

**PRESENT DAY RELEVANCE
OF THE "FORGOTTEN"**

400 GERMAN DOCTORS' MEMORANDUM OF 1965.

● F. del Rio

It is only too obvious that the abuse of sexuality has never been so great in the world as it is today¹ and never has *defeatism* approached so near to despair within the Church. It is not my purpose here to enter into an analysis of the various factors which account for this regrettable attitude of many called Catholics, yet let me express in passing the disapproval of this *pessimism* prevailing in the matter of *masculine self-discipline*. We admit the fact that the world today oozes sex from all its pores, and that, as stated before, the world as a whole is impregnated with this kind of pessimism — the priests to begin with, the spouse, and the husband, and that the great majority of men feel they are face to face with a hard imperative, but in no way with an "impossible" morality, a morality for giants only! . . . "Our experiences in this matter, writes Dr. Ch. Rendu, have led us to the very opposite conclusion, viz., that man is much more capable of self-mastery in the area of complete sexual pleasure than the world believes and understands. Even in tropical countries, such as the Island of Reunion, or Maurice Island, the testimonies and facts evincing *masculine self-mastery*, were sufficiently frequent to pleasantly surprise the priests in our company, in our tours of series of conferences and who therefore know only too well the real facts . . . Of

¹The sex problem in the modern world. An anthology edited by J. F. McDermott, U.S.A., 1931. — *The Conquest of Happiness* by Bertrand Russell *Why wait till marriage?* — Evelyn Millis Duval, N.Y., 1965.

course and in general, *this apprenticeship of masculine self-mastery requires a period of progressive training*".²

The present day moral crisis is not something that has popped up suddenly, unexpectedly. In the late thirties, a well known scientist, non-believer Alexis Carrel, left this description of the moral panorama of his days, when he wrote: "Civilization has not succeeded in creating an environment suitable to mental, and much less to *moral activities* . . . The intellectual classes have been debased by the immense spread of newspaper, cheap literature, radios, cinema and TV. Unintelligence is becoming more and more general, in spite of the excellence of the courses given in schools, colleges and universities . . . *Moral sense is almost completely ignored by modern society. All are imbued with irresponsibility.* Those who discern good and evil, who are industrious and provident, remain poor and are looked upon as morons. The woman who has several children, who devotes herself to their education, instead of to her career, is considered as weak-minded . . . Sexual morals have been cast aside. Psychoanalysts supervise men and women in their conjugal relations . . . Ministers have rationalized religion. They have destroyed their mystical basis. But they do not succeed in attracting modern man. In their half-empty churches, they vainly preach a weak morality. . . or like politicians, they flatter the appetites of the crowd."³ . . . *Modern man has rejected all discipline of his appetites.* However, biological and industrial morals have no practical value, because they are artificial, and take into consideration *only one aspect of the human being*⁴ . . . Intelligence, will power, and morality are very closely related. But moral sense is more important than intelligence. *When it disappears from a nation, the whole social structure slowly commences to crumble away.*"⁵

In the words of Paul VI — "Everything in the modern media of social communications which leads to sex excitation and unbridled cus-

² NRT, N. 6, Juin, 1965 "La Regulation des naissances dans le cadre familial et chretien" par Charles Rendu, M. D.

³ See "Freedom and Responsibility" by Arthur Twining Hadley. Oxford University Press, 1921. Preface.

⁴ MAN THE UNKNOWN, London 1939, pp. 152-3.

⁵ Id. it. p. 129.

