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PAPAL PANIC?

A NUMBER of developments have occurred in the intensifying debate over the Pope's, now notorious, encyclical. The Roman Catholic bishops in this country have met under the chairmanship of Cardinal Heenan to debate the subject and consider the letter put to them by the lay group, the draft form of which was reported in last week's FREETHINKER. Unfortunately the outcome will not be made known until after this FREETHINKER goes to press.

On October 3 Burns and Oates, the Catholic publishers, are to issue *On Human Life: An Examination of Humanae Vitae*. It will contain an English version of the document *Pastoral Approaches*, which is in fact the elusive report of the Papal Commission on Birth Control, which everyone wants to see so badly. Extracts from it were published in *The Times* (September 16). They give a realistic and forthright appraisal of the question, mentioning the population explosion, and go on: "So what is always to be condemned is not the regulation of conception but an egoistic married life, refusing a creative opening out of the family circle, and so refusing a truly human . . . married love". Setting aside the more idealistic doctrine of free love, this must come very close to the views of many Freethinkers. The document goes on to discuss methods of birth control and forms the conclusion, "So the means chosen should be suitable for exercising a healthy and responsible parenthood, in the light of certain guiding principles: besides being effective, they should have regard for the health of the parents and their eventual offspring . . . and finally they should not hinder the power of expression of an increasingly close union between two persons". In fact the document bars no form of contraception and this part of it would not look out of place as an introduction to an FPA leaflet. This almost surprising liberality makes the Pope's complete rejection of the Commission's suggestions even harder to bear.

Indeed, there seems to be no quarter from God's nominee. On September 18, by way of rounding off his series of summer audiences at Castelgandolfo, he made a savage attack on all those who have dared question his authority (though it has long been established that the encyclical was not infallible). From reading *The Times'* report of his speech one gets the impression that the wave of discontent, which has followed the encyclical, came as a surprise to Pope Paul, and has caused him to 'lose his cool' and become irrational beyond the irrationality of his basic beliefs.

He attacked first those whom he saw as wanting 'up-heavals'. He then descended into what cannot be classed as more than an illogical generalisation. He said that such people judged as all the more brilliant whatever was less faithful to and less consistent with the tradition, or life, of the Church; as all the more inspired whatever was less in conformity with the authority and discipline of the church itself; and as all the more plausible whatever was least removed from the mentality and behaviour of the age. This could perhaps truthfully be said of some Freethinkers but surely not of any Catholic.

He went on to refer to the "spirit of corrosive criticism" now fashionable in certain sections of Catholic life. He gave as an example newspapers and periodicals "which appeared to have no other function beyond publishing unpleasant news about events and persons in ecclesiastical life". Another thoughtless generalisation, which makes one seriously wonder whether the Pope is panicking before the growing forces of opposition in his own camp.

TWO SAGAS IN ONE

SO the Forsytes have done something, which a lot of better men have found impossible. They have ousted religion. Ousted it at 6.30 on Sunday nights in many parishes throughout the country. An amusing controversy has been raging in the Correspondence columns of *The Times* about the decision of many church councils and vicars to put Evensong back from 6.30 to 6.00 so that their congregations can get out in time to see *The Forsyte Saga* on television—or is it to prevent the congregation looking at their watches as hymns solemnly follow prayers and then rushing out before the sermon—or is it so that they will actually go to church in the first place.



Insight into Forsyte

This last would seem to be the real truth, and it points to the hypocrisy of the majority of churchgoers and to the fact that their leaders realise it. Letters from clergy, protesting that the BBC should change the time of the Forsyte Saga, produced a rather more enlightened response from the Rev. Rowland Hill, vicar of Cirencester, "The important thing is that people should worship God, not that they should worship him at 6.30". This too though, misses the real point and shows up the clergy's unwillingness to recognise hypocrisy for what it really is—lack of faith. What he

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Freethinker

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Editor: David Reynolds

ANGRY YOUNG SAVIOURS?

'OH! He's just an angry young man. He'll get over it.' Now why should someone campaigning for what he believes be dismissed in these disparaging terms?

The men we should admire most are surely those who dedicate their lives to reform, those who will not rest while there are wrongs to be righted—such men as Bertrand Russell, who never cease to be 'angry young men'. Thus they come close to a lifetime of youth, though the apathetic majority dubs them 'cranks' when their age can no longer act as an excuse for their unruly behaviour.

Over the past few years, a positive rash of angry young men has appeared, in the form of a section of the world student population. In the past few months this rash has become an epidemic.

They are angry in America about a senseless war, angry in Russia and over much of Eastern Europe about the denial of their right to free speech, angry in France about a dictatorial old man, angry in Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and even Britain, haven of repressed emotions. Some of their anger may be unwarranted or petty. The appearances of some of them may frighten old ladies. These are symptoms of their anger. We should be glad and hope that, like Russell, their anger lasts and keeps them young.

Their anger has been conspicuous in demonstrations. Inevitably some of their actions and motivations can be criticised. Some student demonstrations have been violent. Few were planned so. The crowd jostles, tempers flare, a fight begins, someone suffers—a broken nose, a broken window. A policeman loses his helmet. A man died in the strike at the London School of Economics last year, an innocent victim of anger. This was tragic but of no more real significance than a man crushed to death in a football crowd.

