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By almost all accounts, the early 1970s marked a watershed moment for homosexual men and women in West Germany. In 1969, the West German parliament voted to reform the penal code, decriminalizing sexual acts between men and liberalizing a law that had been used to persecute same-sex desiring men since German unification in 1871.1 While several homophile groups and homosexual-oriented publications existed in West Germany prior to 1969, the legal reform both allowed for the foundation of new gay activist organizations and publications and dramatically expanded sexual freedoms for same-sex desiring men.2 After 1969, gay-oriented publications were also openly sold in public, rather than distributed by mail-order subscriptions alone.3 It was then in the period between 1969 and 1983, the year the first AIDS case was diagnosed in Germany, that we see the expansion of gay scenes and contacts, as well as the eventual incorporation of the West German gay rights movement into international gay politics.

Nevertheless, certain continuities remained. Following a long legacy of Western European tourism in search of exotic pleasures, West German gay men traveled around the world during the 1970s, often looking for sexual contacts and “human” connections with men of color. In doing so, West German men constructed some of their destinations as paradises, alternately describing Thailand, the Philippines, Haiti, and other destinations as places of sexual freedom where locals lived “without taboos.” However, expanded publishing possibilities affected both the framing and accessibility of gay travel. Published travel reports in magazines like d&ich and him as well as popular gay guides like Spartacus and The Golden Key reinforced and rearticulated long-standing racial stereotypes, such as happy

1 Paragraph 175 was imported into the German penal code from Prussian law, but was by no means evenly enforced at all moments of German history. As Robert Beachy and others have shown, homosexual activists at the turn of the twentieth century and during the Weimar period occasionally collaborated with law enforcement. In 1935, however, the Nazi government strengthened the law and added Paragraph 175a, which provided for harsher punishments in instances of assault, prostitution, and sexual acts with a subordinate or person under 21. The Nazi «

2 Despite legal reform in 1969, it was only late the following year that direct action-oriented gay activist organizations began to form, influenced as well by the success of Rosa von Praunheim and Martin Dannecker’s 1971 film, It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, but the Society in Which He Lives. For more on gay activism in the early 1970s, see Craig Griffiths, “Sex, Shame, and West German Gay Liberation,” German History 34 (2016): 445-467. Andreas Pretzel and Volker Weiß eds., Rosa Radikale: Die Schwulenbewegung der 1970er Jahre (Hamburg, 2012).

and primitive Africans, bisexual Arabs, and effeminate Asians, for a 1970s West German gay audience. However, as opposed to the idyllic construction often offered during the era of high colonialism or even the first two decades after the Second World War, some gay men began to discuss once-popular travel destinations in North Africa, particularly Morocco and Tunisia, with a growing ambivalence as reports of corruption, police raids, and unabashed prostitution were published alongside enticing ads. By the early 1980s, North Africa no longer functioned as a “refuge” from European constraints, while the construction of new vacation paradises was dependent on Orientalist perceptions of the “primitiveness” of the men who lived there. As Joseph A. Boone makes clear in *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, these stereotypes were neither new nor unique to Germany. Instead, “the regularity with which these tropes reappear over time and across regions discloses a compass and depth that attests to the resilience, as well as elasticity, of the homoerotic connotations.”

In addition, in the 1970s West German gay men found themselves operating in a decisively different social and political landscape from even a few years before. Large-scale migration from southern Europe to West Germany through the guest worker program of 1955 to 1973 elicited mixed reactions from West German gay men. While some used the opportunity to seek out sex with exoticized men in their own backyard, others demonstrated significant sexual aversion toward new national minorities whose differences, as Rita Chin argues, were increasingly racialized. Both reactions, however, hinged on an understanding of a West German gay scene that was implicitly white. At the same time, legal reform placed West Germany alongside a growing number of European countries and American states that had decriminalized homosexuality. The publications and activist groups that formed in the wake of legal reform then paid close attention to the situation of same-sex desiring men under more repressive regimes, calling on West German gays to support their “brothers and sisters” in other countries. With the formation of the International Gay Association (IGA), groups like the General Homosexual Work Group (*Allgemeine Homosexuelle Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, AHA) Berlin as well as publications like *du&ich* and *him* framed

West German gay activism in an international context, arguing that it was the duty of West German and Euro-American gay activists to fight on behalf of gay men and lesbians in more repressive countries. In 1979, the IGA argued that Greece’s petition to join the EEC should be rejected unless it withdrew its proposed law on venereal disease that would target Greek homosexuals, framing gay rights as prerequisite for joining an increasingly integrated Europe. West German gay groups, often working in the context of an IGA-led international movement, could thus claim a universal gay identity shared by their “brothers and sisters” around the world and maintain the privileged position of Western Europe and North America as regions of relative freedom.

However, the IGA and West German gay activists rarely criticized the exploitative or exoticizing effects of sex tourism, while gay publications and guides often viewed sex tourism as not only compatible with the campaign for international gay rights, but in many ways constitutive of it. The confluence of international sex tourism, conflicts over immigrants within West Germany, and attention to the situation of same-sex desiring men and women around the world allowed West German gay groups and publications to position gay life in West Germany in opposition to racialized sexual practices and repressive sexual politics in the Global South. The tensions they explored, between paradise and corruption, inclusion and exclusion, and, in the case of immigrants in West Germany, desire and disgust, far from undermining the transnational project of creating a “better world for gays,” helped undo the longstanding image of a permissive colonial idyll. By the early 1980s, West German gay activists and publications largely construed Western Europe and North America as bastions of sexual progressivism, in opposition to sexual repression around the world attributed alternately to fascist authoritarianism, communist dictatorship, or Islamic fundamentalism.

I. Touring for "Exotic" Men

The decriminalization of male homosexuality in 1969 allowed for not only the open dissemination of gay publications but also the ability for travel agencies to more easily advertise to a gay market in these publications. Enthused by this possibility, du&ich advised its readers in August 1973 to check out these “One Man Travel Bureaus” that specialized in gay tourism. By 1974, agencies such as Partner Tours and Swing Tours were advertising travel especially for gay men to...
places like Bangkok and Tunisia. While there were certainly many reasons why gay men might want to travel, Partner Tours made its purpose explicit in a 1976 du&ich advertisement offering “young, magnificent Tunisians.” Smaller travel agencies took advantage of this as well, such as the Munich-based Henry Probst Travel Service, which advertised a range of “s-exclusive” gay yacht cruises in him in 1973, again selling a mixture of leisure and sex for West German gay tourists.

