Porn, Pedophilia, and Paganism: The Transnational Far-Right European Imaginary of *Gaie France* Magazine (1986–1993)

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Abstract:

On July 11, 1992, eighteen years after the Carnation Revolution ended the fascist dictatorship in Portugal, the Portuguese public broadcaster ran a news story about the launch of the first ever gay magazine to reach Portuguese newsstands, one that was written in Portuguese despite still bearing the title of its parent publication, *Gaie France*. Five years earlier, on July 13, 1987, however, a petition had been signed at the Homosexual Summer University of Marseille denouncing *Gaie France*'s fascist politics.
In this article we offer a critical picture of *Gaie France*'s peculiar place in the landscape of late 20th-century homosexual media in Europe. We show how the magazine advocated a complex ideology that mixed paganism, pederasty, and far-right ideology, trying to spearhead a radical conservative European homosexual movement while having to deal with the view of homosexuality as degeneracy shared by the main ideologues of the European far-right. Rejected by political actors both in the organized homosexual movement and in the "New Right," Gaie France forged a peculiar ideological path that can help us gain a more nuanced understanding of both the European homosexual movement and of Europe itself at the turn of the new millennium.

Keywords: Pederasty, Far-Right Politics, Paganism, Pornography, France, Portugal, Europe

Porn, Pedophilia, and Paganism: The Transnational Far-Right European Imaginary of *Gaie France* Magazine (1986–1993)

On July 11, 1992, eighteen years after the Carnation Revolution ended the fascist dictatorship in Portugal, RTP, the public broadcaster, included a story in its Saturday news show about the launch of the first ever gay magazine to reach Portuguese newsstands nationwide, one that was written in Portuguese despite still bearing the title of its parent publication, *Gaie France*.

On July 13, 1987, five years before *Gaie France* (*GFM*) appeared in Portuguese on Portuguese newsstands, a petition was written at the Université d'Été Homosexuelle de Marseille (UEH). Signed, among others, by journalist and activist Jean Le Bitoux, it established the Comité Homosexuel et Lesbien Anti-Fasciste (CHLAF) with a call for the organisation of Marseille's homosexual summer university to remove *Gaie France* magazine (GFM) from the event and for "this fascist group (GFM)" to be "exempt from all intervention in public" (CHLAF 1987, 20).[i] The petition having been successful, the French homosexual newspaper *Gai Pied Hebdo* published an interview with Michel Caignet, the founder and director of *GFM,* in which he was asked to comment on the exclusion of the magazine from the Marseille event. In a combative style, Caignet stressed that "GFM has its place amidst the homosexual media and it won't be a handful of male and female inquisitors who will prevent us from saying what we have to say." With regards to accusations that he was a member of the far right, Caignet strongly rejects them on the grounds that the far right "is associated.…with a rejection of the other and, more generally, with a moral doctrine grounded in a reductive view of the individual." Instead, "*GFM* proposes a personal rediscovery of the meaning of homosexuality at the European scale. We do not have a universalist vocation" (Rouy 1987, 12).

In what follows, we offer a critical picture of *GFM*'s peculiar place in the landscape of late 20th-century homosexual media in Europe. We trace the transnational networks of its editor, Michel Caignet, and, drawing from discussions of its visual and editorial contents, offer insight into the ways in which homosexuality, pederasty, and anti-Enlightenment thinking came together on the pages of the magazine to lure European homosexuals into the far-right political space that was being reformulated as a result of the fall of the Third Reich. In so doing, we show how *GFM* advocated a peculiar radical conservative ideology, one that tried to build a far-right homosexual movement while having to deal with the association, prevalent among European far right organisations, of homosexuality with moral and political degeneracy. Rejected by political actors both in the organised homosexual movement and in the "*Nouvelle Droite*," *GFM* forged its own ideological path, one that can help us gain a more nuanced understanding of the development of both the homosexual movement and Europe itself at the end of the 20th century, as well as better historicise contemporary forms of reactionary homosexual politics.

A Man with a Mission

In the opening editorial of *GFM*'s inaugural issue—dated January 1986, four years after François Mitterrand equalised the age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual relations—Michel Caignet complained about the state of the French homosexual movement his contemporaneous. To him, the "community" had withdrawn into itself, with community activism reduced to a minimum. Despite recent positive developments, the reality to him was that the "community" still encountered many barriers to real "liberation," and that was to be blamed on both "Judeo-Christian" morality and the "individualistic, tolerant, egalitarian and blind philosophy of

"'enlightenment'." Caignet followed his critique of the liberal political victories of the French homosexual movement with another piece titled "Les Beurs à la Concorde" in which he expressed his outrage at an antiracist protest that had brought "a few tens of thousands" to Place de La Concorde the previous month. Further stressing his and his magazine's rejection of universalism on behalf of "European" identitarianism, he went on to claim that "the forced cohabitation of populations as different in race, culture and mores as the French and the Maghrebis, for instance, is suicidal."

