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The UNIVERSITY LIBERTARIAN

AN INDEPENDENT TERMLY FOR UNIVERSITY ANARCHISTS,
RATIONALISTS & HUMANISTS

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The Grey Generation

It is well known that the old always think that the younger generation is less spirited, active and virile than in "the good old days," whenever these might have been. Such a commonplace, however, need not deter us from considering the currently expressed contention that there has been a generational break, one of these occurrences which happen from time to time in a disconcerting

manner which is not easily explained. D. G. Macrea maintains that the critical age is round about 28; that is, that the great majority of people at the university who are at this present time under that age belong to a generation which has broken with the traditions of those who are now over that age.

The younger generation at the university today are characterized by a desire for social conformity, an unthinking compliance with authority and a lack of desire to make any distinctive contribution of their own. This general youthful greyness makes the minority of young people who are not intellectually quiescent and socially conservative (I do not mean Tory) feel that they are being forced into the position of an execrated lunatic fringe. It is now just "not done" to explore the same intellectual and emotional territories that the preceding generation explored in the 1930's. It is "not done" to question the bona fides of Her Majesty's Government's intentions in the world today, let alone to question the institution of Her Majesty. In the 1930's many intelligent people said loudly and clearly that the policies of H.M. Government were foolish, dishonest, corrupt and leading straight to a world war. They were proved only too right—the trouble was that not enough of them shouted loudly enough. Today the continuation of exactly the same policies merely provokes a well-modulated tut-tutting of criticism. The sham fight between Tories and Labour provides a polite gladiatorial diversion, with that arch-revolutionist Bevan beating his shield in the wings to delight the gallery.

Religion is much in evidence at the university today. Not the crack-brained, romantic march to Rome inaugurated by Newman, or even the neurotic Oxford Group nonsense that had its vogue in the '30's. Now it is very respectably S.C.M.ish. The new message is that Religion is Good For You; it is alleged to be therapeutic, soothing, grateful and comforting, like blackcurrant cordial. Bible-punching Billy had an act

AN APOLOGY

We must apologize to readers for the long delay since the appearance of the first issue.* Numerous difficulties conspired first to prevent the appearance of the Spring issue and then to delay the Autumn issue, and it seemed better to make this issue an early Winter rather than a very late Autumn number. We expect to be able to stick to our schedule from now on, which is to appear a week before the beginning of each term (see business information on page 16).

A deficit of £23 was incurred on the first issue even after allowing for a generous total of donations. Also postage and stationery costs have proved heavier than anticipated and postage rates have increased since our last issue, so that the price of *The University Libertarian* has had to be increased by a penny. Still, 10d. for 17,000 words is not really such bad value, and even the new price involves us in a loss at the present circulation.

Overseas subscription rates have had to be increased considerably to allow for (proportionally heavy) currency conversion charges. As this charge is constant, large remittances for long subscriptions or for more than one copy become advantageous. Full information on prices and subscription arrangements appears on page 16.

*December, 1955. (No further copies available.)

which went down well at Harringay Arena and elsewhere, but Dr. Graham had an equally successful line in the university halls where he lectured. Yet in the end it all led to dreary little introductions to one's local vicar. Those colleges which were founded entirely secularly, with no chapel or chaplain, are now beset with religious societies touting for members. Sometimes, stumbling into the wrong room for a seminar, we come across heads bowed meekly in prayer, while the busts of grim old Rationalists glower down at them from corners of the room.

The follies of the past are dimly remembered. Oxford once declared against fighting for king and country in any circumstances: in the debacle of 1939 most of those who made such a declaration ate their words. In 1933 London University Union attacked the existence of the university O.T.C. in debate: the platform was pelted with eggs and tomatoes by the O.T.C. rowdies. In the late '30's not a few British students lost their lives or their illusions in the Spanish war and revolution. Such activities were partly the result of the sort of student energy which is now expended on throwing fireworks at policemen on Guy Fawkes night, but the significant thing is that although their motives were often muddled and their energies sometimes misdirected, the pre-war generation of students did take an active interest in public affairs and were prepared to take action on their own initiative. Today that initiative is conspicuously absent.

Under the guise of active participation in public affairs, the student movement now proliferates a vast number of organizations, sub-organizations, committees and conferences. The elaborate pattern formed by bodies known by curious combinations of initial letters gives the impression of a vast student activity. Such activity has the simple function of covering up the real powerlessness, the sense of dependence and individual immaturity which dimly oppresses the average student today.

On any real-life issue such as that of military service the average student has no coherent attitude. The great majority of students who have got deferment look on their future conscription with apathetic distaste. To them it seems wrong that they should be compelled to waste their time and perhaps lose their lives for policies that they neither understand nor care two hoots about, but they seldom call into question the State's right to use them. To the suggestion that if they don't want to be subjected to military service they should resist it, they respond with bewilderment. "Can one resist it?" "But doesn't one have to be a Jehovah's Witness or something?" "Yes, but who would have the nerve to?" The plain fact is that these young men go into the forces not because they regard it as an active duty of citizenship, but simply because it would be too too embarrassing to take any active step of non-conformity.

It is the same in the sphere of sexual relations. In contrast to the modern working teenagers who are accepting full sexual experience at an earlier age than did previous generations because of the easier living conditions for young workers, the modern student tends to remain a virgin not out of any positive respect for chastity but because of a Peter Pannish shyness of growing up and taking responsibility for his actions. Strangely enough, the full employment of the post-war decade has done much to increase the sexual timidity of both male and female students. Before the war when

marriage between young people was often considered out of the question because of the prevailing economic uncertainty, young couples would enter full sexual relations or live together as this was the obvious thing to do. Now with marriage by no means impractical when both partners graduate and get jobs, female students hoard their virginity and young men mumble honourable proposals after a couple of drinks at the college hop.

It is easy to find many reasons for the post-war flatness of student life in Britain but less easy to be definite about which are the principal reasons. The fact that the universities are now swollen by large numbers of students aided by public funds who would never have got to the university pre-war, has probably little to do with the phenomena we have been discussing, although such a reason is often put forward in controversies about various sorts of academic decline. The students from lower-income families have more likely got closer contacts with the practices of the ordinary working population. The generalized influence of the Welfare State is perhaps a greater causative agent; the Welfare State has a conservative tendency socially. Less and less is being left to the initiative of the individual and greater areas of his life are being managed by experts. The student population, the experts of the future, are more closely bound up with the ethos of the Welfare State than the ordinary young working population.

The whole process through which the young go is one of successive screenings. They are screened at the age of 11 and then allotted to appropriate types of schools. A few years later, the more academic types are again screened and those who pass through the sieve go to the university. All through their school lives various educational, social, hereditary, psychological, economic and imponderable factors are at work on each individual so that the one that ends up the right shape and size to pass through the university sieve is a very specialized product. In the course of children's development *docility* undoubtedly plays a very important part academically. Docile schoolchildren are easier to teach than independent-minded ones; docile pupils accept the various oversimplified intellectual dogmas at school which not infrequently clash with the independent conclusions of a growing mind; docile pupils are prepared to forego all the clamant urges of adolescence in favour of the austerities of the studious life. It is no wonder that as a by-product of our version of free educational opportunity, coupled with the examination system, we have bred up a new student generation remarkable for its docility and lack of independent thought. The fact that such mediocrity of spirit is not entirely conducive to academic success at the university may partly account for the annual crop of failures among outwardly studious individuals. When students have devoted their time almost exclusively to the pursuit of sport, the opposite sex or other non-academic interests, no one is surprised when they fail to qualify, but what is more disturbing is the high proportion of students who keep their noses glued to their books yet fail their finals or just scrape a pass. With the elaborate screening process which starts in the primary school, such a thing should not be possible.

Anyone who marks examination papers in subjects which are not entirely mechanical, knows the awful dreariness, the infuriating banality of examinees who simply regurgitate the undigested material of books and

lecture notes. The work of the independent thinker who quarrels with the views of his professors and drags in barely relevant material as ammunition, ranks higher than the conscientious parrot. Docility of mind and spirit is prognostic of academic success to a great extent during a child's schooldays, but such qualities may badly let him down at the university. This is less true in certain branches of natural science where all matters of judgment are far removed from the human plane—alas for our brilliant physicists boneheadedly implementing policies which would disgrace baboons!

Having noted a certain trend among university students, I must point out that it is not the only trend. A great deal depends upon the minority section both among students and in the senior commonrooms, which the majority like to regard as a lunatic fringe. This "lunatic fringe" cannot be neglected however, since it makes a distinguished contribution to academic work. We are lucky in this country that the position in the universities is different from that in the United States described by a previous contributor to this journal.* Here the libertarian minority has room for growth. The censorship of dissident opinion is largely internal in British universities. Those holding advanced opinions may hesitate to express them openly in print or before a larger audience than their immediate friends, for fear that THEY will hold it against them in the politics of academic advancement. Often those who do not care a damn what THEY think and are therefore prepared to publicize their opinions on social matters quite openly are people assured of their personal eminence in the academic world. Creeping fear of a nebulous THEY gives more substance to it; we run the risk of clothing the bogey with more power.

