

mattachine REVIEW



JULY 1956

SPECIAL FEATURE:

**WHY AMERICANS ARE SO
FEARFUL OF SEX—Dr. Ellis**



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3 REVIEWS OF PETER WILDEBLOOD'S "AGAINST THE LAW"

Why Americans

Are So Fearful of Sex

By ALBERT ELLIS, Ph.D.

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In the whole wide world there is probably no large group of people who are so fearful of sex as are we Americans.

The southern Europeans, such as the French and the Italians, are notoriously freer about many of their sex ways than we are. The northern Europeans, especially the Scandinavians, are often so enlightened about sex that they tolerate illegitimacy on the one hand and homosexuality on the other. The North Africans tend to live in what we would consider a hotbed of sexual vice.

Most Central African and Southern African natives have many customs, including polygyny, which we would look upon with horror. Oriental and Middle East sex beliefs and practices are so much freer than ours in many ways that our modern sex manuals are beginning just recently to catch up with some of the knowledge which for centuries has been recorded in Persian, Hindu, and Chinese texts.

Even the English, from whom our Anglo-Saxon codes of sex conduct primarily stem, are in many ways less fearful of sex than are we. English newspapers and magazines publish details of sex crimes and happenings which would never be allowed in their American equivalents. English

sex manuals are not only more outspoken than American sex books but have a proportionately wider sale. The premarital and extramarital behavior of the English girls, as many of our GIs discovered during the last war, is in many respects significantly less inhibited than that of our own girls.

(Cont'd on page 13)

On our cover—

KING WILLIAM III IN
ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.
This is one of the most important
of London's squares and is
surrounded by exclusive clubs
and various dignified institutions
such as the London Library.

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reports

COMMENTS

TRENDS

OBSERVATIONS

from the Press
of the
English
Speaking
World...



The U. S. government's security program was the center of a renewed controversy in June following a Supreme Court decision that "security risk" firings were voided unless there was an actual element of security in the jobholder's position. This action brought praise from some corners of the nation's press, condemnation from others (notably the Hearst papers).

Across the Atlantic, homosexuality and the law reached a new high in the public eye when the Church of England Moral

Welfare Council released its report.

In it, sweeping changes of law regulating homosexual acts were recommended.

This issue of the Review is a compilation of significant newspaper clippings from the U. S. and Great Britain. They are presented in full, credited to their source, and given the briefest possible comment.

From the London Daily Express, May 25, 1956:

The Church and Vice

BIG CHANGES IN BRITAIN'S SEX LAWS ARE URGED

SUBSTANTIAL changes in the laws relating to sex offences are recommended by the Church of England Moral Welfare Council.

These suggestions, published today as a report* compiled by the council's study secretary, Dr. Derrick Sherwin Bailey, have been submitted to the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution.

The principal suggested changes concerning homosexuality are:—

- 1 Convicted persons should be given advice by clergymen and treatment by doctors and psychiatrists.
- 2 Women offenders, now outside the law, should be brought within it.
- 3 Private acts between consenting adults should not be an offence.
- 4 The law should penalise men and women guilty of offences with children under 17, or whose acts involve violence or a breach of public decency. Spiritual counsel and other treatment would follow conviction in these cases.

Injustice

Also recommended is the dropping of the terms "prostitute," "common prostitute," and "for the purposes of prostitution" from the laws on the grounds that they tend to prejudice court proceedings.

LET ADULTS PLEASE THEMSELVES BUT PROTECT THE CHILDREN AND PUNISH THE WOMEN TOO

The report strongly criticises the present law on homosexuality.

"As it stands it is not even equal in its injustice. While the male is heavily penalised the female is ignored. Yet socially she is often dangerous. An older woman can dominate a younger and compel her to acquiesce in ways which may ruin her life.

"A thorough-going review is demanded of the principles according to which certain sexual acts are singled out for definition as legal offences while others, equally harmful, are ignored.

Vital need

"If the law is to penalise sexual offences as crimes it should be done on a logical, equitable, and rational basis."

The council pleads for sympathy and help for the invert.

