

REICH REPORT AUGUST 1937: The biological experimental work at the Institute for Sexual Economic Life Research in Oslo encountered many wide-ranging sentiments from the scientific community long before they were published in their entirety.

Two quite unscientific types of reactions to the first reports concerning the biological trials will be addressed here because they acquired certain significance. The strangest rumors are circulating in different places concerning the experiments, for example claims are made that those working on the experiments are completely insane, went down totally indiscriminate paths, that the institution's work in the area of psychotherapy was good; however, their work in the field of biology was nonsense, etc. These rumors originated from scientific personnel, who very superficially witnessed parts of the experiments. Although one cannot rationally contradict rumors, it is possible to present facts that rip the foundation from under such rumors. The first assistant in the trials involving electricity in the human body was Dr. Löwenbach, who applied to Dr. Wilhelm Reich and was hired for this position following his dismissal from the Department of Physiology at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. In September, 1935, Wilhelm Reich decided to eliminate this position. The last impetus for doing so, from the many preceding it, was the following:

The crucial issue at stake was whether the potential fluctuations, which Reich had observed during many different experiments on human skin, were specific biological phenomena, or whether they could also be reproduced using non-living materials. After an initial period of great enthusiasm for his work, Dr. Löwenbach hindered all of the experimental results by denying that certain phenomena occurred, although he had seen and verified them himself. The oscillograph, together with all of its supplemental equipment, was located in the Dikemark Insane Asylum (First Director Dr. Jessing) at this time. The equipment was connected to a catatonic patient, and tickling the palm of his hand with a dry, insulating wad of cotton showed the potential fluctuations (Tickling Phenomenon) already very familiar to us. Dr. Löwenbach and Dr. Hoffmann, both present during this experiment, could not decide whether this phenomenon was due to a physical reaction or not and tried to prove that the bed sheet upon which the patient was lying was also living. The electrode, which previously rested on the palm of the hand, was placed on the bed sheet and, in close proximity, "tickled" with the ball of cotton. *I was completely shocked to see that the experiment resulted in the same potential fluctuations as when the hand was touched.* Dr. Löwenbach and Dr. Hoffmann were triumphant, and Dr. Reich was very surprised because he could not explain that phenomenon. It called into question not only his fundamental findings, but

also his previous experiments with dead matter. Twenty-four hours later, it occurred to Reich what error had been made by the experimenters and how it had caused the phenomenon:

1. The neutral electrode that was connected to the amplifier's cathode had not been detached from the patient's leg. His body was, thus, still connected to the circuitry.
2. The catatonic patient's hand rested on the bed sheet, which had been moistened with KCl. It was, thus, no wonder that they witnessed phenomenon from the sheet. With this, a new problem arose concerning in which way the body's electrical charge could be biologically conducted through the sheet.

Those specifics were the true reason why Dr. Reich terminated his working relationship with Dr. Löwenbach and Dr. Hoffmann. Later on, Dr. Löwenbach and Dr. Hoffmann witnessed the experiment, which measured the stimulation curve during masturbation (experimental results S.VI, table 21). Neither Dr. Hoffmann nor Dr. Löwenbach noticed the increase of potential and the symmetrical intervals of the curves, which in later trials proved to be typical formations. Dr. Löwenbach, in a discussion attended by Professor Schjelderup, Dr. Hoffmann, and Dr. Nic Hoel in addition to Dr. Wilhelm Reich, literally stated that the trials were falsified because even sexual arousal had to result in negative charge. Just two months before, Dr. Löwenbach had enthusiastically reported to Dr. Reich that he had personally measured a strong positive charge during his own sexual arousal. These statements are vital when countering the rumors whirring around today.

