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Please note that all communications, even those to the editor of the journal, should be made either through the Chairman or the Hon Secretary.

All unattributed material in the journal is by the editor and should not be read as representing any kind of official view of the Campaign.

David Bruce Taylor

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No.15 is the fourth issue of *Uncensored* that I have edited. When I took on the job some eighteen months ago, there was on the one hand an urgency to get something out quickly, on the other nothing left in the held-over file. Believing the crisis was temporary, I wrote the whole issue (No.12) myself, including an editorial which ended thus:

At present we get a very good "press-cutting" service from our readers - and that is entirely welcome - but very few of them seem keen to try their hand at authorship on their own account. The expression of views, to my mind, is just as important a part of a publication like this as the recording of information, and I would very much welcome correspondence and even short articles (which I have to confess, though, might be often be even shorter if and when they are published).

The bit in brackets was added in anticipation of a blizzard which has in the event been rather less than a flurry. So far *everything* received has been published *in full*. It's a wide-open buyers' market! I repeat, therefore, why not try your hand!?! (Sometimes mine gets tired!)

Resolution or Realism in the Fight against Terrorism?

IT would be trivializing a tragedy of very considerable proportions to make the murder of ten bandmen at Deal simply the occasion of yet another protest at the sheer pointlessness of the blanket of political silence that prevents any realistic discussion of the Irish question. If the purpose of that silence is to starve terrorism of the "oxygen of publicity", the terrorists have proved yet again how impossible it is to achieve that purpose. Any time they want to draw attention to themselves, all they have to do is to commit another outrage. The idea that security can ever be so tight as to make this impossible is sillier even than the politicians who profess to believe it. And when they occur, is it conceivable that such outrages should not be reported? But that is the least of the publicity gains. The real bonus lies in the fact that every politician one has ever heard of immediately feels himself obliged to pronounce a moral obloquy. If I were a terrorist, perhaps even greater than the exhilaration of committing the outrage would be the exhilaration of listening to the howls of condemnation after every sortie. I would take it as proof (a) that I was a person who could not be ignored - which is surely the chief motivation behind all acts of terrorism regardless of the political pretexts offered - and (b) they howl so loudly only because there is nothing else they can do about it. If there were, they would surely spare their lungs and do it.

Mr King and Mrs Thatcher are agreed on the official propaganda line: "They must never be allowed to succeed." Intoned in those same accents of steely resolution which in other areas over the last decade have a successful record, there are many who find the slogan reassuring. Has it occurred to them that the IRA, like most terrorist movements, have no real ambition to "succeed" in the first place? To tell them that they can't or won't or won't be allowed to succeed is a bit like telling a gardener that his job will never be finished. He knew that when he took it on, and his *unending* commitment to it is one of the very things he finds most satisfying. The terrorist views the political world as the gardener views the natural - permanently and radically opposed to his ambitions. He has no real hope of winning the battle as an army might; and that is why he does not fight like a soldier. Terrorism allows him to find - what perhaps most young men (particularly those with few real prospects otherwise) have always been looking for - danger, excitement and significance, as a part of a cosmic battle against Injustice. Don't ask for a definition of injustice in such a context; it has no definition.

Unlike the soldier, also, the terrorist enjoys his thrills at a very cheap rate. Unlike the soldier's, his is a comparatively safe operation. Of all the casualty groups in

Northern Ireland, that of the terrorists themselves is by far the smallest. They claim the right to kill others at will; no one claims the right to kill them under any circumstances. It is this perverse variant of the "rule of law" - which the terrorist claims to oppose, as a sham - which is in fact his biggest ally in the fight. This "rule of law", as far as he is concerned, is no more than the disadvantageous terrain which the enemy has chosen to occupy and defend, which makes it easy and comparatively safe for him to attack them, and difficult - indeed for all practical purposes impossible - for them to attack him.

This is not the place to discuss precisely what adjustments are needed to such a demonstrably inept ideology. It is sufficient for the present to note that the ideology itself is a crucial reason why our presence in Northern Ireland serves so little useful purpose. But what of the other illusions with which we console ourselves for our manifest lack of success? Should we not at last abandon the claim still insistently made (though now rather faintly and wearily) that over the years one can see a gradual pattern of improvement emerging? The situation is demonstrably a stalemate, has been so for more than a decade, and one that perfectly suits the purposes not only of the terrorists themselves but also of a body that we like to suppose is one of our main allies against them - the Irish government.

