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Mathias Quéré

**“Second-class citizens”: the mobilization of the French homosexual movement for the
“right to difference” (1979-1982)**

Introduction:

On 4 August 1982, French President François Mitterrand signed a decree removing article 331-2 of the French Penal Code, putting an end to the legal repression of gays and lesbians. A few days earlier, following the vote by the French National Assembly to repeal the offending article, the newspaper *Libération* ran the headline: “Penal Code finally purged of its anti-homosexual discrimination¹.” This legislative change legally eliminated the status of “second-class citizens²” that had defined the homosexual population up until that day in the summer of 1982. However, who remembers this date? Who remembers the movement that made it possible, after many years of activism, to get rid of the legal repression against those said to be fond of “le beau vice”? No history textbooks commemorate this particular day in the almanac of gay events. In fact, this date, much like its history, is mostly overlooked. The myth of the Stonewall Riots is much more real and present in the contemporary imaginations of French queer and LGBTI activists than the history of the French movement that came together in the early 1970s and lasted until the second half of the 1980s.

This history originates with the founding of the Front homosexuel d’action révolutionnaire (FHAR) at the beginning of the 1970s³. At that time, the only organization in existence aligned, not with homosexuality, but rather with “homophilia,” was called Arcadie and had been founded in 1954, along with its eponymous magazine, by former seminarian André Baudry⁴. In May 1968, with the student occupation of the Sorbonne in full swing, the short-lived “Committee of Revolutionary Pederastic Action” (Comité d’action pédérastique révolutionnaire, or CAPR) was formed but resulted in only a few meetings and a manifesto⁵. It was only with the founding of FHAR in the spring of 1971 that gay men⁶ and lesbians sought to make homosexuality a topic of political mobilization, and this time it needed to be revolutionary. After FHAR’s demise, it was the Groupes de libération homosexuels (GLHs)⁷,

¹ “Le code pénal définitivement purgé de ses discriminations anti-homosexuelles,” *Libération*, no. 370, July 28, 1982, 32.

² This expression makes reference to French homosexual activist Jean le Bitoux’s book *Citoyen de seconde zone. Trente ans de lutte pour la reconnaissance de l’homosexualité en France (1971 – 2002)* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2003).

³ For a history of FHAR, see Michael Sibalís, “L’arrivée de la libération gay en France. Le Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR),” *Genre, sexualité & société*, no. 3, (spring 2010), <http://journals.openedition.org/gss/1428>.

⁴ For a history of Arcadie, see Julian Jackson, *Arcadie : la vie homosexuelle en France, de l’après-guerre à la dépénalisation* (Paris: Autrement, 2009).

⁵ For a history of CAPR, see Michael Sibalís, “Mai 68 : le Comité d’Action Pédérastique Révolutionnaire occupe la Sorbonne,” *Genre, sexualité & société*, no. 10, (fall 2013), <http://journals.openedition.org/gss/3009>.

⁶ The term “homosexual” was the most commonly used during the 1970s. The reappropriation of the insult “pédé” was used by only the most radical militants. The term “gay” really only appears around the beginning of the 1980s.

⁷ The first GLH used the name “Groupe de libération homosexuelle,” but very soon most of the groups wrote GLH as “Groupe de libération homosexuel.” This syntactical evolution was significant and reflected the times: while the first GLH was a group advocating for a liberation that was specifically homosexual, the subsequent groups

a mixed bag of former activists⁸ of FHAR and Arcadie⁹, that took over for the movement in 1974¹⁰. One distinctive feature of these GLHs was that they were spread throughout France, becoming established in some 30 cities by 1977, creating for the first time a homosexual movement at the national level¹¹. While working independently, the vast majority of these groups considered themselves revolutionary, in the mold of FHAR¹². They espoused an activism that they defined as “existential,” as opposed to the “protest” mentality of the political parties and trade unions. It was above all about *being*, after having spent so many years in the silence and darkness of the closet. Many GLHs were initially more like discussion groups, where telling one’s story or meeting a lover was more important than handing out leaflets outside of factories. It was only later that the groups’ members developed a common political approach and undertook their first advocacy campaigns.

Given the revolutionary character of their activism, the activists were not concerned with demanding the same rights as heterosexuals since, for many groups, repression was just the strong arm of the capitalist and phallographic system. It was not a question of conforming to society, but rather of blowing it up. Hence, for a significant portion of the homosexual movement during the 1970s, fighting against repression seemed illusory since it would only bandage a few wounds without addressing the roots of the problem¹³. Repression was no longer framed only in terms of police or judicial repression, but also moral, social, and political repression.

The end of the 1970s also brought an end to the dreams of a generation that had been hoping for the Revolution. At that time, gay and lesbian activists decided to realign homosexual activism to fight repression, founding the Emergency Committee against Homosexual Repression (Comité d’urgence anti-répression homosexuelle, or CUARH) in the summer of 1979. It is this history that I shall reconstruct in this article. After giving a brief history of repression in France as an original impetus for activism, I will show how and why activists, from 1978 onward, decided to reorient the movement toward an “advocacy” approach, with the

advocated for a liberation that was intended to be multifold. Throughout the history of the GLHs, the context of homosexual liberation can be related to the communitarian context of the movement: political activism oriented towards the community. The homosexual groups for liberation should be understood through the lens of a revolutionary political stance, where liberation was meant to be carried out on multiple fronts and not limited to only homosexuality.

⁸ While the first GLH was founded by only men, there was some gender diversity in the GLHs. This would increase with CUARH. In order to highlight the place of lesbians in this history, I have chosen to use gender inclusive language where possible in the rest of this text.

⁹ The heterogeneous composition of the first GLH might seem surprising given the profound differences between the two groups. Their evolution is as follows: within Arcadie there had been a youth group, which was expelled by the organization in July 1973 for being too radical. This group took the name “Philandros” before renaming itself “Groupe de libération homosexuelle” in the spring of 1974. They were joined in the fall of 1974 by some former activists of FHAR, who led the group to undertake its first activist campaigns. For a history of Philandros and the first GLH, see Jean-Paul Amouroux, *Du Rose à l’arc en ciel, souvenirs authentiques d’un vieux con paranoïaque et homosexuel* (Lyon: Jacques André éditeur, 2015).

¹⁰ For a history of the *Groupes de libération homosexuels*, see Mathias Quéré, *Qui sème le vent récolte la tapette. Une histoire des Groupes de libération homosexuels en France de 1974 à 1979* (Lyon: Tahin Party, 2019).

