

APPENDIX

Brief Biographies of Key Figures

Elisabeth Bouness, a.k.a Ruth Bré (?–1912) Little is known about Elisabeth Bouness, who wrote under the pseudonym Ruth Bré and was based in the Silesian town of Hermsdorf am Kynast. Bré's primary causes included a fight against the proscription of marriage among female civil servants in Prussia, and the plight of unwed mothers and their children. These issues were personal for Bré as a teacher and the daughter of an unwed mother. She was involved in the creation of the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform, although her actual role remains unclear and controversial. Bré's vision for the league was eugenic and imperial: she envisioned settling "healthy" young single mothers and their children in colonies established in eastern Europe. These colonies aimed not only to provide a good life for these women and their children, but also to strengthen the German population by fostering "valuable" life. Bré ultimately broke with the league when the rest of its members rejected her racist utopian objectives.

Aside from the league, Bré is not known to have been involved in any other organizations within the German women's movement. In spite of her historical liminality, Bré produced a number of contemporarily influential and provocative texts, including *The Right to Motherhood* (*Das Recht auf die Mutterschaft*, 1903), *Wards of the State or the Right of the Mother?* (*Staatskinder oder Mutterrecht?* 1904), and *Ecce Mater!* (1905).

For further information, see Bernd Nowacki, *Der Bund für Mutterschutz (1905–1933)* (Husum: Matthiesen Verlag, 1983); Catherine Dollard, *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried Women in Imperial Germany, 1871–1918* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

Johanna Elberskirchen (1864–1943) Elberskirchen was born into a lower-middle-class merchant family in Bonn. In her early twenties she worked as a bookkeeper until she entered academia. Elberskirchen belonged to the generation of women who, barred from studying at German universities, pursued higher education in Switzerland. She studied medicine, natural sciences, anatomy, physiology, and philosophy at the University of Bern before switching to law and jurisprudence at the University of Zurich. Upon returning to Bonn, she became involved in left-leaning organizations such as the Progressive Association (*Fortschrittlicher Verein*), as well as women's suffrage organizations like the Prussian Regional Association for Women's Right to Vote (*Preussischer Landesverein für Frauenstimmenrecht*) and the German Association for Women's Right to Vote (*Reichsverein für Frauenstimmenrecht*), which she founded in 1912. Elberskirchen was one of the only "out" lesbians among German feminists, and in 1914 she became one of only four female chairs of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*), the first organization in the world to publicly campaign for the decriminalization of homosexual acts. She later became involved in the Social Democratic Party and the World League for Sexual Reform. In 1915 she moved to Berlin, where she worked in infant care; five years later, Elberskirchen and her long-term partner, teacher

and Communist Party member Hildegard Moniac (1891–1967), moved to Rüdersdorf outside of Berlin, where Elberskirchen ran a homeopathic practice until her death on 17 May 1943. Elberskirchen produced a remarkable body of work written under her own name and under her male pseudonym, Hans Carolan. Her texts addressed marital reform, prostitution, women's emancipation, homosexuality and heterosexuality, maternal welfare, eugenics and even subjective male bias within scientific knowledge production.

For further information, see Christiane Leidinger, *Keine Tochter aus gutem Hause: Johanna Elberskirchen (1864–1943)* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2008).

Henriette Fürth (1861–1938) Henriette Katzenstein was born to a comfortably middle-class Jewish family in Giessen. In 1880 she relocated to Frankfurt with her husband, Wilhelm Fürth. It was in Frankfurt that she became involved in feminist and sexual reform movements such as the German Society for the Fight against Venereal Diseases and the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform—all while caring for six daughters and two sons. During her years of public engagement, Fürth produced an impressive corpus covering diverse themes, sometimes under her own name and sometimes under her pseudonym, G. Stein. Her prolific output included books, articles, and pamphlets on topics including social and racial hygiene, women's suffrage, home economy, women's work, maternal insurance and welfare, infant welfare, sexual morality, and abortion. Aside from her feminist and sex reform activism, Fürth was a member of numerous Jewish organizations including the Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith (Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens) and the Jewish Women's Association (Jüdische Frauenbund). She held strong social democratic sympathies and ultimately joined the German Social Democratic Party. Between 1919 and 1924 she served as a city councilor (*Stadtverordnete*) in Frankfurt, where she focused on municipal finances, schools, and health. Despite her lack of academic credentials, Fürth became the first female member of the German Society for Sociology (Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Soziologie). Although she was honored by the city of Frankfurt on her seventieth birthday in 1932, her death in Bad Ems in 1938 was not noted.

