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The Sexual Misery of the Working Masses and the Difficulties of Sexual Reform

by Wilhelm Reich

The committee preparing the Fourth Congress of the World League for Sexual Reform has emphasized in its announcement a concern for "Sexual Reform on a Scientific Basis." Since no serious sexual reform can dispense with scientifically based conclusions, such an emphasis would only appear superfluous were it not intended to imply a contrast to another platform, namely a political one. Furthermore, this emphasis can only mean that political discussion is to be excluded from the conference. Although the fundamentals of sexual reform must indeed be prepared scientifically, I maintain that the primary issue to be clarified is the question as to whether the political relations of a state or social system will permit the practical implementation of scientific knowledge. In other words, whether or not sexual reform is possible under existing circumstances. When we consider further that problems of glandular secretions can certainly be discussed without examining social institutions, but that sexual misery originating in these institutions cannot, then it becomes quite clear that we find ourselves in the midst of politics, in the truest sense of that term, merely by placing this topic on the agenda. A discussion and thorough critique of the social order is the scientific basis upon which sexual reform must be founded if the discussion of the problem is to be fruitful.

Serious scientific study of sex has freed itself to a large extent from the so-called unpolitical approach to sexual problems. However, there are many stages of transition from this point to a more conclusive and courageous critique of the social roots of sexual misery, which are, in turn, impeded by the social constraint upon science in bourgeois society. Once a social critique has been carried out, then undetermined biological and psycho-sexual factors can be dealt with by the respective disciplines.

Two separate aspects of the sexual misery of the masses can be easily distinguished: an external aspect caused directly by their material mode of existence, and an internal aspect evoked by the psycho-sexual structure of those affected. The first involves such larger concerns as inadequate housing, birth control, and prostitution. The second involves sexual illnesses, i.e., neuroses and perversions, and typical sexual conflicts, all of which, in the final analysis, are caused by the ruling sexual order (sexual repression, ruling moral values, etc.). These conflicts can clearly be grouped as the sexual conflicts in childhood, puberty, and married adulthood.

A substantial number of sexologists have achieved accord about and clearly understand the external difficulties of sexual life—the housing question, birth control, prostitution, etc. The numerous organizations which have existed for decades are proof of good will and insight into the significance of what they struggle against in our sexual institutions. What is not clear is their position as to whether a change can be expected from those in power today. On the other hand, little consideration has been given to the connections between sexual illnesses and our social order, in part because, though a young science, it was psychoanalysis alone which first introduced us to those mechanisms, and our important task now is to make the links between these mechanisms and the ruling sexual order.

Let us examine various focal points of sexual problems to determine the prerequisites of a viable program of sexual welfare and consider to what extent the ruling social classes are willing and able to provide them. Let us begin with inadequate housing. First of all, it should be clear that civilized living conditions along with adequate nourishment are the essential prerequisites for a sexual order appropriate to the current level of human expectations. If we consider only the most advanced capitalist countries, we confront the undeniable fact that a part of their populace is either homeless or lives in deplorable quarters. Of the remaining majority, approximately 80% to 90% do not have a separate room in which sexual life could take place undisturbed. According to information from the statistical bureau of the district of Vienna from 1926 to 1928, there was a constant number of 4,000 to 5,000 people in Vienna who lived in shelters for the homeless. The total number of people per day staying in these shelters was 368,513 in 1926; 427,515 in 1927; and 492,861 in 1928. Thus, we see a rising trend. The figures do not include the well-publicized “cave dwellers” or those sleeping under bridges, etc. In the proletarian sectors there is an average of four persons per room, compared to one person per room in the bourgeois districts. A large undetermined number of the working population somehow has to perform the sex act fully clothed, in constant fear of intrusion, or distracted by the presence of third parties. This problem is especially great for working adolescents since they have access only to the outdoors in spring and summer, and at best dark doorways in winter. To my knowledge, it has not yet been pointed out that a complete, satisfying and ordered sexual life is impossible in the presence of third parties, when fully clothed, or with fear of intrusion. But this is the situation of the majority of the population. We can, therefore, assert that the housing conditions of the masses alone present a socio-sexual problem of the largest proportion. We have to realize that, even if the

