

The two sides of the coin

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I had just a moment to reflect with amusement how suddenly and how gratifyingly the ideal boys I'd been reading about in Plato's *Symposium* had been transformed into a single real one that beat the lot. Then I began the fun by peeling off his tight white rubber-satin slip—it took me all of ten minutes to get it down and off his threshing legs. And then, much later, in the dark of the night, softly and gently, serious at last, he was mine, all mine.

*

All this was three years ago. He was indeed married the same autumn to his girl, a darkhaired elfin little thing to whom he was quite obviously devoted, and he set up as a vet in the small town in Somerset where he still lives. They have twin boys, both with flaming red hair like their father. I am their godfather.

The Two Sides of the Coin

Let us acknowledge it: the Western Hemisphere feels insecure. It also has an unacknowledged guilt complex in connection with all the social problems it is dealing with inefficiently and incompletely. In times of insecurity and unrest mankind has always looked for an easy way out, and an age-old escape is to find scapegoats and offer them publicly for sacrifice. In the search for scapegoats, homosexuals fill the bill perfectly. Here is a minority, almost never able to fight back: a minority different from those made by race or religion; a minority to which even UNESCO would never risk giving any support.

So once again let's sacrifice the homosexuals, and by sacrificing them ease the world feeling of insecurity and all its guilt complexes for evading the real issues of Western civilisation.

Raids and closing down of places in the United States; the refusal to take on the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report in England; raids and scandals in Italy and France; talk of a change in the present law in both the latter countries—quite an impressive list. Is it any wonder that Switzerland also felt the need to join in these activities against homosexuals? After centuries of neutrality, and with the present standard of living as extravagantly high as it is, the Swiss may doubly feel this insecurity and the inherent guilt complex. So they decided, at least in Zürich, to do something about it. The famous Swiss democratic way which allows two grown-up homosexuals to live the way they want to live is one side of the coin; the recent police raids at Zürich (officially directed against male hustlers) is the other side of the coin.

The first big raid took place in Zürich in July. It was followed by a second double raid in November. In the late afternoon of November 15th, 60 policemen went out to three localities known as homosexual hangouts, and in surprise raids within a very short space of time, brought in 27 men. These 27 were either suspected of male prostitution or of other punishable crimes, and were taken to police headquarters. Then, on the same day at 11:00 p.m., 271 policemen raided five other localities and two public places, taking 75 men to headquarters for questioning.

It would be useless for a homosexual to try to point out publicly all the weak spots in those raids. A homosexual's voice would never be heard under such circumstances when the yellow press has once again managed to stir up «public feeling».

All the more commendable and laudable in this connection is the fact that some Swiss newspapers took up the matter of these police raids. The first newspaper to write objectively about all that happened was the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Switzerland's leading newspaper of world fame. But surprisingly other Swiss newspapers followed suit, among them the *Solothurner Zeitung*, printed at Solothurn, a small Swiss town with a population of only 16 000 people.

The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* wrote on November 19th, 1960:

«To judge by the letters sent to our editors, the last police raids on public gardens and bars frequented by homosexuals have not at all given unmixed pleasure to the citizenry. From numerous remarks made, the conclusion can be drawn that there is great unrest about the way the police conducted the raids, or their aims in raiding. The raids have followed each other in Zürich during the past few months; there was a raid against 'Halbstarke' (teenagers) as well as a first raid against male hustlers, and these two were followed by a double raid in November. Will this new practice of police raids, so far unknown in Zürich, become a permanent standard? Who will be the next targets? Movie-goers under eighteen years of age? People without fixed address? Or owners of dogs whose pets dirty the pavements?

One could write out a questionnaire at least as long as the one by which, after the last raid, the suspected people were interrogated—a questionnaire which contains, in the words of some of those 'suspects', some strange things. To judge by what the interrogated people have reported (and even taking this with a whole grain of salt), the otherwise traditionally good manners of the police seem to have suffered some in the course of this raid. Is it true that individuals questioned were accused of having received parking tickets in the past? And if so, may we ask what this has to do with a raid against male hustlers? Is it right, as maintained by one man questioned, to have one's wallet searched without warrant or cause? Have the men taken into headquarters been addressed by the polite form of «Mr . . .» or were they simply and harshly addressed thus: 'Smith, I want an answer.' On which law is based the requirement for the blood test which the questioned people had to undergo? What happened in the case of a man who refused to have his blood tested?

