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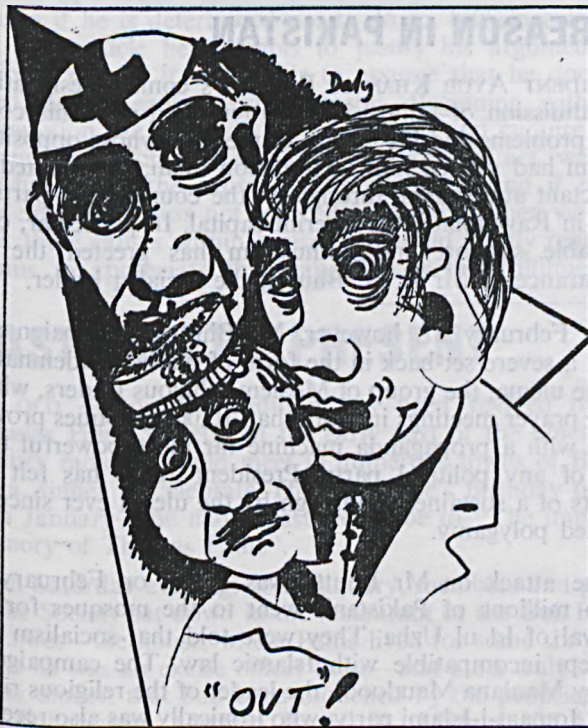
Saturday, March 8, 1969

Sixpence Weekly

## END OF THE UNION?

THE ALMOST disastrously close results of the election in Northern Ireland were followed by the more cheerful news on Friday, February 28, that despite a walk-out by ten Unionist MPs Captain Terence O'Neill received a vote of confidence from a meeting of the parliamentary Unionist part. Thus, for the time being anyway, his position as prime minister would seem to be safe. However, the electorate of Ulster have not only made his job extremely difficult but have also come within a hair's breadth of destroying for ever the political career of this man who for better or worse represents the only hope of his country ever attaining anything approaching peaceful unity. The bigotry made manifest primarily by the astoundingly high vote for the Reverend Ian Paisley and also by the large number of seats won by anti-O'Neill Unionists reflects only the primitiveness of a group of people prepared to persecute another group, merely because they choose to worship the same God in a different fashion. That O'Neill, the man who is doing his best to end this barbaric state of affairs, should be almost ousted

That O'Neill should be placed in this vicious triangle with the unreason personified by Paisley and the Pope at the other corners, and with the possibility of such a calamitous outcome serves as yet another argument against those who maintain that man is strengthened by a belief in God.



## ALL RIGHT SO FAR

MR JOHN PARKER'S Sunday Entertainments Bill survived its second reading on February 28 by the narrow majority of nine votes. Following this news a BBC parliamentary commentator expressed the opinion that the bill now has little more chance than the one presented last year. Thus a lot of pressure will be needed from the secularist lobbies if the bill is not to suffer from the filibuster, which has now become the accepted procedure of the religious element in parliament whenever a bill of this nature is presented.

Further evidence of the need for this bill to become law and of the untenable views of the bill's opponents appeared in newspapers on the day of the bill's second reading. A performance of the much publicised Trinity College revue in which Prince Charles was a leading participant, intended for Sunday March 2, had to be postponed due to the very law which John Parker is trying to change. It appears that on hearing of the organisers' intention to hold a performance on a Sunday the seats for which were to be paid for, Mr Anthony Busk, the divisional organiser of the Lord's Day Observance Society visited the Master's Lodge at Trinity to complain to Lord Butler of Saffron Walden. Lord Butler was unavailable but Mr Busk spoke to his secretary. This resulted in Dr Gareth Jones, the treasurer of the Dryden Society who are putting on the show being informed of the fact that technically his society would be breaking the law if the performance was staged. In a statement to the press Dr Jones said: "In having a Sunday performance I am sure the organisers were acting in good faith. There have been Sunday performances in the past but this is the first time that tickets have been on sale to the general public and that brings us within the 1780 Act".

It is a pity that this did not occur a few days earlier. To read how a law nearly 200 years old has postponed an entertainment for which many people had already bought tickets, for no reason other than that the Lord's Day Observance Society presumes to dictate to people what they may not do on a Sunday, might have brought more MPs to the support of Mr Parker.

by the barbarian element itself makes the situation all the more embarrassing for the British government—particularly when that government is a socialist one. O'Neill himself, in order to maintain the peace, has had to set up a machine, which has created what with little exaggeration could be called a police state. Should he be replaced by a hard line protestant unionist government the situation will inevitably worsen. One begins to foresee a time when to have such a regime as part of the United Kingdom will become intolerable whatever government is in power at Westminster. Severance of the union with Great Britain could only aid the forces of reaction in Ulster and one hesitates to imagine the type of government that would result.



# Freethinker

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Editor: David Reynolds

The views expressed by the contributors to FREETHINKER are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Board.