"This does not mean that anti-social conduct can be condoned or excused. The State must protect, by its laws and its police, the young, and the institution of marriage. But its provisions should be framed and executed equitably.

"There is a vital necessity for further study of the factors which make for sexual maladjustment."

A distinction is drawn between private and public morality.

The State and the law should not be the guardians of private morals. They must punish offences against public morality.

To deal with sin as such is the province of the Church.

What are the causes of homosexuality?

The report quotes and agrees with one invert who said: "Society gets the homosexuals it deserves."

The cure?

It adds: "By unhappy marriages and homes, by inept handling of youthful problems, by prolonged segregation of the sexes and by war and its consequences, society itself creates just those situations which cause inversion."

What is the cure?

"More than anything else the invert needs good friends. The so-called deterrent effect of the law cannot compare with the positive results likely to accrue from a circle of true friends and the entrée into happy homes.

"But law reform and education of the public cannot themselves solve the problem. It will remain until better marriages, happier family relationships and more settled and secure conditions of life eliminate some of its chief causes."

A failure

The council also urges further study of the factors which make for sexual maladjustment, marriage breakdown and parental failure.

About prostitution. . . .

Repression by law and police action is a failure, the council admits.

"It is impossible to devise a method which would at once be effective and impervious to abuse or evasion.

"The fact is that the source of the evil lies beyond the range of legislative action and State coercion. Statutory measures against sexual immorality are futile.

"Unless they can be enforced they only bring the law into disrepute. Repression is the least satisfactory method of all for dealing with prostitution."

Referring to the existing law the report points out that it

breaks the cardinal principle of British justice—that a person is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

A woman arrested for soliciting "to the annoyance" can be charged as "a common prostitute."

Prejudiced

"Thus her case is prejudiced before trial and it is hardly surprising that the business of the court is often perfunctory to a farcical degree."

State action against prostitutes should be limited to protecting citizens from annoyance. And there should be no conviction

unless the person annoyed gives corroborative evidence.

In a foreword to the report the Bishop of St. Albans, Dr. E. M. G. Jones, writes:—

"With prostitution we see the law administered so mechanically and fines and publicity accepted so lightly that justice is brought into contempt."

"With homosexual offences the law seems sometimes to reach to the other extreme and men pay the price of blackmail or even suicide to avoid conviction and a heavy prison sentence."

* Sexual Offenders and Social Punishment, Church Information Board, 6s. 6d.

From the Oxford Mail, May 1956

Reform of laws on homosexuality urged in Oxford

MR. Peter Wildeblood, author of "Against the Law," urged reform of the British laws against homosexuality when he addressed the Oxford University Crime—a Challenge Club at All Souls College last night.

"I am against this law because I believe it to be hypocritical in conception and cruel in practice. I have suffered under it myself, but I know that thousands of others have suffered more," he said.

"It is for their sakes, for those who have been ruined and for those who have been hounded to their deaths, and for all those nameless ones who live in fear, that I shall continue to fight for its repeal."

The Old Library of All Souls was crowded with undergraduates, who applauded Mr. Wildeblood loud and long before and after his speech. When he began he seemed strongly moved.

ASTONISHED

"I am grateful and astonished to be invited to speak in this University," he remarked. "This is a unique occasion. I ask you to try and think what it means to me."

He said that homosexual activities between consenting adults were illegal only in three countries of Western Europe—Britain, West Germany and Norway.

In West Germany the law was a Nazi survival introduced from political motives, in Norway it was a dead letter.

The great majority of the societies and organisations consulted by the Government committee of inquiry into the laws

on homosexuality appeared to have recommended changing the law for consenting adults, though opinions differed on what the age of consent should be.

BASIS OF PROPOSALS

These proposals were based on the following views:—

That the law was wrong because it attempted to legislate people's private lives—an attempt long since abandoned in all other contexts.

It ignored the definition of a crime—that harm had been done to someone. It led to a great deal of blackmail and to corruption of the police.

It failed in its primary object of protecting youth, and might actually lead to further corruption.

