

Abstract

This thesis deals with changes in conceptions of homosexuality and homosexual subculture as of something basically different, as they developed from the second third of the 19th century to the second half of the 20th century among Czech lawyers and physicians, as well as with changes of self-conceptualization of the Czech homosexual subculture itself, having occurred in the same time interval. It focuses mainly on attitudes and efforts of those who aimed at contributing to social emancipation of this subculture or – in times of increased persecution of homosexuality during the Nazi occupation – on the impossibility to carry on such efforts. The thesis is divided in five parts – in the first one, the legal context which provoked the emancipation efforts in times of the 1852 Penal Code being in force (i.e. until 1950) is explained; the next four parts focus on these efforts separately in four distinct periods. Thus, the second part deals with the expansion of the modern concept of homosexual identity in the Czech lands before WWI, the third part deals with sexual reform efforts by liberal lawyers and physicians as well as on emancipatory and political efforts by the homosexual community itself in the democratic First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938), aiming at decriminalization of homosexual acts, the fourth part deals with the new legal context and an increased level of persecution of homosexual acts under the Nazi occupation of the Czech lands, and the fifth part deals with the decriminalization of homosexual acts among consenting adults under the Communist regime, which occurred without any contribution of the homosexual community itself. As a secondary goal, the thesis observes the development of homosexual sociability over this lengthy time period.