## SORRY, CHUM!

THE MOUNTING enthusiasm over the British police force took a nose dive last week due to a remarkable and horrifying statement by Mr Alec Muir, Chief Constable of Durham. Addressing a meeting of Durham University Young Liberals on February 25 Mr Muir said that "it would be more sensible to eliminate quietly people like the train robbers". The philosophy behind this appalling remark was "Although capital punishment is irrelevant to the problem of murder, society in my own personal view has a right to eliminate those people who have showed that they are not prepared to play according to the rules". One fails to see why if capital punishment is to be used to protect society from rule-breakers it should not be used

## COMING EVENTS

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

Belfast Humanist Group: NI War Memorial Building, Waring Street, Belfast: Monday, March 10, 8 p.m.: "Crescent House Project", Victor McElfarrick (Scotland).

Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate: Sunday, March 9, 6.30 p.m.: "Education and Social Training in the USSR" (illustrated), C. B. Holiday.

Luton Humanist Group: Carnegie Room, Central Library, Luton: Thursday, March 13, 8 p.m.: "Interpretation of Dreams", Paul Rom (Psychologist).

Marx Memorial Lecture: Nufto Hall, 14 Jockeys Fields, London, WC1: Friday, March 14, 7.30 p.m.: "The Ideas of Marx and the Current Revolt", James Klugmann.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, March 9, 11 a.m.: "Humanism and Music", Frederic Jackson, FRAM. Admission free. Tuesday, March 11, 6.45 p.m.: Debate on Rhodesia—Wing Commander Sir Archibald James, KBE, MC (Anglo-Rhodesian Society) and Humphry Berkeley (Chairman United Nations Association). Admission 2s (including refreshments). Members free.

The Thomas Paine Society is sponsoring National Library Week at the Public Library, Albion Street, Lewes, Sussex: March 10-15: Exhibition of books, prints, tokens, etc., commemorating the 175th Anniversary of the publication of *The Age of Reason*.

New paintings by Oswell Blakeston at the BH Corner Gallery, 34 Cathedral Place, London, EC4 (opposite St Paul's Cathedral), until March 17. Monday-Friday 10.30 a.m.—6 p.m.: Saturday 10.30 a.m.—1 p.m.

to protect society from murderers, surely the greatest rule-breakers of all. It seems that the chief constable places a greater value on £2,000,000 in used bank notes than on a human life.

The chief constable went on to say that he would be prepared to shoot people whose philosophy was that the use of any force was justified to attain their ends. The infantile ghoulishness of this remark, quite apart from the fact that the chief constable is in effect calling for his own suicide, causes one to think more than twice about the allegations of police brutality made by demonstrators and others in more serious trouble with the law. Consider the following dangerous mixture of hysteria and calm, reminiscent of the intolerance of the American McCarthy era: "There are some people who are beyond correction who should be told 'Sorry, chum, we cannot be bothered by you'. You have a right to live in society provided you are prepared to obey the rules". If a chief constable can be guilty of such smug idiocy it is depressing to consider what goes through the mind of the average constable. Those of us who consider the killing of another human being for any reason, euthanasia apart, to be both a crime and a retrograde step in the evolution of mankind must hope that the dictum 'the exception that proves the rules' can be meaningfully applied to Mr Muir, and that other police chiefs will join us in condemning the public appointment of a man with a mind so narrow and a conscience so small.

## UNREASON IN PAKISTAN

PRESIDENT AYUB KHAN of Pakistan's coming resignation, his admission of failure in his attempt to solve his country's problems and his release of the men whose opposition to him had caused him to imprison them, has created an expectant atmosphere throughout the country and particularly in Rawalpindi, the interim capital. In particular, considerable support and enthusiasm has greeted the re-appearance of Mr Z. A. Bhutto, the socialist leader.

On February 27, however, Mr Bhutto's campaign suffered a severe set-back in the form of public condemnation by the ulema, the group of Moslem religious leaders, whose daily prayer meetings in more than 10,000 mosques provide them with a propaganda machine far more powerful than that of any political party. President Ayub has felt the affects of a sustained campaign by the ulema ever since he banned polygamy.

The attack on Mr Bhutto was begun on February 27 when millions of Pakistanis went to the mosques for the festival of Id ul Uzha. They were told that socialism is a concept incompatible with Islamic law. The campaign is led by Maulana Maudoodi, the leader of the religious right-wing Jomaat-i-Islami party, who ironically was also recently released from gaol by President Ayub.

In order to defend himself against this onslaught which he clearly anticipated, Mr Bhutto has been saying in his speeches that his socialism is not communism and that his aim is simply to "remove the rule of capitalists" and the twenty families which he says monopolise industry and business in Pakistan. That this latter claim is substantially true is undeniable and thus one finds the chief Moslems adopting a position not unlike that adopted by the Roman Catholics in many parts of the world. However, it is perhaps an advantage to the forces of reason, including Mr Bhutto, that the Moslem leaders at least have the decency to go about their business in the open



## CAUSES AND MORALS

A. J. LOWRY

BEING EXTREMELY INTERESTED in Mr Cregan's article (*The New Moral Pessimism*, FREETHINKER, January 18), I felt, since his views appear to be so diametrically opposed to my own, that it would not be out of order to reply. The arguments which rage over the truth or falsity of egoistic hedonism are really but symptoms of a more deeply-seated difference in outlook between the two camps, and unless this disagreement is better understood, there would appear to be little value in discussing its peripheral issues.

