

FREETHINKER

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OPEN LETTER TO MRS MARY WHITEHOUSE

DEAR MRS WHITEHOUSE,

You are both a menace and a treasure. A menace because you would put us back a hundred years, given the chance, to an era of Christian evangelism and bigoted religious censorship of the kind which sent the first editor of the *FREETHINKER* to prison for a whole year. You are a treasure because you brighten so many a day with your fatuous claptrap, your crusading inanities, your vacuous religiosity, your naïve arrogance and, above all, the tremendous energy with which you buzz about the figments of your fantastical world of make-believe. You, Mrs Whitehouse, may well go down in history as the durable comic of the sixties who flitted across the scene like a busy little bee, buzzing here and buzzing there, buzz, buzz, buzz, buzzing the busy queen bee's call to the dreary drones and then buzzing about with your droning little band trying to buzz us all into a world of hocus-pocus.

In your book *Cleaning Up TV* you quote copiously from newspapers which have supported you—the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *News of the World*, the *Sunday Express*, the *Daily Telegraph* and, in particular, Peter Simple. Peter Simple may well be what his surname suggests and the other newspapers could have various things said about them—few, if said by me, would be complimentary. The *News of the World* is, in my opinion, a nauseating newspaper and, if I believed in censorship to the degree you do and censorship were enforced and I were to be, what you would like to be, the arbiter of what was to be censored, the *News of the World* would come high on my list for the chopper. But I do not believe in such censorship. I know that the *News of the World* nauseates me and thus, unless I wish to be nauseated, I simply do not read the paper. You, however, seem to operate in a slightly different way. You see a programme such as 'Till Death Us Do Part'. You dislike what you see and then you watch it as often as you can so that you can find something

to moan about. Moreover, you believe that this is a Christian country. So anything which runs counter to Christian belief or Christian standards must, at the dictates of Mrs Mary Whitehouse, housewife extraordinary, be censored.

In support of your views you quote Sir Charles Taylor, MP for Eastbourne, who wrote in the *News of the World* about some of the plays which had given him offence.

'*The Bachelors* was about some Roman Catholic priests who were practising homosexuals and showed them impertuning teenage members of the congregation at the church door.'

I did not see this play but, on the basis of Sir Charles Taylor's description, I would say that the play performed a great public service. It seems that the play portrayed reality and thus could have done something to dissipate the illusion fondly harboured by so many Roman Catholics that all their priests are paragons of virtue.

But then I overlook the fact that BBC programmes, as Sir Charles Taylor states, 'are not meant to shock or offend against our religious or moral beliefs whether we are Christians or Jews and, after all, we still claim to be a Christian country'. What on earth does he mean when he says, "We still claim to be a Christian country". Who is the 'we'? Is *he* the 'we'? Does he really mean to say, "I still claim to be a Christian country." If so, are we deluded in thinking Sir Charles Taylor is a man? Is he in reality churches and shops, factories and offices, hills and rivers, all rolled into one? Or does he simply mean that he is the *nation* and that this is still a *Christian* nation since he, Sir Charles Taylor, is still a Christian? If this is the case, if Sir Charles is the nation, why is he not doing all the nation's work and paying all the nation's taxes?

It seems Sir Charles Taylor is a man who dreams of being the impossible and doing the impossible. In which case he ought to stay in Eastbourne and spend the rest of his natural life trying to do what Canute couldn't. As it is he tries to change the country, which he himself claims to be, by agitating in the House of Commons. Can't the man change himself, or get himself changed, in Eastbourne, without troubling the rest of the country with his problems? So much for one of your supporters.

I was particularly amused by the dear lady you quote immediately after the delightful Sir Charles (page 125). It seems that on 13 January, 1966, Lady Laycock wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*:

'After watching the Wednesday night play on BBC1 on January 5, I slept on my wrath, anxiety and indeed unhappiness for several nights hoping that with reflection

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would come some understanding or excuse for showing *The Boneyard* advertised as the first of a series of comedies.'

Now if my wife were to describe me publicly as 'her wrath, anxiety and indeed unhappiness', I should be most disturbed by her sense of marital loyalty and affection.