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, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Letter Network (International) and Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). 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 and MCRAE.

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.

INDOORS

Worthing Humanist Group: "The UN Declaration of Human Rights", Patience Fetherston (Secretary, Worthing branch UNA). 5.30, Sunday September 29, Morelands Hotel (opposite the pier).

Hampstead Group of Amnesty International: An Evening of Russian Music Songs and Dances presented by The London Balalaika Ensemble (Leader: Aleksei Zolotuhin). 7.30, Saturday, September 28, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1. 7/6 at the door. All proceeds go to Amnesty International.

Some demonstrations are said to be inspired by communists, anarchists, Russians and others who are generally unpopular. If this is true it does not automatically render the demonstration totally invalid. It is regrettable though, if extreme elements engineer violence and thus condemn their more peaceable fellows. It is also said that some students demonstrate for fun, that they have no real cause. It is impossible to make a ruling on what is a worthy cause and what is not, for this question can only be resolved subjectively. No doubt there are the inevitable layabouts at every university, but these must not be allowed to blacken the name of our students as a whole.

We have seen demonstrations over issues which from the outside seem unimportant and even ridiculous—student self-government, a lecturer from Porten, a student trouble-maker suspended. These may not be senseless, but it would be a pity if a body of students tried to behave like a body of irresponsible trade unionists and went all out for as much as they could get. To do this would only lower them in the estimation of the public, and would be unrealistic for they have much less real power than a trade union.

Their power is of a different kind and its potential was made apparent by the French students in May. It was the students who triggered off what became a revolution against a man, who had been ruling since his election without consulting the people, or offering them an explanation of his policies. The students grudge was small compared to that of the 'workers', to use an unpopular but essential term. Nevertheless the workers are unlikely to have got off the ground had they not had the students example to follow.

This reveals the type of power held by students. In most countries they are the largest cohesive body of aware individuals. One can safely presume that the majority of university students are of above average intelligence and possess the knowledge to go with it. This is further reflected in the splits that occur in their ranks.

The majority of workers suffer from ignorance and a complacency born of years of being the underdog. A minority have sufficient awareness to see what is wrong and what can be done about it. This minority is faced with such a task in goading forward its more docile brothers that it tends to be only the extremists who find the effort worthwhile.

Our students return to their universities next week and though nothing to parallel the French debacle seems likely to happen here, it is reassuring to have learnt from their previous skirmishes that we too possess a body of aware 'angry young men', angry enough to take the lead in the unlikely event of a similar situation. They will only succeed with the support of the people and if they get it then they will be agitating for nothing more way-out than democracy.

TWO SAGAS IN ONE—continued

should have said was, "The important thing is that people should worship God, whatever happens to be on television". For, if people really believe ardently in the teachings of their faith, then they would go to church if the Forsytes were on television just the same as they would go to church if David Tribe or H. J. Blackham was on television. For a vicar to preach to a congregation which he knows is only there because there is nothing good on television must be very demoralising and if he looks at the situation objectively must make him wonder if he isn't wasting his time.

THE FEAR OF DEATH

ANN ROEST

Ann Roest is a Froebel teacher trained at Bedford Froebel Training College (1946-49). She has 12½ years' experience of primary school teaching. She is married with two sons.

WE all know fear. No one knows death, yet. There can be nothing so frightening to a healthy person as the pre-knowledge that all we are, all we love, must end. Any other fears we have, fears we have learned, fears we have experienced, pale away before this largest fear of all. Therefore it is absurd to dismiss this most important conditioning characteristic of a human being as worth no study. And there has been no study.

Human beings have much in common. Their body temperatures should remain at 98.4 degrees. Their similar physical attributes are obvious and can be easily recorded. They all have some degree of mental ability and imagination. They all have to eat, drink and sleep. This list is long.

Children are born with a racial heritage and psychologists have devoted a great deal of attention to investigating the precise nature of this heritage. One of these inborn characteristics is fear. Babies fear and react to sudden noises and the sensation of falling. Indeed to a certain extent babies seem also to fear the unknown and to fear approaching objects. We are all therefore born able to experience this emotion. This can be a valuable and protective asset.

Later, our mothers and our environments, teach us many other fears. We discover pain and learn to avoid it. We learn to avoid passing traffic, falling down, over eating, and anything else that gives us unhappiness. We want a happy way of life, free from the many fears that beset us. We learn to produce conditions which will give us each our own security.

We inherit other innate characteristics. Curiosity, anger, disgust, gregariousness, wandering, assertion, submission, constructiveness, collecting, crying and laughing, imitation and play. There are others too, equally important even if latent and undeveloped in the very young. They are sex, protectiveness and the desire for parenthood.

All these innate characteristics interact with each other as we learn about life, as we grow and learn to control and develop ourselves. Each of us has these emotions in unequal proportion. Some of us are more gregarious than others. Some are more easily depressed and have to control tears while other are frequently happy and laughing. Some want marriage and children. Some do not. All this is very "old hat" to psychologists, the medical profession and the teaching profession.

At some stage in a child's life, usually at around the age of four, he discovers death. He takes quite a while to apply his understanding to people, to himself and to his parents and family. When he fully understands the finality of death his fear is first at the prospect of becoming parentless. When a small child contemplates this he is afraid and some children are very afraid indeed.