The advantages of the present situation to this body are worth considering in detail. Nobody knows just how sincere their professions are of their opposition to terrorism. I doubt if they know themselves; it is not a question that they even need to ask themselves. It is impossible they should be blind to the beauty of their present situation, in which they can sign the Hillsborough Agreement and a hundred more such without ever needing - indeed without ever being able - to do anything effective about terrorism. The question of extradition perfectly illustrates our "no win" and their "no lose" situation. They have agreed to it, and they have even given quite a good performance of being determined to implement it; the act can be made all the more convincing because (unlike the British government) they know that it can never become a reality. Indeed, the business of extradition isn't even in their hands. It is in the hands of the judges, who are plainly determined not to implement it, and who know (as the Irish government knows, almost certainly to its joy and relief) that they cannot be made to do so. Even if the judges themselves wanted to, they are sensible enough to realize that the odium (and therefore the dangers) of extradition would fall, not on the politicians who have made such agreements, but on themselves who are supposed to carry them out.

The McVeigh case last year is an excellent illustration of the point. The judge was satisfied that the man standing before him had the same name as that on the extradition papers. What he professed to doubt was whether it was in fact the same man. The same doubt would effortlessly invalidate

the proceedings of any trial that has ever taken place. Nor would anything be achieved by any evidence of identity being offered to the court. Supposing it were offered by the police; the conversation would go something like this;

Judge: You say you can identify the prisoner. How much personal acquaintance do you have with him?

Police: None at all.

Judge: In that case, I don't see how I can accept your identification.

The case is no better if actual acquaintances are suborned for the job;

Judge: Up to how long ago did you know the prisoner?

Witness: Up to X number of years ago.

Judge: Sure, a man can change out of all recognition in that time. Release the prisoner.

Take a desperate case of the man's own mother, with whom he has lived all his life, being prepared to do it;

Judge (to the prisoner): This woman claims to be your mother. Is that right now?

Prisoner: Never seen her before in my life.

This problem of identification cannot be solved, because it is not in fact a problem of identification at all; it is a problem of political will.

We come now to the question immortalized by Lenin: What is to be done? There is at present no shortage of discussion about an infinite variety of possibilities, with the glaring exception of one: that we should withdraw. There is a fragment of the loony left that advocates it on the unappealing ground that the IRA is right; but among the serious and articulate, to any number of whom the idea must have occurred not merely as a possibility, but as the likeliest eventual outcome, the silence is deafening. And since we can be quite sure that no "reputable" newspaper would be prepared to give space to the idea, let us offer it a little hospitality here.

I have not the slightest doubt that the consequences of withdrawal would be horrifying, and that it is the presence of the British army alone which for the moment saves Ireland (the whole of Ireland) from such consequences. On the other hand, as Mrs Thatcher last year discovered in Australia, there is a sizeable and noisy section of the population in all English-speaking countries (and in not a few others such as Holland, Sweden and Germany) who profess not to believe that any such consequences are threatened. They are convinced - and for all I know they may very well be right about this - that the British presence in Northern Ireland has nothing really to do with keeping the peace at all, but is simply an example of vestigial Imperial stubbornness.

The British won't withdraw because they think they have a right to be there - and regardless of the consequences they will never withdraw. So why not boost Irish morale by embarrassing them when, even if the alternative were as hideous as they claim, there is not the least real danger of it being realized? When the Archbishop of New York rebukes Mr Koch for suggesting that perhaps the British are needed in Northern Ireland after all, one would have to be very naive to suppose that he himself believes what he says. It's just that he knows what pronouncements will ingratiate him with his fellow Irish-Americans without appreciably adding to the Government's difficulties "back home". (It is also very unlikely, by the way, that he speaks without any reference to what the Irish government would like him to say - and that goes for all Irish-American politicians.)

But can we really face the spectacle of the Irish killing each other in huge numbers without doing anything about it? Or can we face the even more horrifying spectacle of Irish "rough justice"? Our first responsibility, on the other hand, must be to our own. Ought we to consign our soldiers to duties in which they get kicks all round and halfpence from nobody? Is it ever moral to put soldiers in situations where they are likely to be fired on, and yet deny them an absolutely equal right of firing back? We seem at present to be offering the army as a kind of punchbag to the Irish, in the probably true belief that without it they would fall on each other with abandoned fury. But doesn't this create a rather ridiculous spectacle, and isn't such improbable self-sacrifice to some extent the justification for the scepticism we find in other countries about the real reason for our presence there? We have no conceivable interest of our own to pursue in Ireland; why then do we expend so much blood and money there? They, who have a vital interest in our staying, seem to feel that the present situation can be cynically exploited without risk to their safety. Is the bride really of such surpassing beauty that we cannot help but woo her hopelessly and for ever? Surely, if she can't be won to a reasonable offer, let's put the ring back in our pocket and quit the field.

