5 Pinkwashing Germany?[1]

German Homonationalism and the “Jewish Card”

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The Party and the Holocaust

Like most everywhere in the “Western” world, Gay Pride is also celebrated in Berlin each June. The “official” Christopher Street Day (CSD) is *the* big event for the gay-lesbian community in the German capital, with participation by local and national political figures, and lately even ambassadors from the USA and Great Britain. In 2012, when the parade passed by the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe on its way to the Brandenburg Gate, the disco trucks briefly turned off their music out of respect for the victims of the German genocide of European Jews. Although “the mood during the parade and the closing rally” was supposed to have been “great,” the queer Berlin magazine *Siegessäule* later also recorded “sporadic criticism,” citing a certain Konstanze as a representative of the crowd of “around 700,000 participants,” who thought: “It makes sense to have a moment of silence, but it did kill the party a bit” (Sauer 2012). A few hours after the event, someone using the nickname “Actually 22” had a different view, posted on the website of the *taz:* “People started grumbling: ‘Goddamn Jews! Death to the Jews! It was only three million anyway!’ (It was more, but that’s what they were shouting)” (Wösch 2012).

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For lack of another option, the user comment had been posted to an interview published the morning of the parade in which a functionary from the Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany (LSVD) reported on the current persecution of homosexuals in Iran. She herself had left that country in 1977, before the proclamation of the "Islamic Republic," but even in Berlin she had already been "berated and spit on" by "people with Muslim origins" (ibid.). The description by "Actually 22" below it began almost apologetically: "I don't know where I should bring this up, since you don't actually report on the CSD in any traditional form. But I'd still like to publish what I experienced today in some form" (ibid.).

In fact, year after year, the *taz* brings out articles at the time of the Berlin CSD with a global-strategic perspective on local events. On the eve before the 2010 parade, for instance, the paper reminds us – in light of presumably increasing attacks by young men "with migration background" of visitors to the gay party district in the Schöneberg neighborhood – about the fate of a different "minority," which "had always understood to seek out niches – in the end, however, it became the victim. Its self-empowerment bears the name Israel" (Reichert 2010). The defensive posture of the Jewish state in the otherwise Muslim Near East is quite clearly recommended as a model for the local gay neighborhood: "They have atomic bombs, and since then, this minority can no longer expect sympathy. But they also no longer need any bland pity" (ibid.). Neither the acknowledged "hostility toward Turks, which can no longer be argued away" (ibid.) among white Schöneberg gays, nor the "empowerment" of the expatriation of all German Jews to Israel seem all that troubling from such a viewpoint.

When persistent facts seem not to comply at all with one's image of the world, they have to be brushed aside as fringe events or, better yet, delegated to the "other side". Accordingly, the rest of the *taz* thread turned to the Iran story, in which, by the way, no one cast any doubt on the report from "Actually 22". Following appeasing platitudes ("Gays are also people after all"), the comments quickly shifted to the smaller leftist alternative to the official parade, the *Transgenialer CSD* (TCSD), which ended, as always, with a rally in Oranienstraße in Berlin-Kreuzberg. "If there is any constant to the *Transgenialer CSD*, [...] it is its decided anti-Zionism. And then the Turkish/Arab/Kurdish dust catchers are happy to spill out of the courtyards and into O-Strasse," agitated one user, wondering why "Judith Butler [...] was not invited by the Kreuzberg group, so she could once again downplay Hamas and Hezbollah as a 'social, revolutionary' movement" (Wösch 2012).

The US American philosopher, who declined the Civil Courage Award at the Berlin CSD in 2010, in part in protest against "complicity with anti-Muslim racism" (Butler 2010) among the predominant gay organizations in the city, had received Frankfurt's Theodor W. Adorno Prize earlier that year, which was met with widespread rejection well in advance in Germany among newspaper and blog commentators. One self-described journalist "in solidarity with Israel," for instance, accused the world-renowned philosopher – who, regarding the Middle East conflict, once professed that she had to "speak out as a Jew [...] against injustice and to advocate for the endangered lives of Jews as well as non-Jews" (Finger 2008) – of advocating for "the incorporation of a variety of Islamist anti-Semitic squads into the global left" (Osten-Sacken 2012).

