

**The Official Treatment of White, South African, Homosexual Men and the
Consequent Reaction of Gay Liberation from the 1960s
to 2000.**

By

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List of Acronyms

African Christian Democratic Party - ACDP
African Gay Association – AGA
African National Congress – ANC
AIDS Action Group - AAG
Congress of a Democratically Elected South Africa – CODESA
Congress of Pink Democrats – CPD
Criminal Investigation Department – C.I.D.
Democratic Party - DP
Detention Barracks - DB
End Conscription Campaign - ECC
Gay Association of South Africa – GASA
Gay Alliance of Southern Africa - GASA
Gay and Lesbian Archives – GALA
Gay and Lesbian Association - GALA
Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand – GLOW
Gay Students’ Society - GSS
Human Sciences Research Council - HSRC
Inkatha Freedom Party - IFP
International Gay Association – IGA
International Lesbian and Gay Association – ILGA
Law Reform Movement – LRM
Lesbians and Gays Against Oppression – LAGO
National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality – NCGLE
National Law Reform Fund - NLRF
National Party – NP
Organisation of Lesbians and Gays Against Oppression – OLGA
Pan African Congress - PAC
Permanent Force - PF
Progressive Gay and Lesbian Working Group – PGLWG

Rand Gay Organisation – RGO

Saturday Group – SG

South African Council of Churches – SACC

South African Defence Force – SADF

South African Medical and Dental Council - SAMDC

South African Medical Services - SAMS

South African Police – SAP

South African Police Service – SAPS

Soweto/Johannesburg Gay Organisation - SOJGO

State Security Council - SSC

Truth and Reconciliation Commission - TRC

United Democratic Front – UDF

United Party - UP

Wits Gay Movement - WGM



Summary

This dissertation is the product of research into white, South African masculinities. It is concerned with the official treatment of white, gay men in this country by the governments of the day from the 1960s to 2000 and the government's control of hegemonic masculinity in order to maintain power. By looking at gay masculinities the threat to hegemonic masculinity was ascertained as well as the different versions of heterosexual masculinities. This thesis also analyses the degree of change in the toleration or acceptance of white homosexuality in South Africa from churches, society, and elements within the SAP and the SADF as well as within gay organisations. Legislative achievements in the Constitutional Court show the most extreme changes in the perceptions of gay masculinities.

This dissertation primarily begins in the 1960s, looking at why it was necessary to set up the 1968 Select Committee. This committee investigated criminalising all male homosexual acts, including those in private and also aimed to dictate societal norms and maintain white, privileged, hegemonic masculinity established and defined by the NP government. The state had always repressed homosexuality through law; even colonial legislation proved this. It was the creation and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity that advocated such legislation. 1966 was the focal year where white homosexuality became a recognisable problem. A gay party was held at a Johannesburg residence, which made white homosexuality visible and alerted the police to this alternative masculinity. The Select Committee, however, did not fulfil its initial aims.

Once elements within the SAP were faced with the visibility of white homosexuality, their power thereby being challenged, Major van Zyl set about requesting stricter legislation by proposing amendments to the Minister of Justice regarding the 1957 Immorality Act and submitting evidence to the Select Committee. However, numerous submissions to and interviews by the Select Committee proved that it was unnecessary and illogical to criminalise private homosexuality. Such submissions showed white homosexuality was no societal threat and that some in white society recognised gay

masculinities and challenged hegemonic masculinity. Consequently the Select Committee did not propose stricter legislation regarding homosexuality.

Furthermore, repressive official treatment of white, male homosexuals was evident in the SADF in the 1970 and 1980s. Through a military perception of masculinity, that is, aggressive masculinity, most in the SADF were intent on conforming its white soldiers to the traditional definition of masculinity, the NP government's definition of white masculinity, which did not include homosexual men. Dr Levine used electro-shock therapy to 'cure' gay conscripts at 1 Military Hospital. This extreme practice of ensuring conformity was no longer utilised by the 1980s and there was also some unofficial acceptance of white homosexuality within the SADF by some white commanders and soldiers.