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The editor would not like it to be thought that the following item has any relevance at all to the proceeding article, except as regards the unavoidable coincidence that both of them relate to Ireland. The letter was published in a recent issue of the International Humanist. I am sure readers will agree that it deserves the widest possible circulation.

- 1 italic
+ 1 italic

We would like to appeal for assistance in our attempts to legally challenge religious discrimination in the Irish Republic. We are concerned with issues of church/state

collusion in key areas of education and health in particular. Help in the form of publicizing the situation internationally could be most useful, particularly if it encourages the financial help we need, given the Irish legal system.

This state is, perhaps, the only one so far to have implemented the programme of the "moral majority" in its entirety. Divorce or abortion are prohibited under any circumstances, homosexuality is illegal, censorship of sexuality is total, and education and health are under the control of religious interests - although state-funded. Employment in education and health is discriminatory (based on religious orthodoxy) and even teacher-training for junior cycle is only available through entry into a religious-controlled college. Yet whilst under the direct control of religious interests, these areas are virtually wholly state-funded, without being accountable or subject to citizens' control.

The norms of civilized democracy are not being observed in Irish society, and only international awareness of this can generate the necessary momentum for reform.

Campaign to Separate Church and State
Dick Spicer (Secretary)
112 Rialto Cottages
Dublin 8
Republic of Ireland

On a lighter note (though I suspect the Lady of Laxton Manor would not appreciate my describing it as such), I publish in full the following equally deserving appeal for support and assistance. The document itself contains serious and sensible points; it is the title, The Corrective Party, which is bound to make some readers smile.

The Corrective Party has launched its campaign into Europe in order to bring to light some highly important issues. Prostitution can no longer be ignored. The Common Market has already faced the issue of prostitution, and did in fact make the Brussels conference centre (with its simultaneous translation system) available to prostitutes for their 1986 conference, which was listened to with great interest by both the Belgium and Dutch governments.

DECRIMINALISE PROSTITUTION.....The prostitution laws in England (a legal system called Suppression) attempts to hide all visible evidence of prostitution. When prostitutes have to hide their work and are driven underground, they become vulnerable to exploitation from third parties, thus opening the floodgates to organised crime. Because prostitutes are forced to work in a furtive, stigmatised and illegal environment, the distribution of health educational material to both prostitutes and clients is most difficult. Laws which

prevent two or more prostitutes working together from the safety of shared premises (Keeping a Brothel) effectively isolate prostitutes, making them unable to share work skills and safer sex information. Dominance Mistresses, providing fantasy services where sexual intercourse does not take place, are penalised most harshly of all (Disorderly Houses Acts). Prostitutes' skills should be integrated into health education efforts. Their knowledge and experience provides a rich and as yet untapped resource, which is invaluable in promoting and eroticising safer sex. Clearly public health and welfare must take precedence over the enforcement of inappropriate and outdated laws. Furthermore, it is crass hypocrisy that prostitution is taxed and VAT-rated, yet prostitutes are denied equal legal, civil and economic rights.

REPEAL SECTION 28 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.....It is the concern of the Corrective Party that Section 28 of the local government bill is ill-defined and open to interpretation. We do not believe that homosexuality can be taught or promoted. Any legislation which directly or indirectly stigmatises minorities on the grounds of sexual preference is ultimately detrimental to health and education efforts. Sex education in schools should include information about emotions, relationships and varied and different lifestyles, including homosexuality.

OPPOSITION TO CENSORSHIP.....Pornography is a demand-orientated phenomenon. Restricting the availability of such material drives consumers to seek illegal avenues to meet their requirements. Graphic depictions between consenting adults should be freely available, and utilised to promote safer sex. Nobody caught HIV infection by looking at pictures. Clearly public health should be prioritised [*The things I do for freedom!* - ed] over prudery.

THE LADY OF LAXTON MANOR LINDI ST CLAIRE
THE CORRECTIVE PARTY
(THE SAFE AND CARING PARTY)
58 Eardley Crescent, Earls Court SW5 9JZ
Campaign co-ordinator: Louise Hanson
IF YOU CARE - VOTE ST CLAIRE

On 25th September *The Times* published on its feature page an article whose subtitle was: "Jack Straw calls for controls on the invidious spread of soft porn". In fact the article gave no evidence of any spread at all, and simply complained, in fairly conventional terms, about availability. But that was the least of its dishonesties. The framework of the piece was a reference to his standing recently in a queue at a Euston station bookstall and seeing someone in front of him buy four girlies magazines - someone who then

reminded him of some one else who had offered him sixpence as a boy of nine to "come into the bushes" with him. Your editor wrote to complain about the article as follows:

Dear Sir

Is there any illiberal cause that Jack Straw is not prepared to espouse? Earlier this year he was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Islamic hostility to Rushdie; now he campaigns - in terms that are the more alarming for being totally vague - for some kind of suppression of 'soft porn'.

