

Adolf Brand. / Oosterhuis, Harry. Who's who in gay and lesbian history: From antiquity to World War II. ed. / R Alderich; G Wotherspoon. London [etc.]: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2000. p. 68-69.

Brand, Adolf (1874-1945), German activist and publisher. Brand was one of the most controversial activists in the pre-World War II German homosexual movement and publisher of the first homosexual journal, *Der Eigene* (1899-1931). After abandoning his profession as a teacher because of his anarchist opinions, Brand started a publishing firm and began publishing *Der Eigene*, a literary and artistic journal 'for male culture'. He advocated 'a revival of Greek times and Hellenistic standards of beauty after centuries of Christian barbarism', and attacked medical sexologists – among them Magnus Hirschfeld – because their scientific research on homosexuality, Brand maintained, 'took away all beauty from eroticism'. In addition to editing the journal, Brand contributed homoerotic poems, political essays and photographs of nude boys and young men. He associated with Bohemians and free-thinkers in Berlin and politically he was influenced by a particular kind of anarchism, formulated by the philosopher Max Stirner. Stirner strongly rejected any subordination of individuality, be it to ecclesiastical and secular authorities, or to morality, rationalism and ideology.

Brand was a militant and quick-tempered man who often became involved in public quarrels, scandals and trials. He was prosecuted several times on immorality charges because of the homoerotic prose, poetry and illustrations he published. In 1907 Brand's name appeared in the national and foreign press because of his involvement in the sensational Harden-Eulenburg scandal in which two confidants of Emperor Wilhelm II were accused of homosexuality in order to obstruct their political influence. Brand, who believed that the disclosure of homosexual relationships among high-ranking men would eventually bring about the abolition of the legal ban on homosexual intercourse, published a pamphlet in which he asserted that the German Chancellor, Bernhard von Bülow, was having a homosexual relationship with one of his assistants. Bülow sued Brand for libel and Brand was sentenced to prison for a term of eighteen months. He was in fact the only one who was actually imprisoned as a result of the series of trials triggered by the scandal, and this strengthened his role as a martyr for the homosexual cause.

To gain moral and financial support for his publishing and political activities, Brand founded the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* in 1903. The society was not so much a political lobby organization like Hirschfeld's *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*, but a literary circle. Again and again Brand and his supporters stressed that the 'male eros' they advocated had nothing to do with the branch of human species psychiatrists and sexologists were labelling as the third sex and for whose rights Hirschfeld's Committee pleaded. They tried to counterbalance medical stereotypes of homosexuality by

glorifying various forms of male bonding and the cultural model of classical Greece. Brand liked to present himself as the leading man of an élite of masculine and culturally sophisticated homosexuals. Although the circulation and frequency of *Der Eigene* and some other journals he published were greater than ever in the 1920s, he became disappointed with Weimar democracy and the liberties of Berlin, because 'unnatural vice' continued to be punishable by law. Hitler's rise to power put an end to his activism. Soon after Hitler's nomination as Chancellor, storm troopers raided Brand's house five times and seized his journals, books and photos. Although Brand was well-known as homosexual activist, he was not arrested during the Nazi Regime. It is likely that he would have survived the war were it not for the American bombardment which killed him together with his wife at home in 1945.