On page 195 you have a footnote. Incidentally, don't you think that 'footnote' is a most disgusting word and should be expunged from all dictionaries as well as banned from the printing press? I mean, if you think about it as much as you think about Kenneth Tynan and his four-letter word, you can imagine all sorts of things, can't you? Just think about it for a moment, Mrs Whitehouse. Footnote. Let's see what ghastly significance that word could have. It could originally have meant, quite literally, a note attached to someone's foot. Perhaps, in Anglo-Saxon times—they had so many repulsive words and ideas in those days—perhaps someone conceived the idea of transmitting a secret note in this way. If the messenger were apprehended surely no one—no one except with a mind as sharp as yours—would dream of looking under a foot for a note. If the messenger had been travelling for some time the foot would be dirty, it might even be sweaty, and it quite likely would exude an unfavourable odour. Thus even if someone did suspect that a note might be attached to the foot, he might prefer to let the messenger pass rather than examine such an offensive part of the body. Thus it is that

'footnote' is a word still used today, signifying a note which no one looks at.

For you, Mrs Whitehouse, I make an exception. I have examined your footnote, repulsive though it is, on page 195 and I see that the list of your patrons includes, in the order you have given them:

Lord William Beresford; the Lord Bishop of Hereford; the Lord Bishop of Blackburn; the Lord Bishop of Argyle and the Isles; Major James Dance, MP; Sir Cyril Black, MP, President of The London Baptist Association; James Dempsey, Esq., MP; Dr The Rev. Benson Perkins, Ex. Sec. World Methodist Council; Professor G. N. N. Collins, Free Church of Scotland.

These people will doubtless assist you in your attempt to achieve the primary object of your National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, namely 'to promote the moral and religious welfare of the community by seeking to maintain Christian standards in broadcasting by sound and vision in Great Britain, and to co-operate with other bodies who share the Association's concern'.

However, if the above-mentioned people were in control of the country with you as their housekeeper, I would be sorely tempted to emigrate. As it is, there are fortunately too many people in this 'Christian country' with too much sense to allow such a deplorable situation to develop.

Sincerely,

DAVID COLLIS.

DESIGNING A NEW CREMATORIUM

APART from showing graphic works the Royal Academy each year devotes a room to architecture, and here one is able to gauge the trends in social ambience: from new cathedrals which look as though Roman Catholicism is striving to embrace freethought, to a modernistic colosseum for primates at the zoo, one cannot help feeling that there is something about the architect's vision that tends to reduce living man to a rather undesirable blemish on his design. Perhaps this is why I looked more closely at Maxwell Fry's model for the Mid-Glamorgan crematorium.

Half-church, half ambulatory, dominated by a large hooded cross from one viewpoint, the model was accompanied by a legend which read, in part:

"Entrance canopy with long slow-rising commemorative cloisters necessitating the reformation of a procession to the catafalque placed in the apse of the consecrated chapel."

Feeling that this was an expression of a need not shared by all corpses, and knowing that the National Secular Society has a special difficulty to provide for the cremation wishes of freethinkers, I felt that this design could be used to provide an opportunity to look at the problem from the perspective of an architect who had clearly given the subject a great deal of new thought.

Maxwell Fry, who was brought up as a Unitarian and is now an agnostic, invited me along to his office.

He told me that it was the first crematorium he had designed, and said:

"I am only too aware of the problems which the fact of death imposes—problems which involve both the religious person in a secular society and the non-Christian in a Christian setting."

He had spoken about these problems to the members of the Cremation Society at their annual conference in 1964. He had told them how he had felt at his mother's funeral,

and how little uplifted or comforted he was by the ceremony.

"I felt cheated of the real emotions which should have been associated with her death.

"I am able to understand the personal involvement which I once witnessed at an Indian cremation, where each mourner in turn shared the bearer's task, and the son lit the pyre.

"The criticisms of the American way of burial—the kind of sentimentality revealed by Waugh in *The Loved Ones*, can also be true of us—our secular authorities have failed to deal with a matter which the churches through our history have treated so seriously.

"My design, which is a direct outcome of the Cremation Society lecture, is an attempt to get away from the kind of 19th century thinking which imposed a kind of material satisfaction mixed up with false associations and sentimentalities. I have tried to provide settings and spaces in which mourners can expiate their mourning without commercial distractions, on the South side for Christian ceremonies, and on the north side for other religious and secular needs."

Old stone has been used to face the cloisters—stones from old buildings which would otherwise have been abandoned or crushed—suggesting in some subtle way that what has been used before can be used again. The hooded cross surmounts the Christian apse; its back suggests a tapered monolith that gives a focal point to the low secular 'chapel'. The design is a thought-out fusion of requirements in which a measure of the personal grief of the mourners has been related to the movement of human beings and the mechanics of body disposal.

Those who feel that dead bodies better serve humanity in a pathological laboratory, or as food for fishes, or should be the concern only of the refuse collector have no need for such complications or space to expiate their mourning. Others may feel that the new thinking being given to the oldest of human rites by an innovating architect will encourage some local authorities to take a straight look at the problems of cremation today.