¹¹ “Groupe de libération de l’homosexualité de Mulhouse,” *Bulletin des GLH province*, no. 2, January, 1977, private collection, Daniel Galy, Bordeaux.

¹² “Manifeste du Groupe de libération homosexuel Politique et quotidien,” *GLH PQ Réflexion 1, Bulletin intérieur pour le débat d’orientation, textes décembre 75 à juin 76*, nodedated, private collection, Alain Lecoultré, Paris.

¹³ « Les modifications en cours du statut de l’homosexualité et le leurre de l’intégration de l’homosexualité en régime bourgeois », *GLH – PQ Réflexion*, no. 2, July – September 1976, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

goal of asserting their right to difference and shedding their status as “second-class citizens.” This alignment of the activist movement began with the creation of a national coordinating meeting of existing groups (CUARH) and a campaign specifically against what the activists called “professional bans.” With the presidential election of 1981 approaching, the movement was encouraged to seize this political moment to obtain new rights and be able to finally express their love openly.

I. A brief history of anti-homosexual repression in France

If gays and lesbians could be considered “second-class citizens,” it is was due to the legal framework to which they were subjected and the social repression that they endured. Between 1945 and 1978, close to 10,000 people, 9,566 to be exact, were convicted by the French courts for homosexual acts¹⁴. Until 1942, there was no law specifically criminalizing homosexuality. The crime of sodomy had been abolished following the adoption of the Constitution of 1791 in the midst of the French Revolution. However, during the 19th century police and judicial authorities were able to repress certain “deviances,” be they homosexual or heterosexual. The regulation of what were considered “sexual disorders” and “against public decency (*contraire aux bonne mœurs*)” was made possible by articles 331 (condemning sexual assault, or *attentat à la pudeur*), 334 (condemning incitement of youths to debauchery, or *excitation de mineur à la débauche*) and 330 (condemning public indecency, or *outrage public à la pudeur*.) Hence, there was an entire legislative mechanism available to charge homosexuals in an indirect fashion.¹⁵

By order of 6 August 1942, which modified article 334 of the French Penal Code, Philippe Pétain explicitly reinstated into French law the criminalization of certain homosexual relations: “Anyone who, in order to satisfy his or her own passions, commits one or more indecent or unnatural acts with a minor of the same sex under the age of 21 years, shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of between six months and three years.” When General de Gaulle came to power at the end of the Second World War, his Minister of Justice, François de Menthon, a catholic and former member of the Resistance, confirmed the Pétain law by order of 8 February 1945, stating that it did not give rise to any criticism. This legislation was in keeping with the rhetoric of the Resistance, which had been largely based on values related to masculinity and virility, in contrast to the supposedly prostrate and submissive France during the Occupation. Lastly, in 1960, conservative deputy Paul Mirguet succeeded in having an amendment passed which referred to homosexuality as a “social scourge (fléau social)” on a par with alcoholism and tuberculosis. The interest that public authorities took in the homosexual question was also manifested by the existence of a group to monitor homosexuals within the vice squad of the Paris police, which, in 1949, implemented a ban on men dancing together.¹⁶ Even if the repression of homosexuality had been less vigorous in France than in other Western

¹⁴ These figures come from a major recent study, based on the annual statistics of the *Compte général de la justice*. For detail on the convictions and an analysis of the figures, see Jérémie Gauthier et Régis Schlagdenhauffen, “Les sexualités “contre nature” face à la justice pénale. Une analyse des condamnations pour homosexualité en France (1945-1982),” *Médecine & Hygiène*, vol 43, no. 3, (2019): 421-459.

¹⁵ It should be noted that, unlike in many other Western countries, such as Germany with its paragraph 175 (which was repealed in 1969, but only in part), homosexual relations between adults in the private sphere had been legal in France ever since the French Revolution.

¹⁶ Mathias Quéré, “Qui sème le vent récolte la tapette, une histoire des Groupes de libération homosexuels en France, de 1974 à 1979” (master diss., University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, 2016), 43.

nations¹⁷, we cannot minimize its effects on the collective psyche and self-perception of gays and lesbians. It drew a clear line between normality and deviance and engendered among gay men and lesbians an intense self-repression, which activists in the 1970s and 1980s were trying to undo.

Anti-homosexual repression was not only a matter of police and judicial repression, but also a result of an overall societal state of mind concerning interpersonal relationships. A survey conducted in 1975 by the magazine *L'Express* gives some indication of public opinion towards homosexuality. In the year 1975, 40% of the French population believed that homosexuality was a social scourge as defined in the law, 44% believed that it was not, and 16% had no opinion¹⁸. When asked how to describe homosexuality, 42% of the people surveyed considered it an illness to be cured, 24% thought that it was a behaviour like any other, and 22% believed that it was a perversion to be fought against. At the same time, 81% of those surveyed said they did not know any gay men or lesbians¹⁹. The next question was about how parents would react to the news of their child being homosexual. 3% claimed that it would not bother them, 16% thought that it “would upset me, but I would let him or her live as he or she wishes,” 34% would try to change him or her, and 38% would be “deeply shocked and would do anything to make him or her change.” The survey also tried to determine if the opinions of the French changed depending on gender and if they thought homosexual men and lesbians should be prosecuted. In response to the question, “If you compare male homosexuality and female homosexuality [...],” 24% thought that neither was reprehensible, 53% thought that both were equally reprehensible, and 7% believed that male homosexuality was more reprehensible than female homosexuality, while 2% believed the opposite was true. 14% had no opinion²⁰. This survey clearly shows that acceptance of homosexuality was still very limited. Two similar surveys conducted in 1979 and 1980 showed similar results to the one from 1975. These surveys consistently show that acceptance of homosexuality was still very limited, providing useful insight for analyzing the criminalization of homosexuality.

Activists were therefore confronted with a paradox that they needed to solve as a matter of urgency: while they had been promoting a radical homosexual movement since the beginning of the decade, nothing had changed with respect to the repression of gay men and lesbians. Several factors would work toward a paradigm shift and lead to a reorientation of their activist movement.