TONY GIBSON.

POSTSCRIPT.

The somewhat melancholy conclusions of this article receive a hint of contradiction by events which have occurred as it goes to press. I refer to the signs of militant protest against the attack on Egypt which the universities have shown. That so blatant a piece of aggression is a sign of our times is no cause for anything but gloom, but the fact that the younger generation have to some extent refused to swallow it is a sign of health.

In the student protest against this beginnings of a colonial war, the Asiatic and African students have acted as a welcome energizing minority. It seems that Britain, like many other decayed colonial powers of the past, may yet receive a revivifying spirit from those whom she has oppressed.

*Norman Birnbaum *An American at a British University*. December, 1955.

Grateful thanks are due for the following donations, which most of the donors have requested should be acknowledged by initials only. In future we will do this in any case:—

HRL 19/4; WA 1/9; DW 1/6; Anon 14/4; S 18/2; DMG 2/6; DB 17/9; BG 8/2; FT 3/6; GW 10/4; MH 10/-; D 2/6; YR 13/-; NE 6d.; JK 3/3; Kit 1/-; RHM 2/7; WB 3/2; JS 1/7; SS 7/6; EP 9/-; RRT 4/8; LD 9/11; WG 7/6; EJ 5/4; B 10/-; G 2/6; PH 17/6; DS £1/11/3; Jet 5/-; RH 1/-.

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Letters to the Editors

To the Editor,

The University Libertarian:

I would like to remark on the last two sentences of Mr. Ward's third paragraph, in the correspondence columns of your last issue. If I understand Comfort, he is not "wrong", for "deductions of the mind" (or "science") are merely the ideas, the momentary end result of the processes, that were begun by "the aspirations of the heart".

There is no important contradiction between the general conclusions of Comfort's thought and, say, Herbert Read's thought; it is the manner of arriving at the conclusions that is different. Comfort is a scientific poet and Read is a poetic scientist. [*Are you sure you've got that the right way round?*—ED.]

As the example in paragraph four of Mr. Ward's letter indicates ("Allegedly 'scientific' evidence could be provided for both these [the authoritarian and the libertarian] traditions"), the objectivity of science is a relative term and it loses its definitive value when used in conjunction with living human beings.

I would not quarrel with Mr. Ward's statement that "the case for anarchism . . . is ultimately based on the aspirations of the heart," but I would suggest that the "deductions of the mind" are the aspirations crystallized.

Sincerely,

JOHN DOHENY.

3410 Hover Place,
Seattle 5, Washington, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

It is seldom that I am able to read a publication dealing intelligently with matters which, like marriage, sex, community life, politics or military service, are treated in Spain according to obsolete Catholic and Fascist standards.

I am not an anarchist, mainly because I do not think that there is any practical way of establishing a Stateless society, every attempt to do so having turned out to be a failure.

However, I believe the libertarian way is the best—the most scientific—one in which to approach and understand many aspects of reality. Therefore please send *The University Libertarian* regularly. I enclose a 25 peseta note which I expect you will have no difficulty in changing to English currency; there are too many regulations here.

Sincerely,

R.

Madrid.

How bad are Britain's Morals?

We give below, by kind permission of Dr. Alex Comfort and of the BBC North Regional Talks Department, the text of his address to the Northern Fifty-One Society on November 25th, 1955, together with part of the discussion which followed, which has been transcribed from a tape recording of the broadcast. We are grateful to the individual speakers for their permission to publish their remarks, which are exactly as broadcast except for minor deletions and rewording made or approved by the speakers.

Dr. Comfort is Nuffield Research Fellow in the biology of old age at University College, London, and was formerly a lecturer in physiology at London Hospital Medical College. He has written many plays, poems and novels, the most successful of the latter being *The Powerhouse* (1944) and *On This Side Nothing* (1948), sociological works such as *Sexual Behaviour In Society* (1950) and *Authority and Delinquency In The Modern State* (1950), and (this year) a medical work, *The Biology of Senescence*. He has the distinction of having broadcast (in 1950) on non-religious morality five years before Mrs. Knight and of being, so far as we know, the only other broadcaster besides Mrs. Knight, Stephen Toulmin and Professor Ayer to have contrived to discuss Christianity as if it was intellectually not quite respectable.

THE NORTHERN FIFTY-ONE SOCIETY

In the chair, Professor Sydney Raybould, Department of Adult Education, Leeds University.

DR. ALEX COMFORT.—I'm afraid that we all know the answer to this question, don't we? If we saw it advertised as the title of an impending sermon or lecture, any of us here could sit down and write out what the speaker was going to say—that our morals are bad and deteriorating, those of the young being particularly degenerate; that this process is due either, some will say, to insufficient praying, or to insufficient beating; others will say that we are on the verge of a moral, political and eschatological catastrophe: and that the only hope is to turn back at once, to ideas and customs which existed, or more accurately which the speaker thinks existed, at some time in the past.

This kind of comment has been repeated in nearly identical terms in every period of English history of which we have record. There is always a vocal group of people who are intensely worried with the wickedness of their contemporaries. Our own generation has been subjected to a great deal of this kind of propaganda, more I think than its share, and I suppose that many people are disturbed by it.

This is all the more remarkable because quite the most striking feature of English individual behaviour in the last half-century has been its almost unnatural stability and restraint, in spite of a rate of change in society far greater than any previous generation has had to face. The surprising fact is not that there are problems of delinquency or of plain fatigue and inadequacy, but that there aren't many, many more. It's curious how the Englishman allows himself to be convinced, generation by generation, of his own laziness,

selfishness, lecherousness and vice—he can be induced to repeat glumly that we are becoming a nation of criminals at a time when we have a murder rate of from half to one per million per annum, and when one fight between two men in Soho occupies the press for best part of a week. It happens partly, I think, because people have very little idea of the amount of demoralisation which the same amount of change in approximately the same time produced in other countries—in America or Germany, for example—and also because we have even hazier ideas about how Englishmen behaved in the past, based on partial and edifying descriptions in school books—which leave out all the dirty bits (*Laughter*). There is, for example, a widespread impression that the mid-Victorian period—the era of church-going, as I have heard it described—whatever else its faults, didn't tolerate sexual delinquency. What in fact it didn't tolerate was the public discussion of it, because it was also the era of a substantial industry in child prostitution and rape which was quite unique in Europe.

The propaganda I have mentioned is also characteristically quite irrelevant to real moral issues. For example, to my mind one of the most serious moral problems facing us today is the way that our country has been led to adopt unlimited war against civilians as a permanent military policy. Others have, it is true, but between Guernica and Hiroshima there has been a complete abandonment, both of the general direction of our own cultural ethic, and of civilised tradition generally; and more recently, the idea that a government is entitled to threaten that in some circumstances it will attempt to bring human history to an end with hydrogen bombs is more than a shift in morality. It represents an actual invasion of public policy by mental disorder.

But this issue and the other big moral issue of today, our relation to the underdeveloped countries, are not usually on the agenda of the guardians of public morality. They always stick to issues which are almost without moral and social importance, like the toleration of nudity or homosexuality, or the sale of red-nosed postcards. In many cases the evidence of degeneracy which they bring forward is not that our national policies are unworthy of our private manners, which is true, but that there isn't enough aggressive behaviour today—we don't flog children and criminals, or burn witches or torture heretics and perverts, nearly often enough. And whenever reform is threatened, up bobs this English Mau Mau to oppose it.

So there are two ways, you see, of putting this question; there is the one which knows the answer already, and words it "How bad are our morals, we hope" and the one which wants to know "What are the main problems of conduct which people are facing now, and how can we best help them." Opinions like those I've been citing are quite proof against evidence and they unfortunately show a strong occupational distribution (I hope I'm not insulting anyone) being apparently commonest among judges, magistrates and some military leaders (though by no means all), only slightly less common among politicians and clergy (possibly among the clergy in decreasing order of ecclesiastical rank) (*Laughter*) and, I'm pleased to say, least common in biological and social scientists. (*Hear, hear.*)

I'm not just being nasty about this, incidentally; one of our worst moral problems today, particularly in the prevention and treatment of crime, is that legislation and public policy are predominantly dictated by people who adopt the first rather than the second viewpoint, and who bitterly resent and resist any factual study of human behaviour.

Well, there have been some important attitude changes in our society, over the last century. The most important and the most evident, I think, are roughly these. We seem to have become steadily less tolerant of openly cruel and aggressive behaviour, in daily life at least; we've moved considerably toward a sexual morality which attempts, at least, to be purposively directed; and we are facing a far greater individual choice in patterns of conduct.