At the same time, some magazines, in particular du&ich, organized their own trips for their readership, which often centered on making connections with “exotic” men. In 1973, du&ich organized its first trip to Beirut, offering its readers the opportunity to experience “the 5,000 year old culture city of the Phoenicians” and to “get to know interesting people, for whom there are no prejudices against homosexuals.” In 1975, du&ich organized another trip to Togo. The editors argued that, as a gay magazine, they were well equipped to lead such trips as they could “limit [themselves] to only a few destinations, which, after fundamental testing, seem to [them] to be suited for homosexual tourists.” Togo apparently fit the bill as a “vacation paradise” where gay tourists would be able to meet the men (and boys) who lived there. In March 1977, du&ich organized another trip to Bangkok, reportedly at the request of hundreds of readers. The editors again stated that they could organize a trip “like no travel agency in all of Europe.” Perhaps this was in fact the case, as that year du&ich expanded its travel services to include a “travel computer” that would generate personalized travel recommendations. All the reader had to do was fill out the survey attached to the March 1977 issue of the magazine and send it in to avoid being “bitterly disappointed” by a poorly planned vacation.

While du&ich was perhaps the mostly deeply invested in the vacations of its readers, it wasn’t the only gay publication or organization in the Federal Republic to become involved in gay tourism. While not

Figure 1. “Urlaub ’76,” advertisement from du&ich, March 1976.

organizing its own tours, the Munich-based Association for Sexual Equality (Verein für sexuelle Gleichberechtigung, VSG) did cut a deal with Alltours in 1974 to offer reduced rates to its members. Between 1972 and 1974, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) Cologne ran a series in its informational pamphlet titled “Vacation Tips from A to Z,” offering advice for travelers to the Canary Islands, Mykonos, and Morocco. In a similar manner, the magazine him offered its readers guides of the best gay-friendly hotels, bars, restaurants, erotic shops, and clubs in cities such as New York, San Francisco, and West Berlin.

In doing so, magazines like du&ich and him, as well as gay political organizations like VSG and GLF Cologne were participating in an international gay tourism market that was experiencing a boom during the 1970s. With the advent of commercial jet travel, destinations that had previously been out of reach for middle-class tourists became increasingly accessible. According to Hasso Spode, by 1968 the majority of West Germans were vacationing abroad, which, as Magdalena Beljan points out, had broad implications for gay travel and the proliferation of published travel reports. That is not to say that travel around the world was tremendously cheap. According to du&ich in 1977, a plane ticket from Zurich to Bangkok would run approximately 1400DM (or about $2,410 in 2017), while a ticket from Bangkok to Manila would cost an additional 300-500DM ($516-$860 in 2017). Nevertheless, travel was faster, easier, and within reach of more German consumers.

Furthermore, international gay guides were becoming increasingly sophisticated and widely available. During the 1970s, Spartacus International Gay Guide became one of the most popular. Founded in 1968 in Brighton, UK by John D. Stamford and relocated in 1971 to Amsterdam, Spartacus relied on readers to send in tips about gay locales in either their hometowns or places they had traveled. By the late 1970s, Spartacus was receiving about 12,000 recommendation letters annually to assemble a guide that, by 1982, was speculated to have sold 250,000 copies in that year alone. Spartacus included translations in French, German, and, after 1977, Spanish. Bars, clubs, bookstores, and saunas

19 During the 1970s, gay magazines in the United States also offered readers travel guides and were similarly involved in the establishment of a gay scene through travel. See Lucas Hilderbrand, “A Suitcase Full of Vaseline, or Travels in the 1970s Gay World,” Journal of the History of Sexuality 22 (2013): 373-402.
20 That is not to say that travel was not part of homosexual life prior to the 1970s. As both Robert Aldrich and Ian Littlewood point out, travel and transience were central to homosexual life in Euro-American contexts even before the twentieth century. Robert Aldrich, Colonialism and Homosexuality (New York, 2003), 5; Ian Littlewood, Sultry Climates: Travel and Sex since the Grand Tour (London, 2001), 129.
23 In 1986, Spartacus was bought by Bruno Gmünder, one of the largest gay publishing houses in West Germany, and subsequently relocated to West Berlin.
across West Germany (and Western Europe) sold the guide and him and du&ich frequently advertised in it, while Spartacus advertised in du&ich and him, further integrating West German gay men into an international tourist scene, a scene that was often focused on cultivating sexual contacts abroad.

Although Spartacus stated in its 1975 edition that its new motto would be “Toward a Better World for Gays,” the guide was in many ways involved in the production and rearticulation of racial stereotypes that exoticized men of color for international consumption. In a similar vein to Spartacus, both du&ich and him, along with magazines like DON and ADAM, coupled their tourism suggestions, travel agency ads, and trip organization with an erotic mixture of travel reports, travel fiction, and images of scantily-clad, non-white youths in exotic settings, pointing to the close connection between specifically West German and broader Euro-American processes of racialization that depended on experiences and fantasies of sex tourism. In almost all of these publications, the distinction between adult, youth, and child was blurred. Not only did the age of consent vary between different countries, but publications rarely stated the exact age of the youths supposedly available for sex, preferring instead vague terms like “youth” (Jugend) or “boy” (Knaben). A reader might guess that some of the images in magazines like du&ich depicted boys well under the age of 18; however, not only would this be impossible to prove, but the legal code of 1975 that legalized the distribution of pornography only explicitly criminalized imagery of overtly sexualized children under the age of fourteen. The ambivalence of magazines and guides, reinforced by West German and international legal ambiguities, allowed for racialized fantasies of youth sexuality that sidestepped the problematic of pedophilia and pederasty, which troubled West German gay politics in the 1970s.25

This image of the happy, friendly native, which had existed for centuries, permeated 1970s travel accounts.26 In November of 1974, the guide and him and du&ich frequently advertised in it, while Spartacus...
published two travel reports, one about Senegal and one about Morocco. Not only did these reports serve as guides to tourism in countries where homosexuality was illegal, but they also contained detailed descriptions of the pleasures to be found there, including friendly youths (described in Senegal as between the ages of 17 and 20) who were ready to approach Europeans. In Senegal, these boys supposedly expected little in return, while in Morocco, the urban boys would try to swindle tourists, although rural boys still offered possibility for a “human” experience.27 Spartacus similarly distinguished between boys in different parts of Tunisia. Although boys in urban areas “usually expect to be paid,” boys in the south of Tunisia “may expect a gift, rather than money.”28 In advertising du&ich’s upcoming trip to Togo in 1975, the author also referenced the anti-erotic impacts of civilization, describing the men in Togo as “extremely primitive” (urprimitiv) although upbeat and happy, unlike “us [Europeans], who are all the slaves of civilization.”29 Naive willingness could also apparently be found in South and East Asia. du&ich suggested Bangkok in 1976 for German men who “like young, friendly Thai-boys” and in 1978 described the youths of Sri Lanka as possessing “endless great charm” — though did not specify whether the “Thai-boys” were over the age of 18 and only mentioned that, in Sri Lanka, there was no law regulating sex between adult men or between adult men and youths.30 As Beljan argues, this search for willing, exotic boys was often coupled with a search for more than just sex, namely a “human” or authentic experience of at least temporary partnership, as already seen in the case of rural Moroccan boys.31 This wish to be desired shaped how West German tourists perceived men and boys around the world, and it was linked to the enduring appeal of regions supposedly untouched by European civilization.32 Spartacus described southern Tunisia as more appealing largely because of the lack of tourists and implored its readers, “not to offer money to boys in the South of Tunisia [sic] as this is one of the few areas in the world where money is not expected — let us try to keep it that way.”33 In 1978 article, du&ich mentioned that one of the great attractions of Sri Lanka was that it offered respite from the “often frequented vacation domiciles of the overcrowded beaches of Europe.”34 Earlier that year, du&ich warned its readers away from the “flood of tourists” that covered Mykonos and suggested that its readers visit Rio, as men from there “know what friendship means.”35 Reporting on the many charms of Haiti in June 1977, du&ich further linked this ideal of reciprocal desire to the image of the happy primitive, writing that