For further information, see Angelika Epple, *Henriette Fürth und die Frauenbewegung im deutschen Kaiserreich: Eine Sozialbiographie* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlagsgesellschaft, 1996); Henriette Fürth, *Streifzüge durch das Land eines Lebens: Autobiographie einer deutsch-jüdischen Soziologin, Sozialpolitikerin, und Frauenrechtlerin (1861–1938)*, ed. Monika Graulich et al. (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 2010).

Sofie Lazarsfeld (1881–1976) Sofie Munk was born in Troppau, part of the Austrian section of Schlesien (now the Czech Republic). Following her father's death, she and her mother moved to Vienna. She later married lawyer Robert Lazarsfeld and had two children: the renowned sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, and psychologist and translator Elisabeth Lazarsfeld (later Zerner). Lazarsfeld and her husband were deeply committed socialists, and their apartment was a well-known meeting place among comrades. Leading social democrats Otto and Helene Bauer and Rudolf and Margarethe Hilferding were among their close friends. It was through Margarethe Hilferding that Lazarsfeld became acquainted with individual psychology and met its *leitfigur*, Alfred Adler, who became a close colleague and family friend. In 1924 Lazarsfeld began her career as a writer and psychologist. Her texts analyzed problems related to women's sexuality, marriage, sexual education, and child rearing through the lens of individual or Adlerian psychology. In addition to her writing, Lazarsfeld engaged in practical sexological work: she opened up a sex and marriage counseling center in her apartment in 1925. As her most famous text, *Woman's Experience of the Male* (*Wie die Frau den Mann erlebt*, 1931), relays, she also wrote a sex advice column. In 1932 she organized the first individual psychology summer school. As a consequence of their socialist activities, the Lazarsfelds were temporarily arrested during the Austrian civil war in 1934. Thereafter, they

withdrew from overt political activity. Lazarsfeld wrote some of her most famous articles during this period, including “Dare to Be Less Than Perfect” (1936) and “Did Oedipus Have an Oedipal Complex?” (1944). Following the Nazis’ annexation of Austria in 1938, the Lazarsfelds fled to France, where Robert Lazarsfeld died in 1941. Sofie Lazarsfeld moved once more, this time to New York City, where her son, Paul, had already taken up a position at Columbia University. She eventually became an American citizen, and remained active in individual psychology circles in New York. Lazarsfeld ultimately became the vice president of the US-based Individual Psychology Association. She died in New York in 1976.

For further information, see Martina Siems, *Sofie Lazarsfeld: Die Wiederentdeckung einer individualpsychologischen Pionieren* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2015).

Rosa Mayreder (1858–1938) Rosa Obermayer was born to a large Catholic family in Vienna, and was one of twelve brothers and sisters. Her father, a wealthy restaurant owner, did not believe in education for girls; consequently, her education was limited to the arts and modern languages. She nevertheless proved a disciplined autodidact, and also learned what she could from her brothers’ lessons. In 1881 she married the architect Karl Mayreder, with whom she had a complex relationship: Karl suffered depression for over twenty years—and, some speculate, the psychological effects of syphilis. In 1902, Mayreder helped found the General Austrian Women’s Organization (*Allgemeine Österreichischer Frauenverein*), the central organization of the Austrian women’s movement, and *Documents of Woman* (*Dokumente der Frau*), a key Austrian feminist journal. She was especially active in feminist campaigns against the state regulation of prostitution and in the Austrian branch of the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform. Following the outbreak of the First World War, Mayreder became heavily involved in the peace movement, particularly the International Women’s League for Peace and Freedom. During her own lifetime, Mayreder was renowned as a feminist philosopher, thanks in particular to her influential studies

Towards a Critique of Femininity (*Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit*, 1905) and *Sex and Culture* (*Geschlecht und Kultur*, 1923). She also wrote librettos, including the libretto for Hugo Wolf's opera *The Corregidor* (*Der Corregidor*, 1896), and novels such as *From My Youth* (*Aus meiner Jugend*, 1908). Like Henriette Fürth, despite her lack of formal academic training she was one of the few female members of Vienna's Sociological Society. Mayreder's image was at one time featured on the 500 Austrian schilling note, and schools and parks in Vienna bear her name.

