

DIAMOND SPLINTERS

This is a demo for lesbian visibility! Here and now we're in the streets with all our herstories, our desires, our political demands, and with the full awareness that our "We" remains fluid. It is my pleasure to welcome at this rally Erika Felden, Gerda Hellinger, Ruth Margarete Roellig and the activists from Lyon, such as Françoise d'Eaubonne. Our comrades from Poland, U, A, X and D have also arrived, especially for the occasion! Thank you! Our front lines are exclusively for FLTI*¹, women*, lesbians* trans* and intersex* persons, then off goes the CSD Emancipation Block from Leipzig, welcome! The route will take us from Lyon of the 1970s to Kraków, and through the Nollendorfplatz in Berlin of the 20s right back to the future, with the final rally in Leipzig. I wish us all a loud and powerful, resolute and feisty demo!

These are the tales of women* who love women*. Of girlfriends, the daughters of Sappho, lesbian-alikes and lesbians. This is a homage to text and image, to magazine publications, to the writing of lesbian herstory as it unfolds. To the woman authors of the lesbian novels of the Weimar republic, to the publishers of lesbian magazines such as the "Quand les femmes s'aiment", "LESBIA" or the "Freundin". The threads woven into this tapestry were picked up in archives, clubs, parks and the journeys in between. These are flags and banners, chats and dances, slogans and words of love. How loud will this ensemble be, composed of so many diverse elements? Will we need to use the flags for batons²? Will there be singing? Is it about a stroll, or a revolt? How many are there to carry the front banner? Are we standing up, uprising, strolling on, stopping off? It's a journey in many an episode.

Des lieux ou les lesbiennes se reconnaissent

„Pour se faire connaître, il faut avoir des revendications, car en posant les revendications, on pose le problème de notre existence...Oui, mais on va quand même pas demander le mariage?...Non, mais je ne me sens pas menacée par des revendications comme le mariage...et puis il faut bien qu'on puisse vivre ensemble...La reconnaissance de notre existence passe par ce qu'on demande et ce qu'on impose. ...Mais est-ce qu'on est assez nombreuses pour revendiquer quelque chose? Est-ce qu'on a la force de faire quelque chose sur l'extérieur aujourd'hui?...Non! Au contraire il faut d'abord se retrouver pour se faire reconnaître!..."

Ce qui est important c'est d'abord le mouvement lesbiennes, c'est créer des lieux où les lesbiennes se reconnaissent. ... Et après?...Après? On verra!...

Etre lesbienne est-ce la seule raison d'être d'un groupe?"

Weekend des groupes lesbiennes, nov. 1977 à Lyon (Quand les femmes s'aiment, n3/4).



Spinnboden Archiv, Berlin. "Die Freundin", ca.1928



LESBIA, Fond Chomarat 1984, numéro13

¹ FLTI* is an acronym for FrauenLesbenTrans und Inter Personen, and translates as in the main text, above. It works as a collective term for the diverse people who experience sexism. The asterisk by a term, like in women* for example, is there to hint at the make up of the term, including all persons who perceive their gender identity as woman* and wish that their identity is respected, regardless of the gender assigned at birth. With regards to women whose birth-assigned gender is in accordance with their gender identity, a term cis-women is used.

² Knüppel-fahnen, DE, literally 'baton-flags' - short thick flagpoles, just inside the length/thickness regulations for demo equipment under the German Law of Assembly, which can also be used for self-defence if the going gets rough)

October 2015, Kraków, Poland. *Plac Wolnica*, evening, 11-ish. On my way to Kazimierz, alone. Just one beer, just me, out of harm's way. Not in the mood to go back home anyway. A beer, the club, LaF. Turns out to last a longer while in the end.

U.: Fine with being addressed as she, though she finds herself queer (only I can't understand why she demands to know where exactly I position myself between bi and lesbian). She asks repeatedly about my girlfriend. Is there only one? She had seen me with two. I've seen her before, right there, the same spots, same movements. She's got big, beautiful eyes (A. claims they are green, and I've never looked into them by daylight). Her perfume is a bit pushy, her hands delicate, with long fingernails. She doesn't like the music. Fair enough, nobody comes here for the music. Her girlfriend has left today. She is in another relationship in Warsaw, where she lives. Polyamory. No, not her thing. Not for U... That night she allows herself to be shoved to and fro a little bit. I don't believe her when she says she didn't dare to chat me up. Because actually, she did. Just doesn't remember. She has studied political science by the way.