Depending upon whether or not we accept the law of causality, two possible views of the world may be constructed. We may, if we choose, decide not to lend credence to this law, in which case the question 'why?' becomes largely meaningless; incidents occur in the world without any explanation being necessary, or even possible; science becomes devoid of value; and the process of induction is made invalid. Anything can happen at any time or any place, and the universe becomes an unhinged Bedlam, in which order is neither seen nor believed.

If we accept causality, however, then it follows that causal antecedents must exist for each event, science and logic may progress, and it becomes possible (in theory at least) to explain every action along deterministic lines.

Now Mr Cregan is at perfect liberty to accept the first view if he wishes. I cannot make him see order and accept reason if he is determined not to do so, but since even in his own article he attempts to justify his arguments by rational means, it seems fair to assume that he does, indeed, accept causality and reason. Beginning with this assumption, we may now turn to morals and enquire from whence they come. If any man performs an act, we may justifiably ask the cause of him doing so, and if it was evident that he was not coerced by another, then we must seek these causes within himself. It would hardly require a genius to appreciate that happiness is the fulfilment of

desire, and since, where there is neither desire nor coercion, actions are not performed, it becomes very difficult to understand how anyone could or would 'freely' do anything, were it not for the happiness he believes he would derive. Mr Cregan, though loud in his denunciation of this view, appears, I have noticed, suspiciously quiet on the question of what other motivating factors can exist.

Let us return to the soldier, to give the falsifiable prediction which Mr Cregan claims is impossible. Let us assume that the soldier is in full possession of his faculties, and is not drunk, mad, hypnotised or in a high fever. Let us assume that he would not increase his happiness by rescuing his comrade, since he is a man he particularly detests. He would receive no happiness from rescuing a countryman, since he dislikes his country, and hopes it will lose the war. Having read Malthus, he would not be happy to save a human life. In short, let it be assumed that all the various ways he might become happier by rescuing his comrade, are in this case inappropriate. If, despite all this, he still risked his life to save him, then egoistic hedonism would, indeed, be disproved; but it would be by no means easy (without resorting to the causeless view of the cosmos) to explain such action at all.

Examples of the falsity of egoistic hedonism must always appear ludicrous, if for no other reason than because the principle is a logical tautology, of the same nature as  $2+2=4$ . For just as any sane person, reflecting upon the meaning of those terms, must conclude by attesting to the validity of this equation, so the notions of egoistic hedonism are inextricably bound to the definition of such terms as 'happiness' and 'cause'; and there would appear no serious alternative to accepting its truthfulness, than a flight beyond the pale of reason, into some strange 'dark night of the mind'.

## PAST MEETS PRESENT

CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL

AN OLD democratic tradition has been revived by the Thomas Paine Society. In the early part of the nineteenth century radicals would meet in numerous towns of Britain for a dinner to celebrate Thomas Paine's birthday on the 29th January—the main toast would be to "The immortal memory of Thomas Paine".

On Saturday evening, 25th January, members and guests of the Society sat down in the restaurant of the Bull House at Lewes—the house, where Paine lived for some six years, when he was an excise officer there—and ate a truly sumptuous dinner, that had been modelled by the proprietor of the Bull House, Captain R. H. A. Midgley, M.A., on authentic eighteenth century recipes.

Captain Midgley added verbal spice to the menu by naming the main dish "Tom Paine's Reasonable Pie", so reminding the diners that this year we celebrate the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of Paine's great attack on organised religion, *The Age of Reason*. Other thoughtful touches were in the decor, the room being full of fascinating pictures of Paine and of characters in his varied life—pictures that are a permanent feature of this delightful fifteenth century house.

Chairman Christopher Brunel proposed the toast to "The immortal memory of Thomas Paine", using some words on

Paine from an ode by Paine's first friendly biographer and citizen of Lewes, Thomas Clio Rickman. Councillor Gordon Hoile then deftly linked history and the serious questions of today by reminding his audience that of the handful of mourners at Paine's funeral two were Negroes, "who had thought it worthwhile to walk twenty-five miles to the burial in America".

We should think of these two Negroes, said Councillor Hoile, and apply what Thomas Paine taught. "We went to their country and did ghastly things to them. They have come to our country, but they haven't done ghastly things to us."

He ended by urging people to find an antidote for Enoch Powellism in Thomas Paineism, for the Thomas Paine Society should not only promote the recognition of Paine's contribution to the cause of freedom, but should also apply a similar spirit of constructive criticism to today's world. These were the aims of the Society, of which he was a founder-member.

The Secretary of the Society, Robert Morrell, at the beginning of the evening was *hoping* that the dinner would be sufficiently successful to encourage him to have another next January; at the end he was taking positive reservations for the 1970 anniversary dinner at the Bull.



# THE HERITAGE OF MILETUS

NIGEL H. SINNOTT

## Peace, Trade, Liberty and War

PROBABLY BECAUSE of the influence of conventional Victorian classical education the 'glory that was Greece' has been reduced in the popular mind to Athens, and perhaps Sparta. One particular ancient city-state has been badly overlooked: Miletus.

In classical times Miletus was situated at the mouth of the river Meander, on what is now the west coast of Anatolia, Turkey, near the modern port of Kusadasi. Miletus was founded by colonists from Mycenae and Tiryns probably before 1200 BC, and is said to have sent a contingent to the siege of Troy.