Caignet's views resonate with those of Alain de Benoist, co-founder of the French *Nouvelle Droite* think thank GRECE (Groupement de Recherche et d'Étude pour la Civilization Européenne), and one of the early proponents of ethnopluralism, the ideology that different cultures should have the right to protect themselves as cultures, co-existing as equals yet restricted to their specific geographic regions (Spektorowski 2003). Benoist's ideas were advanced as metapolitical critiques of the hegemonic universalism of European Enlightenment thinking, which he saw as the cause of both colonialism and the later homogenisation of cultures associated with globalisation (Benoist 1986). The solution, when it came to Europe, was for European culture to "return" to its pre-"Judeo-Christian" origins, rejecting left-liberal ideologies of universalism, cosmopolitanism and progress (François 2007; Bar-On 2012).

Fuelled by the ideology of the *Nouvelle Droite*, *GFM* also called for a return to the pre-modern pagan roots of "Europe" which had—the argument goes—been corrupted first by Judaism, then by Christianity, and eventually by Muslim migration, chiefly from North Africa. While sharing with others in the broader far-right a commitment to ethnopluralism and European identitarianism, *GFM*'s significance arises from the ways in which it argued for the centrality of homosexuals as privileged actors in Europe's return to its "true" identity, an idea

that remains at odds with far-right orthodoxy. Yet, the magazine clearly saw itself as the bridge between the homosexual movement and the new far-right that had emerged in the aftermath of the fall of the Third Reich.

Caignet's advocacy for the value of welcoming homosexuals into the far-right—and thus of rescuing the homosexual movement from its liberal and left-wing capture—is better understood by mapping the transnational networks of which he had been part before founding *GFM*. Born in 1954, he became a militant of the far-right nationalist-revolutionary movement in his early twenties and joined the Groupes Nationalistes Révolutionnaires, which had been founded by neo-Nazi, Holocaust denier, and Front National co-founder François Duprat (Canonges 2014). In 1975, after having also joined the Fédération d'Action Nationaliste et Européenne (FANE), he was arrested in Austria for carrying in his suitcase a uniform of Hitler's *Schutzstaffel* (SS) and a Nazi armband (Lebourg 2018, 139). The following year, he translated and published *Auschwitzlüge* (*The Auschwitz Lie*) by Thies Christophersen, an ex-member of the Waffen-SS (Lebourg 2001). By the early 1980s, Caignet was close friends with Michael Kühnen, the young German homosexual founder of the *Aktionfront Nationaler Sozialisten* (ANS), who had been considered—prior to his coming-out—"the Fuehrer of neo-Nazism," and who would succumb to AIDS in 1991 (Hartmann 1996; Brothers 2000, 47). In fact, Caignet would become the only foreigner to be admitted as honorary member of the ANS, head of the *ANS Auslandsorganization* (ANS Foreign Organisation), and de facto editor of both the ANS's newsletter *Die Neue Front* and the German New Right magazine *Neue Zeit* (Hartmann 1996; Husell 2001, 244).

When Caignet eventually came out as homosexual to his German comrades in 1986, the reaction from the broader German far-right was one of repudiation, leading him to be expelled

from the *Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front* (GdNF)—the organisation Kühnen had created after the federal republic banned the ANS—and *Die Neue Front* to publish a piece in which Neo-Nazi leaders Jürgen Mosler, Volker Heidel, Michael Swierczek, and Ursula Müller accused homosexuals of "contaminating" the National Socialist movement (Mogge 2023, 227; Schröder 1992, 167–168).

Upon being relieved of his roles in the German movement, Caignet went on to publish, that same year, a text Kühnen had written during his first imprisonment (1979–82) but refrained from publishing: *National Socialism and Homosexuality.* Kühnen's ideological meanderings in that pamphlet posit national socialism as the natural—even "biological"—political home of homosexuals, pushing back against both the homophobia in the far-right majority, and the dominant tendency of the homosexual movement to align itself—or be captured by—either liberal or left-wing politics. With nods to evolutionary biology and evolutionary psychology, he argues that "perversion" is not inherent to homosexuality per se but, rather, that homosexuals had to unfortunately align themselves with the true "perverse" communities as a consequence of Europe's christianisation and the subsequent relegation of homosexuality to the category of vice and practice *contra natura*. Polysexuality was, in fact, "natural" to men, and this had lent homosexuals an advantage that sustained the development of "civilisation." It was due to it that "strong men" had been able to organise themselves into "brotherhoods," to protect and secure the life of the "horde," and—through intergenerational (sexual) bonds with teenagers—to ensure the reproduction of "culture" (Kühnen 2004).

Kühnen had been inspired by Hans Blüher, an early member of the German *Wandervogel* movement and radical conservative who had, seven decades earlier, proposed a masculinist alternative to the model of homosexuality advocated by Magnus Hirschfeld and

whose translated writings also regularly appeared in GFM. While Hirschfeld had conceived of homosexuality as "third sex," Blüher—a known antisemite—considered Hirschfeld's thesis to be a feminizing (and, *ipso facto*, Jewish) betrayal of the social role of men as the social agents of civilisation and of pederasty as the means through which civilisation is reproduced (Hewitt 1996, 79–88).[ii]

It is thus through the historical radical conservative politicisation of pederastic masculinity—one that connects the likes of Blüher and Kühnen with Michel Caignet—that one can fully understand the ideological genesis of *GFM*'s mission of marrying homosexuality with late 20th-century European far-right ideology. The way it sought to articulate this disturbing alliance was first, by showing homosexuals that pederasty was the truth of homosexuality before the latter was captured by left ideologies and North American consumer culture; second, by arguing for the historical importance of pederasty as a civilising masculinist practice central to ensuring the freedom of all men and the social order, while protecting European society and identity from degeneracy.