A.: Where do you know her from? Come on, invent a nice story. There must be angels involved. Look, just between you and me: I'm totally into U. ... But she's a lesbian. They're all lesbians down here. What can you do? We dance, watch films together, hang out, chat. And then. Nothing. A. is invariably in the club. He only goes to gay clubs, though not a gay himself in the least bit. Nobody could shake that off him, I suppose, not even him. I am Hindu. The revolution must be without violence. First, you have to change yourself. Again, this is not my problem. It is yours. And I don't like boys. This is my problem. That's it. I'm cutting down on the enthusiasm for German software engineers, feels too much like a cliché from an Indian software engineer. X. spans his ass, he brings it up for her. He's wearing a pale rose shirt (again).

X.: I forgot her name, that Irish-American apparition, based in Boston, roaming the Europe and messing up all the other people in LaF She is hot, yeah.. She knows it. She spends the evening on witty small talk, trailing a cluster of women behind her. She's here, she's there (Germans are so rude!), she's kissing one girl and caressing another. She mingles about the whole night through, and U. can't resist her either. She is inked and tall, with the obligatory smart haircut and that sort of white teeth which just goes without saying. I loooove Poland, oh my god!

D.: D. is a bit lonely, and a splash drunk. I'm sorry for her. And I kind of like her. She packs a few extra pounds, and a silver cross around her neck. She's waiting for the love of her life, and since she connects emotionally to women only, the love of her life should better be a woman. Being a psychologist though, she's aware that the heterosexual marriage is the ultimate thing, that a kid needs a dad, and so on. She never stands in the way, and heteronormativity happily does it for her. She thinks I'm nice, and is happy to talk to someone. Otherwise, she never gets into conversations down here. But she's still coming by. She's looking for a girlfriend, preferably the love of her life, but it's not that easy in here, where nobody wants to talk. Chances are, she is slightly too drunk to find the love of her life tonight, because the love might be rather unwilling to talk to her at this point. Still, her bus only leaves in an hour, and it takes a while into the suburbs (not really, like a quarter of an hour).

**Laufende
Tanzveranstaltungen
für Damen**

in folgenden Damenklubs:

Montag: Lustige Neun. Fleischmanns Fest-
säle, Lindenstr. 110

Dienstag: Kleeblatt. Gr. Frankfurter Str. 99

Mittwoch: Damenabteilung des B. f. M.
Central-Festsäle, Alte Jakobstr. 32

Donnerstag: Altes Geld. Taverne, Georgen-
kirchstr. 30a

Freitag: Vereinigung der Freundinnen.
Tieckstr. 24

Sonabend: Skorpion. Taverne, Georgen-
kirchstr. 30a

Sonntag: Heiderose. Kolosseum, Komman-
dantenstr. 62

Bei diesen Veranstaltungen finden Sie Humor,
Stimmung, Saalpost, Bonbonregen usw. usw.



Die Diele, evening, 1920s, Berlin. Dazzling music, a piano and violin supported by a trumpet, was splitting the eardrums. Even one most unmusical would let out a wail. Yet, it seemed not to impair anything. It added to the gayness, as if setting the dancers on fire. Light-headed, they would twist merrily and push themselves through the garish crowd. Only girls would be dancing. In the middle stood a big, broad, quite masculine woman, who would closely survey the whole scene. ‘Nah, Männeken,’ she halted a man who was trying to mingle with the dancers, ‘there is no place for you in here!’

‘Let me join’ I can dance here just as well as you!’

‘Out of the question! Here, you would have to go and get a shave beforehand. This is where men make a sit. Understood?’

Laughed at, he was drawn away by the others along with his partner back to their table. ‘Why can’t he join the dance?’ Eri asked a woman at her table. ‘In an ordinary dancehall they would call it Ladies’ Choice. But here and now, it’s the girls dancing with their girlfriends who dress like boys. Or, to put it the local vernacular, the mummies dance with daddies.’ [...]

‘Maybe one can feel well in here... or at least somewhat safer,’ thought Eri. The anticipation of a difficult future among the other people, who seemed to her quite outlandish, choked her by the throat. She shut her eyes in dread. Here... She and Ruth belonged here somehow.. Had this woman reckoned, that it was the will of god, for one to become so miserable, as to actually feel more secure in a place like this? Wordless, Eri sat back on her chair.