Jean Straker

Harry Lamont

Speaking Personally

WE ARE all afflicted with a desire to impose our will on other people. We want others to conform to our ideas. If we dislike certain words we forbid their use. If we dislike frankness in sexual matters we assert that sincerity is calculated to deprave and corrupt.

We label *pornographic* what we happen to dislike, but the word merely means the graph or writing of a harlot. Obscenity and indecency are personal concepts, much too subjective to be governed by laws.

What shocks the vicar's maiden aunt may seem quite innocuous to a man of the world or a member of the armed forces. The idea of what constitutes indecency changes from age to age. When I taught French I noticed that many books considered *belly* improper, so substituted *stomach*.

In America a woman wrote a book about sex for her sons. It was a decent honest volume, but she was arrested and fined 300 dollars, with the alternative of a term of imprisonment. Accused refused to pay the fine and said if she had corrupted morals she must go to prison. The Court of Appeal quashed the sentence and the book was subsequently used by the YWCA to instruct young people about sex.

The first doctors to open a clinic in the US to give information about birth control were arrested and carried to jail in a Black Maria.

Ulysses by James Joyce was long banned in England and the USA. A hundred of our leading writers petitioned and at length the ban was removed.

One of the greatest surprises of my life was when the jury found in favour of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by D. H. Lawrence. The Judge and Prosecutor went all out for a conviction, but the verdict had to stand. This book may shock and horrify prudish conventional neurotics, but I don't believe a knowledge of the facts of life ever did harm to a normal sane person. It would be just as daft to assert that doctors are depraved and corrupted by the diseases they treat daily.

It is absurd to pretend that a book about sex will deprave and corrupt. It would be just as absurd and illogical to prosecute me because I have a well in my garden where persons with suicidal tendencies may drown themselves.

France can be just as silly as England where censorship is concerned. Flaubert was prosecuted for a novel called *Madame Bovary*, in which the heroine came to a bad end after a few sexual lapses. In my view the book is as moral as a sermon. The average girl would say: "If that is what happens to a wanton I'm sticking to the straight and narrow path". The author was acquitted.

Another *cause célèbre* was the Republic against Charles Baudelaire for his poems *Les Fleurs Du Mal* (The Flowers of Evil). Some of these verses are crude, as when he describes the physical dissolution of a beautiful woman, but I don't believe any normal person ever sustained any harm by reading them. The world is full of prudes who pretend to be horrified by certain words. They are not really shocked, they only pretend to be. It is what D. H. Lawrence calls the mob reaction. He pokes fun at the notion that the voice of the people is the voice of God. He says the mob is stupid and one should lose no opportunity of pulling its elephantine and ignominious leg.

At all times certain words have been regarded with dis-

ALL CENSORSHIP IS BAD

favour. Even today quite intelligent people consider the term *stink* improper. They prefer *obnoxious effluvium*, *unpleasant smell* or *pestiferous odour*. When I was a student I translated a Latin word by *posterior*, but the lecturer growled: "Arse, man. Don't be afraid of a good old English word!"

The other day I saw in a child's science exercise book a drawing of the male and female reproductive organs. A few years ago a teacher would have been prosecuted for imparting such information. In modern times the phallus has long been considered obscene, horribly foul, disgusting and depraved, but long ago it was extolled as the symbol of fertility and its emblem (enlarged) was placed at the entrance to vineyards, orchards and fields.

It has long been the fashion in the USA and this country for the law to pounce on what it deems to be paperback pornography, but not to interfere with expensive books, no matter how outspoken. Apparently the plebs are more easily corrupted than those who can afford the costly tomes.

When I used to study obscenity in literature I was impressed by the fact that knowledge deemed scandalous was printed in Latin or French. Apparently a scholar is less susceptible to corruption than a more ignorant person.

Bernard Shaw said anyone can drive a coach and six through the censorship. A few years ago a French play *The Enemy in the Blood*, dealing with the perils of venereal disease, was banned in London. In its place was presented a musical comedy in which females in their underwear pranced lasciviously about the stage, as suggestive as could well be imagined.

When boys or men tell improper stories that shock conventional people, prudish society is loud in its condemnation, but the propensity to tell *risqué* stories rarely indicates moral depravity. Usually it is merely a pose.

As a teacher nearly half a century ago I was severely reprimanded for telling some senior boys about Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, but a few years later I heard a nun lecturer in a university recommending it to her students.

Many episodes in Rabelais are considered terribly shocking by conventional persons, but *Gargantua and Pantagruel* has been a world's classic for four hundred years.

