautmann, the number of gay men in the concentration camps was estimated to be between 5,000 and 15,000; most scholarship asserts 10,000 as currently the most probably number.<sup>xl</sup> The particular complexities of queer survival often hinged on silence. As shown, the societies these men and women lived in have only recently accepted or even tolerated their very existence. From 1931 to 1933, previous the language shift in the law, there were 2,319 convictions of homosexual men. Following reform, arrests increased to 22,143 from 1936 to 1938. In 1941, arrests of gay men peaked at 9,244, fourteen times the Weimar era average of 650 convictions per year.<sup>xli</sup>

In addition to the terrific upswing in convictions of paragraph 175 offences, the camp system was even more horrifying for those demarcated as homosexual. Geoffrey Giles states that, “the paragraph was used as a tool of political persecution when no other criminal charges could be dreamt up. Whether the charge was true or not, the pink triangle on your sleeve sent you to the bottom of the camp hierarchy.”<sup>xlii</sup> In the camps themselves, documentation as a gay man pushed the prisoner to the lowest rung of camp existence. Conditions for men labeled with the pink triangle were considerably worse, due to the obvious and widespread homophobia and hatred for queerness cutting across class, race, gender, and socio-politics, even past liberation of the camps as Paragraph 175 stayed in full effect until 1969.

The 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau passed without the recognition or involvement of the homosexual victims of the Holocaust.” The

Nazi regime incarcerated, castrated, sought to re-educate, and murdered thousands of German and Austrian homosexuals at Auschwitz and other camps. Yet, 'Homosexuals were the only group [...] whose representatives were not invited to participate' in this ceremony."<sup>xliii</sup> The refusal to acknowledge victims of the Holocaust in this regard shows how little distance has been covered in regards to scholarship to validate the event of homosexual persecution. While an event as the Holocaust is monolithic, it is not crystallized. The individuality of the experiences, rather, horrors of this persecution are overlooked in such cases. The victims, while to those concerned labeled generally as "survivors", have far more to say independently than as a whole. Yet, while appreciating that all who suffered under the yoke of Nazism have particular and valid voices, these voices do share a commonality and intimacy. "While Holocaust educators can present these victim groups [of the Holocaust] as unconnected with one another, they are in fact inseparable."<sup>xliv</sup> This inseparability gives each voice a louder purpose, to be heard in the din and find others to help make sense of what these survivors have to say.

Many survivors, though, are unwilling or very unable to speak of their experiences. "It's all about patiently carrying one's burden."<sup>xlv</sup> So stated Heinz F., a German gay man who was arrested twice by the Nazi's, spending more than eight years in concentration camps while his friends and lovers met their end at Mauthausen. This is huge tragedy, that for documentation of many, we are too late. The passage of time it took for Jewish and other Holocaust survivors to come forward with their full stories, outside of Nuremberg trial accusations and hearings, was several decades. In the space of those decades, most nations and nearly all

scholars were shedding the disgusting mantle of anti-Semitism. As such, the survivors had an audience, rather, people willing, ready, and able to hear, process, and archive their persecution.

Intersectionality of gayness and Nazism also provides a problematic step for survivors. Many gay men, German as they were, were conscripted into the Wehrmacht, and thus often forced to commit war atrocities alongside willing Nazi's. "I think people became very indifferent very fast. When things go on for years...In the beginning they were just camps, that these camps became death camps...wasn't known in the beginning."<sup>xlvi</sup> Albrecht Brecker willingly chose to join the army after being released from the camps. Upon returning to his town and discovering the men all gone to war, he joined the army to be with men. Truly no conventional Nazi, as his desire for male closeness was not out of political ideology but rather lust of the flesh; a rather subversive, and all the more complex, case.

Survivors, as stated, had numerous ways in which they managed to survive, and individual horrors to endure. As Pierre Seel recounts, not all memories can be dealt with constructively.