Now prior to 1800 the chief feature of English life which foreigners quoted against us was its evident enjoyment of cruelty—bear baiting, bull baiting, duelling, the attendance at executions, often over a dozen at a session, tormenting the insane in Bedlam (this was a favourite family outing in the 18th century), street hooliganism and violent robbery. The tendency to this kind of behaviour has declined all over Europe, but in the course of the last century English attitudes changed very suddenly and a defensive sort of humanitarianism took the place of all this aggressive behaviour. This aggression hasn't gone out of our society—if we had a public execution tomorrow it would have a record audience. It won't, I think, go, until there is a great deal more social purpose in our society, one of the things it almost entirely lacks. The aggression is hanging around: one of its outlets is in sadistic symbols in films and books: another is in crime: another, of course, is in the defence of public morality. There is some evidence that today we express our aggression by getting stomach ulcers and skin rashes rather than by going to see someone hanged, drawn and quartered. But, even this, with respect to some of Her Majesty's Justices, does seem to me to represent a moral gain.

The atomic bomb, by the way, isn't a manifestation of public aggression. It didn't arise from the attitude of the public: it was cooked up in secret by a small group of people, and intensive propaganda by every available means has never secured more than the most grudging public acquiescence in it. It hasn't therefore replaced the duel and the bearpit. The only aggression it canalises is that of a limited number of immature people in office, which is sociologically quite another matter.

Sexual behaviour is, of course, the field of conduct where any suggestion of change causes the greatest emotional uproar, in fact the word "immoral" rarely refers to anything else. Whenever statements are made about it, it's probably worth remembering that we don't in fact know, in any statistical detail, how people behave now in this matter, or how they used to behave in the recent past. For this reason, then, all wide-ranging statements about it are guesses. We do know, however, that there is only a very slight connection between the attitudes people adopt in public and what they in fact do. My two guesses in this field are that

* . . . * The paragraph between asterisks, though recorded, was not broadcast. In fairness to the BBC, however, it must be pointed out that this is not necessarily censorship. The Fifty-One Society recording is always edited from 90 to 60 minutes to heighten the interest of the discussion and to reduce it to a broadcastable length. Nonetheless, the deleted paragraph touches on a most important moral issue, the social behaviour of a personally immature technocracy.—Ed.

the range of sexual patterns is probably much wider in our culture than people's professed morality suggests, and that it always has been: and that real change in attitude, and still more in practice, is probably always much less than it appears—so that when a new sort of behaviour appears it probably means that something which has been there all the time is now done publicly instead of secretly.

But there are some important changes in public attitudes, I think; the most important is the decline of the influence of magic and guilt in determining people's attitudes to sex, and in particular the idea that child and adolescent sexual activities are harmful and vicious—this is a really important advance so far as adult development is concerned. It's a direct result of science too, to my mind. It heralds the recognition that hardly any of the sexual manifestations which have caused such fear and anger in the past are properly described as harmful or perverse, and that those of them which have any social importance owe it almost entirely to the hostile reaction of society. This certainly isn't a general realisation yet, but is already widespread among people who contribute to the social agencies—education, health, science; but not, I'm afraid, so far law, religion or government.

There is also a very widespread attempt by people of all classes to order their conduct, or at least justify it, in accordance with what they believe or hope, often erroneously, to be scientific or psychological principles. In other words they want to have and offer reasonable grounds for what they do and don't do, rather than rely on a mechanical system of right and wrong which they don't find relevant to their experience. This process is producing casualties, in human happiness, largely because of the obstructions which have been placed in the way of giving the public accurate facts, but it is, so far as I can see, an inevitable process, and one which is bound in the long run to transform the whole of our society for the better. But it brings me to the one really worrying trend in our society, the increasing inability of people to provide stable homes for their children. That's one piece of psychological knowledge which hasn't yet got over properly.

This is not primarily a sexual problem. The main cause of it is the rate of change in our society, and the fact that the kind of society which we have doesn't offer the support which immature people need to enable them to grow up. In fact it hinders even the most mature people from doing so, by war, conscription, housing shortages, and the negative and prohibitive character of some sexual instruction.

Producing children you aren't emotionally mature enough to bring up is about the only kind of socio-sexual behaviour, short of actual violence, which we know to be really harmful to individuals and to society.

The kind of people, and therefore of institutions and attitudes, which we shall have in twenty years depends very largely on the atmosphere of homes and the extent to which parents are disturbed or stable people during the early part of their children's development. If we don't devise a form of society which gives support to individuals in doing this, we shall have a crop of aggressive, delinquent and immature people. The two big problems we are facing now (by no means new ones) are the problem of getting stable homes for child development, and the problem of helping or controlling people who are already stunted from this cause,

including delinquents in the ordinary sense, and even more the frightened and aggressive people who secure office and dictate moral attitudes—a generation of immature people will include criminals and misfits in the ordinary sense, but it will also produce nominally respectable people who think in terms of retributive punishment and massive retaliation. I mention them, rather than the officially-recognised delinquents, because the results of their activities are today much more serious, and they themselves are much harder to modify.

The really important difference between this society and past societies is that it is becoming increasingly necessary for people to choose their own patterns of conduct without much support from society. Freedom of this kind has been, and is, quite exceptional in human societies.

Most human beings have always been subject not only to gross economic and political pressures (and of course we still are) but we now have this much greater freedom, and we've got to find out how to use it without the help of a dogmatic ideology.

PROFESSOR W. LYON BLEASE (Faculty of Law, Liverpool University).—Mr. Chairman, I thoroughly agree with Dr. Comfort in his opening statement that it has always been fashionable in this country to speak of the moral degeneration of one's contemporaries. In fact it isn't confined to this country at all. I forbear, sir, in view of the education which most of the members of this society no doubt have, from quoting a very well-known passage of Horace, in the original Latin, but even in ancient Rome they were lamenting the degeneration of their own times and anticipating a still further lapse in the generation to follow. It's a very common form of indulging one's sense of, I don't know, superiority over other people maybe. I also thoroughly agree with Dr. Comfort in his assertion that we are more humane than we were, say 150 years ago, more intelligent in our dealing with problems of sex and we are much more aware of violence because we are much less aggressive in ourselves. We are becoming a more humane, a more tolerant and a more intelligent and sympathetically imaginative people than we were, and we are not by any means so inclined to rely as our fathers were upon absolute rules of conduct imposed on us by the Church, the Law and the people who happen for the time being to be in control of our social order. Moral conduct, it seems to me, is simply a question of recognizing the fact that we are members of a society, that whether you guide yourself by the religious maxim that you must love your neighbour as yourself, whether you accept Kant's Categorical Imperative and say you must treat other men as ends and not as means, or whether you invent some maxim for yourself, "serve and exploit not" or something of that sort, your moral conduct consists solely in the way that you behave with respect to other people; and the more generous, the more tolerant, and the more sympathetically imaginative you are, the more moral you are. I think we are steadily improving and I share Dr. Comfort's satisfaction in that respect with the present, and his confidence with respect to the future.

DELINQUENCY

LADY SIMON OF WYTHENSHAW (Manchester City Council Education Committee).—I understood Dr. Comfort to say that juvenile delinquency is probably caused by broken homes. Now we are always being told that juvenile delinquency is caused by various things. Some

people tell us it is caused by broken homes, some people by mothers going out to work, some people say that it is because of the decline of religion, but I gather from people who have investigated the subject that there is no evidence whatsoever that any of these causes really do tend to produce juvenile delinquents. There are children brought up in broken homes who do not become delinquents, there are lots of children, as we know, whose mothers go out to work who don't become delinquents, and there are children in non-Christian homes who don't become delinquents. I wonder if Dr. Comfort has any evidence on that?

DR. COMFORT.—Well, I personally haven't because I haven't investigated it—I'm going off other people's work. But I notice the way you put it, Lady Simon. You say that there are people who are exposed to this sort of thing who don't become delinquent. I think that Maxim Gorki had a pretty appalling childhood by his own account, but although he became a revolutionary he didn't become a delinquent, and children who live in homes with cases of open T.B. don't necessarily acquire it. I think it's probably true that some are born delinquent, some achieve delinquency and some have delinquency thrust upon them, but I have at least been sold, shall we say, on the ideas of people like Dr. Bowlby and others, that there seems to be some correlation between absence of adult and mature moral attitudes, and deprivation of maternal affection at some time. I wouldn't go so far as to say that it always results when a mother goes out to work. It would rather depend on what other circumstances were present.

LADY CORDELIA JAMES (Juvenile Court Magistrate).—I quite agree with what Lady Simon says, to the effect that there is no evidence at all to show that mothers going out to work in particular does affect juvenile delinquency, but I would like to accuse Dr. Comfort of being rather behind the times, as sometimes does happen with sociologists. (*Laughter.*) He said that one of the disquieting features of our time is the increasing inability of people to provide stable homes for their children, but I would like to remind him that our juvenile delinquency figures have been steadily going down for the past four years and they are now comparable with prewar figures. They have not quite reached the 1938 figures but they are not very much above them.

