GENERAL EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Interestingly, the end of empire coincided with a rapid, if partial, liberalisation of British attitudes in the late 1960s and 70s, although this is proving to have been a temporary phenomenon. As 'freedoms' are now being reinterpreted in the light of particularly narrow bourgeois tastes, intolerant, philistine and culturally blinkered, the British are again becoming the social fundamentalists of Europe, if not of the world, bent upon infringing the civil rights of minorities, inhibiting the arts, and transforming human sexuality once more into an area of tension, fear and ignorance. It may be, however, that suppression has the same effect on the sexual underworld as Prohibition on liquor trafficking. Hyam's book is timely: it exposes the oddity of British attitudes by setting them into the wider context established by imperialism and raises questions about the positive and negative aspects of both sexual expression and repression.

John M. MacKenzie