

2 Surveilled Sociability: Queer Bars

The photos in the album have captured moments of what looks like a fabulous party: partygoers around a table raising their champagne glasses in a toast, big smiles directed at each other and the camera (figure 2.1), a pair of dancers embracing each other while holding on to a bottle (figure 2.2), and what might be a flirting scene, crashed by a goofy-looking third person. A handwritten sign on the wall indicates the party's occasion and location. "To celebrate the third anniversary of Boheme, Tuesday, 25 October 1955, we're presenting a fashion show! ... You're warmly invited by Willy Lorenz."¹ The occasion, hence, was the third anniversary of the Boheme bar, situated on Lausitzer Platz in the district of Kreuzberg. The space of the bar looks crowded and cozy. The dark wood panelling and flowered wallpaper, lit by lamps hanging from the ceiling and installed on the walls above the tables, together with the flower-patterned tablecloths on the wooden tables, make for a rustic *Heimeligkeit*, or coziness (figure 2.1).

Taken at various points of the evening, the photos show guests enjoying drinks and conversation, swaying to the music of the jukebox, crowding the dance floor, competing for the prize for the best ballroom dancers, clapping to a dance performance by a couple in drag (figure 2.3), watching a solo dancer in exoticized drag (figure 2.4), and participating in a beauty contest (figure 2.5).

These scenes of buoyant sociality, of a carefree-looking evening spent in a place where everybody felt very much at home, were *not* arranged by bar owner Willy Lorenz as a keepsake to leaf through in later years. They were *not* kept in a cabinet in a private home to reminisce with friends or family. Instead, it was a police officer in West Berlin who carefully glued them into an album, supplied them with captions, and stored the album in the police archives. The album's



Figure 2.1. Boheme bar. Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin.



Figure 2.2. Boheme bar. Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin.

location stands in tension with the familiarity, even intimacy, between camera and subjects suggested by the images. What does it mean that this testimony to queer exuberance is found in the archives of an institution that played a key part in surveilling, shutting down, and sanctioning the very scenes displayed in its pages? The tension that the



Bild 16: Tanzvorführung Homosexueller.
Beide Tänzer zeigen sich in der Öffentlichkeit
nur in Frauenkleidern

Figure 2.3. Boheme bar. Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin. The caption by the police reads: “Dance performance by homosexuals. Both dancers appear in public only in women’s clothing.”



Figure 2.4. Boheme bar. Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin.



Figure 2.5. Boheme bar. Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin.

Boheme photo album embodies, I argue in this chapter, is precisely what characterizes the space of the queer bar in postwar Berlin: play *and* persecution, sociability *and* surveillance, dancing *and* detention.² In the following pages, I will describe these dynamics as they changed over the period of the two and a half decades after the war. I will do so by highlighting the practices of space-making that different actors who held a stake in queer bars engaged in. As I will show, queer bar-goers and the West Berlin police were only two players in a large cast of characters, which included the West Berlin city government and district offices, newspapers, bar owners, as well as West Berlin's tourism office, which had an acute interest in marketing the city's nightlife as the most thrilling this side of the Iron Curtain. At least until 1961, the Stasi, the East German secret police, also kept an eye on West Berlin's bars, both to control its own queer citizens and to gather information about "the class enemy," whether represented by West Germans or members of the Allied forces.

As spaces long identified as nodes of deviant sexualities and criminality by the police and the state more generally, queer bars are a key site to study the regulation of same-sex sexuality and gender "deviance." State policy is thus a guiding interest in this chapter, and I will attempt to chart the dynamics of bar regulation in West and East Berlin,

though the scarcity of sources for the latter will make for an imbalanced account.³ As in the other chapters, I will also trace queer Berliners' practices of space-making in bars. Simply by patronizing and running queer bars, they ensured their continued existence. By conversing and flirting, drinking and dancing, cross-dressing and performing in drag, they created a different, queer, mode of sociability. They confronted the regulations of police and city administrators by controlling access to queer bars through visual, verbal, and aural codes: drawn curtains, passwords to be whispered, or bells to be rung. The chapter's third conceptual layer are discourses: of homosexualities, deviant genders, prostitution, asociality, juvenile delinquency. The multitude and diversity of discourses woven into the sources on queer bars are testimony to their centrality to the topography of postwar Berlin.

After a review of how bars have figured in the existing scholarship on queer Berlin before 1945, the chapter returns to the first postwar decade. The section following focuses on the second half of the 1950s, when more prohibitive police policies appear to have replaced an earlier *laissez-faire* approach to queer bars. The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 defines the rest of the period of analysis: it meant that East Berliners could no longer go out to West Berlin's bars, but it also meant that West Berlin became further isolated. This isolation changed the significance that nightlife had for the city's economy, and it eventually led to West Berlin's becoming a playground for alternative lifestyles, such as student communes, radical politics, and a growing queer subculture.

Queer Nightlife in Berlin before 1945

In the history of homosexualities, the bar has played a pivotal role as one of the spaces understood to be crucial in the formation of a homosexual identity. Historians Jeffrey Weeks, John D'Emilio, and others have linked the emergence of a homosexual identity to the dramatic socio-economic changes brought about by industrial capitalism, which released individuals from their families as they moved to the cities to work in factories. The rapidly expanding cities provided the conditions for a homosexual subculture to form: large numbers of people with unfulfilled sexual needs and anonymity. Urban taverns, pubs, and bars thus became places of congregation for men looking for sex with men.⁴ For Berlin, Magnus Hirschfeld and other contemporary observers have documented that, at least since the second half of the nineteenth century, a large number of restaurants and bars existed where men, and to a lesser extent, women, socialized and found same-sex partners; around the same time, a queer ball culture also emerged.⁵ The Berlin

police kept a close watch on these queer sites, ensuring that no “overtly sexual behaviour” occurred, but from the mid-1880s on, and through the Weimar Republic, it did not raid them.⁶ This policy changed even before the Nazis came to power, however. In 1932, the newly appointed police president declared a campaign against “Berlin’s immoral night-life,” prohibited queer dances, and soon ordered the shutdown of many of the city’s known queer bars.⁷ In 1933, the Nazis continued the bar closures, and those that were not shut were in danger of being raided by police.⁸ Nevertheless, queer socializing in bars did not disappear completely. Patrons sought out new locales, and some queer bars may have survived through the end of the Nazi reign, as historians have suggested was the case in other German cities, such as Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt.⁹ After the end of the war and Nazism, queer nightlife quickly re-emerged in Berlin, despite continuities in the police force.¹⁰ Jennifer Evans has described “burgeoning and competing homosexual subcultures that came back into view after the war and despite the police regulation and morality enforcement in the 1950s and 1960s,” summarizing detailed studies by historians Jens Dobler, Andreas Pretzel, and Karl-Heinz Steinle.¹¹ Centres of queer nightlife were located in the West Berlin districts of Schöneberg, Charlottenburg, and Kreuzberg, as well as along East Berlin’s Friedrichstraße, though historians agree that East Berlin had much less to offer in terms of queer nightlife (figure 2.6).¹² What is missing in the existing studies are two things: first, an analysis of the development of the bars over time, taking into account the different actors involved in the making and unmaking of these queer spaces; second, while some of the studies mention bar patrons’ gender as an important factor in the way that police dealt with them, it is not a central analytic, and the evidence remains anecdotal.¹³ By contrast, I argue that gender centrally determined whether queer Berliners could live their lives free from harassment and is thus a crucial component of any analysis of queer bar culture.

The Early Postwar Years: “Resurrected Social Life”

The photos from Boheme bar’s three-year anniversary capture a specific moment, place, and mode in postwar queer social life in West Berlin: the end of what was almost a decade of relatively carefree bar-going and, more generally, rebuilding of a queer public in Berlin; a dense network of queer bars in a small pocket of West Berlin’s Kreuzberg neighbourhood; and a mode of working-class social life that reached across sexualities. In East Berlin, queer bars re-opened and thrived in the immediate postwar period, but were shut down in the early 1950s,

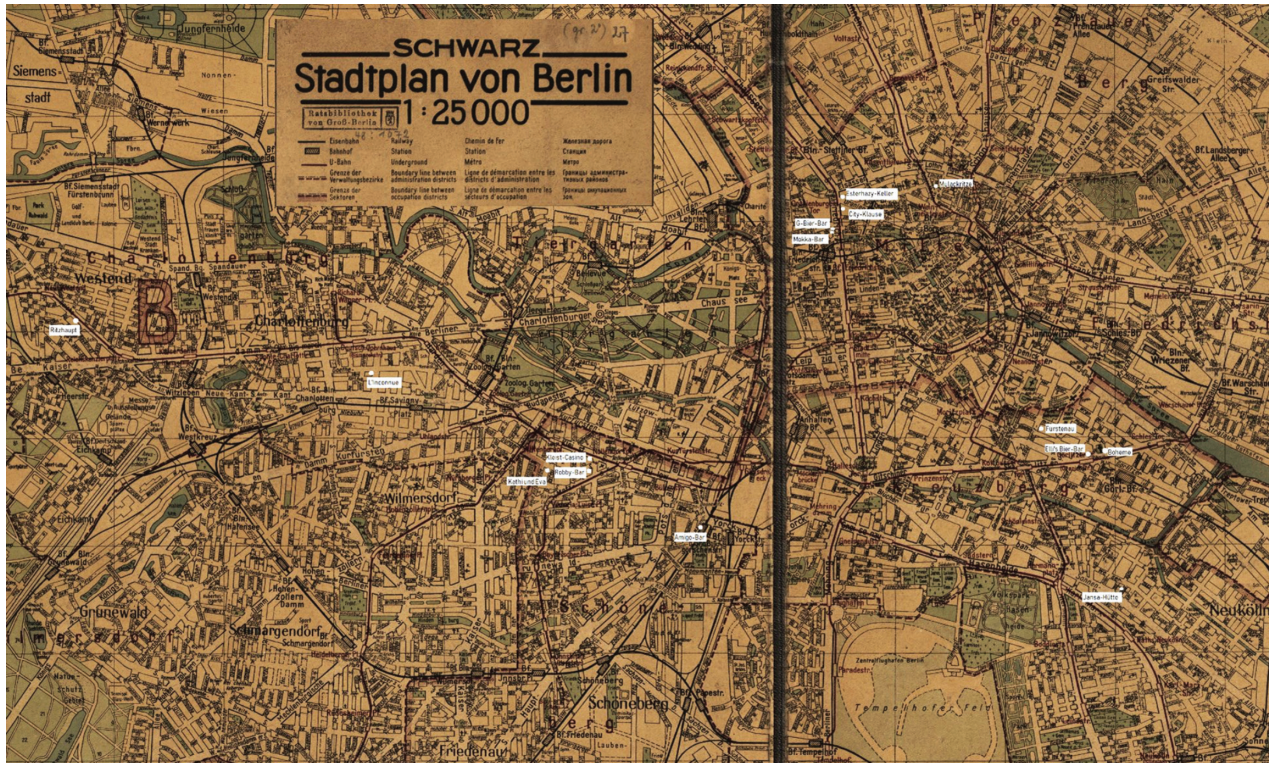


Figure 2.6. 1947 map of Berlin with the bars discussed in this chapter. Data from Schwarz, "Schwarz Stadtplan von Berlin." Digitale Landesbibliothek Berlin/the author.