He seems sadly to imagine, for instance, that the suppression of journals such as *Knave* and *Penthouse* would somehow discourage "bespectacled middle-aged businessmen" from offering money to small boys to go into the bushes with them. I believe such practices ought to be discouraged; but I see no connection between the two halves of his equation.

If I am being unfair, and this is not the implication of the two ideas being juxtaposed, perhaps Mr Straw would tell us what he *did* mean to imply? And would *The Times* have allowed the following as an example of "reasoning" on any other subject than pornography?

"Some 113,000 copies of *Penthouse* are bought each month at £2.50 a copy. *Knave*, at £1.50, claims an average circulation of 135,000 a month. Not all of these readers, of course, are like the man in the queue at Euston, nor will they have a propensity for child abuse or sexual attack. But the amount of pornography freely available in this country is unhealthy, and reflects a perversion in the values of society."

The man in the queue bought four such magazines. Anything else he can be accused of apart from that is totally in Mr Straw's perfervid imagination. This is even more true, of course, of the thousands of other readers he refers to.

Mr Straw has but to cross the English channel to find himself among nations as civilized as ours, far more prosperous, far less violent, who have enjoyed the free availability of such material for more than twenty years. To them it is not the availability that seems unhealthy but rather the restrictions that are still being imposed in benighted Britain.

Yours etc.

Mr Straw is clearly a man we need to keep an eye on - particularly if (as is by no means impossible) the next government is Labour, and we suddenly find that these restrictive

attitudes are also the expressed intentions of the then Minister of Education.

* * * * *

Identifying the Enemy

MARK TAHA

LISA APPIGNANESI & SARA MAITLAND: *The Rushdie File* ICA

I MUST confess I haven't read "The Satanic Verses" and have no particular wish to. This book, a compilation of articles, reviews, interviews and speeches about the furor surrounding it, must have been both easy and difficult to write - or should I say compile. Easy because it requires no original thought, and difficult because what do you leave out?

It gives, of course, different viewpoints on the book, including an Indian reviewer who liked it and called it both anti-police and anti-British government. This may explain the equivocal attitude of the British government towards it. It also quotes various statements by Rushdie himself: "I expected the mullahs wouldn't like it. But I didn't write it for the mullahs,....I get letters every day from Muslims who do like the book." Later on, "I write whatever there is to write"; later still, "Frankly I wish I'd written a more critical book".

It also reproduces an open letter in which Rushdie accuses Rajiv Gandhi of giving in to pressure from fundamentalists. One of these, Syed Shabuddin, accused Rushdie of "Satanic forethought", admitted not having read the book, and said that he didn't threaten violence or incite mobs, just cautioned the Government as to Muslim reaction. This and the professed aims of the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance, must be candidates for the sick joke of the year award, the third being the formula, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful".

We have lists of writers supporting Rushdie, and of countries who have banned the book - including India, South Africa, and of course the Islamic regimes. Which leads me to the subject of the Bigots Unanimous Alliance of the UK: I refer, of course, to the anti-Rushdie attitudes, and support for more restrictions on free speech, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Catholic hierarchy and the Chief Rabbi, all of whom want a law banning "anything likely to inflame, through obscene defamation of the feelings or beliefs of any section of society, or to provoke public disorder and violence". It seems that Protestant (e.g. South African Calvinists), Catholic, Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists are all brothers under the skin. All I can say is, thank God I'm an atheist.

I might add that the book heightened my utter contempt for the Labour Party, with its calls to extend the blasphemy laws, and the "on the one hand...on the other hand" equivocations of the likes of Bernie Grant, Max Madden, Jack Straw and Roy Hattersley. These last two gentlemen are apparently targets of the new Islamic Party, and I hope the Islamic candidates split the vote and lose them their seats. The performance of our own beloved PM and Sir Geoffrey Howe wasn't much better, treading cautiously between earlier criticism of the book and Maggie's later claim that "our commitment to freedom of expression is unshakeable". One could call that a fourth candidate for the sick joke of the year.