The golden age of Miletus was from 700 to 500 BC. The city had four harbours and a flourishing international trade both by sea and overland. Its main export was wool. The Milesians founded over sixty cities on the coast of the Black Sea alone and also developed trading posts in Egypt (Naucratis) and southern Italy (Sybaris). Miletus became a major literary centre as well and produced four remarkable rationalist philosophers and scientists; Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes and Hecataeus, who will be dealt with below.

From 546 BC onwards the Persians conquered Lydia, Babylonia, Egypt and Thrace, and continued to expand their empire based on Susa and Sardis. The Milesians under Aristagoras finally rebelled against Persia in 499 BC, and appealed to the Peloponnesian League (formed by Sparta) for aid; only Athens and Eritrea were daring enough to help.

The Persian king, Darius, must have been amused at the impudence of a simple and rather pacific city-state declaring war on him. However, when the Milesian fleet of 353 ships sacked his second capital, Sardis, in 498 BC he was decidedly "not amused" and organised the largest army and navy the world had ever seen in a punitive expedition. Against this the Milesians fought a desperate sea battle off the nearby island of Lade in 494 BC but were hopelessly outnumbered; Miletus was captured.

Despite the fall of Miletus the rebellion now developed into a wholesale Ionian Revolt against Persia. The Persians succeeded in burning Eritrea but were turned back from Athens by the intervention of Sparta. In 480 BC Xerxes, Darius' successor, launched a 180,000 man invasion against the rebels, and despite the heroic stand of the Greeks at Thermopylae, took Athens, but not before the city had been successfully evacuated. The Greeks then counter-attacked the Persian fleet at Salamis and wrecked it. The Persian army was later soundly defeated in the battles of Plataea and Cape Mycale, and in 479 BC Miletus was free once more.

The successful Greek states now formed the Delian League, but the peace was not to last. Athens embezzled the League's funds and began to turn it into a new empire. To counter this, Sparta took up arms in 431 BC to begin the Peloponnesian War, lasting twenty-seven years. Miletus came into the war on the side of Sparta in 412 BC, and in 405 Sparta, Thebes and Persia defeated the Athenians at Aegospotami and Athens itself fell a year later.

Nevertheless, Internecine strife continued among the states of Athens, Thebes and Sparta and as a result they were eventually all three annexed by a new empire builder, Philip of Macedon. Philip was murdered in 336 BC and was succeeded by his son Alexander the Great whom A. W. Benn described as "arrogant, drunken, cruel, vindictive, and grossly superstitious, uniting the vices of a High-

land Chieftain to the frenzy of an Oriental despot".

As is well known, Alexander led an army eastwards to conquer the world, and reached as far as India. History relates that at least one city did not submit meekly: Miletus. The Milesians finally surrendered after a siege in 334 BC.



Miletus: View of the theatre and Maender plain (Lade is the small hill on the right). From author's photograph May 1965.

Miletus became in turn part of the empires of the Seleucids, Ptolomies, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuk and Ottoman Turks. Eventually the harbours silted up and by the twentieth century AD the once great city was a small Turkish village some six miles from the sea, with the former island of Lade a little hill in the distance. Ten years ago, because of earthquakes, the Turkish villagers were rehoused two miles away, and today Miletus is inhabited by wild birds and a small (too small) German archaeological team who maintain a little museum.

Tourists rarely visit Miletus, preferring instead to go to nearby Ephesus because of its associations with Paul of Tarsus and the goddess Diana. Perhaps one day Miletus will be thoroughly excavated and accorded the homage in European history which is its due.

## The Milesian Freethinkers

During the sixth century before the Christian era, towards the end of the zenith of Miletus, the city-state produced great men whose novel ideas and naturalistic outlook in philosophy were remarkable both for the age in which they lived, and for the contributions they made to the genesis of science and rationalism. Their names were, in chronological order, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes and Hecataeus.

Thales (624—548 or 545 BC) was both a practical politician, mathematician and philosopher. He was the first man to suggest a single material substrate for the universe—water (not at all wide of the mark considering the structure of the hydrogen atom). He introduced geometry into Greece and is credited with the discovery of five geometrical theorems. Thales was a competent astronomer, and is said to have fallen down a well while stargazing; nevertheless he accurately forecast the eclipse of May 28 585 BC which stopped the battle between Alyattes of Lydia and the Mede Cyaraxes. He also recommended navigators to



steer by the Little Bear rather than the Great. One year he made a good deal of money by forecasting a bumper olive crop and bought up all the olive presses to hire them out.

Anaximander (born 610 BC and still alive in 546) was an associate of Thales and was one of the first men to construct a map of the then known world. He declared that the world was unsupported at its centre and was drum-shaped. His great contribution was his suggestion of biological evolution, including that of man, partly from observations of the parental behaviour of sharks in the harbours of Miletus, and partly from induction: he realised that man could not always have relied upon the protection of houses and tools, nor could he survive a long period of childhood in the wild. Anaximander suggested that early animals were like sea urchins (again not far off modern theories of vertebrate evolution) and that men were descended from fish-like creatures.