Yet, in France, Caignet and *GFM* were to also be shunned by the far-right, especially as the AIDS crisis started to deepen existing fractures in French society. Caignet had always been critical of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front due to the catholic morality that informed its political project. That criticism was certainly one of the reasons why he had always aggressively pushed back against left-wing accusations that *GFM* was a vehicle for National Front ideology. *Nouvelle Droite* ideologues like Alain de Benoist and Guillaume Faye, whose paganist masculinist framings of pederasty and homosexuality had informed Caignet's politics, had however appeared on the pages of *GFM* as early as 1986.[iii] Yet, one year later, in 1987, Caignet stated in *GFM* 7 his anger and disappointment at the very voices he had endorsed only two

issues prior, voices that would otherwise reflect his political alignment. The reason for that being the agreement between Faye and Le Pen on a call for increased biopolitical surveillance and restriction of liberties in response to the AIDS crisis. Accusing Faye of cynicism and drawing comparisons between his and Le Pen's position and the persecution of homosexuals in the USRR, China, Algeria and Iran, Caignet went on to argue that the homosexual community was "not all made of opponents to the nationality code, to traditional sexuality (Sparta!), to the protection of the life of foetuses, to the death penalty for murderers, to selective universities, to the obligation of loving France in order to become French, etc…" His political stance is further illustrated by his opening of *GFM* 9, of March 1988, ahead of the French presidential and legislative elections of that year. Very critical of all French political parties, including the far-right National Front, his view was that the election would certainly not result in radical change. Yet, in a sign of political pragmatism rare among more orthodox far-right thinkers, Caignet ended that text by writing the following:

> It is clear that the socialists are currently the only ones who can guarantee homosexuals will live their sexuality largely as they wish. Is this enough to vote for them? We will leave it to our readers to decide while waiting for the advent of new days…

It is in relation to Caignet's and, by extension, *GFM*'s particular political positioning—one that saw in the French Socialist Party a lesser evil when it came to homosexual lifestyles while otherwise sharing much more in common with the identitarian and ethnopluralist far-right milieu—that the magazine's social and sexual imaginary can be fully understood. This imaginary is a development of older European pederastic masculinist imaginaries which had themselves already occupied an ambiguous or hybrid place vis-à-vis the left/right divide of the pre-war decades.[iv] It gestures towards the "new days" desired by Caignet by means of a

"disturbing attachment" to pederastic and racist myths of European origin through which it imagines alternative homosexual futures. GFM "feels backwards" (Love 2007) in a far-right and pederastic "utopian longing" (Muñoz 2009).

A Magazine With an Imaginary

GFM 14 opens with a telling editorial, signed by Caignet. Published next to a black-and-white street portrait of a 1980s teenager taken in front of a window that partly reflects the figure of the male photographer, the editorial—as well as the accompanying photograph—encapsulate the magazine's articulation of pederastic relations and European identitarianism. It reads:

> Hi Boy!
>
> I love your clear, frank gaze, I love the purity of your eyes, the warmth that emanates from your body, the tender complicity that makes us so different and so strong. I love the fire in your untamed eyes, still capable of enthusiasm. An eternal dream.…
>
> In the streets, faces look like prison doors. Sad world. Les Halles. Smell of merguez. Glances cross without meeting. Multicoloured shop windows, consumption. Here, needs and their satisfaction are prefabricated, but the dream is lost. Life is speeding up, we no longer have time to exist. American rhythms: the business is your happiness, a society of "dynamic young executives" with hints of old men.… Will we ever rediscover this purity of being, the divine image of that teenager in Cabaret singing about a tomorrow that has been shattered by fear of the revolution?
>
> The future belongs to us, the future is within us. Let's learn how to be rather than how to have. Let's rediscover through our roots a broken imagination. Let's prefer Apollo to the merchants of the Temple, Dionysus to the priesthood of the trinity god-family-

money. Let's rediscover WITHIN US that clear look, that adolescent smile, to find THE OTHER, to find the others, to find Europe.

While the interpellation "Hey Boy!" could reasonably be seen to address—and thus constitute—an imaginary and idealised teenage object of desire, the decision by the French Ministry of the Interior and Public Security to forbid the sale of the magazine to minors in May 1992—due to its "incitement to pedophilia"—suggests that the magazine would have been, throughout most of its existence, easily accessible to under-18s and that, therefore, some readers may have felt directly addressed by the text in a very literal manner (Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances 1992).[v] Beyond that and the portrait that accompanied the editorial, standing in for its addressee, the "purity of being" Caignet wished to be rediscovered is further clarified by his reference to the scene, in the 1972 musical film *Cabaret*, in which a teenager sings forth a future that, according to Caignet, had been shattered due to "fear of revolution." As also hinted at by the first sentence in the final paragraph—"The future belongs to us"—Caignet was referring to the moment in the film when a young blond boy, in Hitler Youth uniform, sings the song "Tomorrow Belongs to Me." Opening in a folk pastoral genre, the song quickly changes in register as more characters join in the singing, going from hopeful pastoral to militaristic march. At its apotheosis, the boy and the crowd sing "fatherland, fatherland, show us the sign / your children have waited to see / the morning will come when the world is mine / tomorrow belongs to me." The scene ends with the boy making the Roman salute.