The book is indispensable to anyone interested in the ongoing "Satanic Verses" debate, and indeed to anyone concerned about any aspect of freedom of expression. We can now, you might say, see who the enemy is.

* * * * *

On 26th July the US Senate passed by "voice vote" (whatever that is) an amendment to "prohibit the use of appropriated funds [i.e. public money] for the dissemination, promotion or production of obscene or indecent materials, or for work that denigrates, debases or reviles a person, group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin..." In theory such proposals sound not unreasonable; the majority of the taxpayers who provide the money, and to whom the people who spend it are supposed to be answerable, would probably approve.

The trouble with this view is that the same would go for all arts subsidy, and for most educational and military spending also. In practice the whole system of public spending has to be regulated by experts whose advice the elected government accepts, even though it knows that the electorate as a whole probably wouldn't. The practicalities of the present case are a perfect illustration of this. The amendment was moved by a senator who had been angered by an exhibition of photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe, mounted in several museums and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Part of his proposal - which is now to be put into effect - is that these museums should be excluded from all public support for five years, and that the NEA budget should be cut by the amount it spent on the exhibition. Note that these bodies have been punished without any prior warning that they would be doing anything punishable. In the case of the museums, the punishment may well prove capital.

The wider point is the folly of trying to differentiate (as many serious critics still do) between pornography and art at all. Pornography is best defined simply as an artistic genre, in which the aim is to arouse the beholder.

Most of it is bad art, but only a blinded bigot would insist that all of it is. The evidence suggests, moreover, that the low quality of much of it is the consequence of the automatic disapproval of the society in which it is created. It is noticeable, for instance, that continental pornography is of a much higher standard than that produced in this country. But Maplethorpe himself is the best illustration that I know of the point. A high proportion of his later photographs are unquestionably pornographic - and *riveting!*.

Diadumene ("Wearing a diadem") was the title of a picture painted by Sir Edward Poynter, which when shown at the Royal Academy in 1885 aroused a storm of proto-feminist abuse; the reason being that *Diadumene* was painted (alas, not "is painted" - see below) as a voluptuous nude, of a curvaceous perfection only to be conceived and executed by a panting Victorian knight, seething and sweating under the constraint of his shining armour. "Art" in those days tended to mean, "It's respectable and middle-class, even if it does give you a hard on", and Sir Edward had every reason to hope that his work would find adequate protection under that banner.

Unfortunately he succeeded too well in what he had plainly set out to do (i.e. give his fellow academicians a pleasing thrill), and not even "art" could kick the dust in the public's eye. The most notable criticism was that of "A British Matron" in a letter to *The Times* who complained of the "burning sense of shame" felt by any "modest woman on the arm of father, brother or lover". (Strangely, although the ladies have long since dispensed with modesty, along with the need for any kind of escort, whether father, brother or lover, a surprising number of them *still* manage to feel this "burning sense of shame".) To which Jerome K Jerome replied with enthusiasm, if not quite with sincerity:

Sir - I quite agree with your correspondent, "A British Matron", that the human form is a disgrace to decency, and that it ought never to be seen in its natural state. But "A British Matron" does not go far enough, in my humble judgment. She censures the painters, who merely copy Nature. It is God Almighty who is to blame in this matter for having created such an indelicate object.

It was the Amazon londes, though, that won the day. Sir Edward gave in and clothed *Diadumene* in a kind of classic Grecian bathrobe which allowed her to display no more than a single naked breast for the consolation of those in search of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. The deserved outcome was that in 1956 the picture was sold for £3. At that price it was a bargain, though; on 20th June this year it went for £90,000. I suppose with the help of modern technology it is always possible that one day the picture might be 'cleaned'?

We Unmask the Evil SEX BEAST of the London Syllabus - Exclusive!

I ONLY wish I could sustain this breathless tone of tabloid journalism - the topic in hand rather deserves such treatment. Among a sheaf of papers handed to me when I was preparing this issue was a typescript page which read:

As a result of complaints from certain schools, in February 1989 650 lines of the poetry of Catullus, a homosexual Roman writer, were withdrawn from the Latin text, excerpts of which are included in Advanced Level Latin General Certificate of Education examination papers for translation and comment. The complaints may have been prompted by Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which prohibits local authorities and education authorities from promoting homosexuality.

Somewhat disappointingly, the truth is rather less alarming. On 6th March 1989 a circular was sent out by the University of London Schools Examination Board, whose full text is:

GCE A Level Latin June 1989
Paper 3: Catullus (Selections)

Concern has been expressed about certain of the poems included in this Selection, particularly poems 15, 16 and 25.