Anaximenes was a younger contemporary of Anaximander. He suggested that the primary stuff of the universe was "aer" and from this the elements were formed by a process of condensation or rarification. He said that the rainbow was not a goddess but the effect of sunlight on "compacted" air. Anaximenes also attempted rational explanations of such phenomena as eclipses and the phosphorescence of water. He distinguished the heavenly

bodies into stars and planets, and said that they give no heat because of their great distance from earth (Anaximander had suggested that they were nearer the earth than the sun).

Hecataeus lived at the time of the Ionian Revolt, and is unusual in that he advised the Milesians not to declare war on Persia. When the Milesians lost the battle of Lade in 494 BC he was sent as an ambassador to the Persian satrap, whom he persuaded to restore the constitutions of the captured Ionian cities. As a scholar Hecataeus wrote a treatise on world geography called the *Perigesis* or *Ges Periodos* of which some three hundred fragments have survived to modern times. His other great work was the *Genealogia* or *Historiai*, a systematic account of the traditions and mythology of the Greeks. His attitude to the religions of the day was summed up by saying, "The tales told by the Greeks are many, and ridiculous in my view". Unfortunately, only a few fragments of this work survive.

Quite why such a number of original thinkers should have been produced by one city in little more than a century is an interesting point to ponder. Perhaps the absence of narrow nationalism and the cosmopolitan atmosphere produced by the international trade links Miletus had at the time were important factors. In some ways Miletus was a rudimentary prototype for peaceful co-existence and the 'Open' Society.

## CHINA YESTERDAY

### FIRST OF FIVE ARTICLES

CHINA possesses the world's oldest continuous civilisation. Other nations have enjoyed a glorious antiquity and have blossomed forth again in modern times: Italy of the Caesars and of the Renaissance is a case in point. But only in China, of all the world's nations, can a continuous tradition be clearly traced from antiquity to today.

There is debate about the age of Chinese civilisation. Some Chinese have claimed that Chinese culture stretches back into the past in an unbroken line for five thousand years. The *Book of History*, later thought to be edited by Confucius, describes chronicles of the Sage Kings in the period 2356-2197 B.C., and the *Bamboo Books* refer to the Yellow Emperor of 2697 B.C. There are also tales of earlier legendary personages, such as Shen Nung, the father of agriculture, and Fu Hsi, the reputed founder of Chinese civilisation, who is supposed to have given the arts of writing, building and cooking to the human race. Some modern scholars are sceptical about the authenticity of these records as they have clearly been rewritten as late as the first century B.C., but few researchers dispute that they contain very old material. The discovery of "Peking Man" in 1927 proves that human beings lived in China half a million years ago.

Excavations in Honan have shown that a great Chinese culture existed about 1500 B.C., and the Shang Kingdom, the first well-defined Chinese civilisation, dates from this period. Considerable detail has been accumulated on Shang building techniques, agriculture, pottery, royal succession, bronze casting and burial procedures. The Early Chou Period dates from about 1100 B.C. and is known for its feudal social order and its philosophers. Confucius was an official in the State of Lu and in 722 B.C. he wrote *Springs and Autumns*, a chronicle of the State, and this work has given great insight in the China of the day.

The Chinese philosophers (and perhaps Confucius and Mencius are the best known) are peculiar in the extent to

which their thought is grounded in ethics. Even Chinese thought not pre-eminently philosophical has the same sort of ethical interest. Montesquieu observed: "The Chinese confused religion, laws, manners and customs. It was all morality, it was all virtue". And despite the influence of Taoists and Buddhists, the Chinese outlook remained largely ethical, with a profound concern for right modes of behaviour rather than for the propitiation of gods or the salvation of souls. Chinese historical culture is remarkable for the absence of a powerful and crippling religious tradition which can be found in virtually all other ancient and modern societies.

After the fragmented feudalism of the Chou Dynasty, the First Empire emerged in about 200 B.C., and included the Ch'in and Han Dynasties. The most renowned Ch'in ruler, Ch'in Shih Hwang Ti, came into direct conflict with the *literati* because of his tax policies, emphasis on the army, and his general imperial ambitions. The conflict drove him to an action similar to that of the later Catholic theologians, who also feared the educated thinker; he instigated the "Burning of the Books" in 213 B.C. But not all his acts were reactionary, and the Ch'ins developed agriculture, created great irrigation schemes, and for the first time united all of China. The Hans created the form of government that persisted in China from about 200 A.D. to the establishment of the modern republic in 1911. During this period successive dynasties ruled of which the best known are the Ts'in (265-316), the Sui (589-618), the T'ang (618-907), the Sung (960-1127), the Yuan (Mongol) (1280-1368), the Ming (1368-1644), and the Ch'ing (Manchu) Dynasty (1644-1911).

Each age left its stamp on the great tradition. The philosophical preoccupation could be found at all times, and always with the same concern for secular ethical practice. A typical passage, composed in the Sung period, was

(Continued overleaf)

G. L. SIMONS



(Continued from previous page)

learned by all Chinese schoolboys (it derives from *The Great Learning*):

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue, i.e. show goodness that is natural to man, first ordered well their own families. Wishing to regulate their own families, they first cultivated their own personalities. Wishing to cultivate their personalities, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts (to see things as they really are). Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the uttermost their knowledge.

Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made happy and tranquil."