In October, 1936, after a satisfactory number of successful experiments to create bions were completed, Wilhelm Reich wanted to seek guidance from Albert Fischer, the Director of the Rockefeller Institute for Biology in Copenhagen, concerning the continuation of his research. On the occasion of a trip to Copenhagen, Reich demonstrated the bion experiment for Albert Fischer and his assistant. During the trial, Fischer asked Reich if he was mixing toothpaste. Reich then asked whether they wished for him to end the demonstration. Fischer apologized, and the demonstration continued. Reich requested a magnification adjustment between 2500-3000X. Albert Fischer's institute, however, only had microscopes without tilted binocular lens barrels and only magnifying from 1500-1700X respectively. Because of this, the demonstration was more complicated; however, the formations, at least to the practiced eye, were clearly observable. One of Albert Fischer's assistants immediately carried out a Giemsa staining, which had positive results. The same assistant made suggestions regarding the measures necessary for performing for the scientific community. Also attending this demonstration were Dr. Leunbach and Dr. Philipson from Copenhagen. After a while, Reich received a letter from

Leunbach reporting that Fischer had made very derogatory and rude comments. He indicated that it was only his common courtesy that prevented him from immediately throwing Reich out. He had never before encountered such outrageousness. The formations seen in the demonstration were nothing more than simple lecithin formations, and, besides that, it was preposterous to demand such magnifications from him. Reich responded with a letter to Albert Fischer in which he very objectively stated his opinion of this type of control observation.

After the first autoclaved and highly sterile bion mixtures succeeded, Professor Thjötta from the Institute for Bacteriology in Oslo was sent some samples to evaluate. Professor Thjötta deemed these as highly irrelevant, dealing merely with simple subtili. Wilhelm Reich then submitted a request to expand the experiments to also include animal trials. It was a matter of fact that the structures he obtained must be tested for virulence. The request went to Oslo's Medical Director, Heitmann. Professor Thjötta was supposed to provide the expert opinion. Thjötta told Professor H. Schjelderup, through whom the request was processed, that the experimenters would be better off stopping their work because everything had already been researched in that area. Permission to conduct animal trials was later rejected by the medical director. These encounters, just a few examples from many similar ones, should not only show how "scientifically" one approached an, after all, not unfamiliar work, but also point out that there is another way, a correct way of approaching the issue scientifically. Professor Roger DuTeil from the University of Nice was the first representative of this approach.

When Professor DuTeil received the first report about the sterilized bion mixture, he thoroughly examined the preparation together with a bacteriologist, verified the experimental design, and immediately sent a report to the French Academy. He wrote the following to Wilhelm Reich: The experiments were correct and interesting, however, such experiments had already been carried out earlier, though not in this manner, and, most importantly, were cultures from sterilized structures. At this time, the first cultures had already succeeded. Consequently, he immediately called together a commission following his presentation at the Natural Philosophical Society in Nice on March 7, 1937, composed of pharmacologists, bacteriologists, and hygienists under his leadership. This commission was tasked to perform control experiments parallel to those at the Sexual Economy Institute in Oslo and, after their completion, to report back to the French Academy. The first statements made by local bacteriologists are contained in Roger DuTeil's Nice presentation. Further inoculations using the forwarded cultures showed positive results, likewise the verification that the cultures were pure. The experimental design was also deemed correct. However, the work of creating bions and cultivating

them, a job that was already difficult due to their nature, bogged down. In the summer of 1937, DuTeil made the decision to drive to Oslo in order to spend 14 days directly on the spot where he could verify the working procedures, their results, and the possibility of completing control experiments in France for himself. He spared neither money nor time in order to achieve the possibility of complete control. For ten days, DuTeil worked in the laboratory at the Oslo Institute together with all scientific personnel completing a trial test, which was completely successful including the cultures from sterilized bions. In the meantime, a commission of French scientific specialists, among them a leading professor of surgery, were waiting for DuTeil in Paris, who was supposed to bring with him the bions and their cultures produced in his presence in addition to a film showing the work process. DuTeil left on August 7, 1937, following very prolific work, with about 600 m of film and a collection of preparations, which had been produced in his presence.

This is the productive, correct yet discerning and friendly sort of control work. We do not doubt for one second that we have found an objective, critical, yet at the same time productive, helping friend in Roger DuTeil.