For further information, see Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Agatha Schwartz, *Shifting Voices: Feminist Thought and Women's Writing in Fin-de-Siècle Austria and Hungary* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

Grete Meisel-Hess (1879–1922) Grete Meisel was born in Prague to a middle-class Jewish family. She grew up in Vienna, where she later attended university and studied philosophy, sociology, and biology. After a brief marriage to journalist Peter Hess in 1900, she moved to Berlin in 1908; a year later she married the architect Oskar Gellert. While in Berlin, she became involved in various sex reform organizations, including the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform. Following her husband's death in the First World War, Meisel-Hess suffered from psychological illness and loss of economic status. She died quite young, and severely depressed, in Berlin in 1922. In her brief life she published numerous important texts across a variety of genres, all of which addressed feminist issues and sex reform. Her 1909 study, *The Sexual Crisis* (*Die sexuelle Krise*), was especially influential, eventually gaining an international readership. Other key texts include novels such as *Fanny Roth* (1902) and *The Intellectuals* (*Die Intellektuellen*, 1911), and nonfiction treatises such as *In the Modern World View* (*In der modernen Weltanschauung*, 1901), "Sexual Rights" ("Sexuelle Rechte," 1912), *Observations regarding the Woman Question* (*Betrachtungen zur Frauenfrage*, 1914), "War and Marriage" ("Krieg und Ehe," 1915), *The Essence*

of *Sexuality* (*Das Wesen der Geschlechtlichkeit*, 1916), and *The Meaning of Monogamy* (*Die Bedeutung der Monogamie*, 1917).

For further information, see Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*; Elinor Melander, "Toward the Sexual and Economic Emancipation of Women: The Philosophy of Grete Meisel-Hess," *History of European Ideas* 14 (1992): 695–713; Agatha Schwartz, *Shifting Voices: Feminist Thought and Women's Writing in Fin-de-Siècle Austria and Hungary* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

Anna Rüling (1880–1953) Based on Christiane Leidinger's painstaking research, historians now know that Anna Rüling was a pseudonym for the writer and journalist Theo Anna Sprüngli. Sprüngli was born in Hamburg to a Swiss businessman and his wife. Like Johanna Elberskirchen, Rüling was one of the few feminists who agitated on behalf of homosexual acceptance. With Elberskirchen, Rüling was one of the few woman members of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, and actually served as a "chairman" on the committee (other female "chairmen" included Helene Stöcker and the poet Toni Schwabe). In addition to her speech, "What Interest Does the Women's Movement Have in the Homosexual Problem?" she wrote a short story collection in 1906, *Which of You Is without Sin?* (*Welcher unter Euch ohne Sünde ist*) that featured love stories between women with happy endings. For most of her life, Rüling lived in Düsseldorf. Over the course of the First World War, she became quite conservative and nationalist in her convictions. Rüling supported the war and joined the Düsseldorf branch of the Naval Association of German Women (*Flottenbunde deutscher Frauen*). She also became active in the right-leaning German Housewives Association (*Reichsverband Deutscher Hausfrauenvereine*). In spite of her earlier political work and writing, Rüling somehow managed to remain active as a journalist throughout the Third Reich and Second World War, although it does not appear that she was a member of the Nazi Party. She died in Delmenhorst in 1953 as one of Germany's oldest female journalists.

For further information, see Christiane Leidinger, “‘Anna Rüling’: A Problematic Foremother of Lesbian Herstory,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13, no. 4 (October 2004): 477–499.

Helene Stöcker (1869–1943) Stöcker was perhaps one of the most famous radical feminists in early twentieth-century Germany. She was born in Wuppertal to a strict Calvinist household. She moved to Berlin to continue her studies, and ultimately moved to Switzerland to pursue graduate education at the University of Bern. Stöcker later became one of the first German women to receive her doctorate in philosophy. Upon returning to Berlin, she became a member of the Union of Progressive Women’s Associations and in 1905 helped to establish the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform. Until the organization’s dissolution in 1933, she was editor of the league’s journal, *The New Generation* (1908–33). Additionally, she was one of only four female chairpersons of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, and became publicly involved in the fight against the criminalization of same-sex behavior between women. Stöcker never married, but maintained a long-term relationship with lawyer and league member Bruno Springer. Before the First World War, Stöcker’s main philosophical project was the elaboration of what she called the New Ethic, a new approach to sexuality and sexual relations that supported her demands for women’s sexual empowerment, the recognition and equality of so-called illegitimate children and their mothers, the legalization of abortion, and sexual education. The New Ethic was heavily influenced by Stöcker’s embrace of Nietzschean philosophy. Stöcker viewed the establishment of the New Ethic as an essential precondition for establishing authentic, deeper, mutually satisfying relations between men and women, and for the realization of women’s political and social equality. Beyond sexual reform and feminist activities, Stöcker was also heavily involved in the pacifist movement. Although her pacifist activities preceded the First World War, they intensified between 1914 and 1918 and complemented her feminist and sex reform activities during the Weimar era. In 1921 she helped establish War Resisters’ International. Following the Nazis’ ascension to

power in 1933, Stöcker fled to Switzerland, England, and ultimately to the United States. She died of cancer in New York City in 1943. In addition to her myriad articles and editorial work, she published the monographs *Love and Women* (*Die Liebe und die Frauen*, 1906), *The Love of the Future* (*Die Liebe der Zukunft*, 1920), *Love: A Novel* (*Liebe: Roman*, 1922), and *Erotic and Altruism* (*Erotik und Altruismus*, 1924).