II. End of the 1970s: The return of repression?

After a short decade of experimentation surrounding politics and identity, driven by what historians Michelle Zancarini-Fournel and Philippe Artières among others described as the “1968 years²¹” period, the French homosexual movement was racked with doubts. Having established the foundations of their political action, activists found themselves at a crossroads. The reason for this change in the homosexual movement from 1978 onward can be analyzed as

¹⁷ In West Germany, 68,000 men were convicted between 1949 and 1994. In the United Kingdom, 50,000 men were convicted between 1950 and 2000, whereas homosexuality was decriminalized in 1967.

¹⁸ “L’homosexualité est-elle un “fléau social” ?,” *L'Express*, no. 1228, January 20, 1975.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, 68, *une histoire collective, 1962-1981* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), 847

a sort of double movement. On one side, there was what happening internally within the movement and, on the other, what was happening on the outside. The socio-political context is thus essential to understand these developments. The period of political liberalism that started under pressure from social movements in 1974, coinciding with the election of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and including the adoption of a series of progressive laws (contraception, abortion, legal majority lowered to 18 years), came to an end in the late 1970s. While the left believed it would win in 1978, the legislative elections were again won by the right. At the same time, the far left was running out of steam, and the prospects of the Revolution were starting to fade. One of the main reasons for this paradigm shift can be found in the President of the Republic's political tactics. His Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac, resigned from the government in 1976, and, having become mayor of Paris in 1977, repeatedly attacked the government with rhetoric that was farther to the right. At the same time, even though the legislative elections had returned the presidential majority back into power, the left nonetheless continued to increase its voter base despite its divisions. With an eye to the 1981 presidential election and the support needed from the conservative forces, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing shifted his policies to the right²².

One of the first consequences of these political changes was the return of censorship. A number of newspapers, which had originally been authorized under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing himself in 1974, were forced to operate semi-clandestinely. This censorship was based on article 14 of a law of 16 July 1949, that allowed banning the display of "publications of any kind presenting a danger to youth due to their licentious or pornographic nature or the space given to crime²³." The *Association pour la liberté d'expression des pédérastes et homosexuels* (ALEPH), under the direction of Claude Courrouve, released a press release dated 18 April 1978 which revealed the extent of this censorship. The gay magazines *Dialogues* and *Incognito-Magazine* were banned from public display on 19 January 1978. Then it was the turn of *Gaie Presse* and *In-Magazine*, which disappeared from newsstands on 1 March 1978. This series of bans concluded with the censoring of the newest publication, *Gay Magazine*, on 24 March 1978. ALEPH condemned this "dangerous tilt towards moral order and serious challenge to the secularism of the State.²⁴" Instead of referring just to a return of censorship, the activists described a return of repression. In 1977, columns in the activist groups' periodicals, such as *Agence Tasse* and *Diff/Éros*, gave sombre reports of its impact: "11 May 1977 - Marseille: Michel and Antoine live together raising Antoine's daughter. Michel is a transvestite. The police arrested Antoine on 4 May; he was sent to prison, accused of procuring (*proxénétisme*) [...]"²⁵ "Wednesday, 18 January: a teacher from Saint-Leu-La-Forêt charged with incitement of youths to debauchery and lewd acts against persons of his own sex"²⁶; "7 March 1978: conviction by the 24th criminal court of the Tribunal de Paris of four homosexuals caught in the act in the Square de l'Archevêché, behind Notre-Dame de Paris, at 11:30pm; 3000F fine for each and suspended sentences of two months in prison²⁷." However, this rhetoric of a return of repression needs to be put in perspective. The figures from a study by Régis Schlagdenhauffen and Jérémie Gauthier on convictions for homosexuality in France point us in a certain direction. In 1974, the year Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was elected, 147 homosexual men were convicted.

²² Quéré, *Qui sème le vent récolte la tapette*, 105

²³ <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGITEXT000006068067/2010-08-17/>

²⁴ "Communiqué de l'ALEPH," *Agence Tasse*, no. 27/28/29, May 1978.

²⁵ "Chronologie," *Diff/Éros*, no. 3, September – October, 1977.

²⁶ "Usage des lois," *Agence Tasse*, no. 27/28/29, May 1978.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

The next year, 179 homosexuals suffered the same fate. And then 155 in 1976, 138 in 1977, and 162 in 1978²⁸. The difference in the figures between 1977 and 1978 is too slight to be considered significant or confirming a real return of repression. What then was happening to give the protagonists of this story that impression? In fact, it was interest in the issue that had increased, reinforced by the impact of several news items that had made a big splash in the national press.

Two “affairs” in particular, brought to light by the scholar Antoine Idier in his book *Les alinéas au placard*²⁹, accelerated the need for an organized reaction against repression. The first was a trial in October 1978 following the arrest of nine men in the backroom of a club in Paris called “Le Manhattan.” This trial, dubbed “a pink milestone in gay history³⁰” in an article in the newspaper *Libération*, showed the need for activists to rise up in the face of repression and make it a political platform. One aspect, however, had changed. As Antoine Idier recounts, “for the first time, people accused of ‘public indecency with members of the same sex’ appeared in court unashamedly, or at least not denying their homosexuality, and with the clear intention of moving the debate away from that issue.³¹” Then, at the beginning of 1979, there was the firing of a homosexual communist activist, Marc Croissant, by the city of Ivry in the Paris suburbs, which was itself communist party-led. His firing was due to a letter Croissant wrote to the communist newspaper *l’Humanité* where he called on his comrades to wholeheartedly defend the right for “individuals (including adolescents and children) to live their sexuality as they wish (even if it involves homosexuality, pedophilia, or any other form of sexuality) as long as the partners are free and consenting.³²” That was all it took for the French Communist Party (PCF), for whom homosexuality was still a “petty-bourgeois vice”, to see red! The Marc Croissant affair belongs in particular to the category of “professional bans,” which would be at the centre of the first political campaigns by the future CUARH.

III. First step to doing away with repression: Reconfigure the movement

While the movement was faced with conservative tactics from the right, activists also harshly criticized what was happening within the movement. Since 1977, a number of groups had reported they were going in circles³³. The GLHs were not just activist organizations but also spaces for socializing and meeting each other – a place of their own that allowed them to exist and face the outside world. Among those who joined the GLHs to pursue a political struggle were many who also frequented these spaces to relieve their sense of loneliness³⁴. Thus, the goals and expectations of each individual were different, to the point of destabilizing the structure of the groups and, sometimes, accelerating their demise. The groups’ writings reveal that, after a brief period of existence, they would become almost immobilized, incapable of advancing and expanding. The GLH of the city of Rouen, in the *Bulletin des GLH de province*, an internal publication of the movement, made the bitter observation that the initial enthusiasm

²⁸ Gauthier and Schlagdenhauffen, “Les sexualités “contre nature” face à la justice pénale,” 436.