likely because party leaders regarded queer commercial spaces in the GDR's capital as incompatible with the project of building a socialist morality.¹⁴ This book opened with Mamita, the non-binary star of the rich ball culture that quickly emerged in Berlin after the war had ended, and with an elegy for the years of "newly won freedom and tolerance."¹⁵ Doubts are in order to how tolerant those years really were. After all, Richard Gabler, who had led the detective squad's (*Kriminalpolizei*, or *Kripo*) homosexual section (*Homosexuellendezernat*) from 1944, served as head of the vice squad from 1946 until at least 1947.¹⁶ Between 1948 and 1951, under the direction of Gustav Nitsch (1948–50) and Kurt Linke (1950–52), the West Berlin criminal squad regularly controlled "meeting places of homosexual persons," particularly public toilets but also, to a lesser extent, bars.¹⁷ The police reports do not mention raids, however. Thus, at least into the early 1950s, the city boasted a rich and varied queer nightlife, as advertisements in Berlin's same-sex pen-pal newsletter *Amicus-Briefbund* document. In its February 1950 issue, readers were invited not just to the three weekly ball nights at Mamita's Ballhaus im Wiener Grinzing, Fasanen-Straße 78, but to an additional nine other balls at locations in Moabit, Neukölln, Kreuzberg, Schöneberg, and Steglitz, all Western districts.¹⁸ In March, dancers could choose between a "Great Spring Festival" at Kreuzberg's Fürstenau and Schöneberg's Kleines Eldorado bei Gerda Kelch, a "Spring Awakening Under Real Blossoms" at Schöneberg's Kleist-Casino, a "Bad Boys Ball" at Charlottenburg's Bart, a "Great Mask Ball" at Neukölln's Delmonico, a "Ladies' Opening Ball" at Kreuzberg's Imperial, or the "House Ball" at Thefi and Kleines Eldorado. There was just plain dancing at Delmonico and Bart every night, Sunday afternoon "Tea Dance" at Kleist-Casino, "Variety Night" Wednesdays and "Glee and Gaiety" Sundays at Fürstenau, fashion shows at Kleines Eldorado and Imperial, open stage cabaret Thursdays at Delmonico, and "Elite-Evenings" at Kleist-Casino and F13.¹⁹ The advertisements show that some bars catered to particular groups of patrons, such as women or an older crowd. In 1950, "Ladies' Nights" were offered on all week nights: Mondays and Wednesdays at Casa Tulenda in Moabit, Thursdays at Fürstenau or at Kathi und Eva im Grinzing, Fridays at Kreuzberg's Bier-Bar, Saturdays at Imperial and later also at Fürstenau.²⁰ Lotti and Bobby in der Wittenbergklausen advertised equally "For the Lady – For the Gentleman," and Mimi of Die Bohème at nearby Nollendorfplatz welcomed women Tuesdays and Fridays.²¹ A bar on Kreuzberg's Friesenstraße, F 13, advertised as "Treffpunkt der alten Freundschaft" (variably "Treffpunkt der alten Freunde"), indicating both its origin in the earlier, possibly prewar location Oase on Grünstraße/Jakobstraße and the older age of

its customers.²² Zum Grünen Anker at Nollendorfplatz billed “Social Nights for Young and Old,” signalling that older patrons were welcome too.²³ Two years later, in 1952, some of the same bars still advertised in *Amicus-Briefbund*, and new ones had arrived on the scene too. Live music and dance, long hours, and “solid prices” continued to be among the attractions most frequently praised. Mamita’s Ballhaus was still in operation.²⁴ Around the same time, Mamita took over a corner bar on Kreuzberg’s Lausitzer Platz, just across the square from Boheme bar.²⁵ Indeed, she was among the guests at Boheme’s third-anniversary festivities. She is announced on a poster advertising the event in the pub (figure 2.1) and may be among the participants of a fashion show that formed part of the evening’s entertainment (figure 2.5).

It is not just the image of Mamita, however, that warrants returning to Boheme bar. The photo album documents a mode of neighbourhood sociality across sexualities, an atmosphere of familiarity and coziness that is also described in another source speaking of the Kreuzberg bar scene of the 1950s, Peter Thilo’s unpublished novel *Ein Igel weint Tränen aus Rosenholz oder Die Kulturluftschiffer Berlins aus der Sicht des Bodenpersonals betrachtet* (A Hedgehog Cries Tears of Rosewood or the Cultural Air Skippers of Berlin Seen from the Perspective of the Ground Personnel).²⁶ The novel narrates the life of Karl Simon, born in 1931 and living in Berlin since 1946, his coming out as a gay man, his education, and his career in West Berlin’s cultural administration.²⁷ After some disappointments with men whom he found through personals in the homophile magazines, twenty-one-year-old Karl decides to look for love in the bars. He makes his first visit to Skalitzer Platz, where “on each of the four corners, there was a pertinent bar.”²⁸ The bar on the southeastern corner, the location of Boheme bar, is his first destination. In the narrator’s description of the outside and inside of the bar and the scene he finds inside, further practices of queer space-making become visible.

Like most bars of this kind, it was only furnished with a neon beer sign on the outside, but those in the know recognized it by the curtains drawn in the windows, which made it impossible to peek inside. Karl felt shy, he did not know what to expect, but since he had made a plan to go for direct contacts now, he entered. It was dim, everything was bathed in reddish light which reflected the thick red curtains and the red wallpaper. The place was half full, men of different ages were sitting at some of the tables, making an impression of being old acquaintances. There were men sitting at the bar, mostly younger ones, who appeared to have come there only to drink beer ... They seemed friendly, peaceful, and bored ... What Karl did not know was that bars of this kind only get crowded around midnight.

Those who come around this time, shortly past nine, don't come for adventures of any sort. They want to drink beer and talk to acquaintances ... Karl felt that he was in the wrong place. It was too cozy here, people didn't stray, they stayed.²⁹

Thilo's description of the bar sketches a moment different from the photos, an early weeknight at the bar. Nevertheless, both the photos and the narrative transport a familiar and cozy atmosphere. In Thilo's manuscript, it is the warm red colour of the curtains, wallpaper, and light that contributes to this coziness. Curtains in the windows protect patrons, all men, from outside gazes, thus ensuring the privacy necessary to create a relaxed, familiar mood: the bar's *Heimeligkeit* depends on keeping the identities of its patrons *geheim*, secret. At the same time, the curtains serve as a marker for those "in the know" that the bar caters to queer patrons. They hence have a double function: they both conceal and unveil.

Returning to the photos of the bar in the police album, features of its interior design, such as the floral pattern of wallpaper and tablecloths, the wood panelling, and wooden door-frames, also help create this impression of a rustic, petty bourgeois sociality. In addition, though, it is the relationship between photographer and subjects that suggests familiarity. The big smiles directed at the camera show that the photographer was no stranger to Boheme. An undercover officer may have been among the bar's frequent guests. Alternatively, the pictures may have been sold to the police, or seized during a raid or house search. In a way, in its incorporation of queer space-making practices, the categories of sexual science, and police surveillance, the album stands for a resurfacing of the familiarity between queer Berliners, sexologists, and the police that characterized Berlin at the beginning of the century, almost half a century later. The police classified same-sex sexuality, gender transgression, and commercial sex together, and the list of sexually deviant characters described in the captions of some photos – identifying guests as "homosexuals" (figure 2.3), "homosexual transvestite," "prostitutes," "bar girls," and "pimps" – partly relies on the language invented by sexology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁰

Boheme bar can also serve as an example for a variety of practices of queer space-making. It was run by an allegedly gay man who provided a space of low-key relaxation for an all-male afterwork crowd as well as for a glittering party of patrons of mixed genders and ages.³¹ The party's program included two different dance performances. The two dancers captured in figure 2.3, in matching gowns, ribbons on their heads

and necks, and high heels, have clearly carried the audience along: the seated guests appear to be clapping in the rhythm of the music, their faces beaming, while the host overlooks the scene, his gaze towards the dancers and photographer showing pride. The night's other drag performance featured a dancer in racialized drag: a headpiece with a feather, heavily made-up eyes and a bindi, creole earrings, a band around the neck, a band of bananas on top of a shiny bra top, and a straw skirt, painted fingernails, and the rest of their body unclothed (figure 2.4). Rather than just the dancer's take on a racialized and sexualized "exotic" femininity, the banana skirt is also a reference to Black performance artist Josephine Baker, who had performed in Berlin during the 1920s. Postwar drag performers hence drew on femininities popular during Nazism, such as actor and singer Zarah Leander, as well as earlier divas who represented the cosmopolitan moment of Weimar Germany, such as Josephine Baker.

On the album's last page is a glued-in envelope full of photographs of a group of gangsters who went by the name Sparverein West.³² The fact that these two groups of photographs were archived together, those depicting the patrons of Boheme and those showing the members of Sparverein West, suggests that the police were interested in the bar as a hang-out of organized crime as well as illegitimate sexuality. West Berlin's burgeoning queer nightlife as documented in these photos, in advertisements, articles, and Thilo's manuscript was soon disturbed as police began not just surveilling but also raiding bars.