‘Listen to me, my child. When I saw you sitting there with that face on you, I thought: Just give her a bit of coke, she wouldn’t have any. Please, don’t be upset. At first, I supposed that you want to watch the scene here. The people – and there’s little worse in manners than the so-called educated people - they would all amuse themselves, gawking at us. They are strangers here, that’s obvious. So there is only curiosity or - - and you see, this is where my heart aches – another time when one has become split off, or will be split off, cast aside. It goes on like the diamond splintering in a grind shop. We become, even though we are precious, split from the whole, only because the raw stone needs to be polished, just because it must look in a certain way, and this is how the preconceptions and norms split alike from alike. Still, other people collect the diamond splinters and set and value them differently - while they systematically trample and destroy them. It is probably pointless to tell you: Avoid this pathetic lounge, avoid these people, from whom you differ so much today. Outside, alone, you will be pressed through a grinder, shoved harder and harder... until you come back here again.’

Maximiliane Ackers, *Freundinnen. Ein Roman unter Frauen.* 1923



gathering point for lesbians in St.Petersburg, Russia (2018)
photos by Irène Mélix

How we've reached the mid rally point. I'm so overjoyed with that loud and ardent presence which we demonstrate in the streets! Die Diele - the Hall - is a perfect spot for our mid rally. 170 different spaces for homosexuals, such as die Diele, were supposed to be scattered around the Berlin of the 1920s - the Hohenzollern-Diele, Auluka-Diele or the Monokel-Diele were just a few of them. Embedded in an extremely diverse community, there were 30 permanent lesbian venues, there were private parties, dance nights, steamer cruises by the moonlight, fancy dress balls and discussion evenings. There were 6 lesbian magazines in print! Now it's time for some music, and we will open up with Lila Lied, the Lavender Song, the anthem of homosexual emancipation. Now is also the time to thank the DJs who provide us with musical support at the demo. Thank you so much ProZecco³ that you came over from Dresden especially! Feel free to dance the Tyrolienne! Take back the streets! And I'd just like to comment on the afterparty again: the doors open at 10pm and it is a solidarity party for our comrades in Russia Even though there won't be any cream puff eating competitions tonight, you can certainly count on the best of music at multiple floors, a darkroom, a choice of lounges, a well-supplied bar and a most opportune ambience to get to know a couple of comrades better!

[OkCupid]⁴

Women who are interested in women ages 20-44 located within 500 kilometers of me online within the last year

[LESBIA]⁵

Les annonces sont gratuites, pour les contacts directs. Dans le cas contraire, toute annonce placée sous référence, coûtera 20F. pour frais de réexpédition du courrier. 6 lignes, par annonce, au maximum, de 27 espaces.

[Die Freundin]⁶

Berlin. A lady, 39 years old, taught into sincerity by suffering, seeks a partner for letter exchange. Offer 1351 Publ.

[LESBIA]

F 56.84. Avignon. 40 ans, mariée, mais besoin aussi de délicatesse et de douceur féminine cherche amie et plus si affinités. Elle sera j'espère très féminine, caricature homme s'abstenir, et bien dans sa peau. Photo souhaitée, je répondrai à toute même négative. Je suis grande, brune, corps soigné et encore "désirable". Espoirs...Amitiés à toutes.

[Die Freundin]

Köln am Rhein. Educated and employed, a lady of 29 years wishes for a lovely, educated and sincere girlfriend, also to visit the theatre and concert halls together. Offer 1357 Publ.

[OkCupid]

My self-summary

Interior designer and visual artist. Into graphic novels, photography, art, travelling, gigs, architecture, philosophy, aliens, politics, feminism, cheap wine and memes. I travel between Berlin and Nottingham a lot.

[LESBIA]

Paris, 30ans, jolie, jeune femme, féminine et soumise, sans problème, heureuse de vivre, excellent milieu, cherche femme de préférence milieu artistique pour relation tendre et privilégiée. [Die Freundin]

A lady of the society, aged 25, with a place of her own seeks a spouse of an adaptable personality, sublime manners and at least 45 years of age. Adventure seekers need not apply. Offer 1356 Publ.

[LESBIA]

Région Lyon, JF 30 a.ch.tendre amie 25/40 a.pouvant initier.Ecrire, réponse assurée. REF.304 007

[OkCupid]

You should message me if

...you want to cuddle....you want to kiss....you consider yourself as a lesbian. All these pan, saphio stuff, is not enough for my style of commitment....you got the balls to leave a foto from yourself in your profile.