It is not perhaps until he becomes an adult that he really begins to think about his own death. Usually someone much loved, dies. The whole matter becomes a vivid possibility. "I wonder when I will die?"—"I wonder how I will die?" he asks.

If he has Faith, religious Faith, he is much less bothered. He is assured he will "pass over", "go to God". At any event death is not final but only a stepping-stone to everlasting life and the joy of reuniting with the family. Of course, he may be right. My view is that the very vast majority of us think of death as utterly final. A blank end leading nowhere. A black, dreamless nothing. Even those amongst us who cling to Faith have always, at the back of their minds that they could be, and very likely are, wrong.

I challenge anyone who believes this to accept it without fear! Do you not fear the unknown emptiness of the end of all you value? All our innate characteristics fight it. We are gregarious. We are curious. We are angry. We are protective, constructive and wandering.

How does this fear of death influence people? Those of us who tend to be easily irate will perhaps react by dismissing the matter from our minds brusquely. "What is the point of bothering about the inevitable?" But somewhere, inside this sort of person will be a counteraction to this dismissal. To offset his worry he may become a positive bully, a nagger, or even violent. Nor will he know why he acts as he does.

Those of us who tend to be gregarious and gentle may react with love towards others, over-emphasising a desire for affection and popularity. Alternatively, the less gentle and more aggressive will seek position and acclaim. If they cannot be liked for their beautiful natures they can be respected for their power.

What is a miser but a grand collector? Men who spend their lives making money! They may be after other collections, women, stamps, paintings, cars, and a multitude of things, but the driving force which makes such a person excessive, is fear. Fear of loss.

A mother will fear for the death of her children. She will say, "I don't mind about myself so long as the children are all right". This is laudable but, I believe, false. Her fear is the loss of her children whom she truly loves. The worse fate is to die yourself leaving children unprotected and to lose the joy of watching their growth into and through maturity. We can usually withstand the death of our children and create a purposeful life afterwards. What appalls is that our own death takes away our purpose. Hence some parents are over protective, too careful of their young, not permitting the necessary neglect which promotes the development of initiative, imagination and wisdom.

It would be interesting to study how much the fear of death influences the development of criminals. It would be interesting too, to understand how much the mentally unbalanced are reacting to the same fear.

I cannot believe that so fundamental and so great a dread has only small influence on the lives of human beings. Some of us can bury and ignore it and these people are those who may tend to bury and ignore almost anything important. These are the ones who are late for, or miss altogether, unwanted appointments. They forget to write letters. They pretend society is unimportant and that they owe it no duty. Such people are a confounded nuisance.

Some people, cautious and reliable, never progress far because they are continually beset by what might happen.

(Continued on page 312)

J. M. ROBERTSON - THE RADICAL

MARTIN PAGE

Martin Page, an Oxford graduate, is at present preparing a comprehensive biography of John M. Robertson. He would welcome any relevant information on J.M.R.

J. M. ROBERTSON (1856-1933) was without doubt the most distinguished British rationalist and freethinker to enter Parliament during the first half of the twentieth century—indeed, since Bradlaugh's death in 1891. He was also the first openly avowed and widely known atheist of modern times to hold office in a British Government. He was undoubtedly one of the great exponents of modern Liberalism: in his classic volume on *The Meaning of Liberalism* (1925), which presented the function of Liberalism as one of mediation between the forces of stagnation and those of violent ideological change, Robertson frankly acknowledged that the historical "justification of *laissez-faire* disappears before a system of State interference which is democratically motivated and scientifically planned with an eye not to the enrichment of classes but to the well-being of the entire community" (p. 44). This conviction sustained him throughout his life.

He was among the first Victorian Radicals to advocate, wholeheartedly and persistently, a State system of Old Age Pensions; and he was there to vote in Parliament for the Old Age Pensions Bill of 1908 and other "revolutionary" welfare measures introduced by the great Edwardian Liberal Parliament. In 1906, and again two years later, he drafted a Bill to ensure fairer and more democratic Parliamentary Elections on the lines of Proportional Representation—an electoral reform that he was still advocating over twenty years later. In the 1890s he had argued for the abolition of the House of Lords, and he lived to champion the People against the Peers in the constitutional battle of 1910, and to take part in a war-time Parliamentary Conference on Reform of the Lords, during which he strongly recommended its reconstitution as an advisory body pure and simple. In the late 1880s and 1890s, when British Imperialism and all it stood for seemed invincible, he proposed the ultimate abolition of the monarchy, which he foresaw would be accomplished by the end of the twentieth century.

He also put forward, in the 1890s, a whole batch of practical reforms which must have appeared revolutionary and utopian in the contemporary context of general social opinion: railway nationalisation; public ownership of all gas-works, water-works and tramways; nationalisation of idle land; taxation of land-values; a graduated income tax; "the principle of Employers' Liability"; a programme of public works to deal with unemployment; "the extension of the principle of Free Education to the higher schools and Universities"; Home Rule for Ireland; Federal Union for England, Scotland and Wales; payment of MPs; and Votes of Women. Twenty years later he was still campaigning for many of these reforms, most of which have since been implemented in large measure.