In East Berlin, authorities began shutting down queer nightlife even earlier. Bars in East Berlin did not advertise in *Amicus-Briefbund*, though East Berliners read the paper, as their ads in the personal ad section attest. But according to Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, the trans museum curator, collector, and activist from East Berlin, "transvestite" and "homosexual bars" re-opened in the Soviet-controlled part of the city after the war had ended. "The old audience was back all of a sudden, since many did, after all, manage to survive. And the prostitutes, of course, they were back again too."³³ The East Berlin police kept track of queer bars, listing "pederast and gay broad bars" among other "sketchy bars" in their precinct guidebooks, a tool for police work.³⁴ The pub Mulackritze in the Scheunenviertel neighbourhood in Mitte had catered to a queer clientele throughout the Nazi period and continued to do so in the postwar period.³⁵ In her memoir, Charlotte von Mahlsdorf described in great detail how the new owners, Minna Mahlich and her husband, were harassed by the district office within months of taking over the bar.³⁶ She cited Mahlich's rendition of a district office employee asking her to no longer serve "hookers, lesbians, and gays." When she did not comply,

Mahlich lost her *Opfer des Faschismus* pension and her bar license.³⁷ Though both were reinstated after Mahlich's brother, the Belgian resistance fighter Max Levinthal, intervened, the bar could only continue until 1951, when the police irrevocably withdrew Mulackritze's license as part of a clean-up of the area. Von Mahlsdorf claimed that another thirty-one bars in the Scheunenviertel were shut down.³⁸ Cleansing the area of queer bars may have been a result of the SED's turn towards a restrictive sexual morality in the early years of the GDR.³⁹ In the same year, 1951, the East Berlin radio station Berliner Rundfunk laid off eight men because, as "homosexuals," they were prone to attending queer bars, which, according to the staff report's author, only existed in West Berlin.⁴⁰ In this case, SED officials worried primarily that homosexuals, long considered unreliable citizens because of their transnational networks, would connect with "biologically congenial individuals" from the other side of the Iron Curtain.⁴¹ The report author's insistence that no such meeting places existed in East Berlin was wishful thinking rather than fact; certainly, the statement shows that queer bars were not wanted in the socialist capital. The shutting down of queer bars on East Berlin's Friedrichstraße in the 1960s and 1970s may have been caused by a similar concern for presenting a clean socialist city. Both areas, Scheunenviertel and Friedrichstraße, would see massive construction projects after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.⁴²

Repression Returns in West Berlin in the 1950s

In West Berlin too, the "newly won freedom and tolerance" reminisced about in the Mamita article in *Der Weg* did not last forever. The first reports of West Berlin police raids on queer bars appear in the homophile magazines in the fall of 1954, and they continue into the late 1960s. On 18 September 1954, the West Berlin police raided three Neukölln bars, checking the IDs of all patrons present and registering everyone on a list. *Der Weg* reported on the incident in its November 1954 issue and reprinted brief articles from the boulevard paper *B.Z.* and the left-leaning daily *Der Telegraf*, which had criticized both the raid and especially the lists, suggesting that the practice was considered unusual.⁴³ The *Telegraf*'s evening edition, the *nacht-depesche*, voiced what can be read as the strongest critique of the raids.⁴⁴ The article's author used the term "persons of same-sex sentiment" to describe the bar guests, indicating sympathy for and, possibly, familiarity with the homophile cause.⁴⁵ The author then devoted more than half of the article to a direct quotation of a protest letter written by a "Kreuzberg citizen" who was subjected to the raid. The man, who had – self-confidently, if unsuccessfully – asked

the police officer who was registering him to reveal his identification number, argued from a perspective of democratic citizenship. He criticized the raids as an attack on German democracy, comparing them both to Nazi methods and to the practices he imagined to be in place in communist East Berlin.⁴⁶ As the journalist did not comment on the letter, the letter writer's opinion came across as the newspaper's to the reader. Such direct critique of police action against queer people on the first page of a widely read newspaper is remarkable. The fact that the raid was so widely reported on, and the critical assessment of the police across different newspapers, speaks for the novelty of the practice: it is likely that the 1954 raid in Neukölln was the first post-war raid on a queer bar. The West Berlin police thus broke with the long-standing policy of surveilled tolerance of queer nightlife that the city's police had followed from the 1880s until the end of the Weimar Republic.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the newspapers remain silent on why the police changed course so drastically. One reason might be changes in the West Berlin police force. Police president Johannes Stumm (1897–1978, in office 1948–62) and Wolfram Sangmeister (1912–78), head of the criminal squad from 1952 to 1969, did not have a Nazi past, at least not one that was publicly known.⁴⁸ But Erich Duensing, who in 1951 became director of the regular police (*Schutzpolizei*, or *Schupo*), was a former German army colonel who then recruited multiple former army officers for leadership positions in the police force.⁴⁹ Also in 1951, article 151 of the *Grundgesetz* became effective in West Berlin, making former Nazi party members entitled to employment in an office equivalent to their former positions.⁵⁰ This policy meant an exchange of personnel in the precincts, as many of the police officers hired after 1945 had to make room for former Nazis. After the Christian Democratic Union (CDU, Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP, Freie Demokratische Partei) won the Berlin elections in 1952, the West Berlin police hired hundreds of former SA and SS men.⁵¹ It appears likely that these personnel changes in the force had repercussions in the police's dealings with queer Berliners too. Additionally, the fact that the first raids took place in September 1954, less than three months before the Berlin government elections in early December, suggests that the CDU/FDP government sought to present itself to its voters as the guarantor of law and order. Though they lost the 1954 election, the police's approach to queer bars remained repressive under the following SPD-led governments.

The raids may also have been a reaction to the scandalous disappearance of the president of the West German Federal Office for Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz),

Dr. Otto John, on 19 July 1954, and his reappearance in East Berlin a few days later. Both the general and the homophile press commented on his case and discussed John's alleged homosexuality. Even today, scholars debate whether John left West Germany on his own accord, or whether he was kidnapped, as he himself claimed upon his return in 1955.⁵² An article in *Der Spiegel* magazine published on 28 July 1954 included multiple allusions to John's "peculiar disposition," which supposedly had led to his arrest in Portugal in 1944, as well as to his visits to "homosexual bars in Berlin" during private stays in the city.⁵³ "Rolf," editor of the Swiss homophile magazine *Der Kreis*, worried that the scandal would have repercussions for the situation of all homosexuals in Germany. He wrote: "Should it turn out to be true that John is homosexual and has shared classified information about the Western defense with the East, then I am pessimistic for the comrades in Germany."⁵⁴ In *Der Weg*, another homophile magazine, Larion Gyburg-Hall expressed his hopes that the "John case" would pave the way to decriminalizing homosexuality in West Germany. Now, the judges at the Federal Constitutional Court would have to accept the "sour consequences" of the prohibition of sex between men: that, evidently, §175 made men who were in charge of state secrets vulnerable to blackmail and thus had to be abolished in the interest of national security.⁵⁵ This hope was deceptive, as the Federal Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutionality of §175 in 1957.⁵⁶ Even if none of the reports about the fall 1954 raids in the Berlin bars linked them to the John case, a connection appears plausible. Research in the archives of the German and Allied secret services might confirm or falsify this thesis.

The critical press coverage of the raids affected police rhetoric, but not practice. In 1955, criminal squad director Wolfram Sangmeister rejected raids, declaring them an inappropriate measure during a press conference on §175 and crimes committed by "streetwalking boys," teenagers or young men who sold sexual services to men.⁵⁷ The press conference was covered in almost all West Berlin newspapers, signalling a strong public interest.⁵⁸ The conference's immediate occasion was the successful investigation of the murder of a sixty-five-year-old homosexual man, who had died at the hands of a twenty-six-year-old streetwalking boy. The case was one of eight murders of homosexual men investigated by the police in West Berlin since 1948. Sangmeister presented himself as a proponent of decriminalizing sex between adult men but took a tough stance on streetwalking boys. He pledged to prosecute them and mentioned the possibility of sending "repeat offenders" and "incorrigible cases" to the workhouse.⁵⁹

Despite Sangmeister's claim that these streetwalking boys were "uncharted territory" for the police, the figure of the male prostitute had occupied a central position in discourses around deviant sexuality since the turn of the twentieth century, as Martin Lücke has shown.⁶⁰ Sexual scientists, legal professionals working on a reform of German sexual law, homosexual emancipation activists, and social workers were all concerned with streetwalking boys.⁶¹ Often, sexual scientists described them as particularly feminine, distinguishing them from more respectable, conventionally masculine homosexuals.⁶² Since 1909, all efforts at reforming Germany's sexual laws singled out men engaging in same-sex sex "for profit": men selling sexual services but also men of legal age who had sex with male minors or who abused "a dependency resulting from a service or work relationship."⁶³ These cases were described as "complex [*qualifizierte*] homosexuality" and distinguished from "simple homosexuality," or consensual, non-commercial same-sex relationships between men of legal age. The bills for a reformed sex law created a hierarchy between male prostitutes and the men purchasing their services: whereas the latter continued to be understood and punished as "simple homosexuals," "streetwalking boys" were to receive much more severe penalties. These suggestions for legal reform, drawn up by legal professionals in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, served as the basis for the Nazis' changes to §175 and introduction of §175a in 1935. As discussed in the introduction, West Germany kept both laws until 1969, whereas East Germany adopted §175a but brought back the Weimar-era version of §175. The "increasing demonization of streetwalking boys" described by Lücke continued in the postwar era, as Jennifer Evans has shown. For the immediate postwar years, she has described a shift in attitudes towards streetwalking boys from "endangered victims" of the wartime and postwar disruptions to family life – hunger, homelessness, becoming orphans, parental neglect – to "capricious villains" who presented a danger to national renewal in both East and West.⁶⁴ The two states employed ideologically different understandings of streetwalking boys, but both "inherit[ed] a similar strand of pre-1945 criminology, especially Lombrosian-inspired analysis of prostitution as passive asociality."⁶⁵

But authorities also understood the streetwalking boy phenomenon as rooted in problems particular to the postwar moment and the city's division. In reaction to Sangmeister's press conference on streetwalking boys, an employee of West Berlin's youth services office explained that a quarter of the streetwalking boys who were known at the office lived in East Berlin. For those under age eighteen, the office contacted their parents, sometimes successfully stopping them from returning to West

