

Personals Ad from Gay Magazine *Der Eigene* (1929)

Abstract

This personals ad appeared in the magazine *Der Eigene*, which targeted a nationwide readership of educated, middle-class gay men. For those who did not live close to a gay bar or organization, or who did not feel comfortable entering one, such ads offered them a way to meet other men. By placing his ad in one of the most political and literary gay magazines of the period, the man likely also hoped to increase the chances that respondents would share a similar social and cultural background, something that the ad itself reinforced by specifying the man's cultural interests and class background.

Der Eigene was just one of nearly two dozen publications during the Weimar Republic that addressed what we would today call the LGBTQ+ community. In fact, *Der Eigene* was the first such publication in the world. The outspoken gay-rights activist Adolf Brand printed the inaugural issue in 1896, focusing on a readership of educated, middle-class gay men. After ceasing publication during the First World War, *Der Eigene* reappeared again in November 1919 and reached a circulation of between 2,000 and 3,000 per issue for the duration of the Weimar Republic.

Despite Germany's comparatively permissive publishing environment, the magazine frequently ran afoul of government censors, such as in January 1922, when a Berlin court convicted Brand of distributing "obscenity." Prosecutors particularly targeted gay magazines such as *Der Eigene* for their publication of "indecent adverts" [*unzüchtige Anzeigen*], which contributed to the chaste and rather circumspect wording of this and almost all other personals ads that appeared throughout the period.

Brand's polemical broadsides against organized religion for its conservative views on sexuality, meanwhile, earned him a number of powerful enemies in the German establishment, especially within the Catholic Center party. Indeed, Brand's highly polarizing and chauvinist approach to pursuing the rights of gay men alienated many people in the Weimar Republic. When officials briefly shut down *Der Eigene* at the end of 1920, Brand introduced an even more in-your-face magazine, *Freundschaft u. Freiheit*, which bore the provocative subtitle *Ein Blatt für Männerrechte, gegen Spießbürgermoral, Pfaffenherrschaft und Weiberwirtschaft*. Perhaps not surprisingly, given Brand's history, that journal lasted only eleven issues. Brand then relaunched *Der Eigene*, although both economic turbulence and government censors continued to bedevil it.

Source

243 / Freiburg im Breisgau

Looking for an exchange of ideas with a faithful, sincere man of 20-30 years in Freiburg or the surrounding area. I am from a good family and 26 years old. Please respond to the above box number.

Source of original German text: *Der Eigene*, ca. 1929; in Rainer Hoffschmidt, *Kurze Chronik der Schwulen in Baden-Württemberg mit dem Schwerpunkt Nordbaden – Zusammenstellung aufgrund von Hinweisen aus dem Schwullesbischen Archiv Hannover*. Hannover, 2015. Available online: https://www.der-liebe-wegen.org/die_20er_aufbruch/

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