



Discussion Bulletin

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AN OPEN LETTER OF PROTEST

by Bill Massey (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Branch

Chicago, Ill.
May 20, 1973

The Political Committee
The Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014

Dear Comrades,

This letter and one appendix, Comrade Barry Shepard's letter to Comrade Tom Kissner dated April 21, 1973, are presented for publication in both the SWP Discussion Bulletin and the International Discussion Bulletin.

The purpose of this letter is to raise a protest concerning (1) the failure of the Socialist Workers Party to schedule a special convention dedicated to the International Questions (see Appendix) and (2) the all-time high apportionment for delegates to the SWP convention.

1) Upon the request of the International Minority Tendency the United Secretariat voted to postpone the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International for the third time, until December 1973. This was done in order to allow for the broadest, most democratic discussion of the issues currently in dispute in the world movement. This would also ensure that the world congress and the International leadership it elects have the utmost confidence from the ranks of the movement as a whole. It is only within this framework of a fully democratic and fraternal discussion, traditional to the world movement, that the Fourth International can benefit from the current tendency struggle and go forward with the utmost unity in action to build our movement in the coming period. In this regard the United Secretariat as a whole is to be commended in reaching this decision.

With the above in mind, it is with the gravest concern and disappointment that we view the failure of the Socialist Workers Party leadership in not scheduling a separate convention late this year to take up the International discussion and decisions and elect the fraternal observers who will attend the world congress. First of all, the regularly scheduled convention of the Socialist Workers Party is to be held in the earliest part of August, four months prior to the world congress. That is four months prior to the close of the International discussion period. We have already pointed out elsewhere, that the SWP leadership delayed the opening of the International discussion in this Party until well after it was opened up in the sections of the Fourth International. It is also a fact that the leadership of the SWP and the International Minority were able to fraternally participate in the discussions in other sections and sympathizing groups prior to opening up the discussions in the SWP. It is also true that the leadership of the SWP has been conducting a systematic and concerted one-sided polemic against the positions of the Majority of the Fourth International for well over a year. This has taken place thru the vehicles of "plenum reports," "educational on the history of the Fourth International"

and "educational on the differences in the IMG" and other assorted topics. The 1972 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference was a convention-type gathering, without the benefit of delegates or majority/minority points of view, just the view of the SWP leadership which conducted a series of prepared "educational" attacking every position of the leadership of the International. Those comrades who disagreed had no way of intervening or getting time to refute the positions of what now constitutes the views of the International Minority Tendency. The participation of Comrades Barnes and Camejo in this procedure confirms the fact that this whole series of planned one-sided discussions were the worked out policy of the SWP leadership in lining up this party before the discussions were even opened to the ranks to participate. Finally, our convention discussion period was scheduled to open on May 7, yet in most of the branches of the party it was not opened until 10 days, or more, late. For instance in Chicago it opened on May 20. In Houston it has been delayed to allow for a routine task and perspectives report; these examples are typical. Thereby the amount of discussion open to the ranks is even further limited. (Requests to the national leadership, to ask their help in having the branches comply with the convention call opening discussion on May 7 and not May 20, are fruitless as I found out from calling Comrade Barnes. We are told that the branches may decide themselves when to open discussion. Perhaps we should be grateful that discussions are opened at all, but even a charade must have a certain cover to be a success.) The rationale for delaying the opening of discussion in most areas is to allow for the giving of plenum reports. However, when you understand that these "Plenum Reports" are for the most part totally politically indistinguishable from the Political Reports of the International Minority you realize that this viewpoint is being given time to make two reports on its positions in every branch in the party. (The fact that the plenum received unanimous support from the National Committee is not surprising since for the past ten years [10 years] our National Committee has been unanimous on every report, that is major political report, and secondly since the Proletarian Orientation Minority which constituted over 10 percent of the party at the last convention was denied any place on the National Committee, because the Majority of the SWP did not consider it a "serious" minority. Left to the considerations of what the SWP leadership considers serious minorities I could safely predict 50 more years of unanimity on the National Committee.)

With this information in mind the decision not to call a special convention late in the year to take up the International Questions is a travesty. It is totally undemocratic and a breach of not only the rights of the Minority within the SWP but a breach of a correct fraternal attitude toward the Majority of the International as well as Trotskyists throughout the entire world. It does not take much insight to observe that fraternal observers elected to attend

the world congress, midway in the International discussion period, at the beginning of August, will not necessarily reflect the thinking of the ranks or the relationship of forces within the party at the time of the world congress. Further to halt the discussion in this party while it goes on in the International is a violation of democratic norms and the norms of a "Leninist-Trotskyist movement.

2) The Convention Call of the Socialist Workers Party states:

"1. Representation from the branches shall be as follows: One delegate for the first fifteen members or less, and one additional delegate for each 15 additional members or major fraction thereof (8 or more constituting a major fraction)."

Further the Call states:

"In case of political differences defined by conflicting resolutions, the election of delegates in the branches is to be on the basis of the vote on resolution or resolutions voted on at the meeting at which the delegates are elected.

"Members voting for a given resolution are entitled to designate the delegate or delegates to which they are entitled on the basis of proportional representation laid down in this call, the designations to be ratified by the branch. Abstentions in no case count as votes.

"1. If a branch is entitled to one delegate, the delegate goes to the majority of those present and voting at the time of the election.

"2. If two delegates, a minority with 40 percent gets one.

"3. If three delegates a minority with 33-1/3 percent gets one.

"4. If four delegates, a minority with 25 percent gets one delegate, but a minority with 40 percent is entitled to two delegates.

"5. If five delegates, a minority with 20 percent gets one.

"6. If six delegates, a minority with 16-2/3 percent gets one delegate, a minority with 33-1/3 percent two delegates but a minority with 40 percent gets one-half the delegates.

"In general, if a branch is entitled to n delegates then a minority is entitled to x delegates if it receives at least x/n of the votes, with the one exception that if n is even, a minority receiving at least 40 percent of the vote is entitled to half of the delegates."

The ratio of 15 votes per 1 delegate is more than double the ratio used at the 1971 convention, that is seven votes per delegate. The growth of the party in that same period of time is in no way comparable. The actual size of the party at that time was (and we use the various figures that we are given at different times) probably 900- (in 1971 the figure of 1000 was the more common one used to point out the smallness of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency, now we are told that it was 800 in order to emphasize the growth of the party since 1971). Whatever the case, the size of the party today is given as 1,200 (perhaps the demand to open the books would not be out of place in this regard). The growth reflected in these figures in no way justifies the jump from 7 to 1 up to 15 to 1 unless it is understood as a means of keeping a Minority within the SWP from being able to put forth its proposals in a meaningful manner.

This figure is the highest apportionment per delegate in the history of the party and that includes periods of

the party history when the numerical strength was greater than at the present time.

It also must be pointed out that this is the highest delegate ratio of any Trotskyist group in the world *including the Ligue Communiste* which is more than twice the size of the SWP.

The ratio per delegate in 1969 was five per delegate, the ratio in 1971 was seven per delegate, the ratio in 1973 is fifteen per delegate. To justify this on the basis that it will allow for a more democratic discussion can only be understood as an example of Orwellian logic. This ratio cannot be justified on the basis of administrative expediency particularly when it's main accomplishment will be to reduce the participation in the convention of minorities (including a minority which politically supports the positions of the International Majority). The leadership is aware that our particular Minority is spread throughout the party and that this ratio of 15 per 1 is tantamount to gerrymandering us out of participation in what is the highest body of the party. The use of a mechanical majority to infringe on the political participation and clash of ideas in this body is a disgraceful action and an extremely dangerous precedent that should send alarms throughout the ranks. If this is not changed it will in effect invalidate the decisions of the convention and make it just another Socialist Activists and Educational Conference week with only one side being presented.

To avert this dangerous situation which is already having its effects in taking away from the leadership of the party the respect that it is necessary that it command, and in order to eliminate the cynicism that these decisions cause among all the ranks of the party we concretely propose:

1. That an additional convention to deal strictly with the International Questions and decisions be held in November of this year. (The Thanksgiving weekend would prove feasible even for worker comrades as well as students and party functionaries.)

2. That written and oral discussion remain open until the time of this convention.

3. Reduce the ratio per delegate from the provocative fifteen to one to a more reasonable ratio of 5 to 1 and/or allow Minorities to elect their delegates on a basis of national strength of the Tendency thereby eliminating a certain gerrymandering of a Minority. (This would allow a Minority whose actual strength is 10 percent of the party to have 10 percent of the delegates at the convention.)

In regard to the world congress the International Minority Tendency made the following point:

"A preferable course would be to postpone the congress until the nature of the crisis we face has been more clearly defined, the issues at the bottom of the dispute have been fully clarified, the documents have been published, translated and disseminated, and the ranks have had full opportunity to discuss them and make their own contributions." (IIDB Vol X No. 3, p. 4.)

Comrade Juan speaking for the International Minority Tendency at the December IEC meeting had this to say after making the point that administrative and technical considerations must take second place to the political priority of a fully democratic world congress:

"The decision, of course is up to the comrades of the majority. I hope they will watch the matter carefully and decide that it is worth providing more time to help coun-

ter the possibilities of a split and to help ensure that the coming congress will be a democratic one and thus one with authority in the eyes of the world movement." (IIDB Vol. X No. 6, p. 25.)

A democratic world congress cannot take place if the discussions in the sections of cothinkers are abruptly cut short. A representative world congress cannot take place if minorities within the sections of cothinkers are gerrymandered out of adequate and fair representation. An authoritative world congress cannot take place if the congresses or conventions of the leading sections of cothinkers lack authority. "Splits" cannot be prevented by words alone or advice given for export or factional gain, while the opposite method is practiced within the section of cothinkers where one is the majority rather than the minority.

For our part there will be no split—however the actions of the leadership of the party, unless reversed, warn us that they are on a split course—and that these latest acts

plus a whole series of others are meant to provoke the minority in this party to split or be driven out of the party under the weight of these administrative type methods, which were not learned in the school of Leninism or Trotskyism.

On the nature of the allegations that we have made here, I would be quite willing, if the party thinks it necessary to give evidence to their factuality before a Control Commission made up of International cothinkers—if the SWP leadership feels this is necessary.

Comradely,
Bill Massey
National Co-Ordinator
Internationalist Tendency

copy to: International Majority Tendency.
United Secretariat

APPENDIX

LETTER FROM BARRY SHEPPARD TO TOM KISSNER

14 Charles Lane
New York, N. Y. 10014
April 21, 1973

PORTLAND
Tom Kissner

Dear Comrade Kissner,

This is in reply to the questions you raised concerning party procedure regarding discussion of matters before the world movement.

Concerning the discussion on the international plane, that is, the discussion in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin, this is controlled by the United Secretariat. The majority of the United Secretariat has decided that contributions on international questions from tendencies formed around support to documents before the movement as a whole, within sections or sympathizing groups have to be approved for printing by the Political Committee of the section or sympathizing group, with the right of appeal to the United Secretariat.