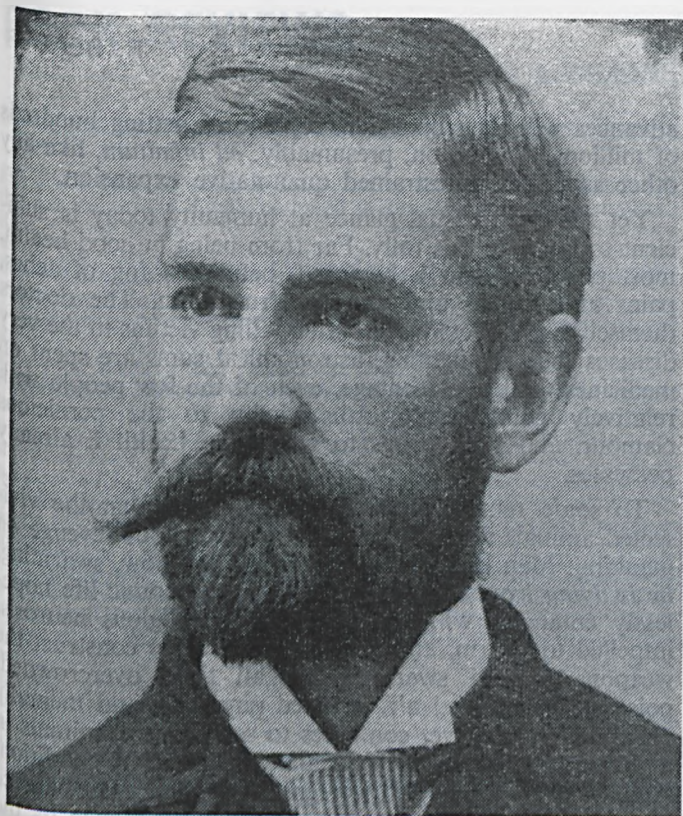
In *The Economics of Genius*, Robertson propounded the socialistic thesis that genius requires for its evocation leisure and culture opportunities which had historically been the prerogative of the ruling class. Doubtless this thesis provided a powerful stimulus for his advocacy, in 1903, of better working conditions and shorter working hours for the telegraph clerks (he himself had left school at thirteen to become a clerk); and probably he had the thesis of *The Economics of Genius* in mind when, in *The Economics of Progress* (1917), he urged a vast extension of

available educational facilities, on the economic ground that a better educated labour force is a more productive one.

Robertson was on the executive committee of the Secular Education League (founded 1907); he was among the first to agitate for the immediate release of two of his free-thought colleagues when they were sentenced to several months' imprisonment in 1911 for blasphemy; and, true to his creed, he sent his children to a co-educational secularist school—a school that closely resembled the 'Modern Schools' of the Spanish libertarian martyr, Francisco Ferrer, whose "judicial murder" in 1909 he consistently condemned. When one of the more militant British suffragettes was imprisoned, Robertson (then an MP) and his wife were instrumental in securing her release and in nursing her back to health. He was also a life-long advocate of birth control—he and his wife had only two children—in days (before the present Pope and the Pill!) when such advocacy could—and sometimes did—invite legal prosecution.

He supported Havelock Ellis's attempt in 1897 to publish his *Sexual Inversion*, despite the grave risk of a prosecution. The following year, there was a police raid on a George Bedborough's bookshop—during which copies of Robertson's *The Saxon and the Celt* and *Montaigne and Shakespeare* were seized—and Bedborough was convicted at the Old Bailey for selling *Sexual Inversion*, which was branded by Sir Charles Hall as a "filthy work", though it was in fact a dispassionate and scientific contribution to a serious subject. This prosecution was construed as an attack on the freedom of the Press, and funds for Bedborough's defence were raised by a "Free Press Defence Committee", which included many leading writers of the day, J. M. Robertson among them. Several years later, Robertson brought a libel action against a provincial newspaper which had not only denounced him as "a rabid Little Englander" and as "an absolutely undesirable candidate" for Parliament, but also insinuated a most damaging connection between the demise of the *Free Review* (which J.M.R. had edited from 1893 to 1895) and the prosecution of Bedborough in 1898, and asserted that in the *Free Review* Robertson "dealt with matters unmentionable in polite society". In court he angrily refuted the innuendoes made by the Judge that he had countenanced the advocacy of free love (in the *Free Review*) and of abortion (in a pamphlet based on a lecture he delivered in 1889). The jury (composed largely of "licensed victuallers" and "gentlemen") awarded the case, with costs, against Robertson, for defending himself against calumny.

But Robertson's most heinous crime was probably that—along with his life-long friend, the economist John Hobson—he was one of the most persistent Radical critics of Chamberlainite imperialism. Hobson's heretical theory of underconsumption—which became the pivot of his 'surplus capital' explanation of imperialism—although first publicised in 1889, had really been anticipated by an essay of Robertson's which had reached the same conclusion by a different path; and Hobson's classic study of imperialism (1902)—which influenced Lenin—took account of many of the points made by Robertson in his *Patriotism and Empire* (1899). In fact, Robertson and Hobson were instrumental in promoting, in the heyday of British imperialism, a new Radical ideology (later exploited by McDonald and the Labour Party) that accepted Britain's imperial responsibilities and the "inevitability of gradualness" in guiding



Robertson in his twenties.

when four Egyptian villagers were executed, and several others flogged and imprisoned, for the death of one British officer.