The *Heptameron* shocks plenty, but was written by a devout Roman Catholic who attended mass regularly.

When D. H. Lawrence displayed his paintings in London someone complained, so the police seized the pictures. The guardians of our purity also removed some by Blake, the famous mystic, but these were subsequently replaced. Although nudes, like Lawrence's, they had presumably become respectable with age.

When a book is banned and/or prosecuted, it receives a tremendous free advertisement and surreptitious sales soar.

Nobody compels a person to read a book. If I don't like it I just put it down and ignore it. Normally, if of no literary merit, it will die a rapid death. I am inclined to agree with Oscar Wilde who said there is no such thing as an immoral book. A book is either well written or badly written—*Viola tout!* What about the trade in pornography? This is ephemeral and does little harm. The more we drive it underground the worse it becomes.

There are people who consider themselves pure, genteel

(Continued on page 199)

NEWS AND NOTES

BILLY GRAHAM'S All-Britain Crusade opens tonight at Earls Court, London, and it is reported that he aims to preach to a million people during the next nine days. With the aid of a well-financed organisation, public relation experts and closed-circuit television screens, he will probably reach his target. He is the type of speaker who needs a crowd, for crowds will accept what an individual will question or reject. And with the bitter memories of the last four decades, it is not surprising that many people have a healthy suspicion of those who harangue an audience which cannot or does not wish to question his words.

It is quite certain that Billy Graham will draw large numbers to Earls Court as he did for a much longer period last year. But it is highly unlikely that his efforts will have any more effect on the indifference of most British people to religion than the crusades of 1954 and 1966.

Each year that passes sees the ground become more barren for the fundamentalist nonsense which Billy Graham's followers expect—and usually get. The majority of them have always come from born-again, evangelical circles usually independent of the main Christian bodies; but there has also been a substantial number from the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches. With the growth of the ecumenical movement, Graham's method and message may be a serious embarrassment to his more cautious supporters.

For many of those who were drawn into the ranks of committed Christians during Billy Graham's previous campaigns, his failure to speak out on such questions as war and civil rights, has been disquieting. He has stated that he is not an expert on foreign affairs, but one does not

have to be in order to have some idea of the horror and misery caused by napalm bombs. It may be that Billy Graham realises that to condemn war, racial discrimination and exploitation is not the best way to win friends and influence people in the world of big business. And although the Lord in heaven may provide, it is the wealthy sponsor on earth who signs the cheques.

Straying sheep

There is great concern in Roman Catholic circles about the number of people who leave Ireland every year, most of them never to return except for a holiday. In countless articles and sermons the faithful have been urged to ignore the temptation to emigrate, and on more than one occasion it has been suggested that they should be prevented by law from doing so.

Roman Catholic churches in Britain would not be so crowded every Sunday were it not for the influx of Irish Catholics. Much work is done by priests and welfare organisations to keep an eye on them, but nevertheless "40 per cent of Irish people in Britain have strayed from the fold". This was stated by Father Patrick Murphy when he opened an emigrant welfare centre in County Leitrim. Father Murphy was formerly assistant chaplain to the Irish Centre in Camden Town, London.

Gloomy outlook

WRITING in the June issue of his Diocesan newsletter, the Anglican Bishop of Ripon, Dr John Moorman, says the Church of England is "approaching the greatest crisis in its history" and within a few years may have ceased to exist, "swallowed up in a united church which would be neither Anglican nor anything else".

Dr Moorman who is a member of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations and was the senior Anglican observer throughout Vatican II, believes that two courses lie before the Church:

1. To join in the plan for a union (possibly by 1980) of all the non-Roman churches in the country.
2. To preserve the distinctive Anglican tradition, believing that if Anglicans try to look at Christian unity as a whole it has a special contribution to make.

London for Heretics

THE National Secular Society is organising a *London for Heretics* tour on Sunday, September 3rd. It may well be the last opportunity to visit some of the buildings with Freethought associations, for the developers are completely changing large areas of the capital. Many of the houses and halls have already disappeared, and although quite a few are still standing, it is likely that they too will be demolished within the next few years.

Putting her foot in it

THE management of London's Academy Cinema must be praising the name of Lady Dartmouth. Her attempt to pressurise the Greater London Council Licensing Committee to rescind its former licensing of the uncut version of *Ulysses* may have been a resounding flop, but it resulted in a great deal of publicity. Now there are long queues at the Academy box-office, and the "House Full" notice is frequently displayed.

