

International Sexual Reform and Sexology in Europe, 1897-1933

NICHOLAS MATTE

Abstract. This paper looks at the relationship of sex reformers and sexology to social reform in Europe in the 20th century prior to the outbreak of World War I. It considers a variety of emerging sexual classification systems and national reform efforts, with special attention to Magnus Hirschfeld and the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin, which was destroyed by the Nazis in 1933. It argues that during this time period the international connections between individual reformers and sexologists developed into a transnational network that was able, to a certain extent, to protect and encourage the rights of sexual minorities both within and beyond national borders.

Résumé. Cet article étudie les relations des réformateurs du sexe et de la sexologie à la réforme sociale en Europe au 20^e siècle avant le déclenchement de la Première Guerre mondiale. Il prend en considération une variété de systèmes de classification sexuelle émergente et d'efforts de réforme nationale, avec une attention spéciale à Magnus Hirschfeld et à l'Institut pour la Science sexuelle de Berlin, qui a été détruit par les nazis en 1933. L'auteur affirme que durant cette période, les rapports entre les réformateurs individuels et les sexologues se sont développés dans un réseau transnational que était capable, jusqu'à un certain point, de protéger et d'encourager les droits des minorités sexuelles, tant à l'intérieur qu'au-delà des frontières nationales.

Sexology as a field became especially important in Europe, but also throughout the world, in the early 20th century. Not only did it create many of the terms and concepts we continue to use as the basis for understanding human sexuality (and especially sexual minorities), it also created a space in which social reformers could argue for equal rights and fair laws for people marginalized on the basis of what we

Nicholas Matte, Doctoral Student in History, University of Victoria.

would now call their sexual orientation or gender identity. Although many aspects of its development occurred in Germany, it was a movement which developed across national borders, a fact which became extremely important during World War II when the European crisis would significantly impact the work of sexual reformers in almost every country involved in the movement, but most especially Germany, where much of the important work housed there was destroyed by the Nazis.

This paper, then, will seek to document the development of the international network established by the Sexology movement between 1897, when Magnus Hirschfeld formed the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee to petition a repeal of the infamous paragraph 175 of the German penal code which criminalized “unnatural sexual acts” between men, and 1933, when the Nazis raided the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin. Towards this end, I will briefly outline some key developments in contemporary sexual theories (with special emphasis on theories of sexual minorities) as background to the movement’s emergence as both a scientific field and an arena for international sexual reform. I will then introduce the cultural and legal contexts from which the movement emerged and in which it was also required to develop. The variety of international circumstances played a major role in encouraging participants of the Sexology movement to become active and establish a sense of authority that could secure social understanding of those aspects of sexual life that they considered important. I will then look at some of the major collaborations and conflicts that emerged between individuals, between and within groups and institutions, and between the movement and various states. Important collaborations included the creation of many international bodies and forums that would significantly support as a material base the continuation of sexual reform and research beyond that which would have been possible if it had been limited to a national movement. Finally, I will look briefly at Magnus Hirschfeld’s world speaking tour and the Nazi Raid of the Institute in 1933, shortly thereafter.

KEY THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Many individuals contributed to the theorizing of sexology in the late 19th century. Among them, several schools of thought emerged. They can all, to a certain extent, be traced to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who, between 1864 and 1879 published 12 volumes on his theories about the origins and nature of what he called Uranism.¹ These pamphlets were largely based on his own personal experience of coming to terms with his sexuality. While he originally published under a pseudonym, he subsequently became a public activist for sexual minority rights by using his real name, which allowed many others to contact him and gave him the opportunity to refine his theory to account for aspects which were

outside of his own experience. Ulrich's theory was that there existed a third sex, comprising what he called "Urnings." He believed that these Urnings were men with female souls, and based on his knowledge of early embryology, he posited that embryos had two "germs," one that determined sex and one that determined sexual attraction.² In the case of the Urnings, these two germs were in conflict. Ulrichs later refined his theory to include a fourth sex (for female Urnings, which he called Enin-gins). He also argued that Urnings were not attracted to each other, but to Dionings, men with male souls. He argued that sex between Urnings and Dionings should be allowed, and the thrust of his theorizing was towards legal reform. Ulrichs, himself a lawyer, had been disbarred from practising law once he was known to be an Urning³ and was forced to flee to Bavaria when Hanover was taken over by Prussia in 1866.⁴