Berlin. Another 25 per cent of the known streetwalking boys were homeless, however. "We cannot take care of them because they are East-West-migrants and in part unrecognized refugees, or they have not continued their process at the refugee office," the office employee explained.⁶⁶ Rather than refugees from formerly German areas in central and eastern Europe as in the immediate postwar years, the refugees described here were East German citizens fleeing the GDR. Their number increased over the 1950s as the East German economy increasingly lagged behind its West German counterpart and as the GDR further curtailed its citizens' political rights and freedom of movement. Consequently, the East-West divide continued to serve as an explanation for "the problem of streetwalking boy activity." A 1960 West Berlin police statement claimed

the not insignificant rise in the number of streetwalking boys [can] be traced back in large part to the so-called currency differential and the refugee misery. Apart from the streetwalking boys who have their residency in the Soviet-occupied district [of Berlin] or the Soviet-occupied zone [of Germany], among those working as streetwalking boys are also such male persons who have come to Berlin as alleged refugees, but who have been denied admission according to the Federal Law for Provisional Accommodation ... According to police experience, streetwalking boys are almost always workshy and only interested in an effortless "breadwinning." When it comes to "earning" money without effort, many of them – animated by the milieu they have chosen and freed of the natural inhibitions – do not shrink back from murder or other violent crime. This is proven by the number of such crimes committed by streetwalking boys in Berlin in the past few years.⁶⁷

The "currency differential" mentioned here refers to the unequal value of the West and East Mark, and more generally to the economic disparity between West and East Berlin.⁶⁸ In West Berlin, streetwalking boys were hence seen primarily as East Germans who profited from the porousness of the city's division, whether out of need or greed. Both sources stress the refugees' lack of state recognition, and their unclear resident status further made them suspicious. Streetwalking boys' mobility made them suspect in the eyes of East Berlin authorities too, as I will discuss in [chapter 3](#). The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 would stop the mobility of people, services, and goods that had characterized the city since 1945, rendering its Cold War division concrete. In neither East nor West Berlin did it end the presence of streetwalking boys, proof that the explanations given had fallen short.

Despite *Kripo* director Sangmeister's acknowledgment of the inefficacy of raids in fighting the "streetwalking boy plight," the West Berlin

police continued raiding queer bars into the late 1960s.⁶⁹ The meticulous police documentation of the raids on three bars in Schöneberg and Kreuzberg in the fall of 1957 allows reconstruction of how raids were prepared and conducted, and what outcome they had. On the night of Saturday to Sunday, 26–27 October, under the direction of Sangmeister and a *Schupo* officer, over one hundred policemen came down on the popular Amigo-Bar in Schöneberg, where between 180 and 250 patrons were enjoying a night out.⁷⁰ Just two weeks later, on the weekend of 9–10 November, the vice department and *Schutzpolizei* raided Kreuzberg's Elli's Bier-Bar on Skalitzer Straße.⁷¹ And another two weeks later, on the night of 21–22 November, the same happened at Robby-Bar in Schöneberg.⁷²

The police intensified the fight against the “streetwalking boy plight” in November of that year, with police department EI (S), usually responsible for robberies and break-ins, taking over raids and patrols, whereas the vice squad, M II 2, took care of interrogations.⁷³ Patrols toured bars that were known as meeting spaces for non-conforming people of different sorts: rebellious youth, women selling sexual services and their clients, gay men, streetwalking boys, lesbian women, and trans people. Sometimes, professionals involved in state efforts to regulate sexuality and control juveniles, such as judges and district attorneys, joined the officers.⁷⁴ Journalists were also at times taken for a tour of the city's nightlife. For instance, a French cameraman came along on a 1959 patrol of bars in Charlottenburg, Schöneberg, and Kreuzberg.⁷⁵ The patrols thus served multiple functions. They kept law enforcement informed about the clientele and character of bars and ensured that owners and patrons remained aware that they were under observation. As tours of the underworld for select visitors, they also played into the city's reputation as Europe's nightlife capital, simultaneously penalizing, participating in, and thus also generating the spectacle. Finally, in their enumeration of conspicuous individuals, of the “homosexuals,” “streetwalking boys,” “transvestites,” “prostitutes,” and “lesbian women,” the officers created and reinforced a typology of sexually suspicious personalities.

In preparation for the 1957 raids on queer bars, officers noted the license plates of cars that were parked in front of the establishments, documenting their owners' data in the files. They observed what kind of crowd gathered in the bars, what patrons were doing, and at what time of the night places were busiest.⁷⁶ With this information collected, meticulous action plans for the raids were written and sketches of the bars' interiors drawn, complete with exits, windows (barred or not), music box, toilets, and tables and chairs (figure 2.7). The “Xs” in the

Handskizze der "Robby-Bar" Augsburg Str. 74 pt.
Telefon: 241083

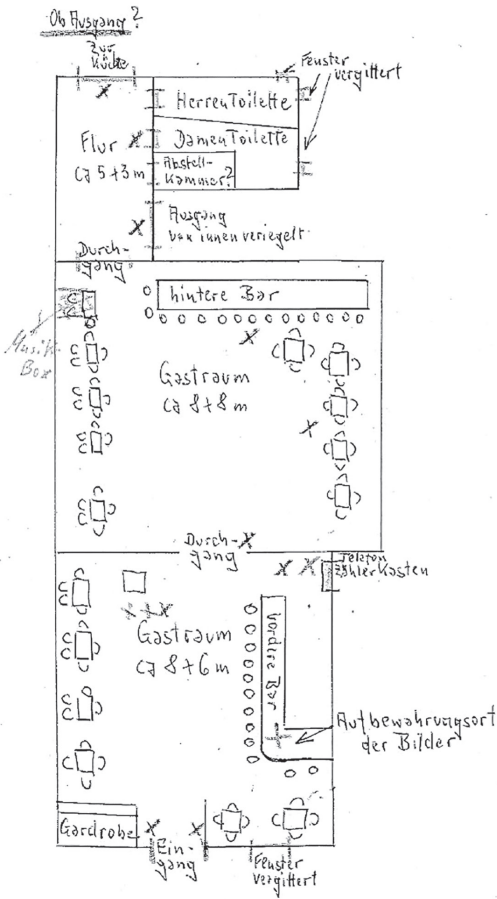


Figure 2.7. Police sketch of Robby-Bar. Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin.

sketch show where officers were to be positioned to stop patrons from fleeing.

The raids were conducted by a handful of officers from the detective squad and dozens of regular policemen, as well as a small number of female officers (*Weibliche Kriminalpolizei*, WKP). *Schupos* blocked

all exits and moved into the bar, immediately detaining those suspected of being streetwalking boys and, sometimes, transvestites.⁷⁷ They were escorted right away to the police vans that were waiting outside and then driven to the State Office of Criminal Investigations (*Landeskriminalamt*, LKA). All other guests were shoved towards the back of the bar. Officers sat down at a table and checked the patrons' IDs. They compared them with their records (*Fahndungsbuch*) and wrote down names, birth dates, addresses, and sometimes occupations.

The lists from the fall 1957 raids at Elli's Bier-Bar in Kreuzberg and Robby-Bar in Schöneberg give insight into who patronized these bars, even if they lack those identified as "streetwalking boys" or "transvestites" by police. Thirty-four individuals were recorded at the raid at Elli's.⁷⁸ Most guests were from the immediate neighbourhood (fourteen from SO36) or from areas nearby (six from other parts of Kreuzberg or Neukölln). Patrons also came from other central West Berlin districts (seven from Charlottenburg, Wilmersdorf, and Schöneberg) and from the outskirts (Tegel, Reinickendorf, Lichtenrade, and Britz). An East Berliner and a man from Bonn were also at the bar that night. The thirty-two men and two women ranged in age from twenty-three to sixty-two years, though most were in their thirties. Most of them were craftsmen, blue- and white-collar workers, and businessmen, but among the crowd were also a civil servant and a journalist, as well as three men "without profession." At Robby-Bar, the crowd was more international. The raid yielded information on twenty-two German men between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-four, many of them visiting from West Germany, others from across West Berlin, with one East Berliner in attendance too. The fifteen foreigners at the bar, "Americans, English, Austrians, Brazilians, and Italians," were asked for identification, but then let go without documentation of their names. Whereas Elli's served mostly working-class and petty bourgeois locals, then, Robby-Bar in Schöneberg was popular with tourists from West Germany and abroad. While all the bars raided catered overwhelmingly to cisgender men, women – both cisgender and transgender – were also often among the guests. Female customers were dealt with in contradictory ways. An October 1957 article about the raid on Amigo-Bar in *der neue weg* notes that women were given particular scrutiny.⁷⁹ Female officers examined the gender identity of a female patron and the bar owner's wife. The article does not give details on how the examination went about, but its description of the procedure as "tactless" and "embarrassing and bureaucratic" suggests that the women had to undress or were patted down so that police

could determine that they were not “transvestites.” Officers singled out transvestites and young men suspected of being streetwalking boys directly and put them in police vans that were waiting in front of the bars. By contrast, a police report of a 1958 raid on Kleist-Casino notes that tables occupied by mixed groups were left alone.⁸⁰ It appears, then, that it was not a normatively gendered appearance alone, but rather the semblance of heterosexuality that could protect patrons at a queer bar from police attention.

With their massive police presence, these raids did not go unnoticed by the public. Police files and reporting have recorded immediate reactions to the raids, as well as bar owners’ efforts to cut their losses from the negative press. At Elli’s Bier-Bar, two patrons protested against police taking down their names. According to the police officer in charge, the raid was conducted in a generally calm atmosphere. Outside the bar, however, the atmosphere was far from quiet.