⁶ Id. it. p. 129.

toms, as well as every form of pornography and licentious performances, *must arouse the frank and unanimous reaction of those who are solicitous for the progress of civilization and the defence of the supreme good of the human spirit.* Vainly would one seek to justify such depravation with the pretext of artistic or scientific exigencies, or to deduce an argument from the freedom allowed in this sector by the public authorities."⁷ The Sovereign Pontiff "draws the attention of educators, and of all who perform duties of responsibility in regard to the common good of human society *to the need of creating an atmosphere favourable to education in chastity, that is, to the triumph of healthy liberty over license, by means of respect for the moral order.*"⁸

It is true that efforts are being made to bring the knowledge of the divine moral law, on the licit means of "family planning" and the "regulation of births" to Catholics in all walks of life, in particular to educators and medical men; these efforts are certainly praiseworthy. This knowledge can serve to refresh the minds of many of *the sanctity of marriage*, and to *stimulate* them to conform their lives to the exigencies of the moral order established by the Creator, for the well-being of the human race and of man — as a person. *But that's not enough.* One needs be as objective and as realistic as possible. One thing is to know the moral law, and quite another to submit generously to its reasonable demands. Against the present day ever more morally polluted environment, the words of St. Paul come to our mind with compelling strength: "It is not the good my will prefers, but the evil my will disapproves, that I find myself doing" (Rom. 7:14, 19), and in the words of Vatican II: "as a weak and sinful being, he often does what he would not, and fails to do what he would do. Hence *he suffers from internal divisions, and from this flow so many and such great discords in society.*"⁹ *Moral sanitation* of the various milieus, environments, i.e. the aggregate of social and cultural conditions which influence at all levels the life of the individual, is desperately needed. It is imperative that greater concerted effort and action be exerted by all, each one, according to his own ability and resources, with the ultimate objective to achieve better structures and above all HEALTHIER ENVIRON-

⁷ *Humanae Vitae*, No. 22.

⁸ "Humanae Vitae", n. 22.

⁹ *The Church Today*, n. 10.

MENTAL CONDITIONS — social and moral — in order to help *weak-willed persons* to stand up to the difficulties they encounter in the fulfillment of the divine moral law.

Indeed we must do far more than heretofore, in the home, in the schools and in the churches, to restore the normal moral health of the young and the old generation. The home should stop turning over to the school, its educational mission which is the very reason accounting for its existence; the schools ought to be more than cheap information centers, confusing or substituting etiquette for moral-religious education*; the churches must show wisdom and sanity. The theology of "love and do as you like" propounded to young and old today could hardly have said anything more dangerous. Too many crimes are being committed daily in the name of "love". What is love, after all? The churches in the name of the "six blessed monosyllables" and some other adolescent slogans have become "incredibly *permissive*" in our down to earth daily existence, references aplenty to the Word of God notwithstanding. "The man who loves me is the man who keeps the commandments he has from me" (John 14:21). Over-simplified christianity is no christianity at all.

The German doctors' Memorandum states and rightly so that "the systematic destruction of our moral and spiritual substance must be countered by *controlling and fighting the very sources of infection*".

Most textbooks of psychology state that our personality, our behaviour is determined by two factors, viz.: *heredity and environment*, — what we receive at birth and *what education and other social influences* do to us. This statement is *incomplete*; nevertheless, we readily accept the fact and truth that "*heredity and environment have a great share in moulding personality.*"¹⁰.

* *La crisi della scuola nel mondo.* — F. Trossarelli S.J. La civiltà cattolica, 2 Nov., 1968. p. 262 ff.

¹⁰ "There are two more factors, which are equally, if not more important: the will and God's grace. The way a person adapts himself to his environment depends to a great extent, on his own free volition. Thus, he may consciously and voluntarily inhibit certain drives; he may, to a certain extent, hold in check his emotions, or at least their expression; he may even within narrow limits, act upon his physique, for instance, by *dieting*. Finally, he is capable

Once more may I quote A. Carell: "The formation of the *moral* esthetic and religious personality is very difficult. The influence of *environment* on these aspects of consciousness is much more subtle. No one can learn to distinguish right from wrong and beauty from vulgarity by taking a course of lectures. *Morality, art and religion* are not taught like grammar, mathematics and history. To feel and to know are two profoundly different mental states. Formal teaching reaches intelligence alone. Moral sense, beauty, and mysticity are learned *only when present in our surroundings*, and part of our daily life."¹¹ Moral education is "atmospheric"; it depends less in ready-made formulae than on the *intense radiation* of vital moral values.