It could never be fairly applied, since there could be prosecutions only in an infinitesimal proportion of homosexual acts. There were in 1953 a total of 1,908 convictions, against a minimum estimate of 650,000 "homos."

Lastly, imprisonment was in no sense a suitable treatment

for homosexuals.

"ENCOURAGED"

"One would think," said Mr. Wildeblood, "that there were quite enough homosexual activities going on without its being considered necessary for such offences to be deliberately encouraged by the police for the purpose of making a subsequent arrest—but that is what happens."

The use of agents-provocateurs was widespread. He quoted newspaper reports of two cases in which the police had been sued for wrongful arrest.

"When one reads of cases like these," he said, "one can't help wondering how many others there have been which have passed unnoticed."

"The reaction of most men, wrongly arrested in such circumstances, would be to remain silent, but fortunately there are from time to time people with the courage to fight back."

"I have found that in the ordinary way it is almost impossible to convince law-abiding people that such things do go on."

From the Honolulu Advertiser, June 1, 1956:

Bogus Police Officer Held

A Honolulu fisherman has confessed he passed himself off as a vice-squad lieutenant to collect \$27 "bail" money from a frightened restaurant worker, police said yesterday.

The accused man, Bernal Waiwai, 28, of 1133 Maunakea St., is being held in custody until he puts up \$50 bond for himself.

THE 38-YEAR-OLD restaurant worker told Detective Segundo Antonio he was resting on a bench in Waikiki shortly after midnight March 17 when Waiwai accosted him.

He said Waiwai flashed his wallet open and introduced him-

self as "Lt. Shaffer" of the vice squad.

Then, he said, Waiwai demanded \$25 "bail" money with the threat of locking him up.

THE VICTIM, frightened and with only \$4.90 in his pocket, took a taxicab to his rooming house to borrow the balance of the money. Waiwai, who accompanied the restaurant worker, then demanded another \$2.

The victim forked it over.

Waiwai was arrested Saturday morning after a friend of the restaurant worker told police about the incident.

Loyalty Program Ruling

High Court Curtails 'Firing for Security'

WASHINGTON, June 11 (AP) — The United States Supreme Court today sharply restricted the Government's blanket authority to fire Federal Employees under President Eisenhower's three-year-old loyalty-security program.

The court, in its final session of this term, ruled 6 to 3 that an employee can be fired for security reasons only after there has been an official finding that his job affects the national security.

Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote the majority decision or himself, Chief Justice Earl Warren and Justices Hugo Black, Felix Frankfurter, William O. Douglas and Harold Burton. Justice Tom C. Clark wrote a sharp dissenting opinion, joined by Justices Stanley F. Reed and Sherman Minton.

Harlan said the term "national security" as used in a 1950 Congressional act giving heads of certain departments dismissal powers over civilian employees "relates only to those activities which are directly concerned with

the Nation's safety, as distinguished from the general welfare."

Clark's dissenting opinion said "the court would require not only a finding that a particular person is subversive but also that he occupies a sensitive job."

"Obviously," Clark protested, "this might leave the Government honeycombed with subversive employees."

The security program was challenged by Kendrick M. Cole, a former inspector in the New York district of the Federal Food and Drug Administration. He was fired on security grounds in January, 1954.

Harlan said in Cole's case no determination actually had been made that his job was affected with the national security as that term was used in the 1950 act. Harlan said Cole's dismissal therefore was not authorized.

From the *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 13, 1956:

'Security' More Secure

THE United States Supreme Court has held, in a 6-to-3 ruling, that the 1950 National Security Act may properly be invoked only where national security is in fact involved; it has said in effect that a Federal employee is not to be dismissed as a "security risk" unless he has some logical connection with security.

The ruling came in the case of Kendrick M. Cole, inspector in the food and drug administration, who was fired in January of 1954 because he declined to explain certain associations in his private life. There was no evidence or allegation of disloyalty against him—he merely informed his superiors that he intended to go right on associating with any persons or groups of persons he chose.

Cole was, of course, standing on a long-cherished privilege of his American citizenship, but one which was sorely threatened by the latter-day doctrine of guilt by association.