In the end of all sessions, we will have defeated war, crime, famine, injustice, sexism, racism and exploitation. Aaaaah, what a nice future we got in front of us....when you want to get in touch with me, because I

3 ProZecco, a feminist DJ collective based in Dresden, established in 2016 [facebook.com/ProZec-coKollektiv/]

4 OkCupid.com, an online dating platform for all gender, founded in the US, used in several countries around the world (since 2004)

5 Lesbia, a French lesbian newspaper, (1982-2012)

6 Die Freundin, a German lesbian newspaper (1924-1933)

can't see likes. But I will write you, if we got a match....if you want to play some sexy role play with me. I love it.

[LESBIA]

F75. 75. F34 ans aimerait rencontrer F.30/35 assumant son homosexualité, aimant ville et campagne, sportive mais pas "mec". saine et sincère, pour amitié dans un premier temps (cohabitation plus tard), sorties, cin, weekends. Femmes mariées, bisexuelles, pas sérieux, s'abstenir.

[Die Freundin]

A transvestite seeks a chance to share thoughts and reflections. Offer1359 Publ.

[OkCupid]

My self-summary

I'm young polish transwoman who wants to meet nice people. I am anarchist, feminist, vegan and queer as f*ck Pansexual, Lesbian, Homoflexible, Queer, Intersex, Transfeminine, Transgender, Transsexual, Trans Woman, Single, 173cm, Average build Other ethnicity, Speaks English, some Hebrew, some Ancient Greek, and some Russian, Working on University, Jewish (and it's important)

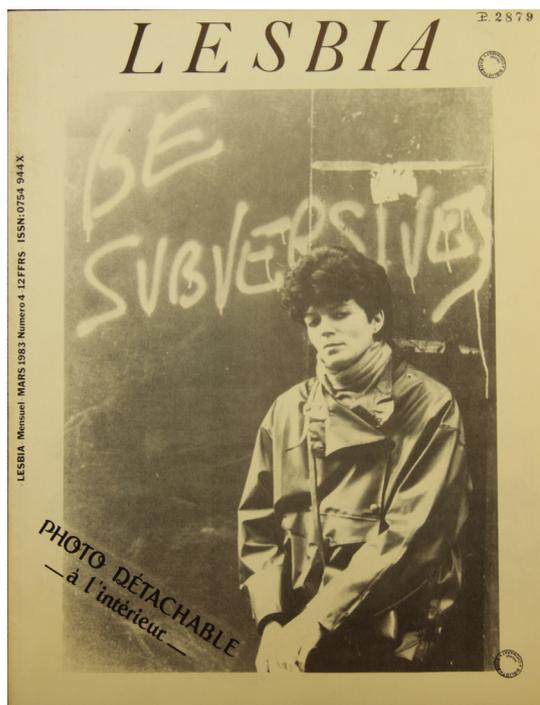
Never smokes, Doesn't drink, Doesn't do drugs, Vegan, Doesn't have kids but might want them, Has dogs, Cancer sign

[Die Freundin]

Attention Hamburg. Where do the women of higher society meet to become closer friends? Possibly also in private. Offer1347 Publ.

[Die Freundin]

A 25-year old seeks the company of a lovely and smart lady. Offer 1346 Publ.



LESBIA, Fond Chomarat, 1983, numéro 4



LESBIA, Fond Chomarat, octobre 1985, numéro32

[OkCupid]

You like each other!

Apr 22, 2017 4:39pm

Hey do you ever go to Prague for staropramen?

Apr 22, 2017 9:47pm

Too rarely! It's next door and I only went there twice, that's horrible and to be changed. And you? Any reasons to cross the border from time to time?

Apr 22, 2017 10:22pm

I usually go to Berlin so I pass Dresden on my way but actually have been to it just once. Wouldn't mind to just go for a day trip one day. Shall we go for a walk/drink then? Could probably plan it for some weekend in May. Or if you decide to come to Prague, although I would go for other beer than Staropramen)

Apr 23, 2017 10:27am

Both sounds good! I am a lot on the road the month of may, doing exhibitions in other cities but it would be nice to do it anyway... Why no staro? Let me know when you're on the way to Berlin!

[...]

May 3, 2017 12:02pm

Hey I regret that I'm so busy with exhibitions cause I would actually feel like an evening in a nice bar meeting you. I hope that I will not miss it by postponing.. Have a nice day! (after all its a way to travel between Prague and Dresden)

May 4, 2017 12:30pm

I just came back to Prague myself. Spent a week with queers only in Saint Petersburg and forgot straight people even exist :) now back to Prague straight reality. What are you doing next weekend? Friday or Saturday evening?