I am writing to inform you that the Paper set for the June 1989 examination will not require candidates to translate or to comment on any of these three poems, nor will knowledge of them be needed to answer the essays set for Question 3.

In the interests of evenhandedness I comment first on the typescript I originally received. The figure of 650 lines cut out mystifies me. The surviving poems of Catullus come to 2,284 lines in total. The syllabus was a selection only, and I can't believe that this selection ran to 1,634 lines. On the other hand, the three poems listed in the circular come no more than 38 lines.

Next I am forced to wonder who can have given whoever it was the idea that Catullus was a *homosexual* writer. He is famous above all for his stormy affair with "Lesbia", and Mrs Metellus (if she it was) would be vastly surprised to hear her favourite poet described as homosexual. Strictly speaking the ancient world did not know what a homosexual was. All the words we might want to translate as that (the commonest is *cinædus*) refer specifically to passive homosexuals, who were often derided - sometimes merely jocularly, sometimes quite savagely - though never on moral, much less on criminal, grounds. On the other hand, the idea that there was anything perverse in a man having active sex with

pretty young males as well as with pretty young females never seems to have entered *anyone's* head. It is only in this (highly misleading) sense that Catullus can be described as homosexual.

At some period in his life, for instance, he seems to have had the hots for the boy Juventius and has left us four poems about him, one of which (99) is an apology for having forced a kiss on him. It is difficult to know just how much to make of them. If Juventius had been disposed to complain, he would have objected on *social* grounds; i.e. that a well-born youth ought not to be pawed about against his will as if he were a slave boy. Such a complaint, if made, would have been taken very seriously. On the other hand, it was his pride that was hurt; the idea that he had suffered some kind of permanent damage to his emotional self would have been unintelligible.

Looking at the three poems themselves, I must admit I feel some surprise that they ever got into a school selection at all, and it is quite likely that Catullus himself would have shared that view. It is notorious that his poems survived into the Middle Ages in a single copy presenting a rather corrupt text - this compared with the abundance of excellent copies of Terence, Horace, Virgil, Ovid and so forth. The difference of course was that unlike all these Catullus had no place in the school syllabus. Martial, who wrote about a century after Catullus but who also specialized in short poems on social themes, including a good deal of what he would not hesitate to admit was filth, is well aware that much of what he writes is not suitable for schoolboys (there were, of course, no schoolgirls). On the other hand in their day the sixteen-plusses that nowadays make up the average sixth form would already have embarked on public life, and it would have been thought nothing less than grotesque that anyone should still expect them to be virgin-al at such an age, either in their reading habits or in daily life.

It is likely that some good has come out of this modest turmoil. I take it for granted that all but the most stupid and spiritless pupils, seeing these three poems in the book and hearing that they were not, after all, going to be included in the syllabus, will have immediately smelt a rat and taken the trouble either to translate them themselves or to find a translation in which all would be explained. One hour's private and voluntary study - at this, or indeed at any, age - is worth at least three of classroom drudgery. One point that does need to be made, though, is that even if such material is to be excluded from the classroom (I must admit on this occasion to feeling just a twinge of sympathy with the censor) there is no reason why it should not be available in the library. It certainly was in my own school days, long before the permissive society was ever thought of. The reference to Clause 28 may well be relevant here. I give the first of the three poems below, together with line-by-line translation and brief notes, so that the reader

can judge the point for himself. (Actually, the third of the three is rather tame and could have passed.)

XV

Commendo tibi me ac meos amores,
Aureli, Veniam peto pudenter
Ut, si quicquam animo tuo cupisti
Quod castum expeteres et integellum,
Conserves puerum mihi pudice -
Non dico a populo; nihil veremur
Istos, qui in plateâ modo huc modo illuc
In re prætereunt suâ occupati;
Verum a te metuo, tuoque pene
Infesto pueris bonis malisque,
Quem tu quâlibet utlubet moveto
Quantumvis ubi erit foris paratum;
Hunc unum excipio ut puto pudenter,
Quod si te mala mens furorque vecors
In tantam inpulerit, scleste, culpam
Ut nostrum insidiis caput lacessas -
A, tum te miserum malique fati,
Quem attractis pedibus patente portâ
Percurrent raphanique mugilesque!