To a considerable extent, the Supreme Court ruling reaffirms the right of most Government employees to choose their friends and associates without endangering their jobs. It prohibits the application of the act to all Federal employees and limits it to those who are "sensitive" or concerned with policy making, or who otherwise directly bear upon the Nation's safety.

This is a sound and sensible reading of security requirements and will go far toward preventing the rash, unjust and arbitrary dismissals that some department heads have resorted to in the name of national security.

Cain Questions Need Of Loyalty Program

Former Senator Harry P. Cain (R-Wash.) said today there is "serious question" whether a loyalty program is needed for government employees.

The Subversive Activities Control Board member told the Senate constitutional rights subcommittee that not "even a handful" of the 9,600 security risks listed in the last three years by the Eisenhower administration were disloyal.

Cain, a frequent critic of the administration's security program, said the President showed "deep concern" over the lumping together of loyalty and other security cases.

Telling about his meeting with the chief executive last Thursday, Cain said:

"The President had thought that a clear distinction was being made between the two because although a disloyal person is a security risk, a security risk is seldom a disloyal person."

He explained that the security tag is applied to persons who "should be fired" for over-drinking or indiscretion or other causes on grounds of "unsuitability" but not security.

Yet, he said, "anyone who leaves the government or related endeavors these days as being a security risk is thought by many to be, in one way or another, disloyal."

PSYCHIATRY

Homosexuals Played With Dolls, Not Baseballs

► MEN who became homosexuals played with dolls instead of playing baseball when they were little boys. Only 14 of 102 men studied by a group of New York psychoanalysts played baseball compared to 66 out of 100 other mentally sick patients and perhaps 100% of normal American men.

The psychiatrists, incidentally, could find no evidence that homosexuality existed in any major league ball player although such has appeared in other sports.

In addition to this tendency to stick to feminine games and pastimes as children, the homosexuals studied were sissies in other ways. Their mothers kept them close and had them wear girlish clothing and long curls as small children.

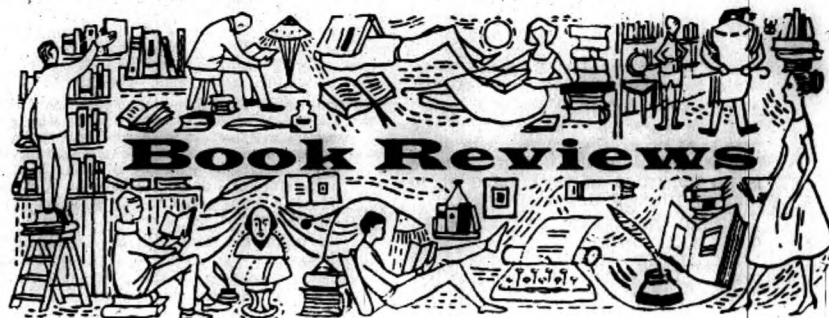
The mothers and fathers did not get along well together. Contrary to general impression, the homosexuals did not love their fathers so much that they tried to remain feminine. Actually the patients studied tended to hate their fathers who had been either hostile or detached.

These trends in the home situation and relations with the parent, the psychoanalysts believe, are significant in leading to homosexuality in men.

The doctors feel optimistic about the chances for homosexual men becoming normal in their sexuality. Of the 102 patients, 15 have recovered in the sense of becoming exclusively heterosexual. Others, the doctors feel, may also recover in this sense when they have had more treatment.

These findings were reported at the American Psychiatric Association meeting in Chicago by the research committee of the Society of Medical Psychoanalysts in New York City, Drs. Irving Bieber, Cornelia B. Wilbur, Alfred H. Rifkin, and Paul Zimmering, all of New York.

Science News Letter, May 19, 1956



Peter Wildeblood's "Against the Law" was briefly reviewed in the June issue of *Mattachine Review*. The comment was from a British newspaper, "Truth."

Here are three more reviews of Wildeblood's book, presented in trio form because they come from widely different English newspapers, and yet all carry praise for the author and the book.