In 1905 he issued a penetratingly critical psychological and biographical study of the arch-imperialist Chamberlain; and his whole philosophy of life and deep knowledge of economics made him one of Joseph Chamberlain's most devastating opponents when the latter launched his Protectionist (Tariff Reform) campaign in 1903. In fact, Robertson became recognised, both inside and outside the Liberal Party, as one of modern Britain's ablest and most persistent advocates of Free Trade. His *Trade and Tariffs* (1908) became a sort of Bible (!) with the Free Traders, and the ardour of his advocacy was in no wise emasculated by his experience as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (1911-15).

In the 1890s Robertson had condemned "the wasteful increase of armaments now being promoted by the Tory and Liberal-Unionist coalition", and he carried his support of international co-operation and disarmament with him into the pre-1914 Liberal Parliament. He represented the Rationalist Peace Society (founded in 1910) on the National Peace Council, and at the height of the agitation for "Dreadnoughts" he powerfully reiterated his arguments for cuts in Britain's naval and military expenditure. When the storm broke in 1914, he supported the Government in its defence of Britain's allies against German aggression; and in the World War that followed, he attacked German militarism as unequivocally as he had assailed British imperialism in the Boer War. Notably in his study of *The Germanic Gospel of Race* that he had begun in *The Saxon and the Celt* (1897). He thus paved the way for an intellectual repudiation of a Hitlerism and Nazi racialism whose practical "achievements" he did not live to see; and in his masterly Parliamentary swan-song (August 1918) he fittingly gave a prophetic warning about the grave danger of another and more terrible world war issuing from an inconclusive peace that would allow Germany to rebuild her military machine. No wonder he was on the Nazi list of dangerous intellectuals to be liquidated under a German-occupied Britain!

Robertson's Parliamentary career ended—fittingly again!—with the death of Liberal England in 1918. In 1923 appeared his *Mr Lloyd George and Liberalism*, in which he mounted a scathing—almost scurrilous—attack on Lloyd George's treachery and mismanagement in the War and during the notorious 1918-22 Coalition. Death alone extinguished Robertson's devotion to Liberalism as he saw it; and whatever criticism may be made of the limitations of his political creed, few would deny his life-long sincerity and remarkable consistency in his concern for perpetual human betterment and "the widest individual and psychological freedom". But perhaps the last word should be left for Robertson's own summing-up: "At least let some of us put it on record that, living in a mad world, we preached another creed".

TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS

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the colonies towards self-government. Robertson, for example, declared, in *Wrecking the Empire* (1901): "Though the pursuit of Empire be judged an ignorant and pernicious policy, the violent and humiliating curtailment of it is a source of new evil; and as none of us proposes a sudden evacuation of India, much less did any of us desire a sudden or catastrophic rupture of the British connection with South Africa" (p. 33).

Robertson—like Hobson—bitterly opposed the Boer War, bravely defying the physical violence and jingoistic hysteria displayed by his opponents. His pamphlet *The Truth about War* is a trenchant and hard-hitting reply to Conan Doyle's account of the War; and *Wrecking the Empire* (1901) reveals his conviction that "the policy of crushing the two Dutch Republics in South Africa is preparing the dismemberment of the British Empire" (p. 31): how right he was! His article on 'Empire' (written a full decade before 1914) also contains some observations of acute insight, e.g.: "What it [the British Empire] represents is substantially a means of provision for a number of the sons of the middle and upper classes—a civilised version of the empire of Rome, no more. The supposedly Great England of today, by the admission of its devotees, is relatively more vulnerable, more defeatable, more liable to be met by a great hostile coalition, than the so-called Little England of the past. And when the economic basis dwindles, as it inevitably will with the progressive exhaustion of our coal and iron and the exploitation of the resources of America and probably those of China, unless perhaps tidal force should supply a new motive power, our empire will be in increasing jeopardy, like the similarly placed empires of the past".

In the great Edwardian Liberal Parliament, and for years afterwards, Robertson was to be one of the keenest critics of the British régime in Egypt; and he was in the vanguard of those who publicly denounced the iniquity of British "justice" over the traumatic Denshawai Affair (1906),

THE ANIMALS REVENGE

R. READER

A PARTICULARLY revolting and despicable manifestation of religious neurosis and unrestrained quantitative expansion is vivisection and animal experimentation in general.

Any religious neurotic will tell you that an animal has no soul and is essentially different, spiritually, from all human beings; even as any medical man, a century ago, could have described the many points of fundamental anatomical and functional difference between a human being and any of the apes, the nearest animals to us. So far as both souls and bodies are concerned, the animals are something distinct from mankind, or, as religious neurosis puts it, "Man is above the beasts".

But what have we here? A guinea pig—an animal more remote from mankind than any of the apes—stretched out for dissection, infection with loathsome diseases, inoculation with painful vaccines and drugs, etc. etc. It has no 'soul' (but it has a nerve structure and can feel pain). Surely religious neurosis should now step in, protesting that any reactions of the guinea pig are quite untrustworthy for assessing the probable reactions of sick persons in hospital to similar treatment; has not religious neurosis already proclaimed that all animals are below Man?