In front of the bar a large crowd of people, several hundred persons, had congregated, and they openly proclaimed their approval of the police action. Only one male person tried to cause unrest. This person was arrested, however ... After the action was finished, a group of officers remained close to the bar for security reasons, as the bar owner had expressed her worries that an “upset crowd might storm and demolish her bar after the police have left!” No incidents occurred, however.⁸¹

Hundreds of people congregating in front of the bar, voicing their approval for the raid – the bar owner certainly had reason to be worried. It is unclear from the officer’s narrative whether the male individual trying to cause unrest echoed the crowd’s sentiment or whether he expressed frustration or anger with the police. The report does not explain, either, why the crowd approved of the raid. Were they upset with the bar’s clientele for its queerness, or was Elli’s simply too noisy? According to the police, complaints “from residents” had led to their previous raid on Amigo-Bar, suggesting that neighbours were another actor in struggles around queer spaces.⁸²

Even if the West Berlin press was often critical of the raids, there were also newspapers whose homophobic reporting contributed to hostile attitudes towards queer bars. The *7 Uhr Blatt am Sonntag Abend*’s coverage of the raid at Elli’s was titled “Fight the Vice,” and its report mixed

images of crime and disease to create an impression of imminent threat at the hands of streetwalking boys.⁸³

The Berlin detective squad has declared a massive fight against the “street-walking boy” vice, which has been spreading in our city like a foul plague and has become a nourishing ground for multiple other crimes. After a notorious meeting place of these elements, who are mostly work-shy and adverse to any orderly life, was raided just two weeks ago in Schöneberg, the police struck last night in Kreuzberg.⁸⁴

The article did not mention the bar’s name, but its description as a “bar on Skalitzer Straße that is known as a meeting place of homosexual circles” left little doubt as to which establishment was meant.⁸⁵ It is thus not surprising that the owner of Robby-Bar, raided two weeks after Elli’s, pleaded with the officer in charge to inform the press only in a factual manner, if at all, and asked for confirmation of his “exemplary and correct” behaviour – his cooperation in a smooth and quiet raid.⁸⁶ Indeed, the report notes that, in contrast to the events at Elli’s, not a single guest at Robby-Bar protested against having their information recorded.

Despite the enormous effort undertaken by the police, the success of the raids, purportedly conducted to arrest “streetwalking boys,” was questionable. The police carted off those patrons who were detained at the beginning of the raids to the State Office of Criminal Investigations, where they interrogated and photographed them and took their fingerprints, even if they could not make any charges against them.⁸⁷ Once personal information was on record in the “pink lists,” it could be used in any arising court case, and it was accessible to federal and city governments.⁸⁸ Of the around one hundred individuals arrested in the three raids, only six seem to have been sentenced.⁸⁹ All of them were residents of East Berlin or the GDR, and at twenty-three to thirty-nine years of age, they could not clearly be characterized as streetwalking boys. The sources give no hint about why, in this case, only East Germans were sentenced. Did the West Berlin court, like the SED, fear contacts between gay men from the East and the West? The six men were sentenced to between two and four weeks in prison, with three years of probation during which they were prohibited from visiting the bar where they had been arrested or, in one case, even all homosexual bars in West Berlin. The raids brought no progress in the investigations of the murders of five homosexual men. In the press, the position of the bar owner was again given precedence, whereas the police’s failure was cause for gleeful comment. “No Success for Chief Cop during

Nightly Hunt," *nacht-depesche* titled about the raid on Amigo-Bar.⁹⁰ The bar owner was quoted as saying:

Why do they give me a permit first and then ruin my business with such methods. It is known that I cater to homosexuals, but I make sure that streetwalking boys cannot take up space in my bar by letting in only members or their acquaintances.⁹¹

The statement highlights the tremendous risk that bar owners took, and it demonstrates the uncoordinated and at times contradictory policies of different state authorities. The district office had given the bar a permit without regard to its clientele, but the police raided it. Whereas Amigo-Bar's owner distanced his bar from streetwalking boys, the owner of Robby-Bar explained that, with the streetwalking boys gone, the other guests stopped coming too, resulting in severe damage to his business.⁹²

Massive raids were the most spectacular and scary form of police surveillance. Throughout his service as chief of West Berlin's detective squad, Sangmeister asserted that their purpose was not the persecution of homosexuals but only the crackdown on streetwalking boys and progress in murder investigations of homosexual men. The outcome of the raids – bar patrons arrested on the grounds of §175 – belied his claim, however. The raids endangered bar patrons' and owners' livelihoods. They demonstrated police power and created a climate of constant risk. Despite these severe restrictions, queer Berliners continued going out, enjoying the coziness and conversation, the dancing and flirting with others from near and far that West Berlin's bars offered.

In 1959, representatives of the police and city government began a regular exchange in the "Rowdy Commission." Since the mid-1950s, psychologists, politicians, and police in both West and East Germany occupied themselves with teenagers and young adults who embraced US popular culture, distanced themselves visibly and audibly from bourgeois respectability, and became known as "Rowdies" or "*Halbstarke*."⁹³ After jazz and rock n' roll concerts in West Berlin in 1956 and 1957 had resulted in rioting young fans, the "Rowdy Commission" was set up to deal with the problem, made up of representatives of the Senator for the Interior, the Senator for the Economy, and the Senator for Youth and Sport, as well as high-ranking police officers.⁹⁴ In the commission's meetings and its decisions for action, streetwalking boys remained a central figure of contention, as authorities worried that "dubious bars" would expose young men to "a criminal infection."⁹⁵ Here, the discourses about criminality and homosexuality overlapped,

with queer bars acting as sites of infection. Even if the commission's initial focus was on juvenile delinquency generally, the close cooperation between the police, the judiciary, the Senate, and the district offices created the foundation for a massive campaign against queer bars in the 1960s.

Police raids did not present the only disturbance of queer sociality at the bars. While the angry crowd in front of Elli's dispersed on the night of the raid, three weeks later, the bar was attacked by a group of about fifteen youth, who beat up patrons and destroyed furniture.⁹⁶ A similar attack is described in Peter Thilo's novel manuscript. In the late 1950s, protagonist Karl, now a law student, rewards himself for having studied hard by paying Elli's a visit, a place that he appreciates because of its patrons' non-normative gender:

After being surrounded by all the conforming students at university ... Karl wanted to be among homosexuals again who affirmed their sexuality and who had gaily made themselves at home in it. That was not true for Karl; he no longer had to hide at home, but in the presence of his fellow students, he could not even inconspicuously wiggle his butt or speak in a nelly way, not even for fun. Here at Elli's, a nelly demeanour of different varieties was the custom.⁹⁷

Karl and his friend find a table and begin drinking when noise from the entrance commands their attention. While most guests flee to the back of the bar room and hide behind sofas and under tables, Karl joins the "four waiters in their white jackets" who "tried barring the entrance to a group of new guests."⁹⁸ These new guests, Karl finds out soon, are "a kind of rocker or biker gang, clad in leather, at first sight six or eight strong figures" who were "not well intentioned towards the homosexuals."⁹⁹ The "rockers" fight the waiters and bar patrons with bar stools and ransack the bar area by throwing bottles, glasses, and ashtrays against the mirrored shelves. Karl, hit on the head with a bar stool for the third time, faints and awakes in his own blood. The bar owner, Elli, anxious to return to business as usual, rejects his plea to call the police, an ambulance, or a taxi. Stabilized by his friend, Karl walks to a nearby hospital, where his cut is stitched, and then takes the subway back to his home in the suburb of Dahlem. The next day, the doctor prescribes multiple weeks of rest. The lighthearted narrative voice contradicts the violence captured in this episode and the terror that Elli's guests must have felt. Elli herself is portrayed as a no-nonsense businesswoman whose concern lies with the reputation of her bar rather than her guests' well-being. The episode further demonstrates the risks that queer bar-goers

took upon themselves for a night out. Again, these risks were distributed unevenly; those whose gender was non-normative, the feminine men and transvestites, were in danger, whereas normatively masculine men had less to fear. Episodes recounted in two oral history interviews demonstrate this range of experiences. Whereas feminine Orest Kapp felt terror at the sight of groups of youth on his way to or from a bar, conventionally masculine Fritz Schmehling had the privilege of passing as one of them and then returning to the bar that his friends had disrupted, even making it his regular joint.

Teenage Orest Kapp and his friends would go to bars in Schöneberg where he met “really sweet men, often still boys,” for instance at Trocadero and later Black Molly.¹⁰⁰ But the way to the bar was dangerous, and before entering, Kapp took precautions:

You could never let yourself be seen on the streets. Especially not alone. And when you saw a group of youths, you’d best make yourself scarce. And at the bars that we went out to, there were bells, and you’d never go inside without checking if anyone is watching you.¹⁰¹

By contrast, Fritz Schmehling’s normative masculinity made for an entirely different bar-going experience. Schmehling came to West Berlin in 1963, a few days after his twenty-first birthday, to explore the city’s gay subculture. A carpenter, he had taken the opportunity to commit to two years of employment in West Berlin in exchange for evading the mandatory military service.¹⁰² Asked by the interviewer if he identified as “homosexual” when he moved to Berlin, Schmehling responded:

No ... That makes you a pansy, and end of story! But I never felt like the female part. Up to today I can make very little of that. [laughs] Maybe that has to do with my trade too, I don’t know. A craftsman remains a craftsman, right?¹⁰³

Schmehling hence did not identify as a “homosexual” because, to him, the term signified femininity. His masculinity, which he links to his trade here, allowed him to pass for straight among his colleagues. His first experience of a gay bar then came as part of a group of young men – a clique – seeking to “go on a rampage” in a gay bar during a Saturday night tour of the red-light district of Potsdamer Straße.

I had a few colleagues at the company where I worked as carpenter. They said, Ooh, Saturday we’ll explore Potsdamer [Straße.] Well, I said, ok, good, I’ll come, right? Well and so you got to know the different establishments.

Watched the ladies who think they'll get ahead quicker by walking slowly. And then one of them said, now let's go to Winterfeldtplatz to a gay bar and go on a rampage. Ok, why don't you go along, at least you'll know where to go. So we went into the old Trocadero and [ahem] well, you misbehaved a little bit, tipped beer into the ashtray, turned the ashtray on its head, etc. Then they kicked us out. We continued back towards Potsdamer [Straße] and I somehow split, said, I'm done for today. So I walked back to Winterfeldplatz, knocked on the door, thinking, let's see if they let me in. An older gentleman opened the door and said, I thought that you weren't one of them. And he let me in. From then on, this Trocadero was my starting point.¹⁰⁴

In Schmechling's narration, causing a stir at a gay bar is part of a fun night out in West Berlin's red-light district for a group of young tradesmen: visiting "different establishments" – the term could refer to bars or to brothels – going "on a rampage" at a gay bar, and then returning to Potsdamer Straße, whether to continue drinking or to purchase sexual services from one of the streetwalkers. Compared to the violence at Elli's described by Peter Thilo, the disturbances Schmechling mentions – creating a mess by tipping over beer-soaked ashtrays – appear benign, like a prank. But to someone like Orest Kapp, who was a regular guest at Trocadero and whose femininity would have made him a "pansy" in Schmechling's eyes, the group's disruption of the familiar space of the gay bar would have been terrifying. Schmechling's normative masculinity allowed him to pass for straight among his colleagues. While his entry to the world of gay bars came as part of a group of hostile youths, the fact that he was let back in suggests that he did not play a leading role in the disturbances and that the experienced older doorman was able to distinguish his normative masculinity from heterosexuality.

