

than three decades signed by some 6,000 Germans from all walks of life, a number of them world-famous to this day.

The arguments against Paragraph 175 included: the injustice of stigmatizing as criminal the sexual activity of those whose homosexual orientation was inborn and unalterable; the danger of **blackmail** to which it subjected those who engaged in homosexual activity; the futility of attempting to penalize activity that in any case occurred in private and was thus inaccessible to police surveillance; and the number of illustrious figures of past and present whose homosexual inclinations would have made them liable to prosecution and social ruin.

Despite the support given to the campaign for repeal by the **Social Democratic** (and later by the Communist) Party, beginning with a speech in the Reichstag by August Bebel in 1898, the conservative opponents of repeal retained a majority on the commissions appointed to revise the penal code, and a 15–13 victory in 1929 proved hollow, as the National Socialist assumption of power led to an even more punitive version of the Paragraph in the novella of June 28, 1935, whose constitutionality was later upheld by the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe on May 10, 1957 on the pretext that “homosexual acts indisputably offend the moral feelings of the German people.” In line with this reasoning the government of the Federal Republic has denied all compensation to those who during the Nazi period were for violations of Paragraph 175 interned in concentration camps, where they were forced to wear the **pink triangle** that later became a symbol of gay liberation.

Hirschfeld’s vigorous campaign against Paragraph 175 made it a household word in Germany, and a slang expression for homosexual is *geboren am 17.5*, literally “born on the 17th of May.” Only in 1969 did a Social Democratic government in Bonn repeal that portion of the law which penalized consenting homosexual activity between adult males. Even in the

Nazi period Paragraph 175 was not extended or applied by analogy to lesbians. But it had taken 72 years of struggle, interrupted by the renewed persecution under National Socialism, to secure the abolition of a criminal law that in France the Revolution had stricken from the books in 1791.

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PARANOIA

In current usage the word **paranoia** has two senses. The older meaning, stemming from nineteenth-century **psychiatry**, is that paranoia is a psychosis characterized by systematized delusions of persecution or grandeur. Hallucinations may be present, though they are not necessary for a diagnosis. Recent popularization of the term—a consequence of the general diffusion and vulgarization of psychiatric concepts characteristic of our society—has tended to reduce its meaning to a tendency on the part of an individual or group toward excessive and irrational suspiciousness and distrustfulness.

As part of his overall concern with mental conditions that impaired functioning, Sigmund Freud had sought to grapple with paranoia in the original psychiatric sense. From his mentor in the 1890s, Wilhelm Fliess, Freud took the notion that paranoia was dependent on repressed homosexuality. Only later, in 1915, did he formulate this interpretation as a general rule. He believed that the paranoid withdrawal of love from its former object is always accompanied by a regression from previously sublimated homosexuality to narcissism, omitting the half-way stage of overt homosexuality. This claim of a special link between paranoia and (male) homosexuality has been one of the most

thoroughly examined of all **Freudian concepts**. Although some **psychoanalysts** cling to it, the results of a variety of investigations make the conclusion inescapable that it is untenable.

It may well be that, for reasons independent of the Freudian system, a somewhat larger proportion of homosexuals and lesbians incline to paranoia in the clinical sense. This finding would not be surprising in view of the **homophobia** to which they have been subjected. However, no serious or sustained consideration has been given to the matter.

In recent decades members of some gay organizations have also shown paranoia in the more ordinary sense of collective fearfulness that some sectors of society, primarily the government, are out to get them. To some extent these fears came in the baggage of the **leftist** sects who were influential in the years of gay liberation following the **Stonewall Rebellion** of 1969. They were not entirely groundless, inasmuch as the Federal Bureau of Investigation did engage in surveillance of gay groups. Nonetheless such fears can take exaggerated form, as in the belief that the **AIDS** virus was deliberately spread by some governmental agency. Prudence requires that one be on guard against inimical activities by state agencies, but—in the absence of any real evidence—this is a belief that clearly illustrates the possibilities of exaggeration and panic that lie in wait for those who are overly eager to detect conspiracies.

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PARENTS, LESBIAN AND GAY

Society has traditionally treated parenting as the exclusive prerogative of

heterosexual couples whose union is sanctioned by marriage. Of course when children were born outside of wedlock, both parents and children have been made to feel the stigma of illegitimacy. In advanced industrial countries, however, recent social changes have eroded the dominant position of the nuclear family, and made single-parent units virtually of equal significance. In this context families headed by lesbians and gay men have become more numerous and more visible.

Origins of Lesbian and Gay Parental Units. Some persons, who eventually come to acknowledge their homosexuality, marry while still under the impression that they are bisexual or that their homosexual feelings are merely a phase that they will leave behind once they enter a stable union with a member of the opposite sex. Although they may become uneasy as the feelings emerge or persist, nonetheless children may be conceived and born in the initial years of the **marriage**. A few persons, mainly gay men, discuss their homosexuality with their fiancées before the wedding and, with candor and mutual understanding, the marriage may hold. However, increasing numbers of parents who become aware of their different orientation seek and obtain a divorce. In keeping with the tradition of allowing the parents to remain with the mother, lesbian parents then raise the children. It is much less common for a gay father to retain custody of the children. In other instances childless lesbians and gay men may adopt children, though this has led to some controversy.

Some lesbians have conceived and given birth as a result of artificial insemination by donors. Since many doctors frown on this practice, associations have been formed to help prospective parents to accomplish the insemination themselves. As in the case of childless heterosexual couples seeking artificial insemination, the potential donor must be screened for genetic and health reasons. In many instances a gay man is the semen donor, and