²⁹ Antoine Idier, *Les alinéas au placard: l’abrogation du délit d’homosexualité, 1977 – 1982* (Paris: Cartouche: Institut François Mitterrand, 2012).

³⁰ Idier, *Les alinéas au placard*, 115.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² “Peut-on être pédé et communiste?,” *Libération*, no. 1599, March 30, 1979, 4.

³³ “GLH Lille,” *GLH Infos*, Spring, 1977, 5, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

³⁴ “Groupe de libération de l’homosexualité de Mulhouse,” *Bulletin des GLH province*, no. 2, January, 1977, 6, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

had waned and the group's activities had been stalled for several months. Even if there were some projects being planned, there were not enough active GLH stakeholders to make them happen, and the meetings were by no means inspiring. The article's author concludes, "We often were looking at each other like statues, and it was always the same people who spoke."³⁵ In this way, the types of organizations that had been put in place since the middle of the decade were causing paralysis, and the existing groups realized they were lacking vision. At the same time, activists complained about a striking disconnect with the vast majority of gay men and lesbians due to a certain intellectual elitism and the radical politics espoused by the GLHs. These men and women could hardly see themselves as part of the movement when the activist approach remained so far removed from their daily realities, their often mundane expectations, and their hopes for freedom. Homosexual activism therefore needed an urgent change of direction.

While groups tried to reshape their goals at a local level by diversifying their activities (organizing film festivals, starting newspapers, creating community centres), national initiatives sought to reconfigure the movement and give it a new direction. In this context, a national meeting of GLHs was held on 11-12 November 1978 near Lyon³⁶. 160 people coming from 25 different groups, as well as from other countries, met for a weekend with the objective of reinvigorating the movement. Jacques Prince, editor of *Agence Tasse*, a bimonthly bulletin of the GLHs, noted that the weekend's discussions suggested that "the homosexual movement does not exist. There is only a small minority of homosexual activists, who represent neither a force nor an electoral power³⁷." Given that the emerging approach within the movement was to fight against repression with the aim of doing away with the status of "second-class citizens," it was then understood that the homosexual struggle would need to be carried out in the legal sphere. Activist Alain Huet, also an editor of *Agence Tasse*, noted, "But, fight for [a law]? That is currently being discussed in many places and groups in the 'movement'³⁸." Since most GLHs had shown only limited pragmatic interest in the question of repression, there were multiple pitfalls, prompting Huet to state, "It is interesting to highlight the difficulties that [this] brings up given that [it] is on a different level than where, until now, almost all the existing groups have been.³⁹" That was to say, on the theoretical level. Fighting against laws was like putting themselves on enemy territory. The women's movement had had a similar experience, albeit far from universally successful, with the fight for abortion and, towards the end of the decade, the fight against rape. However, unlike the feminists, the activists of the homosexual movement were a lot fewer in number, and, according to the editor of *Agence Tasse*, a legislative fight needed to be based on a coalition of people from all political backgrounds. Compromises were inevitable and the need for coordination essential. Consequently, to advance the cause, they also needed "a minimal amount of bureaucracy⁴⁰," which had been the bane of the homosexual movement since the first moments of FHAR.

³⁵ "GLH de Rouen," *Bulletin des GLH province*, no. 2, January, 1977, 15, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

³⁶ "La réunion nationale des GLH à Lyon le 11 novembre," *Fil rose*, no. 6, December 1978 – January 1979, 2, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

³⁷ "Éditorial: de Lyon à Marseille," *Agence Tasse*, no. 30/31/32, undated, 4.

³⁸ "Jouons avec les stars pendant que nous sommes encore jeunes et après, on verra..." *Agence Tasse*, no. 27/28/29, May 1978, 3.

³⁹ "Jouons avec les stars," 4.

⁴⁰ "Jouons avec les stars," 5.

IV. Which way to turn for the homosexual movement?

One group, the Marseille GLH, considered by some in the movement as having reformist tendencies, had taken on the issue of repression as early as 1977. To understand this GLH's approach, we must look at two concepts that shaped the homosexual movement during the 1970s. Freedom (*Liberté*) and Liberation (*Libération*) were two theoretical frameworks that, when applied to the movement, defined the different forms of activism. In his work *L'homosexualité est-elle soluble dans le conformisme*, Jacques Fortin, a former activist of the Marseille GLH and former local leader of the Revolutionary Communist League (*Ligue communiste révolutionnaire*, or LCR), proposed a definition. On one side, there was the movement for *liberation* which encompassed a culture of "homosexual subversion [...] [which] distrusts forms of organization." It "loathes integration and tries to find itself through relational experimentation[...]"⁴¹. On the other side, there was the movement for "'freedoms' [which] wants to promote self-organization and fight to end police pressure and discrimination in order to obtain the freedoms of press, assembly, association and expression"⁴². To a certain extent, fighting for *liberation* is acting to subvert the world while fighting for *freedoms* is seeking to obtain rights. The strategy of *liberation* is consistent with the political orientation of far-left groups and is a total system, framing all aspects of life. To achieve this, the group has to have a common political orientation and members with relatively homogeneous aspirations. The *we* that emerges from this is relatively limited. This orientation is more applicable to groups that considered themselves revolutionary. This orientation is more applicable to groups that consider themselves revolutionary because it is only when a common political viewpoint emerges within the group that it can engage in a fight for *liberation*. In contrast, a group such as the Marseille GLH, which was more mixed in the political composition of its members, and hence more reformist in the eyes of other GLHs, is more in line with the fight for *freedoms*. According to Jacques Fortin, the fight for *freedoms* has as its primary focus the idea of going as far as possible together, despite the political differences between the individuals. In other words, "the goal is always to drive the movement forward as far as possible toward its interests, without losing the middle."⁴³ This strategy has its own prerequisites. In order to be able to go as far as possible together, it requires a common goal, with a minimal common ideological base on which to build the foundations of the movement. The fight to end repressive legislation and obtain the same rights as heterosexuals became a common base, an ideal least common denominator. It was perhaps the only point of agreement possible between everyone -- the end of repression as a shared demand for a movement that needed unity and a reorientation of its activism.