31 Beljan, 164.
32 Aldrich, 411.
33 Spartacus (1973), 306.
34 “Ceylon,” 2.
“the natives know no sexual taboos at all.”

In its March 1978 grand report on Haiti, du&ich offered a racial essentialist explanation, claiming that Haitians had no sexual taboos because “black eroticism is considered to be something natural.”

These descriptions were often paired with exoticizing imagery. du&ich published its 1975 report on Togo alongside two images of African boys with captions that read together, “a vacation paradise with the goal...to really sow one’s wild oats.”

The magazine also published a number of covers that eroticized non-white bodies, including a naked youth holding a stack of bananas looking enticingly over his shoulder at the camera in September 1977 and another cover with a dark-haired, brown-skinned youth in the same position, but surrounded by jungle and wearing short blue shorts in August 1978.

In 1982, along with its article on German tourism in Japan, Gay Journal published an image of a Japanese man in the same backwards-looking position. In addition to these images, gay magazines published photographs of Arab and Latin American men in traditional garb or in exotic surroundings to emphasize their otherness for German eyes.

In doing so, these publications created a visual repertoire that perpetuated ideals of non-white men in foreign countries as ready and willing to have sex with West German men.

Nevertheless, these magazines did contain a diversity of representations of eroticized men, as men of color in the United States were covered quite differently from men in the Global South. New York and San Francisco were often portrayed as liberal paradises where, according to GLF Cologne in 1973, gays had more freedom in everyday life than in Europe, despite the fact that anti-sodomy laws existed in 45 states.

Nevertheless, race was still quite present in discussions of travel to the U.S. and racial diversity could even be a compelling reason for West Germans to visit. In his 1976 report on his trip to New York and Los Angeles for him, contributor Ingo Harney described his experience at an
outdoor party in New York as “dreamlike, never before have I seen so many beautiful people. It abounds with thin, dark-skinned boys (Knaben) and gazelle-like, fiery-eyed girls. Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Jamaica, all of the Caribbean is represented in its exoticism.” Unfortunately, Harney was assaulted and robbed both at this party and later in Los Angeles. However, he never lost his affection for men of color. Closer to home and with fewer references to racial diversity, The Netherlands were described in du&ich as a “paradise for homosexuals” and Amsterdam-based Spartacus in turn stated that West Germany’s gay scene “stands head and shoulders above the entire flock,” even in comparison to other Western European countries. Ever in search of a paradise for gays, Spartacus, together with West German gay magazines, interpreted Western Europe and North America as possibilities due to more liberal legal environments in comparison to other parts of the world.

Even when looking to travel destinations in the Global South where sexual encounters with exoticized men could be had, we can see differences in how individual countries were depicted. As Beljan argues, expectations about sexual encounters with men in different countries differed based on racial stereotypes. East Asian men and boys were supposed to be effeminate and passive while black and Arab men and boys were supposed to be virile and active, although these roles were usually up for negotiation. The desirability of different countries as travel destinations also changed over the course of the 1970s. Depending on the legal and social situation, du&ich and him alternately advertised Haiti, Togo, Sri Lanka, and Thailand as places where opportunities for sex were plentiful and, just as importantly, where genuine reciprocal desire existed. Following a 1975 trip to the Philippines, John D. Stamford became enamored with the country and advertised it as the “gay paradise of Asia,” encouraging readers to visit during a reported spell of unrest in Thailand between 1975 and 1978. Despite Stamford’s warning, however, the editors of du&ich still reported in 1976 that they felt “at

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44 That’s not to say that du&ich and Spartacus had the rosiest relationship. In calling The Netherlands a “paradise,” du&ich is making the point that it is only seen as such because Dutch society was more tolerant in comparison to other countries, not because of emerging reports of boy prostitution that were linked to John Stamford. “Ich kann mich ja auch geirrt haben...” du & ich, June 1977, 7; Stamford, Spartacus International Gay Guide 8th ed. (Amsterdam, 1978), 28.
home in Bangkok.” While Swing Tours advertised trips to Sri Lanka up until 1981, in 1982 Spartacus removed its entries on the country both at the request of the Sri Lankan government and because tourists would likely face police harassment at the places that were listed. Not only then was reporting and advertising contingent on shifting political circumstances, but it also often depended on the personal preferences of editors.

North African countries, however, took on a more ambivalent role in the shifting political landscape of the 1970s. Prior to the criminalization of sexual contact between men in 1962, Morocco had served as a refuge for same-sex desiring Western Europeans who were fleeing anti-sodomy laws in their own countries. This was true of Morocco as well as other former European colonies where, as historian Robert Aldrich demonstrates, prosecution of male homosexuality was often uneven and offered greater possibilities for expression of dissident sexualities. The French colonies of North Africa were especially attractive destinations for European men, because, in contrast to British colonies, male homosexuality was often decriminalized, or at least persecuted less systematically. Although the French protectorate of Tunisia criminalized male and female homosexual acts under Article 230 of the 1913 penal code, Europeans were rarely prosecuted for same-sex contact. However, following independence in 1956, Tunisia retained Article 230 under President Habib Bourguiba while the changing legal situation in neighboring countries led some European homosexual men to wonder if Article 230 would now be systematically enforced. These changes triggered an outcry from Der

Figure 5. Cover of du&ich, August 1978.

48 Aldrich, 185.
Kreis, one of the most prominent German-language homosexual-oriented publications of the moment. Warning its readers of the new legal situation in Morocco, the editors of Der Kreis wrote in February 1966 that “adventures in Morocco have ended.”51 Three months later, it expanded this warning to all tourists traveling to the Maghreb, writing that although “there is scarcely a region in the world where homosexuality is so widespread,” Europeans had to take special precautions in the wake of new laws because authorities were cracking down on “immoral” Europeans to protect “innocent Arab youths.”