"The Daily Telegraph," Wildeblood wrote in a recent letter to the Review, "is extreme right wing; the New Statesman far to the left, and the Listener is an official organ of the BBC—so it's a good cross-section of opinion."

The reviews are presented in the order listed above.

The Homosexual and the Law

By Sir BASIL HENRIQUES
Against the Law. By Peter Wildeblood. (Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 16s.)

Peter Wildeblood, a highly intelligent, experienced journalist who writes extremely well, has made it his purpose to explain the homosexual to the general public and to plead for a change in the law. It is his further object to complain against the police searching without a warrant; and to expose some of the evils of a prison sentence, especially certain avoidable and disgraceful conditions which exist in, at any rate, Wormwood Scrubs.

To be a homosexual is, the author suggests, a disability which for many can no more be avoided than "having a glass eye or a hare lip... A man who feels an attraction towards other men is a social misfit only; once he gives way to that attraction, he becomes a criminal." He states that such men are condemned to perpetual continence, although (in his view) indulgence

between consenting adults in private does less harm than adultery or causing an unmarried girl to have an illegitimate child.

Fornication and adultery are sins, but they are not crimes; and sex relationship between consenting adults should, he urges, be treated in the same way. He wholeheartedly condemns those who corrupt youth.

The author admits that he belongs to no religious denomination. The sinfulness of sexual indulgence outside marriage is not stressed, nor is the power of religion to enable a man to remain continent.

Purpose of Prison

With regard to prison, Mr. Wildeblood says:

"The purpose of prison is not so much retribution as reform; not revenge but cure. It seems only sensible to try and fit a prisoner for a better life when he gets out. It is useless to put a man away for a long period, do nothing to change or improve him, and plausibly hope that he will have magically transformed himself into a good citizen. Men do change in prison, but seldom for the better."

The abominable sanitary and washing conditions in Wormwood Scrubs can only have a degrading influence on all the prisoners; it is

incredible that they should exist. But the worst part of prison is the fact that no attempt was made to fit the prisoners for life outside. There is no incentive to work hard or to take an interest in their work.

A man should earn, so that he can contribute towards his keep, give compensation, or help to support his family. The system of "voluntarily" having to sew mailbags in their cell at night, when many of the prisoners could use their time so much more profitably, bears a strong resemblance to the treadmill.

This is a very courageous, honest book which can do a great deal of good, even to the most prejudiced, and no harm to anyone. It would have been better had the recapitulation of the "Montagu Trial" been omitted.

The Rage of Caliban

Against the Law. By PETER WILDBLOOD.
Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 16s.

Thirty years ago they used to call prison "the living grave of crime." When the Webbs and G.B.S. wrote their *English Prisons Under Local Government*, they could justly say that prison was "a silent world, shrouded, so far as the public is concerned, in almost complete darkness." Today Sir Lionel Fox, chairman of the Prison Commission, can as justly claim in his book, *The English Prison and Borstal Systems* that the prisons are open to inspection by anyone with a responsible interest in penal matters—hundreds of voluntary workers, prison visitors, social science and other students (these often sleep and work in the prisons), press and radio men and film companies. Prison Governors are required to receive and accommodate all these new watchdogs; and they do. It is a great change. It has produced a wealth of solemn books and theses, bright articles and broadcasts, documentary films, television scripts. And how much do we know now?

It takes a writer of Mr. Wildblood's quality, it takes a prisoner of his sensitive perception, to show us how little we know. I suppose one test of a civilisation is the kind of persons it subjects to this contrived and hapless misery; and if they are to include a leavening of cultivated people on the grounds that they are pacifists, cranks, debtors or homosexuals there will, at intervals, emerge poignantly written accounts which, for the ordinary reader at least, transcend all the solemn theses of the trained investigators. There are occasions when it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind, said the author of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*—it becomes a pleasure. We can almost hold it to be the duty of writers like Mr. Wildblood to speak their minds about prison; and in doing it with a restrained ferocity that holds our absorbed attention, he has written the noblest, and wittiest, and most appalling prison book of them all.