While Ulrichs was not active during the high period of Sexology as an international movement, nor was he himself a medical professional, he did, nevertheless, have contact with others who would respond to and adapt his ideas within the movement. For example, in January of 1879, Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, the influential Viennese professor of psychiatry, wrote to Ulrichs:

The study of your writings on love between men interested me in the highest degree... since you... for the first time openly spoke about these matters. From that day on, when—I believe it was in 1866—you sent me your writings, I have devoted my full attention to this phenomenon, which at the time was as puzzling to me as it was interesting. It was the knowledge of your writings alone which led to my studies in this highly important field.⁵

This important contact between Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebbing gave the subject of same-sex attraction and gender ambiguity a crucial voice within the newly emerging field of psychiatry. Richard von Krafft-Ebbing's study of deviant sexualities would come to be extremely influential in legal and social interpretations of a variety of sexual proclivities. While Ulrichs had based his theories in large part on himself, Krafft-Ebbing was not only not attracted to other men or otherwise gender variant, he was a scientist working with asylum populations in the context of degenerationist thought, which imagined mental illness to be rooted in a diseased nervous system. In his own theorizing, Krafft-Ebbing distinguished between moral failing and sickness. He argued that some people were genuinely attracted to members of the same-sex as part of a degenerative condition associated with underdeveloped bodies, and he considered the possibility of damage to the genitals to be the cause of sex and gender variance.⁶ His model tended to centre around desire rather than pleasure, and he classified four types of sexual perversion: homosexuality, fetishism, sadism and masochism;⁷ in addition, he theorized that there were four kinds of inborn homosexuality: a continuum from

“psychosexual hermaphrodisy,” to androgyny, as well as 3 types of learned homosexuality.⁸ Krafft-Ebbing also sought to define a rational taxonomy of sexuality in general, and his major contribution to Sexology’s theoretical background was his extensive case histories, which, by the 12th edition of his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, numbered over 300.⁹ Like Ulrichs, many people contacted Krafft-Ebbing after he began publishing on sexual deviance. They often argued that his theory of degeneracy was inaccurate and offensive. Others requested his help in becoming cured of their disease. Ulrichs himself, while admired by Krafft-Ebbing, complained that doctors such as Krafft-Ebbing only became familiar with people in asylums and thus represented Urnings to the world in a faulty light.¹⁰ But while Krafft-Ebbing was largely restricted to the formal medical model in which he practised, others blurred the boundaries of medicine in order to effect social and legal change and ensure that sexual minority or gender variant people were not looked down upon by society generally.

Havelock Ellis, a British physician, was one such person. Having married Edith Leeds, an outspoken lesbian, and himself having had several close male friends who were attracted to men, he was adamant that inversion, as he called it, was a natural anomaly that should be accepted. He believed that the basis of inversion, or eonism, as he also sometimes called it, was to be found within the endocrine system.¹¹ While he disagreed about the existence of a third sex, (because he thought of transvestitism as a largely heterosexual matter), he did agree with the distinction between inverts, whose tastes were congenital, and homosexuals, whose were acquired.¹² He believed that human beings were all bisexual and that differences were simply a matter of degree, not kind. Believing that there was some truth to be taken from all theories, unlike most of his contemporaries, Ellis also placed importance on the role of love, for example, arguing that sadists and masochists associated love with pain.¹³ The main focus of Ellis’ theorizing on sexuality was to make more acceptable the variety of sexual practices which existed, although he himself often avoided controversy and therefore tended to write more about the congenital rather than the acquired forms of homosexuality. He was very important, nevertheless, as an agitator for sexual reform, as we shall soon see.

Magnus Hirschfeld, a doctor and reformer in Berlin, held views more consistent with Ulrichs’ original “third sex” theory. Hirschfeld believed that there was a continuum of gender and sex between male and female, and developed the term *Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (“sexual intermediary”) to describe people who were attracted to members of the same sex or otherwise gender variant. He came to further distinguish between homosexuals and transvestites (the term for which he coined in 1910), and later expanded his theory to include a definition of transsexuals.¹⁴

Hirschfeld's motto "per scientiam ad justiam" ("through science to justice") reflected his firm belief that science could provide the opportunity for fair treatment of all. Like Krafft-Ebbing, he used extensive case histories and consultations to develop his theories, (although Hirschfeld had a much wider pool from which he theorized) but he was less interested in developing theories than in effecting legal and social reform, an endeavor to which he would contribute greatly. This was largely because, like Ellis, he felt that sexual minorities should not be criminalized or pathologized.