That year certain print and online media made a workshop offered by two Jewish-Israeli queer activists living in Berlin as part of the TCSD 2012 a cause for concern. Under the title "Pinkwashing Israel" they explained how their country's government used their hard-won gay rights for the country's international public image, as a means of legitimizing racist domestic and occupation policies. Presumably not to deceive anyone into thinking that such analyses were "the latest gimmick of anti-Israeli propaganda," the weekly *Jungle World*, which was particularly critical of the event, consistently declined to mention the origins of the speakers (Ströhlein 2012).

More than any other topic, the relation to the state of Israel – regardless of any "pro-" or "anti-Zionist" self-image on the part of the discussants – has become the measuring stick for internal German debates about nation and belonging. The question of how "the" homosexuals in Israel are doing is increasingly among the core issues of both the "pinkwashing" as well as the opposing "pink watching" movement. The degree to which "the figure of the Jews" gets instrumentalized for quite different battles has recently become clear in German debates about circumcision, where, due to vociferous conflicts about "universalism" vs. "cultural relativism," real people leading their private lives, beyond their function in the public non-Jewish German collective, have been pushed to the background[2].

2 On this the Cologne-based Orientalist and writer Navid Kermani: "And I still can't quite believe that not even 70 years after the Shoah traditional Jewish life in Germany is once again being criminalized and therefore ultimately being pushed into illegality. This offends me as a German citizen almost more than it alarms me as a Muslim" (Frank 2012). On the so-called circumcision debate in 2012, cf. Çetin and Wolter 2013, as well as Çetin, Voß and Wolter 2012.

"A Tactic of the National Gay Movement"

It has become a commonplace in "enlightened" German national discourse to name homophobia and anti-Semitism in the same breath, the common reference being the persecution during the Nazi period. "Much as it was with the Jews, albeit on a smaller scale and with less effect on the public, the SS targeted homosexuals," wrote Eugen Kogon in his standard work, first published in 1946, on the system of the German concentration camps. Indeed, "possibly because homosexuality was originally widespread in Prussian military circles, the SA, and the SS itself, so that it was supposed to be ruthlessly outlawed and exterminated" (Kogon 2004, 284). They placed, for instance, the camp prisoners classified as homosexual[3] in Buchenwald among those to be transported to death "in the highest percentage in relation to their numbers"; also, the human experiments by SS physicians to "eliminate homosexuality" were addressed by Christian antifascists (ibid., 284f). But while these facts – unlike the number of victims[4] – are undisputed in international research, Burkhard Jellonek and Rüdiger Lautmann, in their introduction to the 2002 collection *National Socialist Terror against Homosexuals*, highlight the fact that most foreign scholars counter the claim, made by many German authors, that the persecution of homosexuals in the Third Reich took on "a special character, as exhibited by the so-called Final Solution to the Jewish question in comparison to common anti-Semitism" (Jellonek and Lautmann 2002, 12).

The background for the "strategic usage of the parallel holocaust/homocaust [...] as a tactic by the national gay movement" (ibid., 13) is the legal situation after liberation from fascism. Paragraph 175, which had been taken over from Prussian law after the founding of the German Reich, criminalized homosexuality between men, and was intensified by the Nazis in 1935. In the GDR the original paragraph had initially returned, and then in 1957 an act to alter the criminal

3 Here and in the following this term always refers exclusively to men. On the persecution history of lesbian women, on the national debate about the lesbian victims of the Nazis and their representation in the Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted under Nazism, and indications of the sparse research materials on the topic, cf. a statement by Lesbenberatung Berlin/LesMigraS (2010). Persecution was often additionally targeted at gender non-conforming persons, regardless of sexual orientation or any self-designations such as "lesbian" or "gay".