As seen in the patron lists from Elli's and Robby-Bar, East Berliners could be found in West Berlin bars, though in small numbers only: going out in the West was attractive, but expensive. Dog groomer Rita "Tommy" Thomas, whose photo collection I discussed in [chapter 1](#), had friends in West Berlin. She and her girlfriend Helli spent their Friday and Saturday nights exploring the bars. In an oral history interview, Tommy remembers exchanging five Ostmarks for one Westmark, which made for a frugal nightlife experience:

We were pretty spartan, we maybe ordered one schnapps and one lemonade, and held on to that all night. While the others drank wine. Or we drank a bottle of wine, not a bottle, a glass. When there were a few of us, a

bottle and then everyone got a glass. So as I said, you could have a conversation there. And that was a lot. That was pretty good.¹⁰⁵

Tommy's lack of means affected her experience of queer nightlife, but it did not exclude her from queer sociality. She was introduced to her first queer bar, Bei Rudi in Schöneberg, by friends.

Well, somebody said, I don't know who it was, some acquaintance or so, I met a lot of people, after all. Why don't you come along! So I went along and looked around. That was the first time I was in a club like that. I just looked, yeah. There was dancing there too, but I was too strange still, and I was also very young.¹⁰⁶

Tommy describes having been "too strange" to join in the dancing during her first visit at a queer bar, as well as being "very young." But later, when she had become familiar with queer nightlife, she continued to be a talker rather than a dancer. She describes the typical course of an evening at a lesbian bar as follows: "You sat down and talked some and drank some and maybe made a date."¹⁰⁷ Bei Rudi was named after its owner, a woman whose elegant masculinity impressed Tommy. "Rudi was wearing a tie, and always a suit, and always had red lips, and ran the show."¹⁰⁸ Rudi later took over Fürstenau, a club in the backyard of Adalbertstraße 21 in Kreuzberg.¹⁰⁹ This bar became Tommy and Helli's regular haunt, an integral part of their everyday life, as seen in [chapter 1](#).

Tommy also remembers Eldorado, where her Charlie Chaplin costume once won the first prize at a masquerade ball, and Kathi und Eva in Schöneberg, where an all-women band played for dancing late at night. Bei Rudi and Kathi und Eva were women-only in her memory, though it is unclear in the interview whether these spaces were exclusively female all the time or just for one night. Fürstenau and Kathi und Eva were also remembered by Renate, an older lesbian woman interviewed in the 1980s.¹¹⁰ Renate and her girlfriend Klara, both born in the 1920s, were a working-class couple living in Spandau, a western suburb. They worked heavy manual labour jobs, as *Trümmerfrauen*, women who helped clear the ruins after the Second World War, as welder, and as turner, but were also out of work for longer periods of time. Nevertheless, they made their way downtown to visit a queer bar now and then.

I learned of the bars from acquaintances, after the war. There was the bar in Adalbertstraße, in Kreuzberg, by the Wall. It had an upper floor where

the heteros were. Everybody took the same entrance. On the lower floor, it belonged to two girls who were a little older already. You should have seen them! That was around '60. We went along with a co-worker once. It was like this: back then, they were all still coming from East Berlin. They sat there in suits, tailcoats, smoking fat cigars. There was a round table, a kind of regulars' table. Then there was a dance floor, not located separately, but by the entrance. An all-male band was playing on the dance floor ... Suddenly a girl was peeking through the door. They were fighting. Every so often there are pretty intense scenes of jealousy! We only went there twice because I did not like it so much. Then we'd always go to Fuggerstraße, there was a bar there, "Eva und ..." They had a music box. What I did not like so much about it was, to be honest, that there were rich women there. We could not consume anything there, after all. We did always drink our martini, though. Then the two of us talked, but you did not get in touch with others there. It was so upper class, we couldn't really keep up. And it was pretty much the same on Goethestraße.¹¹¹

In Renate's account, class divisions across lesbian bar spaces become apparent. Fürstenau, situated in the heart of proletarian Kreuzberg and very close to the zonal boundary, was popular with East Berliners and masculine women wearing suits and dress coats and smoking cigars. The direct sequence of these two groups in her narration – East Berliners, masculine women – may express that women from East Berlin frequently adhered to a style of female masculinity that is known from photographs of 1920s lesbian bar culture.¹¹² Fights between women, caused by jealousy, were not uncommon according to Renate. This fact, too, evokes historical precedent: in his 1914 description of homosexual community life, Magnus Hirschfeld had described women's bars as "more rowdy" than men's.¹¹³ By contrast, Kathi und Eva in Schöneberg catered to a wealthy audience. In Renate's narrative, her and Klara's poverty prevented the couple from socializing with other patrons: it was so "upper class" that they "couldn't keep up." Still, she says they "always" came there, and "always" drank their martini, suggesting that, despite the class difference, they were regulars at Kathi und Eva. The place on Goethestraße that Renate describes as similar to Kathi und Eva was likely the lesbian bar *L'Inconnue*, discussed later in this chapter.

Hans-Joachim Engel, born in 1935 and a resident of East Berlin since the late 1950s, was aware of queer bars in East Berlin, but they were not of interest to him. "Before the Wall was built, I never went out in the East. Because what was I supposed to do there?" he put it, suggesting that bars in East Berlin had little appeal, at least to him.¹¹⁴ Engel's first experience of a gay bar was the Kleist-Kasino, one of West Berlin's

most popular and most long-running bars. He described this visit, most likely in 1958, in ambivalent terms.

It was strange, we met at Kleist-Casino, and, well, I was so shocked there after all, and he was the only one who came up to me, he came up to me in a really nice way, and so I, well, dancing was exaggerated, but, in any way, we made a date for the following Saturday at Kleist-Casino. So I dressed up and made myself look pretty, and he showed up too, but nothing happened. I mean, we had a good conversation, we were entertained, all of that ... And it was almost lights out, and I say, what now? [The other man said:] I know a café that's open a little longer. But I wanted something else entirely ... So I said, listen. What's going to happen now, my place or yours. And he hesitated briefly, then said, well, we can go to my place. In Rudow.¹¹⁵

Like Tommy, Engel did not feel comfortable during his first visit to a queer bar: he expresses his shock, though without vocalizing what exactly was shocking to him. Nevertheless, his visit was a success, as he met a "nice" man. A week later, after a night spent together at the other man's apartment in Rudow, a suburb in the city's southeast, Engel would find out that his lover was a West Berlin police officer. The two kept dating until the Wall separated them permanently.¹¹⁶

In my in-depth analysis of the 1950s, the practices of both queer bar-goers and the West Berlin police have come to the fore. The latter gave up its traditional stance of the surveilled tolerance of queer bars in 1954, shifting to a policy of intense repression through raids instead. Reasons for this change may include the return of former Nazis and military personnel to the police force, as well as the conservative city government's desire to satisfy its voters. Mounting tensions between East and West may also have contributed to the change in police strategy, as suggested by the temporal proximity between the scandalizing news coverage of West German intelligence service president Otto John's disappearance and reappearance in the GDR in July 1954 and reporting on the raids in queer bars in September of the same year.

The significance of embodied gender for queer bar-goers' experience of West Berlin nightlife has been another focus of this section. It was predominantly those whose masculinity or femininity attracted attention as non-normative who had to fear a police arrest or thug violence. Additionally, young bar-goers were automatically suspected of being "streetwalking boys." Over the course of the 1950s, the public began to regard them as dangerous criminals rather than as victims of the difficult times, and police intensified their persecution. In West Berlin,

streetwalking boys were increasingly perceived as East Germans profiting from the open border, though authorities in both East and West were wary of their mobility. The West Berlin press reported critically on police repression of queer bars, at times giving ample page space to statements of bar owners and patrons affected by raids. In the 1960s, queer bar owners would no longer limit their response to complaints in the press: now, they began to fight back.

The 1960s: The Wall, Continuing Raids, and a Growing Resistance among Bar Owners

In her oral history interview, Tommy, the East Berlin dog groomer, describes returning home to Friedrichshain from a night out at the Kreuzberg bar Bei Rudi in the early morning hours of Sunday, 13 August 1961.

That night we were out in West Berlin, at Rudi's, Adalbertstraße. And early in the morning, around one, two, we got to the border at Oberbaumbrücke ... There were some policemen standing around there, and we chatted with them, a little drunk as we were [points to her head]. And then the policeman said: "Well, if you cross now, then you're over there. And will never be allowed back here. Think about that." ... Well, we did not have the intention [to stay in the West]. I had all my animals here in the garden, and Helli [her girlfriend] ... The West Berlin police said: "You can cross, but then you can't come back." They were informed already. Well, and since then, we could not come to West Berlin. That was the last day. One doesn't mourn after things, then, after all, we had our life here. Only that, a little bit, the going out, because we did not have that here, we did miss that a little bit, right?¹⁷

While Tommy, using the impersonal pronoun "one," concludes that there was no point in mourning what had been, her last sentence suggests that the transition to life behind the Wall was not so smooth and painless after all. "Only that, a little bit, the going out, because we did not have that here, we missed that a little bit," she continues. Despite her repeated use of the diminutive "a little bit," the lack that Tommy felt, suddenly unable to spend her weekend nights in the company of other lesbian women in queer public spaces, becomes palpable here. Hans-Joachim Engel found himself having to make the same decision: staying in the West or going home to the East, forever? He was dating the West Berlin police officer, but his main employment as a decorator was in East Berlin (figure 2.8). He had recently married a pregnant

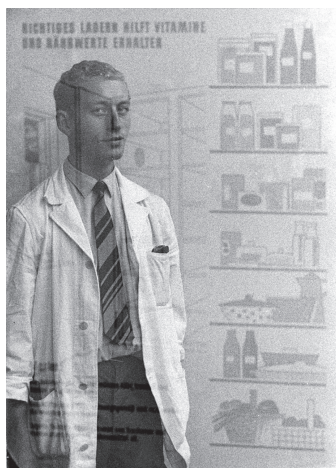


Figure 2.8. Hans-Joachim Engel photographed by Mark B. Anstendig at his job as decorator. Courtesy of the artist.

friend who needed a father for her child, and the three shared an apartment in Stalinstadt. Since the baby was born, Engel helped provide for the child, taking on odd jobs in West Berlin to have some Westmark to buy “*Penaten* baby lotion, bananas, and what else you need as a young father.”¹¹⁸ In August 1961, he was working night shifts as a reception clerk at a friend’s guesthouse in West Berlin. On Saturday, 12 August, he was out at an artists’ bar on Kurfürstendamm when he received the news from West Berlin actors returning from their performance at East Berlin’s variety theatre Friedrichstadtpalast. Staying in the West was not an option for him, however.