G. W. RHODES (Lecturer in Government and Administration, Huddersfield Technical College).—Mr. Chairman, I want to take up this point, too, because though I am a schoolmaster of very short standing, I do discuss this problem with many teachers who have been in the profession for a very long time. Their general impression is that this problem of juvenile lack of self discipline, juvenile delinquency as revealed inside the school has been particularly common since the war, and though there have possibly not been any general sociological studies of this, teachers are generally of the opinion that this has been a direct result of the fact that during the war there was very little direct parental control of the children from the father; since the war, an increasing number of mothers have been going out to work, the parents themselves are earning more money and spending more time in the evenings out in various forms of entertainment, with the result that children get very little direct guidance from the parent—particularly in terms of self discipline. If I might give a typical example, I know of innumerable young girls of 13 who regularly are allowed to stay out until the early hours

of the morning. Now some people may say it's a bit Tory to disapprove of that. Quite frankly I do not think it improves the self discipline of young girls to be out regularly at such times of the night (or such times of the early morning).

F. R. POSKITT (Headmaster, Bolton School).—I am very glad Dr. Comfort gave the importance he did to this question of instability of background in relation to difficulties that children have to face, because I think most of us in schools, particularly where the numbers of boys in difficulty are so small that one can follow the cases through, do find that almost universally there is something wrong in the home, though not necessarily due to the parents' own fault. All sorts of aspects of family life which used to hold it together, economic aspects, the religious aspect, the educational aspect have gone, and the parents in many cases are left without function except the function of sharing a bed. What we've got to do if we want stable family life is to give the parents and the family much more significance in our set-up, in the choice of careers, in the choice of schools, and possible bring them far more into the life of the school. We need a campaign to make the parents significant, to make them feel they are important and I think that we shall then find props to replace those that changed social circumstances have removed.

RELIGION AND MORALITY

PETER CRAIG (ex-Conservative candidate, Manchester City Council).—I do feel that one of the main causes of this moral problem, and I'm convinced that it is getting worse, is that the part the Church is playing in everyday life is getting less. Previously, I think, most children, even if the parents were not particularly what is called "religious," did for a certain period attend Church and Sunday School, and there they were taught now to differentiate between certain forms of conduct, in other words they were shown how to make a moral choice. Now I feel that, since the war, the drop in the number of children who attend Church and who are taught on moral questions is the linch-pin of this whole problem.

J. M. CAMERON (Department of Philosophy, Leeds University).—I want to come, in a way, to the rescue of religion and the law. I don't think that the relation is quite so simple as the last speaker has suggested, but I want to suggest to Dr. Comfort, much as I agree with very much of what he said, that, although the personal spokesmen of the Law and the Churches often say cruel and stupid things, there is a sense in which these are two great traditional institutions which carry with them the moral principles to which he in fact is appealing when he condemns such things as cruelty. I want in the second place to suggest that we are in fact faced really with something of a moral crisis. He himself suggested some of the reasons for this, notably what he said about the hydrogen bomb, with which I heartily agree, but it seems to me that there are other moral issues which people take rather light-heartedly and simply because somehow they think that social utility and kindness to people are supreme values. I just take two examples, euthanasia and abortion. It seems to me that here we have proposals, whether right or wrong I'm not concerned, that are revolutionary proposals in relation to that standard of morality which is carried by the Law and the Church. I am suggesting that a revolution in certain fundamental spheres of human life

is being proposed, and it is taken for granted as self-evident that we are always to be kind, we have always to consult social utility, and that we may kill the child in the womb, and that we may put out of the way the person suffering from cancer or perhaps even the old people who no longer can make anything of life. I think that this is a turning point in European morality and that it is the tradition of the Church and of the Law in this country which provides some kind of defence for the traditional attitudes.

DR. COMFORT.—I quite agree about euthanasia. A lot of nonsense has been talked about it, and I personally wouldn't advocate it even for heretics. (*Laughter.*)

DR. DENNIS CHAPMAN (Department of Social Science, Liverpool University).—Cameron is surely a little out of touch? Abortion and the killing of the old have been universally practised since the dawn of time by almost all persons in all societies. Why should he regard this as revolutionary?—it is terribly old fashioned!

DR. H. V. WISEMAN (Department of Social Studies, Leeds University).—I would like to pursue this question of the Church and religion a little further, if I may. The more I hear of the sort of solutions that the Churches and the Church leaders are trying to offer to our problems, the less satisfactory I find them. I don't know whether I'm in order to mention television in this august gathering, but there is a programme called "Is This Your Problem?" On almost every occasion there has been a leader of one of the Churches trying to offer advice, and I've made a note of three quite distinct problems to which the Church was an answer. There was no indication as to how or why it was. It was the answer to the problem of a woman who had a sister who was a dipsomaniac, it was the answer to the problem of a woman who was so tired when she had put her children to bed at 8 o'clock that she couldn't face bridge-roles in order to entertain. It was also the answer to the problem of a man who for eleven years had been living in over-crowded circumstances yet couldn't get a new home. Somehow or other these people were going to get some kind of consolation which would enable them to face up to the sort of problems they had brought to Edana Romney—who, incidentally didn't solve them either. If you go a little deeper, you have what is fundamentally I think a moral problem, the problem of relations between the races, the colour problem. The Archbishop of Canterbury comes along with some obscure and quite meaningless talk about men being equal in the love of God but not in the sight of God, which seems to me doesn't offer any sort of answer to this kind of problem at all. I would like to think that the Churches have some kind of answer but so far I haven't seen it.

THE REV. WILFRED GARLICK (St. George's Anglican Church, Stockport).—I am interested to hear what Dr. Wiseman has to say about that. On the face of it I should be disposed to agree with him, except that I would like to say to him that psychiatrists tend to give a psychological solution and socialists tend to give a socialistic solution, therefore parsons tend to give a parsonic solution, and I think that might be allowed for. But to answer the point which struck me as being most important of all the ones that Dr. Comfort made: he said (I think in the course of his opening remarks) that the thing which was really one of the moral problems was the lack of responsibility, in all ways, large and small, in people's individual life and in our cor-

porate activities. I quite agree with him in that particular field; I think that we have displayed a most lamentable lack of responsibility in the directions which he quoted, war, the hydrogen bomb and all the rest of those great things, but I think also that most of us who have to live with ordinary people are most impressed by the extraordinary lack of responsibility for their own lives and for the lives of the community which they display. I would suggest to Dr. Wiseman that the one contribution which the Church can un-failingly make is to give people a *reason* for living. It may be, in the opinion of a good many people here, an erroneous one. They may not agree with the doctrinal background of it, but if they don't accept that, then there isn't any meaning in life at all. We have at least the main contribution to make, and I should be very happy if all the religious leaders of all levels would confine themselves to that kind of guidance and leadership.

DR. COMFORT.—I again just want to say that what I said was actually the reverse—that I was astonished how much responsibility we retain. And you have said something very important when you say that “if that isn't so there isn't any meaning in life.” I don't want to embark upon an attack on religion but I do feel that very serious harm has been done by the stream of sermons, which have at any rate been produced by the B.B.C. in very large volume, to the effect that if you don't have a supernatural ethic you haven't got an ethic at all. A lot of people haven't got a supernatural ethic and they would otherwise have one, and I think that has done a lot of harm.

NON-RELIGIOUS ETHICS

DR. PHYLLIS BENTLEY (Novelist).—It seems to me that the great moral task of our time is the formulation of a code of non-religious ethics. So many people feel entirely unable to accept religions of any kind, and yet they are longing for some stable code of ethics which all could follow. Then people could still be, if they wish, Christians, Buddhists and so on. They could add those ethics to the general moral code. It is extremely difficult, of course, but surely we could discuss the problem—surely it should be one of the great moral tasks to try to formulate this non-religious code of ethics?

KENNETH BARNES (Headmaster, Wennington School, Wetherby).—I can't believe that this code of ethics would be any more use than the rigid one of morality that the Church has championed. I would like to believe that the Church, the supposed custodian of Christian principles, could continue to lead us. There is no doubt whatever that the principles the Church demanded in the past did safeguard people and were a tremendous help, but I see no sign that the Church is capable of providing that guidance now. That is not to say for a moment that this is not a religious problem, it is a profoundly religious problem. It has to be noted in passing that Jesus broke across practically all the current morality of his time, and his method was always to call people to the *facts* of the situation. He was a scientist in that respect. Things were not to be easily settled in terms of outer morality, and the human realities of the situation were always what he called people to regard. And then facing realities people had to build up some inner morality, an inner sensitiveness,

an inner awareness both of the totality of things and the details, and in view of that sensitive inner awareness they could decide what they should do. It is that sensitiveness, which is fundamentally a religious thing, that we must search for, and I have some hope that the younger generation is doing it. Though they go through a good deal of suffering, they hurt each other and make a lot of mistakes, they eventually come through, many of them, to a morality which has some relevance to the real situation in which they are living and in the end does respect persons.