4 The scholarly literature gives very different numbers. Based on recent studies, Günter Grau estimates that about 6,000 men were taken to concentration camps as "homosexuals," only half of whom survived the camps (2011, 317).

code went into effect that entailed a virtual suspension of the criminal liability of homosexuality between adult men. In West Germany, the National Socialist version was maintained, and in 1957 it was confirmed by the Federal Constitutional Court as fundamental to the moral outlook of the people – thus deeming it to be a law that was not specifically influenced by National Socialism. Some 50,000 of the total of around 100,000 cases opened in the West against the so-called 175ers ended in conviction (see Bluhm 2012). The convicted also often continued to be exposed to barbaric medical interventions (see Voß 2013). In order to argue against the continuing anti-gay violence of the state, "the" gays were represented as the forgotten sufferers of German fascism (cf. Bochow 2011, 85). A book title by Harry Wilde from 1969 read *The Fate of the Alienated: The Persecution of Homosexuals in the "Third Reich" and Their Position in Society Today*, and even as late as 1981 Hans-Georg Stümke and Rudi Finkler were attempting to position gays as a whole as close as possible to Jews as the acknowledged victims of Nazi racial fanaticism with their book *Pink Triangle, Pink Lists: Homosexuals and "Healthy Public Sentiment" from Auschwitz to Today*.

Nonetheless, John C. Fout, who discerned the continuing existence of gays bars in several German cities up to the end of fascism, and, incidentally, found that in Hamburg 50 percent of those persecuted as "homosexual" were members of the Nazi Party, proved that in comparison to the Shoah, "despite the concentration camps, despite the murder of gays during the Nazi period," there was "never a total excision of homosexuality and no systematic persecution of gays" (Jellonek and Lautmann 2002, 169). As for ideological principles, Voß notes that in Nazi Germany "it was not widely assumed that homosexuality was hereditary, as might have been expected in the context of discussions being carried out there about 'races' and 'degeneration'" (Voß 2013; cf. Grau 2011). Rather, as James D. Steakley summarizes, the Nazi persecution of homosexuals – who had not been "completely rounded up, but only selectively arrested" – was more about "re-educating heterosexuality or at least sexual abstinence". This would distinguish them "fundamentally from the Nazi persecution of Jews, which was meant to be carried out to the last man, the last woman, the last child" (Jellonek and Lautmann 2002, 66). The behavioral aspect is also underscored by the name of the agency responsible for this persecution: "Reich Headquarters for the Control of Homosexuality and Abortion".

For Steakley it is a dangerous political myth when "gay opinion makers" sometimes let homosexual men even appear "as the primary target group of the National Socialist eradication campaign," since in doing so they "played down fascist racial fanaticism, situating homophobia as the decisive motif of the Nazi movement" (Jellonek and Lautmann 2002, 63). We must therefore differentiate – not between victims of Nazi terror, but between non-Jewish German gays. The majority of them belonged "exactly like other German men and women to the most willing subordinates and beneficiaries of the Nazi state" (ibid., 65).

The Art of Appropriation

In the new gay movement that formed in the Federal Republic after legal liberalization in 1969, there were indeed attempts to differentiate the view of history. Some began to engage critically with the activists from earlier generations, discovering that there were racializing/antisemitic tendencies among them (cf. Nieden 2005). Manfred Herzer, one of the founders of the Berlin Gay* Museum, summarized the state of this critique as follows on the occasion of the large West Berlin exhibition "Eldorado" from 1984:

> "As correct as it no doubt is to view the Nazi era as a period of the most extreme persecution and repression of homosexuals, it is still wrong to sit back with this knowledge as the presumed complete truth. The complexity of the relationship between Hitlerian fascism and homosexuality is not nearly well enough researched at this point to be able to explain it comprehensibly" (Herzer 1992, 47).

Meanwhile, precisely for the leftist mainstream gay and lesbians, the "pink triangle" of the camp inmates classified as homosexual became a symbol of general gay self-awareness (cf. Bochow 2012, 87).