I would not have stayed there. First off, I had family. And then I explained to everyone, this will last four weeks, maybe, then they’ll wall us in around Berlin, and then the Saxons can’t flee anymore and that’s that. Because in Berlin, nobody fled to the West. People could visit their grandma every day, and you could work a little bit in the West, you know. The farmers sold eggs in the West, etc. Well, that was it ... That was that famous night.¹¹⁹

“First off, I had family,” Engel explains – he had married his friend and helped provide for the baby. He also did not expect the city’s division to be permanent. The everyday reality of the divided, but entangled

city, where visiting the other part for leisure or work remained common despite the escalating Cold War, had become so entrenched as to appear normal and unchangeable. When prompted if the separation from his West Berlin boyfriend was not painful, Engel responded:

That is the only thing [that was painful], otherwise it did not really affect me much. I'm not sure why, I had a good job, I had a circle of friends here. I still had all my family ... I had to return, come hell or high water. And you had to console yourself, whole families were torn apart, I mean, that [his own situation] was sad, too, but ... And, I don't know ... the first year, [I thought] still, that can't work for long. A few people thought that ... And then I have to say, we were on the Island of the Blissful. We had Western radio, Western television, we were up to date. When I visited my friends in Dresden, [they were living in the] Valley of the Clueless.¹²⁰

At least in retrospect, Hans-Joachim Engel soon accommodated himself with the new situation. Whereas for Tommy the Wall meant being shut off from public spaces of lesbian sociality until a small activist queer scene developed in East Berlin ten years later, Engel now discovered that there were gay bars in East Berlin too. For a while, he became a regular at City-Klausse and Esterhazy-Keller, both in the immediate vicinity of the Friedrichstraße train station, where all of East Berlin's queer venues in the 1960s were congregated.

City-Klausse, a small venue run by an Austrian, served as a workman's pub during the day. Engel remembers the men working at the hauling companies around Friedrichstraße going there for breakfast. At night, the entrance was barred off, and a doorman controlled access. Its interior as described by Engel, four tables and a bar complete with a *Hungerturm*, a glass cabinet showcasing sandwiches, was reminiscent of traditional Berlin pubs such as the Mulackritze, preserved in Charlotte von Mahlsdorf's *Gründerzeitmuseum*.¹²¹ One of the four tables was the regulars' table, where, according to Engel, a rich fishmonger held court with her circle of young gay men, "a real pansy club" that spent their summer vacation together in Ahrenshoop, on the Baltic coast.¹²² Engel does not elaborate the relationship between the fishmonger and the young feminine men, but his phrasing that "she had at least five or six" suggests that they may have worked as "streetwalking boys" for her. Stasi informant "Franz Moor" reported on female-led male prostitution at City-Klausse and the nearby Esterhazy-Keller in February 1961. He described two women, allegedly "former lesbian girlfriends," running a streetwalking boy business that doubled as the spy ring "Ring of the Nibelung." In his report, "Moor" writes that the men were to report

on their tricks' "political views" and that they were working for the "MfS," the Stasi ministry.¹²³ Their job thus appears to have been spying on fellow GDR citizens primarily, not on Westerners.

Another bar that Hans-Joachim Engel remembered was the Mokka-Bar in the Sofia House, also on Friedrichstraße. This bar was run by "two ladies" as Engel recalls. He describes it as a "transit" place, where "you'd meet one another" but then move on.¹²⁴ Lesbian Stasi informant "Maria Jahn" mentioned Mokka-Bar as "the meeting spot for lesbian women" in a report from 1967.¹²⁵ Next to Mokka-Bar, there was the G-Bier-Bar, which "Jahn" described as a "meeting place for homosexuals and lesbians."¹²⁶ All queer bars on Friedrichstraße, with the exception of Mokka-Bar, had to close by the end of the 1960s for unknown reasons.¹²⁷ Mokka-Bar itself was shut down in the mid-1970s to make way for an Intershop, a store where high-quality products that were generally not available for purchase in the GDR could be bought with Western currency.¹²⁸ Clearing Friedrichstraße of queer bars may thus have been motivated by the dual goals of presenting visitors with a respectable facade of the Cold War front city and using the prime location, just a short walk from the central transit station of Friedrichstraße, to generate much-needed Western currency for the GDR economy.

In West Berlin, police raids continued throughout the decade, but bar owners began protecting their businesses in the 1960s, countering the harassment in two ways: introducing physical barriers to control access to their bars and challenging the legality of the raids.¹²⁹ What is more, as West Berlin's isolation from West Germany solidified over the course of the 1960s and the city became a centre of student unrest and political protest, the consensus on keeping checks on the city's queer subculture, if there had ever been one, eroded. The police, different levels of city administration, and the city's tourist office now all pursued different interests in regulating nightlife.

Even in the late 1940s, bar-goers in some queer bars had to ring a bell to be allowed entry.¹³⁰ As seen earlier, this practice was no protection from violent thugs or police raids, but it served at least as a modest obstacle to disruptions. State authorities tolerated the practice until the 1960s, when bar owners began shutting police out. The first record of concerns about a bar restricting police access is from 1960, when the Senator for the Economy inquired with the police if a bar owner could lock his doors while guests were present inside.¹³¹ The inquiry was prompted by a Schöneberg host who had lost the dancing license for his bar and now opened his doors only upon knocking. The police replied cautiously that "the facilitation of surveillance alone" would

not be enough to force a host to keep doors open but “indecent acts committed in the closed bar” would provide a valid reason.¹³²

In 1963, the Neukölln bar Jansa-Hütte came under police scrutiny for keeping its doors shut. Frequent police patrols – two or three times a week – often found the bar closed, or, if open, access was limited by a sign on a door reading “private party.” During a “Japanese lampion celebration,” a patrol report noted “male patrons in women’s clothing,” and unknown guests were turned away by the owner himself. Summoned to the precinct, twenty-two-year-old owner Peter Raudonis explained that he kept the bar closed because it was a meeting place for homosexuals.¹³³ In the report to the district office, the police expressed their concern that “by consciously making his bar a meeting place for homosexuals,” Raudonis was promoting indecency, and they proposed to run another background check on the owner.¹³⁴ They also noted that a youth centre had just opened in the bar’s immediate vicinity and suggested that the bar might thus run counter to public interest. Jansa-Hütte remained open under Raudonis’s direction, however. It does not reappear in the police files until 1967, indicating that the young bar owner’s self-confident stance towards police surveillance had been successful.

By the mid-1960s, protecting one’s patrons and one’s own livelihood from police raids by installing bell and light systems had become a widely followed practice of West Berlin bar owners.¹³⁵ These systems doubled as protection from police and homophobic bullies, warning customers inside of possible danger. The police’s frustration about hampered surveillance led to a heightened concern with “indecency” and crimes associated with queer bars among authorities. Ultimately, this concern resulted in the reformation of the “Rowdy Commission” and a massive, multiple-year campaign against queer bars, as well as against other bars considered hosts of deviance. Apart from bar owners’ securing of doors, two elements contributed to this campaign: First, West Berlin’s description as a homosexual haven in the West German press led to worries about the city’s reputation among police and some city officials. Second, a series of violent incidents at West Berlin bars prompted police and the Senate to take action against bar owners considered “irresponsible,” blaming them for allowing crime to happen or, worse, for promoting it. The ensuing exchanges in the reconvened Rowdy Commission demonstrate competition over who could control nightlife. If the proponents of an unrestricted nightlife prevented some, though not all, of the suggested regulations, it had less to do with a Berlin tradition of *laissez-faire*. Rather, West Berlin’s geographical isolation, and its separation from many of the city’s major sights by the Wall,

meant that its infamous nightlife was a precious part of its economy, an asset that the city could not afford to lose through the imposition of stricter regulations.¹³⁶ However, queer bars did not enjoy such freedom, but rather suffered more intense surveillance as a result of closer cooperation between police, Senate, and district offices.

In a 1965 issue, national weekly *Der Spiegel* described West Berlin as a “meeting place” of homosexuals, citing as evidence the 12,000 men registered as homosexuals by the West Berlin police since 1948, half of whom resided in West Germany.¹³⁷ This kind of unwanted press attention contributed to the reconvening of the Rowdy Commission in 1966, though now with a particular focus on queer bars.¹³⁸ The incidents that immediately triggered the commission’s reformation, however, paradoxically were instances of sexual violence perpetrated by heterosexual men against women and trans people.¹³⁹ In one of the cases, a man abducted an eighteen-year-old woman on the street, dragged her into his car, took her to the Schöneberg bar Crazy Horse, and raped her there. Then he and a group of other men continued to another bar, Black Molly, where they violently forced a present transvestite to accompany them to one of the perpetrators’ apartments.¹⁴⁰ In the commission’s meetings, the police repeatedly complained that district offices, whose economic departments oversaw bar licensing, did not respond to their reports about irresponsible bar owners who allowed, or even promoted, criminal or indecent behaviour in their establishments. One measure to be taken against the “excesses” was the reintroduction of a curfew in the city.¹⁴¹ Early on, a near consensus was formed between the police and representatives of different Senate departments – the Departments of the Interior, Justice, Youth and Sport, Health, and Finances – to follow this path, albeit with “generous exceptions.”¹⁴² The single committee member to disagree was the Economy Department’s representative, who argued that “introducing a curfew ran counter to Berlin’s metropolitan character and might lead to a ‘purification’ of Berlin’s nightlife.”¹⁴³ Within a few months, however, this economic argument gained force, and at an October 1966 meeting of the commission, the tide had turned against limitations on nightlife. Reintroducing a curfew or prescribing brighter bar lighting ran counter to Berlin’s status as “*Weltstadt*,” or cosmopolitan city, representatives of the Senate’s Economy Department insisted.¹⁴⁴ They were backed by the city’s tourism office, whose representative strongly advised against restrictions. She explained that the lack of a curfew had increased tourism: travel agencies no longer complained about the “unsatisfactory Berlin nightlife.”¹⁴⁵ She was concerned, however, about visitors getting caught up in a raid, and asked to be informed of so-called *Schwerpunktlokale* (focus