This question brings back a debate that has cut through the homosexual movement since its beginnings: should homosexuals demand the right to difference or should they instead promote a right to indifference? Broadly speaking, claiming a right to indifference is a position that maintains that the homosexual, by integrating into society, should not make waves and should be an ordinary person like everyone else. There would be no need to appeal to heterosexuals based on a difference in condition, but a pragmatic campaign for the repeal of discriminatory laws would still be necessary. However, the activist demands would stop there. This was essentially the position of the homophile group Arcadie. On the other hand, others

⁴¹ Jacques Fortin, *L'homosexualité est-elle soluble dans le conformisme ?* (Paris: Textuel, 2010), 85.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

assert a homosexual difference. Homosexuality cannot be dissolved in a heterosexual world, and for many a simple accommodation from the latter cannot be enough. It has to be rocked to its core. However, this homosexual difference was not originally conceived by homosexuals themselves. It is more of a reappropriation, a stigma reversal to borrow from Becker⁴⁴ since the difference was first conceived by heterosexual society. As the magazine *Paillettes* stated, “our homosexuality is truly a distinctive characteristic – we are often made to feel it. Deep down it’s really the only thing that people reproach us for, our defining feature, the fact that we are not in the norm⁴⁵.” The daily reality of gay men and lesbians was different from that of heterosexuals because, just to exist and be heard, they had to speak up. Consequently, during the 1978 legislative elections, several homosexuals were candidates in Paris, and the campaign was called “Homosexual Difference 1978⁴⁶.”

However, these demands for a right to difference need to be contextualized. In the 1980s they were not following the same criteria used 10 years earlier at the time of FHAR. In the early 1970s, the assertion of a homosexual difference was meant to be subversive and sought to dismantle the framework of heteronormativity from a revolutionary standpoint. From 1971 onward, FHAR largely adopted this position, as evidenced for example by two articles in the introduction to *Rapport contre la normalité*: “To those who believe they are normal” and “To those who are like us.” An unmistakable dividing line was drawn between those pursuing heteronormativity and those wanting to “destroy ‘fascist sexual normativity’⁴⁷.” At the beginning of the 1980s, demands for the right to difference had been transformed and could no longer be understood according to a revolutionary paradigm. The existential approach of the movement, as it had existed throughout the 1970s, had given way to advocacy activism. While still asserting its difference from heteronormativity, advocacy for a right to difference sought to place homosexuality on an equal footing with heterosexuality. Activists argued for the distinctiveness of their own condition, which should be equal in value to the heterosexual majority not only in law but also in public opinion. It was thus with an eye to being able to fully live their difference that gays and lesbians at the beginning of the 1980s mobilized and demanded equal rights. Starting in 1982, across the entire country, multiple groups and associations offered activities that were “conventional” but intended specifically for gays and lesbians, such as the “Gay loisirs” leisure activities association in Toulon, “Bénines d’Apies” (a lesbian hiking group), or even the women of the lesbian group “Mytilène,” who got together to practice karate and aikido, all reinforcing the notion that this right to difference was not transitory⁴⁸. The organizing of homosexual marches every June from 1982 onward, where the festive aspect and the affirmation of homosexual pride became increasingly prominent, also reflects the assertion of a right to difference.

Given that the groups were mostly autonomous up until this point, steering the fight against repression required coordinating the various existing groups, thereby strengthening the movement. With that in mind, following the meetings in Lyon in November 1978 and at the suggestion of the Marseille GLH, they decided to come together in the summer of 1979, for

⁴⁴ Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders, Études de sociologie de la déviance* (Paris: Métailié, 1985).

⁴⁵ “Des candidats pd,” *Paillettes*, no. 1, undated, 8, private collection, Jean le Bitoux, Paris.

⁴⁶ Mathias Quéré, “*Quand nos désirs font désordres*”. *Une histoire du mouvement homosexuel français de 1974 à 1986*, (PhD diss., Université Toulouse Jean-Jaurès, 2022), 321.

⁴⁷ Front homosexuel d’action révolutionnaire, “Adresse à ceux qui sont comme nous”, *Rapport contre la normalité*, (Paris: Champ libre, 1971)

⁴⁸ “L’annuaire des groupes”, *Homophonies. Nouvelle série*, no. 3, January 1986, 22.

what would be the first Université d'été de l'homosexualité (UEH), a week to reconfigure the movement and give it new direction. It was during this UEH that a new federating structure of all of the existing homosexual groups was devised with the goal of fighting against repression and for the repeal of anti-homosexual laws. This new structure was given the name Emergency Committee against Homosexual Repression (Comité d'urgence anti-répression homosexuelle, or CUARH.)

V. The birth of CUARH and the construction of a movement against professional bans

CUARH was officially founded on 28 August 1979. At the beginning of September, a meeting was held in Paris and led to the creation of CUARH-Paris, whose goal was to “bring aid to any homosexual of either sex struggling with discrimination, among other things.⁴⁹” An anti-repression legal aid service in collaboration with lawyers was also put in place to provide direct help to those grappling with repression. A letter dated 12 September 1979 was sent by the Paris group to numerous organizations and political parties, as well as to various trade unions. CUARH, more so than the GLHs, sought to establish a dialogue with the different political and union organizations, as they understood the importance of obtaining institutional support in the balance of power they wanted to establish with the political authorities. The letter stated that “each year, thousands of [homosexual men and women] are fired, threatened, or blackmailed by their employers because of their sexual orientation and their private lives⁵⁰.” It continued by announcing that CUARH was engaging in a campaign against professional bans⁵¹ due to homosexuality and calling on organizations to “take a stand against what is being done to homosexuals, and to participate in their campaign of public appeals, leafleting, and petitions, [and invited them to] a meeting on Sunday, 30 September.⁵²” In the end, this letter symbolizes the change of direction for homosexual activism toward an activism approach⁵³.

Why a mobilization against what activists called professional bans? The code for the French public service stipulated in its article 16 that “No one can be appointed to public employment: [...] if he [or she] is not of good moral character⁵⁴.” This requirement of good moral character lent itself to all possible interpretations and became a sword of Damocles over the head of every homosexual man and lesbian, still considered “second-class citizens?” Admission to the civil service was also prohibited for anyone having a “tubercular, cancerous,

⁴⁹ Idier, *Les alinéas au placard*, 83-84.