average is reduced to one family per room, this in no way contributes to the solution of the sexual problem of housing. Sexual hygiene in housing requires at the minimum the possibility of privacy for the partners. Unfortunately, we must emphasize at this point that modern housing construction scarcely takes into account a fraction of those affected by inadequate housing; that, in addition, it completely ignores the problem of sexual privacy; and finally, that it must ignore it just as long as there is not even housing for the homeless. As long as human society does not, cannot, or will not afford for each of its members, or at the very least for each couple, the possibility of privacy, there can be no mention of eliminating the harm caused by inadequate housing or the civilizing of the sexual life of the masses. All the talk about "elevating culture" remains what it always has been—mere talk.

In the capitalist countries at this time there are 20 million unemployed (note the rising trend), which means about 80 million starving people. In addition, there are the millions of exploited colonial slaves, whose condition we do not have to describe in detail. Nor need we offer statistics to illustrate their sexual life. If we could believe in the possibility of a wise man regulating human relations "rationally," we would suggest a palliative measure: for example, establishing institutions for the sexual needs of the masses which would provide the appropriate hygienic and medical services. Such a suggestion was recently made by Borgius in the *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft*. One should not laugh at such a suggestion if one tacitly accepts and promotes cheap-rate hotels, extra rooms, and various over-night lodgings for the well-to-do. In a socialist state like Russia this suggestion might indeed be taken seriously, considering that in its present period of transition, the ideal of a mass housing program cannot as yet be fulfilled. We do not believe in the wise man any more than we do in the capacity and will of the capitalist classes even to approach such questions because the suppression and aggravation of sexual as well as of material existence is essential to the maintenance of their system. For them, a solution to these problems would mean surrender. And granting credence to their promises and gestures can only mean irresponsible beguilement of the masses.

We encounter similar difficulties with the question of birth control. Sexology and hygiene are certainly advanced enough to deal with these questions. On the one hand, it is indisputable that the abortion law is the least suitable means for limiting the decline of the birth rate. Conversely, the Soviet Union is advancing in this field in an exemplary way, having gained much experience during the past twelve years. While the birth rate

declined in England from 28.4 births per thousand in 1900 to 16.7 in 1927, in Germany from 34.7 to 18.3 in the same years, in France from 21.4 to 18.1, and in Italy from 32.6 to 26.4, the decline in Russia with completely legalized abortion moved only from 47.2 to 44. The deaths of 10,000 women in Germany and 1,000 women in Austria yearly due to fatal abortion could be prevented by complete repeal of abortion laws, the social legalization of abortion, broad propagandizing of birth control measures together with a generous and progressive maternal and childcare program within the scope of general social welfare. Such a program would stop the decline of the birth rate and make qualitative population planning possible. But we do not want to commit the mistake of complaining that the ruling powers are too evil or too stupid to learn from those experiences in the Soviet Union and make them the basis for reform. We would prefer to understand the connections correctly: such sexual reforms are possible only in a state which abolishes the advantages gained from depressed wages, that is, from an industrial reserve army, and aims to represent the interests of the broad masses. The fact that bourgeois governments adhere to policies that are obviously fiascos is directly connected to the ideological factor of "morality." It is in their interest not to sanction the satisfaction of sexual needs, but to keep them under constant social pressure.

We shall not dwell much longer on this subject, not because it is any less important, but because the decisive conclusion has already been stated: the question of birth control is a political matter of the first order and can only be resolved in conjunction with all other political struggles. One difficulty remains to be mentioned. Aside from communist doctors and a few sympathizers with the Soviet Union, no one is making an effort to inform the masses about the experiments in the Soviet Union and in this way further the process of mass initiative.