Caignet's text and its cinematic reference illuminate the ways in which pederasty was articulated, in *GFM*'s imaginary, as a sexual means to political ends. In both, the figure of the teenager embodies both the past and the future of the adult writer. The mode of address—"your"—and the recurring rhetorical deployment of terms like "us" and "we" make the teenage

boy an unstable figure, repeatedly hovering between object and collective subject vis-à-vis Caignet, a figure deprived of meaning outside its relationship with the writer, apart from its being a stand-in for the writer's own temporality, for his being toward a masculinist future. That is precisely the kind of masculinist temporality that had already sustained Blüher's and Kühnen's pederastic political imaginary. Namely, that pederastic relationships are relationships between a teenager and his future self. That is, that they are, at their core, grounded on a young ego's recognition of—*and desire for*—itself in an adult ego ideal. It is through the pederastic relationship that the teenager becomes the man he is supposed to be, and that the pederast ensures his own future—his own masculinist lineage—in the figure of the youth who will grow up to become him, to become his "father," as it were. Just like "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" smoothly transitions from hopeful pastoral song to heroic militaristic claim to the future, *GFM* posits pederastic sexuality as masculinist pedagogy. It is through the pederastic relationship that the hopes of the teenage boy can mature into the militaristic drive of a masculinist adult hero and thus guarantee the future and the survival of "Europe," its civilisational reproduction. In a manner that is not structurally dissimilar from the temporality of "reproductive futurism" Lee Edelman famously associated with the figure of the "Child" in contemporary culture and politics, the far-right masculinist pederasts of *GFM* were also doing it for the children because to them, too, the children were the future, albeit a Neo-Nazi one.

It is no surprise, then, that the images that defined *GFM*'s pederastic erotic imaginary also hover between idyllic and heroic registers. Naked or clothed, photographed or drawn, sculpted or painted, classical or contemporary, and often appearing in "natural" settings as part of fraternal youth organisations engaged in outdoor group activities, young innocent boys—the magazine's visual editorial line seems to argue—carry within them the seeds of the heroic

manhood required in the civilisational battlefield. And it is the pedagogical task of the pederast to make sure the boy grows to become a warrior.

It is worth noting however that, while actual sex scenes only ever appear by means of reproduced images from pre-modern cultures illustrating long-form articles, *GFM* was still thoroughly populated by advertisements for media agencies from which readers could purchase a wider variety of photos and videos of boys and young men. Among those, the most prominent was J.M.V. Diffusion, owned by Jean-Manuel Vuillaume. Vuillaume would eventually be trialled and sentenced to prison in 1997 alongside Caignet himself, having both been found guilty of running an international child porn ring distributing videos not only of naked teenagers but also of sex scenes with under-age boys filmed in Colombia by Vuillaume's production company Toro Bravo. Vuillaume would also appear referenced in a later child sexual abuse scandal and court case that took Portugal by storm in the early 2000s, leading several high-profile figures—including an ex-minister, a TV presenter, a doctor, a lawyer, and an ambassador—to be charged and eventually sentenced to prison in 2010. The case concerned the decades-long sexual abuse of young boys under the care of Casa Pia de Lisboa, an old and theretofore highly-respected state orphanage. As the original investigation by journalist Felícia Cabrita and the subsequent court case both revealed, boys would have, for decades—including during Portugal's fascist dictatorship—been regularly taken from Casa Pia to the homes of high profile individuals to be sexually abused. According to Cabrita, Vuillaume himself had also had unrestricted access to Casa Pia, where he would pick boys to photograph and film (Cabrita 2012). Those included two particular teenagers—key sources in her journalistic investigation—who had been filmed by Vuillaume while under the tutelage of that Lisbon orphanage. One of those videos, "Miguel et Pedro №1" is advertised in *GFM* 38 (March 1993), with the caption

"Portuguese, aged 12 and 14, heroes of 'Paradis Naturiste nº 3' from a few years ago. They play at home. 60 mins, 700 Francs." One of those boys—the son of a sex worker killed by a heroine overdose—would not have been older than 10 the first time he was filmed by Villaume (Cabrita 2012). On this same page of *GFM 38*, surrounding that particular advertisement, other advertisements appear for other videos of boys described as "Portuguese" or identified with Portuguese names.

From Centre to Periphery

Beyond the advertisements for videos featuring young Portuguese teens, references to Portugal were rather regular throughout *GFM's* run. Indeed, that was something of an exception in the context of the wider European gay magazine culture, one that rarely directed its gaze to the small westernmost nation in the continent. By all intents and purposes, Portugal was—in the 1980s and 1990s—far removed from the European centres of both homosexual culture and homosexual activism, a country still catching up with modernity due to having lived for four decades under a dictatorship from which it had only come out in 1974. While there had been thriving public homosexual cultures among the urban bourgeois elites at the turn of the 20th century in Lisbon, for instance, and while some of those cultures had continued throughout the *Estado Novo* regime (1933–1974) albeit in more private settings, the reality was that Portugal's fascist government had managed to completely prevent any kind of public homosexual culture or activism by passing laws against the "practice of unnatural vices," and by means of a highly sophisticated and widespread state censorship apparatus that would, among other things, prevent any references to homosexuality, whether at home or abroad, to reach the population via news media, literature, or the arts. The result was that, during the 1950s and 1960s, when

the homosexual liberation movement was gaining visibility and momentum in places like the USA, France, Germany or the United Kingdom, the vast majority of homosexual acts in Portugal continued to be performed by men foreign to the notion of homosexuality itself (Almeida 2010). At the same time, however, both homosexual and heterosexual pedophilia were widespread, oftentimes sustained by networks of members of the political and economic elites, turning Portugal into a sex tourism destination for wealthy upper-class pedophiles to whom the fascist regime would turn a blind eye (Almeida 2010; Saraiva 2018).