Despite these concerns, West German gay men continued to visit Morocco and Tunisia, as well as Egypt throughout the 1970s. North African men were still often described as widely available for sex. In 1974, GLF Cologne reported that in Marrakesh, “any guy (or almost any guy) is ready to have sex with you.”52 In 1977, Air France invited Alexander Ziegler, the head editor of du&ich, to board a Concorde from Paris to Casablanca in order to “report on the country where you can still feel free as a homosexual.”53 In 1979, in an attempt to convince skeptical editors that Cairo was a worthwhile destination, Swing Tours claimed that “you could meet up with practically any boy,” echoing a 1976 du&ich report that “human encounters [in Cairo] with natives were so many and so intense.”54

By the early 1980s international gay guides as well maintained the (centuries-old) consensus that Arab men were generally bisexual, though rarely “passive.” In 1977, The Golden Key, an English- and German-language guide based in Copenhagen and advertised heavily in du&ich, advised readers about Tunisian men that “as in all Arab countries they absolutely only want to fuck men and are therefore exclusively active.”55 In 1978, Spartacus claimed that “throughout North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean [including Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey], there is a traditional bi-sexual heritage.”56 However, Spartacus still carefully made the distinction that “Greece, and to a lesser extent Turkey, are not as rough as the Arab nations,” where European tourists would be expected to take on the passive role.57 In the 1982 edition of the Frankfurt-based Gay Reiseführer, the guide used the same language as The Golden Key to claim that “as in all Arab countries — and I’m counting Morocco among them — bisexual behavior among men is common.”58

However, as already seen in Spartacus reports, sex often came at a price. Continuing its 1974 report on Marrakesh, GLF Cologne advised its members that you had to be ready to pay, and, even when you

55 The Golden Key (Copenhagen, 1977), 343.
57 Ibid.
58 Founded in 1977 and still in its early days in 1982, the Kurt-Joachim Foerster publishing house went on to acquire ADAM, DON, and ADONIS, making it one of the largest gay publishing houses in Germany by the mid-1990s. Kurt-Joachim Foerster, Gay Reiseführer (Frankfurt am Main, 1982).
did, “your wishes are of no interest” to Moroccan men and boys who “want to get off and nothing more.”\(^{59}\) That same year, \textit{du\&ich} also reported that sex in the big cities of Morocco “has become strongly commercialized. In other words, whoever has money gets practically any youth in bed, whoever has no money remains alone.”\(^{60}\) Some reports linked this to larger problems of widespread criminality in these countries, as well as police and government repression of homosexuality, which somewhat undermined what Said cites as the association “between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex.”\(^{61}\) Although Air France hoped to capture a gay tourist market for its Paris-Casablanca route, Ziegler was less than impressed. He described Casablanca as, “the dirtiest city that I have ever seen” and “full of messed-up male prostitutes, dubious street dealers with crusty faces, and police raids against homos are part of both the daily and nightly routine.”\(^{62}\) In its 1976 report on Cairo, \textit{du\&ich} reassured readers that “homosexuality is illegal like in all Arab countries, however it is largely tolerated.”\(^{63}\) Nevertheless, the contributor reported that one had to be careful, as two young Egyptian men claiming to be students had swindled his British friend.\(^{64}\) The editors of \textit{him} were less than impressed with Cairo, despite the reassurances of Swing Tours, reporting that the hotel was dirty and cramped, the tour guide did not show, and they were left entirely stranded in a foreign city.\(^{65}\) In Tunisia, not only was it difficult to find reciprocal desire in cities, but in 1977 \textit{du\&ich} reported that one British man had been jailed for a week for homosexual conduct and ended up being fined the equivalent of 300DM, causing \textit{du\&ich} to wonder whether Tunisia was “dangerous as a vacation spot.”\(^{66}\) Enno Krentler, contributor to the informational bulletin of the AHA Berlin, tried out Tunisia for himself in 1980. He found it dirty, expensive, and complained of the boys between 8 and 13 trying to sell goods on the beach, eventually vowing “never again Tunisia!”\(^{67}\) In short, while some gay men, travel agencies, and even Air France continued to claim that North African countries were enticing destinations, fears of dirty cities, youthful criminals, and police raids often prevented gay tourists from fully experiencing their own version of “Arabian Nights.”

II. Desire, Disgust, and "Exotic" Encounters in the Federal Republic

As Jarrod Hayes points out, the potential for “exotic” sex and a certain form of “sex tourism” could also be found within Western Europe.\(^{68}\)

\(^{61}\) Said, 190.
\(^{62}\) “Blick hinter die Kulissen der Redaktion,” 17.
\(^{63}\) “Arabische Nächte,” 17.
\(^{64}\) Ibid.
\(^{65}\) “Swing Tours Internationale-Mainz,” 54.
This was certainly the case for France, where, as Todd Shepard demonstrates, Arab men, primarily from Algeria but also from Tunisia and Morocco, held a particular erotic appeal for white gay men, on account of both exoticized difference and the authentic revolutionary role ascribed to men from the former colonies.\(^6^9\) In West Germany, the guest worker program brought the possibility of sexual encounters with exotic others in the Federal Republic. While some gay men sought out southern European immigrants in gay meeting places and personal ads, others saw sex with “southerners” (\textit{Südländer}), a term often used to refer to those from Mediterranean countries, as repellent or even threatening. By 1978, discrimination within gay communities led \textit{du\&ich} to publish a report on the particular situation of southern European “guest workers.”\(^7^0\) Calling out the hypocrisy that it saw among some gay men, \textit{du\&ich} wrote that,

The “Papagallos” with black, curly hair from southern Italy, the temperamental Spaniards, Yugoslavians, and Greeks, those who, when we encounter them in their homeland are “such charming, friendly people,” but as soon as they linger in our latitudes, we almost always ignore them because they, as Cologne police officer Rainer G. (28) said, “bring chaos among the general population.”\(^7^1\)

\textit{du\&ich} then reported on the “notorious xenophobe” Martin L. from Düsseldorf, who refused entry to Spaniards, Yugoslavians, and Turks in his gay bar because they did not consume enough alcohol and made a mess, and had the police throw out a Spanish man the week before he was interviewed by \textit{du\&ich}, because he felt “obligated to take care of the local customers.” The magazine then included (edited) testimonials of men from Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Turkey who had experienced such discrimination in the gay scene. Fabrizio M., a 24-year-old Italian, discussed how he had been removed from a gay locale in Düsseldorf by armed policemen who brought him “to the police station like a hard criminal,” allowing the reader to see the other side of Martin L.’s story.\(^7^2\) Pedro, a 19-year-old from Barcelona, discussed how he had difficulty finding German partners because, “as soon as they hear that I speak Spanish, they leave me alone because I have a strong accent, even though I speak German very well.”\(^7^3\) Pedro, a 17-year-old from Rome, had more success finding a partner but was unable to turn sexual encounters into long-term relationships because, “for them [Germans] we are only ‘Papagallos,’ who, when one takes them home, one never takes their eyes off of them, because otherwise they’ll steal something.”\(^7^4\)


\(^{70}\) Although the guest worker program officially ended in 1973, the term was still used to describe recent immigrants from southern Europe and Turkey, particularly those in search of low-wage jobs.