May 4, 2017 10:46pm

That's the thing..I have openings this Friday and next Friday, it's crazy. The one next week is in northern Germany.. What did you do in St.Petersburg? It sounds amazing =) And since Russia isn't known for being gay paradise, I wonder...

May 4, 2017 11:20pm

So I guess the meeting is in a month?) Im not planning to travel anywhere soon so just let me know. Regarding s.petersburg, I'm Russian and many of my lesbian friends moved there, actually it's a lesbian capital of Russia, or maybe it will definitely compete with Moscow if you consider the population. It has a very active lesbian scene and it even felt like every 5th woman is a lesbian. It's not paradise for sure but people there are quite tolerant.

Dearest demonstrators, dearest comrades, queers, dykes, divas, drags, femmes, butches, tom boys, mums and dads, all of us! We've reached the final rally! I'm glad to say we still have three exceptional speakers for you: My greetings to Francoise d'Eaubonne, the Ladies Division of the Association for the Human Rights and last but not least the comrade from Ema-Block, Leipzig! Also, I owe you the solidarity words from Elisabeth Killmer, she sends us the following: "Show that you can fight, not just dance and have fun"¹ And as far as the big CSDs of our times are concerned, I'll quote the comrades from Lyon: "Oui, mais on va quand même pas demander le mariage?"². Because, whether you want the marriage or not, there was and still is plenty of other issues to deal with. There's still so many *white*³ standpoints to question, so many fights to win. As we legitimately like to emphasise around Leizig, we want nothing less than the whole Bakery! We are here, and we are organised for a life without capitalist pressure, without state control or divisions based on gender, desire, skin tone, looks, origins, level of ability or whatever else. We want no less than bring all these to rubble. For the solidarity over the borders, let us connect our struggles!

1 Elisabeth Killmer, 1929 (Die Freundin)

2 Weekend des groupes lesbiennes, nov. 1977 à Lyon (Quand les femmes s'aiment, n3/4).

„Comment se regrouper? Dans quel cadre? Pour faire quoi? A-t-on des revendications?

3 *white*, given as it is in italics, is not meant to be understood as a (skin) colour,

but rather as a hint at a particular set of positions in the racist division of social privilege.

[Lesbia, rencontre avec Françoise d'Eaubonne]

L: Vous parlez de mouvement révolutionnaire, de subversion: est-ce que vous considérez l'homosexualité comme révolutionnaire ou subversive.

FdE: Elle a été subversive en 71; à l'heure actuelle, elle est passée de ne plus l'être du tout et de devenir un objet de consommation. Quand on est 50, on part à l'assaut du ciel; quand on est 50.000, on part à l'assaut des saunas. Tous les mouvements de subversion qui ont commencé à marquer des points et à s'étendre, tous, obligatoirement, se fragilisent dans la mesure-même où ils commencent à être vainqueurs. Et c'est toujours à ce tournant-là qu'on peut juger l'impact, la dynamique d'un mouvement.

L: En quoi l'homosexualité serait-elle révolutionnaire?

FdE: elle l'a été dans la mesure où elle a été marginalisée, maudite, tout ce qui est révolutionnaire malgré soi; ce qui ne voulait pas dire du tout que chaque homosexuel est un révolutionnaire, ce serait trop beau! Et c'est ce qui nous a fait quitter ARCADIE: l'impossibilité d'admettre l'idée d'une intégration, d'une mise au pas au prix d'avoir sa place dans la société. Quel intérêt y-a-t-il à être intégré(e) dans une société névrotique qui traite l'homosexualité de névrose? Quel intérêt y-a-t-il, pour les femmes, à être égales dans une société d'inégalités? Tout doit déboucher sur une critique globale, autrement on arrive à quoi: à se faire admettre par des gens inadmissibles.

A call to the same-sex-loving women of Germany!

With the imminent legal alignment between Austria and Germany, a valid threat appears that the German women may fall under a penal code as it is currently in place for men, and in Austria, also for women. If we are to avert this threat, it is essential for women to unite in an organization which will advocate with vigour for the rights of homosexuals, and not in the wild dance clubs which exclusively serve the private interest of a handful of individuals. The struggle for liberation can only be waged within an organization which gains the recognition among both the public and the authorities. Please note:

ONLY A SINGLE ORGANISATION OF HOMOSEXUALS EXISTS IN GERMANY. It is the "Association for the Human Rights", based in Berlin S14, neue Jakobstraße 9

Admission is possible at the headquarters, and also at every event in Alexander Palace and on Saturdays in the Ladies Division of AftHR, Arminsäle.