Each section or sympathizing group, in addition to the discussion in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin, has its own discussions on the international questions, which are regulated by each section or sympathizing group. Many sections (most of the European sections), hold a special convention devoted to the international questions, and may restrict their discussion on these questions to the pre-convention discussion period for that special convention. Our procedure is different. The SWP almost always includes discussion of international questions as part of its regular pre-convention discussion, and usually the first points on the convention agenda are devoted to these questions. This has been the case for the past

two conventions, for example, where reports were made on the issues in dispute in the International, and votes taken that set the line which the leadership of the SWP has followed in the course of the international discussion.

This summer the SWP will hold a convention. As usual, all points before the International are up for discussion and vote at our convention. Every member of the SWP has the right to participate in this discussion, to form tendencies or factions based on support to the line of specific documents, and to vote for the line of whatever documents they support. Delegates are elected on a proportional basis where divisions exist, and the convention delegates make the final decision at the convention. (You refer to a "tendency formed for the purpose of contributing to the international discussion." I would like to point out that tendencies are only recognized if they are formed around support to the general line of written documents placed before the membership as a whole.)

Because of the importance of the international questions facing the SWP and the International, the National Committee decided to open the literary discussion on these questions prior to the opening of the regular pre-convention discussion. This has already opened, and a number of contributions to it have already been printed. Included in these is a declaration of tendency by Comrades Massey, Smith and Shaffer. The oral discussion in the branches on these and all other questions before the party will open early in May, and each branch will be responsible for organizing the oral discussion on the various points before the party.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard

PROPAGANDA FOR THE UNINITIATED

by Steve Beck, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

The prospects for our party are bright. We have already begun the job of shifting from a circle of activists constrained to propagandizing mainly among other revolutionaries to the nucleus of a mass party which strives to educate the entire working class. The present and future reaction to the attacks by the ruling class will present all tendencies claiming to be socialist with the opportunity for mass appeals and recruitment. Our party is the one best prepared for this upsurge.

Activists turning toward socialism, even those without a theoretical background, will seek an effective, well organized group with strong ties among revolutionaries from around the world, a tradition of militancy, and a record of opposition to the bureaucratic betrayals of the Meany's, Maos and Brezhnev's. We alone fit the bill.

To attract these new people, we have created viable organs of mass education—a weekly, a popular monthly, an international press service, a speakers bureau, a network of movement forums and a publishing house. The challenge facing the party is to use these institutions to their best potential. It is all too easy to follow the old pattern of preparing forums, conferences or articles aimed at the present cadre and the revolutionary activists close to us. For us to give the impression of being insular, "just for the initiated," through a routinist attitude would be criminal.

Two basic elements of this new stage in our propaganda should be *political clarity* and *popular appeal*. Radicalizing workers and students are always confused at first by the jumble of similar sounding revolutionary groups, many with five syllables (Socialist Workers, Progressive Labor, Socialist Labor). It even takes time to figure out that *The Militant*, the Socialist Forums, the *ISR* and Pathfinder Press are arms of the same movement. Bringing clarity out of this jumble is an important political job.

Broader appeal involves both style and content. Our detailed polemics against Healy and Mao aimed at the theoretically advanced workers should continue—but side-by-side with explanations of simple concepts like what socialism is, how monopoly works, and anecdotes about everyday life.

This implies an uncompromising war on that foot-in-mouth disease known as "trot talk." No more "recent periods," "key tasks," "perspectives," or "broadest and deepest" anything, when another phrase will do! Correct terminology is one thing, but stilted language which creeps into our every conversation is inexcusable.

Finally, an unhealthy prejudice has developed in the party against forms of communication other than print or formal speechmaking. Historically, this is probably due to the way in which our ultraleft opponents in the anti-war movement were fascinated with guerrilla theater, rock music and art to the point of indifference to their political content or quality. Likewise, the Stalinists have a periphery of artists and folksingers whose skills far surpass their class consciousness. An overreaction of ours has often been to equate "seriousness" with leaflets, newspapers and

standard demonstrations only.

This is itself not a serious, Trotskyist attitude. For one thing, a poster, song, or well done satirical play can economically communicate a complex idea. Secondly, a demonstration or rally is a piece of "theater" whether we like it or not, and part of its political purpose is to boost the morale of the participants. A clever chant or good marching song can do this even when the turnout is small or the weather bad, but they take forethought just like the sound system and training of marshals.

Those who doubt this view should examine Cannon's *Letters from Prison*. Despite the internment of its top leaders, the party then, as now, was reaching out to new forces. Comrade Cannon expressed a keen interest in all aspects of revolutionary education, writing avidly about Laura Gray's cartoons, a plan for a songbook, even the inclusion of poetry in *The Militant*. All that in order "to talk to the workers without 'writing down'; to have elementary propaganda for the new workers without eliminating the more serious political material for the more advanced workers," and to fight "the fifteen-year habit of writing for the politically initiated" (pages 99 and 114).

Specifically I would like to see the following proposals considered by the convention:

1) *The adoption of a party emblem*. Most comrades do not discover until they enter a voting booth that the party is symbolized for the voting public by a stroke of lightning smashing a chain which is wound around a globe. This emblem is never used in our regular work.

Yet an emblem could be quite useful in our propaganda. It would instantly set us apart from all the other similarly named sects and the alphabet-soup confusion of initials. As bourgeois hucksters have long been aware, a "trade-mark" soon becomes a sort of shorthand for an organization and all it stands for. We all remember how "Out Now!" became the indispensable abbreviation for "Immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal from all of S. E. Asia," and how the forces behind this idea were symbolized by that stylized dove with an uplifted wing. An even more powerful example is the hammer and sickle.

This question is sometimes set aside by saying that it is a minor one, or that symbols must "arise out of struggle." Did the globe, chain and lightning bolt arise that way? Is it immaterial that we let pass the opportunity to communicate with millions each election day, even if only with a pictograph?

When the largest student strike in history broke out in 1970, a stylized red fist, simple to stencil and silk-screen, was spontaneously adopted by millions of activists and was plastered on walls, T-shirts, patches, banners and posters. More recently, the leaflet sent out by Bay Area unionists for their anti-wage control action used a chain to symbolize unemployment, high taxes, low wages, etc. The broken chain is also a symbol of the prison revolt.

We can: (a) design a new emblem using a fist, chain, globe or other design in common use; or (b) we can adopt a standardized SWP monograph; or (c) we can

modernize the old emblem; or (d) we can adopt an emblem in use by one of the sections of the Fourth International. If possible, such an action should be taken immediately by the Political Committee for use by local campaigns in the coming elections, and reviewed by the convention. But it should be done!

2) We have taken a strong stand in favor of the movements fighting racist immigration laws and for bilingual education and ballots. These are vital issues in the Chicano community and among the growing group of Chinese immigrants. Our newspaper should immediately include *a back page or insert in Spanish*, and as soon as possible, *a section in Cantonese* as well. Our foreign comrades will be certain to support this effort with contributions of material.

3) *The weekly forums should be standardized*, with a common name, common sponsorship and promotional material. The Militant Forums are the closest thing we have to a sympathizers' organization, and should be built with that in mind.

4) *Our weekly newspaper should appear openly as a platform of our movement*, with the party emblem dis-

played prominently and a phrase about how it "reflects the views of the Socialist Workers" on the masthead.

5) *The centerfold of the party publications* are underutilized. Posters and campaign materials which appeared there on past occasions have been extremely useful. There is always some conference or mass action or boycott to be built by means of posters, and a poster series on revolutionary figures would be sure to attract subscribers.

6) Without upsetting current priorities, *expansion into the recording field* should be begun as soon as possible. The problem of educating at-large contacts and members could be eased by establishing tape cassette lending library of major forums and educationals at the regional centers. Many workers have more records or tape cartridges than books, and the media is more versatile.

As anyone who has attended past conventions is aware, the party has already recruited several musicians of professional caliber. They should record a collection of revolutionary songs, or we should edit one from songs by the Irish Republicans, Vietnamese, Angolans and Cubans. At the very least, the publishing house should begin compiling a songbook.

June 5, 1973

THE HOMOSEXUAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (1864-1935)

by John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, Upper West Side Branch,
New York Local

I. Introduction

The June 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City are generally viewed as marking the beginning of the gay liberation movement. This view is based on a lack of information.

In reality, the Stonewall riots represent not the beginning of gay liberation but the beginning of a *new wave* of gay liberation. 1969 marks a rebirth, an anniversary — indeed, one might say the 100th anniversary of gay liberation.

As in the women's movement, with the gay movement we are presently witnessing a kind of "second wave." And just as the history of the early wave of women's struggle needs to be rediscovered, so it is with the homosexual rights struggle. Unlike the history of the women's movement, however, the history of the first wave of gay liberation has been almost *entirely* suppressed and, thanks to the efforts of Stalinism and Nazism, many traces of it obliterated.

So effective has this suppression been that the mere assertion today that there *was* a gay liberation movement in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the present one may at first arouse disbelief. Yet not only did such a movement exist, but it was

a vital and growing movement that had a measurable impact on other social and political movements, not to mention literature and the arts.

The aim of this article will be to sketch briefly the history of this early struggle for homosexual rights, its rise and decline, as well as to discuss some of the issues it raised and their relevance both to the gay liberation struggle today and to the aims and activities of the revolutionary movement.

II. The Early Homosexual Rights Struggle

Stonewall, we said, in a sense marks the 100th anniversary of the gay liberation struggle. In the late 1860s, a new German penal code was proposed that would apply to all the German states and that added homosexual acts (among males) to the category of crimes. It was adopted by the Reichstag in 1870 with no debate.

While the German legislators displayed a lightminded attitude in legalizing homosexual oppression, however, their move did not go unnoticed by homosexuals. In 1869, a Hungarian doctor by the name of Benkert (who used the pseudonym K.M. Kertbeny) wrote a lengthy open letter to the then minister of justice, tracing the history of the rational approach to homosexuality, and arguing that

the state has no business sticking its nose into people's bedrooms. He defended homosexual behavior with what might be called "gay pride," and called on the authorities to reject the proposed antigay law, Paragraph 175.

Benkert was also the person who, in 1869, devised the term "homosexuality," which has come to be the generally accepted term for designating sexual acts between persons of the same sex.

Benkert's open letter reflects a defiance and indignation at bigotry, ignorance, and intolerance that one might easily associate with the militancy of the gay movement today. He did not make his stand in a vacuum, however. For the 1860s saw the beginnings of what could be called scientific interest in homosexual behavior. And like the roots of the gay movement, the first efforts to develop a rational understanding of homosexuality can also be traced to Germany.