In our view the time has irrevocably come when this environmental situation can no longer be *passively* put up; we must act, and clear measures are needed, and all decent men ought to cooperate.

In the decree on the "Apostolate of the Laity" of Vatican Council II, we read: "Our times require of the laity much more zeal than in the past. Modern conditions demand that their apostolate be *thoroughly broadened* and *intensified*. The constant expansion of population, *scientific and technical progress*, and the tightening of bonds between men, have not only *immensely widened* the field of the lay apostolate, a field which is for the most part accessible only to them. . . . This apostolate becomes more imperative in view of the fact that many areas of human life have *become autonomus*. This is as it should be, but it sometimes involves a *withdrawal from ethical and religious influences* and a serious danger to Christian life."

It is obvious that in the context of human conditions — mainly social, cultural and moral as we experience their influence upon men to

of influencing his environment, either by modifying it, or at least by moving out of it. 'Divine grace' also has a great influence upon man's life. That influence primarily affects his spiritual faculties, in the form of light for his intellect and strength for his will. But it extends also to his actions and attitudes, his emotions and drives, even to the unconscious strivings of his mind." Philosophical Psychology by J. F. Donceel, s.j. Sheed and Ward, N.Y. 1955, p. 279.

¹¹ Op. cit., p. 151.

day, the quoted injunction of Vatican Council II *takes on the nature of an urgently binding imperative for all good, honest men.*

About four years ago, almost three years ahead of the "Humanae Vitae" encyclical of Paul VI, of July 25, 1968¹² 400 German doctors issued a Memorandum against contraception and abortion. It was reprinted in full in the "Medical Forum"¹³ and "Sto. Tomas Nursing Journal".¹⁴ I do believe it is extremely relevant to bring to the knowledge of the readers of "Boletin Eclesiastico" this document which reveals the truly scientific, ethically sound, socially conscious of its signatories. Our readers will find it, to say the least, *enlightening and stimulating.* It is in this spirit we offer it here to our readers. Space limitations allow no lengthy comments, if any, except in brief footnotes.

The signatories begin by expressing their concern over the growing wave of public propaganda for *contraception and abortion.*¹⁵ Protesting against dealing with so complex a problem in such a fashion — *which runs counter to the medical and ethical norms of the medical profession,* the motion addressed to the Federal Ministry of Health, requests that all the many aspects of the problem be examined, with the aid of responsible experts, in order to arrive at common views and policies. The demands of the signatories may be summed up thus:

- (i) The Federal Ministry of Health should investigate suitable means of combating the *real sources of the abortion*

¹² "Herder Correspondence" (English ed.), April, 1965, pp. 110-112.

¹³ Catholic Physicians Guild of the Philippines, April-June, 1965, pp. 107-111; H. Auerhofer, M.D.

¹⁴ September, 1965, pp. 147-150.

¹⁵ Following on an initiative taken by two doctors in ULM, 400 German Physicians signed a memorandum to the Federal Ministry of Health dealing with the *sexualization of public life, propaganda for contraception, and over-population in many countries.* Among the signatories were nearly a hundred gynaecologists practicing in the Federal State of Baden-Wurttemberg (all those in the State but for three) and 45 professors, including 25 professors of gynaecology among them the heads of the university gynaecological clinics of Tubingen, Freiburg (Breisgau), Heidelberg, Kiel. Apart from the gynaecologists, the best-known signatories are the internal specialists Professors Ludwig Heilmeyer of Freiburg, who treated Cardinal Stepinac, and Arthur Jores of Hamburg. Professor Hermann Knauss of Vienna, co-discoverer with the Japanese Professor Ogino of the method of birth regulation known by their names.

plague, which are to be found in *an unbridled public and private sexualization* and the disintegration of the moral substance of the people.

(ii) The prohibition of public advertising of contraceptives should be continued.

