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QUEST FOR JUSTICE:

towards homosexual emancipation

Antony Grey

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In 1967, after a ten year campaign, the laws which treated all homosexual acts between males as crimes in England and Wales were altered to permit such behaviour between two consenting men aged over twenty-one in private. Twenty-five years on, the profound significance of that change, and the nature of the struggle that was waged to achieve it, are not always fully appreciated. Gay people and their lifestyles are still subjects of considerable controversy and entrenched prejudice, and today's gay rights campaigners are justified in believing that much more sweeping changes in legal and social attitudes are now called for.

QUEST FOR JUSTICE is the inside story of the battle for the Wolfenden reforms, told by one of its main protagonists who was Secretary of the Homosexual Law Reform Society during much of the campaign and for some time afterwards. Besides giving his personal account of the campaign, Antony Grey comments on the subsequent course of the developing movement for gay rights, and his own not always entirely harmonious relations with it. He also describes the rising power of the "moral majority" backlash, and its bitter attacks upon liberalisers whom it misdescribed as "permissive".

He expresses disappointment at the slow progress of human sexual rights during recent years, and a sense of ever greater urgency, with the advent of AIDS, for the widespread acceptance of much more frank and realistic attitudes. The conclusion, however, is optimistic, foreseeing a sexually saner twenty-first century in which updated moral, social and legal attitudes will combine to promote, instead of hindering, human happiness.

Antony Grey took a history degree and qualified as a lawyer whilst working in journalism, public relations and industrial administration. One of the first active campaigners supporting the Wolfenden Report, he became Secretary of the Homosexual Law Reform Society and the Albany Trust in 1962 and spearheaded the public and parliamentary lobbying which led to the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. After the reform he continued as Director of the Albany Trust until 1977. Since then he has qualified as a counsellor, and now combines work as a therapist with writing.

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