It was Iwan Bloch, a Berlin dermatologist, who devised the definition of Sexology. Feeling that theorizing about sexuality from a strictly medical perspective was too narrow, Bloch proposed the new study of *Sexualwissenschaft* (Sexual Science, or "Sexology"), which would incorporate anthropological and historical data into understanding the variety of sexualities. He argued that since sexual "perversions" existed in all cultures and times, what really needed explaining was that they continued to be so repressed.¹⁵

But without their connections to each other and to a wide international network of sexologists and reformers at the beginning of the 20th century, none of these individuals, had they been working in isolation, would have been able to engage in the type of social reform or research that they did. Each had their own specific goals and projects in mind, but they accomplished them through co-operation and mutual learning, as well as within a wider social context. And because they often faced negative social reception for their ideas, much of what they accomplished would have been stunted had it not been for the mutual energy they provided each other, and for the official authority which the movement developed because of its international character. We cannot ignore, then, the important legal and cultural contexts in which the movement emerged and developed.

LEGAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT FOR THE EMERGENCE OF SEXOLOGY

As in the case of Ulrichs, who was forced to flee his home in 1866 when Prussian troops occupied Hanover and declared same sex sexual relations illegal, the legal context in which many Sexologists lived was a driving force in the development and applications of their theories and work. Ulrichs' had begun his protest because he feared that impending German unification would result in the more repressive laws being extended to places which had previously allowed same sex relations. His flight from Hanover to Bavaria to avoid this possibility turned out to be only temporary, as his fears were realized and he was finally forced to leave Germany permanently for Italy in 1880.¹⁶

Many other sexologists faced similar legal sanctions, although they were not necessarily as severe. But because of the international communication network which would develop in the first part of the 20th century, individuals became much more aware of the variety of ways Sexology was limited by the state or other powerful groups and found their own ways to react and co-operate in resistance. For example, many sexologists faced publication censorship. Havelock Ellis was unable to find a British publisher for his major work, *Sexual Inversion*, and so it first appeared in Germany in 1896 as *Das Konträre Geschlechtsgefühl*, before eventually getting published by the Watford University Press, in England.¹⁷ Even then, one reviewer wrote that “more than an ordinary danger is attached to Mr. Havelock Ellis’ work as a book for laymen... it is especially important that such matters should not be discussed by the man in the street, not to mention the boy and girl in the street.”¹⁸ Further, in 1898, George Bedborough, secretary of the Legitimation League, was arrested for selling “a certain lewd, wicked, bawdy, scandalous libel,”¹⁹ namely, Ellis’ *Sexual Inversion*. After that, Ellis had his work published in the United States, where Random House did not restrict its circulation to professionals, as had been attempted in Britain. Such an example of international publishing as a form of resistance to national censorship laws was common, and important in making international members of the Sexology movement aware of potential and actual issues faced by their colleagues in other countries. International scandals were particularly important in generating enthusiasm for the movement’s participation in legal and social reform, as was evident in the widely famous trials of Oscar Wilde.

Other sexologists, such as Krafft-Ebbing, who had less personal vulnerability could use state interest and repressive legal contexts to achieve personal and professional standing. His largest work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, for example, was written for doctors, lawyers and jurists who were discerning the guilt or innocence of those accused. Krafft-Ebbing argued that sexual deviance should not be criminalized, but rather pathologized, and that the appropriate state response to sexual “perversion” was to consult with professionals such as himself for treatment rather than punishment, and especially not to determine for themselves whether such deviants could be held responsible for their actions. This kind of call for professional consultation was common by most Sexologists and many sexual reformers, who held a variety of motivations and expectations. Krafft-Ebbing’s work was widely read, and within his own lifetime translated into Russian, Japanese, French, Italian, Hungarian, Dutch and English.²⁰ However, there was concern, especially in Britain and the United States, that despite its value for authorities, it detailed acts that shouldn’t even be discussed, and thus it was not encouraged as authoritative in those countries, nor was it as well received.²¹ For exam-

ple, one British reviewer argued that “there are many morally disgusting subjects which have to be studied by the doctor and by the jurist, but the less such subjects are brought before the public the better.”²²

As many Sexologists were themselves social and sexual reformers, conflicts sometimes arose between the relative importance of developing the authority of medical experts versus promoting social reform. For example, some Sexologists accused others of being interested more in social and legal reform than in the newly emerging “objective science” which they imagined Sexology to be. It was in this complicated legal, social, and professional context that Magnus Hirschfeld’s Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, the first formal organization of the international Sexology and sexual reform movement, emerged.