For further information, see Christl Wickert, *Helene Stöcker, 1869–1943: Frauenrechtlerin, Sexualreformerin und Pazifistin; Eine Biographie* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1991); Kristin McGuire, “Activism, Intimacy, and the Politics of Selfhood: The Gendered Terms of Citizenship in Poland and Germany, 1890–1918” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004); Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

Mathilde Vaerting (1884–1977) The life and work of Mathilde Vaerting have been largely overlooked by English-language scholars. This elision is somewhat surprising, given her historical importance as one of Germany’s first female professors. It is this achievement that has attracted the attention of German researchers. Even within German-language scholarship, research into Vaerting’s work as a sexual researcher and theorist and its influence is lacking, even though at the time she was hailed as “among the most profound and original investigators of eugenic and sociological problems at present working on the continent of Europe” in the United States–based journal *Critic and Guide* 25, no. 6 (June 1922): 235.

Vaerting was born in Messingen in 1884, and was the fifth of ten children born to a well-off Catholic family. Her parents, both farmers (*Landwirte*), placed considerable value on their children’s education, and provided them with a private tutor. Vaerting ultimately pursued one of the few professions open to intelligent and ambitious German women at the turn of the century: teaching. She successfully passed her teaching exam in Münster in 1903, and took up her first position in Düsseldorf

that same year. Four years later, Vaerting, a woman of seemingly great energy and initiative, began studying math, philosophy, physics, and chemistry at universities in Bonn, Munich, Marburg, and Giessen. In 1910, she passed the exam to become a senior teacher (*Oberlehrerin*) in math, physics, and chemistry, and only a year later obtained her doctorate from the University of Bonn. Vaerting moved to Berlin in 1913, where she took up a position as *Oberlehrerin* in the working-class district of Neukölln. There she became involved in radical education reform movements, sex reform movements such as the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform, and sexological associations like the International Society for Sexual Research.

In 1923 Vaerting was named professor in the new chair of *Erziehungswissenschaft*, which roughly translates to pedagogy, at the University of Jena. At the time, she was thirty-nine years old. Her appointment by the Social Democratic state government of Thuringia was strongly resisted by most of her male colleagues, who referred to her as a “coerced professor” (*Zwangsprofessorin*) and dismissed her scholarship as “feminism in the guise of science.” Vaerting lost her professorship when the Nazis came to power, as a result of Paragraph 4 of the Nazis’ Law for the Reestablishment of the Civil Service Profession (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*). During the Third Reich she was placed under a travel ban, and was consequently unable to travel to the United States or the Netherlands, where colleagues had endeavored to arrange new faculty positions for her.

Following her forced retirement she retreated from public life, and did not publish during the Third Reich. In 1944 a bomb attack destroyed her unpublished manuscripts and works in progress. Following the Second World War, she attempted to reestablish an academic career, with no success. Between 1953 and 1971, she published regularly in the *Journal for State Sociology* (*Zeitschrift für Staatssoziologie*), and helped to found the International Institute for Politics and State Sociology (*Internationale Institut für Politik und Staatssoziologie*). Mathilde Vaerting died in 1977, at the age of ninety-three, in Schöna im Schwarzwald.

For further information, see Christina Herkommen, “Mathilde Vaerting (1884–1977),” in *Personenlexikon der Sexualforschung*, ed. Volkmar Sigusch and Günter Grau (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2009), 715–717; Markus Seltzer, *Mathilde Vaerting: Biographische Forschungs-Arbeit zum Kampf einer Professorin am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Eberhard-Karls-Universität, 2002); Elisabeth Dickmann and Eva Schöck-Quinteros, eds., *Barrieren und Karrieren: Die Anfänge des Frauenstudiums in Deutschland; Dokumentationsband der Konferenz, 100 Jahre Frauen in der Wissenschaft im Februar 1997 an der Universität Bremen* (Berlin: trafo verlag, 2000).