But no! This guinea pig, this Thing without a Soul, by its sufferings, is immediately exalted to something *above* the average human being (who, if expedient, can be shot at from ten miles' distance, or poisoned in a hole). It has become a thing of vital interest, of the utmost importance for the human race. All phases of its sufferings are recorded, and are considered to be quite valid for treating those sick people in hospitals, most of whom would, when in good health, have regarded as outrageous any suggestion that their bodily reactions could in any way approximate to those of the guinea pig.

Nevertheless, despite this blantant "double-think", it is still widely believed that our present medical knowledge is founded on the results of experimentation with animals. The unpleasant, unpalatable truth is that the fundamentals of medical science were established by *experimentation with human beings, both dead and living*, the anatomical investigations of the Renaissance Italians and, later, the efforts of the 19th century anatomists, aided by the body-snatchers; the vast knowledge of poisons, their effects and remedies, which has accumulated through the "experimentation" by the criminal on living subjects throughout the ages; and, more latterly, the unparalleled opportunities for carrying out experimentation by novel drugs and operations on living (and dying) subjects provided by a major war.

Yet still the millions of animals pass through the laboratories every year. Still the highly-skilled personnel laboriously accumulate data that can be of real use only to the veterinary surgeon. Why? Because, impelled by religious neurosis, even illness must be forced to contribute to the general dementia of quantitative expansion.

Sick people desire good health and will pay large sums to procure merely the hope of obtaining it. The millions spent in animal experiments are amply repaid by the tens of millions paid out to obtain the products of those experiments. And part of those tens of millions can then be used to enlarge the said laboratories where, it is hoped, further

advances will then be made, capable of netting hundreds of millions. And so on, presumably, *ad infinitum*, like any other aspect of unrestrained quantitative expansion.

Yet the most casual glance at humanity today is sufficient to lay bare this folly. Far from being in good health, most people live in a bemused, befuddled fog of aches, pains and mental and physical frustration. The doctors themselves are overworked, often falling victims to the very diseases they are fighting, astronomical sums are spent on medicines, and a percentage, even of the few people with relatively good health, falls victim to the pernicious clamour, and buys drugs to wreck the health it already possesses.

To some remote observer, it must seem that the vivisected animals are about to take a tremendous revenge on mankind. Man has subdued them all, and now, swarming, *he is dying from his victory*. With his economic life hopelessly entangled with the dementia of religious neurosis, impelled to swarm, and yet also impelled to construct the weapons to end swarming for all time, overcrowded, poisoned by vitiated air, irritated physically and mentally on all sides, Man yet continues to sacrifice the animals in a desperate, futile search to alleviate his own condition. And, by so doing, he still worsens his position. The balance of species on the planet will not be disturbed, even by the creature who despises all others as "below him", and then tortures them in his own likeness. The agonies suffered by the animals will be paid for by the agonies suffered by mankind in swarming.

RANDOM NOTES

"COMET"

BISHOP CASHMAN'S sporting activities, as reported in last week's FREETHINKER, were alluded to more than once, amidst derisive laughter at a very well-attended teach-in on the Encyclical at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Friday, September 13.

The meeting was organised by the Newman Association and the audience was predominantly Roman Catholic, their sympathy was overwhelmingly against the Encyclical and this was evident from the enthusiastic and prolonged applause with which they greeted two excellent speeches against the Encyclical. Dr John Marshall who was on the Papal Commission of experts spoke from the medical angle. He expressed his opinion that the Vatican Council itself would have voted for a change of policy but that they were bullied into accepting an Expert Commission which they thought would naturally carry more conviction with everyone concerned. Anthony Spencer, a sociologist, said his previous convictions changed as a result of attending a Conference on World Population.

West German Catholics meeting at Essen on September 7 passed a resolution with an overwhelming majority, calling for a revision of the ban on birth control and stating that they could not in conscience obey the Pope's ruling.

Still nearer home, for the Pope that is, Italian Bishops have asked priests to be patient and tolerant towards those who are unable to observe the Papal teaching on artificial means of birth control.

BOOK REVIEWS

G. L. SIMONS

ISRAEL AND THE ARABS by Professor Maxime RODINSON: Penguin Special. 5s.

IT is not easy to write a book that is at once basic enough for the newcomer and detailed enough to support worthwhile analysis; it is doubly difficult to keep such a book succinct, particularly when the topic is controversial. In all these respects Professor Maxime Rodinson has done extremely well with his *Israel and the Arabs*.

Many factors enter into the Arab-Jewish conflict: we can see nationalism, militant religion, racial feelings, and the inevitable effects of Western and communist economic/military penetration. According to personal belief one may elevate one of these factors into the position of prime importance, attributing the conflict solely (or mainly) to its impact. Rodinson—"a Jew who in no small measure is in sympathy with the Arabs"—is not alone in subscribing to a single basic cause, and he sees the conflict as one of foreign occupation: the Jews are the interlopers, the Arabs the nationalists moved to protest. Such a view has weight. But first to history . . .

Palestine was the homeland of the Jews, but their dispersion was accelerated by the Roman occupation. Attempts were made to set up Jewish states in the Yemen (sixth century) and on the lower Volga (from the eighth to the tenth centuries): these states were not durable and the Jews were forced to exist in various host nations, preserving their culture as best they could. Up to modern times a few Jewish colonies existed in Palestine, and their numbers increased after a new wave of anti-semitism in Russia (1881). At this time Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire, and an Arab state. By 1914, the mainly Arab population numbered 739,000: there were about 85,000 Jews. On November 2 the Ottoman Empire entered the world war on the side of Germany against Britain, France and Russia.