DR. COMFORT.—I want to say there that I think that process is going on as you say, particularly in the matter of sexual morality, and I do feel that we have a very heavy responsibility to try to feed these folk with more facts. We are short of facts on the effects of particular forms of behaviour. The question has been raised tonight, is it really true that broken homes for instance do, as I've suggested, affect the character of the children? Well, many psychologists think they do and apparently this has also been challenged. But there are so many of these things in which we could provide a considerably larger body of fact. Fact is probably no substitute for ethics, but it is a thing which at the moment a lot of these people are crying out for, and I think they would be very pleased indeed to have.

REV. RONALD LLOYD (Moravian Church, Bradford).—I very strongly agree with Kenneth Barnes that this idea of there being provided, from whatever source, a wonderful code of ethics, is precisely the thing that Christ refused to do. He refused to draw up a book of rules, he always left it with human personality. But before I make what I believe to be a more fundamental point I can't resist, Mr. Chairman, just a passing crack at Victor Wiseman. Quite frankly, his attack on this particular television programme—for which I hold no brief—is grossly unfair. I saw the same programmes and made exactly the same sort of investigation and came to a quite contrary viewpoint: particularly since in each case the Church made it quite clear that in about three seconds you can't give a final answer to anything. I realize now that I have just fallen into the same trap as Wiseman and a number of others, I said “the Church says”. What in heaven's name is “the Church”? We keep hearing this phrase particularly when some attack is going to be made on Christian belief. Is the Church the Archbishop of Canterbury? Wiseman quoted what he said about the race question. Why not quote Trevor Huddleston?—isn't he also the Church?

DR. WISEMAN.—I did say the Church and Church leaders, Mr. Chairman. Maybe they're separate but they're all expressing a religious point of view.

A Voice: But not the same one apparently. (*Laughter.*)

REV. RONALD LLOYD.—Not the same one, Mr. Chairman—it is of course inevitable in all societies that the safe men get to the top, and you naturally expect a safe solution to come from a source like that. (*Laughter.*)

The point I'd really like to make is this. I came expecting to *disagree* with 90% of what Dr. Comfort would say. I find myself *agreeing* with about 95% of what he says, particularly when he says our whole moral ideas within society are topsy turvy: the idea in which sexual morality is accepted as the only kind of criterion.

GRAFT

DR. DOROTHY KNOWLES (Department of French Studies, Liverpool University).—Nobody has mentioned so far the matter of graft. Might not the amount of graft in a country be as good a yard-stick for judging its morals as, say, sexual behaviour?

DR. COMFORT.—Well, I think it might. I don't know how far it's due to our elevated moral standards here and how far it's due to historical accidents, you can work that one out for yourself—though anybody who has worked, like some of my colleagues have, in a country like Egypt would have quite a lot to say on the differences between British morality and those abroad. It doesn't seem to have got much worse here recently, does it? I wouldn't have thought there was an awful lot of graft around. You can't bribe a judge or a member of Parliament with anything less than a title at any rate. (*Laughter.*)

LADY JAMES.—I would like to go on about the point about social change, Mr. Chairman. A lot has been said about frightened people who resent change, but surely in any society you must always have the two pressures; you must have the pressure towards change coming from the great reformers, and you must also have the pressure towards conservatism coming from the forces which have been, I think very unjustly, run down, of the Law and the Church.

MRS. MITZI CUNLIFFE (Sculptor and wife of Mr. Marcus Cunliffe, head of the Dept. of American Studies, University of Manchester).—As an American, England strikes me as being extraordinarily moral, that is in terms of public morality. On the question of graft which has been mentioned, it is absolutely stunning to me that there is so little public corruption; it seems that the whole country tends more or less to play according to the same rules, which is completely untrue of places like the United States, where they don't have one set of rules really; Americans are so completely polygot in background and general orientation that there simply isn't any one code that all Americans are either subscribing to or are fighting against. England seems very static in this way. The sort of change that people are upset about now in England is actually happening very, very slowly and gently here compared with more violent societies that have been formed rather more hectically. I think that the problem with adolescents which is disturbing people now seems to be cropping up mainly as a lower class problem. In America this is a middle class and upper middle class and every person's kind of problem, whereas here, middle class and upper middle class people seem to keep their children in an extraordinarily child-like state emotionally and socially for an enormously extended period.

The harping back to religion that has gone on this evening is incomprehensible to me as an old-fashioned humanist. I am quite struck by how Church-going English people are, compared with Americans—at least how observing they are compared with New Yorkers, my husband corrects me. (*Laughter.*) English people obviously believe there is a moral code, with small differences of unimportant detail, which all people subscribe to and which held sway until recently. Most Americans would think that organized religion hadn't functioned for society as a *moral* check for so long that one wouldn't bring it up in this sort of argument at all.

WILLIAM GRUNDY (Geological Engineer).—Dr. Comfort attacked certain things, and he attacked some magistrates and some clergy. Many of the defences that have come in reply from members of the Society were in fact defences of law, of justice and of religion, the abstract thing, whereas Dr. Comfort I think was attacking individuals. Those individuals, who are the elements of conservatism in society that Lady James mentioned, deserve to be attacked if some recent outbursts are typical of what goes on in their minds. Take, for example, the recent magistrates' committee on the subject of homosexuality. The motion that was put to them was rejected heavily (and that is not a good or a bad thing, it's just a fact) but the so-called reasons that were put forward by many of those people indicate an awfully unhealthy state of mind. Words like “bestial” and so on were flung about as though they were arguments instead of emotional question-begging.

Someone earlier on said a very important thing, that we are all members of society. I think that if we as a society have accepted the care of the less fortunate, the sick, the aged, and so on (however the intention may be frustrated by political and economic forces), then whatever may have happened to individual morals lately, at least there's been quite an improvement in the morals of society.

ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY

F. R. POSKITT.—May I go back to the point in Dr. Comfort's speech in which he refers to the sense of guilt regarding sexual matters and particularly the need for changing our attitude and being more tolerant towards the sexual activities of children and adolescents? As far as children are concerned, he is no doubt referring to the very wrong attitude adopted—certainly until recently—both by parents and by schools towards masturbation. As far as the question of adolescence is concerned, I personally would welcome wider information on that subject.

DR. COMFORT.—We are at the moment in a society where the age of puberty is coming rapidly down. It is rather a remarkable thing, I don't think it has been explained, but it has come down nearly five years in the last century.* We have a society which is going to postpone marriage quite a lot by various economic reasons, and also by reason of the increased saving which is necessary, and I would have thought that—although I am not prepared myself to lay down here and now what form it should take—we've got to face the fact that some form of sexual, preferably heterosexual, activity in adolescence has got to be put up with. We can take various views about it. We can prohibit it altogether, in which case it will happen; we can tell people to avoid it if possible, to confine themselves to moderation, which are very, very vague counsels and which don't help people very much and so increase the amount of trouble. We can accept the thing perfectly frankly, and try to work out a form of mate selection, shall we say, between adolescent persons which doesn't involve the risk of a premature pregnancy, which doesn't cause the sense of guilt which that

*According to a reviewer in *Nature* (12/5/56, p. 861): “It seems likely that the time of occurrence of the adolescent spurt is a more sensitive indicator of nutritional deficiency than is the growth rate at earlier periods . . . [There is] substantial evidence that the onset of adolescence has been speeding up in many countries during the past 50 years or more.”—Ed.

sort of thing causes now, and which doesn't land us in the situation of trying to enforce a continency which simply is unrealistic. A lot of people will jump down my throat about that. The real difficulty is that you can't introduce a thing of that kind, as, shall I say, a piece of private enterprise. If you introduce it on a limited scale for one group of adolescents great will be the row and great will be the psychological damage which is likely to occur to their contact with other people. It is a thing which is likely to come gradually, but I think we may find that we are shortly confronted with something of that sort as a *fait accompli*. And although I can't perhaps go into detail, the vast majority of primitive societies which don't altogether prohibit premarital intercourse in adolescence, arrive at various systems which work rather well. In fact I believe there is one Indian race which according to an anthropologist's article recently changed its system, from demanding that young men should go steady with particular girls, to insisting on a continual rotation within the sort of club-house where the young people lived, and one young man remarked that he regarded marriage with very, very great relief because then you could stick to the girl you wanted and you didn't have to put up with a whole lot of irritating young women you had no affection for and would be only too glad to leave to other people.