The largest body of literature on homosexuality in the 1860s was produced by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, a German homosexual who knew Benkert. In 1864, he wrote his first "social and juridical studies on the riddle of love between men": "Vindex" and "Inclusa." As early as 1862 he coined the term, "Uranian" ("Urning" in German), based on the well-known myth in Plato's *Symposium*, to refer to homosexuals. This term, widely used for decades both on the continent and in England, embodied the (mistaken) notion that homosexuals were a "third sex"—a woman's mind in a man's body, and *vice versa* for women. Mistaken though this notion was, both gays and straight supporters saw in it justification for their argument against persecuting people whose sexual orientation could be considered as inborn, "natural," and as unchangeable as that of the heterosexual male and female. (We will return to this matter later on.) Yet however antiquated Ulrichs' ideas may seem today, they were widely influential for decades and unquestionably represented a pioneering step a hundred years ago. He can quite properly be regarded as the grandfather of gay liberation.

The last two decades on the nineteenth century saw a proliferation of literary and scientific works dealing with homosexuality, especially in England (to which we shall return) and Germany. Yet the promising beginnings of a movement to fight for homosexual rights, reflected in Kertbeny's open letter and in the efforts of Ulrichs, took approximately a quarter century to come to fruition, and, for the first time in history, to embark on the road of activism.

The Scientific Humanitarian Committee

In 1897, two years after Ulrichs' death, the first gay liberation organization was formed, in Germany. It was called the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. Its founder and guiding light throughout most of its thirty-five years of existence was Magnus Hirschfeld.

The Committee published a Yearbook (*Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*—Yearbook for intermediate sexual types), which appeared more or less regularly (and for periods as a quarterly) between 1899 and 1923. This publication contained not only reports on the Committee's activities, but also literary, historical, anthropological, polemical, and scientific studies on the subject of homosexuality and other sex-related phenomena (such as transvestism). For a time the Committee also published a monthly report for its members, and it continued its pub-

lishing efforts—though sporadically towards the end—until 1933, when the rise of Nazism made further activity impossible.

In one of the early issues of its Yearbook, the Committee stated its goals as follows: (1) to win legislative bodies to the position of abolishing the antigay paragraph on the German penal code, Paragraph 175; (2) enlightening public opinion on homosexuality; (3) "interesting the homosexual himself in the struggle for his rights."

In line with these goals, it carried out various kinds of activities: It held regular public forums on homosexuality; it sent out representatives (Hirschfeld primarily) on speaking engagements and even international tours; it sent copies of its publications and other literature to governmental commissions studying revision of penal code (in Russia and Switzerland, for example), and to public libraries, including the British Museum. The central, "activist" focus of the Committee, however, remained for more than two decades its petition campaign against Paragraph 175.

The Petition

The petition campaign was launched in 1897. Its aim was to collect as many signatures of prominent political and artistic figures, scientists, and doctors, as possible, on a petition calling for the removal of homosexual acts from criminal status, except in cases involving the use of force, or arousing "public annoyance," or when performed between an adult and a minor under the age of 16.*

Supporters and proponents of the petition stressed several points in their efforts to expose the injustice of the antigay law: that since the Napoleonic Code was adopted in 1810, homosexual acts were legal in most countries in Europe, and that this had led to no ill side effects for society; that it punished sexual acts between two men but left unpunished the same acts when performed between a man and a woman or between two women; that it left millions of citizens prey to blackmailers and extortionists;

*(Footnote: Paragraph 175 of the German penal code still exists, though it was modified in 1969—100 years after Kertbeny's open letter!—to remove homosexual acts between consenting adults from criminal status. This spring (1973), the Social-Democratic government indicated its intention to further modify the law, but retaining the provision outlawing homosexual acts between adults and minors (under the age of 18). German gays, however, are demanding complete repeal of the law, to make consenting homosexual sex legal irrespective of age. In doing so, they are not only continuing, but also going beyond, the struggle begun some seventy-five years earlier. It should be noted, incidentally, that in the ensuing years, the age of majority for homosexual acts has tended to increase, not only in Germany, but even in some countries like France, where the Napoleonic Code, which included no special law on homosexual acts, prevails. More recently, however (in Holland and Denmark, for instance), the trend seems to be towards lowering the age at which a citizen can legally decide to engage in homosexual acts to the early teens. The only proper formula, of course, is the *complete* removal of homosexual acts from the penal code, with punishment to be provided for only in cases involving the use of force.

that rather than deliver gays from their harmless and enjoyable penchant for same-sex relations, the law drove them to despair and frequently suicide.

The Committee gave top priority to its petition campaign. For years, the first article in its yearly and quarterly reports was frequently a detailed report on the current status of the struggle, with reprints from the press, correspondence, etc., indicating what response the Committee had received, and keeping its supporters up to date on the progress being made. And while at times the petition campaign slackened—as it did, for instance, when the Committee struggled to defend itself during the anti-gay witch hunt of 1907 and also under the ravages of the first world war—it was never abandoned. Indeed, its most vigorous effort appears to have come after the war, when the Committee formed a united front in 1920 with two other gay groups—the German Friendship Association and the Community of the Special—to press forward the fight against the law.

From the very start it won prominent supporters to the gay cause. On January 13, 1898, the Committee's first major supporter took the floor of the Reichstag to argue for the petition. He was the great Social-Democratic leader August Bebel.

In addition to signing the petition, Bebel took copies of it into the Reichstag and urged his colleagues to add their names as well.

Ridiculing the bourgeois government's approach to the matter, Bebel pointed out: "The number of these persons [gays] is so great and reaches so deeply into all social circles, from the lowest to the highest, that if the police dutifully did what they were supposed to, the Prussian state would immediately be obliged to build two new penitentiaries just to handle the number of violations against Paragraph 175 committed within the confines of Berlin alone."

At this point, the record of the proceedings indicates a commotion, with apparently a cry of protest from a certain von Levetzow. Bebel continued: "That is not an exaggeration, Herr von Levetzow; it concerns thousands of persons from all walks of life. . . . But gentlemen, let me say one thing. . . . If with regard to this law the Berlin police did their duty all the way, then there would be a scandal such as the world has never known, a scandal compared to which the Dreyfus scandal, the Lützow-Ledert and the Tausch-Normann-Schumann scandals are pure child's play."

Bebel's conception of the extensiveness of homosexual behavior was advanced for the period, half a century before the Kinsey investigations, and with anthropology only in its infancy. The Reichstag member who was shocked by Bebel's remarks was probably typical of most people then in viewing homosexuality as a rare, mysterious, and unnatural phenomenon.

This, like a subsequent speech by Bebel on the petition campaign in 1907, was punctuated throughout by supporting shouts of "Hear! Hear!" from the Social-Democratic benches.

The Committee carried on a phenomenal amount of propaganda activity around its petition. In 1899, for instance, it sent a letter to Roman Catholic priests throughout the country requesting them to take a stand on the question of gay oppression and gay rights. In 1900, it

sent copies of its Yearbook with the responses it had received, a pamphlet on the law, and a letter to all the members of the Reichstag and of the Federal Council. It also sent a letter to 2,017 daily newspapers; another to more than 8,000 top administrative officials, provincial councillors, mayors, and justice, police, and railroad officials; and yet another to public prosecutors and presidents of criminal courts throughout the entire Reich. (The latter dealt in particular with a recent spate of convictions in the province of Hannover for homosexual acts, or, in legalese, "unnatural lewdness.")

The Committee also decided to publish "a generally understandable and convincing piece of propaganda that will make it possible to reach the broadest layers of the public with a refutation of the false conceptions that still often hold sway about the nature of Uranianism." (Within four years this pamphlet, entitled "What the People Should Know About the Third Sex," went into its nineteenth edition.)

In 1901, it sent 8,000 copies of the petition to judges. Ads were regularly placed in the press on behalf of its efforts.

Support for the petition was not limited to a few isolated stars. More than 6,000 prominent figures signed it, of whom half were doctors. Some of the others were: Finance Minister Rudolf Hilferding, Hermann Hesse, Franz Werfel, George Grosz, Krafft-Ebing, Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Max Brod, Martin Buber, Albert Einstein, Käthe Kollwitz, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, Carl Maria Weber, Stefan Zweig, Grete Meisel-Hess, Gerhard Hauptmann, Karl Pauli, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Arthur Schnitzler.

In addition to German signers, the petition received the (unsolicited) backing of a number of outstanding international personalities, among them Zola, Tolstoy, the Danish critic Georg Brandes, and Norway's most prominent nineteenth-century poet, Bjoernstjerne Bjoernson, who sent Hirschfeld the following note in December 1901: "For more than twenty years I have viewed this matter the same way you do, and if I were a German, I would sign."

On October 18, 1907, more than 2,000 people attended a debate on Paragraph 175. The committee described the debate as "a high point of the movement, so to speak, which was only to soon go into a sudden decline." The "decline" was brought on by the hysteria surrounding a series of trials involving homosexuality and prominent gays. The scandals lasted for several months and had a generally conservatizing effect on public opinion.

In late 1910 a new draft penal code was introduced that proposed to extend criminal status to include sexual acts between women. This move brought a new dimension to the struggle—the involvement of women's liberation groups.

By early 1911, meetings of women's organizations were being held throughout Germany to discuss ways to fight the proposed extension and to link the struggle of women with that of gays. A broad range of groups took up this matter, including Social-Democratic and bourgeois women's organizations.

One such meeting, reported at length in the Social-Democratic *Vorwärts*, was held in Berlin on February 10, 1911, by the local branch of the League for the Protection of Mothers. The turnout was so large that a second

meeting had to be called two weeks later. The speaker for the Scientific Humanitarian Committee was Hirschfeld, who discussed the nature of homosexuality and the petition campaign.

Both meetings adopted a resolution condemning the law. This was the first public position taken by any important women's organization on this question. It called any attempt to extend criminal status to lesbianism "a serious mistake": "An inequality would not thereby be eliminated, but rather an injustice doubled. The doors would be thrown wide open to informers and blackmailers, and unmarried working women who share living quarters with other women would be burdened in the most shamefully damaging way, without in the process any interest being protected. At a very minimum, the gathering regards it as absolutely necessary that medical experts—especially sex researchers and psychiatrists—as well as women be consulted on this question."

Following the several-year-long dislocation caused by the first world war, the petition campaign, which had receded into the background, was aggressively resumed in order to fight yet another draft penal code (introduced in 1919), which, although it dropped any proposed extension of criminal status to lesbians, still provided for up to five years in jail for males who were convicted. Still, the more liberal climate prevailing in the period just following the war and the 1918 revolution gave gays considerable optimism that their struggle against the law was about to succeed.

In August 1920, the Committee held its first post-war general membership meeting. This meeting voted to form the united front of gay groups to fight the law, and it set up a special joint "action committee" to organize the fight. The committee was headed by Kurt Hiller.

In October 1921, a new minister of justice was appointed who was himself a signer of the petition.

Hopes were further buoyed when, after considerable pressure, the authorities agreed to provide a public hall *inside* the Reichstag building itself where the Committee could address interested members of the body. Fifty showed up for a speech by Hirschfeld on March 15, 1922.

The meeting, reported the Committee, was "a significant event in the history of our movement. We want to hope that it may serve to bring us a good distance closer to our goal in the struggle for liberation that we are engaged in."