\(^{72}\) Ibid.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.

\(^{74}\) Ibid.
Train stations, a major site of same-sex encounters since the Kaiserreich, were particularly dangerous for immigrant men. 20-year-old Angelo Bertoni noted, “The police make short work of us foreigners” while Manuel G. from Madrid observed, “If I go cruising in the train station and get caught, then they’ll send me on the next train back to Spain.” While their West German peers marginalized these men, they faced starker consequences for living out their homosexual desires because of their vulnerability as immigrants. As an unnamed 18-year-old Turkish man working illegally outside of Würzburg made clear, if his boss and his wife ever found out he was a homosexual, they would throw him out.

What is particularly important about this report is the emphasis that du&ich placed on sexual intimacy. The testimonials of Marco Pedrazzoli, Angelo Bertoni, Manuel G., Pedro, and the unnamed Turkish man all discussed sexual dissatisfaction, marginalization, or general isolation. According to a survey du&ich conducted of 53 West German men in two gay clubs in Cologne, scarcely any were ready to have a long-term relationship with a “foreign guest worker.” The reasons these men gave “ranged from general prejudices like ‘those guys all stink’ to private anxieties like ‘my landlord would never allow something like that’ to the racist expression ‘southerners have no character.’” In addition, du&ich included pictures of dark-haired, young men, whose captions featured quotations from the testimonials. In one picture, the man is shirtless, and the caption reads: “I have many friends — but they only want to sleep with me”; in another, the man is completely naked and recumbent. It bears the caption, “The worst is the sexual misery. We can’t cruise around the train station, so therefore only masturbation remains.” In mixing the eroticization of sexually frustrated men with calls for more than just sex, du&ich used sex and intimacy both to work against discrimination and to perpetuate elements of these men’s objectification.

In 1981, the magazine Gay Journal, which often took on a tabloid character, moved beyond the notion that “southerners have no character” to argue that southerners were criminally homophobic. One article claimed that Turks were attacking gay German men, alleging that “the starkly different moral imagination between Turkey and central Europe is causing increasingly more young Turks so much confusion that they quickly fall into hard criminality.” The piece thus echoes the criminalization of immigrants that appears in both Martin L.’s claims as well as immigrant men’s experiences
with the police. But *Gay Journal* also seeks to frame this as a broader southern phenomenon, writing that “youths from the southern countries have learned that they can let off steam on homosexuals in the Federal Republic and prove their strength — in defense of their ‘manly honor.’” By singling out Turks and reiterating a perception of fundamental “southern” difference, *Gay Journal*, like the notorious xenophobe Martin L., asserted racialized reasons to explain why certain groups of immigrants were inherently hostile to West Germany’s gay scene.

That said, we should remember that the readers’ sexual desires did not always match the porn and the politics of the magazines. Instead, we see a diversity of sexual desires coming from gay men at this moment, especially as exhibited in personal ads. Even before *du&ich* published its report on racism toward “guest workers,” many gay men were enthusiastically non-discriminating in personal ads. Throughout the 1970s, men seeking other men through personal ads in *du&ich* included phrases like “gladly including foreigners” (*auch gerne Ausländer*), or who were “delighted by foreigners too” (*auch Ausländer angenehm*), or, to emphasize the point “especially delighted by foreigners too” (*auch Ausländer besonders angenehm*).

Some Germans in fact positively discriminated, searching for “an army boy or a foreign boy,” or writing that they “preferred foreigners” (*Ausländer bevorzugt*). While one man from Celle specified in 1974 that he was looking for a “colored foreigner” (*farbige Ausländer*) and another man from Hamburg was looking for a “rocker guy or a southerner” (*Südländer*) in 1978, rarely did these men explicitly state from where they would like their desired “foreigner” to be. More often men submitting personal ads simply wrote “also foreigners” (*auch Ausländer*), “nationality irrelevant” (*Nationalität egal*), or “nationality and skin color unimportant” (*Nationalität und Hautfarbe unwichtig*). One man from North Rhine-Westphalia wrote in 1976 that being “bisexual or a foreigner would not be an obstacle.”

Although relatively few men specifically searched for a southern European man, even rarer were men who identified as such. While one man in 1976 wrote that he was “dark, appearing southern European,” the vague term “dark” (*dunkel*) was more common, possibly pointing to the hesitancy some men had about at least initially identifying as a member of a racialized and marginalized group. In addition, it is unlikely that many working-class immigrants could purchase magazines or buy a personal ad, as in 1976 *du&ich* cost 7.50DM (about $14 in 2017) while placing an ad up to 20 words

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81 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 29.
cost 17.50DM, plus a fee of 7.50DM (a total of about $40 in 2017), and each additional word cost 1DM. Those that did might run into language barriers or the challenge of storing gay magazines in shared housing.

Black men in West Germany were also met with desire and sometimes revulsion, sentiments that both often hinged on their perceived racial otherness. Although Afro-Germans were rarely spotlighted in West German gay magazines, images of black men, both in “exotic” settings that referenced tourism and in neutral settings that could be anywhere in West Germany, permeated the pages of du&ich and him. In addition to printing these images and publishing travel reports to places like Togo, Senegal, and Haiti, where contact with black men was seen as the goal, du&ich advertised American porn magazines like Mandingo 3 — Black Leather, Black Adonis 2, and Black Sugar that, as their names might indicate, featured black men and especially “super-strong Negro models with magnificent measurements.” However, desire did not always mean sexual contact. A survey conducted in German saunas of 790 gay men and published in October 1977 in du&ich showed that 93% of the men interviewed had never had an “intimate relationship” with a black person. 56% however were “very interested” in such a relationship while 8% found the idea of sex with a black man to be “revolting (scheußlich) and unthinkable.” It is impossible to know if this survey was representative of West German gay men or even of du&ich’s readership. It is also impossible to know how truthful respondents were, as du&ich’s exposé on the lives of immigrant men in West Germany suggests that sexual attraction to non-white men was a good way to fight discrimination. The survey does however point to the multiple and competing ways racial otherness could be interpreted. At the same time, these moments of contact or possible contact within West Germany highlight other racial stereotypes of “dirty southerners” and “revolting” black men that do not show up in accounts of foreign travel.