REV. RONALD LLOYD.—Probably the most forthright statement that Dr. Comfort made was when he advocated premarital sex relations for adolescents. He expected that everybody would jump down his throat and nobody did, and I think that a statement like that should not be allowed to go unchallenged. I think the implication was, perhaps, that of course the narrow-minded Church people would be against it. But it should be made perfectly clear that there is a pretty well-documented body of psychiatric opinion which feels that it is not a good thing at all, so that even on grounds other than religious I would condemn it.

DR. L. F. HENRIQUES (Department of Social Studies, Leeds University).—I should like to support Dr. Comfort, in one point, where he mentioned the fact that many primitive societies, or a particular one, have worked out an adequate means of dealing with this problem of adolescent sexual activity. In the case of one society—I think it must be the Trobriand Islanders—complete sexual freedom, or what we would call promiscuity is allowed before marriage; but upon marriage adultery is punished with death; and in the event a very satisfactory set of relationships is built up. (*Laughter.*) Further to that I would like to add that the discussion tonight has left out what is in my opinion the most important point that Dr. Comfort made. That was when he talked about the freedom of choice which is upon us today. This I think absolutely fundamental, because what most people cannot do is to exercise this choice. (*Hear, hear.*) Formerly the Church helped and guided and was the arbiter of conscience, and people knew more or less what to do. Today there are so many bewildering bodies arrayed, saying that this shall be done or not be done, that the unfortunate individual, in his lamentable state of education, finds it quite impossible to decide upon a course of action. The result is—the prevalence of the psychiatrist.

DIVINE AUTHORITY

I. M. CAMERON.—I want to say three things very briefly on the old subject of Christianity and morals. The fact is that, in traditional Christian moral teach-

ing, sexual demeanours are not the most grave sins. (*Hear, Hear.*) Pride and avarice are far greater sins than sins of the flesh. Secondly I want to say that I can't accept at all the account given earlier by Kenneth Barnes of Christian morality as a kind of *experimental* morality. If one thing is perfectly clear it is that Christ in the Gospels teaches *with authority*, and he says, "I say unto you, thus and thus." And the whole problem of morals in relation to religion is the question of divine authority and how divine authority is to be known. If there is divine authority and we can know what it is, this does in a very real sense settle the moral question.

LADY JAMES.—I would like to end on an optimistic note. We might remember that the divorce rate, the separation rate and the delinquency rate are going down, and the illegitimacy rate has been stable—except for two World Wars—for the last fifty years.

DR. COMFORT, replying to the discussion:—I want to go back to the point made by Dr. Henriques, who did pick out the most important thing that I said. We've got a society of choice, and we can't avoid it. If someone came here and asked the Fifty-One Society to order his moral conduct look at the variety of choices he'd find. This is a good sort of society, I believe: it gives great opportunity for individual and independent thinking—it is the sort of society likely to be conducive to, say, original scientific research. But it is also the sort of society which gives great opportunity for individual failure, and there are obviously people who get so little support from it that they would clearly find life a great deal easier in a society which is both highly moralistic and highly supportive, like that of the Communist countries—which are intensely moralistic in many of these respects and which are supportive to the extent that they succeed in propping up or pushing along the individual in the direction of conformity to the type of citizen they believe to be desirable.

Well, I think that ethics are not a thing which you can have laid down for you. I think they're an evolved adaptation of social animals. I think that they're things which we've all of us got—or at least a need for them—and if we don't have a rational system of them we shall invent *some* system of them, good or bad. And I think that the moral problem which we've got to cope with, as most people here seem to agree, is that of developing sociality, as I call it rather than moral goodness, within the structure of free choice. And I personally think we've got to do it without the help of an ideology, either a supernatural one as it has been in the past, or a political one as it might quite easily be in the future. I'm equally certain that we can only do it by a great expansion of individual awareness, and also of scientific sociology to give us a few ideas on the actual consequences of some of the things we do.

Well, how bad are our morals? I think that *as morals* they're at death's door. One speaker has wanted to reformulate a particular code of morals. Well, there are an enormous number of back numbers of that particular magazine and nobody reads them. I think that the heirs of our dying morals, if you like to call them that, will be "conditions of happiness" suited to the enormous diversity of human individuals, for whom I think no single code of conduct is ever likely to prove universally acceptable. They will be conditions of happiness rather than rules of conduct as such.

The Secret Police & You

Benn Levy, playwright and former Labour M.P., is the chairman of the recently formed Campaign For The Limitation Of Secret Police Powers. This article by him is appearing simultaneously in The University Libertarian and in Labour's monthly Fact, by arrangement with the latter journal, which we thank for its co-operation.

[While the work of the Campaign is unquestionably valuable, The University Libertarian feels much more emphatic about the relative importance of State security and civil liberty. We do not concede the State apparatus, as such, any rights against the individual at all. Only people have rights against people. We feel quite truculent on this point, and suspect that one or two ivory-tower principles like this are a better safeguard than 'realism' against the sort of administrative deterioration which we now seek to halt and reverse. However, all liberally-motivated opposition to this trend is valuable ipso facto, and we urge our readers to give their support to the Campaign. Virtually all members of science and engineering faculties, at least, will be affected by the abuses which are the subject of the Campaign.—EDITOR.]

"SECURITY ORGANISATIONS" used to be concerned with the two limited fields of catching other people's professional spies, whose exposure would be duly accompanied by a suitable parade of moral indignation, and of training and organising spies of our own.

These romantic exercises, indulged in by all Great Powers, were no serious threat to individual liberty. The radical change came when it was decided that the target of counter-espionage agents should be not merely the mercenary spy but any British citizen who held or had held certain political convictions or who was suspected of "sympathy" with them or who was related to or friendly with one holding such political convictions or whose sexual preferences were unusual or who was given to more than the occasional booze-up or who was otherwise, in someone's opinion, reprehensible as a "loose-liver".

All these novel offences were, believe it or not, solemnly listed in a Government White Paper last April, which confirmed that an appropriately novel punishment (loss of livelihood and reputation) could be inflicted on the suspect.

I say "could be," because nobody pretends that every man or woman in the country, who is employed either in the Civil Service or in private industry where work of a "confidential" character is done and who comes within any of the wide and nebulous categories proscribed, is in fact automatically dismissed. Whether a man is chivvied out of his job or left in peace lies effectively at the arbitrary discretion of the secret police.

It should be added that the White Paper has never been translated into legislation. The House of Commons has therefore had no opportunity of amending or rejecting its provisions. Nevertheless, it exists as an official authorisation by the Government for the despotic arbitrament of the secret police in the lives of private citizens.

Is despotic too strong a word? Not if the normal democratic safeguards against despotism can be shown to be absent. And, unfortunately, they can. Those safeguards are the law, the House of Commons and public opinion.

In law the victim has no protection, provided, of course, his contract of employment has been terminated

in proper form. If his employers pretend that inefficiency or redundancy or re-organisation or any pretext other than the true one is the reason for dismissal, then he is deprived even of his meagre rights of appeal to the tribunal which is nominally accessible to him.

Public opinion cannot be invoked because the reasons for dismissal are withheld and cannot therefore be publicly controverted.

The House of Commons is disqualified from intervening for similar reasons. The Minister is in effect irresponsible, for he can and does refuse to answer Parliamentary questions. So the Commons are as powerless as the Law or public opinion to provide any safeguard whatsoever against injustice.

The situation, in short, is a complete constitutional throwback to the distant days before these elementary rights were won. That is why it is so deeply important. That is why its importance cannot be gauged merely in terms of the number of victims, even if a true figure were ascertainable. That is why the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool registered so heavy a vote backing a resolution that urged the Executive to take corrective measures.

How can safeguards be restored?

A group of liberal-minded people, disturbed by the present position, have been organising what is known as the Campaign for the Limitation of Secret Police Powers. They have not pretended at any point that solutions are easy nor, of course, that State security can be allowed to go hang. They admit that, although mercenaries are still the overwhelming majority in contemporary espionage, yet their activities are occasionally supplemented by political ideologues with supra-national loyalties and that this is the relatively new element in the problem.

There are those who hold, like the White Paper, that State security must have an absolute priority; those who hold that *personal* security must have absolute priority; and those who, rejecting the luxury of absolutism, argue that security of both State and individual have imperative claims which are not in fact irreconcilable.

IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM

Whereas Group One maintains that, to make the State secure, civil liberty must be breached and Group Two argues that, to keep civil liberty intact, the State must take some risk. Group Three, which includes the Campaign Committee, is convinced that both objects are attainable, provided machinery be established to make the security police a "responsible" body. Until this organisation is subject to some form (even a novel one) of public or *parliamentary* or quasi-legal restraint, it cannot be allowed to wield power over individual lives.

The problem has, therefore, been to devise such restraints without exposing security resources; and the answer has been found in a modified form of the procedure already current in trials for treason.

There, fair defence is made possible because the hearing is in camera and the proceedings are protected by the Official Secrets Act.