On March 18, 1922, the signed petition was finally presented to the Reichstag—twenty-five years after it was launched. In December, the Reichstag voted to turn it over to the government for consideration. And there it appears to have remained, for, by 1923, the post-war economic and social chaos had reached such a point that the existence of the Committee began to be seriously threatened and the long efforts of the new, gay movement that seemed so close to success were eclipsed.

Progress and Projects

Although in Germany, as elsewhere, the legalized aspect of homosexual oppression touched male homosexuals more directly than females, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee made a conscious effort to attract lesbians. Its publications and forums provided a platform for lesbian feminists to educate on a number of questions, including the relationship between lesbian liberation and

women's liberation in general.

By early 1901, the Committee had begun to attract a significant number of lesbians, who, it said, had become "an almost indispensable and prominent component of our events." The fact that lesbian acts were not legally punishable, it pointed out, did not at all mean that lesbians escaped the effects of prevailing bigotry and oppression. Indeed, "the homosexual man and the homosexual woman are linked by a natural kinship with one another."

By 1905, the Committee felt that it had succeeded in accomplishing an essential preliminary goal for gay liberation—making the "love that dare not speak its name" into a subject that was being widely talked about: "One thing has been achieved, and it is not the least important thing. The period of passing the matter over in silence and disregarding it is past, for good. We now find ourselves in the midst of a period of discussion. The homosexual question has become a genuine question, one which has given rise to lively debate, and which will continue to be discussed until it has been resolved in a satisfactory way."

By 1905, no sizable newspaper was able to ignore the question of the struggle against gay oppression. The Committee's optimism proved to be excessive, however, and by the 1930s the "homosexual question" was to again be relegated to oblivion for several decades. (A measure of the extent to which the momentum of this early gay movement was later stopped, and its apparent validity as an issue for the Marxist movement eradicated by Stalinism, can be seen in the fact, for instance, that it was not until July 1970 that *The Militant* found that the developing new gay liberation movement had reached the point where, once again, it could no longer be ignored by the Marxist movement.)

By June 1908, more than 5,000 gays had been in contact with or members of the Committee.

In addition to the petition campaign, the Committee was involved in a number of projects and raised the question of gay rights in various ways.

Like the gay movement today, for instance, it confronted candidates during election periods, demanding that they take a stand on gay rights and on the petition. In the 1907 Reichstag election campaign, it received twenty responses to its questionnaire in this connection. By the 1912 campaign, ninety-seven candidates responded—only six of whom opposed gay rights. Of the ninety-seven, thirty-seven were elected (twenty-four of these were Social Democrats, who, as usual, made up the largest block of supporters of gay rights).

Shortly before the 1912 elections, a small, black-bordered ad appeared in several German papers. It went as follows:

"REICHSTAG ELECTION! 3rd Sex! Ponder this! In the Reichstag on May 31, 1905, members of the Center, the Conservatives, and the Economic Alliance spoke *against* you; but *for* you, the orators of the *Left*! Agitate and vote accordingly!"

Rumors were not uncommon at the time—both among gays and in the bourgeois press—that in races where the vote was close, it was the gay vote that made the difference.

In 1903, Hirschfeld undertook what were undoubtedly the first large-scale statistical inquiries into homosexual

behavior—an approach that pointed the way to the more comprehensive taxonomic investigations of Alfred Kinsey nearly a half century later. The studies—rather primitive and of dubious scientific value—were based on inquiries first sent to 3,000 students in Charlottenburg, and then 5,721 metal workers. The publication of the results prompted a Protestant pastor to press charges against Hirschfeld for "disseminating indecent writings" and "insulting" six student co-plaintiffs by publishing the report. Hirschfeld's defense lawyer thought it significant that not one of the 5,000 metal workers had objected to the questionnaire. Hirschfeld himself made a stirring speech in court defending the right of scientific investigation into homosexual behavior and the fight against ignorance and oppression.

The court found that while he had not published anything "indecent," he had nevertheless run the "risk" of leading young, impressionable (and, to the court's way of thinking, heterosexual) young men down the path of "perverse tendencies" by merely raising the idea of homosexuality with them! In spite of the foolishness of the notion that the young needed a questionnaire on the subject to get the idea that they could engage in homosexual acts, the court went on to fine Hirschfeld 200 Marks. The Committee, nevertheless, described this as a "significant moral victory."

The trial received a great deal of sympathetic newspaper coverage—including in the German-language press in Brazil and Argentina—and Hirschfeld won considerable support from various organizations. The Social Democratic *Vorwärts* went so far as to compare his persecution to Galileo's under the Roman Inquisition.

Another project in which the Committee participated was the first gay liberation film, "Anders als die Andern" (Different from Other People). It was produced by a brother by the name of Richard Oswald with the help of Hirschfeld. Shown to the press for the first time on May 24, 1919, it was banned from public showings by the government in August 1920. To our knowledge, no copies of this historic document have survived.

World War I dealt a severe blow to the Committee's efforts. Several hundred of its members, and thousands of its supporters, left for the front. Although it continued to hold meetings, its base of support tended to dissipate, and the general mood among the public was not conducive to advancing the cause of gay rights.

The Committee itself, though politically independent, appears to have taken a rather social-patriotic attitude toward the war. It combined social-patriotic references to the German cause with earnest expressions of its desire for peace and "active love for those of our brothers who are out there in the field." Many of the early fighters for gay liberation died on the imperialist battlefield.

Despite the prevailing social patriotism, the Committee did not strike off its list its members in "enemy" countries like England. Indeed, it continued to publish articles by them during the war and to remind its readers of the need for solidarity among gays.

Its foremost goal during the war was to keep the gay rights struggle alive so that it could blossom again once the hostilities had ceased. In its April 1915 issue it wrote: "We must be, and are, of course, prepared for any eventuality. What is necessary, however, is that the Committee be able to hold out and be there when—after what is

hoped will be a quick, victorious end of the war—domestic efforts for reform are again stirred to activity, and when, therefore, the struggle for the liberation of homosexuals, too, picks up again."

The German revolution of November 1918 gave the gay movement renewed hope. From the very outbreak of the revolution, the Committee cast its lot with the new republic. In the new era of freedom and enlightenment that it foresaw emerging with the overthrow of the monarchy and militarism, it expressed the "firm hope that our movement, too, which is based on scientific research, will once again be able to move into the forefront and lead the struggle for homosexual liberation to its long-desired end."

"We took the most active part in all the revolutionary events," the Committee reported. One example of this was the speech by Hirschfeld to a mass meeting in Berlin during the height of the revolution on November 10. The meeting, in front of the Reichstag building, was called by the Bund Neues Vaterland (New Fatherland League), one of the first groups to actively support the rebellion. Between 3,000 and 4,000 people attended the rally. As bullets flew overhead and Red Guards attacked supporters of the Kaiser nearby, the well-known gay leader exhorted the crowd. In conclusion, he said:

"In addition to a true people's state with a genuinely democratic structure, we want a *social* republic. Socialism means: solidarity, community, mutuality, further development of society into a unified body of people. *Each for all and all for each!* And yet a third thing we want: The community of peoples, struggle against racism and national chauvinism, removal of limitations on economic and personal communication between peoples, the right of peoples to self-determination regarding their relationship to a state and their form of government. We want people's courts and a world parliament. In the future it should no longer be 'Proletarians, but People of the World, Unite!' Before our eyes pass the great pioneers of the Social Democracy who are no longer in a position to experience this day: Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and Paul Singer, and with them socialists from other countries, above all our French friend Jaurès. His death at the beginning of the world war shows that not only in Germany but elsewhere too nationalism attempted to destroy internationalism, and militarism attempted to destroy socialism. Citizens! Let us trust in the new republican government; let each person help to keep calm and order. Then we will soon be able to again lead a life of human dignity."

The Committee immediately sent a delegation to the new government to press for a total amnesty that would include the release from jail of all inmates convicted of homosexual acts. The removal of censorship and the greater freedom of the press and speech that ensued following the revolution were a boon to the gay rights struggle for a time. But perhaps the most tangible benefit to the gay movement was the acquisition of a building that was to become an international center for gay liberation and sex research.

Institute for Sexual Science

The Institute was housed in a lovely building that had belonged to Prince Hatzfeld prior to the revolution. In

his speech to the scholars, doctors, and politicians who attended the opening in July 1919, Hirschfeld called it "a child of the revolution"—not only of the uprising that swept Berlin on November 9, 1918, but also of the "great spiritual revolution" that had begun decades earlier with the first stirrings of the homosexual rights movement.

The Institute for Sexual Science was a repository for all kinds of biological, anthropological, statistical, and ethnological data and documentation relating to sexology. It became a kind of university for sex science, with regular classes on a variety of relevant subjects. It was the first institute of its kind anywhere in the world. It was truly a forerunner of the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research.

The Scientific Humanitarian Committee, while remaining organizationally independent of the Institute, set up offices in two rooms on the second floor. The building thus became an international center not only for sexual science but for the gay liberation movement.

The procession of scientists and politicians who visited the Institute was long and numerous. Scores of persons at a time representing various political groups, including a number of socialist youth groups and parties, would seek it out as a way of informing themselves on the subject of homosexuality and related questions. Every German who crossed its threshold was given an opportunity to sign the petition against Paragraph 175.

One such delegation to visit the Institute arrived on January 21, 1923. It consisted of Russian doctors, and was headed up by the people's commissar of health. Here is what the Committee had to say about their visit in the 1923 issue of its Yearbook:

"On January 21, 1923, the film 'Anders als die Andern' was shown to the Russian doctors after they especially requested it. After seeing it, these gentlemen expressed their surprise that a film of such serious and decent content should arouse any scandal at all and that it could be banned. The Herr Minister of Health in conclusion stated how pleased he was that in the *new Russia, the former penalty against homosexuals has been completely abolished*. He also explained that *no unhappy consequences of any kind whatsoever have resulted from the elimination of the offending paragraph, nor has the wish that the penalty in question be reintroduced been raised in any quarter.*" (The tsarist antihomosexual law was abolished by decree in December 1917. A decade after his visit, Stalin reintroduced it.)

For fourteen years the Institute's unique collection of exhibits, its research work, its archives, and its library won for it an international reputation that attracted many foreign scientists and writers. Its brief life came to an abrupt end with the rise of Nazism.

Per Scientiam ad Justitiam

The Scientific Humanitarian Committee, whose motto was "per scientiam ad justiam" (justice through science), played a role in stressing the need for scientific enlightenment and a rational approach to homosexuality and sexuality in general that went beyond its publications and the Institute to include direct intervention in scientific gatherings. Hirschfeld was one of the speakers at the International Medical Congress in London August 6-12, 1913, for instance. His intervention at the gathering, attended by some 2,000 doctors from all over the world, was described by the Committee as "a success for our cause."

While in London, he combined his scientific work with political activism by meeting with British gays to form the London branch of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee.

The Committee also organized an active intervention into the September 16-24, 1922, centennial gathering of German scientists and doctors in Leipzig, attended by more than 8,000.

Hirschfeld also played the key role in calling and helping to organize the first congress, in Berlin, of the World League for Sexual Reform in 1921. The Committee sought to insure that the oppression of homosexuals be recognized as a valid and significant question during the de-liberations.