*I entrust to you myself and my loved one,
Aurelius, Politely I ask a favour
That, if you yourself have mentally longed for something
To come your way that was pure and untouched,
You will keep the boy for me away from corruption -
I do not say from the crowd; I fear nothing
From those, who hither and thither in the street
Go about occupied with earning a living;
It's you I'm worried about, and your prick,
A menace to good and bad boys alike,
Shove it where you like, as you like,
As much as you like, have it ready for all encounters;
I make this one exception, as I think, politely,
But if your evil heart and frenzied mind
Drive you, gaolbird, to such criminality
That you scheme some sort of ambush against our head -
Ah, then luckless you, and of evil destiny,
Through whom with your legs splayed and your gate wide open
Radishes and mullets will make their rapid passage,*

The 'loved one' may or may not be Juventius, but there can be no doubt that it is that kind of affair that Catullus is referring to. Boys were usually thought of as being most attractive when they were no longer *impueres* (i.e. they were sexually potent) but were still *imberbes* (i.e. they were still smooth in the face). If they were still being used for sexual purposes beyond that age, they were then known as *exoleti* (literally 'outgrown'), a term more heavily

charged with contempt even than *cinædus*. The difference between a *cinædus* and an *exoletus* was that the former was a free man who did it out of sexual need; the latter was either a young man on the make or more usually a slave or a freedman. Perversely (for once the term is being used with a certain precision) in Roman eyes the fact that he was compelled to act as he did only heightened his disgrace, as well as the glory of the person making use of him.

The other point that needs clarification is in the last two lines, which describe a common 'rough justice' punishment for adultery. It is clear from the rest of Catullus' poetry that Aurelius was in fact a close friend, despite his being accused, both here and in No.21, of a predatory attitude towards boys which frequently disregarded even the decencies of friendship. He would not in fact have been liable to this punishment even had he yielded to temptation, so the intention must be humorous. The fact that Catullus entrusts his *protégé* to such a dangerous 'friend' in the first place points in the same direction. The 'radishes' in the last line are those large, long, wide Italian radishes sometimes sold in England as 'mooli'.

So there you are then, boys and girls. Unfortunately the examination season is over, or you could have learnt up all this and put it down on paper. In which case either you would have had a distinction, or the examiner an apoplexy.

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The following two documents, the first a policy statement of the Campaign, the second a press release issued at the time of the passing of the Criminal Justice Act some eighteen months ago, are left over from the previous issue.

Film and Video Censorship

1. The British Board of Film Classification is at present a split personality. When dealing with cinema film it is a non-statutory body responsible to the film distributors; when dealing with video it is a statutory body appointed by the Home Office. This is unsatisfactory.

2. The BBFC system of certificates should remain in being as a purely advisory system and consumers' guide for both cinema and video.

3. The parts of the Video Recordings Act which relate to film content and the power of the Home Secretary to appoint a Censor should be repealed. Video classification should be placed on the same footing as cinema film.

4. Films should not be cut for either cinema or video release. (Recertification might occasionally be considered for video.) This would bring the UK into line with most other EC countries.

5. The alleged welfare of children should not be used as an excuse to censor material intended for adults.

6. The power of Local Authorities to prohibit the showing of a particular film within their area should be abolished.

7. There is no unbiased evidence linking fictional violence on film or video with real-life violence on the street. Film and video should not be used as scapegoats in criminal cases; this encourages offenders to evade responsibility for their actions.

8. Fictional violence reflects a violent society; it does not cause it. People do not become violent through watching simulated violence on a screen; they may choose to watch simulated violence because they are already (potentially or actually) violent people.

9. The notion that women need special protection from what they may find distasteful is patronising and sexist. Men and women should be treated as equals.

Note: Cinema and video are both covered by the Obscene Publications Acts.

May 1989

Child Pornography

The Campaign does not condone the production or sale of indecent photographs of children, but has reservations about the Section in the Criminal Justice Act which makes possession alone of such photographs an offence.

We argue that once it is accepted that possession alone of any item, no matter how offensive, can be a crime, there is little to prevent this principal being extended to other material whose offensiveness is not unquestioned.

When the Drug Trafficking Offences Act was passed, the public were assured that the unusual penalty of confiscation of assets would be applied only to the proceeds of that particular crime, but the Criminal Justice Act now extends that penalty to a wide range of other offences.

The Campaign would welcome an assurance from the Government that the proposed offence of possession will not be extended to other material intended for consumption by members of sexual minority groups.

March 1988

Correspondence

Before I set out the only item on this section, I would like to offer a few notes on the concluding item of the previous issue, which was an excerpt from a letter from the former Treasurer John Lyons to the secretary Mary Hayward.