Now you see why I did not speak for forty years? I am ninety percent disabled from the war! My ass still bleeds! Even today! The Nazi's stuck twenty-five centimeters of wood up my ass. Do you think I can talk about that? That it is good for me? This is too much for my nerves [Klaus]! I can't do this anymore. I am ashamed for humanity.<sup>xlvii</sup>

To try to make sense of torture is huge gulf for any discipline to stretch. In historical context, most often torture has been utilized to gain information, as well as assert

dominance and ownership of the human body. Homosexual men were stripped of their agency and, as Seel explicitly detail, of their dignity and humanity. For a survivor to come forward with this information, was often not an option. As detailed above, the Adenauer administration did not embrace homosexuality, instead they continued to withhold agency from these individuals, to perpetuate the Nazi system of state terror to subvert the autonomy of gay men and women. Coming forward was not an option until recently; few had the power, or had been so traumatized that they could not take back the power to shout their horrors to peers unwilling, for the most part, to validate their experiences.

“Now for me too, it’s all over. In September I’ll be ninety-three. Thick skin, no?”<sup>xlviii</sup> Despite the fact that many other survivors, for whichever reasons, have been unable to come forward with their testimonies of the atrocities of Nazi policies combating homosexuality, these stories have been told. The correlations and links to the codification of laws that were allowed to endure far too long are identified. Armed with this knowledge, and a critical eye to all forms of institution resembling or hearkening in any way to the Nazi ideologies, we can combat with words, knowledge, education, and action, the current state of homophobic violence against the queer population of the world, to prevent any more living ghosts made of any person in any society.

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*“A ghost has no fantasies, no sexuality.”<sup>xlix</sup>*

## Notes:

<sup>i</sup> Pierre Seel. *Liberation was for others: memoirs of a gay survivor of the Nazi Holocaust*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1997. 91.

<sup>ii</sup> Paragraph 175:

“175. A male who commits lewd and lascivious acts with another male or permits himself to be abused for lewd and lascivious acts, shall be punished by imprisonment. In a case of a participant under 21 years of age at the time of the commission of the act, the court may, especially slight cases, refrain from punishment.

175a. Confinement in a penitentiary not to exceed ten years and, under extenuating circumstances, imprisonment for not less than three months shall be imposed:

1. Upon a male who, with force or threat of imminent danger to life and limb, compels another male to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or compels the other party to submit to abuse for lewd and lascivious acts;

2. Upon a male who, by abuse of a relationship of dependence upon him, in consequence of service, employment, or subordination, induces another male to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or to submit to being abused for such acts;

3. Upon a male who being over 21 years of age induces another male under 21 years of age to commit lewd and lascivious acts with him or to submit to being abused for such acts;

4. Upon a male who professionally engages in lewd and lascivious acts with other men, or submits to such abuse by other men, or offers himself for lewd and lascivious acts with other men;

175b. Lewd and lascivious acts contrary to nature between human beings and animals shall be punished by imprisonment; loss of civil rights may also be imposed.”

(English Translation by Warren Johannson and William Percy in “Homosexuals in Nazi Germany,” Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual, Vol. 7)

<sup>iii</sup> Butler, Judith. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

<sup>iv</sup> Günter Grau, Claudia Schoppmann, and Patrick Camiller. *Hidden holocaust?: gay and lesbian persecution in Germany, 1933-45*. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1995. 54.

<sup>v</sup> Dagmar Herzog. *Sexuality and German fascism*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. “Denial of Homosexuality” Geoffrey Giles. 289.

“Implementation of policies against homosexuals was neither consistent nor unfailingly rigorous.”

<sup>vi</sup> William J. Spurlin. *Lost intimacies: rethinking homosexuality under national socialism*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.107

<sup>vii</sup> Rector, Frank. *The Nazi extermination of homosexuals*. New York: Stein and Day, 1981.10.

