

FREE THINKER

Registered at the
G.P.O. as a Newspaper

FOUNDED 1881 by G. W. FOOTE

Friday,
April 7, 1967

OPEN LETTER TO THE EARL OF LONGFORD

[Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), House of Lords Official Report: Tuesday, 14th March, 1967; Motion—Primary Schools: The Plowden Report (Col. 173). Extracts from the speech of the Lord Privy Seal, The Earl of Longford]:

"We are collectively a Christian country in Britain in 1967. If any one doubts that, let me remind him that it was only in 1944 that a daily act of worship was made compulsory in all our schools. Since then, the aid to denominational schools has more than once, indeed quite recently, been increased.

"The present Cabinet, whatever its manifold and manifest feelings, can fairly be described as a Christian Cabinet; so could the last, or any conceivable alternative in this country today. If it were not so, I should not be much interested in being a Minister of the Crown. Does it mean nothing that the political parties preface their party conference with a Christian service or message? Does it signify nothing that the present Government, led by the Prime Minister, attended a special service to renew their dedication after the last Election—a service conducted by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Southwark, and the noble Lord, Lord Soper— . . . "Who can doubt that the country which teaches Christianity throughout its schools is much more likely to be Christian than one which does not?"

DEAR LORD LONGFORD—I am writing to take you up on some of the points you made in your speech on the Plowden report. You say we are collectively a Christian country in 1967. I can only assume that the great influx of immigrants into this country since the war has escaped your attention and that you are unaware of the millions, yes, my Lord, the millions of Sikhs and Hindus and Moslems and plain, nondescript heathens who now, with the few remaining British who have not yet emigrated, make up this glorious nation of Great Britain. I take it you do not know that the percentage of couples being married in registry offices is on the increase whilst the percentage of couples being religiously welded or wedded in church is on the decrease. You clearly have not noticed that many people are losing their faith and their interest in religion. That the churches are suffering from dwindling congregations, that fewer and fewer men are entering the priesthood each year, are also facts which somehow you have overlooked. It may well be that your elevated position, placing you as it seems above the actual facts of life, is responsible for your overlooking these things. And

certainly if oversight is praiseworthy and commendable you, my Lord, are definitely to be congratulated.

It is true that in 1944 a daily act of worship was made compulsory in all our schools. It provides yet another example that a government can be particularly susceptible to religious pressure and prelates and priests successfully cunning when a nation is toiling under the strain of war. More than twenty years later we are still suffering from the regrettable consequences of these religious provisions. I hope you will realise, in part, just what a mess has resulted from this wartime deal by reading my piece in the FREE THINKER of February 17th, *Teach Them to Know and Love God*, a copy of which I am sending for your Lordship's edification. And more than twenty years on from 1944 you oddly ask, "Who can doubt that the country which teaches Christianity throughout its schools is much more likely to be Christian than one which does not?" Today Christianity is taught according to an agreed syllabus in 100 per cent of our State schools—prior to 1944 in less than 100 per cent. Are you seriously suggesting that Britain is more Christian today than it was before 1944? And if you are suggesting this, what do you mean precisely by 'Christian'?

That the aid to denominational schools has more than once, indeed quite recently, been increased since 1944 does not prove that we are collectively a Christian country but simply that a minority of ardent religionists, mainly Catholics, are still able to manipulate politicians against the national interest. And since your 'Christian Cabinet', which after all is as much interested in the 'religious vote' as any other section of politicians, allowed itself to be manipulated into granting the latest increase—clearly and demonstrably against the national interest—I am bound to ask you, which do you consider has thereby acquired the greater disrepute, the Cabinet or Christianity?

I ask you this since it is you who say that the present Cabinet can fairly be described as a Christian Cabinet and if it were not so, you tell us, you would not much be interested in being a Minister of the Crown. I ask you therefore which you consider more important—good works or the particular religious belief or faith which, according to your criteria, is the right one? I would not describe a Cabinet whose members happened, incidentally, to be atheists, as an atheistic Cabinet but, following your descriptive line of a 'Christian Cabinet', let me ask you this. If an atheistic Cabinet were conducting the affairs of the nation effectively and pushing through reforms beneficial to its citizens, do you really mean to tell me that you would not want to be part of that Cabinet, simply because the majority of its members happened to be atheists? Is the most important factor for you that it should be made

INSIDE

CENSORSHIP—LET'S BAN IT!

Barbara Smoker

New Thinking on War and Peace: II

SEX AND WAR

CENSORSHIP AND THE WEB OF AUTHORITY

Jean Straker

NEWS AND NOTES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THEATRE

LETTERS

up of Christians, men and women who believe in God, acknowledge Christ as their saviour and accept his teachings? Please answer these questions unequivocally.