In regard to prostitution and the venereal diseases closely related to it, current sexual hygiene has demonstrated its lack of success in the clearest manner by its prescription of a single formula: limit sexual intercourse to marriage, otherwise abstain. The continued prescription of old formulas, regardless of their impracticability, is evidence of the irresolvable contradictions of our social order. This continues because it is feared that knowledge of the actual relationships will have disagreeable implications. It should be recognized that prostitution is caused by mass unemployment of proletarian women on the one hand, and by the prohibition of sexual life for unmarried women of the middle and upper segments of society on the other. These two factors of our sexual order result in the general

degradation of sex life and in the hunger of bourgeois males for the commodity of "female flesh," which is offered to them for sale within the proletariat. Thus, if achievement of sexual welfare is seriously desired, the only possible conclusion is that the causes of mass unemployment, i.e., the bourgeois economic order, must first be removed. Secondly, an official sanction of sexual life for girls and unmarried women must be implemented. Lindsey reports that, since the inclusion of female youth in sexual life, prostitution has become a poor business in many areas of America. This is another demonstration that morality merely produces the opposite of what it strives to accomplish in the first place. Therefore, we must reject all discussions concerning measures to be taken against prostitution as misleading and fruitless as long as they ignore the two basic principles mentioned above.

We will now turn from those elements of mass sexual misery which are based in obviously external hardships to those based in the inner psycho-sexual structure of individuals. Psychoanalytical research of conflictual sexual structure has shown (whatever the implications of these results, not enough attention has been given to them, even in psychoanalytical circles) that conflicts are the direct result of influence from the dominant social institutions (the general sexual atmosphere, sex education, family and married life, etc.) upon the biophysical needs of sexuality. In the last analysis, again, this structure is merely the consequence of our social order. The general expression of this pathogenic influence is manifested in the sexual disturbances (impotence, frigidity, perversions) and the psycho-neuroses, which are the final specific consequences of disturbed sexual economy. These sexual disturbances, including the neuroses, are mass symptoms. They permeate the proletariat exactly as they do the middle and upper bourgeoisie: differences in the symptoms are only superficial. Freud's old premise that neurosis is a symptom peculiar to civilized and instinct-inhibited life cannot be supported and was furthermore contradicted by Freud himself in his emphatic reference to neurosis as an epidemic among the masses equal in scale to that of tuberculosis.

Since neuroses are a mass phenomenon, it is also essential that sexual reform consider them from a sociological point of view. Certainly it is not easy to project a precise picture of the spread of psycho-sexual illnesses. At present it is hard to approach the masses for statistical studies, and one has to rely on incomplete statistical results and conjectural observations gathered from one's own psychotherapeutic practice. In addition, due to prevailing sexual timidity, neuroses cannot be readily observed; nor is there insight into a whole series of neurotic and sexual

disorders, and many neurotic disorders are completely overshadowed by material need. The situation is hopeless enough even leaving aside these unknowns, which actually tend toward understatement rather than overstatement. Random sample studies of youth groups, assemblies, and factories have revealed a 50% average of neurotic symptoms in men and 70% in women. This means that just as many men and women lead sexually disturbed lives and have sexually disturbed households. As for disturbed potency or capacity to enjoy intercourse, a rate (estimated to be low) of 50% with men and over 90% with women was revealed. We need not waste words here about perversions as psychopathological deviance from a biologically normal sexual goal and sexual object; their wide distribution is well known.