But more than all these details, one is interested in the basic question: Are such spectacular raids the only police measure being taken to diminish evil? And also—is a huge raid—with all the inevitable publicity in the papers in this case—the right procedure to follow? As a last resort a raid may not be questioned; but it is a dangerous instrument whose application should be thought about most carefully. One of its disadvantages is the present discussion among teenagers during school breaks about a theme which should properly be left to talks between parents and children.

Do the means justify the ends?»

The *Solothurner Zeitung* wrote on November 23d, 1960 under the heading of 'Protection of Minors or Preparing of Black Lists': 'Citizen A. and Citizen B. one evening are taking their usual constitutional walk in a Zürich public garden. Suddenly plainclothes men appear. 'Your identification papers!' Citizen A. remains relatively calm and looks for his passport to identify himself while Citizen B. becomes angry—not on account of a bad conscience at all—but on account of what the police want. Words are exchanged, and despite the interven-

tion of Citizen A., Citizen B. is hauled into a police van. At headquarters he is, following the lines of a questionnaire, asked about his sexual orientation. The outcome is that he is a completely normal man, happily married, and father of two children. Police commissioner and police medical officer extend their excuses and Citizen B. can leave headquarters a free man.

That could happen to you also.

According to temperament, reactions would be different. One would be furious; the other would laugh; a third one would turn pale and start stammering; the fourth intelligent one would remain tranquil. But it is not so much a question of reaction as the principle of whether citizens can be held by the police—not only single individuals, let us make that clear, and not only a single suspicious one, but a great number of people for the sole reason that they happened to be in certain places at a certain time. And further, those people are not only apprehended by the police to clear their identity, but taken to headquarters as well, to be submitted there to painful interrogating. The article 2 Nos 2 and 5 of the «Allgemeine Polizeivorschrift» (the Swiss police manual) states that the police are entitled on one side to check and control people, and on the other side to look into the matter of criminal, punishable acts and to collect evidence. So far so good! This regulation is intended, however, to enable the police to check single individuals for various reasons in the public interest. But of this possibility little use is made anywhere, because checking of people means, very generally speaking, a breaking into the private sphere, and will be felt by those subjected to it as a first step towards a preliminary inquiry. *The temporary arrest by the police—not to be confused with an arrest on order from a court of inquiry—goes a considerable step further.* Such an arrest robs a citizen for a time of his freedom and makes him face the unpleasantness of police interrogation; the direct or indirect meeting with actual criminal elements, and, lastly, makes him liable to 'registration'. And this is the point at which the whole matter starts to become questionable. Though it has been maintained that this latest action (i.e., the second police raid in Zürich) was carried out in the interest of juvenile security, one cannot help feeling that the main reason was *to complete the lists of homosexual people.*

As long as no minors are involved, no homosexual man nor lesbian woman can be reproached on account of his or her tendencies. The State has in this connection neither the right to check, nor any other rights.

We repeat once more: These things are true as long as no minors are involved. Otherwise the law can step in. But this is a different matter altogether. Homosexual tendencies are as old as the human race, and are not punishable, nor a valid reason for administrative measurements such as the preparing of police registers. Only too vividly do we remember the concentration camps of the Nazis in which considerable numbers of homosexuals were put into 'protective custody'. Naturally there is all the difference in the world between the registration or the liquidation of a human being. But the principle as such remains the same finally:

The all powerful State here enters into the most private sphere without offering a valid verification of the public interest involved.

We definitely believe that a far greater number of criminal acts is committed by 'normally' oriented men with minor girls than by homosexuals with minor boys. On account of such a latter case happening now and then, the starting of huge police raids against homosexuals as such, and the keeping of black lists is

going too far in a State of Justice. For the protection of minors practically nothing is gained; no single crime is prevented; nor is the amount of perversion influenced one way or the other. A homosexual man is as little inferior as a lesbian woman—they are both different only in that they do not conform to the norm. That homosexual men very often possess an extremely high measure of sensibility and a surprising width of culture can easily be verified by any psychiatrist.