In contrast, nothing was or is said in gay circles seeking recognition about the groups that fell victim to "hereditary health" policies, or about Roma and Sinti, about Slavs, about "asocials" and deserters, about trade unionists, socialists, nor communists. It is also shockingly rare that Jewish lesbians and gays – who necessarily must have represented the numerically largest group of victims among homosexuals – are ever mentioned. "Identity politics madness treated being homosexual and being Jewish as completely antagonistic" (Stedefeldt 2007, 5), criticized the publicist Eike Stedefeldt in 2007 during the planning stages of the Berlin Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted under Nazism, which was to be inaugurated the following year. A piece of "appropriation art," it stands above all for the political arrogation of the gay-lesbian initiators, who had polemicized against the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe because it had neglected "their" victims. The solitary chunk in the center of Berlin deliberately seems to have been cast out of the arrangement of the 2,711 blocks that memorialize the victims of the Shoah just diagonally opposite the street. “Completely left out of the debate was the idea that the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe could commemorate more homosexuals than any gay memorial site, since it is safe to estimate that among the six million murdered Jews, 300,000 were homosexual” (ibid.). The idea was clear, if unspoken: “homosexual victims” are those who had been classified as “Aryan” and who therefore presumably should have been granted complete participation in society.

Incorporation into the National Collective

It was first an academic work, considered a milestone on the path toward memorializing the self-image of German homosexual men, that “solved” the problem. Alexander Zinn, later spokesman for the Berlin LSVD, positioned himself from the beginning as an opponent of the self-doubting tendency in the gay movement. Even if it had been the case, as Manfred Herzer

> “no longer wanted to rule out, that German homosexuals in 1933 ‘entered the Nazi movement in droves, so to speak, where they were not ranked behind their heterosexual compatriots’ – does this not show precisely the insignificance of their estimation for their relation toward National Socialism?” (Zinn 2007, 13)

The propaganda of antifascist emigration would then be to blame for the fact that something that Zinn considers not to “have any relevance, from the perspective of a historian of the period, for the repeated claim of a connection between homosexuality and National Socialism – why should German homosexuals have been any cleverer than the rest of the population” – could become the “stereotype” of the homosexual National Socialists (ibid., 112).

Zinn’s book fits into a barely questioned historical revisionism that has taken place since the end of the power bloc confrontation. Homophobia is expressly represented as a *leftist* phenomenon – contrafactually, since the work which in this regard is unassailable in its scholarship shows that in Germany only the political left advocated for the abolition of Paragraph 175. Nonetheless, the communists and socialists, “with the homophobia that they cultivated” obstructed “the possibility of a differentiated way of looking” at the Nazi movement (ibid., 85). For example, they were not prepared to appreciate that in the case of the SA director Ernst Röhm, who at the time of the Weimar Republic was a member of the gay rights oriented *Bund für Menschenrecht*, "his battle [*Kampf* in the original!] applied to 'a social order, that in place of a healthy recognition of natural operations and knowledge, prescribed hypocrisy, lies, displacement, prudery, and uncalled-for indignation'" (ibid., 81).

In their isolation, the exiled antifascists supposedly no longer understood the Germans. The reasons for their exile get as little attention from Zinn as the practical activity of the gay *Nazi* Röhm. According to Zinn, there is much to indicate "that the Gestapo's persecution of homosexuals was generally less accepted by the German population, but also by the public abroad" than there would be for "antisemitic excesses" (ibid., 139f). And he himself seems to share this assessment, at least as concerns the Germans, when he considers it plausible, for instance, that the referendum of 1935 on the future of the Saar Territory was 90.76 percent in favor of reintegration into Germany because the population, according to Zinn, had rejected the "instrumentalization of homosexuality" being carried out by leftist emigrants "on behalf of the campaign to maintain the status quo" (ibid., 163).