Does the Cabinet, of which you are a member, prayerfully beg Almighty God to lead the country out of its balance of payments difficulties? Does the Cabinet implore the All-Powerful to lend His most mighty arm to assist you in building 500,000 houses a year? Does the Cabinet consult the New Testament and the alleged teachings of Jesus Christ before making a decision on any political issue? And if none of this is done at Cabinet meetings, what on earth do you mean by saying that the present Cabinet is a Christian Cabinet and that you would not wish to be a Minister of the Crown if it were not? And even supposing the majority of the Cabinet's members are Christians, so what? How is the country better off because the Christian faith infuses its Cabinet? Furthermore I should like to know—and I imagine adoring Christians throughout the country would be interested to know, so please do not evade this question—does this Christian Cabinet commence its meetings with a Christian service or at the very least with a Christian prayer? If it does I am interested to know the text of this prayer. If various prayers are used, then a sample two or three will suffice. I know Cabinet meetings are supposed to be secret but neither the Russians nor the Chinese are likely to be interested in the Cabinet's communications with the Christian God, although they might well be amused by such politico-religious intercourse being conducted by the governors of a proudly civilised nation. Please be so good as to let me know about this part of Cabinet business.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

THE 61st ANNUAL DINNER

will now take place at

THE HANOVER-GRAND
HANOVER STREET, LONDON, W1

SATURDAY, 8th APRIL

RECEPTION 6 P.M. DINNER 6.30 P.M.

Speakers:

BARONESS WOOTTON MILES MALLESON
MARGARET KNIGHT LORD WILLIS

Chairman: DAVID TRIBE

Dress Optional - Vegetarians Catered for

TICKETS £1 1s 0d each

must be obtained and paid for in advance from
103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1

HUMANIST FILM SOCIETY

sponsored by the
NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY
presents the award-winning film

JAN HUS

(Colour—English sub-titles)

THE ASQUITH ROOM,
2 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W1
(Tottenham Court Road Underground)

SUNDAY, APRIL 16th, 7 p.m.

ADMISSION FREE

Now, if it so happens that there is no Christian service or not even a Christian prayer to open or conclude the Christian Cabinet meetings, I shall be glad if you will tell me and all Christians over the age of twenty, why not.

Please do not shock us, my Lord, by saying there is no good reason to pray at the political meetings of the Christian Cabinet. You yourself eulogise the virtue of prayer at political meetings and its indicativeness of Christianity permeating the land. You ask rhetorically, "Does it mean nothing that the political parties preface their party conferences with a Christian service or message? Does it signify nothing that the present Government, led by the Prime Minister, attended a special service to renew their dedication after the last Election?"

Of course it means something that the political parties preface their party conference with a Christian service or message. It means that there are still in 1967 many ignorant and bigoted people who are chiefly, if not wholly, interested in whether so and so is a Christian. They are not concerned with his knowledge and ability. They are not interested in whether he would prove a conscientious hard-working Member of Parliament. They could not care less about his ideas for the nation's progress, except where these ideas directly affect their religious beliefs and affiliations. No. None of this troubles them in the least. They are interested in only one thing. Is he a Christian? And if he is not, what is he? Certainly if he is an avowed atheist he may well obtain fewer votes than if he is, or pretends to be, a Christian. As you yourself know, the vote of the ignorant and the vote of the bigot count as much politically as the vote of the enlightened and the vote of the fair.

Of course it signifies something that the present Government, led by the Prime Minister, attended a special service after the last Election. But it was not to renew their dedication. It was simply a political wooing of the ignorant and the bigoted. All that is necessary to win the votes of some simpletons is to give cash to their churches or their church schools, to play along with their superstitions now and again, and generally keep on the right side of their priests and bishops. It is a very easy way of obtaining and retaining a large number of votes. Far easier than having to persuade them that policies on this, that and the other issues, those unrelated to religion as well as those related, are the right ones.

Hear, my Lord, the words of *your* Lord:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matthew 5, vv. 5, 6).

Such are the words of your Master, most noble Earl of Longford. You know how easy it is for the hypocrites to pray standing in the churches and at party conferences so that the people will see them. What I want to know is, does Mr Harold Wilson lead you and his fellow Christians in prayer in the secrecy of the Cabinet meeting where no eye of the voter doth see and no ear doth hear?

So, my Lord, please be good enough to let me have a few straight answers to the questions I have put to you and I shall see that your unequivocal answers are voiced abroad.

By the way, when's the next election?

Sincerely,

DAVID COLLIS.

CENSORSHIP — LET'S BAN IT!

Barbara Smoker

STAGE CENSOR and keeper of the royal swans—these are just two of the quaint surviving rôles of the Lord Chamberlain. Stage censorship, the only form of pre-censorship we have in this country, which is the only country in the world to have it, would be a farcical survival, simply good for a tolerant giggle, if it were not for the harm it has done and is still doing to the English theatre and to freedom of speech. Bernard Shaw, two of whose best plays the Lord Chamberlain kept off the English stage for many years, fought long and hard for the abolition of this autocratic power, but only now is its end in sight, and its reprieve is still possible. The fact that a change in the law is now being considered makes this an opportune moment for the appearance of Richard Findlater's interesting historical survey.¹

Most Lords Chamberlain have been more concerned about politics, the royal family, and religion, than about bawdiness or cruelty, though each incumbent of the office has ridden his own hobby-horse, and generally looks ridiculous in the saddle in the perspective of time. One delicious example is that of the censor's comment on the scene in *London Life* (1881) where the hero orders a meal of steak and beer: "During Lent it would be better if the order were for a boiled egg and a glass of water".