Though these words may sound trite to Western ears, this passage, and similar ones, are said to have inspired the first revolutionaries against the Manchus.

The Confucian ethic was only one strand in the rich Chinese culture. The exquisite tradition of calligraphy and brush-work is without parallel in the world, and in the earliest times the Chinese were adept at detailed writing, working with bronze and other metals, astronomical observation, and the creation of silks, cottons and other fabrics. In the third century B.C., a sophisticated theory of the state is developed in the *Book of Lord Shang*, and despite Shang's opposition to poetry and music (as in Plato), the Chinese poet is sometimes inseparable from the philosopher. A detailed legal system was evolved in the centuries before Christ; zoos were kept and animals were classified; and the paths of the planets were charted across the sky.

China was also the first country to introduce public examination as a means to the selection of officials of the state. Aristocratic succession to office was abandoned by the Sung Emperors and competitive examinations were put in its place to supply teachers, statesmen and scholars. But as in the modern universities of the Western world, undue stress was placed upon the classics, and the scientific tradition—which clearly existed—tended to be ignored. In fact the esteem in which the Chinese philosophers and *literati* were held tended to obscure the remarkable strides that Chinese scientists were making in various fields. The respect for learning in Chinese history is unique in its all-pervasiveness. In his *Autobiography* (Volume II) Bertrand Russell, talking of China, contrasts the English attitude to that of the traditional Chinese:

"The Englishman in the East, as far as I was able to judge of him, is a man completely out of touch with his environment. He plays polo and goes to his club. He derives his ideas of native culture from the works of eighteenth century missionaries, and he regards intelligence in the East with the same contempt which he feels for intelligence in his own country. Unfortunately for our political sagacity, he overlooks the fact that in the East intelligence is respected . . ." (my italics).

In *The Problem of China* (1922) Russell also says that Chinese culture "was deficient in one respect, namely science". In the sense that a broadly based scientific technology did not exist this is true; in the sense that scientific research of importance was not being carried out it is false. Perhaps since Russell wrote *The Problem of China* he has had an opportunity to read the gigantic and scholarly volumes of Professor Joseph Needham on *Science and Civilisation in China*. In the September 1968 issue of *Endeavour* (the technical science review journal of ICI) Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen contributed an article entitled *Sex Hormones in the Middle Ages* (pp. 130-132) which is a survey of various chemical techniques known to the early Chinese, not just in the Middle Ages. It is worth mentioning some of the techniques described.

In 1378 A.D. Yeh Tzu-Chhi recorded information that was known to other medieval people—that sex hormones are responsible for the growth of facial hair in the male. In his book, *Tshao Mu Tzu*, he says that "the outer glory of the seminal essence is manifested by the beard". Similarly, Wang Shih-Chen says in his *Lei Yuan* (1575 A.D.) that "the beard pertains to the kidneys and testes". In the *Pen Tshao Kang Mu* (1576 A.D.) by Li Shih-Chen there are numerous preparations of testicular tissue, taken from the pig, the dog or the sheep, and administered for male sexual debility, spermatorrhoea, hypogonadism, impotence and "other conditions for which androgens would be prescribed today". In the West similar treatments did not begin until the nineteenth century.

The use of placental tissue, a rich source of oestrogens, was mentioned by Chhen Tschang-Chhi in his *Pen Tschao Shih I* pharmacopeia as far back as 725 A.D., and in the fourteenth century Chu Chen-Heng was encouraging its use in the treatment of various forms of debility.

One of the most staggering accomplishments of the early Chinese was the treatment of urine for therapeutic purposes. (In 1927 Aschheim and Zondek discovered large amounts of sex hormones in pregnancy urine, and it was subsequently realised that all urine contains these substances.) In medieval China, active products were prepared from urine by means of precipitation, re-solution, evaporation, sublimation and crystallisation. The oldest fractionation methods of which there are known accounts date from the beginning of the eleventh century and are recorded in the *Ching Yen Fang*. The article by Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen concludes with the words:

"... there can be little doubt that between the eleventh and seventeenth century A.D. the Chinese iatro-chemists were producing preparations of androgens and oestrogens which were probably quite effective in the quasi-empirical therapy of the time . . . this must surely be considered an extraordinary achievement for any type of scientific medicine before the age of modern science."

And the early Chinese developed other aspects of scientific technique: explosives, astronomy, chronology, biology and mathematics. Clearly the Chinese also have a scientific tradition.

We fought China for the first time in 1840 because their government tried to stop the importation of opium. The war resulted in the cession of Hong-Kong, and the opening up of China to Western imperialism and trade. Britain, France, Germany, and Japan took over portions of Chinese territory, and China's humiliation was complete. Chinese culture was pursued in the same old way, and the imported Christian missionaries made little headway. It seemed that China was to absorb the "foreign devils" as it had done with every barbarian invasion in the past. But there was something new in the air. The sleeping giant was awakening and striving to rediscover its political pride. Rebellions began—the most famous being the Boxer revolt—and in 1911 China became, for the first time in its history, a republic. But still the foreign influence had not been eliminated: Chinese resources were shipped to foreign countries while the Chinese peasant starved and sold his daughters into prostitution. Dr Sun Yat Sen's new republic barely affected the miserable life of the Chinese peasant, and no mass enthusiasm was engendered.