Partly to gain the alliance of the Palestinian Jews, the Balfour Declaration (1917) promised the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain assumed the mandate for Iraq and Palestine: a clause was included providing for the application of the Balfour Declaration—this constituted a serious betrayal of specific promises made to the Arabs.

In the thirties, chiefly because of the Nazi persecutions, the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine rapidly increased: between 1932 and 1938, a quarter of a million Jews entered Palestine. Immediately after the war, militant Jewish groups used guerrilla warfare to oust the British, who soon found the situation intolerable and capitulated (1947). Virtual civil war ensued between Arab and Jewish populations, with the British—the only force in the area with any chance of preserving law and order—hurriedly evacuating. In the final phase of the war 60,000 Jewish soldiers faced 40,000 Arabs. On several occasions, David Ben Gurion broke UN-imposed cease-fires to achieve military advantage: a proposed invasion of Egypt was only prevented by an Anglo-American ultimatum, and the UN mediator, Count Bernadotte, was assassinated by Jewish terrorists. The Jews won the war—they had conquered a portion of Arab territory by force of arms, Israel was a reality, and the Palestinian Arabs fled in large numbers to other Arab states. Of the refugees Ben Gurion said, "We must do everything in our power to ensure that they never return".

In 1956 the United States cancelled its offer of aid to finance the Egyptian Aswan dam, President Nasser nationalised the Suez canal, and Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt. Israel, one of the biggest per capita recipients of US finance, was firmly in the capitalist camp. Egypt, with grim economic problems and denied Western assistance, turned to nationalisation—and to the Soviet Union. Other trends, notably in Syria, contributed to the growth of Arab socialism: the West armed Israel, and the Soviet Union armed Syria and Egypt. The scene was set for the six-day war that started on June 5, 1967.

There is general agreement now that it was Israel that started the war. Rodinson says, "On Monday, June 5, at 7 in the morning (Israel time), the Israeli air forces left the tarmac. Less than two hours later, the Arab air force had to all intents and purposes ceased to exist. The war . . . was virtually won". It is no justification of the Israeli act to say that Israel was "provoked", or was taking "preventive action". Article 51 of the UN Charter, noting that many wars start in such a way, specifically precludes anticipatory action of this sort. The situation now is that Israel has conquered further areas of Arab territory, and that no-one in the West who may be able to exert influence is prepared to criticise the aggression.

Rodinson's basic conclusion is that "The conflict appears essentially as the struggle of an indigenous population against the occupation of part of its national territory by foreigners". On the "millennial Jewish vision of the Return of Zion" he comments, "When a people is subjected to foreign conquest, the moral wound it receives is in no way alleviated by the spiritual tendencies observable within the conquering group, nor by the motives for the conquest . . .". Rodinson develops his arguments in detail: he traces the political conflicts in modern Israel, the rise of Arab socialism, the circumstances leading to the June war. He examines the various Arab states, and the parts played by America, the European countries, and the Soviet Union.

Only rarely can one acclaim a new book without qualification: I am pleased to be able to do so now. In under 250 unpadding pages Rodinson conveys considerable detail, and the prose is lucid and eminently readable. For a thoroughly adequate account of the growth of Israel and the Arab states, their conflict, and its place in the modern world, I commend *Israel and the Arabs* as excellent value.

MARGARET McILROY

AND THEN THE SCREAMING STARTED, Oswell Blakeston (Hutchinson, 25s).

OSWELL BLAKESTON is well-known to all FREETHINKER readers as a valued contributor of articles and reviews, and many readers will also have enjoyed his stories and novels. Now he appears in a new role as the author of a thriller. *And Then the Screaming Started* is lifted above the average thriller by the witty and penetrating, though off-beat, characterisation that Blakeston's other fiction leads us to expect. Joe, the wretched ageing dirty-worker for the unscrupulous millionaire, Kelvin, is shown fairly, in his full unsavouriness, but despite this Blakeston skilfully directs our sympathy towards him. Is there hope of a better future for Joe? Does he deserve it? Can he extricate himself from Kelvin's control? Can Caroline's love, or the mystic sign of a new religion help him? Read and find out.

FILM REVIEWS

QUENTIN SEACOME

THE STRANGE AFFAIR (On General Release).

THE message in *The Strange Affair* which is constantly expounded by the fanatical Sergeant Pearce to Constable Strange, the two central characters, is that there is nothing more despicable than a corrupt policeman. However his fanaticism, on behalf of good, leads him to bribe a young police-constable into planting drugs on a family of racketeers whom he has failed to convict on several occasions, and against whom he bears a grudge.

Police Constable Strange, having failed his degree at University, decides to join the Force for the benefit of society, and falls victim of the bribe, due to a carnal indiscretion with a beautiful fifteen-year-old girl. He falls foul of the racketeers while on the beat and suffers unpleasant facial injuries, but feels too uncertain about their identity to testify in court despite the efforts of Pearce to make him. The family of racketeers comprises two cruel twins who worship their father a corrupt ex-policeman, the reason for Pearce's hatred of them. To say more would spoil a well built-up sequence of suspense.