Uranians of the World, Unite!

The revival of the gay liberation struggle after the war was reflected in other ways as well. With the end of the war, the German gay movement sought to reestablish links with gay groups in other countries, especially England, where gays were most active. And at its first post-war general membership meeting August 28-30, 1920, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, in addition to setting up the united front with other gay groups to fight the antigay law, passed a motion to this effect. By the end of the war, the idea of forming a world gay organization was being tossed around. One reflection of this was the August 14, 1920, issue of the Community of the Special's publications, which contained an article entitled "Uranians of the World Unite!"

An example of this international outreach was the international speaking tours that Hirschfeld went on in the early twenties. In early 1922, he went on such a tour through Holland. The turnout at most of his meetings shows the widespread interest that prevailed in sexuality and the homosexual rights struggle. On his Dutch tour, he drew a full house in Amsterdam's Koncert-Gebouw and more than 900 in The Hague.

On May 25, 1922, he spoke in a concert hall in Vienna that seated more than 2,000. Only a few notices in the newspapers brought out so many that the hall was packed and hundreds had to be turned away. He gave a three-hour speech.

Five days later, he addressed a meeting in Prague at the invitation of the group "Urania." So many people showed up that seats had to be set up behind the film screen. He also addressed meetings in Italy.

The post-war upturn in the gay rights movement was reflected in other ways as well. With the new mood came an increase in gay publications, and, in 1921, the formation of a gay theater in Berlin, Eros Theater, where original gay plays were performed.

With the formation of the gay united front, the fight against the antigay paragraph also picked up. Besides stepping up the petition campaign, protest meetings were organized; one in Berlin in early 1921 drew more than 400 persons.

In January 1921, the Action Committee of the united front issued an appeal "to the homosexuals of Germany" to join the struggle for gay rights. In it, it stated, among other things:

"Homosexuals, you know what the reasons and motives of your opponents amount to; you know, too, that your leaders and advisers have for decades been tirelessly work-

ing to destroy prejudices, spread truth, and achieve justice for you (and these efforts have certainly not been entirely without success); but in the last analysis, you must carry on the fight yourselves. In the final analysis, justice for you will be the fruit only of your own efforts. The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves."

By its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1922, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee had about twenty-five branches throughout Germany.

The obviously successful post-war activities did not all occur without incident, however. For the ugly head of fascism and anti-Semitism reared itself early. On October 4, 1920, a meeting Hirschfeld was addressing in Munich was physically attacked; the police dragged their feet on doing anything about it. In 1921, he was attacked by anti-Semites in Munich and left in the street for dead; his skull had been fractured.

One of the most vicious assaults came at a lecture in Vienna on February 4, 1923. This meeting was disrupted by Nazi youth who first hurled stink bombs and then opened fire, wounding a large number of members of the audience. Hirschfeld himself was not hurt.

Relations With Other Groups

Although the Scientific Humanitarian Committee was the most influential and prominent German gay group, there were others. Of these, perhaps the most significant was the Community of the Special. Founded in 1902 under the inspiration of Benedikt Friedländer, its orientation was more along cultural lines than that of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, and under Friedländer it openly disputed Hirschfeld's single-minded stress—even after Freud's contributions had become general knowledge, and in spite of mounting ethnological and anthropological evidence to the contrary—upon the notion that homosexuality was an inborn condition. While it supported the petition campaign against Paragraph 175, it did not consider it as important as the Hirschfeld group did. Its publication, "Der Eigene" (The Special), a periodical (after 1906 it appeared in book form) of "art and masculine culture," first appeared in 1896. Its publisher, Adolf Brand, was more than once the target of court suits for publishing "indecent" material, such as gay love poems, photographs, etc.

The Community's relations with Hirschfeld's committee were often rocky, particularly in 1907, when an important split in the Scientific Humanitarian Committee occurred, apparently engineered by Friedländer.

In addition to working with other German gay and women's groups, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee maintained close ties with a number of foreign gay groups (which we shall take up shortly). Its outlook was consistently internationalist. An example of this was its top policy-making body, which, with a reorganization in 1906, consisted of twenty-eight members from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, England, Italy, and Belgium.

Gay Movement in England

Homosexual acts between adult men remained punishable by death in England until 1861 (and punishable by imprisonment until 1967). While the modification of the law was not the result of any campaign, nor did it give rise to the formation of a gay movement, the next

few decades saw a phenomenal growth of a gay literary underground, or semi-underground (thoroughly documented in Brian Reade's book, *Sexual Heretics*, published by Coward-McCann in 1970). While Reade's assertion that "an increase in homosexuality was observable in England from about the middle of the nineteenth century onward" seems at best debatable, it is true that a great many prominent gay writers began to seriously come to grips with the question. (This trend, observable throughout Europe, received its first literary impetus from the Romantic period, with its rediscovery and glorification of Greek antiquity and the often homoerotic overtones to its cultivation of the ancient ethos.)

While it is not our purpose here to trace the rise of this gay literary phenomenon in the Victorian and post-Victorian periods, the nature of the gay liberation movement in England cannot be understood without some awareness of it.

One of the most pervasive influences on British gays in the second half of the nineteenth century was Walt Whitman. The publication of his *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, and particularly its highly homoerotic "Calamus" section, established him as the most influential of the poets who made homoerotic themes a prominent part of their writing. The unabashed joy of homosexual love that permeated his writing and his philosophy stirred gays throughout Europe for decades to a new pride in their homosexuality.

Among these was Edward Carpenter, a socialist, who, when the gay pantheon is filled, will certainly occupy a prominent position. Carpenter, a prolific writer, grappled with many subjects, among them homosexuality among primitive peoples, the constraining effects of "civilization" (or class society) and "commercialism" (i.e., capitalism), prison reform, the labor movement, Marx's labor theory of value, women's oppression and liberation, Oriental philosophy, and many other topics.

Carpenter visited Whitman twice, and wrote a book of poetry in the 1880s entitled *Towards Democracy* that was inspired by Whitman's style and his vision of "comradeship." The book foresees a socialist revolution that will inaugurate a new era of "democracy," "comradeship," and sexual freedom; his vision of the new society awards a special role to homosexuals (who, in keeping with the times, he views as a "third sex" or "intermediate sex") in introducing humanity to this new era of freedom, democracy, and comradeship.

In 1894, Carpenter gave a public lecture in Manchester on "homogenic love"—a thing unimaginable until it was done. The speech was published in January 1895 by the Manchester Labour Press. The fourth of his pamphlets on sex to be published by the Labour Press (the others had sold well), this one caused some alarm.

In 1895, he began collecting material for a book entitled *Love's Coming-of-Age*. Then, in April, came the arrest of Oscar Wilde; the subsequent trials and antihomosexual hysteria dealt a serious blow to the developing British gay movement that lasted for at least a decade. In his autobiography, Carpenter wrote that from the moment of Wilde's arrest "a sheer panic prevailed over all questions of sex, and especially of course questions of the Intermediate Sex." Trains were reportedly filled with homosexuals rushing to flee England for the continent.

Following Wilde's arrest, Carpenter's publisher canceled his contract for *Love's Coming-of-Age* (although part of it

had already been set) and refused to publish further editions of *Towards Democracy*. A half dozen other publishers also refused to touch *Love's Coming-of-Age*. "The Wilde trial had done its work; and silence must henceforth reign on sex-subjects," Carpenter wrote. His only hope of seeing his work published was the Manchester Labour Press, which brought both it and *Towards Democracy* out in 1896. "My book circulated almost immediately to some extent in the Socialistic world, where my name was fairly well known; but some time elapsed before it penetrated into more literary and more 'respectable' circles."

The book, which eloquently describes the oppression of women and hails the developing movement for women's rights, in addition to discussing homosexuality, was translated into a number of languages. Carpenter wrote that at the first German Women's Congress in Berlin in 1912, the book "curiously enough became a sort of bone of contention, dividing the advanced party who took it as their text-book, from the more conservative party who anathematized it." By World War I, it had sold 50,000 copies. Besides German, Carpenter's books were translated into Italian, Bulgarian, Japanese, Norwegian, Dutch, Russian, and Spanish.

In addition to Carpenter, mention should be made of the contribution of John Addington Symonds to early gay literature. In 1883, he privately and anonymously printed an essay called "A Problem in Greek Ethics, Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion." This was the first serious study of homosexuality in English. He went on to play a large role in helping Havelock Ellis write his monumental *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, published in 1897—in German, so as to avoid English censorship. Symonds' family bought up most of the edition and destroyed it; they insisted that his name be removed from forthcoming editions (he had died in 1893), and Ellis complied.

In 1914, Ellis and Carpenter founded the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology. This group, which had 234 members in July 1920, concentrated on propagandistic and educational activities. It created a special gay subcommittee. Its pamphlets included an abridged version of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee's "What the People Should Know About the Third Sex." The British group founded a library and established a number of contacts in the United States, most important of whom was Margaret Sanger. With her aid, it announced plans to form an American branch in the early twenties.

Other Countries

While the early gay movement developed most fully in Germany and England, and while its impact reached far beyond those places where actual gay groups became organized, brief mention should nevertheless be made of a few additional manifestations of the first wave of the homosexual rights struggle.

● *Holland*. Following the adoption of the Dutch anti-homosexual paragraph on June 15, 1911, a Dutch branch of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee was formed. This was the first of what was to become a series of foreign branches. It described its task as follows: "To spread enlightenment about the homosexual question in all layers of the Dutch population and to demand the same rights for homosexuals as exist for heterosexuals, and above all the same estimation and treatment." It immediately got

thirty prominent figures to sign an appeal to this effect. It also published a Dutch version of the pamphlet "What the People Should Know About the Third Sex."

● *Austria*. By early 1914, an Austrian branch of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee had been formed in Vienna and was holding public lectures on homosexuality that were receiving considerable, and sympathetic, coverage in the press.

● *United States*. There does not appear to have been much, if any, organized gay-rights activity in the United States during the period covered in this article. That does not mean, however, that the question of gay oppression and gay rights was in a state of complete limbo. In 1911, for instance, a work was privately published by an author who took the pseudonym of Xavier Mayne entitled "The Intersexes: A History of Similisexuality as a Problem in Social Life."

One of the first, if not *the* first, public supporters of gay rights in the United States was Emma Goldman. In the introduction to a lengthy article on Louise Michel written by her and published in the 1923 issue of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee's Yearbook, Hirschfeld praised her for speaking up for the rights of those without rights in her "Mother Earth" publications and in speeches all across the United States. "And so it is," Hirschfeld wrote, "that she became the first and only woman, indeed one could say the first and only human being of importance in America to carry the issue of homosexual love to the broadest layers of the public."

In her article, Emma Goldman had the following observations on the question of gay rights:

"I regard it as a tragedy that people of a differing sexual orientation find themselves proscribed in a world that has so little understanding for homosexuals and that displays such gross indifference for sexual gradations and variations and the great significance they have for living. It is completely foreign to me to wish to regard such people as less valuable, less moral, or incapable of noble sentiments and behavior."