It is in the context of that history that references to Portugal on the pages of *GFM* are often marked by romantic nostalgia for a "primitive" past structured around two defining pillars: far-right politics and pederasty. Michel Caignet's editorial for *GFM* 33 (October 1992), for instance, laments what Portugal had become:

> In terms of friendships with boys, the country is already largely contaminated by the gangrene of the humans rights movement. In Lisbon, the police are very much present, as is media hysteria, and this city, once regarded by some as a paradise, now resembles other Western capitals.

In 1993, *GFM* 6 new series published in the aftermath of the prohibition of its to minors, included a damning 3-page article titled "Big Brother: the Portugal of Today." Signed with the initials "Y. N.", the article epitomises the Northern and Central European sexual primitivist gaze often laid upon Southern Europe—a liminal space between Northern African barbarism and European civilisation—and its supposed "Mediterranean sexuality" unconstrained by both neoliberal rationality and moralism. It is that imagined kind of freer sexuality that, according to the author, had started being lost. The reason for that being—the article implies—the country's

transition from fascism to democracy and its accession, in 1986, to the then European Economic Community (EEC):

> If there is a country where appearances have become deceptive, it is Portugal. It still has a friendly face, its people are still communicative and its youths still exude a natural sensuality, but a notorious change has taken place for all who go there in search of pleasurable contacts.
>
> Long gone are the days when boys, living in very loose gangs, would escape the uncomfortable shacks that populated the neighbourhoods of Chelas or Musgueira and set off—often with a stick of glue in their mouths—in search of a hospitable roof over their heads. Long gone, too, are the days when they would land in front of the Chic-Choc, the famous drugstore on Avenida—whose slot machines provided an easy excuse for their presence—where they'd come to "sort themselves out." In other words, to find some American or Swiss who would invite them in and give them a bit of pocket money in exchange for caresses or, for the most daring, photographs. There'd be a few kids who'd be quick to pull out a knife, to blackmail or, more often, to leave the room after having discreetly carried out some kind of petty theft. Yet, generally speaking, events would unfold without much of a hitch.

The article proceeds by presenting a diagnosis of a country in a profound downward spiral "as a result of its integration in our puritanical Europe." It takes the reader through what it posits as moralistic overreactions of a nation losing itself, losing its identity and its freedom through assimilation into the common European political space. The events presented as symptoms of that very loss of self included increasing policing of areas known for under-age prostitution, the media furore about foreigners coming to Portugal to film teenagers, or the infamous scandal of a

priest who, in 1992, was charged with sexually abusing teenage boys in the island of Madeira. According to the author, the media and institutional responses to pedophilia were evidence that Portugal was unfortunately surrendering to European hegemony and becoming a country where one could no longer even "caress" teenagers. The article eventually points to the recent appearance of *GFM* in Portuguese as a welcome antidote to "counterbalance the devastating effects of Portugal's alignment with the moral stances of the EEC."

GFM had indeed started being published in Portuguese one year earlier, in 1992, and become the first homosexual magazine distributed nationally in newsstands in Portugal. With a print run of 6,500 copies, it managed to achieve what no other homosexual publication had managed to do. Between the Carnation Revolution of 1974 and the appearance of *GFM* in Portuguese, there had been various attempts to start homosexual magazines in Portugal but those only ever had print runs of a few hundred copies and had only ever been distributed by mail or in bars. *GFM* changed it all by bringing a homosexual magazine to the Portuguese public sphere, as the episodes with which we opened this article demonstrate. Despite having lasted no longer than one year, the magazine is an important source to better understand not only the particularities of Portuguese homosexual history but also the very dynamics of centre and periphery that were shaping not only Europe and its institutions but also European homosexual cultures.

When, in December 1984—ten years after the Portuguese Carnation revolution ended fascism, the Basque homosexual magazine *Gay Hotsa* published an article about Portugal, it described it as a country afflicted by an economic crisis that prevented Portuguese people from going out. Gay life was centred in Lisbon, where two gay bars are named, with a few other larger cities also having some kind of what it describes as "scene." Lisbon—it claims—was the

city in Europe with the highest number of male sex workers, and this "has its advantages for some." While some homosexual organising had happened since the 1974 revolution, the piece continues, it mostly boiled down to a small organisation in the north of the country and no public political visibility anywhere else.[vi] The gay press, still in its early years in the 1980s, was described as having "loose content and poorly curated presentation." With the theme of homosexuality being seldom discussed in its national media—and, when so, always in a negative light—Portugal was presented as a highly conservative nation with exceptions being made for a "minority of young people in Lisbon and other cities more connected with the general euro-occidental path." The article paints a picture of a nation that, like Spain, had recently come out of a long dictatorship yet one that, unlike Spain, still struggled to forge a homosexual public and political life (Cascais 2006). While Spain had started moving towards what *Gay Hotsa* called the "euro-occidental path," Portugal was seemingly lagging behind what was assumed to be a linear and universal narrative of societal progress and gay rights. The reasons for that were, still according to *Gay Hotsa*, social conservatism and the poverty that prevented the development of a homosexual counterpublic sphere.