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CENSORSHIP

THIS IS a subject in which it is absolutely essential to define the term under discussion. In the Cosmo Group, which was formed to oppose censorship in television and radio, we have found that there is a great deal of confusion on this point. For example, the staff at the BBC and ITV have to select from the masses of material submitted those items which they deem suitable for scheduling. This is what they are paid to do. Many items must be improved or rejected. Is this censorship? Of course not, it is selection, exactly the same process as you carry out when you thin out the carrots, or as a producer performs when he chooses the cast for a new play. No-one would regard either the discarded carrot thinnings or the disappointed actors as having been censored!

My own definition of censorship is "the overall imposition of one point of view". For example, if a television channel excludes all broadcasts concerning religion except those which express a Christian view, it is clearly censoring Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Humanist and atheist views. (Indeed, in Britain, this is not far from the actual position; the vast preponderance of Christian-biased material put out is far in excess of the proportion of active Christians among the British population.) When "one point of view" is imposed by censorship, it is frequently the view of the Establishment or the government of the day. The banning of Peter Watkins' award-winning production, 'The War Game', was a clear case of censorship arising from the film's direct and telling opposition to official policy on Civil Defence. Bill Meilen's play, 'The Division', censored by the ITA but finally shown this May, and received with acclaim, was about a rigidly-disciplined naval reform school, and the eventual showing was carefully prefaced by an announcement that the establishment portrayed had no resemblance to any present naval school. The reason for the previous ban was thus clearly revealed.

Another angle on this kind of official-fearing timidity also concerns Bill Meilen. His new play, 'The Bullpen', based on recent and personal investigation of the methods of the Ku Klux Klan, is a startling and forthright treatment of a subject of much interest to British viewers. Yet Rediffusion have timidly turned it down, despite the enthusiastic welcome it received from their production team, and the BBC Wednesday Play producer has gingerly refused to schedule it. Can it be that they fear its scheduling might upset the Eagle of Grosvenor Square? Should this matter, when our own television audiences would welcome an authoritative treatment by a proven playwright on such a vital section of the North American racial scene?

Despite recent comments to the contrary, the Cosmo Group continues to make progress. We have groups all over the British Isles who are continually active in argument in their local papers with the would-be Cleaner-Uppers. Nationally we have strong Parliamentary representation, and our members have kept up steady pressure on their own MPs, which has resulted in many of the latter making representations to Mr Edward Short, the Postmaster-General. While this expression of the enlightened view may not be directly responsible for Mr Short's recent forthright pronouncements concerning the need for freedom of expression on television, we are confident that it played its part. We do not try to 'improve' programmes.

We feel that for any organisation to attempt this would be arrogant. There are plenty of channels for the expression of public opinion on this point.

As the sole organisation formed with the specific aim of opposing censorship, Cosmo was invited to join the distinguished body of people who have formed to defend 'Last Exit' in the forthcoming legal proceedings. The immediate function of this committee will be to raise funds for the defence, but I hope a permanent organisation will remain to watch for and help to oppose any other efforts to exert censorship in any field.

Some readers, I know, will not be in wholehearted agreement with our policy. In the course of various talks to freethinkers I have discovered, with some surprise, that a number of them are opposed to cultural freedom. They must, I feel, bring themselves to recognise the logical conclusions of their attitude, and ask themselves certain questions: If we are to censor certain material to safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable if exposed to it, who chooses the censor, the shepherd to protect the sheep? The world we live in is not a cosy place, so which is most dangerous, to pretend that it is cosy, or to frankly recognise the ugliness as well as the beauty? If television, literature and drama are to be tailored to avoid shocking the vulnerable, does this not mean that the rest of us, too, must subsist on a diet of pap for mental invalids? And in any case, does it help the vulnerable to screen them from the realities and conflicts of our time?

In my opinion the sadness and the peril of those who are so concerned with cleaning up our culture is that their effort blinds them to the real need of our era: the urgent fight for a society in which every child is provided with the means of growing up normally, stable and secure, with a capacity for making genuine relationships. Then the market for pornography and the anxiety to protect the vulnerable will wither away into the limbo of forgotten things.

