



Homosexual Acts

Call to Reform Law

(with others)

This PDF is one of a series designed to assist scholars in their research on Isaiah Berlin, and the subjects in which he was interested.

The series will make digitally available both selected published essays and edited transcripts of unpublished material.

The PDF is posted by the Isaiah Berlin Legacy Fellow at Wolfson College, with the support of the Trustees of the Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust.

All enquiries, including those concerning rights, should be directed to the Legacy Fellow at berlin@wolfson.ox.ac.uk

Homosexual Acts

Call to Reform Law

(with others)

Letter to the editor, *The Times*, 7 March 1958, 11c



Sir John Wolfenden

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES*

5 March 1958

Oxford

Sir, – We, the undersigned, would like to express our general agreement with the recommendation of the Wolfenden Report that homosexual acts committed in private between consenting adults should no longer be a criminal offence.

The present law is clearly no longer representative of either Christian or liberal opinion in this country, and now that there are widespread doubts about both its justice and its efficacy, we believe

HOMOSEXUAL ACTS

that its continued enforcement will do more harm than good to the health of the community as a whole.

The case for reform has already been accepted by most of the responsible papers and journals, by the two Archbishops, the Church Assembly, a Roman Catholic Committee, a number of Nonconformist spokesmen, and many other organs of informed public opinion.

In view of this, and of the conclusions which the Wolfenden Committee itself agreed upon after a prolonged study of the evidence, we should like to see the Government introduce legislation to give effect to the proposed reform at an early date; and are confident that if it does so it will deserve the widest support from humane men of all parties.

Yours, &c.,

N. G. ANNAN; ATTLEE; A. J. AYER; ISAIAH BERLIN;
†LEONARD BIRMINGHAM; ROBERT BOOTHBY; C. M.
BOWRA; C. D. BROAD; DAVID CECIL; L. JOHN
COLLINS; ALEX COMFORT; A. E. DYSON; †ROBERT
EXON; GEOFFREY FABER; JACQUETTA HAWKES;
TREVOR HUDDLESTON, CR; JULIAN HUXLEY; C.
DAY LEWIS; W. R. NIBLETT; J. B. PRIESTLEY;
RUSSELL; DONALD O. SOPER; STEPHEN SPENDER;
MARY STOCKS; A. J. P. TAYLOR; E. M. W. TILLYARD;
ALEC R. VIDLER; KENNETH WALKER; LESLIE D.
WEATHERHEAD; C. V. WEDGWOOD; ANGUS
WILSON; JOHN WISDOM; BARBARA WOOTTON

© *the authors* 1958

Posted in Isaiah Berlin Online 13 March 2022