"I am a homosexual," he declares simply, and he explains what (in his case) the word means; knowing also—or believing he knows—what the admission will mean to his career:

It is easy for me to make that admission now, because much of my private life has already been made public by the newspapers. I am in the rare,

and perhaps privileged, position of having nothing left to hide. My only concern is that some good may come at last out of so much evil, and with that end in view I shall set down what happened to me as faithfully and fairly as I can. I do not pity myself and I do not ask for pity. If there is bitterness in this book, I hope it will be the bitterness of medicine, not of poison.

He begins his story with an account of his childhood that I should like to put into the hands of every parent and teacher, not only in this country but in every country that punishes his kind. He goes quickly through his adolescence, his war, and the brilliant journalistic career that brought him to the *Daily Mail* as diplomatic correspondent; and so to his arrest, trial, and imprisonment.

A very small group of people will know whether his account of the arrest is true. It includes half a dozen police officers. The effortless flow of his writing could easily dull the realisation that each step in the story is reported with what many readers are likely to accept as a painstaking regard for accuracy. The following colloquy, accordingly, is one of uncomfortable importance. One of the police officers who had loudly awakened him in his flat at eight in the morning said that they were "going to search the house":

He did not, however, produce a warrant. I tried to remember—were the police allowed to search a house without a warrant? My numb and frozen mind refused to give me an answer.

"I must get in touch with my solicitor," I said.

"That can wait. We've got plenty of time."

And he invites you to consider not merely the position of the suspect under this new revelation of English law but also the value of a "conspiracy" charge in respect of what co-defendants may say to the police in each other's absence:

"Look here, don't you think you would feel better if you made a clean breast of it?"

"I think I ought to see my solicitor first."

"Well, it's up to you to decide, not him."

And a few minutes later:

"What is going to happen to me?"

"Well, I make it a rule never to make promises: but as you haven't been in trouble before I should think you'd probably get bound over. The best thing is for you to make a statement. You just clear yourself—don't bother too much about the others."

At the trial Mr. Justice Ormerod, having heard the police dismiss all this as lies, decided nevertheless that the long statement written by Mr. Wildblood in response to it might have been made in consequence of a promise of favour and was therefore inadmissible.

The account of the trial, naturally enough, is subjective and episodic, but it gives the highlights of what must have been an agonising eight days for most of the people involved. The author can be forgiven, perhaps, for seeing the hand of oppression in every detail of court procedure and expediency. For example, he and his co-defendants, wanting to get women on to the jury (and in this their instinct was sound), found that every juror summoned for service that day was a man. This was almost certainly no accident, but the reason for it was not that an all-male jury would be tougher; it was merely that the officials at most Assize Courts still think of women as carefully insulated cooks.

The Judge, unlike so many others, did not say that the convicted men would receive in prison "the medical treatment that your condition is said

to demand." Eighteen months, he said. And Mr. Wildblood reports two interviews with prison psychiatrists, the first of which (on pages 101-2) is hereby commended to the Prison Commissioners for the horrifying possibility that it may be true, while the second (page 143) amounted to an assurance that there might have been a chance of "curing" him if only he hadn't come to prison at all. While he was in prison he read smuggled Press cuttings about his trial. They included a comment of Mr. Hannen Swaffer, unnoticed by "This England," that all homosexuals should be treated by psychopaths.

The pictures of prison life are unforgettable, their quality made memorable by this man's unaffected avoidance of self-pity. "I have believed all my life," he thought on the way to prison, handcuffed with others in a motor coach, "that every experience, no matter how disagreeable, can be made to enrich and illuminate." Clearly the belief is unshaken. This book is 'tis deliberate, synoptical, and altruistic testament.

C. H. ROLPH

Against the Law. By Peter Wildblood. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 16s.