There was no gay liberation movement to speak of until the 1980s. GASA, a white gay organisation, led the movement but it was to be unsuccessful in that it supported the NP government, that is, it benefited from hegemonic masculinity because GASA's membership was predominantly white men. Because of this GASA was seen to support the government's policy of apartheid and there ensued the consequent debate between gay essentialism and gay rights as part of the broader struggle. GASA was purely reactionary, because in effect it did not really want change and was therefore ineffective. The gay movement grew but it did not unify. This failure to unify meant the gay liberation movement, as a movement had failed, even though, later, liberation and much change was achieved, mainly through the work of the NCGLE. Like the 1968 Select Committee, the President's Council was set up in 1985 to once again investigate stricter penalties against homosexuality. The ANC was still very quiet on the issue of gay rights, supporting heterosexist hegemony and not recognising gay masculinities.

The President's Council did not recommend stricter legislation against homosexual men but the 1988 Sexual Offences Act retained the penalties against homosexuality as stipulated by the 1969 Immorality Amendment Act. Gay essentialism damaged any headway regarding gay rights, especially when it came to gaining the support of

progressive organisation in the broader political struggle because there was so much infighting regarding defining gay masculinities. Race could not be discounted in this equation and the RGO, a black gay organisation, challenged GASA's support of the NP government. New gay organisations only contributed to the failure of the gay liberation movement because again there was no unity. In 1989 Albie Sachs of the ANC met with a liberal gay organisation, OGLA, and finally gay rights were beginning to be taken seriously, culminating in the protection of gay rights in the 1996 Constitution. This was due to individual members of the ANC and Kevan Botha, the lawyer hired by the NCGLE to represent gay rights at CODESA.

Once sexual orientation was retained in the equality clause of the Constitution it was left to the NCGLE to fight for the legal practice of equality for gay men and lesbians. There was also greater toleration and even acceptance of homosexuality by the South African society at large, both black and white, the churches, and the SAP, especially officially. Hence, although the gay liberation movement had failed, gay rights had been entrenched and change allowed for potential equality, the last of which would be legal gay marriage, which remains to be seen.

Opsomming

Hierdie verhandeling is die resultaat van navorsing gedoen oor blanke, Suid-Afrikaanse manlikheid. Die verhandeling kyk na die amptelike hantering van blanke, homoseksuele mans in hierdie land deur die regerings van die dag van die 1960's tot 2000, en die regering se beheer oor manlikheid om mag te behou. Deur te kyk na homoseksuele manlikheid word die bedreiging vir hegemonese manlikheid vasgestel asook die verskillende weergawes van heteroseksuele manlikheid. Hierdie verhandeling analiseer ook die graad van verandering in die aanvaarding of toleransie van blanke homoseksualiteit in Suid Afrika, van kerke, die samelewing en elemente binne die SAP en die SAW, asook van binne homoseksuele organisasies. Dit wat bereik is deur wetgewing in die Konstitusionele Hof wys die geweldige verskille in die persepsies van homoseksuele manlikheid.

Hierdie verhandeling neem as vertekspunt die 1960s, en ondersoek die redes vir die opstelling van die 1968 Volksraadkomitee. Hierdie komitee het die strafregteliheid van alle manlike homoseksuele aktiwiteite ondersoek, insluitend sulke aktiwiteite wat in privaatheid plaasgevind het, ook het die komitee as doelwit gehad om sosiale norme voor te skryf, asook die behoud van blanke, hegemonese manlikheid soos vasgestel en gedefinieër deur die NP. Die regering het altyd homoseksualisme onderdruk deur wetgewing, soos bewys deur koloniale wetgewing. Dit was die vestiging en onderhoud van hegemonese manlikheid wat sulke wetgewing verdedig het. 1966 was die brandpunt jaar waarin homoseksualiteit 'n herkenbare probleem geword het. 'n Homoseksuele partytjie is in 'n private woning in 'n Johannesburgse voorstad gehou, hierdie partytjie het homoseksualiteit sigbaar gemaak, en die polisie bewus gemaak van hierdie alternatiewe seksuele orientering. Die Volksraad komitee het egter nie aan hulle oorspronklike doelwitte voldoen nie.