By contrast, it is true that, in what may be called a "White Paper" case, both the offence and the punishment are unknown to the law, but this surely makes it additionally urgent that we should be vigilant on behalf of the defendant and must assure him at least a quasi-judicial trial before an experienced tribunal, since by the nature of the charge he is debarred from the pro-

tection of a Court of Law. This is surely the irreducible minimum that any genuine believer in civil rights could accept.

There already exists, it is true, an Appeals Tribunal consisting of a couple of retired Civil Servants and an ex-Trade Union official, but its value is negligible.

In the first place it is not available to all those (probably a majority) who are given false reasons for their dismissal.

Secondly, even those who are frankly informed that they are paying the price of their political convictions or have been guilty of exercising what they suppose to be a right of free association or are alleged to be too shaky in their morals to be immune from possible blackmail, even those may hear only by accident that they have any right of appeal at all.

And if they should indeed hear about it, they will soon learn that they may not claim the normal right of legal representation. They may not even be helped by the presence of a Trade Union "friend". They may not hear the evidence against them that they are striving to refute. They may not confront their accusers. They may not demand to know the identity of the informers who have brought them to this plight. They are thus unable to expose malicious motives.

Instead of answering accusations of guilt, they are in the position of having to demonstrate their innocence *in vacuo*. And even if in spite of these almost insurmountable difficulties an appellant should persuade the tribunal to "acquit" him (I have heard of only two cases of reinstatement), that decision may be over-ruled by a Minister, who has never even seen the appellant; and without any fear of being called to public account for his action.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Appeal Tribunal can be dismissed as the merest window-dressing. It provides appellants with little more than the opportunity of an indeterminate chat on the periphery of the subject with three respectable old gentlemen who neither in theory nor in practice offer him the elementary protections of a trial.

The Campaign Committee have therefore produced certain proposals:

- (1) Rules governing employment on security work should be approved by Parliament and made known to every person engaged upon it.
- (2) No person should be removed from his employment on a mendacious charge; e.g., if security be the reason, he shall not be allowed to suppose that it is inefficiency.

Every person suspected of being a security risk shall be advised in writing of the charges against him; of his right of appeal and of his right to be supported by either a legal or trades union representative.

- (3) Instead of a review by the "Three Advisers," there shall be a right of appeal to three High Court Judges who, sitting in camera, shall examine the security officers who have brought the charge, their evidence, their witnesses and their documents; and whose proceedings shall be protected by the Official Secrets Act.
- (4) In the last resort, this Court, if it has evidence of misconduct in the administration of security organisations, shall report the matter, through the Lord Chancellor, to the Privy Council.

Apart from some disagreement as to whether the Tribunal would not be better composed of one High Court judge and two lay assessors, rather than three

judges, no serious argument has so far been advanced against these proposals.

It has, of course, been said that they involve some risk of exposing security sources, but the risk is no greater than in a treason trial and nobody suggests that that is a sufficient reason for depriving a man charged with treason of proper facilities for defending himself. It is surely a wild extravagance that the man accused of having committed treason should have a fairer deal than the man presumed to be likely some day to commit it, that the John Langs should be denied rights of defence enjoyed by the John Nunn Mays.

EXHILARATION

I have written so far as though this issue concerned only State security and personal liberty. But the repercussions are even wider.

For a short while during the war I, like many others, was attached to the security services. I confess that at first there was a sense of exhilaration at finding myself released from the normal taboos against lying, cheating, eavesdropping, forging, phone-tapping, blackmail, bribery, seduction, kidnapping and even murder—all in the name of national security; especially as I was covered, instead of threatened, by authority.

But, even if the exhilaration had not been short-lived, I could not recommend an expansion of that area of society which is above the law and where these trespasses, or at least the less sensational of them, are accepted practice, even in peace-time.

Moreover, as Kenneth Younger pointed out, it is no easy matter to recruit intelligent, unbiased and politically literate people for this kind of work, so that the more you expand the secret police the less qualified will they be to make the political judgments we are now expecting of them.

And because so many of them (as in America) will be honestly ignorant of the distinction between a Communist, a Socialist or even a Liberal, and because many persons will have no desire that the distinction *should* be made, what may have started as a bona fide precaution for State security can easily end up, as it did in the States, as a weapon with which the Right can harass the Left.

Furthermore, when a man's livelihood is at the disposal of other private citizens operating beyond curb of the law, the opportunities for blackmail are formidable. Again one need only glance across the Atlantic.

And finally, the whole practice is a temptation to Ministers and Civil Servants to expand the area of secrecy beyond its necessary boundaries. The frontiers of absolute discretion can be pushed forward. Personal blunders can be covered up.

There has been no more serious constitutional issue for many years. It is at least gratifying that the Labour Party has demonstrated its disquiet.

The Committee of the Campaign For The Limitation Of Secret Police Powers has produced an informative and readable pamphlet, *The Secret Police And You*, which can be obtained from the Secretary at 28 Broadway, London, S.W.1, price 1/- post paid, or 8/- per dozen post free. The Committee, which is supported by a Sponsoring Council of over sixty eminent liberals, artists and scientists, also invites men and women, who for political reasons have been removed from their work or demoted or threatened with removal, to communicate with them for advice and assistance.

Cry from a Training College

JUST HOW USELESS is a 2nd Class Arts degree to a young woman with no money? Office work, teaching and social service opened their arms to me on graduation. My family had sent me to the University hoping that there I would find a husband with plenty of money. They didn't exactly say so, but that was tacitly understood. I have let them down, for the undergraduates who propose marriage are the very silly ones: the others who have more sense do not include marriage among their proposals. So having failed to justify the sacrifice entailed in letting me go to college, I was morally bound to accept their proposition that I should go to a Teachers' Training College.

In the eyes of many people a teacher is at least a "professional person." Why teaching is looked upon as conferring a special status is quite funny. Any girl who has scraped through her G.C.E. can be turned into this "professional person" in a painless, initiativeless, mass-produced fashion in under two years. I, having graduated, am considered a most superior person and they will turn me into a "professional person" in nine months. God knows what use a knowledge of Classics, Anglo-Saxon and History is supposed to be to a teacher in an Infants School, but it lends prestige. The joke about teachers being "professionals" in contrast to trained typists, hairdressers, cooks and call-girls, started in the original scheme to make the working class train the working class according to the demands of their "betters". The history of the national scheme of education is one of a scheme run on the cheap. They did not attract the ill-educated working class boys and girls into the new "profession" of teaching by offering them either decent working conditions or decent pay; this would have cost a good deal, and anyhow it was not necessary. The policy was to appeal to the motive of snobbery; to become a schoolteacher meant that you left the working class behind. Lower middle class status was an effective bait to sufficient numbers of young people and their families pushing behind. Robert Lowe, introducing the Revised Code in 1862, said: "I cannot promise the House that this scheme will be an economical one, and I cannot promise that it will be an efficient one, but I can promise that it will be either one or the other. If it is not cheap it shall be efficient; if it is not efficient it shall be cheap."

We have left behind the exaggerated emphasis on cheapness in education, but the stereotype of the Elementary Schoolteacher has remained for all to emulate. The tradition of climbing out of the working class *via* the Teachers' Training College remains, and it has important results. My fellow students here at this Training College exemplify the usual traits of the upwardly social climb. They repudiate the class of their origin; they disapprove of "rude" language, easygoing ways with children, lax sexual morality, religious agnosticism and all the things that remind them of their working class origins. They are out to reform the children of the working class, to make them all conform to the outlook of the *petit bourgeoisie*—and to use a cane if necessary. Being myself the daughter of a bus-driver I have no illusions about the working class or wish to idealize them, but the ideals which the State schools aim to shove into them are a mere degradation because they

are phoney. We are not expected to educate the children in the schools, we are expected to train them, to force them into a state of anxiety to get on, to "pass" the 11-plus examination, to despise and leave the ways of the class of their origins and to take on a ready-made set of values manufactured in the schoolroom by their "betters." I should know, for I have been through that mill myself, very successfully, and the price I must pay is that my family never feel at ease when I am around nowadays, for with my University education and friends I am now a Lady.

These personal details are, I think, in order and very much to the point of what I imagine the purpose of *The University Libertarian* to be. It is the purpose of the Universities to spread knowledge and to research into the whole field of human experience. What concerns me is just what we are doing with the knowledge we have and the intellectual power we wield. If I understand Anarchism right, it is an attempt to investigate the validity of the claim made by the State to control and organize the whole field of social action; to question, in fact, the State's very justification to existence. I am myself the result of the State's incursion

THE REVOLTING STUDENTS

In Hungary and Poland, Rumania and Esthonia, in Russia itself, students are in revolt against the established order. Even in Britain students came out on the streets over Suez and have been moved to action over Hungary. In these times a viewpoint which puts the interests of young people before the state, vested interest, secret police, becomes particularly relevant.