⁵⁰ Letter from CUARH, September 7, 1979, private collection Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

⁵¹ The French term “interdiction professionnelle” (professional ban) is a literal translation of the German word *Berufsverbot*, which is highly political in Germany. The German constitution stipulates that admission to the civil service is forbidden to anyone who expresses political disagreement with the constitution. This article was used mostly to criminalize and condemn the German radical left at the end of 1960s, when the Red Army Faction (RAF) was still a strong force. German activists’ reappropriation of the concept was also based on its use in the 1930s against the Jews. This historical reminder allowed activists to emphasize the incompleteness of the denazification of the German State after the Second World War.

⁵² Letter from CUARH, September 7, 1979, private collection Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

⁵³ It should be noted that these paradigm shifts occurring within the French homosexual movement were not unique to France. In many Western countries, the late 1970s and early 1980s marked a similar evolution in the direction taken by activists. Brought together within the International Gay Association since 1978, numerous homosexual organizations sought to create a movement on an international scale based on an agenda of advocacy and reformism.

⁵⁴ “Les interdictions professionnelles pour homosexualité dans la loi,” *Contre les interdictions professionnelles pour homosexualité*, January, 1980, 4, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

or nervous affliction⁵⁵.” Here, “nervous affliction” refers to mental illnesses, and it was this part that activists criticized. The World Health Organization (WHO), still considered homosexuality a mental illness, as it would until 1999. “So much so that, during the medical exam preceding any employment in the civil service, if you say to your doctor that you are homosexual, he can consider [...] that this mental illness is incompatible with entrance into the ranks of public servants⁵⁶.” This campaign against professional bans, a first step toward the repeal of discriminatory laws, moved with astonishing speed and mobilized activists throughout France. It is worth noting that while the GLHs’ activism in the early 1970s was primarily characterized by local involvement, the various campaigns started by CUARH were based on national involvement to ensure that the movement spoke with one coordinated voice and manifested its size and strength to the political authorities. During the coordinating meeting of member groups of CUARH, which took place in Dijon on 9-10 February 1980, an initial assessment of the campaign was made. For example, through a petition launched in the fall, they had collected almost 10,000 signatures, many from public figures⁵⁷. To strengthen the campaign, a large rally had also been planned for 31 May 1980 in Paris at La Mutualité, the preferred meeting hall for gatherings of far-left and minority movements⁵⁸.

This militant fervor was brought face to face with the fact that, on 11 April 1980, the French National Assembly voted on a proposed amendment to reinstate paragraph 3 of article 331 (which later became article 331-2) by the deputy and former minister Jean Foyer, member of the right-wing Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and president of the Law Committee of the French National Assembly. Previously, in 1978, during the parliamentary review of a law addressing rape, a centrist senator by the name of Caillavet had tried, in vain, to remove this paragraph. It was in this context that the rally at La Mutualité was organized. CUARH called on “all gay men and lesbians in France to participate in the national rally in Paris on 31 May because their liberation will only be possible if large numbers of them first take responsibility for their own battles⁵⁹.” Living up to the hopes of the organizers, the public answered the call – 3,000 people participated in the event⁶⁰. It was a first victory for the fledgling CUARH, which had carried out a widespread mobilization involving far more than just activists. This turning point in the homosexual movement’s activism and its opening up to more pragmatic demands thus appear to be a prerequisite for the “massification” of the movement, whereby the majority of gays and lesbians began to hope for actual concrete change in their everyday lives and circumstances.

The last act surrounding Foyer’s amendment played out in the fall of 1980. On 16 October, the Senate, which had voted for the repeal of paragraph 3 of article 331 of the Penal Code, backtracked and declined to remove it. Immediately afterward, CUARH put out a press release. It denounced “the will of all those who further anti-homosexual prejudice today [...]. The Senate has just vindicated the fascist groups, like *Renouveau français*, who signed a petition today asking for ‘the retention and vigorous application of article 331 of the Penal Code and

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ “Les interdictions professionnelles,” 5.

⁵⁷ “Compte rendu de la coordination nationale du CUARH de Dijon,” February 16, 1980, 1, private collection, Jacques Vandemborghe, *Mémoire des sexualités*, Marseille.

⁵⁸ “Décision prises concernant le GLH Marseille. CUARH Dijon,” February 9 and 10, 1980, 1, private collection *Mémoire des sexualités*, Marseille.

⁵⁹ “Le 31 mai, pour les droits et libertés des homosexuels (hommes et femmes),” undated, 2, private collection, *Mémoire des sexualités*, Marseille.

⁶⁰ “Les pédés à la Mutu,” *Libération*, no. 1959, June 2, 1980, 2.

the expulsion of all foreign homosexuals⁶¹.” Then the press release called for a demonstration on 23 October in the streets of the capital. The call to protest was signed by numerous leading figures, many of whom were from outside the circle of intellectuals who had already been for many years lending their support to the homosexual movement and its demands. It should also be noted that the homosexual activists’ message achieved an increasingly wider reach into different levels of society and thereby gave weight to the power relationship they hoped to establish. It was under rainy skies that three thousand people gathered together in Place Saint-Sulpice in Paris. This number was significant since the homosexual movement had never managed to mobilize so many people for a demonstration. Chanting “Arabs, Jews, homos, same fight” and “Foyer needs a good lay⁶²,” the demonstrators marched to the Théâtre de l’Odéon after being blocked from marching to the Senate. This first campaign of the newly formed CUARH was essential to the history of the movement because it helped bring about new directions for advocacy for the homosexual movement. As noted in a pamphlet on professional bans published by CUARH, “the various different charges ultimately involve the notion of sexual majority (and this is what we must address. Isn’t it a democratic right?) We should note that the age of consent is 15 years for heteros and 18 years, civil majority, for homos⁶³.” This was a new cause taking shape on the horizon for the homosexual movement and CUARH.

VI. The 1981 presidential election campaign: Hope for an end to repression

In the space of a few months, CUARH managed to establish itself as the cornerstone of the French homosexual movement and became the main point of contact with trade unions, political parties, and other organizations. Following a new national coordinating meeting on 26-27 September 1980 in Angers, CUARH, along with all the groups comprising it, decided to campaign in connection with the 1981 presidential election. “So that gay men and lesbians will finally start to become a political force to be reckoned with in this country⁶⁴,” *Homophonies*, CUARH’s newspaper, reported. In the “electoral circus” of the election, the newspaper continued, the homosexual minority is “singularly forgotten,” and no candidate has ever spoken publicly in favor of the rights and freedoms of homosexuals, even while they are “all smiles” trying to grab the votes of young people, women, and ecologists⁶⁵. According to the coordinating meeting’s report, they could take advantage of this key moment in French politics to compel the candidates to take a public stance on homosexuality. To this end, an open letter and a questionnaire were sent to all of the candidates, asking them to declare their position on the repeal of the anti-homosexual legislation. In addition, to create a wider propaganda campaign, they printed tens of thousands of leaflets to be distributed and thousands of posters to be put up.