Zinn, in looking back at the incorporation of homosexuals into the circle of the national community, thus also smooths their path, at least for those who were not persecuted for racist reasons. Not only are long past generations adapted to fit the image of today's "gay" identity, which results in a seamless historiography, the likes of which are otherwise only written for territories and ethnic groups established by the state. The quasi-ethnicity of homosexuals – purged of any non-"Aryan", gender non-conforming, "heritage damaged", leftist, etc. elements – likewise counts as a reputable part of the nation *all along*.

A "Community of Fate"?

When it was still a matter of memorializing the "forgotten homosexual victims," this had to happen above all in competition with the victims of the Shoah, since the debate about the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe was being carried out at the same time. Udo Badelt and Eike Stedefeldt documented a part of the polemics in gay newspapers, where a presumed "privileging" of Jewish victims was then being imagined (Badelt and Stedefeldt 1999). Jan Feddersen even went so far as to write in the *taz* of November 20th, 1997, that in truth homosexuals had it worse than the Jews. Using a term from Hannah Arendt, the article switches to a different topic for two paragraphs, which is meant to lend weight by reflecting on the family:

> "Anyone who speaks of a renaissance of the family should not be silent about homosexuality, about gay and lesbian children. They are, plainly seen, the pariahs of the heterosexual family. Homosexuals have a lot in common with Jews in their collective psychic constitution. Members of both groups know early on, long before they have found a term for the desire for their own sex, long before they are concretely confronted with antisemitic behavior, that they are different from the others. There is a difference between the two minorities, and this is central: Jews know that they are protected as Jews by the family, gays or lesbians do not" (Feddersen 1997, 15).

In turn, the German-Jewish philosopher is conscripted to add a borrowed heft to the argument:

> "When the future political scientist Hannah Arendt moved with her family to another city, her mother impressed upon her before her first day at the new school: If anyone should disparagingly call her a Jew, she should kindly return home at once; she, that is, the mother, would immediately complain – which in fact also happened. There is nothing comparable for homosexuals. What young boy, who isn't interested in shop class and would rather learn how to knit a sweater, would dare to express this wish? What family is modern enough to want to and be able to renounce the traditional images of masculinity and femininity? Or to put it another way: What young man in puberty would dare to refuse the sexual order in public? For around ten years surveys have indicated a shift in mentality in the German population. No, gays should no longer be gassed [!], they say. The liberal credo 'live and let live' no longer excludes homos" (ibid.).

Such impropriety no longer seems necessary today from the viewpoint of the gay mainstream. For instance, Jörg Steinert from the Berlin LSVD, in an interview from May 15, 2012 on the 20-year existence of his organization, answers the question: "Are lesbians and gays a fringe group?", once again without any concrete provocation, with a comparison full of implications: "They are a minority. And they always have conflicts with majorities – it's no different for the Jewish community in Berlin" (Reichert 2012). What may seem completely sensible against the backdrop of an identity politics that above all has to worry about getting grants to work with victims of discrimination and violence, must nonetheless be astonishing at least in view of its political nonchalance. While in fact no one has to pass through a metal detector to get into a lesbian bookshop, a gay sauna, or to the "ecumenical" CSD religious service, and while there are no police officers posted in front of any gay establishment in Germany, the equation of antisemitism and homophobia obviously works quite well from a gay perspective today. The one form of "discrimination" can be understood, discussed, and addressed by analogy with the other. Ideas of consistent, self-coherent identities provide the impulse to keep statistics about violence against the group's members or to call for diversity measures. That this idea also includes having common "enemies" has been clear since 2006, when LSVD Berlin-Brandenburg called for introducing the "Muslim test" from Baden-Württemberg in Berlin and Brandenburg as well. The questionnaire, which was often called "attitude snooping" and was not abolished until 2011, included not only queries about terrorism, but above all questions on antisemitism and on the sexual self-determination of (heterosexual) women and gay men (cf. Migration und Bevölkerung 2006).