COLLABORATIONS AND CONFLICTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEXOLOGY MOVEMENT

Magnus Hirschfeld formed the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee), in 1897, to petition the Reichstag to repeal paragraph 175 of the German penal code, which criminalized same-sex sexual relations between men. Like Ulrichs, Hirschfeld had published his own personal protest against the discrimination faced by sexual minorities in society in 1896, called *Sappho and Socrates or How Is the Love of Women and Men for Persons of Their Own Sex to be Explained?*²³ This publication resulted in many new contacts with people interested in his argument, and especially, in his expertise as a doctor. Unlike Ulrichs, Hirschfeld was inspired to mount a more organized public campaign against sexual discrimination, and the work of his committee extended beyond a general call for legal reform to a petition which would, over the course of the 25 years it was in circulation, collect over 6000 signatures,²⁴ including those of such prominent figures as Kraftt-Ebbing, Albert Einstein, Carl Maria Weber, and Finance minister Rudolph Hilferding. August Bebel, leader of the German Social-Democrat party, even argued in favour of the petition on the floor of the Reichstag.²⁵

While the petition was focused on a very specific law in Germany, it attracted international attention, and unsolicited international signatories included Zola and Tolstoy, among others.²⁶ The goals of the committee also grew to include the enlightenment of public opinion and developing, among members of sexual minorities themselves, an interest in the fight for social and legal reform, or what might later be called consciousness-raising. These last two goals lead to the expansion of the Committee’s work beyond its own national borders and specific legal concerns. As such, in 1899, it began publishing the *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Yearbook for Sexual Intermediaries) an international popular journal which ran from 1899-1922 and contained a variety of

perspectives on homosexuality and gender variance, including scholarly articles, biographies, propaganda, and some major sexological contributions (such as from Krafft-Ebbing). By 1908, more than 5000 gays had contacted the Committee²⁷ and chapters were active in a variety of countries, including Holland,²⁸ Austria, and Britain. The *Jahrbuch* was not, however, a scientific journal as much as it was a journal of sexual reform. Hirschfeld also edited *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft* (Journal of Sexology), which contained exclusively scientific articles, including an article in the first issue by Freud titled "Hysterical Fantasy and Its Relation to Bisexuality" in 1908.²⁹

From the formation of the Committee onward, Hirschfeld would prove to be one of the most significant individuals in the international organization of the Sexology movement. As a self-identified member of the intermediary sex (an identity which he refined over time), a doctor, and an ardent social reformer, he was central to many efforts which brought diverse individuals together into groups that could affect change and pursue research in new and exciting directions. Thus, framing an account of the international elements of the Sexology movement around his activities and associations is particularly helpful. For example, Hirschfeld went to Italy to solicit articles for the *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* from Paolo Mantegazza (who wrote *Anthropological Studies of Sexual Relations of Mankind*) and Cesare Lombroso (who had conducted large-scale research into criminals, prostitutes and geniuses).³⁰ He had originally met them both at a medical congress in Rome in 1894, where they encouraged and impressed him.³¹ Hirschfeld was also active in local movements, and successfully petitioned the Berlin police to give some people special permits to live as members of the opposite sex.³²