bars).¹⁴⁶ That was the police term for bars that they considered hotbeds of crime, “bars patronized exclusively or predominantly by asocials and criminals, and which have garnered attention for an accumulation of criminal offences.”¹⁴⁷ At the meeting, the police distinguished these focus bars, which required tight regulation, from the city’s nightlife more generally, which they claimed they had no intention to curtail. Among the focus bars were “*Homo-Lokale*” (homo bars), and the attending officers pointed out the “special problem” presented by “the homosexuals.” They stated that the number of “homosexuals” had risen significantly, as well as that of “transvestites,” who now made up “50% of service staff” in some bars. The city occupied a leading position in the number of homo bars. The officers also described the protocol for changes in the ownership of queer bars: the new owners were informed in writing of the behaviours that were considered “*polizeiwidrig*” (contrary to police regulations): “kissing, hugs” as well as “close dancing.”¹⁴⁸ The police representatives further explained that they informed the districts’ economy departments – the only authorities capable of imposing restrictions – of criminal incidents happening at bars and of untrustworthy bar owners, but that these briefings frequently remained without response.¹⁴⁹

While the Senate ultimately declined to reintroduce a curfew, the meetings of the Rowdy Commission did have the effect of improved communication between police, Senate, and district offices. Furthermore, they resulted in a streamlined effort to tighten regulation of the focus bars, in some cases forcing bar owners to uninstall bell systems and give police complete access to bars again.¹⁵⁰ In November 1966, the Senator for the Economy wrote to the district departments for the economy, providing a list of focus bars and bell bars, and asking district authorities to require bar owners to uninstall their bell or light systems and guarantee access to their bars. In Charlottenburg, for instance, the Senator noted three bars patronized chiefly by “homosexuals, lesbians, and streetwalking boys,” who presented a “danger for decency” for the other guests and staff.¹⁵¹ The police continued sending district offices updated lists of bell bars throughout the following years, prompting the Senator to clarify to the district offices that only those bell bars that presented “moral dangers” to guests and staff could be required to reverse their entry restrictions.¹⁵² District offices, in turn, asked the owners of these bars to take down the bell and keep their doors open. If they did not comply, they could be issued tickets of up to 500 Marks.¹⁵³ Some bar owners fulfilled the provision immediately, but many did not, instead filing a formal appeal, hiring a lawyer, or just ignoring the new demand. The owner of the Schöneberg bar Black Molly explained to

the patrolling cop that “he must be a new officer who did not know yet that the vice squad had nothing against closed doors.”¹⁵⁴ Peter Raudonis, owner of Jansa-Hütte in Neukölln, told a patrolling officer that “he was not willing to comply with the district office’s demand to take down the bell and keep the bar open.”¹⁵⁵ Raudonis hired a lawyer who protested the provision, involving the Senator for the Economy too.¹⁵⁶ Gerda Ritzhaupt, owner of Weinrestaurant Ritzhaupt in Charlottenburg, engaged in lengthy negotiations with the district office, which in turn consulted with the police to determine if it should grant the bar an exception. The police reply revealed the thin ground on which the police were treading, relying on assumptions, hearsay, and observation of behaviours that were not illegal to construct the “moral danger” necessary to impose the no-bell provision.

The above-mentioned restaurant continues to be a meeting place of homosexual persons where male guests socialize predominantly. *Despite repeated controls and observations, no culpable behaviour could be found in the bar itself.* During a control on 12 October 1967, a detective heard by way of conversation that a drunk transvestite *supposedly* undressed on 17 September 1967. During another observation on 5 December 1967, the detectives *merely* noted that they were “sized up” by the older men present who were sitting at the bar, in the same way that is common in other bars where homosexuals socialize when younger, yet unknown male guests enter. During another observation on 12 December 1967, the detectives observed two male guests leaving the bar together, *making the impression* of a homosexually inclined couple ... Another male guest at the Ritzhaupt was recognized as a homosexual looking for a partner by one of the detectives. During the time of observation, men were repeatedly found dancing to recorded music too. Even if these *perceptions do not yet present culpable acts*, they do justify the *suspicion* that homosexuals also come to “Ritzhaupt” to look for a partner. For this reason, it would be unavoidable to examine carefully if the incontestable restriction should be rescinded with the possibility of creating a precedent.¹⁵⁷

The use of the subjunctive, of words such as “impression” and “perception,” and modifiers that indicate limitations, such as “despite,” “even if,” “however,” or “merely,” demonstrates clearly that the police had no reliable proof for the moral dubiousness of Ritzhaupt’s Weinstube. But the “suspicion” that the bar was frequented by homosexuals who looked for sex sufficed for the intense scrutiny shown by the police. The district office eventually followed

the police's recommendation, charging Ritzhaupt a penalty of 300 Marks. The Schöneberg bars Le Punch and Pink Elephant, which had also appealed the no-bell provision, were equally unsuccessful. In the case of Le Punch, the police could point to the bar's listing in the homosexual travel guide *Eos-Guide* as incriminating evidence. In addition, the rejection letter of Le Punch's appeal gave a long list of police observations to prove that the bar's owner, by controlling access to the bar via a bell, "had made it possible for the persons socializing there to give in to their abnormal inclinations."¹⁵⁸ The observations included a familiar range of activities that were mostly not illegal: men dancing with men and women with women, men kissing men and women kissing women, the presence of transvestites, and in one case, a young man masturbating an older one under the table.¹⁵⁹ Even after West Germany reformed its homosexuality law in 1969, legalizing sex between men over twenty-one years of age, authorities did not stop their surveillance. In 1970, West Berlin's police president assured the Senator for the Economy that he would continue to inform the district offices of queer bars that restricted police access through a bell and welcomed men under twenty-one. It seems very likely that this practice applied to most venues.¹⁶⁰

Lesbian women, despite not being threatened by §175, were part and parcel of the group of people considered criminal and dangerous because of their sexuality. In a police memo on the legal grounds of conducting bar patrols from the late 1960s, the customers necessitating police controls are described as follows:

From experience, we know that some bars serve as gathering points for homosexuals, lesbians, streetwalking boys, and other asocial or criminal people. These bars thus pose dangers to public safety and order, because they are often the origin or scene of criminal acts, and in addition give cause for police measures in terms of health and vice authorities.¹⁶¹

Consequently, police surveillance extended to bars that were patronized primarily or exclusively by queer women. In 1967, the police informed the Charlottenburg district office that the bar L'Inconnue "has been known as a meeting place of lesbian women since around 1960."¹⁶² Recently, the new female bar owner had restricted access through a bell, and the female bouncer only let policemen in after they showed their badge. Once inside, the bar owner requested that police identify themselves and explain the reasons for their visit. The women running the bar thus stood up to the intrusions by the police, holding law

enforcement accountable rather than cooperating in the surveillance. The letter continued, saying that although

women's homosexuality is not punishable per se ... we cannot rule out that criminal acts might be perpetrated by this circle of people either ... The possibility exists indeed that women or girls who may be wanted or underage can be found in a bar of this character too.¹⁶³

Despite the frequent use of the conjunctive form here and the officer's concession that "no observations of this kind have been made so far," the district office did not seem to doubt the necessity of continued police patrols of L/Inconnue. Surveillance of the bar continued even beyond the reform of §175 in 1969.¹⁶⁴

Conclusion

Bars were important sites of queer space-making throughout the post-war period. In West Berlin, despite intense repression efforts by the police, queer Berliners could pick among a diverse landscape of night-life haunts to socialize, dance, and be entertained. Bars catered to different patrons specified by age, class, and gender, with those addressing a higher class crowd and/or queer or straight tourists located in Schöneberg and Charlottenburg. Kreuzberg was a hub of working-class queer bars whose traditional, turn-of-the-century interiors appealed to diverse crowds. In East Berlin, a small number of bars along Friedrichstraße catered to gay men and, to a lesser extent, lesbian women. State policy towards queer bars went through phases of tolerance and repression. In the Scheunenviertel in the early 1950s, the district office actively shut down queer bars. During the 1950s and 1960s, the queer bars on Friedrichstraße could operate, though they were under surveillance by Stasi informants, often queers themselves whose homosexuality had been used to pressure them into the job. The Stasi also actively used these spaces to recruit additional informants. By the late 1960s, most Friedrichstraße bars had to close, and the only remaining spot, Mokka-Bar, did not survive beyond the mid-1970s. In West Berlin, after a brief period of toleration, the police conducted raids on queer bars from the mid-1950s until the end of the 1960s. The rationale for the raids shifted from a campaign against the "streetwalking boy plague" to a concern about the bars' role as places of "indecentcy" and "crime." As I have shown, the association of queerness and criminality extended beyond those affected by §175, legitimating the surveillance of lesbian bars too. In their treatment of queer bar patrons, West Berlin police differentiated

by gender performance and age. Men who looked like they might be underage were suspected of being streetwalking boys, and they and transvestites, cross-dressing men or trans women, suffered the most direct form of police harassment. For all others, the raids functioned "as deterrent," as Clayton Whisnant has put it.¹⁶⁵ Everyone present at a queer bar during a raid was registered on a "pink list," their (suspected) homosexuality now in the hands of all kinds of state authorities, with unforeseeable consequences for careers and personal lives. But these sources also demonstrate that queer bar-goers and bar owners were not discouraged by the massive repression they faced. Patrons spoke up during raids and expressed their anger to journalists, whose reporting was often sympathetic to their cause. Bar owners restricted access to their venues, protecting their customers from police and thugs, and sought legal help in their dealings with the police and district offices. Finally, the documents also show that, over the course of the 1960s, an economic discourse took precedence over the moral one, as some in West Berlin's administration argued for queer bars' value as draws for tourists.