It was to change that lack of a homosexual counterpublic that *Gaie France* appeared in Portugal and in Portuguese in 1992. According to Miguel Rodeia, who—under the pseudonym Pedro Botto—was the founding editor of its Portuguese version, the appearance of *Gaie France* in Portuguese had been the solution found to, at last, have a homosexual magazine in the country, one that would feature editorial and visual content relevant to a demographic that was still trying to come together, define itself, and forge a shared local culture and sense of belonging.[vii] Previous attempts to have a gay title on newsstands had always hit against the conservatism of the two Portuguese companies then responsible for the national distribution of

magazines and newspapers, which had historically refused to distribute homosexual titles. With Rodeia having been introduced to Michel Caignet by a mutual acquaintance during a visit to Paris, a strategy was forged to overcome that obstacle: Caignet would mail every issue of *GFM* to Rodeia in Portugal, Rodeia would translate some of the articles to Portuguese, write and commission new original content, and send everything back to Paris on a floppy disk so that the Portuguese version of the magazine could be published in France and then sent for distribution in Portugal. This way, and because the Portuguese distributor Electroliber had a distribution contract for French magazines with the NMPP (Nouvelles Messageries de la Presse Parisienne)—the French distributor of *Gaie France*—the Portuguese iteration of *GFM* could reach newsstands nationwide.

The first issue of *GFM* in Portuguese (June-July 1992), opened with a "Letter from the Director," penned by Michel Caignet himself. The letter, printed in French, introduced the magazine's mission, as well as its director's hope for its expansion to the lusophone world:

> Of all the slogans, all too restrictive, that could serve as an epigraph to Gaie France Magazine, "an aesthetic of youth" would perhaps be the most appropriate subtitle for an editorial project which, accompanying the ephemeral and sacred moments of youth when everything is formed, privileges as formative the youthful friendships and romances.

These formative youthful friendships and romances—the letter continues—don't just belong to the domain of the "aesthetic" but they are also guided by a particular moral path, one that renounces the principles of Abrahamic religions in a war against civilisational subjugation.

Yet, despite the clarity with which Caignet articulates *GFM*'s political and sexual project, Miguel Rodeia, its Portuguese editor, responded with a certain unease when I asked

him about the far-right and pederastic ideology advanced by the magazine and its French director. Vehemently distancing himself fqrom that ideology—not least due to the French magazine's connections with the aforementioned pedophilia scandals in both France and Portugal—Rodeia noted the *quid pro quo* that resulted in the publication of a Portuguese version of *Gaie France*: in his words, he "used" Caignet to achieve his goal of having, for the first time, a Portuguese homosexual magazine distributed nationally; Caignet, on the other hand, "used" Rodeia to disseminate his ideology among Portuguese homosexuals. All this would have been facilitated by José Manuel Ferreira, a Portuguese businessman who shared with Caignet not only his far-right politics but also his paganism. According to Rodeia, Ferreira had connections with the French far-right, having even "promoted" the visit of Jean Marie Le Pen to Portugal in 1990, having also been the common acquaintance who had introduced Rodeia to Caignet in Paris. It was Ferreira who, Rodeia claims, had financed the Portuguese edition of *GFM* and who was Caignet's *de facto* proxy in Lisbon.

After having allegedly been the real person behind *GFM* in Portugal, José Manuel Ferreira went on to become one of the people behind Hugin, a Lisbon publishing house created in the 1990s with a portfolio that included, among others, books on paganism and esotericism, the freemasonry, and translations of Adolf Hitler and Julius Evola. Besides Ferreira, Hugin also counted Júlio Prata Sequeira and Maria de Fátima Bernardo as directors. Hugin was not, however, the only time Ferreira and Prata had collaborated. In the 1980s, Ferreira was named as a contributor to *Jovem Revolução*, a far-right Portuguese periodical edited by Prata which advocated a pan-European "Third Position" revolution.[viii] Then, from 1994, the two were behind another short lived far-right magazine titled *Sinergias Europeias*.[ix] The last of the three directors of Hugin, Maria de Fátima Bernardo, a homosexual woman, also had another

connection with José Manuel Ferreira. According to Rodeia, she had been the person chosen by Ferreira to take over the Portuguese editorship of *GFM* after Rodeia and Caignet had what Rodeia described as a heated argument over the age of the teenagers whose photographs appeared on the pages of the magazine. Caignet's insistence on the publication of photographs of increasingly younger youths had triggered Rodeia's fallout with Caignet, leading to the former's removal from his role as the Portuguese editor of *GFM* in 1993, only one year after he had edited its first issue. Maria de Fátima Bernardo would have then briefly taken over as editor, managing to edit a further couple of issues before *GFM* finally ceased to publish in Portuguese.