The horizontal understanding of discrimination, which assumes the individual victim, reaches its limits when forced to leave this individual framework: historically, structurally, institutionally. For in fact it is not about majorities and minorities, but about relations of dominance that have *become* historical, that have nothing to do with the number or even the existence of "victims". Neither antisemitism nor homophobia can be reduced to verbal and/or physical violence in public spaces, even if these are often the cases that get reported in the newspapers. Often enough people are taken for "gay" or "Jewish," or they know to avoid certain pieces of jewelry or clothing, behaviors, or speech patterns precisely in order not to be *recognized*. The question of what kind of social phenomena homophobia and antisemitism are, and who gets to define them and for what reason, is not considered to be of any great significance. In contrast, against this backdrop, it is at the very least dubious to speak of an increase or decrease in homophobia or antisemitism.

Historically the two phenomena took hold in the second half of the nineteenth century.[5] With the Industrial Revolution the entire society experienced a fundamental transformation (urbanization, mass organizations and media, the formation of the German nation-state, partial secularization, etc.). Modern capitalism quickly supplanted traditional modes of labor and economics, having a direct influence on the relations between the sexes in the lower and middle classes.[6] The new definition and fixed positions of femininity and masculinity not only involved differences between bourgeois and proletarian identities, as the

5 On the history, which goes back to the Spain of the Reconquista, cf. Çetin 2012, 28f.

6 While proletarian women had to pursue industrial work alongside reproduction activities to a much greater degree, women from the bourgeois classes were urged to be wives and mothers first and foremost.

phenomenon "homosexuality" was also defined for the first time (cf. Hirschfeld 1914, 10).

Around the same time arose the phenomenon of modern antisemitism. Unlike anti-Judaism, which was based primarily on Christian religious arguments, the new phenomenon no longer provided an escape from discrimination and violence through Christian baptism. Modern antisemitism emerges, as befits its time, as biological racism, which presumes even assimilated Jews, Christian converts, and/or Jews who are not otherwise "conspicuous" to be foreign, backward, and dangerous *by blood*. In times of profound social, cultural, economic, and political upheavals and crises it offers a way to explain ever more complex processes by forming identity, which was voluntarily taken up by millions of people. It is sometimes argued to this day that Jews have above-average intelligence or that a shadowy Jewish superiority lies behind national and international politics, economics, and media, etc. Like all forms of racism, the exclusion of "others" simultaneously regulates the inclusion of those who may belong – only that the "we" group is constructed as the victim that the Jews are far superior to. While in other forms of racism – even when attributing presumably positive characteristics (such as physical strength, endurance, and diligence, sensitivity or inclination to musicality and sports) – it is above all a matter of ascribing to the "other" a disposition that is closer to nature, less based in reason, in order to legitimate exploitation, domination, and power, antisemitism also gets the function of providing an outlet for *experiences of powerlessness.*[7]

It is certainly justified to say that modern German national identity, as it was first created in the middle of the nineteenth century, was not only modeled on the background of colonialism and the transnational construction of "modernity" and "civilization," but also and precisely in delimitation from Jews. The fact that the German Reich only acquired its colonies in the 1880s, losing them again during the First World War, does not in any way mean that it could have stood outside negotiating "Europe" and whiteness.

The idea of an *unchanging, self-contained, globally operating, superior group* distinguished, then as now, the antisemitic *ressentiment* from homophobic atti-

7 Cf. Gernot Jochheim: "Antisemitism could thus essentially be used to cast blame in a wide variety of contexts only because there were in fact no causalities between Jews and exactly that problem the explanation proposed to deliver […] [It] exclusively served the goals of self-definition and identity-formation on the part of its protagonists" (Jochheim 1999, 25f). This is of course not the place to discuss more involved questions of comparing or contrasting antisemitism and other forms of racism.

tudes, which are above all aimed against the individual and "correctable" *behaviors* of lesbians and gay men. The efforts by gays to create a historical "community of fate" with Jews must therefore not only first fabricate a collective identity "of our own," but then must also deliberately disregard the differences between the groups (and above all the hostilities against them).