Even the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain's control of stage censorship will not, however, necessarily solve the problem, as the theatre will then presumably be subject to the ordinary laws of obscenity and probably therefore an even stricter censorship by theatre managers, on the lines of that already carried out by the film industry, the BBC, and ITV. It would have to be strict indeed, however, to satisfy that intrepid TV-clean-upper, Mrs Mary Whitehouse. Her book,² recently published by Blandford Press (significantly, they are also the Moral Rearmament publishers), fortunately goes too far to be taken seriously by anyone but the bigoted few who are ready to see evil in every corner. Readers familiar with Mrs Whitehouse's every press campaign will find little in the book that is unpredictable, except perhaps for the verdict that dear old Auntie BBC is more immoral than the ITV! A possible explanation for this, suggested by the anarchist weekly *Freedom*, is that Moral Rearmament depends largely on the financial backing of some of the biggest advertisers on ITV. One rather amusing instance of inconsistency in the book is that *Dixon of Dock Green* is praised in one chapter as a healthy programme that promotes good relations with the police but is castigated in a later chapter for giving juvenile delinquents ideas!

The criteria which Mrs Whitehouse chose for assessing TV programmes in a three-months' survey are most revealing:

- Is womanhood respected?
- Is family life shown as essential to the good society?
- Is authority shown to be upheld?
- Is Christianity shown to be the only true faith?
- Is chastity portrayed as the accepted norm?

From these it is apparent that Mrs W. seeks to suppress anything which she personally finds distasteful, whether or not it genuinely reflects a part of our society. Even where there is iniquity in society, it is surely better to offer people an opportunity of examining it and then perhaps doing something about it than to push it under the carpet of the TV room.

In comparison with Mrs Whitehouse, Pamela Hansford Johnson is the soul of cultured liberalism—which makes it all the more sad that *her* book, *On Iniquity*,³ also comes out on the side of censorship, and will be taken more seriously. Last year, she attended part of the moors murder trial as a press representative, and it was that horrifying experience which spurred her to write this highly emotive book. It is true that Brady read Sade and that Brady also committed at least three sadistic crimes; but it cannot logically be assumed, as Miss Hansford Johnson assumes, that the one activity led to the other. In fact, it seems more likely that the man's depravity led him to both and that the crimes or something like them would have been committed even without the influence of Sade. Confusion between causation and symptoms is even more apparent when the author lumps together such various trends in our society as pop art, pornography, greater sexual freedom, greater linguistic freedom in print and on the stage, the theatre of cruelty, the decline of church attendance, and an increase in crimes of violence, for no better reason than that they are all associated in her mind as being things of which she disapproves. Insofar as any of them are symptoms of a sickness in society, they still cannot be convicted of being causes of the sickness; and even if any of them could be so convicted, direct censorship by law would do more harm than good, since it would be sure to create an underground market for whatever was legally suppressed and increase the demand for it. Among the supposed causes of crimes of violence she does not even mention the two world wars; and among the literature and TV that she would censor there is no mention of the advertisements, paid for with public money, that deliberately incite teenage boys to join the armed services and learn to kill.

There must always be a kind of censorship, but it should be the voluntary kind that is called criticism and that limits no one's freedom but one's own. Who is wise enough to protect whom from what? Even the Roman Church has now abandoned the *Index*, yet Britain seems to be moving further away from the open society.

Mr Findlater points to the absurdities and abuses of our present stage censorship; Mrs Whitehouse wants to place the TV screen in a straight-jacket of innocuous "family" entertainment; Miss Hansford Johnson advocates stricter censorship in case there should be some connection between a book and a murder (but does not seem to include books that justify mass murder in Vietnam); meanwhile, our existing censorship laws are being exceptionally hard-worked. The Lord Chamberlain demanded that the recent production of *US* at the Aldwych Theatre be made more acceptable to "responsible American opinion". John Calder may be sent to prison for publishing a rather boring book called *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. An irreverent, outspoken, zestful fortnightly paper impudently titled *International Times* or *IT* (of which I have been one of the few regular readers since it started publication six months ago) has been suppressed by the police, who, acting on a warrant issued by Bow Street magistrates under the Obscene Publications Act, have seized not only the whole stock of back numbers of the paper but also its distribution lists and correspondence files, thus forcing it to cease publication, at least temporarily. There has also recently

(Continued at foot of page 110)

NEWS AND NOTES

BERNARD LEVIN'S excellent article in the *Daily Mail* on leading Freethinkers of the past stated that this publication probably died with Chapman Cohen who had been its editor for many years. Mr Levin was informed of his mistake and two days later published a handsome and witty correction.

It is not surprising that such a mistake was made. In the first place, Cohen had been editor of the *FREETHINKER* for nearly 40 years, and was the last of that magnificent band who, as Levin wrote, went at it hammer and tongs on the public platform and in the columns of the various Freethought journals. It would not have been surprising if the *FREETHINKER* had not long survived the stalwart who had been so closely associated with it for a lifetime, but there is another reason why people may assume that it died with him.

Chapman Cohen died in 1954 when neo-McCarthyism, conformism and the "I'm all right Jack" outlook were on the crest of the wave. Organisations or individuals trying to promote good international relations, the arts and the rights of people to work out their own philosophy of life, were suspect and often dubbed Communist. Theatres closed down, in many places the only cinema became a supermarket or bingo hall and large numbers of debating and discussion groups were forced to wind up. Scores of "small" publications went to the wall, including many which had been long-established and still widely read.

