

## CHAPTER 2

# Scandals and Alliances

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter examines the ways in which various high-profile scandals, including the Eulenburg affair, helped raise public awareness of same-sex desire and consequently played a role in shaping same-sex identities. It also looks at the political alliances that various homosexual activists sought with Freudians, feminists, and youth-movement leaders.

### OVERVIEW

The pioneering queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has suggested that the turn of the twentieth century was marked by "homosexual panic." At that time we began to acquire the mental habit (familiar to us today) of constantly raising questions about people's sexual preferences. The homosexual panic created a seeping paranoia about same-sex desire that worked its way into the fabric of our culture. It changed how we behaved in public and in private; it fundamentally reorganized the relationships between men and men, women and women, and women and men. This chapter examines several national scandals that played a significant role in Germany in promoting this homosexual panic. One involved a prominent businessman who headed up the nation's principal steel company; a second revolved around a colonial governor in the far-off city of Dar es Salaam, the capital of German East Africa. The most important scandal, the Eulenburg affair of 1907, ended up taking down two central figures in the German Kaiser's court.

These scandals created publicity for the homosexual movement, but not the kind that the movement wanted. In fact, the Eulenburg scandal produced a serious crisis for Hirschfeld's WhK and created a political atmosphere in which the government seriously considered sharpening the law against homosexuality instead of repealing it. To get through this difficult period, homosexual activists tried to build alliances with other movements: feminism, Freudianism, and youth organizations. Not all these alliances would prove productive, but the effort to build them was a critical step in the maturation of the homosexual movement.

### KEY TERMS

Friedrich Alfred Krupp; Philip von Eulenburg; Kuno von Moltke; Johanna Elberskirchen; Hans Blüher

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## NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

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