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- viii PBS. "The Great War . Resources . WWI Casualties and Deaths | PBS." PBS. [http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath\\_pop.html](http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html) (accessed May 7, 2014).
- ix Rector. 15.
- x Clayton John Whisnant. *Male homosexuality in West Germany: between persecution and freedom, 1945-69*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 19.
- xi Ibid.19.
- xii James D. Steakly. *The homosexual emancipation movement in Germany*. New York: Arno Press, 1975. 91.
- xiii Richard Plant. *The pink triangle: the Nazi war against homosexuals*. New York: H. Holt, 1986.16.
- xiv Ibid. 16.
- xv Rector. 15.
- xvi Whisnant. 17.
- xvii Ibid. 15.
- xviii Spurlin. 32.
- xix Plant. 21.
- xx Seel.13.
- xxi Ibid. 24.
- xxii Ibid. 25-26.
- xxiii United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Persecution of Homosexuals in the Third Reich," <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?ModuleId=10005261>
- xxiv Seel. 43.
- "Now I froze in terror. I had prayed that he would escape their lists, their roundups, their humiliations. And here he was, before my powerless eyes, which filled with tears. Unlike me, he had not carried dangerous letters, torn down posters, or signed any statements. And yet he had been caught and he was about to die. What had happened? What had the monsters accused him of? Because of my anguish I have completely forgotten the wording of the death sentence
- Then the loudspeakers broadcast some noisy classical music while the SS stripped him naked and shoved a tin pail over his head. Next they sicced their ferocious German shepherds on him: the guard dogs first bit into his groin and thighs, then devoured him right in front of us. His shrieks of pain were distorted and amplified by the pail in which his head was trapped. My rigid body reeled, my eyes gaped at so much horror, tears poured down my cheeks, I fervently prayed that he would black out quickly."
- xxv Foucault, Michel. *The history of sexuality*. London: Penguin, 1992. 105.
- xxvi Seel. 61.
- xxvii Claudia Schoppmann. *Days of masquerade: life stories of lesbians during the Third Reich*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. 15.
- xxviii Ibid. 17.
- xxix Ibid. 13.
- xxx Whisnant. 24.
- xxxi Ibid. 26.

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xxxii Ibid. 56-58.

xxxiii Ibid. 55

xxxiv Seel 22

xxxv Heide Fehrenbach. *Rehabilitating fatherland: Race and German Remasculinization*. *Signs* 24(1998), 107-27

xxxvi Jürgen Baumann, *Paragraph 175: Über die Möglichkeit einfache, die nichtjugendgefährdende und nicht öffentliche Homosexualität unter Erwachsenen straffrei zu lassen* (Berlin: , 1968), 63-66.

xxxvii Ibid. 2

xxxviii Grau. 43.

xxxix *Paragraph 175*. Film. Directed by Robert P. Epstein. United States: New Yorker Video, 2002.

xl Rüdiger Lautmann ed., *Seminar: Gesellschaft und Homosexualität*. (Frankfurt am Main: 1977).

xli Grau. 131.

lii Geoffrey J. Giles, "Intro to Karl and Erich," *Gay Voices in East Germany* ed. John Borneman, (Bloomington, 1991): 13.

liiii Plant. 41.

xliv Ibid. 42

"Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazi regime and its collaborators systematically targeted, sterilized, incarcerated, tortured, raped, subjected to pseudo-medical experimentation, and/ or murdered millions of people whom they had categorized under an array of real and perceived social, biological, racial, religious, and political groups, including people of African descent, alcoholics, asocials, Communists, criminals, dissenting Catholic and Lutheran clergy, the mentally and physically disabled Freemasons, male homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, lesbians, pacifists, Poles, political dissidents, prostitutes, Roma and Sinti (or Gypsies), Slavic and Asiatic peoples of the Soviet Union, Soviet prisoners of war, and trade unionists. While Holocaust educators can present these victims groups as unconnected with one another, they are in fact inseparable."

xlv *Paragraph 175*. Film. Directed by Robert P. Epstein. United States: New Yorker Video, 2002. (Heinz F.) 1:04:50

xlvi Ibid. (A. Brecker.)1:01:20.

xlvii Ibid. (P. Seel.) 1:03:00.

xlviii Ibid. (Heinz F.) 1:07:30.

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