Fortunately, the *FREETHINKER* survived and continues to appear every week. It has readers not only in most parts of Britain but in many other countries. It has built up a reserve of support of goodwill, contributors to its columns are unpaid, but despite this still runs at a loss. There is no income from advertising and many prospective readers find it difficult to persuade a newsagent to take it. It is up to readers and the movement it serves to promote the sales and contribute to the Sustentation Fund. Many individuals and groups are already doing so, and if many respond to the appeal I don't see why the *FREETHINKER* should not be celebrating its centenary fourteen years from now. But if sales are not substantially increased I don't see how it can. It's largely up to you.

Plowden for Parents

THE much-discussed Plowden Report is a sizeable tome of 1,200 pages and weighs nearly 5 lb.—not really convenient for slipping into a pocket or handbag. Now the enterprising Advisory Centre for Education have published a shortened version entitled *Plowden for Parents*. It sets out the sections of greatest interest and aims at encouraging parents to see that the Plowden recommendations are carried out. *Plowden for Parents* is obtainable from the Advisory Centre for Education, 57 Russell Street, Cambridge, price 5/6.

The Rosary v Batman

WRITING in the *Irish Press*, Father C. L. O'Hagan, National Director of the Rosary Crusade, sorrowfully reports a marked decline in the recitation of the Rosary in Irish homes. Various reasons are given for this, including Vatican Council II, the fact that the Rosary is repetitive and tedious and the counter-attraction of television. "When it is on it would be the cause of a row were we to

turn it off in the middle of a programme for the Rosary". That is probably an understatement.

However, a much more fundamental problem than indifference to the Rosary is facing the Catholic hierarchy in the emerald isle. A recent survey among Catholic students revealed that there is widespread opposition to the Church's teaching on birth control.

Change of Address

DURING the 18th century there lived in Camden Passage, Islington, a gentleman named Alexander Cruden. He had a varied career as a tutor, bookseller and proof-reader, and published several works including a concordance to the Bible. He appointed himself corrector of the morals of the nation especially with regard to swearing and Sunday observance, and had the endearing habit of stopping people in the street and trying to convert them to a religious way of life. Alexander the Corrector as he called himself, had what today would be considered religious mania.

If his ghost still frequents that part of London it must have been gravely disturbed (no pun intended) by a recent happening. Our friends the Rationalist Press Association have just taken possession of a large house almost opposite the Corrector's abode. We wish them every success in their new headquarters, and congratulate those responsible for the decision to move to what is becoming one of London's most interesting and "with it" districts. The new address of the RPA is 88 Islington High Street, London, N1, telephone 01-226-7251.

Sporting type

NOBODY minded when asked to pay three shillings for a programme instead of the usual sixpence at Wisbech football ground. They were attending the first professional Sunday soccer game in Britain, but as it would have broken the Sunday Observance laws, money was not taken at the gate. Instead, the fans paid extra for programmes. Not however, Mr James Richards, a Baptist minister and member of the Lord's Day Observance Society. No one prevented him from walking through the gates or compelled him to buy a programme. He said, "I would like to stop the game but everything appears to be legal".

Preventing Sunday theatrical performances, sports and exhibitions has been a well known activity of the Sabbatarians for about three hundred years. They are now swimming against the stream and before the end of this century the Lord's Day Observance Society will be regarded much as the Flat Earth Society is today.

In the meantime, we should support every action being taken to reform Sunday observance laws, so that people may pay to enter a theatre, sports ground or racecourse without the promoters becoming law-breakers.

Humanist conference

SCOTTISH Humanists are organising a weekend Conference at Edinburgh University on April 29th and 30th. The theme of the Conference will be "Towards a Humanist Society", and speakers will include Professor G. M. Carstairs. Scottish readers—and Sassenachs too—who would like further information should contact Mr W. T. Farrer, 59 Fox Covert Avenue, Edinburgh 12.

E.A.

FREE-ART. Jean Straker at the Academy of Visual Art, 12 Soho Square, London, W1, Friday, April 14th, 8 p.m. Tickets 5/- each from the National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1 (HOP 2717).

NEW THINKING ON WAR AND PEACE: II

A. C. Thompson

Sex and War

This is the second of four articles which look frankly into the causes and prevention of war.

INCEST—sexual intercourse with a near relative—has been considered immoral throughout the world and throughout history. Is there some natural reason why it is immoral? Many people feel revolted by the very thought of sex between brother and sister or between parent and child. Is incest wrong because people are disgusted by it, or are people disgusted by it because they have been taught it is wrong? Does one intuitively recognise it to be wrong, or has one a taboo handed down from primitive times? It is possible to cause one to be revolted even by food, simply by declaring it to be poisoned.

Consider, if you will, the first human beings who lived on earth. Whether the first of the human species were created by God as Adam and Eve, or descended as mutations from pithecanthropoid parents, whichever way it actually was, there existed once an original human family. The earliest spouses were necessarily brother and sister and their immediate progeny were necessarily incestuous. But as society increased, incest had to be avoided as much as possible, for incest tends to produce family clans within society. If separate families keep breeding through many generations without intermarriage, the territory becomes populated with rival clans—separate, antagonistic, diminutive societies—and a united common society becomes impossible. This division within society gives rise to internal dissensions, hatreds and feuds, and hampers both commerce and government. Early in the history of humanity, men would learn the wisdom of forbidding incest and of requiring intermarriage throughout all the families of the society, for this intermarriage can make a cohesive nation.