III. Growing Attention to Gay Rights around the World

Anxiety about same-sex desiring immigrants in West Germany as well as the legal constraints gay tourists might encounter abroad were linked to a growing concern regarding the situation of same-sex desiring men around the world, particularly under authoritarian regimes. Already in the early 1970s gay action groups were paying close attention to their “brothers and sisters” in other parts of the world.
The situation of gays in communist countries was of particular interest to left-leaning gay activists, given their claim that, in the words of Homosexual Action West Berlin (HAW), “discrimination against homosexuality is incompatible with the struggle for socialism.”91 In early 1973, two HAW members traveled to Poland to “get a picture of the situation of our Polish co-sisters [Mitschwestern].” The situation was bleak indeed. According to the three gay men with whom the West German activists met, “Homosexuality is almost completely taboo in Poland.”92 HAW also attempted to establish contact with gays in East Germany, but their efforts apparently were met with little success.93 The less radical GLF Cologne used the example of socialism to make an opposite claim. In 1973, it argued that, “In the Soviet Union, in China, Cuba but also Israel — that is, in socialist social systems — homosexuals are discriminated against at least as much as in capitalist countries.” Consequently, West German leftists could not blame discrimination against homosexuals on capitalism or the FRG’s social system.94

While different gay action groups used the situation in communist countries to shore up competing claims about capitalism and sexual repression, action groups and publications interpreted repression of same-sex activity in other parts of the world in a more unified manner. Not only were such reports oftentimes calls to solidarity, but they also helped position Western Europe and North America as places of relative freedom while simultaneously reinforcing racialized understandings of men of color, not unlike accounts of sex tourism. The difference between reports on political repression and travel reports was the former focused mainly on how anti-gay laws affected local men (and sometimes women), rather than the Euro-American tourists who wanted to sleep with them.

Of particular interest was the situation of homosexual men in Greece, who had reportedly faced repression since the military coup of 1967. In 1973, GLF Cologne reprinted an article from Der Spiegel about the “wave of cleansing against homos and prostitutes.” This was particularly concerning since, “according to the view of the Greek military, loving friendship between men in the cradle of pederasty [Knabenliebe] does not belong to the desired masculine ideal that is being cultivated in Greek barracks and cadet academies.”95 In June of that year, DON also reported that the military crackdown on “pornography, prostitution, nudists, and pederasts” constituted a “hunt for homosexuals.”96 In November 1973, gay activists organized a demonstration in Frankfurt together

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95 “Letzte Meldung!” Information Köln GLF, January 1973, 8.
with “Greek comrades” against military persecution of homosexuals.97 Although the military regime collapsed in 1974, the proposal of new anti-gay laws in 1979 elicited further outcry from gay activists, particularly AHA Berlin, which reported trouble in the “gay dreamland Hellas.”98 In positioning the actions of the Greek government as contradictory to the country’s history of homosexuality, gay (and straight, in the case of Der Spiegel) publications and groups advanced a Spartacus-like idea of same-sex desire as being native to Greece. At the same time, the claim of gay groups not just in West Germany, but across Western Europe, that the EEC couldn’t accept Greece’s membership application if it implemented this law, positioned the Greek government’s actions as contradictory to the ideals of a liberal Western Europe.99 Various gay groups and publications similarly paid attention to the changing political landscape of Spain and Portugal. Spartacus in particular was concerned with reports of persecution of homosexual men coming out of Spain. Although Javier Fernández Galeano has shown that under the Franco regime there were loopholes, particularly for tourists, Spartacus’ concern went beyond how repression affected tourists and, in 1975, it asked its readers to write to the Spanish embassies in their countries and send money to the exiled Movimiento de Liberación Homosexual Español in New York.100 Following the collapse of the Portuguese and Spanish dictatorships, GLF Cologne rejoiced in 1974 that, “Portuguese homosexuals can now step out of the shadows.” him also monitored these developments as well as the 1976 formation of the Spanish gay group Christian Brotherhood for Friendship (Fraternidad Christiana de la amistad).101

During and following the processes of liberalization in Portugal, Spain, and Greece, gay groups and publications focused on South American countries, particularly Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, as places where anti-gay repression was particularly harsh. In the same 1975 edition in which it encouraged readers to support Spanish gay groups, Spartacus implored its readers also to write to Chilean embassies to protest the “barbaric evils perpetrated against our gay brothers and sisters” and, more generally, to send letters of encouragement and financial support to gay organizations in “countries where oppression exists in a serious way.”102 In November of that year, a meeting of action groups in Freiburg established the Argentine campaign to raise money for the Homosexual Liberation Front (Frente de Liberación Homosexual) in exile in New York and to develop other strategies to help “Argentine brothers and sisters.”103

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99 Ibid.
March 1979, the editor-in-chief of him, Hans-Peter Reichelt, called for solidarity “with our friends in Rio de Janeiro,” particularly the magazine LAMPIAO, which was reportedly being threatened by the “half-dictatorial regime.”

These calls for action and solidarity reflect conflicting impulses of inclusion and exclusion. In visiting Polish “co-sisters,” demonstrating with “Greek comrades,” protesting persecution of Chilean “gay brothers and sisters,” and raising funds for “Argentine brothers and sisters,” West German gay organizations and publications asserted a universalist gay identity that not only could be found around the world, but mandated action in solidarity with gays in countries “where oppression exists in a serious way.” At the same time, though, it established a dichotomy between Western European (and North American) liberalism and communist/Third World repression such that Greece could join the EEC only if it rejected proposed anti-gay laws. This tension seems to contradict processes of exclusion stemming from sex tourism and exotic imagery that hinged on essentializing representations of race. While it was politically advantageous to include all same-sex desiring men and women in an international gay community, travel reports and accounts of immigrants in West Germany often positioned people of color outside an implicitly white West German gay community. Gay publications did not recognize this as a contradiction. Instead they often published calls for solidarity alongside exoticizing images of men of color and travel reports on the charming and happy “natives” of Togo, Haiti, and the Philippines.

By 1979, West German publications increasingly described West Germany and, by extension, Western Europe and North America as places of greater sexual liberalism. Attention to persecution around the world reinforced this perception, as gay groups and publications claimed that it was their duty to help their “brothers and sisters” in other countries. Not only did this place Western Europe and North America as paragons of sexual progressivism, but they mapped a universalist gay identity onto diverse sexual experiences around the world and established a mode of resistance that centered on group organization. This process became even more pronounced after 1979 as the Iranian Revolution highlighted Islam as another source of sexual repression and the International Gay Association, founded in 1978, helped position West German organizational tactics in an international framework.
IV. The Iranian Revolution and the Formation of the International Gay Association

Prior to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, West German gay groups and publications rarely noted the persecution of same-sex desiring men in Middle Eastern and North African countries. There were some scattered reports of repression against homosexuals in North African and Middle Eastern countries. In 1974 GLF Cologne reported Gaddafi’s new prison sentence for sexual contact between adult men, and in 1979 him reported that three men were sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia because they raped and killed a young man. In addition, publications and groups were concerned about what the changing legal situation in North Africa might mean for European and North American tourists. However, it wasn’t until the Iranian Revolution in spring 1979 that West German gay activists began calling for solidarity with gays in a Muslim-majority country and started to see Islam as a possible source of anti-gay repression, alongside Eastern European communism and Latin American dictatorships.