By adopting, on his release, a precisely opposite course to one considered by the Governor of Winchester Prison as inevitable, Mr. Wildblood has earned the respect of every fair-minded person who reads his book. To the Governor's suggestion that he might find it convenient, after serving eighteen months for a homosexual offence, to live abroad, change his name, and behave like a furtive outcast for the rest of his life, he replied: 'If you will excuse me for saying so, sir, I think that would be a most cowardly course'. A victim of what for years to come will be known as the 'Montagu Case', he relates his experiences with a commendable lack of bitterness, self-pity, or anger. And his criticism of the law as it stands with regard to sexual acts committed in private between adult male persons, the methods used by the police when enforcing that law, and the appalling conditions in existence at Wormwood Scrubs—of which one has frequently been told—is unlikely to be challenged by anyone who, having

calmly digested the indisputable facts, thereafter examines his conscience. Indeed there is every reason to suppose that many of the reforms suggested by the author would have the willing support not only of the Moral Welfare Council of the Church of England, but also of the Prison Commissioners.

Magnanimously, Mr. Wildblood forgives the unorthodox behaviour of the Detective-Superintendent who, he says, searched his house without a warrant and managed to prevent him from seeing a solicitor until he had been persuaded to make a statement. The man, he assumes, was only acting upon instructions given him by the same high official who considered it his duty to have Wildblood arrested, but not his duty to arrest the twenty-four other men similarly implicated; the inference being that Wildblood alone having been associated with Lord Montagu, it was the big fish they were really out to catch. On the last day of the trial the Superintendent, over a gin and tonic, wished the accused 'good luck', as, a few nights before the trial opened, Fabian of the Yard had done. 'How ridiculous it all was!' is the author's comment; and he adds: 'It was quite possible that I might go to prison. And what would that prove? Officially that I was an enemy of Society, a criminal'.

In Wormwood Scrubs the author found no reason to contradict the Earl of Huntingdon's statement in the House of Lords that the sanitary conditions in some of our prisons would disgrace a Hottentot village. He cites also the pitiful lack of heating facilities in the depth of winter, remarking: 'The Prison Commissioners, apparently, had adopted their usual attitude of pious hand-wringing and pleaded poverty'. But this plea is by no means an empty one, as anybody knows who has seriously gone into the matter. The real villain of the piece is presumably the Treasury, from whose parsimony in such matters it must be concluded that the conditions in which prisoners are housed is considered to be of very minor importance. Books like this one—though few of them are free from prejudice—are worth far more than the pleadings of any professional reformer.

WHY AMERICANS ARE SO AFRAID OF SEX

(Cont'd from page 2)

We Americans have a deceptively free exterior attitude about sex; but underneath we are chicken. We pet, as the Kinsey reports show, almost universally. We engage, to a considerable degree, in masturbatory, fornicative, adulterous, homosexual, and other types of sex outlets. But we usually do so queasily, stealthily, guiltily. We cannot help our actions, as it were, but we can help our thoughts—and we do help them drive us to anxiety, despair, neurosis. We have our sexual

cake, but we don't really eat it—or we gulp it down in such a manner as to bring on acute indigestion.

The result is considerable frigidity on the part of our females, varying degrees of impotence on the part of our males, and enormous amounts of dissatisfaction, unappeased hunger, and continual sex fear on the part of both.

Why?

Why should I and other psychotherapists have to spend so much of our time seeing a continuous

succession of disturbed people, most of whom have some serious degree of sexual anxiety?

There are several important answers to these whys:

1. *Americans are specifically taught to be fearful of sex.* During their childhood and adolescence, all the possible dangers, and virtually none of the pleasures,

of human sexuality are drummed into their heads and hearts.

Grim specters of loss of reputation, illegitimate pregnancy, illegal abortion, syphilis, gonorrhea, perversion, physical and emotional breakdown, etc. are ceaselessly thrown at them while they are growing up.

The idea that sex is good, sex is fun, sex is one of the greatest and most repeatable of human joys is rarely unequivocally brought to their attention. In jokes, yes; in sly asides, of course; in under-the-counter pamphlets and books, certainly. In these indirect and backhanded ways the idea that sex is good, hot, and spicy is slammed across to the average American male and female. But directly and forthrightly? By parents, educators, clergy? Heavens, no! From these respectable sources come cavilings, quibblings, cautionings.