And: "Even years ago, when I still knew nothing about sex psychology and my only familiarity with homosexuals was limited to a few women whom I got to know in jail, where I wound up because of my political convictions, I firmly stood up in defense of Oscar Wilde. As an anarchist, my place has always been alongside the persecuted. The entire trial and conviction of Wilde struck me as *an act of horrible injustice* and repulsive hypocrisy on the part of the society that had condemned this man. And this alone was the reason for which I stood up for him.

"Later I came to Europe, where I found out about the works of Havelock Ellis, Krafft-Ebing, Carpenter, and many others, who introduced me to a full awareness for the first time of the crime committed at the time by Oscar Wilde and people like him. From that point on, I stood up both in my speeches and in my writings for those whose sexual feelings and needs are differently oriented. Above all, it was your work, my dear doctor [Hirschfeld], that helped me to shed light on the extremely complicated problems of sex psychology and to develop a more human attitude toward this question among my audiences."

Demise Of The Gay Movement

After 1923, the year of the final publication of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee's Yearbook, the fate of the

early gay movement becomes sketchy and more difficult to trace.

Throughout the next decade, its members continued to speak out on gay rights and took an active part in the organization of congresses of the World League for Sexual Reform in 1928, 1929, and 1930.

A paper that dealt specifically with gay oppression at the 1928 congress in Copenhagen was a stirring "Appeal on Behalf of an Oppressed Variety of Human Being." It was written by Kurt Hiller, and read by Hirschfeld. (The May 1971 issue of the *ISR* published the text of this speech.)

Hirschfeld continued his international speaking tours throughout the twenties, including a world trip beginning in 1930 that brought him to the United States and the Orient, including China. Upon his return to Europe, in 1932, he was forced by the threat of Hitlerism to remain outside Germany. He took refuge first in Switzerland, and then in France.

On May 6, 1933, a Berlin newspaper announced that the city's libraries were to be cleansed of books of "un-German" spirit, and that the students of the Gymnastic Academy would start with the Institute for Sexual Science. The Nazi newspaper hailed their destructive raid as a "deed of culture" aimed at an institution that "tried to shelter behind a scientific cloak and was always protected during the fourteen years of Marxist rule by the authorities of that period, [and] was an unparalleled breeding ground of dirt and filth. . . ."

The following eyewitness account of the fascist raid is taken from *The Brown Book Of The Hitler Terror*:

"At 9:30 a.m. some lorries drew up in front of the institute with about one hundred students and a brass band. They drew up in military formation in front of the Institute, and then marched into the building with their band playing. As the office was not yet open, there was no responsible person there; there were only a few women and one man. The students demanded admittance to every room, and broke in the doors of those which were closed, including the office of the World League for Sexual Reform. When they found that there was not much to be had in the lower rooms, they made their way up to the first floor, where they emptied the ink bottles over manuscripts and carpets and then made for the book-cases. They took away whatever they thought not completely unobjectionable, working for the most part on the basis of the so-called 'black list.' But they went beyond this, and took other books also, including for example a large work on Tutankhamen and a number of art journals which they found among the secretary's private books. They then removed from the archives the large charts dealing with intersexual cases, which had been prepared for the International Medical Congress held at the Kensington Museum in London in 1913. They threw most of these charts through the windows to their comrades who were standing outside. . . ."

"The staff was kept under observation during the whole of the proceedings, and the band played throughout, so that a large crowd of inquisitive people gathered outside. At 12 o'clock the leader made a long speech, and then the gang left, singing a particularly vulgar song and also the Horst-Wessel song.

"At three o'clock a number of truckloads of storm troop-

ers showed up and announced that they were going to continue the work begun that morning. This second troop then proceeded to make a careful search through every room, taking down to the lorries basket after basket of valuable books and manuscripts—two lorry-loads in all. It was clear from the oaths used that the names of the authors whose books were in the special library were well known to the students. Sigmund Freud, whose photograph they took from the staircase and carried off, was called 'that Jewish sow Freud'; and Havelock Ellis was called 'that swine.' Other English authors wanted by them were Oscar Wilde, Edward Carpenter, and Norman Haire; and also the works of Judge Lindsay, the American juvenile judge, Margaret Sanger, and George Silvester Viereck; and of French writers, the works of Andre Gide, Marcel Proust, Pierre Lot, Zola, etc. The sight of the works of the Danish doctor Leunbach also made them break out into oaths. Many bound volumes of periodicals were also removed. They also wanted to take away several thousand questionnaires which were among the records, but desisted when they were assured that these were simply medical histories. On the other hand, it did not prove possible to dissuade them from removing the material belonging to the World League of Sexual Reform, the whole edition of the journal *Sexus* and the card index. In addition, a great many manuscripts, including many unpublished ones, fell into their hands. . . ."

A few days later, all the books and photographs, together with a large number of other works, were publicly burned on Opera Square. More than 10,000 volumes from the Institute's special library were destroyed. A bust of Hirschfeld was carried in a torchlight procession and thrown onto the fire.

Magnus Hirschfeld eventually leased an apartment in Nice, where he began to rebuild what he hoped would become a replica of the Berlin Institute. He had hardly begun this project when he died.

From 1933 to 1935 the gay movement was brutally exterminated by both the fascists and the Stalinists.

The last of an irregular series of "Newsletters" of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee was published in February, 1933, by Kurt Hiller. In July of the same year, Hiller was arrested and sent to the Oranienburg Concentration Camp. He was fortunate to be released nine months later, after nearly dying from mistreatment in the concentration camp, and he left Germany.

Later, gays were treated as targets for extermination, along with Jews, gypsies, socialists, and communists. The emblem which had to be worn by the gay inmates was a pink triangle.

Following the death of Magnus Hirschfeld, the two remaining presidents of the World League for Sexual Reform, Norman Haire and Dr. Leunbach, found it necessary to dissolve the League in 1935. With the rise of fascism, most of the European sections had ceased to function. Political differences among the members of the World League made it impossible to continue. In a letter announcing their decision, the two presidents explained the differences: Haire insisted "that all revolutionary activity should be kept out of the program of the WLSR," while Leunbach was "of the opinion that it is impossible to reach the goals of the WLSR without at the same time fighting for a socialist revolution." This act put the final touch on the demise of the early gay movement.

III. Scientific and Theoretical Issues

Much of the history of the early homosexual rights movement involved debate over theoretical and scientific questions.

The entire nineteenth century witnessed intense struggle between advancing science and the old myths, which shrouded, among other things, the mystery of class relations. From this conflict emerged scientific socialism itself.

In the nineteenth century, the early geologists, sociologists, Darwinian evolutionists, and other scientists were all castigated in their time by frenzied spokesmen for Christianity and the established order as "infidels," "practitioners of the dark arts," etc. But science advanced, and with it, a challenge to the "eternal moral truths" of theological morality.

The first militant writer on the subject of homosexuality was Ulrichs. His greatest contribution was to break through the taboo of silence. What had once been "the sin so horrible that it must not be mentioned among Christians" (*peccatum illud horribile, inter Christianos non nominandum*) became an appropriate subject for discussion and objective evaluation.

Many of Ulrichs' ideas are no longer tenable, in particular his notion that homosexuality was congenital, that homosexuals represented a separate variety of human being ("Uranians"), that the male homosexual had "a feminine soul enclosed in a man's body" (*anima muliebris in corpore virili inclusa*).

Clearly Ulrichs' outlook was idealistic in the extreme. His schema simply did not accord with reality.*

Erroneous though Ulrichs' concepts were, they made it possible to reject the old notions of sin, depravity, or morbidity. Homosexuality was just as natural and healthy for an Urning as heterosexuality was for a Dioning. On this basis it was possible to agitate against the barbarity of laws which persecuted a variety of human beings merely for being different. And since everything was congenital, no threat to the normalcy of Dionings was involved.

Although these ideas of Ulrichs are now thoroughly refuted by the unified evidence of history, anthropology, zoology, depth psychology, and statistical research, it is important to be aware of them, since they left their mark upon several decades of ideology—especially in

*In real life, for example, individuals could go from heterosexual to homosexual behavior, and *vice versa*; and further, male homosexuals were by no means always feminine in appearance or otherwise. To resolve these contradictions, Ulrichs was forced to devise a most elaborate, indeed metaphysical, system of classification.

Human males were divided into three main categories: (a) the Normal Man or Dioning—called Uraniaster when he acquires Urning tendencies (!); (b) Urnings; and (c) Urano-dionings—those *born* with a capacity for love in both directions.

Urnings were further divided into four sub-categories: (1) the *Männling*, who is thoroughly manly in appearance, mental habit, and character; (2) the *Zwischen-Urning*, who is an intermediate type; (3) the *Weibling*, who is effeminate in appearance and cast of mind; and (4) the "Virilized Urning," and Urning who acquires the normal habit (!!).

medical literature—and upon popular thinking.

Richard von Krafft-Ebing incorporated many of Ulrichs' ideas into his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, written and for years published only in Latin. Krafft-Ebing considered homosexuality, with all other sexual deviations, to be the product of diseased nerve centers and a vicious and degraded personality. His system of classification for homosexuals was fully as elaborate and idealistic as Ulrichs'. On the positive side, Krafft-Ebing later considerably modified his view that homosexuality was always a disease; he supported the petition to repeal Paragraph 175. His case histories provided valuable data for later psychologists, notably Sigmund Freud.

Magnus Hirschfeld developed the concept of the sexual *Zwischenstufe*, or intermediate state, sharing with Ulrichs the notion that homosexuality represented an inborn human variation. He went even further than Ulrichs to consider the bodies of homosexuals also to be sexually intermediate. Reflecting Hirschfeld's viewpoints, the Yearbook of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee was entitled the *Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types, with particular attention to homosexuality*.

Hirschfeld's viewpoints were not shared by everyone in the gay movement. Some combatted them. In 1907, when the group led by Benedikt Friedländer split from the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, it was largely because of differences over scientific questions. Friedländer felt that Hirschfeld's theories held back the movement and declared: "The way is free for a less dogmatic, more open and more correct evaluation of homosexual love."

The *Zwischenstufe* theory was attacked by Friedländer as "degrading" and a "beggarly . . . pleading for sympathy." He ridiculed the notion of "a poor womanly soul languishing away in a man's body, and of the 'third sex.'"

Friedländer insisted upon a historical approach which also took into account anthropological evidence; he wrote, "A glance at the cultures of countries before and outside of Christianity suffices to show the complete untenability of the [*Zwischenstufe*] theory. Especially in ancient Greece, most of the military leaders, artists, and thinkers would have had to be 'psychic hermaphrodites.'"

The medical profession came in for scathing analysis by Friedländer, who considered the prominence of its representatives in the gay movement to be harmful. He wrote, "Now with diseases, one can certainly have pity, one can behave humanely to the sick and indeed try to 'heal' them; at no time does one acknowledge presumed physical inferiors as having equal rights."