It may be objected that the most primitive of men would not have enough sagacity to appraise the wisdom of a social policy, but would instead stupidly follow custom. This does not matter. Natural selection would extinguish this unwise custom by exterminating those who practice it. An incestuous people lack the unity necessary for defence and war, are divided and hence weak and vulnerable to attack by enemies. Incest in a society is thus a social fault, a characteristic with negative survival value. As such societies perish, their peculiar customs, such as incest, perish with them, and the societies which have survived are those which have maintained a rule of exogamy, of marriage to someone outside the family.

Exogamy is opposed by endogamy, the rule or practice of marrying within one's own society. There are in primitive societies several reasons for this policy. The men in a society tend strongly to disapprove of their nubile girls becoming brides of aliens, the women disapprove of men going outside the tribe to bring back into it a strange woman with alien ways, customs and beliefs, and the polygamic ruler, anxious to populate his harem with the pick of the prettiest, desires all maturing young females to be available. But there are other reasons than the sexual ones. Endogamy tends to keep a society intact, by preventing its mixture with foreigners; in case of war, no members have divided loyalties to two different societies. No one need refuse to fight an enemy because they are his wife's people or because his sister is among them.

It has happened historically that human societies are less than the whole human race. It happens from time to time that one society wages war against another, and it is often thought that this would not happen if humanity were not divided—if all humanity were one society. The reasons for this division are of course partly geographic: nations are separated by such natural barriers as oceans, mountain ranges, rivers and other features of the earth's topography. But the cause is also partly due to endogamy. The map of the world has always shown separate nations in contiguous land areas divided by no natural boundary, but only by a line which indicates the limits which each side claims and proposes to defend.

Every species of animal and plant tends to spread itself round the whole earth unless limited laterally by an impassable barrier such as a sea, a mountain chain, a desert, or an unendurable climate. Although natural barriers have not limited the spread of men, who have found ways to circumvent them, they have nevertheless hindered free intercourse among peoples, sexual as well as commercial and diplomatic, and have thus tended to produce different human societies in different geographic regions. But these same natural barriers which limit diffusion of societies also limit wars between them: there were for instance no wars between the peoples of Asia and of the Americas before the invention of the steamship. Wars have been fought between peoples who were within travelling distance of each other. These peoples were of separate societies. Intermarriage would have mingled them into one society. Hence endogamy is one factor which kept them apart. Hence endogamy is indirectly responsible for the custom of war.

As Darwin pointed out, different societies of men, in a struggle for existence, compete for the surface of the earth just as plants and other animals do in their evolutionary ascent, and those in any way better equipped to survive tend to suppress the life and consequently the reproduction of those less well adapted, so that the latter tend to become extinct. History records societies which are now nearly or quite extinct: the Carthaginians, the North American Indians, the Tasmanians. Threat of such extinction is a threat against all that a people have and are, against themselves and their children forever. It is against such threat that men wage wars, that they devote themselves and all that they have to a desperate struggle for existence. Even the fear, if not the threat, of such catastrophe is enough to provoke war.

A society, in its meaning, is not necessarily equivalent to a nation or state. The Jews have been a unified society through the centuries even though they were dispersed through many countries. Poland, after the Peace Treaty of 1919, had a society divided by a Ukrainian minority in an eastern section which she finally ceded to the Soviet Union, and a German minority in the western part from which she expelled them by the millions. The populations of South Africa and of Rhodesia do not form societies. Nor is a society the government; a society may overthrow its government, as the French and the Russians did in their revolutions. The Roman Catholics tend to regard themselves as an international society.

All over the world we witness today bitter prejudices between peoples of different societies, between peoples of different colours, nationalities, religions. A distinctive feature of such prejudice is disapproval or prohibition of intermarriage. In South Africa, apartheid makes criminal

any sexual or even social approach between blacks and whites. In the United States, the white man exclaims, "I want the black man to be my brother, but not my brother-in-law!" One who tries to defend another race is asked, "Would you want your daughter (or sister) to marry one of them?" and the expected answer "No" triumphantly proves the wisdom of race prejudice. There should not be intermarriage of Israelis and Arabs, of Moslems and Hindus. Roman Catholics forbid their faithful in Vietnam to marry Buddhists there; in fact, Roman Catholics have always forbidden "mixed marriages" which is the name they give to exogamy where their members are concerned, for it tends to dilute the unquestioning allegiance to the Church which they demand from their faithful.

However ignorant or stupid we may be personally, we regard ourselves as superior: we are white, while others are yellow, or brown, or black; an accident of history has caused philosophy and science to grow among us rather than among others; we have the best economic system which is Capitalism, while those others are Communists; we have the only true religion which is Christianity, while those others are heathens doomed to Hell; we have the best hair-styles, dance steps, cigarettes, lipsticks, shoes and stockings, collars and ties, matchbox architecture, all sorts of sophistication, and we should civilize others by imposing it all on them, and if they don't want it, by conquering them and forcing it on them. By making them as nearly like us as it is possible to make black resemble white, we extend our society or our society's influence and somehow assure our own survival. But we must not marry them, for then our society would become tainted.

It seems a fair prediction that as long as apartheid or other such endogamy exists, the problems of race prejudice will not be settled. Nowhere on earth can blacks and whites feel that they form a society as long as members of one race are unacceptable as marriage partners by the other. Apartheid is a mistake. One test of which people constitute a society is that of which can marry and be accepted by the other's people. But there are other tests also.