Toe elemente binne die SAP eers bewus gemaak is van homoseksualisme, en die mag van die SAP dus daarmee saam bevraagteken is, het die SAP gereageer deur aansoeke vir strenger wetgewing, deur voorstelle vir wysigings aan die minister van justisie aangaande

die 1957 Immoraliteitswet en die voorlegging van bewyse aan die Volksraadkomitee. Verskeie voorleggings aan, en onderhoude deur, die Volksraadkomitee het egter bewys dat dit onnodig en onlogies was om private homoseksualiteit strafregbaar te verklaar. Sulke voorleggings het bewys dat daar geen sosiale bedreiging in blanke homoseksualiteit was nie, en dat sommige in die blanke samelewing manlike homoseksualiteit erken het en ook hegemoniese manlikheid bevraagteken het. Gevolglik het die Volksraadkomitee geen strengere wetgewing aangaande homoseksualisme voorgestel nie

Verder was amptelike onderdrukkende behandeling van homoseksuele mans sigbaar in die SAW in die 1970s en 1980s. Deur 'n militêre seining van manlikheid, dit wil sê, aggressiewe manlikheid, was meeste van die SAW van plan om soldate aan die tradisionele vereistes van manlikheid te laat voldoen, dit was ook die NP seining van manlikheid, en homoseksualiteit het nie by hierdie seining ingepas nie. Dr Levine het skokterapie by 1 Militer gebruik om homoseksuele soldate te 'genees'. Hierdie ekstreme toepassing van vormgetrouheid is teen die 1980's nie meer in gebruik nie en daar was ook 'n mate van nie-amptelike aanvaarding van homoseksualiteit in die SAW van sommige blanke bevelvoerders en soldate.

Daar was geen werklike homoseksuele bevrydingsbeweging tot die 1980s nie. GASA, 'n blanke homoseksuele beweging, was aan die stuur in die beweging maar was onsuksesvol in dat die beweging die regering ondersteun het, dit wil se, dit het voordeel getrek uit die hegemoniese manlikheid omdat GASA se lede hoofsaaklik blanke mans was. Die debat tussen homoseksuele wesenlikheid en homoseksuele regte as deel van die wyer beweging het ook hier ontstaan. GASA was suiwer reaksionêr, aangesien GASA nie regtig enige iets wou verander nie, en sodoende oneffektief was. Die homoseksuele beweging het gegroei, maar nooit verenig nie. Hierdie onvermoe om saam te staan het beteken dat die homoseksuele beweging, as 'n beweging misluk het, selfs toe bevryding tog later bekom is. Soos die 1968 Volksraadkomitee is die Presidentsraad gestig in 1985 om weereens strengere maatreels teen homoseksualiteit te ondersoek. Die ANC was toe nog baie stil

om die saak van homoseksuele regte, met die ondersteuning van heteroseksuele hegemonie en sonder om homoseksuele manlikheid te erken.

Die Presidentsraad het ook nie strenger maatreels teen homoseksualisme ingestel nie, maar die 1988 Seksuele-oortredinge Wet het die strafte soos uiteengesit in die 1969 Immoraliteitswet behou. Homoseksuele wesenlikheid het enige vooruitgang aangaande homoseksuele regte'n knou toegedien, veral wanneer dit te doen gehad het met aanwins van progressiewe ondersteuning in die breër politiese prentjie omdat daar soveel stryery oor die definieering van manlike homoseksualiteit was. Ras kon nie uit hierdie vergelyking gelaat word nie, en die RGO, 'n swart homoseksuele organisasie het GASA in hierdie opsig angevat, en nuwe homoseksuele organisasies het slegs bygedra tot die mislukking van die homoseksuele bevrydingsbeweging omdat daar geen samewerking was nie. In 1989 het Albie Sachs van die ANC samesprekings gevoer met 'n liberale homoseksuele organisasie, OGLA, en uiteindelik is homoseksuele regte ernstig opgeneem, die hoogtepunt is bereik met die beskerming van homoseksuele regte in die 1996 Grondwet. Hierdie hoogtepunt is die gevolg van enkeling lidmate van die ANC en Kevan Botha, die advokaat wat deur die NCGLE gehuur is om homoseksuele regte by CODESA voor te staan



Met die insluiting van homoseksuele regte in die gelykmatigheids artikel van die Grondwet is dit aan die NCGLE oorgelaat om te veg vir die wetlike regte van homoseksuele mans en vrouens. Daar was ook meer aanvaarding vir homoseksualiteit deur die meerderheid van Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap, beide blank en nie-blank, die kerke en die SAP, veral amptelik. En so, selfs met die mislukking van die homoseksuele bevrydingsbeweging, is homoseksuele regte in die grondwet ingesluit, met die verandering is daar nou 'n kans vir gelykheid, die laaste waarvan sal wees wettige homoseksuele huwelike, wat nog gesien moet word.