Friedländer strongly rejected the distinctions certain idealist authorities made between "true" and "pseudo-homosexuality," saying ". . . it is incomprehensible what is 'pseudo' about it." Also, he clearly anticipated Kinsey's concept of the sexual continuum. He considered bisexuality to be the fullest and least distorted human condition.

Friedländer's death in 1908 cut short his contributions. Hirschfeld, describing the Friedländer secession in the 1908 Yearbook, was none too generous. Fearful of seeing gays accused of attempting to "convert" to homosexuality, he unjustly branded Friedländer's bisexuality theory as "water in the mill of the enemy."

After 1910, however, Hirschfeld became much less sectarian and much more open to a historical perspective, though he never totally abandoned his belief that homo-

sexuality was largely congenital. His surveys in 1903 were truly pioneering efforts, however antiquated they might seem in the light of present-day statistical laws and survey techniques. Hirschfeld's great leadership in the foundation of the Institute for Sexual Science and the World League for Sexual Reform far outweigh the errors of his earlier theories.

In England, two writers deserve mention. One, Sir Richard Burton, was the translator of the *Arabian Nights*. His "terminal essay" on pederasty, published in volume 10 of the *Arabian Nights* in 1885, constituted a powerful defense of homosexual love, using a vast amount of historical and anthropological evidence, as well as his own observations in Africa and the East.

Havelock Ellis' great work, *Studies In the Psychology Of Sex*, was most influential, and provided an immense amount of all kinds of information—historical, anthropological, case studies, and other data. When the volume on *Sexual Inversion* was published in 1898, he was immediately prosecuted, and his printer was heavily fined.

IV. Socialism and the Gay Movement

One encounter between socialism and the gay issue goes back to the early 1860s, a generation before the first organized gay movement, a period when the death penalty was just being removed in England and still in effect in Scotland. The lawyer, J. B. von Schweitzer, got in trouble over homosexual activity in Mannheim. He was brought to trial, punished, and disbarred from the legal profession. He was helped out of his impasse by Ferdinand Lassalle, who encouraged him to re-enter politics. Schweitzer joined Lassalle's Universal German Workingmen's Association in 1863.

Several members of the Association were offended by the Schweitzer incident. Ferdinand Lassalle, however, defended Schweitzer, and said, "What Schweitzer did isn't pretty, but I hardly look upon it as a crime. At any rate, we can't let ourselves lose someone with such great ability, indeed a phenomenal person. In the long run, sexual activity is a matter of taste and ought to be left up to each person, so long as he doesn't encroach upon someone else's interests. Though I wouldn't give my daughter in marriage to such a man."

After Lassalle's death, Schweitzer was elected head of the Universal German Workingmen's Association. The German workers apparently were more impressed by Schweitzer's abilities as a working-class leader than by any past indiscretion in his personal life. He was later elected as a representative in the Reichstag.

The Wilde Case And Die Neue Zeit

Oscar Wilde was arrested in April 1895. The British press roused public opinion to a frenzy against Wilde. An atmosphere of deepest reaction ensued for homosexuals.

A number of French citizens initiated a petition to the Queen of England to pardon Wilde, but Queen Victoria issued no pardon. The French press, by and large, while not abusing Wilde, treated the whole thing in an ironical and sarcastic tone. Only a few writers raised their voices in defense of Wilde.

In Germany, there were only two instances where the press "illuminated the Wilde case in a fair manner," according to the Yearbook. One was *Die Neue Zeit*, the most prestigious journal of the Second International. This

was the period of *Die Neue Zeit's* greatness, under Engels, Liebknecht, Kautsky, Bernstein, and Bebel.

In a long, two-part article written in April-May 1895, Eduard Bernstein defended Wilde and presented a far-ranging materialist critique of the irrationality and hypocrisy of society's sexual morality, the legal contradictions and injustices, the obligation of the socialist movement to provide leadership on sexual questions from a scientific perspective.

He wrote, "Although the subject of sex life might seem of low priority for the economic and political struggle of the Social Democracy, this nevertheless does not mean it is not obligatory to find a standard also for judging this side of social life, a standard based on a scientific approach and knowledge rather than on more or less arbitrary moral concepts. Today the party is strong enough to exert an influence on the character of statutory law, and through its speakers and its press it enjoys an influence upon public opinion that extends beyond the circle of its own supporters. As a result, it must take a certain responsibility for what happens these days. Therefore, an attempt will be made in what follows to open up the way to such a scientific approach to the problem."

Bernstein argued that the word "unnatural," as applied legally and in common parlance to homosexual acts, was inappropriate. Strictly speaking, nothing one did in the course of a day was "natural," including carrying on "intercourse" through the written word. He proposed instead saying "not the norm," emphasizing the materialist basic that "*moral attitudes are historical phenomena.*" Judgments on what are "natural" or "unnatural" really reflect a society's stage of development rather than any genuine state of nature.

Throughout Bernstein's article runs the insistence that sexual mores be seen in historical perspective, illuminated by anthropology and ethnology, rather than in absolute, idealistic terms. He observed, ". . . previously the Romans, the Greeks, the Egyptians and various Asiatic peoples cultivated homosexual gratification." Reserving judgment on how this first came about, he continued: ". . . we must be satisfied with the statement that same-sex intercourse is so old and so widespread that there is no stage of human culture we could say with certainty was free from this phenomenon."

Bernstein took up and refuted the popular notion that an increase in homosexuality accompanied so-called "periods of decadence," arguing that the ancient Greeks and other peoples had freely allowed and practiced homosexual love in the periods of their greatest vitality.

Bernstein warned against accepting sickness theories put forward by Krafft-Ebing and the majority of the psychiatrists of that day. He stressed that psychiatrists have difficulty judging an individual case of same-sex love on truly medical rather than on moralizing grounds. He wrote: "In any case, it is a certainty that [male homosexuality] is by no means always a sign of a depraved disposition, decrepitude, bestial pleasure-seeking and the like. Anyone who comes out with such [psychiatric] epithets takes the standpoint of the most reactionary penal laws."

The Social Democracy

August Bebel continued to support the gay movement following his 1898 stand. In a 1907 speech, the old and

ailing Bebel recalled the shock some Reichstag members had expressed over his estimates as to the great numbers of homosexuals, and how he had been accused of exaggeration. In retrospect, Bebel maintained he had not exaggerated—if anything he may have estimated too few!

Bebel also stressed that Paragraph 175 was enforced with a double standard—one for the higher-ups and another for workers. In his opinion, on this basis alone, Paragraph 175 was indefensible.

He wound up by saying, "But gentlemen, you have no idea how many respectable, honorable and brave men, even in high and the highest positions, are driven to suicide year after year, one from shame, another from fear of the blackmailer."

It reflects Bebel's greatness that he could respond to, learn from, and evolve with the rise of the gay movement. In this sense, too, it justifies Trotsky's appraisal in a speech to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets on 2 September 1918:

"[the epoch of so-called peaceful capitalist development] fashioned the outstanding leaders of the European working-class movement. Among them we saw such a brilliant figure as that of August Bebel. . . . His thought advanced step by step, just as the German working class in the epoch of world reaction rose only gradually from the depths, freeing itself from darkness and prejudices. His spiritual figure grew, developed, became stronger and rose in stature—but all this took place on the selfsame ground of watchful waiting and preparation. Such was August Bebel in his ideas and methods—the best figure of an epoch which lies behind us and which already belongs to eternity." (*Leon Trotsky Speaks*)

Following Bebel's lead, the Social Democracy supported efforts to repeal Paragraph 175, and the Party's newspaper, *Vorwärts*, carried news of the gay movement.

The 1905 Reichstag Debate

An unprecedented parliamentary debate on gay rights took place on May 31, 1905. The Social Democrats intervened in a most vigorous way. The Reichstag split nearly down the middle—with the Social Democrats supporting the petition and nearly all members of the clerical and bourgeois parties opposing it.

The brunt of the argument for the gay movement's petition to repeal Paragraph 175 was carried by the Social Democrat Adolph Thiele, who had obviously done considerable research and collaborated with the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. His speeches take up a full thirty-four pages of the Committee's 1905 Yearbook, which printed the entire record of the debate.

Thiele expressed his hope that the matter could be approached in as objective, unprejudiced, and non-partisan way as possible. He described the petition, which then had about 5,000 signers.

Using Magnus Hirshfeld's statistical investigations, which indicated that about 6 percent of the population were either homo- or bisexual (a much too low figure in light of the Kinsey studies), he argued that not just thousands, but *hundreds of thousands* of Germans were made miserable and exposed to blackmail because of Paragraph 175.

Thiele attributed such laws as Paragraph 175 to carry-overs from the "priestly cruelty and intolerance" of the Middle Ages. He said the treatment of gays "reminds

one of the period of the Middle Ages, of that time when witches were burned, heretics were tortured, and proceedings against dissenters were conducted with the wheel and gallows."

The opposition to the petition was led by a Dr. Thaler of the Center Party. His arguments included a vicious personal attack on Karl Ulrichs; the brilliant observation that although 5,000 Germans had signed the petition 60 million had *not* signed it!; and an endorsement of the viewpoints of Moses, St. Paul, and Justinian. Dr. Thaler concluded his presentation by pleading, "So let's keep respect for Paragraph 175 to protect the threatened morals and the vitality of the German people."

The Bolsheviks And The Stalinists

With the bureaucratic degeneration, the Stalinists brought back sexual reaction, and have done their best to destroy traces of the previous revolutionary-socialist approach to sexual questions.

The Bolshevik government did away with all laws against homosexual acts *per se* in December 1917. They viewed this act—along with other moves to extend sexual freedom—as an integral part of the social revolution.

The sweeping reforms in sex-related matters that were an immediate by-product of the Russian revolution ushered in a new atmosphere of sexual freedom. This atmosphere, which gave an impetus to the sexual reform movement in Western Europe and America, was consciously extended to include homosexuality. "It was necessary, it was said, to take down the walls which separated the homosexuals from the rest of society," Reich reported. This attitude was generally shared by the population.

The official Soviet attitude under the Bolsheviks was that homosexuality did nobody any harm and that it was, if anything, a scientific matter, not a legal one.

The Bolshevik approach is reflected in a pamphlet by Dr. Batkis, the Director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, entitled *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*. The German edition was published in 1925, the original Russian in 1923. Batkis attended congresses of the World League for Sexual Reform in an official capacity.

The "Sexual Revolution in Russia" pamphlet covers a wide range of topics—basic theory, the tsarist legislation, women's emancipation, the family, protection of mothers and children, and the attitude of the state toward sexual activity.

Following is part of the introductory section of Batkis' pamphlet [complete paragraphs]:

"The present sexual legislation in the Soviet Union is the work of the October Revolution. This revolution is important not only as a political phenomenon, which secures the political rule of the working class. But also for the revolutions which emanating from it reach out into all areas of life. . . .