Die Freundin, 1928, 4

An open letter at the CSD Leipzig⁴ plenary meeting

10. March 2018 in all

1 Comments

[On 14th Feb 2018 a participant of the CSD Leipzig plenary has declared support for the AfD⁵. As they were allowed to continue the speech and further take part in the plenary on an equal footing and without any consequences, the representative of the Emancipation Block⁶ has left the meeting in protest. The matter was supposed to be discussed again two weeks after that. Our minimum postulate that the CSD have nothing to do with the AfD, the party's supporters or any otherwise reactionary individuals was not accepted by the majority vote. For this reason, we find it necessary to continue this debate with greater transparency, which we intend to initiate with the following open letter.]

To the plenary of CSD Leipzig,

both of the two previous CSD plenaries have left us shocked. For the past three years we have considered

⁴ CSD Leipzig (Sachsen). Christopher Street Day, happening every year in July.

⁵ AfD: Alternative für Deutschland. Political Party in Germany founded in 2013. Perceived initially as liberal, it turned more and more to the right after 2015. Now successful as a far-right, nationalist and populist party. Known for antisemitic, racist, nationalist and islamophobic positions. In close contact with far-right movements like Identitäre and the xenophobe organisation PEGIDA. Especially strong in the eastern parts of Germany but also 12,6% on a national level at the last elections in 2017.

⁶ emanzipatorischer Block: network of radical left groups and individuals in critical solidarity to the CSD Leipzig, founded in 2015. Their own program and party around the CSD includes: anticapitalist, antiracist and radical queer perspectives. <http://emanzipatorischerblock.blogspot.de/>

ourselves a part of the CSD, mainly due to the fact that it was always understood as political CSD, not just a sort of entertainment. Other than this, we wished to pursue LGBTI emancipatory demands. As we see it, such a self-conception no longer seems to be of any validity, if the AfD and AfD-affiliated individuals are all of a sudden welcome as equal partners in dialogue (even at the expense of our further participation!). The AfD has never kept its agenda a secret and, given the current circumstances, their involvement in the local government in Saxony following the 2019 elections is not that unlikely. What this means for the CSD itself, for the many politically engaged associations as well as for all of us, as LGBTI individuals, is that we need to brace ourselves for some dark times, both in terms of funding and political pressure from the top.

And yet, the AfD is not our only problem. It's merely the parliamentary branch of the growing far-right movement.[...] Whenever these far-rights are offered a podium, they are being recognised as a part of

the democratic debate. And yet this very democracy, based on the idea of the equality of all people, is repeatedly undermined from their positions. In 1993, the first success of the "New Right" prompted the liberal philosophers and left-wing publicists in France to issue an "Appeal at Vigilance". Their warning was that it will only be the "New Right" who would benefit from an unrestricted dialogue under the guise of pluralism. Maurice Olender, the Initiator of the Appeal, formulated a thought which now seems to have been forgotten: "One can speak about everything - only not with everyone".

The CSD is a commemoration of an uprising by drags and trans* People Of Colour, by hustlers and homeless queers, against racist and LGBTI-hostile police violence. Whoever gets the AfD aboard now, gives this whole struggle a proper slap in the face. A kick to the thousands of LGBTIs murdered by the Nazis, whenever one speaks with the people, who forward a full one-eighty in the politics of memory. And how cynical it also is, that last year's Queer Refugees for Pride were ambassadors of the CSD Leipzig, when now a cooperation begins here with the sort of people who demand orders to fire at will at the borders control.

We continue to fight for an emancipated and free society. The Emancipation Block of CSD Leipzig [<http://emanzipatorischerblock.blogspot.de/>, Access on 4th June 2018]

It was an honour to me to moderate this demonstration. Before the final closure I still wish to thank the Spinnboden Archive in Berlin, the Fond Chomarot of Lyon and the Archives lesbiennes in Paris. My thanks also go to the Blaue Distanz⁷ for their support. Please, let's give all of us a thunderous applause! Everything which happens from now on, is no longer subject to the right to assembly, since the organiser officially disbands the demonstration at this very moment. Our fluid "We" will remain faithful to what we manifest, and will again spread in all directions... and yet, here we are, that's what we have demonstrated, just here and now. For us at the demo orgateam this means: feminist, antinational, radical, lesbian and queer in the best meaning of the words!

⁷ Die blaue Distanz (Anna Erdmann, Franziska Goralski), an artistic duo. www.blaue-distanz.com