The English believe Eire should form one society with Britain and the people of Eire want to be a separate society; the people of Eire think that Northern Ireland should form a single society united with them, and the people of Northern Ireland do not consider themselves part of Eire; the people of Northern Ireland include some who want to be an independent society; and within this fragment there are smaller groups of dissenters. The question arises, how large should a society be, or how many or which people should form a society? Ireland is only one example; the same problem exists throughout the world. Everywhere it is a question whether a large power bloc is more desirable than home-rule of small independent states, everywhere central governments strive to extend their sway over minorities clamouring for independence. The Social-Survival verdict is that those people form a natural society among whom there is no natural impediment to interaction such as language difference or geographic separation; differences in religion, ideology, race, or traditions are irrelevant. One may well consider ludicrous the Catholics of Eire who demand that the Northern Irish form a single society with themselves, while at the same time they condemn marriage with them. Religious difference is not a valid reason for prohibiting intermarriage, and it unnecessarily divides and alienates people who could otherwise be a harmonious society. It is true that peoples have been able to unite themselves into societies despite differences of language: the Swiss have no

common language, yet they are a most peaceful people and their French, German and Italian parts are not struggling for independence. Eventually we come to a definition of a society as those with whom one can interact in ways which contribute to one's personal survival and to the begetting and survival of his descendants—those with whom one can live.

The question of the origin and nature of societies is fundamental to the Social-Survival theory of ethics which asserts that people act morally to preserve their societies. It is also basic to the causes and nature of war, because war is always fought between different societies. A biological species was defined by the English naturalist John Ray (1627?-1705) who declared animals or plants to be of the same species if they can mate and produce non-sterile offspring. All of humanity, on this standard, is of one species; but endogamy creates artificial species or sub-species which evolve along diverse lines into recognisably different types. It is among these sub-species that wars occur. A struggle for existence, of course, occurs among all living things, among the individual members of the same species as between different species. But the competition among members of the same society does not concern us here, for it is capable of regulation by government and law; what concerns the peace of the world are the struggles between separate societies. The Social-Survival theory maintains that racial and national origins do not provide a sufficient cause for suspicion, hostility, hatred and fear among nations, and that clear understanding of these origins by all peoples would do much to allay the apprehension which is felt towards the people who are different.

The Social-Survival theory of ethics thus draws its substance not only from philosophy and psychology, but also from human palaeontology, anthropology and history, and it offers a rational basis for sociology, jurisprudence and international relations.

CENSORSHIP—LET'S BAN IT!

(Continued from page 107)

been a police raid on the Badge Boutique (in Whitcomb Street), which sells those lapel badges bearing such slogans as "MAKE LOVE NOT WAR", "SAVE WATER—BATH WITH A FRIEND", and "I AM AN ENEMY OF THE STATE". The particular badge for which the badge-sellers have been threatened with prosecution says "KILL A COMMIE FOR CHRIST"—its obvious satirical intention being deliberately misunderstood by the authorities so that they can prosecute under the new racial incitement law. As one of the badge-merchants has said, the slogan could only be read like that if the badge were worn by Cardinal Spellman, who has not so far been among their customers!

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Banned! A Review of Theatrical Censorship in Britain*, by Richard Findlater (MacGibbon & Kee, 1967; 36s).
- ² *Cleaning Up TV: From Protest to Participation*, by Mary Whitehouse (Blandford Press, 1967; 16s and 7s 6d).
- ³ *On Iniquity*, by Pamela Hansford Johnson (Macmillan, 1967: 16s).

CENSORSHIP AND THE WEB OF AUTHORITY

Jean Straker

IN HIS REPORT (FREETHINKER, November 4th, 1966) on the *Freedom of Vision* Teach-in held at Hampstead last October, Christopher Brunel said:

"Although the Teach-in lasted six hours, there was no time for drawing together the diverse views expressed—perhaps the organisers left that to the people who attended to do for themselves."

The full report of the Teach-in is now published (*Censorship in the Arts*, pub. Academy of Visual Arts, 30s), and I think the reader will find that it does draw together the diverse views in a way that makes it possible to see and define the forces that maintain and exploit censorship in our society.

The true freethinker, I am sure, has both an instinctive and rational understanding of these forces, but to the man in the street, conditioned by the 'profanity' of secular thought, the forces are hidden and hardly suspect.

Norman F. Sheppard made the point in the following terms:

"If this is a religious matter we've got to face it, and examine the attitudes that a religion can have concerning a particular matter: it can suppress it; it can encourage it; it can say it will travel with it within certain limits; or it can ignore it. Christianity has changed its attitude to sex at various times; there have been times when it has been thoroughly encouraged—and there have been times when it has been discouraged."

Eve King had already said that the problem started in the Renaissance, when it seemed possible, for less than a quarter of a century from 1505 to the Sack of Rome in 1527, that you could equate Christianity with the Classical ideal, when one didn't have to be conscious of prudery, one didn't have to 'X' anything through in one's mind, when there was no kind of tension or strain between what was said and how it was being said.

"This is a moment Michelangelo lives through—but we are soon faced with Reformation galore—and with Counter Reformation in Italy—and Michelangelo has the irony of finding in the fifteen-forties that they are employing an artist—poor man, he's ever after got the name of the breeches-maker, which sticks to him for life—to paint clothes on the nudes in his Last Judgment on the Sistine ceiling. As someone said: 'If you can't be nude at the last judgment, when can you?'"