To further broaden the mobilization, the idea of a national march was adopted at the seventh coordinating meeting of CUARH in La Baule on 15-16 November 1980. The march, planned for 4 April 1981, or three weeks before the first round, was meant to complement the campaign already underway “since just questioning the candidates for the Élysée would not be

⁶¹ “Appel à l’initiative du CUARH,” *Homophonies*, no. 1, November, 1980, 4.

⁶² “Un millier d’homos dans la rue,” *Libération*, no. 2082, October 24, 1980, 24.

⁶³ “Introduction,” *Contre les interdictions professionnelles pour homosexualité*, January, 1980, 3, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

⁶⁴ “Présidentielles,” *Homophonies*, no. 1, November, 1980, 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

enough if we do not have, in parallel, thousands of us in the streets, along with all the defenders of freedoms, to demand an end to discrimination⁶⁶,” *Homophonies* noted. This march was even more important for CUARH since, despite the sometimes positive responses to the questionnaires, in truth they had little confidence in the candidates, no matter who they were. As the editorial in issue number 6 of *Homophonies* underscored, “we should not be fooled by promising statements. We will not give a blank check to anyone. We know that it is through maintaining social pressure, through our battles, particularly at the national march on 4 April, that we can pry our most basic rights from the candidates.⁶⁷” Protesters in the streets were still the best ally of the movement.

After months of planning, tens of thousands of leaflets distributed, posters pasted on walls in numerous cities, and buses chartered throughout France, expectations were high for this day, which activists hoped would be historic. And it was indeed a success. *Homophonies* sounded a jubilant note: No one, not even the most optimistic among us, had dared to hope! There were 12,000⁶⁸ of us, perhaps 15,000 women and men, coming from all over France and abroad to show, in this pre-electoral period, our determination to fight for our rights and freedoms⁶⁹.” No other demonstration in Europe had brought together so many gay men, lesbians, and their supporters, coming from all over France to experience such a memorable moment. For a vast majority of the people present, it was their first homosexual demonstration. Many of them, curious and hesitant, had gathered along the sidewalks to watch the procession and “then, persuaded by the size and excitement of the march, joined in midstream⁷⁰.” Catherine Gonnard, a future Parisian activist with CUARH, remembered that day:

“When we arrived, we were kind of all assuming we would stay on the sidewalk. And then everyone thought the same thing, and the sidewalk wasn’t wide enough. So we all went into the street. I think it was one of the best moments in my life. All of sudden there were 10,000 of us [...] It was incredible, there were so many of us. There were some women, and there we were, and the slogans were actually quite hilarious: “Nationalize the sequin factories.” The guys were chanting “Giscard, [we want] diamonds for our lovers” because it was just after the Bokassa diamonds scandal. [...] I was excited to be there, happy and pleased!⁷¹”

If the primary objective of this march was to assert the depth and breadth of the homosexual movement so it could finally be taken seriously by the presidential candidates, it also appears to show for the first time, in the light of day and in such a massive way, a certain pride in homosexual difference. Having arrived at Beaubourg, the endpoint of the march, the demonstrators took over the square in front of the Centre Georges Pompidou and decorated the building with their banners. The exceptional nature of that day was highlighted by Jean Cavailhes of the Dijon GLH, who took spoke on behalf of CUARH:

“Today is an historic day. When you talk about it later, you will be able to say, ‘I was there.’ We are in the streets, gathered to demand that lesbians and gay men be able to live and love in the open. This is the first time since prehistoric times that such a major demonstration has taken place in France: historians have checked in their grimoires, and

⁶⁶ “À Paris le 4 avril: marche nationale pour nos droits et libertés,” *Homophonies*, no. 2, December, 1980, 5.

⁶⁷ “Présidentielles,” *Homophonies*, no. 1, November, 1980, 3.

⁶⁸ The newspaper *Le Monde* reported 10,000 demonstrators.

⁶⁹ “C’était le 4 avril,” *Homophonies*, no. 7, May, 1981, 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Author's interview with Catherine Gonnard, January 2019, Paris

they are unanimous: neither the Lutèce of Vercingétorix, nor the Paris of 1979, nor the Paris of 1848 or the Commune has seen such a demonstration⁷².”

To end the day, a gala was held that night in the hall of La Mutualité. After awarding a prize for Homophobia 1981 to the Group to monitor homosexuals of the Préfecture de Police of Paris, the singer Juliette Gréco was triumphant before a delighted audience. After that, 5,000 people danced until dawn⁷³.

The press confirmed the march had been a success above and beyond the triumphant speeches of CUARH and the significant number of participants, which was in sharp contrast to the deafening silence that the movement had generally been used to⁷⁴. Within the “homosexual world,” the newspaper *Gai Pied*, which had never spared CUARH and its initiatives, headlined its May edition: “Triumphant March” with a short sidebar stating that “CUARH’s goal has been achieved: 10,000 homosexuals marched in the streets of Paris. The largest gay rally in France⁷⁵.” The mainstream press also reported widely on the march. *Le Matin*, *Quotidien de Paris*, *Minute*, *La Croix*, *Le Monde*, *L’Humanité*, *Le Figaro*, *L’Aurore*, *Le Provençal*, and *Combat socialiste* covered this historic day in line with their own points of view on the homosexual question. Some in the media focused on the classification of homosexuality as a mental illness⁷⁶. Christian Colombani of the newspaper *Le Monde* remarked that the onlookers along the route did not seem particularly shocked by the men and women marching before their eyes. The homosexuals seemed at first glance more acceptable to them, “apparently less provocative... unless the public is just getting used to it.⁷⁷” For its part, *Le Figaro* indulged in a veritable sociological study of the gay and lesbian world:

“You could recognize all of homosexuality’s diversity: fashionable young men holding hands, street toughs in leather outfits and a little ring in their ear, transvestites, women with their arms around each other’s necks, elegant older homosexual men, drag queens all made-up, punks, and young men with crew cuts and bomber jackets⁷⁸.”