It is important to emphasize at this point that the vast majority of sexual-economic disturbances are inaccessible therapeutically in spite of developed psychotherapeutic methods at our command today. We should not deceive ourselves here either. The only analytic psychotherapy which recognizes and treats sexual disturbance etiologically and which is, therefore, worth our consideration is psychoanalysis. The optimism of non-analytic therapists need not irritate us, for we know from a practice full of disappointment that the temporary elimination of a symptom is neither a cure nor even an improvement. We also know that in many cases of impotency it is easy to make coitus possible, to eliminate frigidity, or even to increase pleasure during coitus. On the other hand, the path from here to the restoration of full capacity for sexual experience is a long and difficult one and requires the restructuring of the entire personality. This cannot be accomplished with methods of short-term, palliative psychotherapy. In our estimation, the viewpoint: "That's sufficient for the masses" is medically false and reactionary.

Since the founding of the outpatient clinic in Vienna, well over 2,000 patients have registered for treatment. Only around 180 of these could be treated. Over a period of one and one-half years, the centers for sexual counselling set up by the "Socialist Society for Sexual Counselling and Sexual Research" have had 700 cases to accomodate—all workers and employees without means. This many applied for assistance, even though at the beginning only two newspapers, and later only one, advertised the counselling centers. Of those seeking help, approximately 30% could be successfully advised, while the remaining 70% were those with neuroses and sexual disturbances in need of treatment for which there is no possibility of cure due to lack of institutions and interest in these patients. Public health programs either totally ignore neuroses or prescribe Bromide

and Testosan. While some public health programs allow psychotherapeutic treatment, the permitted length of time is completely inadequate. Even if they wanted and were able to give the mass neuroses sufficient attention, they would not be able to deal with them because of their great prevalence and the long periods of time necessary for their treatment. Judged by mass standards, neuroses and other sexual disturbances can only be attacked prophylactically—just as tuberculosis is presently treated in the Soviet Union.

If we recognize therapy of individual neuroses as inadequate and set our hopes on prevention, then we must next investigate the approach to the restriction and arrest of the causes of neuroses. Those who accept the one-sided and false viewpoint of a predominantly hereditary etiology of neuroses forego from the outset any opportunity of changing the state of affairs. However, Freud's theory of the predominantly infantile genesis of psychic disturbances suggests a course toward prophylaxis. Freud's theory has scarcely been analyzed yet, let alone disputed. Still missing is an evaluation of the psychoanalytic theory of neuroses, above all the working out of the laws of sexual economy for practical application in sexual education. I cannot expound in detail on the psychoanalytic theory of the sexual etiology of neuroses within the context of this paper. Instead, I will assume that they are well known and restrict myself to a short conclusion.

Neuroses and other sexual disturbances are dynamic and economic; first and foremost they are products of a disturbed sexual household which in turn is produced historically by the pathogenic development of sexuality. All other interpretations miss the core of the problem simply because they are restrained by sexual morality and evade all further implications. These feared implications relate directly to the fact that it is the sexual conditions of life in bourgeois culture that produce the disturbed sexual economy. Neuroses became a mass phenomenon because all individuals in our society are subjected to a sexually restraining and repressive atmosphere which makes an economic ordering of the sexual household impossible from the time of early childhood on; more specifically, it creates a psychic structure which prevents such ordering.

Future scientific research in this area falls clearly into two parts: a) Psychopathology, which investigates the consequences of social influence on instinctual needs, the dynamics and psychology of psychic disturbances. To date this has been carried out most extensively in the research of the Freudian School. b) The sociological part, where very little scientific work has been done up till now. Here the problem to be investigated is the sociological significance and reason for the pathogenic effect of contemporary society upon sexual life.

Although the first part offers us material on and an understanding of the dynamics and treatment of neuroses, it is clear that only the second part puts us in a position to apply these psychopathologic discoveries to develop a mass prophylaxis for psychic illnesses. When we come to understand why and through which institutions contemporary society produces neuroses, we shall also be able to make our preventive demands and specify the necessary preventive measures, just as the tuberculosis researcher in the Soviet Union today points the way for the social politician. With this I hope to have made clear that psychoanalytic research into neuroses—and other types of research do not come into question because of their common neglect of sexual etiology—cannot claim to replace politics, which alone can create the foundation for the practical application of research in areas of mass treatment.