What became clear as speaker after speaker defined the censors and their targets was that the Counter Reformation had penetrated the whole web of authority in a way that made one feel that *Opus Dei* was trying to run everything that mattered.

Sean Hignett related how James Dempsey (MP, Coat-bridge and Airdrie) had attacked his book, *A Picture to Hang on the Wall*, as being 'depraved and corrupt'.

"I think," he says, "that what offended James Dempsey was the fact that the man in the book has a Catholic background—Dempsey himself has a Catholic background—and that I mix up blasphemy and obscenity—if these are the words you want to use." And the point was made that it was not only lawyers, MPs and publishers who censor things, but printers also—perhaps the 'Father of the Chapel' was not misnamed.

What we were up against, said a voice from the hall, was people who speak very loud in the Puritan tradition, and then want to cash in on it from a totally different end from that which they talk about.

Francis Carr saw a myth of halo morality, a balloon which gets bigger and bigger if not punctured. He said:

"There is a heavy burden of responsibility on all of us—authors, playwrights, publishers, artists, photographers—to risk our all, as D. H. Lawrence did, to puncture this balloon—to ridicule by satire, on the stage and elsewhere, the obscene nature of the

Lord Chamberlain, the magistrates, Mrs Whitehouse, the common informer, the 'dog-collars' and all."

When an attack on my own *Danae* study was made by a voice from the hall, it was Ronald Clark who answered it again:

"With regard to an explanation of Jean Straker's picture *Danae*, may I ask at the risk of offending some people's feelings a little, perhaps, how they would explain to their children the birth of Christ?" This, significantly was the picture the Lord Chief Justice had said was 'indecent but not obscene'.

If in fact my visual interpretation of the seduction of Danae by Zeus became in the mind of an observer an explanation of the Christian myth, I feel rewarded that I have, in fact, shown

How god and maiden may in union prick
The false defence of blind credulity,

at least to some whose perceptive senses have not been completely anaesthetised. To others, Mrs Whitehouse would find an audience with her words quoted by Michael Paul of *Cosmo*:

"Make no mistake: a group of evilly dedicated people, firmly entrenched inside the BBC, are plotting to denigrate the morals of the nation; they intend to sap away our beliefs, ridicule our moral standards, and decry everything that the Union Jack stands for. They intend to put the country into such a demoralised state of mind that England can be turned into a secular nation."

The report as a whole is directed to the Home Office with a covering letter from George Foss Westcott (a grandson of the famous Bishop of Durham) addressed to Miss Alice Bacon. The point relevant to the censorship of sexual matters which he makes is:

"I can understand that the attempt to severely restrict sexual activities by fear and censorship may be desirable for some religions, because, for example, this will almost inevitably produce feelings of guilt, and because the instincts and emotions repressed may be capable of being sublimated, to some extent, in a religious direction."

And he concludes his letter with these words:

"It seems to me to be very important, before the well-organised, wealthy and politically powerful subjective pressure groups are able to force through Parliament further legislation to reduce human freedom, that more objective data should be collected, and more scientific research done on the effects of censorship on the individual and its influence on hindering the spread of knowledge. Censorship is the opposite of communication and destroys freedom of conscience by disallowing choice. For these reasons I hope you will study this report and decide to set in motion the necessary administrative machinery to examine and correct all existing laws which are in conflict with the maximum personal freedom for adults to acquire and communicate knowledge."

LETTERS

Drawing the line

MY MEMBERSHIP card of the NSS shows me the Society has three pages of practical objects which it has listed as 'immediate'. Most of them have been 'immediate' for the last century, and the chief amelioration of freethinkers' positions has probably come from the normal functioning of ordinary social change and pressures. While we have so much to do, should the NSS really concern itself with 'Free Art'? To ally ourselves with anything even the nearest bit risqué detracts from our genuine grievances. I really don't think I'm a prude, but I do draw the line at a nude. Sir Kenneth Clarke is one thing—strip-tease photography another.

(Miss) G. HAWTIN.

Abolition of coursing

I WRITE to draw readers attention to the Private Member's Bill, published by Ernie Heffer, MP, to abolish coursing. I ask readers to give this measure their support and to write to their MPs in support of the bill.

F. S. ELLIS.

FREETHINKER

Published by G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.
(Pioneer Press)

Editor: DAVID COLLIS

THE FREETHINKER ORDER FORM

To: The FREETHINKER, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1
I enclose cheque/PO (made payable to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.)
£1 17s 6d (12 months); 19s (6 months); 9s 6d (3 months).
(USA and Canada \$5.25 (12 months); \$2.75 (6 months); \$1.40
(3 months)).

Please send me the FREETHINKER starting.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE: plain paper may be used as order form if you wish.)

The FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newagent. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to G. W. FOOTE & CO. LTD. Editorial matter should be addressed to: THE EDITOR, THE FREETHINKER, 103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone HOP 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Holidays. Burton-in-the-Wirral, Cheshire: Painting Holiday, July 29th to August 12th. Details from Mrs. M. Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone, Vigilant 8796.

Humanist Letter Network (International) and Humanist Postal Book Service. For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

Manchester Branch NSS, Platts Fields, Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.: Messrs COLLINS, DUIGNAN, MILLS and WOOD.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bolton Humanist Group (Small Meeting Room, Civic Centre), Thursday, April 13th, 8 p.m.: "Problems of Sex: The Human Answer".