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into the realms of education. Because I am a person of more than average scholastic ability, I find myself not married to a manual worker like my elder sister, nor working in a factory like my younger sister, but a B.A. and now expected to lend a hand in fostering the system which produced me. The system, it seems to me, is not designed to equalize the social classes, but to perpetuate them. The working class is to have the brains creamed off *via* the schools; but the workers as a class are not to be allowed to go their own sweet way. They are to be drilled into a pattern of subservience to values which people higher up the social scale openly mock at. In a word they are to be *vulgarized*, and the schoolteacher is the agent of this process.

The Roman State debauched its proles with bread and circuses. Our Welfare State offers them something less robust, but it aims to ensure its own perpetuation by removing people like me from their class origins with the bribe of secure wages and higher social prestige. But though I cannot now go back to the social setting of my childhood, yet I do not like the look of the cake which is offered me in return for a life of bashing schoolchildren into the required shape. That prig of a budding schoolmaster who would like to be my husband ("think of the long holidays together, dear") that house in such a *nice* neighbourhood, that car quite as good as the Jones's, my own children cursed with *two* schoolteachers in the home, and the meetings of the local Labour Party to take care of my social conscience—I do not want them! This is the ideal of most of the girls at this Training College; it might have been mine had they caught me at 18. But I think that now I will bite the hand that has fed me for so long—the Welfare State. I like the look of its schools even less from above than I did from below. Maybe there is a way round.

MONICA HALL.

REVIEW

Gods Like Men

THE INDIAN RATIONALIST, published by S. Ramanathan for the Indian Rationalist Association, 9 Broadway, Madras 1. Annual subscription (12 copies), Rupees 2-4-0, 4 shillings, or 1 dollar.

When Dr. Billy Graham visited India last year, he made reference in a broadcast from Madras to the "large and serious-minded Rationalist group" in that city. This group is presumably the one which plays most part in the production of the *Indian Rationalist*, an inexpensive, highly readable, and well-printed monthly. It is most interesting to European rationalists to find that rationalism has taken root outside Europe and America, and to see the different form it takes under the different circumstances in which it exists.

The traditional struggle of rationalism is against Christianity, and the emphasis of rationalist arguments has therefore been against the particular inadequacies and morbidities of that religion: against the primitive superstition which is Christianity at street-level and which paralyzes the intellectual initiative of the unsophisticated; against the intellectual fallacies in the arguments used to defend their more nebulous version of God by those more sophisticated Christians who are sufficiently infected with scientific habits to feel that a "case" must be developed. (This particular pressure has been particularly important because the category of person to be tackled often acquires considerable social power, in the exercise of which he refuses to take any decision or action incompatible with his theological deductions; only when he suffers a loss of confidence in the correctness of his attitude, as on divorce for example, will he cease to oppose more humanitarian legislation. It is the rationalist's job to induce this loss of confidence and hence a decline in dogmatism. When his numbers are few he will achieve far more for the mass of the people in this way than by attempts at direct education.) A third attack has been on the sex-fear of Christianity, this morbidity introducing, by routes well-known to Freudians, an element of righteous sadism into the exercise of power by Christians, whether as fathers or as governments. A fourth, on the intellectual and cultural intolerance of Christianity,* which has been even within living memory a major hindrance to science, and which has been specifically indicted, along with the Hebrew, Moslem, and Shintoist religions, as contributing to difficulties of racial co-existence, by a UNESCO pamphlet on race.†

To the extent that there is still some Christian and much Moslem influence in India to be combated, assault on these points also appears in the *Indian Rationalist*, but the major target is, of course, the Hindu religion, so that there is a refreshing novelty for a European in seeing discussed yet another of the elaborate ways in which human beings make asses of themselves. Christian cosmology had already become quite vague before our fathers were born, but for millions of illiterate Indians the world really does rest on the back of an elephant who stands on the back of a turtle, and so on, until the dilemma of infinity makes itself noticeable. The mythology of Christianity has also been boiled down by now to a residue which is merely improbable, such as the flooding of the world, the parting of the waters of the Red Sea, and the swallowing of Jonah by the whale, while orthodox Hinduism still narrates, in vulnerable detail, the most incredible geological episodes.

Fortunately, the casting has been so lavish in the Hindu spectacle and the dramatis personæ so numerous that, as with the Greek and Roman gods, each tends to acquire a distinct and very human personality and becomes thereby theologically improbable. Christians worship a changing god who is sufficiently vague to be a father-substitute, a life-force, a mathematician or a science-fiction theme according to the disposition of the man who creates him, but Hindus worship gods who

*Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians (1:9): "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

†*The Roots of Prejudice*, by Arnold Rose, Professor of Sociology at the University of Minnesota; UNESCO, Paris, 1951; p. 14. The contrasting tolerance of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and most pagan religions is referred to.

are people, and the most elementary materialism will make them untenable. One consequence of having gods like men is that they love and hate, neither of which then is sinful, so that Hinduism has always been fairly sane about sex, and as one would expect in a religion where the self-appointed leaders of morality think it their duty to teach their followers how to handle sex and not how to avoid it, the sacred writings of Hinduism incorporate more forthright sexual information than may be circulated in many European countries.

The August issue of the *Indian Rationalist* contains an editorial which has started a minor controversy. It is about Krishna, "the most popular of the Hindu gods"; on the literary evidence, the Editor remarks, Krishna was black. "The popular mind thinks of him as a dark young man with a flute who seduced all the women in the neighbourhood. Evidently his colour was black. The scriptures say he looked like the blue cloud. He had two married wives, Rukmani and Satyabhama. Besides, there was another elderly woman whom he is supposed to have loved when he was just a boy . . . in the minds of millions of his worshippers today he is associated more intimately with Radha than with either of his other two wives." (Oedipus in Asia! Freud would be pleased.) One wishes, in passing, that Christ had been a bit of a lad, so that we might have been spared the racking of Europe in a thousand years of rule by celibates warped by what Auden called "the distortions of ingrown virginity."

The jocular reference by the Editor to Krishna's colour provoked a correspondent in the September issue, Mr. G. K. Arora of Lucknow, to suggest that Krishna's darkness implies that *he was not an Aryan* and "opposed the doctrine of blood imposed by the Aryans." The Editor of the *Indian Rationalist* rightly feels uneasy about this development and objects that "we do not think it to be a historic fact that all the Aryans were fair skinned." To Krishna is attributed the theological justification of the caste system (a special problem faced by Indian rationalists not found by ourselves, whose Christian opponents can be held to their professions of brotherhood), and it would be very unpleasant if he was to become associated for Indian chauvinists with a sort of inverted colour prejudice.

A byproduct of the argument is a bouquet for the West's ability to face up to its problems in the analytical phase of their treatment at least. Mr. Arora defends Krishna's sex life: ". . . I find nothing wrong in him if he married two women and loved a third who was a married woman. The story that he had eighteen thousand lovers is, on the face of it, a gross exaggeration. As a matter of fact it is only this aspect of his life that makes him a real man of flesh and blood. He is so different from those who preached non-human, non-natural beings. It is true he was not monogamous. On that count will you call him immoral? Please read the Kinsey Report before adopting the sexual ethics of the western nations."

The Editor, Mr. Ramanathan, retorts: "Mr. Arora's contemptuous reference to the Kinsey Report shows that he has not understood that report. He would be a brave man who would assert that if an investigation were held in India and reports drawn up on the sexual

conduct of the Indian male and of the Indian female, the reports would display the prevalence of a higher level of morality in India than in Europe. [Morality is here used as synonymous with sexual restraint, a definition with which we would disagree.—ED., *University Libertarian*.] Indeed, we in India have not attained that level of intellectual and emotional maturity that would make possible the holding of a critical and frank enquiry into vital matters relating to sexual conduct, and a Kinsey report would be utterly impossible in India, showing thereby that on the moral plane we are still in a more elementary stage than the Americans who gave scope for such an investigation."

India is technically a secular state, which is a start on the right foot, and Mr. Nehru has expressed publicly his distaste for the "fantastic nonsense" of religion. Yet a correspondent is obliged to complain that locomotives are blessed in the presence of government ministers, and are not otherwise allowed on the rails; that an ex-Judge of the Supreme Court leads a priestly agitation to restore, after 350 years of disuse, ritual worship in the temple of Vellore in order to reduce unemployment among priests, and presses the Archaeological Department to provide the indispensable focus of the ceremony—the upright cylindrical stone symbolical of the phallus; and that the President of the secular Republic, whose name is a compound of Radha and Krishna, participates in the restoration of another temple. Yes, India has need of its rationalists, of its Rationalist Association and of its lively journal. At this sensitive phase in India's growth, the smallest pressure deflecting India towards sanity and away from Freud's "collective neurosis" can accumulate to something very important in a lifetime; and we warmly congratulate those who are fighting the past in the name of the future.

R.S.

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