The basic question remains: Is the creation of neuroses only an accidental by-product—an area of neglect, so to speak—in our sexual order? Or does it, along with the entire sexual order, contribute specifically to the stability of a society which is based on the ownership of the means of production and exploitation of the masses? In the first instance, we are justified in hoping that definite measures can be taken now, within this order. In the second instance, the question is just as hopelessly bound up with the fate of the whole society as is the question of inadequate housing and birth control.

As a doctor, I find it my painful responsibility to assert the latter: neuroses and sexual disturbances are not accidental occurrences, but a necessary part of, specific to and inseparable from the bourgeois sexual order. We said neuroses were an expression of disturbed sexual economy in the majority of members in our society. How does this relate to our sexual order? We distinguished three main stages in the production of neuroses: childhood, puberty, and married adulthood.

In a special study (*Sexual Maturity, Abstinence, and Marital Morality*, Münster-Verlag, 1930) I attempted to prove that our entire sexual education—beginning with the familial education of the small child and concluding with pressures on adolescents for abstinence before marriage—is determined primarily and most decisively by the interests of the marriage situation. The meaning and purpose of all contemporary, i.e., bourgeois and sexually repressive education, is the preparation for life-long monogamy and the bourgeois family, which, in the opinion of all bourgeois sexologists, are indispensable bulwarks of bourgeois civilization and culture. In accordance with their importance as cornerstones of bourgeois order, marriage and the family are energetically defended both

by actual legislation as well as by active and passive hindrance and proscription of erring sexual drives. Both institutions are rooted deeply in our social order—economically by the interests of inheritance, socially by the necessity of protecting the wife and children, and politically by the unique function of the family as the most important conveyor of the ideological influence of the ruling classes. However, both presuppose an abnormally high degree of sexual repression; and precisely this sexual repression is the decisive factor in the production of neuroses, the mass manufacture of impotency and frigidity, and, in the final analysis, even perversions.

Naturally, no executor of these goals is aware of the significance of his actions. This meaning, emanating from the economic and social necessities of the bourgeois system, fulfills the thoughts and emotions of all parents, educators, and politicians of sex and is continually reproduced in the familial education of each new generation of parents, educators, and politicians of sex.

As for sexuality in puberty and post-puberty, statistical studies made in Moscow by Dr. Barasch at the Venerologic Institute have substantiated my own research into sociological relationships: the early initiation of sexual intercourse renders the individual incapable of marriage and consequently of establishing a family as defined by bourgeois sexual order. This, and not the supposed cultural interests, are responsible for the demands for abstinence placed on adolescents, with all of the undesirable consequences of long-term abstinence. Each social order which must economically and socially adhere to marriage and the current form of the family is forced to demand abstinence for adolescents—even if this demand can scarcely be implemented and reveals most disastrous results. The demand for abstinence on the part of sexually mature adolescents, whether actually practiced or not, means from the very first the creation of a conflict between sexual desire and frustration. The only ones who come through unscathed are those robust and unscrupulous enough to free themselves from the influences of their upbringing and to live in accordance with their needs. The torment of even these adolescents, resulting from the lack of social services which would make possible a hygienic sexual life, belongs in another chapter of the problem of sexuality. The degree of prejudice evident even today in sexual questions which society considers ticklish is witnessed in the widespread demand for adolescent abstinence in the name of increased concentration and productivity. Here, two things are simply overlooked: firstly, nothing impedes the concentration and work of the adolescent as much as abstinence and

conflictual masturbation; secondly, precisely those few adolescents who are sexually uninhibited and healthy also have a greater productive potential. Furthermore, it must be emphasized again and again that those adolescents who manage to exercise abstinence over a long period without immediate damage will at a later time, when required to perform sexually, prove incompetent and thereupon develop neuroses.