Formal societies and institutions would come to be increasingly important in the internationalism of the Sexology movement, but in its early years, many of the international connections were between individuals across national and disciplinary borders. For example, we have seen the importance of contact between Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebbing and that of those contacts made by Hirschfeld as a result of his publications. Havelock Ellis's work was also largely based on important contact with the writer John Addington Symonds, who helped him refine his theories, challenged his reliance on biological explanations for inversion, and in fact co-authored much of *Sexual Inversion*, although his contribution was not recognized as such until later because he died before its publication and his family objected to using his name.³³ Later, as a result of *Sexual Inversion's* censorship trial, hundreds of men and women contacted Ellis on a variety of issues, cementing for Ellis the relationship between sexology and social reform.³⁴ Such connections between medical and non-medical people were invaluable to both sexology and the reform movement, because, as Harry Oosterhuis has argued, it created

social space in which it became possible to discuss topics previously unavailable, and “served not only as a guide for professionals, but also as a mouthpiece and panel for the individuals concerned.”³⁵ For marginalized individuals, official recognition was crucial. In a letter to Edward Carpenter, John Addington Symonds wrote: “I am so glad that H. Ellis told you about our project. I never saw him. But I like his way of corresponding on this subject. And I need somebody of medical importance to collaborate with. Alone, I could make but little effect—the effect of an eccentric.”³⁶ And while these individual contacts expanded the network of available resources, it was nevertheless the establishment of institutions and groups, and collaborations between groups, that expanded the movement beyond the theories and actions of a few individuals.

In 1913, Iwan Bloch, Magnus Hirschfeld, and several other physicians founded an academic society, the *Ärtliche Gesellschaft für Sexualwissenschaft und Eugenik* (Medical Society for Sexology and Eugenics), which was open to both medical and non-medical academics, and held monthly meetings at which papers were presented for discussion on the topic of Sexology. Within its first year, the Society grew from 15 to 100 members.³⁷ In the same year, Albert Moll, a Berlin physician, established the *Internationale Gesellschaft für Sexualforschung* (International Society for Sex Research), with very similar goals. Moll disagreed with Hirschfeld’s combination of mixing legal and social reform with what he considered to be the new *science* of Sexology, and he often organized against Hirschfeld’s efforts. Hirschfeld had tried to work with Moll, but Moll rejected these efforts. Moll believed homosexuality was fundamentally degenerative and pathological, and he offered treatment to cure acquired homosexuality through association therapy.³⁸ As such, he was highly critical of cooperation with sexual minorities and worried quite publicly about the inclusion of Hirschfeld within the field because of his “questionable motivations.” While Moll argued for an approach more in line with Krafft-Ebbing’s original work, Krafft-Ebbing’s own ideas evolved with the movement, and in his last article on the subject, published in Hirschfeld’s *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, he acknowledged that scientific research into the topic of Uranism had been one-sided.³⁹

Within the movement there were many conflicts, of which the personal conflict between Moll and Hirschfeld was just one. At the height of their authority, many sexologists were consulted by state officials looking for justification to change legal and social policy. Sexologists were usually used to defend the innocence of the accused, but interests were often complicated in the types of defence they mounted. As we have already seen, debate between Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebbing about whether it was in the best interest of the accused to be deemed sick was the main debate. An example of how important that distinction was arose in the case of the Adolf Brand, who was arrested in 1903 for distributing “lascivious

writings" for a journal he published, *Der Eigene* (1896-1931). Brand had been the leader of a counter-movement that argued for a return to Greek pederastic love and for a sort of "cult of masculinity" in which sexual relations between men was only one part. As such, he was quite public with his view that Hirschfeld's "intermediary sex" theory was incompatible with equal rights for homosexuals, and the division was so strong between the two approaches that Hirschfeld either could or would not testify on Brand's behalf, given the nature of his defense and attack Hirschfeld's theory of a "third sex."⁴⁰

Perhaps the most significant collaboration and international resource for Sexology and the Sexual Reform movement was the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute for Sexology/Sexual Science), founded by Hirschfeld in Berlin in 1919. It acted both as an international center at which a variety of projects could come together and also as a research and treatment facility. Established through private funds as a government-approved foundation, the Institute offered public lectures, a museum and archive of sexual ethnography, marital counselling facilities, psychotherapy, and gynecology services. The marriage counselling facility alone was visited by thousands of people, and was used as a model for many other countries.⁴¹ In addition, all who visited the Institute were given the opportunity to sign Hirschfeld's petition, as well as to participate in a sexual history questionnaire used by Hirschfeld as a large-scale study of human sexuality. The Institute had a considerable staff, a lecture hall and library, and trained young scholars in the field. It was loosely affiliated with the University of Berlin and had tens of thousands of visitors. It housed 20,000 volumes, 35,000 pictures, and 40,000 biographies and confessionals as well as a variety of rare objects and art. It had visitors from all over the world, including Margaret Sanger, Harry Benjamin, Jawaharlal Nehru, and many national delegations, such as that of a 1923 Commissar of health delegation from Russia.⁴²