The press on the “left,” despite its strong support for CUARH’s initiative, still sometimes manifested paternalism and condescension. *Combat socialiste* took the liberty of giving advice to gays and lesbians on what they should and should not do:

“With their noisemakers, their coloured balloons, and their slogans, the demonstrators were laughable. Will mindsets ever evolve? For that to happen, maybe homosexuals should avoid indulging in this sort of terrorism – “hetero is retro, homo is the way to go,” they were heard saying – and they should leave it up to the individual be in charge of his own tastes⁷⁹.”

⁷² “Intervention à Beaubourg de Jean Cavailles, militant du GLH – Dijon,” undated, 1, private collection, Mémoire des sexualités, Marseille.

⁷³ “Notre préférence fera la différence,” *Gai Pied*, no. 26, May, 1981, 1.

⁷⁴ The newspaper *Libération* is an exception because since its foundation in 1973, it has tried to give a voice to all minoritarian movements.

⁷⁵ “La Marche triomphale,” *Gai Pied*, no. 26, May, 1981, 1.

⁷⁶ “L’homosexualité sous la lorgnette des médias,” *Homophonies*, no. 7, May, 1981, 6.

⁷⁷ “Le droit à la différence,” *Le Monde*, April 7, 1981.

⁷⁸ “L’homosexualité sous la lorgnette des médias,” 6.

⁷⁹ “L’homosexualité sous la lorgnette des médias,” 7.

In summary, reading between the lines, we can see that this journalist's directive to gays and lesbians was to drop their demands and their assertion of a homosexual difference and instead blend into the indifference of heteronormativity.

A national coordinating meeting of CUARH took place on 5 April, taking advantage of the fact that a large number of activists were in the capital at that time. All were in agreement about the success of the day and the evening after⁸⁰. Beyond the popular success, multiple statements of support from political organizations, trade unions, and social movements suggest that the demands of CUARH had been taken into consideration. In addition, the socialist candidate François Mitterrand promised, if elected, to prepare a draft bill based on a proposal already put forward by the Socialists in the National Assembly to repeal the repressive laws. Even if the activists knew "that they [had] to put electoral promises into perspective, during this period where all votes [were] welcomed⁸¹," some were beginning to believe that the long-awaited change was about to happen. Nevertheless, there were still many questions about the next steps for the movement. *Homophonies* summarized: "4 April made us aware of our strength and our numbers; there is now a balance of power. But how can we take advantage of it?"⁸² The response would depend on the winner of the election.

The first round of the presidential election was held on 26 April 1981. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterrand qualified for the second round. Two days later, during a meeting with the association *Choisir*, the socialist candidate was asked by journalist Josyane Savigneau of *Le Monde* about his position on homosexuality. After an initial evasive response, lawyer Gisèle Halimi made another attempt and questioned the candidate more directly: "On one specific issue, if you are elected, will homosexuality no longer be a crime?" To which François Mitterrand responded: "But absolutely... This is no reason to judge one's choice, it's in the law of nature, following one's tastes, it doesn't matter; everyone's choice should be respected, that's all [...]"⁸³ On May 10, the socialist candidate won the election with 51.76% of the votes. The same evening, in the Place de la Bastille where left-wing voters had come to celebrate the victory, CUARH unfurled a banner with the slogan: "Homos have chosen freedom⁸⁴". The hope for long-awaited change was all anyone was thinking or talking about. The June edition of *Gai Pied* featured the headline: "Seven years of joy?"⁸⁵

Conclusion:

Ending the status of "second-class citizens" for gays and lesbians at the beginning of the 1980s coincided with an explosive time in the cultural and commercial life of homosexuals. Bars proliferated, no longer hidden away or reserved only for the well off; clubs, backrooms, and saunas became central components of gay lifestyles. And so, as a new chapter in politics was beginning, activists could for the first time live and celebrate their difference. Even if social acceptance of homosexuality was still illusory and called for continued mobilization efforts, gays and lesbians could hope to live, exist, and love without suffering the torments of state

⁸⁰ "Compte rendu de la coordination CUARH du 5 avril 1981," April 23, 1981, private collection, Jacques Vandemborghe, *Mémoire des sexualités*, Marseille.

⁸¹ "L'homosexualité sous la lorgnette des médias," 7.

⁸² "C'était le 4 avril," 4.

⁸³ Frédéric Martel, *Le rose et le noir : les homosexuels en France depuis 1968* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 212.

⁸⁴ "Et maintenant ? ...," *Gai Pied*, no. 27, June, 1981, 1.

⁸⁵ "Sept ans de bonheur ?," *Gai Pied*, no. 27, June, 1981.

repression. At the same time, after many years centred around activism on a national scale, the French homosexual movement returned to its existential quality and shifted to the local level, where it developed new perspectives on the right to difference, primarily manifested by the emergence of gay and lesbian social centers⁸⁶. But this new reality was particularly short-lived. In June 1981, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta (USA) announced the first case of what had not yet been called AIDS⁸⁷. In 1982, French newspapers had a field day with the new illness that they called “gay cancer⁸⁸”. Within the homosexual community, there was utter disillusionment. As an activist named Albert Rosse put it, “now the queers, on the basis of their particular illness, have returned to the list of social scourges that they had inopportunately fled⁸⁹.” The winds of freedom that were blowing at the beginning of the decade were only short-term, and the ghosts of repression gained renewed vigour. However, it was the epidemic that would, in the 1990s, give new fuel to campaigns demanding for gays and lesbians the same rights as heterosexuals, this time concerning the institution of the family. Some activists who had fought for the repeal of repressive laws subsequently started movements for civil unions, resulting in the creation of the *Contrat d’union civile* (CUC) in 1991 followed by the *Pacte civil de solidarité* (PACS) in 1999, with the goal of giving legal recognition and some form of protection to same-sex couples. This was a brand new chapter in the history of a homosexual movement seeking recognition for all those who were still denied it.

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⁸⁶ Quéré, “*Quand nos désirs font désordres*”, 584-591.

⁸⁷ Martel, *Le rose et le noir*, 320.

⁸⁸ “Mystérieux cancer chez les homosexuels américains,” *Le Monde*, January 6, 1982.

⁸⁹ Martel, *Le rose et le noir*, 320.