The exigency of adolescent sexuality is not exhausted in the problem of neuroses. Thanks to analytic studies, the situation at hand is clear enough. When the development toward a normal love life is obstructed ideologically and in practice by a lack of enlightenment, of institutions for sexual hygiene, etc., the adolescent, since he cannot go forward, is forced back into pathogenic childhood situations. His sexual guilt feelings and the confusion resulting from the repression of sensual satisfaction are fertile soil for the pathogenic tendency contained in the revived childhood conflicts. The appearance of most neuroses during puberty is the clearest manifestation of this phenomenon.

When we trace sexual-ideological and pedagogic influences directly back to childhood—recognized by Freud as the source of all subsequent psychic disturbances—then we see the very same mechanism at work which varies only in proportion to the age of the child. The parents' sexual repression and timidity are reproduced in the child; conflicts resulting from the Oedipus complex disturb the child's sexuality; parental fixation and fear of the parents produce childhood neuroses and prepare the ground for later ones as well. Particularly evident is the parental struggle against childhood masturbation, the first effort of society (for which the parents act as executors) to debilitate genital primacy and concurrently the sexual constitution as a whole. The prevention of neuroses is inconceivable as long as there continues to be family upbringing and, with it Oedipal conflicts. We regret, of course, the complexity of this problem, but it cannot be helped: the prevention of neuroses begins by excluding from the education of the child his or her own parents, who have proven themselves to be the most unqualified educators. The sexual education of the small child will be put instead into the hands of specially trained personnel who are less biased. This, however, presupposes the education of *society* in general. It is unnecessary at this time to discuss all that this implies and the degree of upheaval in all our attitudes and in our economic existence, etc., required by such an effort.

It would be important not only from an academic standpoint to determine when the struggle against infantile masturbation first occurred in the history of human society—at what stage in civilization and in what

relationship to economic interests. According to the reports of Ploss, Malinovsky, Bryk and other ethnologists, masturbation and sex play in childhood are simply ignored in primitive tribes. They are accepted as a matter of course, while for us they constitute *the* horror. In fact, it is the struggle against masturbation itself which prepares the ground for later sexual disorders, for it is here that genital sexuality is imbued for the first time with fear and feelings of guilt.

This struggle against masturbation in childhood makes just as much sense within the framework of our sexual order as does the demand for adolescent abstinence. It accomodates itself as the first step in the production of marital fitness.

Weakened in their genital sexuality and, full of neuroses due to the Oedipus complex, masses of individuals approach the challenges of sexual life as adults and run headlong into the sexually and economically contradictory institution of marriage. Since marital problems are all too familiar, we need not deal with them here at length. In the bourgeois era, marriage appears as an important economic and social institution with its claim to exclusive and life-long possession of the sexual partner. As a sexual partnership, however, it is subject to sensual stupefaction. According to statistical studies made by Hellmann in the Soviet Union, the highest percentage for the duration of sexual relationships is four to five years. Hence, in the institution of marriage the economic component and the sexual component stand in irreconcilable contradiction to each other: the economic binds permanently; the sexual loosens the bond. Furthermore, economic union intensifies marital conflict, which in turn makes sexual discontent increasingly unbearable. All attempts (i.e., Van de Velde) to sustain the institution of marriage by "eroticizing" it derive from this contradiction and because of this fundamental conflict of interests are hopeless from the very beginning. Moreover, "eroticism" is a sword which cuts two ways: while for a time it may enhance erotic relations, it usually eliminates the capacity for permanent monogamy—one of the fundamental prerequisites for the institution of marriage.