**Avril Fox is Chairman of the Cosmo Group*

PUBLIC FORUM

CENSORSHIP

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Organised by the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

A MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY congratulates the Great Powers on refusing to get involved in the recent fighting in the Middle East and agreeing to operate through the United Nations. Particular commendation belongs to the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary for remaining calm in a gale of press and parliamentary hysteria. Egyptian charges of Anglo-American complicity can be set aside less by their denial than by Egyptian recognition of blundering implicit in the shake-up of her High Command. In such a struggle blood could have flowed more freely, but the short sharp gush was tragic enough. For this the Great Powers must bear some measure of blame in that they supplied the arms which made hostilities possible. There is some evidence that these were furnished so as roughly to preserve the balance of power. If this measure of 'secret understanding' were feasible, why couldn't the same understanding have led to an arms embargo altogether? No one could have believed the Arab-Israeli question had settled down. The suspicion remains that these arms were cynically supplied to Israel by the West for profit and to Egypt by the East to curry Arab favour. Now that the whole issue is once more in the melting pot the United Nations must take steps to get it permanently off the boil, so that flare-ups in the area do not become a spectacle in each succeeding decade, with the glare of prospective global combat ever more menacing on the horizon.

This Society has frequently pointed out the pernicious influence of religion in most aspects of personal and public life, especially its power to set one community violently against another. So long as Judaism and Islam retain their primitive hold, so that Jews invoke the Abrahamic Covenant and Muslims cry for a *jihad* (holy war), there will always be the yeast of uprising in the area. Add to this the enthusiasm of some Christians for Palestinian conflicts on the assumption that they foreshadow the Armageddon and the Millennium. Today religion is uncoiling its tentacle-hold on human minds, but the release is slow. Meanwhile moral pressure and, if need be, sanctions must be brought to bear on the contestants to restrain their belligerence till their reason returns. The Great Powers cannot be expected to supply arms, or even economic aid which might be diverted to military adventures, if their only return is to face demands for intervention when their protégés are in trouble, periodic threats to their own nationals living in this area or visiting what is one of the most historic and supposedly sacred parts of the world, and grave inconvenience through closure of the Suez Canal and withdrawal of oil supplies. We would urgently make the following appeals to:

The Arab states and their supporters. The partition of Palestine, like the partition of other regions in the interests of insistent minorities, may have been misguided but should at last be accepted as a *fait accompli* . The original decision was made by the United Nations, with both the United States and the Soviet Union in favour. Since that time an extra two million Jews from all parts of the world have come into Israel, so that it is now more populous than either Jordan or the Lebanon. Great technical expertise from these Jewish immigrants is now available in the region and could be used for proper development of the Jordan valley to the benefit of all the surrounding nations. If, that is, peace returns to the area. Just as the United States should not bury its head in Taiwan and refuse to recognise China, however instinctively it dislikes her, so the Arab leaders should be statesmanlike enough to recognise

David Tribe, *President, National Secular Society*

Israel and try to preserve peace on her frontiers. A couple of weeks ago they were prepared—one might have thought anxious—for a war with Israel, which they have lost. It is a harsh fact of life that the price of concussion is some concession. No vital national interest of Egypt would be threatened by yielding to Israel right of access to the Gulf of Aqaba, even the Tiran port of Sharm el Sheikh. Jordan cannot expect to retain control of the historic part of Jerusalem and refuse access to Israelis or foreign visitors with Israeli visas. Egypt should retain control of the Suez Canal but allow Israeli shipping to pass through; though with direct access to both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean this may not be of great importance to Israel. With oil-rich exceptions, the Arab states are poor and under-developed and cannot afford the luxury of permanent hostilities on their borders, so some seem to be envisaging. The Palestinian refugees who do not want to return to Israel must be absorbed into their new homes.

Israel and her supporters. Israel must not be misled into intransigence by overseas reaction generally in her favour. President Nasser has long been the *bête noire* of the Western press, which last week proclaimed quite falsely that military defeat had toppled him, and the general public delights in a David *versus* Goliath victory. But encouragement of Israeli nationalism will inevitably lead to hardening reactions in the Arab and Communist worlds and a delayed anti-semitism in the West. Some of the most Zionist elements in Britain are extreme Right-wing and would, if they could, pack off all Jews to the 'Jewish national home'. Israel must realise that she is too small to defy the Arab-Communist world indefinitely and cannot rely on Western support for outrageous claims. As she first herself declared, she should be satisfied with a political triumph and not demand territorial cessions—with the possible exception of land round the Gulf of Aqaba and Straits of Tiran—besides. She has the right to expect international demilitarised zones on her borders until such time as relations improve with her neighbours, and not the old system of UN forces on national soil which they could be requested to vacate. Jerusalem is a city sacred to Christians and Muslims as well as Jews, and of secular historic interest. It should become what the Flushing Meadows majority report originally (1947) called for—a UN mandate. In that way the rights of all minorities would be permanently safeguarded. The Palestinian refugees should be allowed to return to Israel or compensated—with the benefit of foreign aid if the financial burden be too great.

We hope all concerned in the solution of this problem will be both rational and humane. It is harder to win peace than war.