Beginning at the end of Mr Lyons' complaint, I do not doubt - I never have doubted - that pretty well any communication from CAC to the Archbishop of Canterbury was likely to be 'binned'; which is why the best approach was an open letter, where it does not matter what the actual recipient does with it. Let us start with the frank admission that public men by and large have very little interest in the censorship question either way. We have few committed friends of real eminence, and few committed enemies. On the other hand, we seem to be up against a widely-held view nowadays that pressure groups of our sort had their say in the sixties and seventies, and that the rising star is on the other side of the heavens. Formal resolutions of committees formally communicated are fine in their way; but the first question in the mind of the recipient will be the one that Stalin made so famous in the Second World War: "How many divisions have they?" Our concern must therefore be with the wider public, whose support that person is likely to feel we do not have, and whose reaction will be based on that perception.

A more interesting suggestion is that I was "seeking to rubbish genuine faith". I can understand Christians themselves being anxious to distinguish between 'genuine' and (I suppose) 'hypocritical' faith - but should we be? In practice 'faith' is a code word meaning, "I insist that these claims are true, and I acknowledge no obligation to give any reason why I think so". I am perfectly happy to admit that the claim is often advanced without any conscious awareness of the inherent dishonesty (which is the most I can make of 'genuine' faith); but the practical consequences for us are exactly the same as if the plea were totally cynical (as there is equally no denying it often is). 'Genuine' faith, just as much as hypocritical, is increasingly demanding that it should be protected (and the Archbishop himself has led the demand). Moreover if Christian claims were justified, the demand would be quite unanswerable; criticism of the claims has to be a part of our resistance to it.

Finally: "There was undoubtedly a great need for CAC to write to the country's leading churchman on the controversy surrounding 'Last Temptation' in order to put a reasoned argument that the Bible represents Christ as human, albeit the Son of God, and as being subjected to temptations..." Once again, coming from a specifically Christian body of liberal views such an approach might make sense. Should we so confine ourselves? Let us suppose there were no question but that the motive behind Scorsese's film was flat, intentional and vindictive blasphemy. Does Mr Lyons in such cases take the view, "Oh, well, then I suppose it ought to be banned"?

The secretary herself has had thoughts on much the same subject, and wrote to me as follows:

When one receives a lovely big fat issue of a journal it seems ungrateful to carp at a single sentence, but I have to disagree very strongly with the statement on page 3 of *Uncensored* 13 that "If it is legitimate for the contras to argue blind, then so it is, I presume, for the pros to do so too."

No it isn't. For two reasons, one ethical, one practical. It is not legitimate to argue blind that a work should be banned, it is intellectually unsound and morally wrong. Works of art should no more be condemned without trial than people. The would-be censors pose as moralists; if we can demonstrate that they have behaved unethically we gain an advantage, but not if our conduct is no better than theirs. We can and should argue that "this *kind* of film should not be banned", but we must not argue that "this *particular* film should not be banned" unless and until we have seen it. Then we can speak with real authority, but not before.

The remainder of your letter to the Archbishop amply demonstrates the practical reason against arguing blind; any attempt to go into detail may leave the argument looking irrelevant and the writer foolish. None of the so-called 'miraculous' events referred to in your letter appears in Scorsese's film, which completely invalidates paragraphs 2 and 3 and casts strong doubts on paragraphs 4 and 5. To any one who has seen the film (or read the novel on which it is based) it is obvious that you don't know what you are talking about.

Oh yes. There already exists a religion one of whose tenets is that it is blasphemy to talk of an incarnation. It is called Islam.

The editor replies:

I shall be brief. I am correctly quoted in the first paragraph of Mary's letter. The opening of the second paragraph therefore refutes a totally different position from the one I hold - and still hold. That I presume is the ethical criticism. I have failed to locate the practical one, unless it be the argument that we are entitled to argue blind that "this *kind* of film should not be banned" but not that "this *particular* film should not be". I should dearly love to see an actual specimen of the first kind of argument. In fact I thought that was what I was offering.

I agree I assumed when I heard the criticism that Scorsese's film distorted the gospel narrative that part of the trouble would be that he disbelieved in miracles. I was amazed (and contemptuous) to find that in fact he does believe in them. But not even this admitted error renders any part of the letter totally irrelevant, since the main argument still stands that the gospels themselves are a distortion of the events they purport to record. I presume that Mary will admit both that Scorsese *does* distort the gospels, and that the gospels *do* distort the original facts.

The last paragraph misses the point entirely. No one need doubt that if Jews and Muslims were offered equal legal protection provided they were prepared to forgo any right to accuse Christian orthodoxy of blasphemy they would immediately settle for that. The question would then be whether the rest of us were not entitled to exercise the rights they had agreed to forgo.