No one should accuse us of 'shielding' homosexuals. There is just nothing to shield! We have simply to take certain things into consideration; we have to do all we can to help young people to develop as naturally as possible; and also we must not fall into the error of setting ourselves up as judges. Again and again all things in life turn out inexpressably relative—also the term 'normal'. The normality of which we often feel so proud is in the last resort a gift from God, and not the result of our own personal merit. For this reason alone we have no right at all to pass judgment on fellow beings only because they feel different in their physical desires. And the State also has no right to outlaw them by the help of black lists.'

No comment necessary.

Richard Arlen

From: THE OBSERVER, LONDON

The voting on the Wolfenden debate looked more like a feeble puff than a healthy breeze of change. There were far fewer Members of Parliament rallying to the cause of reform than might have been expected after a three-year campaign conducted by the Homosexual Law Reform Society and others. But at least the Home Secretary's refusal to legislate during the life of this Parliament was not wholly unyielding; he did recognise that reform would come, but later rather than sooner.

It is an odd commentary on our democratic process that twelve out of thirteen members of the Wolfenden Committee came firmly down in favour of change, yet their recommendation can be rejected, two to one, by a House which remains to a great extent ignorant of the social realities of homosexuality. Is there not some way in which Parliament can arrange to inform itself of a committee's reasoning before any policy decision is made? We should think seriously about the problem of commission reports, indecorously shelved by Governments which for political or other reasons find the recommendations unpalatable.

*Friendship
can survive almost anything
except a small loan.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Die neuen Ausweiskarten

Diejenigen Abonnenten, die bis 12. Januar das Abonnement für 1961 bezahlt haben, erhalten die neue Ausweiskarte mit diesem Heft. Die anderen Abonnenten erhalten ihre Ausweiskarte — nach Eingang ihrer Zahlung — mit dem Februarheft.

Les nouvelles cartes d'identité

Les abonnés, qui au 12 janvier ont payé l'abonnement de l'année 1961 recevront leur nouvelle carte d'identité avec le présent numéro. — Les autres abonnés, pour autant qu'ils auront effectué le versement, reçoivent leur carte avec le numéro de février.

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Kameradschaftliche Vereinigungen und Zeitschriften des Auslandes:

angeschlossen an die «Stiftung internationales Komitee für sexuelle Gleichberechtigung», ICSE; Sekretariat: Damrak 57, Tel. 34596, Postbus 1564, Amsterdam. — Organ: Newsletter.

Deutschland: Int. Freundschaftsloge (IFLO) Postfach 1399, Bremen.

Organ: IFLO-Bundesbrief.

Verein für humanitäre Lebensgestaltung (VhL), Kettenhofweg 46, Frankfurt a.M.

Dänemark: Forbundet af 1948, Postbox 1023, Kopenhagen K, Organ: PAN,

Klubadresse: «Admiral-Kroen», 2te stock, Admiralgade, Kopenhagen K

Holland: Cultuur- en Ontspanningscentrum (COC), Postbus 542,

Amsterdam C. Central-Büro: Damrak 57, Tel. 34596. Organ: Vriendschap, Clublokal: «De Schakel», Korte Leidsedwarstaat 49, Tel. 64511.

Norwegen: Det Norske Forbundet av 1948, Postboks 1305, Oslo.

Schweden: Riksförbundet för sexuellt likaberättigande, Postbox, 850, Stockholm I.

USA: One Inc., 232, South Hill Street, Los Angeles 12, Calif.

Mattachine Society, 693 Mission Street, San Francisco 5, Calif.

Belgien: Centre de Culture et de Loisirs, boîte postale 1, Forest 3, Bruxelles.

Tous les réunions: 29, rue Jules Van Praet, 1er étage. (Près de la Bourse).

Sonstige Zeitschriften und Vereinigungen, dem ICSE noch nicht angeschlossen:

Dänemark: «EOS», Postbox 514, Kopenhagen N.

«Vennen», Postbox 183, Kopenhagen — K.

Deutschland: Kameradschaft «die runde», Reutlingen.

Der Weg, Verlag Wolf H. F. Prien & Co., Uhlandstr. 149, Berlin W. 15.

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