(iii) Care should especially be taken to ensure that the indirect manner in which mass publications openly violate this ban, be stopped.

(iv) The strict requirement that contraceptive pills be sold *only* on prescription, must be upheld, in order to prevent their misuse.

(v) The Federal Ministry of Health should energetically do everything it can to ensure that 'operative' sterilization without compelling medical reasons, remains forbidden.

What is very significant and relevant is the way in which these demands are factually and uncompromisingly substantiated in this document, viz.:

(a) *The strongest powers and greatest possibilities for the creation, development, and preservation of the personality and the culture lie in the creative forces and energies of man. The rise and fall of every culture has depended upon the "disciplined" and "undiscipline" application of these forces.*

b) *While we increasingly ignore these fundamental laws of life and allow our Christian Western inheritance to be destroyed, their importance determining factors of history is more and more recognized in the Soviet Union and Red China, and they are being deliberately incorporated into the ideological and political planning of world revolution.*

c) *The view that the meaning of human life is to be found in "prosperity and pleasure-seeking" has become the guiding idea for the majority of the people. This attitude ignores the fact that our debt to our own parents and to the community means first and foremost the inescapable obligation to assume responsibility for the life of coming generations.*

4) *The essence of human sexuality is the total union of two human beings in a physical, spiritual and intellectual life-partnership, whose visi-*

ble expression is the child. Its meaning therefore lies in the preservation of the human race and the formation of the community. One-sided and selfish misuse degrades and destroys the human personality and the community.

e) Most of the forms of "modern sexuality" are diseased artificial products of civilization. The now common degradation of the creative forces of man in the pursuit of private pleasure and for the physical exploitation of one's fellow-man is thus by no means anything that is "conditioned by nature."

f) A decisive role in this is played by the sexualization of public life which is so common today.¹⁶

This includes in particular:

1. The unrestrained propagandistic exploitation of the female body and of sexual allurements for advertising purposes and for all kinds of unscrupulous profit-making in business, the theatre, films, television, illustrated magazines, books, etc.

2. The open propaganda for nudism and the systematic destruction of the natural sense of modesty at the beaches, beauty contests, etc.¹⁷

3. The kind of "scientific", "morally neutral" sex education prevailing today, which deals only with superficial processes in the generation of human life, as if there could be no mysteries here.¹⁸ This type

¹⁶ This positive, objective, clear presentation and evaluation of human sexuality in paragraphs a) b) c) d) e) is in striking contrast with the negative, or at best vague, ill-defined, subjective picture propounded by some of the so-called "dissenting" theologians. It may well happen, in the near future, that married couples will have to see "doctors" rather than Theologians, for enlightenment on the specific problems of their state of life!... cfr. "Modern man in search of a soul" by C.G. Jung, pp. 221-244.

¹⁷ A recent visitor of Manila remarked that whereas some of the streets of Manila are dirty, and that seems to point to a lack of civic spirit, the modesty in dress of our young women was almost a vision! May your feminine youth value herself, as it does, he added.

¹⁸ It is very often stated that the only difference between the Catholic attitude and present scientific position concerning population control through "contraceptives", is just a matter of means to a common good. I doubt if the average well informed Catholic is ready to accept this view. In

of sex education leads to irreverence and cynicism and destroys the last remaining inhibitions and barriers in this sphere.

4. *The public propaganda for contraceptives which is now spreading is part of this "neutral" kind of sex education.*

5. *Statements by doctors, politicians, and even clergymen who declare "pathological" sexual behaviour of the individual and in society "to be permissible" only because the behaviour of so many people has become pathological.*

6. *Destruction of the family by an erroneous policy on taxes x x x*

7. *Public ridicule of chastity in most of the so-called cultural products of the theatre, press, and television. Making light of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual intercourse.*

8. *All of these phenomena contribute to perverting normal sensibilities and behaviour, frequently cause women to fear having children, and lead to the loss of mutual respect between married couples.*

9. *A further consequence is the loss of respect for the nascent life. Herein lies the real reason for the epidemic of abortions — this con-*

the words of E. F. Diamond, H. D., we are separated from the modernist mentality by many meaningful attitudes.