In terms of content, each Portuguese *GFM* included translations of some of the articles published in different French issues alongside articles and news about Portugal, relevant to its Portuguese readership, who would also send in personal advertisements for sexual and romantic encounters. Worthy of note when it comes to its local content—and apart from important regular updates on the AIDS crisis in Portugal—is a piece that appeared in *GFM* 4 (December 1992–January 1993) about Parque Eduardo VII, a historical Lisbon hotspot of gay cruising and male sex work. This article was one of Rodeia's proudest moments as the Portuguese editor of *GFM*, and it resulted from a collaboration with Portuguese tabloid newspaper *Tal & Qual*, which also published a summary of the story in October 1992—the first time a national Portuguese newspaper had collaborated with a gay magazine. The article paints a picture of suffering and loneliness found among both sex workers—described as young men with addiction problems—and cruisers. Ethical issues aside—the *Tal & Qual* journalist had pretended to be a homosexual man in order to carry out his investigation—the article adopted the sensationalist style for which the Portuguese tabloid remains known. Interviewed by Rodeia at

the end of the interview, Paulo Madeira, the *Tal & Qual* journalist, was asked "Did your views on the gay scene change as a result of this piece of work?", to which Madeira replied: "Absolutely not. It has only further convinced me that we have not yet turned a page on AIDS. There's people wiling to do anything, even dying, for half a dozen hookups." At a time when AIDS activist discourse across Europe and the USA had already been stressing the importance of separating HIV infection from homosexuality and promiscuity, and when options existed for safer sex, having these words uttered by a heterosexual journalist on the pages of a Portuguese gay magazine is symptomatic of the idiosyncrasies of Portugal in the early 1990s, a country still struggling to forge a significant national homosexual movement and political constituency.[x]

The appearance of *Gaie France* in Portugal further highlights the dynamics of centre and periphery that marked postwar Europe and the project of European unification. With homosexuality had only been fully decriminalised in 1982, having acceded to the EEC in in 1986, and having had its first significant homosexual organisation—the Homosexual Working Group of the Revolutionary Socialist Party—founded only in 1991, in the early 1990s the country was a liminal space, both Europe and not yet "Europe." At the level of its institutions and economy, as well as of its homosexual scene, Portugal was to undergo fast transformations driven by both internal and external forces.

GFM's Portuguese edition, with its aim of becoming a reference for news and knowledge about or relevant to the homosexual population, is evidence of the forces attempting to establish and develop a homosexual public sphere in Portugal. In the context of the AIDS crisis—with its first case diagnosed in Portugal in 1985—the need for such platform had become all the more urgent (Matias 2023).

Yet, while Rodeia, its Portuguese editor, used the opportunity to finally realise his dream of having a nationally distributed homosexual magazine, Caignet, its French director, and José Manuel Ferreira, his Portuguese right hand, saw in *GFM* a tool to disseminate their revolutionary far-right political ideology. With long-standing and well-established connections between the Portuguese and French cultural and political elites, and with France being one of the main destinations for Portuguese economic migrants, the magazine could bridge homosexuals in the two nations and hopefully disseminate among them a far-right European project grounded on cultural purity, anti-migration, pederasty and paganism, an ideology that *GFM* presented as the only one capable of saving "Europe" from its seemingly imminent undoing at the hands of both European political institutions, and US capitalism and consumer culture. In so doing, *GFM* would continue to project onto Portugal what it imagined as an ancient form of "Mediterranean sexuality" in dire need of being recovered, one that could be traced to Antiquity and thus to the core of European civilisation, the very same myth that had more or less continuously fuelled the homoerotic imaginaries of Central and Northern Europe since the Grand Tours of the 1800s (Aldrich 1993). In exchange, Portuguese homosexuals would finally be able to access a magazine that addressed them and that, all things notwithstanding, was able—thanks to Rodeia—to bring them important news, from developments in HIV research to reports about the state of homosexual politics and activism in Europe.

Conclusion

In *Disturbing Attachments,* Kadji Amin (2017) argues that both homosexual activism and the field of queer studies have consigned pederasty to the past. Driven away from a politics of liberation towards a claim for identity-based rights oriented towards futurity, queer thinking

and political action have carried out, according to Amin, a "hygienic dislinkage" of pederasty from homosexuality. "Pederasty," he argues, "cannot be absorbed into such a liberal and egalitarian framework given its long-standing association with illiberal relations of dependency, its lack of remove from the scene of social power, and its involvement of minors juridically incapable of either autonomy or consent" (35). Yet, attending to a source like *GFM* helps us illuminate the ways in which pederasty played a central role in shaping particular kinds of homosexual political constituencies in the aftermath of World War II. Difficult as those stories may be—unethical and criminal as their actors may have been and continue to be—they can help us develop a better understanding of the historical nuances and conflicts at the core of a "movement" united in its view of homosexuality as inherently political but fractured with regards to the kind of politics homosexual politics ought to be.