The Iranian Revolution, which established an Islamic Republic in the country in April 1979 and installed Ruhollah Khomeini as Supreme Leader, was met with a reaction of confusion and dismay by many West German gay activists. While the rule of the Pahlavi dynasty was heavily contested in West German gay activist circles and publications prior to 1979, the former Shah had “never been accused of harming the homos,” as one HAW activist sarcastically put it. Under the new government, this was no longer the case, yet the regime also did not proceed to suppress uniformly all same-sex practices. As part of the general reversal of the sexual reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, the new regime began to crack down on clandestine urban gay communities, while simultaneously permitting (or, more accurately, ignoring) the continuation of same-sex emotional and even sexual intimacy in sex-segregated spaces. However, those whom the government did choose to prosecute were quickly tried and often executed, eliciting outrage from both West German and Western European activists.

Already in June 1979, when the status of the revolution was still unclear, him reported that a revolutionary court found six men guilty of running a homosexual prostitution ring and sentenced them to execution by firing squad. In that same issue, him elaborated that in Shiraz, three young men were executed for “sodomy” and four

108 One Iranian gay activist in the 2000s even called Iran a “homosexual paradise,” since before the revolution, it was only possible to establish sexual contact with other men in elite hotels and bars, while afterwards it was relatively easy to find willing men in parks. Janet Afary, Sexual Politics in Modern Iran (Cambridge, 2009), 289.
young men were sentenced to death for sexually assaulting another man in Tehran (which, him admitted, “would also be punished in democratic countries, though not with death”).110 In August 1979, him reported that 150-200 people in Tehran had been imprisoned for “insulting Islamic morals,” while 16 people had been executed on these grounds.111 These accounts were then echoed in other magazines. In 1980, du&ich wrote that concubinage had been reintroduced as a legal practice, while Gay Journal claimed in 1983 that Iran had introduced a “new world of concentration camps” to house its prisoners, including homosexual men, and in 1984 reported that women convicted of adultery were liable to be stoned.112

These reports of imprisonment and execution based on assault, “sodomy,” and “insulting Islamic morals” underscore the difficulty of determining who had been convicted because of consensual relations under a law that did not distinguish between consensual sex and rape. At the same time, as Janet Afary has stressed, “the popular notion that Islamism has enforced a harsh form of sexual repression on the Iranian people does not convey the complexity that has taken place.”113 While that is not to deny the brutality that some Iranians faced under the new regime, it does point to a general lack of information on a new sexual economy that allowed for some forms of same-sex sexual activity and women’s participation in the public sphere while suppressing others.

To account for these contradictions, some West German gay publications pointed to Islam as the cause of this reported violence — indeed, the use of Islam was central to the making of the revolution and revolutionary Iranian identity.114 In reporting on a string of executions, him claimed that, in addition to the “famous” punishment for thieves, Islamic law mandated that any homosexual be thrown from the roof of his house.115 Nevertheless, it was difficult at this moment for gay publications to claim that homophobia was inherent to Islam, given the ongoing tradition of seeking out same-sex intimacies in Islami-cate countries. In August 1979, him called the Iranian suppression of homosexuals part of its “medieval clerical fanaticism,” while, in the same article, calling Iran one of “the birth places of homophilia,” which, in just three months of revolution, had turned homosexuality into an abnormality, sickness, and perversion.116 While for centuries European scholars had attempted to draw distinctions between Persian “civilization” and “foreign” Islamic influences, him made no such move, arguing that Iran’s “long and honored gay culture” was part of the Middle East’s “Islamic tradition.”117

111 Peter Larsen, “Revolution im Iran,” him, August 1979, 34.
113 Afary, 325.
115 Rauschen, 52.
116 Larsen, 34.
117 As Joseph A. Massad points out, one of the clearest cases of this can be found in Er- nest Renan’s 1883 lecture, “Islamism and Science,” in which he argues that the only exception to the “intellectual” nullity of “states governed by Islam” was Persia, which had retained its “genius.” Joseph A. Massad, Desiring Arabs (Chicago, 2007), 12-13.; Larsen, 34.
In January 1980, him used the example of Iran to make a case about gender and sexuality in North Africa. Admitting that there existed nothing comparable to Khomeini and his regime in other “Muslim states,” him did claim that “the oppression of homosexuals belongs to an everyday picture of an environment that is marked by the teachings of Mohammed.” While him did claim further that “it would be altogether false to speak of a systematic hunt for homosexuals” in North Africa, it reached the conclusion that, “strictly religious Arabs” viewed European women’s and gay liberation movements as a sign of “moral decadence.” In referencing the extreme and well-documented case of Iran, him claimed that across Southwest Asia and North Africa Islam generated homophobia and misogyny, in opposition to the liberation movements of Europe. Nevertheless, according to him, a man who had a sexual relationship with women but also slept with men on the side “has no social repression to fear,” thereby attempting to account for both Iranian/Islamic sexual repression and Arab bisexuality/pederasty.

The Iranian Revolution, which helped to influence this perception of Islam as a tool of the sexually repressive state, coincided with the formation of the International Gay Association (IGA). Founded in Coventry, England in August 1978, the International Gay Association aimed to organize gay rights organizations around the world and pressure national governments and international bodies to recognize gay rights as human rights. By 1980, the IGA included among its 45 member organizations the Action Group Homosexuality Bonn, the Gay Action Committee Cologne, the Gay Liberation Front Cologne, the General Homosexual Work Group Berlin, the German Green Party, and the German Study and Work Group Pedophilia. Because of the timing of its founding, the IGA paid close attention to the unfolding situation in Iran. Already in March 1979, Enzo Francone, a representative of the IGA and the Italian gay group FUORI!, went to Iran to protest oppression of homosexuals there with a one-man demonstration and press conference in front of Tehran’s central prison. Unsurprisingly, Francone was quickly arrested. This triggered immediate action from IGA networks in Western Europe and the United States, which contacted Iranian embassies demanding his release. Francone was released within 90 minutes. Although it is unclear whether the IGA influenced the decision to release Francone, him determined that the dramatic sequence of events required a detailed account in its July issue.

119 Ibid., 54-55.
120 Ibid., 55.
122 As mentioned, the issue of whether pedophilia or ephebo-philia (desire for adolescents) were acceptable identities and should be incorporated into national and international gay rights movements was highly visible during the 1970s and lasted into the 1980s. According to Magdalena Beljan, it was only in the context of the AIDS crisis of the 1980s that the “P-question” fell into the background in publications like du&ich. Beljan, 162.
Clint Hockenberry, the IGA’s American liaison, and Edmund Lynch, the IGA Informational Secretary, credited the IGA with putting into place a snowball telephone system which, in late 1979, reportedly brought out 2,000 Danish people to protest arrests in Iran. West German gay activists and publications were thus participating in both national and international activist frameworks that paid close attention to Iran and looked for ways to resist its regime.