At this time we shall only note that marital reform, as it is currently practiced, settles for meager gains, for all attempts to make basic changes are being frustrated by reactionary and semi-reactionary forces. We also doubt that viable marital reform can be anything more than a paper ordinance as long as women are not totally independent economically and as long as child-raising is not socialized. However, this presupposes once more the elimination of private ownership of the means of production—in other words, the social revolution. The example of legislation in the Soviet

Union concerning marriage demonstrates once again how radically different and relatively painless the solution to these questions can be if the basic economic conditions are provided. By contrast, in Austria we are presently experiencing a storm of political reaction against a very insignificant start toward marital reform—the possible allowance for divorce. In view of mass marital suffering, we should not be so easily satisfied with what is in fact merely an easing of the formalities of divorce, such as exists in Germany. The issue is of far greater importance if reform is taken seriously. The absolute disassociation of economic interests from sexual interests is at stake. As witnessed in the struggle against religion, it is not so much a matter of separating the church from the state as it is of the extinction of religion itself as a social mass phenomenon. Should someone accuse me of impatience in this matter and suggest that social changes cannot be brought about “overnight,” then I could only answer by pointing to the boundless affliction, marital homicide, and permanent marital infirmity which continue to exist. For my part I am amazed at the patience exercised in marital reform today. This kind of patience guarantees that we shall continue waiting for a change in our social order for another 500 years; it deludes us into expecting fundamental changes in and from the bourgeoisie—thereby serving to create illusions.

Despite the fact that this survey is incomplete, it has touched upon the most essential matters. So now let us try to conceive of the type of sexual reform still possible within the existing social order. From this analysis it follows that efforts of fundamental reform try to get at the core of the misery (*Misère*) are hopeless because the misery is not an accidental, but rather an intrinsic component of the bourgeois social order.

The history of the last decades demonstrates that the masses are still being excluded from improved housing conditions. In order to meet the requirements for sexual hygiene in housing a radical socialization of housing would be necessary, a measure which the ruling powers will surely not adopt and condone. The facts coming out of the Soviet Union indicate that progress in the life style of the masses is possible only on the basis of a total elimination of private ownership of housing and land—and even then progress is all too slow.

In the question of birth control, those not inclined to illusions have long since lost faith in the will and capacity of the prevailing bourgeois courts. If the birth control program of the Soviet Union in the course of thirteen years has not been convincing and has not compelled us to take the same measures, then we are again left with the realization that bourgeois-capitalist birth control programs are intrinsic to the capitalist system and cannot be separated from it.

The situation is even more hopeless regarding the question of neuroses. The prevention of neuroses, which is the ultimate concern here, would require radical changes in our whole sexual morality, in sexual institutions and in education. Hence we can safely say that even a socialist society will only slowly and with difficulty be able to move toward a solution—as one of its last possible concerns in the phase of transition.

A sexual reformer would certainly wish to arrive at less rigid conclusions than the realization that sexual reform today must strive first and foremost for radical changes in the economic and social order. Only then will sexual reform be a valid subject of discussion and one of the most difficult problems of the new human society.

However, to deduce from this that we should stand patiently by until history passes its judgment would be totally false. It is urgent today that we infuse not only birth control and marriage but all questions of sexuality into the general program of the proletarian mass movement. The experiences of the post-war years have demonstrated that it is not at all sufficient simply to form organizations and committees, which—while remote from the suffering of the masses—sit around writing up resolutions and submitting protests. (Here it should be noted that even this does not occur with enough frequency.) These questions will have to be made more accessible to the masses, and they themselves will have to be taught to take the initiative in this area. With the support of the masses under the direction of competent committees and workers' parties which uncompromisingly represent the point of view of the masses and with all the means that the masses have at their disposal, the governing bodies would be forced into making concessions—just as concessions have become *common and accepted practice* in the sphere of economics.

In concluding, I sense that I have not succeeded in convincing the majority of those assembled here. Therefore, I take the liberty of making the following suggestion: prove me wrong and prove that you can find a solution within our social order to the questions posed here. My political friends and I would happily be converted to your point of view. However, you may not demand proof from us, for it is not our claim that sexual reform can be accomplished within bourgeois society. We take the opposite view, and there is historical proof to support our case that change can be accomplished after the social revolution: the reforms which have been made up to now in the Soviet Union.*

* *Translated by Kay Goodman.*