The Institute also held offices for affiliated organizations like the World League of Sexual Reform and the *Deutscher Bund für Mutterschutz und Sexual Reform* (German Alliance for the Legal Protection of Motherhood and Sexual Reform). The *Bund* fought against paragraph 218 of the German penal code (which criminalized abortion), was a member organization of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, and through the marriage counselling section of the Institute gave advice to unmarried mothers.⁴³ Because paragraph 175, the main focus of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, only related to men who engaged in same-sex sexual relations, women had been largely absent from the early campaign. However, as the movement grew to include issues of more widespread social change, women began to hold extremely prominent roles, and many of the Sexologists working within the sex reform movement saw their work as naturally overlapping with other social causes. For

example, Havelock Ellis gave his support to campaigns for birth control, abortion, and voluntary euthanasia, among others.⁴⁴ Magnus Hirschfeld was an active socialist and supporter of the women's movement. They both had important connections with leaders of the women's movement (Ellis being a close friend of Margaret Sanger,⁴⁵ the American birth control pioneer, and Hirschfeld of Dr. Helen Stöcker, president of the *Bund* and one of the first women to receive her PhD in Germany⁴⁶). Indeed, at a 1904 meeting of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee Anna Ruhling gave a speech entitled "What Interest Does the Women's Movement Have in a Solution to the Homosexual Problem?" in which she argued that the women's movement must take into account the threat of legal sanctions on sexual acts presented to some of its most prominent activists, who happened to be lesbians.⁴⁷ In fact, a draft penal code in 1910 proposed the expansion of paragraph 175 to include sexual relations between women,⁴⁸ which further encouraged women to join the campaign.

Equally important as the permanent, central, physical space which the Institute provided were the various conferences designed to ensure and develop the international nature of the movement. The first international conference was held in Berlin in 1921, titled "the International Meeting for Sexual Reform on a Sexological Basis."⁴⁹ Primarily co-coordinated by Hirschfeld, the organizing committee included scientists from San Francisco, Tokyo, Peking, Moscow, London, Copenhagen, and Rome,⁵⁰ and physicians in attendance came from as far away as Argentina, China, and Japan.⁵¹ The congress lasted 6 days and had 48 speakers on a variety of subjects, including sex and the law, birth control, sex education, and endocrinology.⁵² That same year (1921), Albert Moll also began planning a rival international conference, although his remained in the planning stages until 1926. Hailed as "purely scientific," his conference had three times as many speakers, but included most of those who had attended Hirschfeld's.⁵³ Despite Hirschfeld's success and worldwide recognition as an expert of Sexology, he was not invited to Moll's conference, because, as Moll claimed, "the problematic nature of Magnus Hirschfeld made it impossible for me invite him. I have much material about this, but would not publish it now without being forced to do so."⁵⁴ Hirschfeld's colleagues were shocked by his absence. But despite his exclusion, he had nevertheless sent invitations to each of the delegates to visit the Institute for a guided tour during their stay in Berlin.⁵⁵

The Second International Conference for Sexual Reform was held in Copenhagen in 1928, and was organized by Dr. Hertha Rises (of Frankfurt) and Dr. J. H. Leunenbach (of Copenhagen) under the leadership of presidents Hirschfeld, Ellis, and August Forel.⁵⁶ The result was the formation of a new organization, the World League of Sexual Reform, which planned to hold annual conferences at rotating locations.⁵⁷ That

year, the committee had members from Argentina, Egypt, USSR, USA, Chile, Britain, France, and Germany.⁵⁸ The congress included such topics as "The Denaturalization of Women," by Dr. Johanna Elberskirchen, "Sexual Reform in the Soviet Union" by Dr. Leo Gurwitsch and George Batkis, and "The Sexual Education of Children," by Dora Russell.⁵⁹