Gay Reason of State

Jasbir Puar coined the term "homonationalism" to describe a tendency in North American and European mainstream discourses that does not (any more) fundamentally question the conventional ideal of a white, gender unambiguous, heterosexual middle class, but on the contrary supports it, since other new opportunities for belonging arise through *othering* (Puar 2007). A quote from the Berlin-based group SUSPECT might clarify that the academic version of the term – in the American as well as the German context – corresponds to activism by migrants and people of color.

> "Jasbir Puar uses the term 'homonationalism' to describe the attempt of this (not always successful) assimilation and the accompanying invention of a 'gay friendly' nation. This happens at the costs of those whose status of belonging is becoming ever more precarious in the context of war, the tightening of borders, and growing criminalization: old and new migrants as well as their children and grandchildren – above all those identified as Muslim, Roma and Sinti, as well as other people of color. There are also those whose real or fantasized sexual and gender identities (too many children, too little money, non-monogamous, married too young, too patriarchal, too oppressed) seem less and less to fit the national standard. Those who fall by the wayside also include people who identify as queer, transsexual, homosexual, or bisexual, those who are unable to pass as upstanding (honorary) citizens due to social class, whiteness, or compliant masculinity or femininity" (SUSPECT 2010, 3).

The right to such oblivious belonging seems above all to be achievable by not only condoning a hierarchy between different population groups, but by actively supporting it; the emancipation of society as a whole has to take a back seat whenever the particular interest of gays sees a chance to be implemented. It is no accident that the histories of the gay deaths and survivors of the concentration camps are not compared with those of the Sinti and Roma, with whom there would potentially be many more similarities, for example the lack of knowledge about the victims of the Nazis and the further persecution of the survivors in postwar Germany, but also the absence of compensation payments or the invisibility within the culture of memory as it is taught in schools. This shows how strategically the reference to the Shoah and its survivors is utilized. For in fact the parallels, which are made in an attempt to "climb up" the social hierarchy of victims, are in no way admissible.

For a gay emancipation in the national collective, however, such identification proves in fact to be completely functional. The Berlin Republic did not accept any attempts to relativize the Shoah.[8] On the contrary, the motto "We have learned from Auschwitz" is a formula meant to restore validity to the growing meaning of the nation, both at home and abroad. Not only was the war against Yugoslavia carried out explicitly with German history in mind, but foreign policy has been marked since then by referring to the lessons of the past. "Human rights" are now meant to take center stage – whether in trade relations, the EU accession process, or the granting of honorary titles. The fact that the figure of a refined Germany is in blatant contradiction to weapons exports into crisis zones, deportations of Roma, murders by German soldiers, or unresolved rehabilitation of (also gay) Nazi victims does not disturb the hegemonic self-image.

Gay opinion makers have played an important role in displacing homophobia as well as antisemitism onto those identified as migrant and/or Muslim since the 1990s. The Central Council of Jews in Germany never tires of pointing out the dangers of anti-Muslim racism and common interests, for instance in the debates about the headscarf or the circumcision of boys. In contrast, the "community" makes use of a rhetoric of common suffering with "the" Jews in order to confirm a structurally racist and antisemitic dominant society in its foundations. By referring positively to a "refined Germany," it contributes – intentionally or not – above all to German-washing the gay scenes.

Aside from the banter on the *taz* website, civil society, so often evoked, has also not dealt with the accusation that at the festivities of the gay Berlin mainstream, in the presence of notable German politicians, including guests from the diplomatic corps and not least numerous representatives of the press, an antise-

8 In contrast, the Porajmos, the genocide of the European Roma, has hardly entered mass consciousness, let alone the question of processing it. Zoni Weisz, a Dutch survivor and activist, was the first representative of this group of victims to speak in the German parliament, and that only in January 2011. The Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism was inaugurated in October 2012.

mitic affront was said to have occurred. A couple of streamers for gay-friendly Tel Aviv will have to suffice.

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