



Prussian Homosexuality: 1417 - 1933

Michael Hone

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Germany could just as well be called Prussia today because Prussia was its heart and mind, a warrior class that ceased to exist in 1947 when the Allied Control Council, the victors of WWII, abolished the entity with a few rapidly penned signatures at the bottom of a document. But as seen in this fully-illustrated book, far more than some hastily scribbled names will be needed to erase the story of the fiercest fighting force since the Spartans, two brother nations in arms, the Spartans who fought to the death so a lover would never be found lacking in courage and loyalty in the eyes of the boy at his side, and the Prussians headed by a man history calls Frederick the Great, one so powerful that Napoleon himself, gazing down at his grave, proclaimed that he would not be there had Frederick lived, Frederick whose love for men and boys was shared by many of his Prussian soldiers and Prussian compatriots. The most tolerant gay-friendly nation in the world is, of course, America, San Francisco its Holy Land, but Berlin comes in a clear second today, a capital that celebrates the gay-way every June in a march called Christopher Street Day in remembrance of the Stonewall Revolt. And throughout history, excluding the hellish interval of the Nazi maelstrom, Prussia has been tolerant of homosexuals, the word itself invented in 1869 by Karl-Maria Kertbeny in Vienna and publically defended for the first time in 1867 by the jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs in Munich. In 1897 Magnus Hirschfeld founded the first organization in the defense of homosexuality, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, and in Berlin in 1874 Adolf Brand founded *Der Eigene*, *The Special One*, the first magazine to celebrate love between men. In Chicago in 1924 the Prussian Henry Gerber created the first homosexual organization in America, the Society of Human Rights, the building declared a National Historic Landmark in 2015. The Renaissance of homoeroticism took place in Prussia, and from 1800 to 1933 Berlin progressively mutated into the homosexual capital of the world, the seat of Romanticism, the rebirth of Periclean Greece, where the greatest researchers and psychoanalysts united to justify male-male love, where scientific institutes saw the light of day, supported by even the police who encouraged research into the reasons for the explosion of homosexual clubs, bars and hundreds of boy brothels. Students sought truth and the betterment of society through discussions taking place during hikes and encampments around fires, the participants underscoring their quest for freedom through male bonding and total nudism. Literature, poetry and naked boys filled magazines pinned open at kiosks to reveal the extraordinary beauty of the unclothed body. The last half of this book will be devoted to this liberating phenomenon. Thomas Mann wrote: "I have lived and loved. I knew happiness, held in my arms he I longed for." To my mind this is the very aim of life. The only aim of life. It is the soul of this book, the story of men who preferred men.

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