"First of all, we are separated by a reverence for life which prevents us from accepting their views on abortion, therapeutic or otherwise. Secondly we are separated by reverence for the human body, which prevents our accepting their views on sterilization, voluntary or otherwise. Thirdly, we are separated by a reverence for sex, which makes their tasteless mechanistic method of sex education unacceptable and repugnant.

"Finally, we are separated by a reverence for God, which makes us entirely unable to accept their "new morality", woven out of the fabric of the old immorality and made relevant in what they call the post-Christian era.

"We have seen a breakdown in value systems. We have seen a devaluation of the child and an over-valuation of education, humanistic, scientific and technological, but without ethical orientation and religious inspiration. We have lost the sense of the child, as a reward for sex, in favour of the child as a penalty for sex.

"We are anxious about the population explosion, but unconcerned about copulation explosion at all levels of immaturity." Cfr. "Oral progestins and the Catholic Physician" in "Linacre Quarterly", May, 1966, pp. 195-196.

tinuous mass murder of human life, for which, in most cases, in view of the present prosperity, social, financial, or ethical reasons can no longer be held responsible.

10. The idea of fighting the abortions plague through public propaganda for "anti-baby pills", or even through sex education on television or in the schools confuses cause and effect. For as already indicated, this propaganda is itself a part of the public sexualization.¹⁰

11. The indiscriminate distribution of pills would, moreover, in the case of many more women and girls, remove the last brakes on the modern trend towards sexualization.

CONCLUSIONS:

The problem of "public sexualization" and the "contagion of abortions represents a matter of life or death for our nation as well as for the whole world. We must do far more than heretofore — in the home, in the schools, and in the churches — to restore the moral health of the young and the old generation. The systematic destruction of our moral and spiritual substance must be countered by controlling and fighting the sources of infection.

In the field of medicine and biology, the State is, through its board of health, responsible for the *disinfection, immunization, and strict qua-*

¹⁰ A popular reason for the propagation of contraceptives is that contraceptives serve to avoid *abortion*, and it is a lesser evil, for prevention is better than abortion. However, detailed research has incontrovertibly established that the spread of artificial birth control by means of the methods known to man down to a few years ago, has as a matter of facts and statistics led to an enormous increase in abortions! What is likely to happen now that birth control methods 100% effective are known to us, remains to be seen in the near future. In all likelihood, and we do not mean to prophesy, "sexual promiscuity" and venereal diseases are going to increase alarmingly!

Cfr. *Saint-Luc Medical*, 1961, No. 4, pp. 319-339 "Les techniques contraceptives son-elles prophylactiques de l'avortement?" par le R. P. S. de Les-tapis, s. j.; *Marriage in the Modern World* by Bernard Haring, c.s.s.r., The Mercier Press, 1964, pp. 325-332.

On "Oral Contraceptives", see *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology*, vol. 11, n. 3.—"Oral Contraception" edited by C.-R. Garcia, M.D., September, 1968.

rantine and radical isolation of the infected person. But where is a comparable responsibility on the part of the State for the spiritual and moral health of our own people or of those nations which are not yet fully developed? Are our "cultural" exports to these non-immunized peoples not just as dangerous as shipments of typhus bacilli would be? Would it not be necessary to apply the same moral criteria to our film exports countries that we do to publications and films which are harmful to youth?

In our view, the time has irrevocably come where this development can no longer be passively put up with; clear measures are needed.