The Third Congress, held the following year (1929) in London, was organized by Norman Haire, Dora Russell and Magnus Hirschfeld. Among the speakers were George Bernard Shaw (who spoke on "The Need for Expert Opinion in Sexual Reform"), Marie Stopes (from London) and Dr. Jurt Bendix (from Berlin) on their work on birth control,⁶⁰ and Bertrand Russel on censorship.⁶¹ The congress attendees also took part in a tour of the Cromer Welfare Center, to see how birth control was practiced in London.⁶² The League passed 5 calls for reform at this congress: (1) for equality between men and women, (2) for divorce without state intervention, (3) for an end to censorship, starting with consultation of professionals to determine public safety, (4) for safe, legal access to abortion, and (5) for no children to be born against the wishes of their parents.⁶³

The fourth congress, held in Vienna in 1930, included similar topics, such as inner secretions (endocrinology), sexual reform, birth control and the rights of children, among others.⁶⁴ The League's presidents were by then Hirschfeld, Haire and Leunenbach. But the fourth congress faced problems; because of rising political tensions throughout Europe, many of those planning to attend were unable to make it, including Dr. Harry Benjamin, from the United States, who was scheduled to lecture on "The Male Hormone," based on his treatment of sexual malfunction with hormone injections. Adjustments were made to the program. For example, Benjamin's paper was read in his absence, and reprinted in the program book.⁶⁵ The theme of endocrinology was an important one at this congress: several others spoke about the importance of inner secretions and their role in sexual development. This congress, like the others, also included a tour of the relevant local organizations, in this case the Vienna Institute for Sexual Research.⁶⁶

Although the World League of Sexual Reform was planning to have a fifth congress in Moscow in 1932, it had to be moved to Brno, Czechoslovakia⁶⁷ because of the rise of Stalinism and increasing persecution of sexual minorities. This congress was very different from previous ones because it took place within a strictly academic context at the University and was sponsored by the Czech president Jan Masaryk.⁶⁸ There were 85 speakers at this congress, with topics ranging from masturbation to intersexuality, but again, because of the political crisis in Europe, 30 speakers had to cancel at the last minute.⁶⁹ Despite hopes that the social and political situation would improve in time for the next congress, with the rise of Nazism in Europe, very few countries would allow the congress to

take place there. Paris was determined to be out of the question,⁷⁰ and so Hirschfeld suggested to Ellis that he help Benjamin put the next one together to coincide with the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933 in that city. Unfortunately, economic depression made it impossible, and the situation in Europe would have nevertheless also precluded many from attending even if it were possible. As it turned out, no further congresses would be able to convene.

Responding to invitations from various American groups and universities, Hirschfeld himself had left Europe in 1930 for what would turn into a two-year world tour, and this tour clearly demonstrated the international influence of Sexology and its social reform movements. Hirschfeld first spent three and a half months in America, where he lectured in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco. He gave 36 lectures, many to workers unions, but the majority to medical societies, many to which he also became an honorary member.⁷¹ He then travelled to Japan, China, Taiwan, India, the Philippines, and the Middle East. In each of these places he was enthusiastically received, and often asked to consult with local authorities on social policies related to sexuality. Many of his hosts had visited the Institute in Berlin and been part of one or more of the Congresses. Likewise, Hirschfeld himself learned much about the diversity of human sexuality by visiting such a range of cultural contexts, and he was excited about re-assessing his theories based on this new information. In each of the places he went, he met with local groups whose causes he came to support, as, for example, the movement against British and American imperialism in India and the Philippines. His return to Europe was met with the usual favorable press coverage and one article, in the *Weiner Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that "In all modesty Magnus Hirschfeld asks the interviewer to understand that it was not his personal effort that made this enormous trip around the world possible and successful. Rather, it is the interest in the scholar's special field that, in his opinion, formed the basis for such an extraordinary success" (April 2, 1932, *Weiner Allgemeine Zeitung*).⁷² But while Sexology may have been achieving international success, social and political events in Europe continued to worsen while Hirschfeld was absent. When his tour ended, he was unable to return to Germany and had to remain in Paris.

The morning of May 6, 1933 represented a turning point both for Hirschfeld's Institute and for the international Sexology and Sexual Reform movement. A description of the tragic events that brought an end to all the hard work, careful organizing, and reform efforts in which so many had been engaged can be found in *The Brown Book of Hitler Terror*:

At 9:30 am some lorries drew up in front of the Institute with about one hundred students and a brass band....They took whatever they thought was not completely unobjectionable, working for the most part on the basis of the so-

called "black list"....They then removed from the archives large charts dealing with intersexual cases, which had been prepared for the Int'l Medical Congress held at the Kensington Museum in London in 1913....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....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.⁷³

Later that afternoon a second group returned to finish taking the patient records. In total the groups destroyed 20,000 volumes, 35,000 photographs, 40,000 confessionals and biographical letters, and many unique objects. Levy-Lenz, who worked at the Institute, suggested that in addition to the anti-Semitism and homophobia clearly at play, there was the fear that the Institute "knew too much" about party officials.⁷⁴ Hirschfeld learned of the news in a Paris theatre newsreel, where he saw most of his incredible life's work being thrown into a fire on Opera Square in Berlin, including a bust of his head, which had been given to him on his 60th birthday.