Another Chinese leader had a different vision for his nation, and after decades of struggle achieved power in 1949. The next four articles in this series will be about him and the China he is helping to mould.



## PLAY REVIEW

BOB CREW

## "SOLDIERS"

*(New Theatre, St. Martin's Lane, London, WC2)*

WITH THE ABOLITION of the Lord Chamberlain's power of theatre censorship, it has become possible for the British public to see plays such as Rolf Hochhuth's *Soldiers* which is currently showing in London. As a result, the public is more enlightened than it would otherwise be and playwrights face new threats to their welfare through prosecution by those who object to their works. Thus a new and entirely creative element of anarchy has been introduced to contemporary British theatre and the theatre world is becoming increasingly "theatrical" both on and off the stage!

Hochhuth's play is mainly concerned with the bombing war on Germany, as conducted by Winston Churchill. It examines both the ethics of bombing civilian populations and the character and sentiments of Winston Churchill, who is the central figure. It also makes a somewhat vague reference to the possibility of Churchill turning a blind eye to the assassination of his friend and ally, General Sikorski, the Prime Minister and Supreme Commander of the Polish Forces.



John Colicos as Winston Churchill and Alec Clunes as Bishop Bell of Chichester.

At the time of writing, the play has been debated at length on television, either by people who took part in the events concerned, or by their friends and relatives, and Hochhuth is reported to have received three prosecutions: one from the learned Historian, Trevor Roper, one from a Polish pilot who captained the aeroplane in which General Sikorski was killed, and another from Winston Churchill's grandson, who is concerned for the family name. Also, a question concerning the play has been asked in the House of Commons, and the Prime Minister has described *Soldiers* as "scurrilous".

At no point in the play is it actually said that Churchill was involved in the assassination, but there is an inconclusive discussion in which the possibility of assassination is brought to Churchill's attention, should Stalin—against whom the Poles were conducting their own hostilities at a time when Churchill needed the continued participation of the Russians—demand this as the price for his country's support. And this, more than anything else, is what has captured the public imagination and inflamed its sentiments, leading to various parties making an issue out of the possibility of Churchill and/or the British authorities being responsible for the assassination of General Sikorski.

In my view, the play does no more than refer to the possibility of assassination—and rightly so—without reaching any particular conclusion or making a specific allegation. But, clearly, there are many in Britain today who appear to think otherwise. The issue is

further confused, not by the play itself, but by Hochhuth's statement that he has a sworn affidavit by a former member of the British Secret Service to the effect that the British did assassinate General Sikorski. But we are told that we shall have to wait fifty years for that, in order to protect the individual who has taken the oath.

Certainly, as Hochhuth has commented, Nemesis keeps a complicated system of accounts!

The greater part of the play, however, is concerned with Churchill's ruthless and necessary execution of the bombing war, in which civilian areas were bombed deliberately and without apology. Hochhuth says that he was inspired to write his play by the books of the British historian, David Irving, which familiarised Hochhuth with the moral objections in Britain to Churchill's methods. In the play there is an interesting confrontation between Bishop Bell of Chichester and Churchill, in which Bell is asked how it is that he can split hairs between the sanctity of human life according to caste (e.g. civilians, industrial workers, soldiers) when we are all supposed to be equal in God's family. It is perfectly clear from the play that the type of bombing war conducted by Churchill was absolutely necessary until the British were ready to attack on land and there are no doubts that it had the desired crippling effect on the German effort. Hochhuth has said (in an interview with *Die Zeit* in October, 1967) that, in researching his play, he became so fascinated by the character of Churchill that it was almost impossible to find an antagonist for him. Hochhuth's treatment of Churchill as a great man with an unenviable task to accomplish cannot be faulted and, were it not for the unsavoury implications of Sikorski's death, I suspect that those who object to *Soldiers* would be heralding it as a compelling play about a great man.

The larger consideration to which Hochhuth's play ought to give rise is that of bombing wars generally and how they are conducted, rather than the hackneyed theme of political assassinations. Whilst Churchill's was the first of the major bombing wars, we are reminded by *Soldiers* that the international conventions and moral humbug to which they gave rise in World War II still exist today, one quarter of a century later. As Hochhuth has pointed out, in no trial at Nuremberg was a bomber-chief ever arraigned. Kesselring's destruction of Rotterdam is not considered illegal, even though other methods of killing civilians in warfare are. And so we have the ugly absurdity of Hague Conventions which could not protect Rotterdam—but could protect the man who destroyed Rotterdam. In *Soldiers* Winston Churchill is portrayed as a man who left nothing to chance and won.

To see a play in my lifetime, dealing with people and events of my lifetime, was, for me, a stimulating experience. Well done Rolf Hochhuth, even if you are wrong about the Sikorski assassination.

On the question of whether Hochhuth has portrayed Churchill as if he wanted to sav that he was capable, not just of mass murder, but also of individual murder, even of friends, Hochhuth has said this, "I would say that when the Minister of Defence of a warring nation is responsible for sending, night after night, pilots of eighteen or twenty over Germany in bombers—although he knows that the nightly losses will be 7 per cent or more—then, given the situation, it is probably not the same for him as it would be for us if we were to commit murder. He has to say to himself: 'If the Red Army is going to make a separate peace with Hitler will win'. This question is my point of departure." And on Street and the Kremlin—then everything will have been in vain. Hitler will win". This question is my point of departure." And on the question of why, for the purpose of portraying a murderer, Hochhuth did not use Hitler or Himmler, Hochhuth said, "I believe that the man who thought up Auschwitz is not a normal being, but a monster, a diseased creature and that is not the stuff of tragedy".