THE PROBLEM OF OVER-POPULATION

The current attempt to solve this problem by public propagation of contraceptive pills, sterilization, or even abortion could have an even more catastrophic spiritual, biological, and moral impact in those countries than in the West. *An aid programme which leads to hygienic-medical and material progress, and not to the development of persons who act responsibly, will of necessity create more problems than it solves and will turn into a boomerang.*

2. It is therefore not our task to impose upon the non-white peoples, for purely superficial and technical consideration, solutions which run counter to their best traditions and models. *It is the responsibility of their elites to develop themselves the right way of mastering this problem.* In this connection, it is interesting to note that Gandhi called for *pre-marital abstinence, late marriages, and occasional abstinence* on the part of married couples, as the best way of practising birth control in India. Though such demands may sound utopian to European ears, there have been numerous individual cases in Asia and Europe which prove that such demands can indeed be realized.²⁰ *The ability to subli-*

²⁰ Cfr Population: explosion or control? by A. Nevett, s. j., Geoffrey Chapman, London 1964, ch. VI: "The Indian Woman and Marriage", pp. 109 ff. Gandhi's view of marriage. Whilst going through the series of his writings, one is struck with the Mahatma's insistence on spiritual values, spiritual outlook and spiritual energy. Most particularly, he is unique among national leaders in his advocacy of personal continence, as a spring of force, and a source of national strength. On occasion he even appears somewhat

mate sexual forces for the sake of a higher goal represents a basic possibility in the nature of man and an essential attribute distinguishing him from the animal.²¹

3. Mankind is developing technically, but man must also develop morally, if he is to escape self-destruction.²² This would demand a corresponding cultural policy on the part of the "developed" peoples towards the "underdeveloped" nations, a policy closely tied to the best traditions of these nations and helps them along. In reality, however, we are pursuing — with our films, our books, our "scientific" sex education, our magazines, and the example we set at our universities and schools where the coloured intelligentsia are being trained a cultural policy which is just the reverse.

puritanical in his views and never feels shy of calling his people to heroic standards. With him there was no defeatism or pessimism, but always an appeal to ideals and an optimism which aroused his people to unsuspected heroism and which was the secret of his success.

"If a reference to my own married life is not considered irrelevant, I may say that my wife and I tasted the real bliss of marriage when we renounced sexual contract and that in the heyday of youth. It was then that our companionship blossomed and both of us were enabled to render real service to India and humanity in general. I have written about this in my *Experiments with Truth*. Indeed, this self-denial was born out of our great desire for service." (Harijan, 7-7-1946)

Cfr. *Saint-Luc Médical*, 1935, No 5, p. 475-476; *The Medical Missionary*, April 1935, n. 2., p. 61.

²¹ In most cases the avoidance of contraception is a matter not of heroism, but of a great deal of annoying inconvenience and painful struggles for self-control. Embarrassing as it is to admit that self-control is what we need to solve our problems—because this is an admission of the weakness of which we are ashamed—this remains the truth for most of us. For others, those whose situations are difficult, something more than an ordinary effort is needed. Cfr. "*Contraception and the Natural Law*" by Germain G. Grisez, Ph.D., 1964, p. 198 ff.; 209-214; "*Nature and Grace*" by K. Rahner, s.j. Sheed and Ward, London, pp. 102-4.

²² Vatican Council II: *The Church Today*, n. 15 says: "Our era needs such wisdom more than bygone ages if the discoveries made by man are to be further humanized. For the future of the world stands in peril unless wiser men are forthcoming. It should also be pointed out many nations, poor in economic goods, are quite rich in wisdom and can offer worthy advantages to others."

"Steeped in wisdom, says Vatican Council II,²³ man passes thru visible realities, to those which are unseen. Our era needs such wisdom more than begone ages, if the discoveries made by man are further to be humanized. For the future of the world stands in peril unless wiser men are forthcoming." In our case I am grateful indeed to these gentlemen of the medical profession, for their truly scientific attitude, and superior wisdom in analyzing a problem so complex and so vital to the physical, mental and moral well-being and health of mankind. Priests should greet with thanksgiving these honorable members of the medical profession, Their attitude is truly strengthening, stimulating, inspiring. We can no longer remain passive; we must act. Clear, definite measures are needed. All decent, honest men ought to cooperate.

²³ *The Church To-day*, p. 14.