The result, as I noted in my book *The Folklore of Sex*, is that the American boy and girl, and later the American man and woman, believes that sex is good—and bad; tasty—and nasty. They are, in a word, conflicted. And

conflict means indecision, and doubt—which means fear.

2. *Americans are raised to be overly-competitive about sex.* Our boys and girls are made to feel that, above all else, they must succeed, achieve, win out in the social-sexual game. They must

not merely enjoy themselves on their dates and eventually achieve good marriages—nay, they must date the *best* boy or girl in the neighborhood; be the *finest* lover for miles around; have the *greatest* home and family.

Americans must do all these things, moreover, without any experience to speak of, sans any notable period of learning. If they study arithmetic, French, or engineering, they are of course expected to take awhile to get onto the subject, to learn it. But if they study what is perhaps the most complicated subject in the world—namely, that of getting along well with a member of the other sex—they are somehow supposed to be able to discover all the answers with no learning experience whatever and to make the best possible impression literally from scratch. This, of course, they usually cannot do. They naturally make a certain amount of blunders, errors, mistakes. But each error is considered to be an unforgivable crime. Each time when he misses her mouth and kisses her nose, or she goes a little too far or not far enough in petting, or either of them fails to say the right romantic word when the moon is full: each mistake is considered catastrophic, disastrous.

This means that the boy and girl soon become afraid to try certain actions or chance certain words. Then, not acquiring any experience or familiarity with taking these actions or saying these words, they become afraid of taking or saying them in the future. Thus arises a vicious circle, where dire fear of making a social-sexual mistake leads to lack of learning, which in turn leads to further fear of ineptness, which in turn leads to further inhibition of learning, and so on to a hopeless eternity.

This also means that when the boys and girls who keep fruitlessly merry-go-rounding in this manner finally do stumble into marriage, they still have learned relatively little about social-sexual relations, and carry their fears and restraints into their marital relationship.

3. *Americans are brought up to fear tenderness and love.* American males, in particular, are raised to be "regular guys" and to avoid "sissified" displays of emotionality. They do not kiss, like the French; throw their arms around, like the Italians; be very warm to their children, like many peoples of the world.

Even American women are often raised so that they are ashamed to cry openly, to laugh uproariously, to let their hair down in public.

This means that, in spite of our Hollywood films and romantic novels, we do not allow ourselves to be overly warm, affectionate, loving. We often, in fact, try to use sex as a substitute for love: to throw ourselves into a wild necking session because it is easier to say with our hands what we would be embarrassed to say with our lips.

But love inhibition breeds sex inhibition. As we inhibit and deaden our tender reactions, we also block some of our deepest sex sensations. Love, moreover, is an exceptionally good antidote for all kinds of fear; and to the extent that we have little love, we tend to have more fear—including sex fear.

4. *Americans are generally fearful and often neurotic.* We Americans tend to have unreasonable goals and ideals, especially in regard to worldly success and keeping up with the Joneses. We

frequently are never weaned from our childhood ideas of grandiosity and refuse to face the harsh realities of life and accept the world as it is. We have seriously conflicting values and philosophies of life—such as the notion that we should be good and kind, on the one hand, and ruthlessly make a million dollars on the other.

Because of our general insecurities, immaturities, and conflicts, we tend to be beset with multitudinous feelings of doubt and inadequacy; and these often lap over into our sexual attitudes. Where general neurosis is epidemic, sexual disturbance cannot be too far away.

Assuming that Americans, because of reasons like the foregoing, are probably the most sexually fearful of any large group of people in the world, the question arises: Can anything effective be done to make us less panicky in this respect? Certainly: but only if the problem is tackled in all its important ramifications, and not treated as if it were a simple sex problem alone.

On an individual basis, this means that the sexually disturbed person must promptly seek professional psychological help and must be prepared to examine and understand the innermost layers of his personality before he can expect to solve his problem.

On a social basis, this means that our sexually disturbed society must also seek, through scientific and clinical research and consultation, all possible professional help and must be prepared to tackle some of its most serious and widespread social issues before it can hope to solve what appears on the surface to be a relatively uncomplicated sex issue.





and now...

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