That *Soldiers* is the stuff of contemporary theatre is, for my money, unquestionable.

## BOOK REVIEW

MARGARET KNIGHT

EDUCATION OR INDOCTRINATION: Tim Beaumont and Colin Bloy (Prism Educational Pamphlets, 2s 6d).

THIS PAMPHLET is written jointly by a Christian (the Rev Timothy Beaumont (metamorphosed into Tim Beaumont since he became Chairman of the Liberal Party) and an agnostic, Colin Bloy. It was commissioned by the Liberal Party's panel on Education, but the authors emphasise that the contents express their own views and are not an official statement of Liberal Party policy. Their optimistic aim is to find a solution to the "RI" problem that will be acceptable alike to Christians, adherents of non-Christian religions and Humanists.

The authors' attitude to the non-Christian religions is more liberal, in every sense, than that of the present Minister of Educa-

(Continued overleaf)



## LETTERS

### A horrifying heaven

I READ with interest the details of a "religious" ceremony in the chapel of a Barcelona bullring.

May I point out that a pressure group of British bullring propagandists are spreading the "gospel" of bullfighting quite openly in this country. Their aim is to introduce the bullfight here—despite the fact that the baiting, torturing and slaughter of animals in an enclosed space for public entertainment was prohibited by British criminal law more than 100 years ago.

Lectures about the "art" of bullfighting have already been given to pupils at a Surrey grammar school,<sup>1</sup> as well as to Rotary clubs and youth clubs.

The same group supplied information on the BBC TV film *Matador* (BBC 1 July 29, 1966), which was described by BBC authorities as "a documentary on the whole business of bullfighting".

A photograph in a bullring trade magazine<sup>2</sup> in Madrid shows the producers of the "documentary" film accompanied by members of the British pressure-group and their PROs.

It is regrettable that the television programme *Matador* spared viewers most of the gross cruelty and the scenes in Spanish slaughterhouses showing matadors practising the "moment of truth" (slaughtering with the sword). The captive cattle endure repeated sword thrusts and take a long time to die while the matadors perfect their "virile art form".

The bullring show earns for Spain much foreign currency and vast sums are spent on propaganda aimed at extracting money from tourists. The show is becoming increasingly dependent on tourist support. It is being boosted in Britain and other countries to aid Spanish economy through tourism. Propaganda is spread in a variety of ways, one of them being through books and articles which glamourise a show which, on account of its hideous cruelty, is outlawed in civilised countries. The campaign to attract foreign tourists to bullfights operates on an international scale. Those, directly and indirectly, financially interested in the bullring show work through international organisations.

In 1962 Interpol delegates walked out from a bullfight describing it as "an obscene spectacle". This was the most pointed rebuff to the bloodshow since 1957 when the late Pope Pius XII refused to receive a projected "pilgrimage of homage" to Rome by representatives of the bullring trade.

Pope Pius made these people understand that their intended gifts of a jewelled matador's cape and a million pesetas would be by no means acceptable.

Despite ecclesiastical censure Spanish clerics encourage and support this cruel relic of paganism, a public money-making show that makes huge fortunes for Spanish bull farmers.

<sup>1</sup> Purley Grammar School.

Mrs M. W. WATKINS.

<sup>2</sup> *El Ruedo*, 13/4/65.

(Continued from previous page)

tion (who recently, when speaking at a school at which 80 per cent of the pupils were coloured, blandly expressed the hope that the school would mould them into "one unified Christian community"). And the first three sections of the pamphlet contain much with which Humanists will strongly agree—for example the statement that "While it is true that children should certainly be taught about the Christian religion since this is part of the cultural heritage of this country and the West, there is no need for them to be taught this as if the myths which went to make it up were true" (p. 5).

In the fourth section, however, we reach the parting of the ways. Messrs. Beaumont and Cloy, though they are prepared to treat the incarnation and the resurrection as matters of opinion, do not, despite the latter's agnosticism, question the basic doctrine of the existence of God. And they take for granted the desirability of entering into a "personal relationship with God", and the importance of "worship" (a term which is not defined) as a means to that end.

So long as these assumptions are held by Christian educationists it is clearly unrealistic to hope, as the authors do, that agreed syllabuses can be drawn up by Christians and Humanists in collaboration, or that "the collective worship required under the Act could be broadened" to allow for Assemblies acceptable to both Christians and Humanists (p. 13). From the Humanist point of view, this is like trying to broaden the basis of astrology so as to make it acceptable to astronomers.

However the pamphlet contains other more practicable suggestions which Humanists will whole-heartedly welcome, at least as

interim measures: for example, the proposal that "voluntary" (i.e. denominational Church) schools, which in some areas are the only ones available, should be obliged by law to inform parents of their right to opt their children out of "RI", and obliged also to provide satisfactory alternative occupations for children for whom the option is exercised.

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