



## Paragraph 175 2000/Uncertified

### Synopsis of the film

*Paragraph 175* is a documentary about the persecution of Gay men and Lesbians under the Nazi regime. Featuring the testimony of seven of those who experienced this persecution firsthand, the film will give audiences an opportunity to consider the scope of Nazi hatred and reflect on the society which was destroyed between 1933 and 1945. The film's title *Paragraph 175* refers to the penal code which made homosexuality for men illegal in Germany in 1871. It was not repealed until the 1960s and 1970s. Lesbians were not included in the code as the authorities believed that lesbianism was a temporary condition that could be cured. Today, 75 countries still penalise men and women for being gay.

### When it was made and where

Narrated by actor Rupert Everett and using archive footage and the personal artefacts of those interviewed, this documentary was filmed in the late 1990s in the homes and neighbourhoods of the survivors who shared their stories in Germany, France and England.

### HMDT Review

We're recommending this film because it provides an authoritative and meaningful overview of the experience of Gay men and Lesbians under the Nazi regime. Using the firsthand accounts of survivors this documentary can be used in its entirety or in sections at HMD activities.

The film centres around the stories of Gad Beck, Pierre Seel, [Albrecht Becker](#), Heinz F, Heinz Dormer, Karl Gorath and Annette Eick who all experienced different types of persecution. Pierre Seel and Gad Beck are perhaps the most well-known of those who are featured. Annette's story may be of particular interest to UK based viewers as she escaped from Berlin to England and made her home here. Within all of these stories there are themes of the celebration of the vibrant gay community that flourished in Berlin following the First World War, the persecution which the reintroduction of the Paragraph 175 legislation led to and the impact of the looting of the Institute of Sexual Sciences in 1933. All of those interviewed speak of what happened to them after

liberation and their decision to speak out about their experiences and the shame which was attached in doing so.

As with all survivor testimony, there are recollections of violence, murder and extreme persecution although there are no images which will cause offence featured in the film. As a documentary, there is no age classification for *Paragraph 175* and we urge you to consider your audience when you watch this film in its entirety before deciding whether it is suitable for your HMD activity.

You can use HMD resources to find out more about: Victims of Nazi Hatred (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/victims-of-nazi-persecution>)

Read the case study of Albrecht Becker, who is featured in *Paragraph 175* (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/education/case-study-albrecht-becker>)

Watch Ali talk about his experience of LGBT persecution in the present day (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/films/untold-stories-ali>)

Find out more about the looting of the Institute of Sexual Sciences in May 1933 (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/dates-to-remember/looting-of-the-institute-of-sexology>)