Throughout the film there was a nice balance between the main plot and entertaining diversions into everyday police duty typical of any police station. The bit parts playing ordinary police complaints, added humorous well-played diversions. Michael York gave a reasonably naive portrayal of the unfortunate Constable Strange but was overshadowed by Jeremy Kemp's powerful and sensitive performance as the fanatical Sergeant Pearce, the man given a bad deal by his unimaginative Scotland Yard authorities and criminals alike. Susan George was provocative as the over-sexed but loving young girl who gave Pearce the evidence to bribe Strange, due to living with her 'kinky' aunt and uncle, who, unknown to her made money from her sexual cavorts with Strange by photographing them.

The direction was a solid job and especially good in small crowd scenes including important dialogue. The one inevitable nude scene was tastefully directed and cleverly photographed.

It is refreshing to see that films are dealing with subjects like the police force more candidly and truthfully than in previous years. Gone at last, thank goodness, is the traditional fatherly police image which is nauseous and false to say the least. The corruption and apathy which must exist in part in any organisation, legal or not, was brought over with conviction in the film.

The Strange Affair is not brilliant, but well worth a visit for sheer entertainment value.

LETTERS

Reason, no conscience?

IN HIS ARTICLE 'Conditioning and Conscience' (September 14) D. L. Humphries 'describes' more than he 'explains' at least to this reader.

Perhaps the following aspects on the subject, if not typical, are at least topical:

Among the values motivating conscience is an awareness of good or bad as it affects the experience of other people.
Reason itself has no conscience—it is indifferent.

The Pope's Encyclical may thus be regarded as 'right' in doctrine and as 'bad' in conscience. CHARLES BYASS.

The heavy stuff

I FOUND both Peter Leech's review 'Philosophy and Illusion' and D. L. Humphries article 'Conditioning and Conscience' most stimulating mentally. I am glad to see the serious element entering into the FREETHINKER. I sincerely hope you can provide more stuff of this calibre. JEROME GREENE.

THE FEAR OF DEATH

(Continued from page 307)

what might go wrong. They want to be ambitious, to imitate their more progressive brothers, but they do not dare. One wonders whether they are reacting to the fear of death by trying to avoid meeting it at all.

We have a large group of people who are so happy to be alive at all that they react by being fully creative. Death will come to them but in the meantime they try to get as much done, that is good, as possible. They want to leave behind evidence of years well spent.

Driving genius stands alone. Life is full of what must be done—painting, writing, making music. And this is done exclusively and uninhibitedly. But genius is rare. Most creative people are quite small fry. One will learn a trade or another a profession. Some of us produce children and continue through life to be assertive and constructive in an imaginative and disciplined way. Others may quietly further their scientific knowledge; teach children happily and well; tend the sick; help the poor and unhappy. When such people contemplate death they hope their achievements will have been helpful, their service enough.

It is probably these people who are the most mature and the most contented. Their need is not for money, position, power or any material proof of worth. They simply refuse to contemplate a death which would end a valueless life. They cannot alter the death but they can affect the life.

The effect upon human behaviour of the fear of death should be studied in depth. It has always been necessary to condition ourselves to the advances of mankind, to become more civilised, to understand each other more thoroughly. Fear inhibits. While we certainly need some inhibiting fears for our own preservation, real freedom of thought, freedom to become more kind and loving towards each other will be retarded while we are frightened. Can we be freed?

ART

KIERAN DALY

Darkness Now?

(A concern for the disappearance of light and tone in today's art.)

AT PRESENT we see an extremely pallid display of creativity particularly when considering very recent painting, since this tends always to be a flat and opaque form of exacting realism. The feeling is of course still there but unfortunately lacks the necessary excitement and brilliance of past masters of this quality. This apparent absence of a vibrant aspect is principally an aesthetic loss and one would begin to explain this by the introduction of pop-art and the acceptance of more abbreviated forms, such as the hard-edge technique involving almost geometrical execution, which is totally devoid of any atmosphere.

We would do well to look back to the introduction of brilliance into the modern movement. The Faure group of painters, so-called because their exuberant use of colour and dashing execution gave the impression of 'wild beasts' breaking into the restrained tradition of French nineteenth century painting, flourished during the early years of this century.

The greatest exponent of this quality was the painter J. M. W. Turner, who, when exhibiting his work at the Royal Academy, arrived with only a canvas laid in with blue for sea or sky, and yellow shading through orange into brown where there were to be trees or landscape, this being the crux of his inspiration the detail being added later. The qualities of light, colour and energy were implicit in Turner's earlier works but were not brought to fruition until his first visit to Italy in 1819. The overwhelming impact of the clear brilliant Italian light is shown in the watercolours done during this journey, on Lake Como, in Venice, and in and around Rome and Naples. But the majority of the works he executed were pencil drawings and none of these were publicly exhibited in his lifetime. They served however, as a repertoire of forms and as promptings to his exceptional visual memory, on the basis of which he could recall the excitement of his original encounter with the scene depicted.

All artists can, at some time, experience a depressive period of non-activity which can be compared to the present painting phase—the flat and limited form which is now accepted. An awakening and return to a more vibrant execution would certainly be welcomed with great enthusiasm!

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