Belfast Humanist Group (War Memorial Building, Waring Street), Monday, April 10th, 8 p.m.: Dr. J. A. MILBURN, "Humanists Face the Future".

Havering Humanist Society (The Social Centre, Harold Wood), Tuesday, April 11th, 8 p.m.: A speaker from the BHA's "Working Party for Social Action".

Manor Park Methodist Institute, Romford Road, London, E12, Friday, April 14th, 8 p.m.: Public Debate. Subject: "Increased State Aid for Churches?" Speakers: R. J. CONDON (NSS), and Rev. J. H. K. PORTER.

Manchester Humanist Society (36 George Street, near Piccadilly, Manchester), Wednesday, April 12th, 7.30 p.m.: AVRIL FOX, "Censorship Report".

Merseyside Humanist Group (Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool), Friday, April 14th, 7.30 p.m.: J. FLASHMAN, "Buddhism".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, April 9th, 11 a.m.: Dr ERNEST SEELEY, "Scientific Humanism"; Tuesday, April 11th, 6.30 p.m.: DAVID HOPMAN, "Social Service Volunteers".

South Place Sunday Concerts (Conway Hall, London), Sunday, April 9th, 6.30 p.m.: Tunnell Piano Trio. Haydn, Mathias. Schubert. Admission 3/-.

West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, London, E11): Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.

THEATRE

David Tribe

Howards End (E. M. Forster and Lance Sieveking), New Theatre.
The Diary of a Madman (Nikolai Gogol and Walter Eysselinck), Duchess.

The Rivals (Richard Brinsley Sheridan), Haymarket.
The Daughter-in-law (D. H. Lawrence), Royal Court.

THE THEATRE is indeed heartbreak house. When this review appears **Howards End** will be off after a sadly short-winded run. A distinguished humanist novelist, a noted adapter, the Earl of Harewood as co-presenter, a cast and director of sensitivity and established reputation have together launched, in the absence of production gimmicks, black comedy or an international star, a financial disaster. I hope their ignition of an artistic triumph will be some consolation.

The central plot of this urbane Edwardian story is not of great interest to a modern suburban generation: the influence of a country house, **Howards End**, on the members of two families. Especially when the house itself appears only in the last act and in a set which is disappointing after what designer Dacre Punt earlier achieved. But the human relations are beautifully portrayed in light and shade dialogue of sparkle and tenderness. To the conflict of the classes are added tensions between middle-class cultured liberalism and middle-class ruthless professionalism, and between womanly idealism and womanly commonsense. Frith Banbury's direction is lively without swamping the mood and dialogue of a vanished world. Gwen Watford, Joyce Carey and Andrew Ray are outstanding among an outstanding cast. Let us hope the production has not sunk without trace.

Anything about madmen today provokes the suspicion that someone is trying to cash in on the legendary (and dare one suggest exaggerated?) success of the **Marat-Sadc**. But a visit to **The Diary of a Madman** will convince the most cynical that here is a play—or an experience—that cries out for realisation. First staged at the Sussex University Arts Centre, it passes like an organ practice from the comic conceit of a minor bureaucrat to the dark terror of paranoid schizophrenia. Nicol Williamson, who recently won awards for his marathon in **Inadmissible Evidence**, magnificently straddles a yet more taxing and harrowing mount in this dramatic monologue. Director Anthony Page and his technical assistants achieve subtle lighting, Protean costume changes and the most startling scene transformation I have seen take place on the stage.

The Haymarket, Nash's opulent Regency triumph, is just the right setting for classical comedy of manners. Its latest revival in this *genre* is one of the most delightful it has staged. Sheridan's **The Rivals** (1775) is not really about anything in particular but the perversity of arranged marriages and the tantrums of lovers, and if it weren't tricked out by a complicated duel sub-plot would end four scenes before it does. Yet it remains one of the great comedies of the English language. Truly the eighteenth century had "style", and the exchanges between the lovers are masterpieces of epigram and literary conceits. But the great joy of the play is the character of Mrs Malaprop, whose exuberant, inadvertent liberties with the language—of which "a nice derangement of epithets" and "as strong-willed as an allegory on the banks of the Nile" stand out—have given us "malapropism". Motley's gracious sets, Anthony Powell's luxurious costumes, Glen Byam Shaw's direction and the acting of an impressive cast including Ralph Richardson achieve an evening as lively and stylish as a *gavotte*. The inimitable Margaret Rutherford is the inimitable Mrs Malaprop.

Half a century ago few people thought of Shaw and Galsworthy as bourgeois and "bloodless", but D. H. Lawrence did and wanted to portray working class characters with more grime, bodily and intellectual, than the Doolittles. Today it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that **The Daughter-in-law** will be turned into a musical (look at **Oliver** and **The Match Girls**), but it could not become a **My Fair Lady**. The theme is the obsessive one of Lawrence's recollections of childhood in the mining village of Eastwood, Notts, immortalised in his best novel **Sons and Lovers**. It dissects the insidious wife and mother's dominance over her occasionally violent, but pathetically weak and self-doubting menfolk. Director Peter Gill, designer John Gunter, and the cast of Anne Dyson, Victor Henry, Gabrielle Dave, Mike Pratt and Judy Parfitt give the feel of a family as well as the stuff of drama. Apart from occasional lapses by the daughter-in-law, who may anyhow be thought as as somewhat urbanised by a life in service, the performers tackle a very difficult dialect with astonishing virtuosity.