Flashback

FEMALE SUFFRAGE, to be deserving of support by true reformers, should not be confined to women of property. If the present agitation only means a further representation of property we are against it. The People need representing now. Property has had the power of a tyrant. Suffrage, like free trade, should be universal, for if it is made partial it is ten to one that "property" will get all the benefit. Has a poor man with a dozen children not more interest in the welfare and stability of a country, than an old bachelor millionaire who may at any time transfer his affection, his metallic gods, to another country? Parchment must give way to People!
(*The International Herald*—May 11th, 1872)

THE MIND OF A SAVAGE

ANIMALS lay claim to certain territories and fight others who try to invade 'their' property; similarly, savages consider anybody outside their consanguine group an enemy.

In this respect, racists have the retarded mind of the savage. All the territory they inhabit is inviolate, the people considered native are 'pure-blooded' and whoever is different has to be kept out.

Reviewing various studies in physical environment and inter-personal behaviour, Alan Lipman in *New Society* (April 20) points out that people even like to occupy their accustomed seats.

"In private homes, in clubs, in pubs and in university senior common rooms, it is common for specific chairs to be regularly used by the same people . . . The same people tend to sit next to one another in buses and trains . . . The phenomenon of 'Dad's chair' also cuts across class and other social and personal variables".

The ambivalence of belonging

Robert Ardrey in his book *The Territorial Imperative: A personal Inquiry into the Animal Origins of Property and Nations* (New York, 1966), treats the whole gamut of animal possessiveness to arrogant nationalism, based on observation of primates in freedom. Previous studies in captivity had led to the erroneous notion that monkeys and primates were concerned with nothing else but sex in one form or another. What else were left to them to do since they had no longer to care about predators and food supply?

Freud, starting from this misconception of the over-sexed baboon, made it the leitmotif of his system; however, animal behaviour never proves anything for members of an entirely different social set, human society. In order to survive in their particular habitat, animals had to specialize; specialization in one field leads to deficiency in another and therefore they all form part of a 'Food Chain' where one species feeds on another. Man only refrained from physical specialization and made up for this by intellect and artefacts: by means of preconceived and self-made tools (and weapons) he reached all-round perfection, and by so doing left the food-chain and became its master. Rid of predators, even the most natural activity, his sex urge, developed different from that of the animal. However, feeling the master of Nature, the atavistic sense of Belonging has survived: territory belongs to him and he belongs to the territory. Whoever wants to enter it from outside is evil and must be resisted.

Today we know that monkeys and primates are, in their natural state, by no means preoccupied with sex and with depriving younger or weaker males of their female companions. What they jealously watch over is their territorial claim, and they gesticulate and scream with rage if they suspect others of stealing from 'their' possession, eg. fruit.

Race Discrimination analysed

Last September, in an eighteen page report, *Novy Mir* (New World), the Soviet magazine, published a research into the psychology of prejudice. The following are a few points made:

Race discrimination is a perpetually effective red herring used by political despotism to divert attention from real problems, from deficiencies and shortcomings whose maintenance is in the interest of the ruling clique. Ethnical peculiarity is set up as the one and only valid standard and

Otto Wolfgang

whoever differs from it in any way is considered sub-standard ("Untermensch") and of evil intentions. These primeval instincts, once awoken, engender a senseless mixture of fear and hatred which it is impossible to break down with rational argumentation. Reporting a burglary, people would say "they caught the thief", if he is a gentile; if however he was a Jew, they would say "they caught the Jew", thus insinuating that all Jews are inveterate pilferers. A similar smear is possible by circumlocution such as "Some of my best friends are Jews" (with "some" being the operative word).

A plant inhibited in its natural growth must try and overcome the obstacles in a less straight way, and when an ethnic group discriminated against is compelled to do alike, this seems to corroborate their wickedness. "They segregate—they stick together—they occupy all the cushy jobs, they flock into the free professions . . ." They are "too clever", therefore they must be feared as competitors. They are rich and influence world reaction—they are Communists—they created "Entartete Kunst" (degenerated works of art, etc.).

Most of this competition and antagonism is felt within the middle classes and the petty bourgeois (of this stratum came most of the fascist leaders). Prejudice is a *social* ill, which explains why discussion and education are of no use whatsoever; integration by force of law may paper over this social crack but under the surface the hatred will

ALL CENSORSHIP IS BAD

(Continued from page 195)

and refined because they decline to discuss sex and frown on any mention of it. They are always yelping about immorality in art. One should remember D. H. Lawrence's advice and plug one's ears to keep out their obscene howl. They have minds like cesspools. As Aldous Huxley said, to the Puritan all things are impure.