GFM first emerged in France at a time when the homosexual movement, in both its radical left and liberal forms, had for the most part severed its ties with those who had claimed pedophilia as a "liberator and egalitarian cause during the 1970s" (Amin 2017, 118). It also first emerged in the context of a reimagining of far-right politics intended on ensuring its ideological survival after the defeat of the Third Reich. It was in that context that the magazine was able to position itself as the heir to a mythical long history of European pederasty, and an advocate for the return of a social and political order sustained by masculinist fraternal relations. Its project harnessed the taken-for-granted political force of homosexuality and of its pederastic mythology, cathecting it toward a far-right European political imaginary. If, as Phillip Ayoub and David Paternotte (2014) note, liberal homosexual politics have shaped and been shaped by the postwar project of European integration that gave rise to the European Union, *GFM* shows homosexuality being deployed not for the advancement of liberal or social democratic European

politics but, instead, on behalf of a late 20th-century revitalisation of far-right ideology. Either way, both the mainstream liberal homosexual organisations and the more underground actors of far-right homosexual advocacy represented by *GFM* appeared to agree on one thing: homosexuality was a core pillar of European identity and exceptionalism. Yet, what *GFM* also shows are the fractures at the very heart of the postwar European far-right movement, whose main proponents continued to equate homosexuality with degeneracy, a position that would only be further strengthened once the AIDS crisis hit the continent.

However, it was also as an attempt to protect "Europe" from degeneracy that the ideologues of *GFM* advocated for pederasty and tried to disseminate their ideas to the periphery of Europe, to its very borders. Benefiting from connections with likeminded individuals in a peripheral country like Portugal, Michel Caignet's decision to publish a Portuguese version of *GFM* was a project of ideological expansion that found in Portugal the last battleground where a "true" European sexuality could still be rescued from degenerate European liberal and left politics. His project, however short-lived, was only possible due to the material, social and political constraints of a country that had only recently gotten out of a four decade-long far-right dictatorship, a country that was now the target of all kinds of political forces trying to shape its future, a country where the vast majority of its homosexual population had no shared subcultural reference points, let alone a sense of collective political agency. In that way, both *GFM* and the liberal transnational European political institutions did engage in a similar enterprise: namely, to intervene in the periphery in order to shape it in the image of their own European fantasies.

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Ethics statement

The interview data included in this article has been collected in accordance with ethics review and approval by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (2023-07962-01).

Disclosure statement

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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[i] All translations from French, Portuguese, and German sources that appear throughtout this article are the authors' own.

[ii] Blüher's writings would appear translated in 1994 as a supplement to the first issue of *Palæstre*, a French pederastic journal also edited by Michel Caignet, with a foreword by Michel Meigniez de Cacqueray. Cacqueray would—alongside Caignet, the photographer Jean-Manuel Wuillaume and around 60 other people—be charged with involvement in the "Toro Bravo" network of production and distribution of child pornography in 1997. Unlike Caignet and Wuillaume, however, Caqueray would eventually be acquitted on grounds of reasonable doubt (Dumay 1997).

[iii] See "Homosexualité: Catamorphose de la Sexualité ou Renaissance des Dieux?—Entretien avec Guillaume Faye," *Gaie France* 4 (October-November 1986); and "Alain de Benoist et la Question Homosexuelle," *Gaie France* 4 (October-November 1986).

[iv] On the complicated history of homosexual masculinists and their unorthodox politics, see the case of Karl-Günther Heimsoth, a medical doctor who, beyond having produced some of the earlier sexological works on homosexuality and having used the term "homophily" for the first time, had a keen interest in astrology, was—like Blüher—an antisemite critic of Magnus Hirscheld and of his "third sex" thesis, an intimate friend of SA commander Ernst Röhm, and someone who held, at different times, membership of both the Combat League of Revolutionary National Socialists (*Kampfgemeinschaft Revolutioniser Nationalsozialisten*) and of the Communist

Party of Germany during the last years of the Weimar Republic (Hergemöller 2009, 271–273; Dose 2014, 35–36; Tamagne 2006, 288–299).

[v] Caignet, however, did not take the State's intervention either lightly or as a defeat. As his editorial of July that year noted, "sexual relations between adults and minors older than 15 have been legal since 1982 [when they were equalised for homosexual and heterosexual relations by François Mitterrand's government], and I'm not aware that your favourite magazine has expressly encouraged sexual relations with minors under the age of 15!" Addressing the magazine's teenage readership (real or imagined), the title of the editorial, as it appears in that issue's contents page, reassured them: "your parents can still buy Gaie France Magazine."

[vi] This small association would have been Gay International Rights (GIR), active in Braga, in the north of Portugal, between 1974 and the mid-1990s (Matias 2024, 39).

[vii] The views of Miguel Rodeia that are stated this article were—unless noted otherwise—collected during interviews and email exchanges with the first author, carried out in January and August 2024.

[viii] *Jovem Revolução* was edited by Júlio Prata and the name José Ferreira appears at least once as one of the contributors to the far-right magazine. According to Miguel Rodeia, they were the same people behind Hugin, with José Ferreira being also behind *GFM* in Portugal. Digital versions of some issue of *Jovem Revolução are* available online via Ephemera, the library and archive of Portuguese politician José Pacheco Pereira at https://ephemerajpp.com/2016/06/13/jovem-revolucao-2/.

[ix] The mission of *Sinergias Europeias* was to disseminate, in Portugal, the ideology of European anticapitalist nationalism espoused by the French organisation Synergies Européennes, also founded in 1994 by Robert Steuckers as a breakout group of GRECE, after Steuckers fell out with Alain de Benoist over GRECE's political strategy. See Camus and Lebourg, *Far-Right Politics in Europe*, 138–141.

[x] The fist Portuguese homosexual organisation, the Homosexual Working Group of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (GTH-PSR) had just been founded that same year in Portugal, and the country's first LGBT Pride parade would not take place until the year 2000.

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