However, the IGA regarded Iran as just one of a number of countries that oppressed homosexuals. In 1979, for example, the tageszeitung reported that the organization was attempting to inform the International Human Rights commission in Strasbourg of conditions in Iran, the Soviet Union, Finland, Brazil, “and other countries with extremely sexually repressive regimes.” In 1980, Francone took his demonstration to the Red Square in Moscow to protest the criminalization of homosexuality in the country that was hosting the Olympics. As part of its ongoing attempt to convince Amnesty International as well as national governments to recognize homosexuals as “prisoners of conscience” in certain countries and therefore eligible for asylum, the IGA announced at its second annual meeting in 1980 in Barcelona a particular commitment to Iranian and Argentine refugees. While Islam may have been to blame for repression of homosexuality in Iran, in a 1984 interview with Schauplatz, IGA General Secretary Jean-Claude Letist argued that, “there’s a big problem in Latin America because of the typical masculine ideal there, that of the ‘macho’.”

In other words, Islam, in particular Islam in Iran, became only one lens through which the repression of homosexuality around the world might be interpreted. However, this focus on repression also in the Global South did help to coalesce an understanding of Western European and North American countries as particularly tolerant of homosexuality; consequently, gay groups located in those countries — also as represented in the IGA — had a particular responsibility to help gay people in other parts of the world. The AHA Berlin used its English-language report on a 1980 IGA conference workshop to make precisely this point. Criticizing what it saw as West German gay political apathy, the AHA Berlin argued that, “The number of those who have given up any social interest and are living an exclusively narcissistic [sic] life has increased alarmingly in recent years. This has been especially the case in those western countries with relatively liberal legislation for homosexuals.”

125 “Der Widerstand formuliert sich” taz November 28, 1979.
128 Schauplatz? 1/84 “IGA Konferenz” Claus Gillmann, 12.
traditional understanding from the first half of the 1970s that gays needed to mobilize to counter discrimination within West Germany, the AHA Berlin here made a case that, because Western countries were more tolerant of homosexuality, gays in West Germany had a duty to mobilize on behalf of those living in more repressive lands. West German gay groups, gay publications, and even mainstream publications both helped construct this international framework in the late 1970s and early 1980s and fostered awareness of the IGA’s activities and of repression in other countries to the West German reading public.

Conclusion

By the early 1980s, the expansion of international sex tourism, increasingly racialized representations of southern European, particularly Turkish, immigrants in the Federal Republic, and collaboration with gay activist groups in Western Europe and North America generated contradictory discourses of inclusion and exclusion that nevertheless privileged Western Europe and North America as regions of considerable sexual freedom. The diversity of gay politics, sexual practices, and desires was evident in reports of sex tourism as well as in travel guides themselves. As travel became cheaper and more accessible for middle class West Germans in the late 1960s and early 1970s, West German and Western European gay men were able to travel the world in pursuit of exoticized men. While du&ich preferred Bangkok, John Stamford of Spartacus could not recommend the Philippines enough. North Africa, once a place of refuge for homosexual Europeans, was met with increasing ambivalence by West German tourists who found Casablanca dirty and the men of Cairo deceitful. Nevertheless, the fantasy of Arabian Nights in North Africa and the Middle East remained. Despite the wide range of experiences and desires articulated in the pages of West German gay magazines during the 1970s, travel reports and images of men of color oft en relied on old, Orientalist understandings of non-white sexuality that were nevertheless compatible with anti-racist politics.

At the same time, some West German gay men applied racialized understandings to immigrant men living in the Federal Republic, navigating West Germany’s supposedly new racial diversity through sexual practices and desires. du&ich advocated building sexually intimate relationships with men from southern Europe, and some
white West German men sought out men of color through personal ads. However, others were unsettled by the presence of black men or men from southern Europe in West Germany, as indicated in personal ads, published surveys, and published reports. Although it was met with different answers, the question of whether immigrant men “belonged” in gay spaces reinforced the dichotomy between an implicitly white German gay subject and “foreigners,” increasingly marked as Turkish. This question emerged alongside a growing attention to the situation of same-sex desiring men outside North America and Western Europe. West German gay activists and publications often ascribed these men a universalist gay identity, which ignored the diversity of sexual experiences around the world, while simultaneously positioning Western Europe and North America as regions of greater sexual freedom. While the boundaries of Western Europe were fuzzy and, over the course of the 1970s, grew to include Spain, Portugal, and Greece, by 1979 the tension between an inclusionary gay identity and an exclusionary understanding of Western Europe as sexually progressive permeated West German gay politics.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 helped to position Islam alongside other factors contributing to the repression of sexual dissidence around the world, including communism in Eastern Europe and China and authoritarian dictatorships in South America. It would be misleading to assert (not to mention almost impossible to prove) that gay activists and publications saw Islam as the most important factor contributing to sexual repression or that they even held a unified interpretation of the relationship between Islam and homosexuality. Nevertheless, by the early 1980s, some gay activists and publications used Islam to interpret sexual repression in opposition to Western freedom in a way that would have been virtually impossible even a decade before. Not only were Islamicate countries for centuries perceived as refuges from repressive European laws and sites of “deviant” pleasures, but even when the legal situation began to shift after the Second World War, police raids, corruption, and imposition of new laws were rarely, if ever attributed to Islam prior to the late 1970s.

Whether in the Middle East, South America, or Eastern Europe the tension between the inclusive extension of a universalist gay identity to same-sex desiring men around the world and the exclusive privileging of Western Europe and North America centers of sexual progress helped bolster the transnational project of the IGA and its
West German affiliates. By granting same-sex desiring men a gay identity and conceptually distancing them from their repressive governments, West German gay activists could pursue a progressive political agenda that sought the establishment of liberal governments around the world. At the same time, West German gay activist organizations and the IGA largely refrained from criticizing sex tourism and its concomitant perpetuation of Orientalist representations, while gay publications and guides viewed sex tourism as compatible with, or even directly supporting, the push for gay rights around the world.

These developments laid the political groundwork for the following decade, when, in 1983, the arrival of AIDS in West Germany became a chief concern of gay activists and publications alike.131 Faced with threats of government repression, societal homophobia, and death, gay activists and the newly-founded German AIDS Help (Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe), looked for ways to collaborate with activists and health workers in other affected countries as well as members of other affected groups, particularly sex workers, intravenous drug users, hemophiliacs, and immigrants. In this context, the competing dynamics of inclusion and exclusion produced by the multiple ways in which the gay rights movement had internationalized during the 1970s would have far-reaching consequences as anti-racism and anti-xenophobia (re)emerged as a central focus for many gay activists. It wouldn’t be until the early 1990s, however, that debates over the exploitative and racist elements of sex tourism emerged among mainstream gay activist groups as a universalist approach to anti-racism became central to both German and international gay rights activism.

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