Hirschfeld tried to recover as many of the treasures as he could; his partner and assistant, Karl Geise, had managed to get many of the important articles out before the raid.⁷⁵ Many more were subsequently available for purchase through auction after having been seized by the government, but since the Tax Collection Department took away the Institute's agency status and was claiming more than 10,000 Reichsmark in retro-active corporation and sales tax,⁷⁶ there was no money to consider the possibility of buying back the stolen goods. Hirschfeld was trying to rebuild the institute in Paris when he died of complications from malaria and diabetes in 1935. Three staff members had remained at the Institute until as near its closing as possible; Arthur Kronfeld, Karl Giese and Felix Abraham, all of whom committed suicide in exile as it became clear that they would be unable to escape the Nazis.⁷⁷

The World League of Sexual Reform tried to continue its work after the Institute had been shut down, but by 1935 it was dissolved because of conflict between the two presidents about appropriate responses to the situation in Germany. Hirschfeld had written to Leunenbach and Haire, urging that "Helen Stöcker...and many other friends, are of the opinion that non-German members of the World League should go into action on behalf of Dr. Hodann, Hiller and other comrades who have been imprisoned. Their fate is not only absolutely unbearable for them, but for all of us."⁷⁸ Haire felt that the World League of Sexual Reform should not engage in political protest, but Leunenbach was "of the opinion that it is impossible to reach the goals of the WLSR without at that same time fighting for a socialist revolution."⁷⁹ Thus, one of the longstanding debates within the sexology movement—whether or not researchers of sexuality

should engage in social reform, was, in light of Nazi occupation, resolved by a breakdown of the co-operative international efforts towards a movement that integrated science and social justice.

CONCLUSION

Despite the destruction of the Institute by the Nazis and the subsequent collapse of much of the structured organisation of the Sexology and Sexual Reform movement, we should nevertheless recognize the importance of the theories, social and legal contexts, and collaborations and conflicts which had led to the development of the movement between the formation of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in 1897 and the Institute for Sexual Science's destruction in 1933. During that time, international and interdisciplinary associations vastly increased the potential for the in depth study of human sexuality. Many social and sexual questions that continue to plague Western social life became prominent during this time both in Europe and indeed worldwide, through the movement's influence. Questions of whether sexual variance should be considered abnormal, or as the basis for criminal behaviour or exclusion from certain social activities, questions of whether sexuality is a social or biological issue, questions of whether science can or should objectively study human sexuality in absence of historical and cultural study, questions of whether sexuality is a societal or individual personal issue, all plagued the movement, and the call for sexual reform. Sexologists emerged in the backdrop of medical professionalization, and power struggles ensued between doctors who wanted to increase the authority of their profession, and those who were interested in engaging in social and political agitation. As now, those who were themselves members of sexual minorities were more vulnerable to accusations of subjective interest than those who were not. But during this time, extensive collaborations developed between a diverse group of people on a variety of issues as a part of an international, and often worldwide movement. Women's rights advocates, scientists, lawyers, writers, philosophers, gay and transgendered rights activists, concerned community members, and sexologists all worked together to address issues of mutual concern, and to try to develop an open climate in which they could draw on each others' expertises, struggles and successes. Perhaps more importantly, the international connections that the movement had established prior to the rise of Naziism ensured that at least some of the movement's work could be salvaged. Magnus Hirschfeld's motto, "through science to justice" was particularly representative of the movement's strong desire for social (and legal) justice. The Sexology and sexual reform movement of the early twentieth century developed many of our modern ideas about sexuality, freedom, and sexual rights, and demonstrates the value of

international and interdisciplinary co-operation in social reform efforts. But its fate should also serve as a reminder of how vulnerable such infrastructures can be.

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