Some people think they become pure and more estimable by avoiding four-letter words, the kitchen sink, the wc, and the chamber pot. Milton spoke to them as follows: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat". I often hear people say one can't touch pitch without getting defiled. They go about with a Pecksniffian grimace, seeing smut everywhere.

Most of those who howl at a swear word on TV seem to me to be whited sepulchres, anxious to pretend they are terribly shocked by any crudity. I know people who assure me they shiver with horror at the crude word for sexual intercourse, but feel no revulsion at *luck*, *puck*, *stuck* or *muck* and other words that rhyme with the forbidden vocable.

When a child is born we proudly display him in the nude, but after a few years if he exhibits a certain part of his anatomy he will be guilty of indecent exposure. Believers insult God by deeming His creature indecent. The fact is that at all times and places we are ruled by irrational and often idiotic taboos which you violate at your peril. Intelligent people conform to avoid trouble, while realising how absurd the taboos are.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding request, 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, Art Holiday, Burton Galleries, Wirral Cheshire, 29th July to 12th August. Small Youth Camp near Yeovil, Somerset. Details of both from Mrs M. Mephram, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey.

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, Platt Fields, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m.; Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.

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

Manchester Humanist Society, Wednesday, June 28th, 7.30 p.m.: Informal discussion at 162 Urmston Lane, Stretford, Manchester.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, June 25th, 11 a.m.: J. STEWART COOK, "Impact of Technology on Ethics".

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

merely be accentuated. In our modern society of "faceless" capitalism with its all-powerful class of civil servants it is easy to represent the "outsider" as the cause of all evil.

Compensating for an inferiority complex

There are no "pure" races and never were (and if they ever existed they must of necessity have died out). But Austria's inhabitants are more than most others mongrelized. Charlemagne created his "Ostmark" (Eastern March) as a bastion against the inroads of Mongol hordes from the East (Huns, Avars, Magyars); this strategical assignment made it possible for Austria (as well as Russia) to have an absolute central government even in feudal times. Later the monarchy became the prison of many nationalities and a pool of inter-marriage; the Viennese cuisine and language prove these close inter-relations. After the disintegration of the monarchy, the Austrians (in Vienna mostly Germanized Czechs) have been the most strident pretenders of their 'Germanic purity' (Deutschstaemigkeit), and anti-semitism has been rampart (6 per cent even in the Communist Party). In the monarchy the unformed students at the Vienna University periodically beat up their Slavonic brethren; now they have only the Jews left.

Can the savage ever become civilized?

On the occasion of the International UNO Day against Race Prejudice, Claude Roy, the French writer, declared: "Racism is rarely an arbitrary crime; nearly always the humiliation of one set serves the profit and power lust of another: the exploitation and oppression of people said to be inferior serves to enhance the standing and income of the Super-Men so-called."

Discrimination is irrational and immune against rational arguments and discussion; it's no use stressing that it is silly and scientifically untenable; it can only be weeded out if its profit basis is removed so that nobody any longer can benefit from this primitive incitement.

According to the French monthly *Droit et Liberté* (April), Professor Roger Ikor, in an address to celebrate the same day, declared:

"We all are racists without knowing it—tainted with this biological atavism. Racism seems to be an inherited germ engendered from primeval fear in our forefathers—fear of everything and everyone somehow different. There is one difference: the racist nurtures this primeval germ, whilst, we the others, try to get rid of this bug."

LETTERS**Pornography a substitute**

MISS G. Hawtin's criticisms of the NSS support of 'Free Art' (May 19) seem to be of the familiar 'I believe in freedom, but variety. The qualifications to the idea of Freedom which are made often prove to be the greatest danger to freedom. Miss Hawtin believes in freedom of art, provided that her particular criteria of art are upheld. This position seems to me to be little different from that of, for instance, Mrs Whitehouse, who believes in freedom of television, provided that her particular criteria of Christian morality are upheld. Surely if artists themselves see artistic merit in their work, this is a sufficient criterion?

But even with regard to pornography with pretensions of art, the case for censorship seems weak, if we really believe in freedom. In our puritanical Western civilisation the warmth of love and sexual pleasure are narrowly restricted, and pornography provides a substitute for these. However inadequate and second-rate, pornography is harmless and often satisfying to many, performing a useful function in a society whose moves retard full emotional maturity.

Of course, there must be some restrictions to freedom, but our criteria must not be based on arguments of personal taste and preference, but on what can empirically be shown to be harmful to the freedom of others.

EDDIE HILL,
Union of Undergraduates, University of Birmingham.