"The social legislation of the Russian communist revolution does not intend to be a product of pure theoretical knowledge, but rather represents the outcome of experience. After the successful revolution, after the triumph of practice over theory, people first strove for new, firm regulations along economic lines. Along with this were created models governing family life and forms of sexual relations responding to the needs and natural demands of the people. . . .

"The war set in motion the broad masses, the 100 mil-

lion peasants. New circumstances brought with them a new life and new outlook. In the first period of the war, women won economic independence both in the factory and in the country—but the October Revolution first cut the Gordian knot, and instead of mere reform, it completely revolutionized the laws. The revolution let nothing remain of the old despotic and infinitely unscientific laws, it did not tread the path of reformist bourgeois legislation which, with juristic subtlety, still hangs on to the concept of property in the sexual sphere, and ultimately demands that the double standard hold sway over sexual life. These laws always come about by disregarding science.

"The Soviet legislation proceeded along a new and previously untrodden path, in order to satisfy the new goals and tasks of the social revolution.

"No society in the whole world set these goals, whose problems confronted no previous revolution.

"The relationship of Soviet law to the sexual sphere is based on the principle that the demands of the vast majority of the people correspond to and are in harmony with the findings of contemporary science. . . .

"Now by taking into account all these aspects of the transition period, Soviet legislation bases itself on the following principle:

"It declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured, and no one's interests are encroached upon." (Emphasis in original.)

One paragraph of Batkis' pamphlet specifically deals with homosexuality. It follows:

"Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters. Only when there's use of force or duress, as in general when there's an injury or encroachment upon the rights of another person, is there a question of criminal prosecution."

The work of Magnus Hirschfeld, and to a lesser extent Freud, provided much of the basis for the lengthy treatment of homosexuality in the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, published in 1930.

The Encyclopedia noted that "in the advanced capitalist countries, the struggle for the abolition of these hypocritical laws is at present far from over. In Germany, for example, Magnus Hirschfeld is leading an especially fierce and not unsuccessful struggle to abolish the law against homosexuality. Soviet law does not recognize 'crime' against morality. . . ."

(The line had changed considerably by the third edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, published in 1971. The entry in its entirety: "*Homosexuality* (from *gomo* . . . and Lat. *sexus*—sex), a *sexual perversion* consisting in unnatural attraction to persons of the same sex. It occurs in persons of both sexes. The penal statutes of the USSR, the socialist countries, and even some bourgeois states, provide for the punishment of homosexuality (*muzhelo-zhestvo*—sodomy between males)."

Yet however commendable and tolerant their legal approach to homosexuality, and however advanced their social attitude in comparison to the capitalist world, there is no indication that the Soviets reached a point of at-

tempting to positively integrate homosexual behavior into society: (1930 Encyclopedia) "It is already obvious that the Soviet evaluation of the features and characteristics of homosexuals is completely different from the West's evaluation. While understanding the wrongness of the development of homosexuality, society does not place and cannot place blame for it on those who exhibit it. This breaks down to a significant degree the wall which actually arises between the homosexual and society and forces the former to delve deeply into himself."

The extent to which a relaxed attitude toward homosexuality developed as a result of the official Soviet attitude under the Bolsheviks may be seen in the decision of the symbolist poet, Mikhail Kusmin, to publish a collection of erotic verse in 1920, illustrated with unabashedly homoerotic drawings by a friend, Vladimir Milashevski. Kusmin, the first Russian writer of note to make homosexual love into a central theme of his work, continued to publish throughout the 1920s, his last work being published in 1929.

The Soviet Union sent delegates to the International Congresses of the World League for Sexual Reform: Berlin (1921), Copenhagen (1928), London (1929), and Vienna (1930). A fifth congress—originally scheduled to be held in Moscow, with point number one on the agenda being "Marxism and Sexual Problems"—was held in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1932 instead.

At the 1928 congress in Copenhagen, the Soviet Union's sexual legislation was held up as a model in two resolutions passed by the congress, one dealing with the German penal code and the other offered as a model for world sexual reform.

At the same time, some indications of the Stalinist reaction became apparent in 1928. While still stressing the legality of homosexual acts *per se*, and of abortions, the Professor Dr. Nikolai Pasche-Oserski also anticipated a legal reversal by referring to homosexuality as a potential "social peril" and abortions as an "evil." Pasche-Oserski suggested that the pragmatic "social peril" guideline might be more progressive than the traditional legal concept that no act should be considered a crime unless there is a law on the books stating so. Actually, "social peril" is a completely reactionary conception shared alike by the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie. It throws the door wide open to the exercise of arbitrary bureaucratic authority and the abrupt termination of civil liberties and legal safeguards. This was echoed in the French government's decision in 1960 to brand homosexuality as a "social scourge" and the Cuban decision in 1971 to treat it as a "social pathology."

By the 1929 Congress in London, the Soviet delegates did not mention homosexuality, whereas before they had held up the non-criminal status in Soviet law as a model. In a related issue, Dr. A. Gens, while still maintaining that abortion as such was not punishable, referred to abortion as "an evil" to be agitated against among the masses of female toilers. Gens concluded his presentation, "Demand for Abortion in Soviet Russia," by stating: "We are deeply convinced that the best foundation of society necessitates the consciousness of motherhood."

At the 1930 Congress in Vienna, the Soviet delegates did not mention homosexuality either. Dr. Batkis now found himself put on the defensive, having to try to justify changes in attitude regarding abortion.

The Triumph of Stalinism

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Stalinists began to develop a whole mythology in which homosexuality was "the product of decadence in the bourgeois sector of society" and "the fascist perversion." (The fascists reciprocated by branding any departure from their glorified "moral purity" as "sexual Bolshevism!") Stalinists began extolling the virtues of "proletarian decency."

Discrimination, spying, denunciation, and party purges against homosexuals began. In some cases, old Bolsheviks like Klara Zetkin intervened and achieved acquittal in some cases.

In January 1934, mass arrests of gays were carried out in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, and Odessa. Among those arrested were a great many actors, musicians, and other artists. They were accused of engaging in "homosexual orgies," and were sentenced to several years of imprisonment or exile to Siberia. The mass arrests produced a panic among Soviet gays, and were followed by numerous suicides in the Red Army itself.

In March 1934, a law punishing homosexual acts with imprisonment up to eight years was introduced. The law, which took the form of a federal statute, was the result of the personal intervention of Stalin. It limited the definition of homosexuality to males; it provided for up to five years imprisonment for consensual homosexual acts and up to eight years if the act was accompanied by taking advantage of the dependent position of one of the partners, by the use of force, or if it was conducted as a profession or publicly. All republics were required to insert the statute unchanged into their codes. In effect, the law raised homosexuality to the level of a state security matter, constituting a peril to the moral fabric of society.

The Soviet press began a campaign against homosexuality as a sign of "degeneracy of the fascist bourgeoisie." One of the loudest voices raised against homosexuality was that of the hack Gorki, who soon lent his enthusiastic backing to the stifling, tasteless, and reactionary concept of "socialist realism." Words cannot adequately convey the contempt he deserves for his article "Proletarian humanism," in which he wrote, with reference to anti-Semitism and homosexuality: "One revolts at even mentioning the horrors which fascism brings to such a rich flowering." And, he continued: "In the fascist countries, homosexuality, which ruins youth, flourishes without punishment; in the country where the proletariat has audaciously achieved social power, homosexuality has been declared a social crime and is heavily punished. There is already a slogan in Germany, 'Eradicate the homosexual and fascism will disappear.'"

In truth, it was in June 1934, only three months after Stalin's antihomosexual statute was decreed, that Hitler wiped out the entire leadership of the SA, using arguments similar to those of the Soviet Union's antigay persecution.

The Stalinist campaign against homosexuality did not occur in isolation, of course, but went together with a general reactionary trend that accompanied the triumph of the bureaucracy. This was reflected in other areas, too, such as the abolition of legal abortion in 1936 and the exaltation of heterosexuality and the family as ideals for the Soviet citizen. A *Pravda* editorial discussing the proposal to abolish abortion painted a picture of the Stalinist citizen that, however revolting it might seem even to the heterosexually oriented person, certainly must have

struck anguish and terror in the hearts of Communist gays: "The *elite* of our country, the best of the Soviet youth, are as a rule also excellent family men who dearly love their children. And *vice versa*: the man who does not take marriage seriously, and abandons his children to the whims of fate, is usually also a bad worker and a poor member of society.

"Fatherhood and motherhood have long been virtues in this country. This can be seen at the first glance, without searching enquiry. Go through the parks and streets of Moscow or of any other town in the Soviet Union on a holiday, and you will see not a few young men walking with pink-cheeked well-fed babies in their arms."

It was during this period—at the end of 1935 and the first part of 1936—that the French writer, André Gide, made a visit to the USSR that wounded both his communist and his homosexual sensibilities. Homosexuals, he noted, were viewed as synonymous with counterrevolutionaries (just as in Cuba today), and the battle against nonconformity "was fought even in the area of sexual questions."

Pierre Herbart, who accompanied Gide on his trip, wrote in his diary that conversations everywhere in Moscow were "edifying and moral in nature." He said he was "so sick of virtue that I could throw up. I learned that boys no longer kiss girls without first having gone before the mayor; that homosexuals are mending their ways by reading Marx in concentration camps; that taxis must be lit up at night so as not to harbor sin; that the bedsheets of Red Army soldiers are inspected in order to shame those who masturbate; that children have no need for sex education because they never think about dirty things like that; that the fee for divorce is about to be raised, thereby putting it out of the reach of the poor; that it is unhealthy for people to enjoy themselves sexually without reproducing. This has all been proven by science, and everybody bows down in awe before its decrees."

The campaign against homosexuality in the Soviet Union served as a cutting edge in the efforts of the Stalinist bureaucracy to secure a final stranglehold over the Soviet population in the mid-thirties—a process that was to culminate in the Moscow trials. Antigay witch hunts have frequently served this purpose in the hands of reactionary forces throughout history, whether it be the Inquisition, the British bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century, the Nazis, the U. S. capitalist class in the 1950s, the present day Greek fascists, or the Stalinist elements that are asserting themselves in Cuba today.

V. Conclusion

The early gay movement was cut short after seventy years of existence, without having achieved any lasting breakthroughs. The small, isolated groups that came into existence here and there during the next two decades could not even be called holding actions, since there was little left to hold onto. The onslaught of Stalinism, fascism, and the ravages of World War II had wiped out virtually any trace of the first wave of gay liberation.

Today the gay liberation movement is in resurgence on an international scale never before seen. As it rediscovers and renews ties with its past, it will find not only inspiration in the first wave of gay assault on bourgeois morality and legality, but also important weapons for extending that struggle.

The rediscovery will be of special value to socialists. For it will provide important new evidence for their argument that the liberation of *all* the oppressed lies in the struggle to abolish the system that fosters and thrives upon their oppression.

Today revolutionary socialists are in a better position

than ever to champion the struggle of those who do not choose to make love according to the prescriptions of theologians, psychiatrists, bourgeois lawbooks, and Stalinist traitors. The historic revitalization of the homosexual rights struggle gives us a special opportunity—and a responsibility—to do so.

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