

Freethinker

Registered at the GPO as a Newspaper

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

VOLUME 89, No. 13

Saturday, March 29, 1969

Sixpence Weekly

CIVIL LIBERTIES

THE ANNUAL REPORT of the National Council for Civil Liberties appeared on March 12 and is encouraging reading for all those concerned with fighting injustice and maintaining freedom. But despite the amount of work being done by the NCCL for which everyone in this country cannot but be thankful, the report makes only too clear how inadequate its present resources are in relation to the size and number of problems which need to be dealt with.

The report discusses in detail the progress made and the difficulties still to be overcome on a large number of fronts, under headings ranging from 'reluctant servicemen' to 'scientology', from 'Northern Ireland' to 'censorship'. And though this is impressive particularly when it is realised that the present annual budget is between £8,000 and £10,000, the amount of essential work left undone brings one into agreement with the NCCL'S statement that: "To maintain the highest standards of civil liberty in this country would need an NCCL comparable in resources and reputation to the American Civil Liberties Union, with its annual budget of one million dollars.

Many people are not fully aware of how the NCCL works. This is best explained by quoting from the annual report:

"The National Council for Civil Liberties was formed in 1934 by trade unionists and others angered by the treatment of strikers and hunger marchers. The NCCL now campaigns for the rights of all political, religious, racial and other minorities in Britain and works to protect and extend the rights of all citizens. In practice, this means giving help to a wide range of people: from servicemen recruited as teenagers who are subsequently refused a discharge, to gypsies, harried and treated like lepers by local communities and authorities; from coloured people refused jobs and homes, to citizens wrongfully arrested . . .

Action depends on the particular case. In some instances, all that is necessary is to advise the complainant of his legal position or refer him to one of the many solicitors who can help. More frequently, the NCCL itself will act. It may take representations to a government ministry—for example, the Home Office on an immigration issue, the Ministry of Defence on Servicemen's rights, the Ministry of Housing on permanent sites for gypsies.

If no satisfaction is received, the case may be raised in Parliament by one of the Parliamentary Civil Liberties Group of MPs. MPs might also join in deputations to Ministers. Likewise, in cases involving arbitrary decisions of local government and the police, the NCCL will make direct representations and, in the case of the police, will if necessary make an official complaint.

A number of complaints of the same type frequently lead to the opinion that new legislation is the only answer. Equally, problems affecting the rights of large sections of the community—discrimination against women and children, invasions of privacy, censorship—can often only be dealt with conclusively by legislation and changes in the law. Through the Parliamentary Group and the submission

INSIDE:

F. A. Ridley on Teilhard de Chardin

of evidence to governmental commissions and committees, and through research studies into the issues, the NCCL attempts to improve the law and so help to extend civil liberties in a broader sense.

One example of success in this direction was the effort made to ensure the rights of patients compulsorily detained in mental hospitals. The campaign led to the passing of the Mental Health Act, 1959, which established the right of regular appeal against detention. A more recent campaign has been to persuade the government to follow the recommendations of the Wilson Committee for an appeals procedure for immigrants refused entry into the country.

Perhaps the NCCL's most important function is to make everyone aware of their rights and obligations. This is done largely through the sale of publications on subjects as varied as the rights of children, dangerous drugs, police powers and the citizen's rights on arrest. In 1968, the NCCL started a new series of broadsheets on topical issues. It is called *Speak Out* and the first one, on race relations, was published in October 1968; the second, on *Privacy*¹, in February 1969."

Speaking of the prospects for the future the NCCL say "Our size and scope are more modest but we have been encouraged by the explosion of interest in our work which is already bringing in more money, more members and local committees. Last year we only had three liaison groups, now we have nine. This is indication enough that the NCCL is at the beginning of a more powerful and influential phase of its existence". Freethinkers will welcome and, it is hoped, support this new phase.

¹ A report of the *Speak Out* on 'Privacy' appears in this edition of FREETHINKER.

H.T.A. RESOLUTION

AT A MEETING on March 1 of the Executive Committee of the Humanist Teachers' Association the following resolution was passed: "The Humanist Teachers' Association urges that the clauses of the 1944 Education Act relating to compulsory worship and religious instruction should be omitted from the new Act. The Association condemns as

(Continued overleaf)

Freethinker

Published by G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.

Editor: David Reynolds

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(Continued from front page)

undemocratic the public pronouncements of the Secretary of State for Education and Science in which he has stated his intention of prejudging this issue without regard to the lively debate now taking place on this topic".

Since the passing of this resolution Mr Short has held a seminar on religious education. This took place last weekend at Windsor. Unfortunately at the time of going to press no information is available as to the results of this meeting. However, what can be said is that, though this action by Mr Short is a welcome step in the right direction, it by no means negates the second part of the Humanist Teachers' resolution. A seminar from which Sikhs, Jews, Muslims and Humanists are excluded can have no claim to be democratic.

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

Agnostics Adoption Society: The Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Annual General Meeting—Chairman: Professor A. J. Ayer. Speaker: Mrs Iris Goodacre (author, *Adoption Policy and Practice*), "Adoption Societies—Problems and Prospects".

Cardiff Humanist Group: Glamorgan County Council Staff Club, Westgate Street, Cardiff: Wednesday, April 2, 7.45 p.m.: "Twentieth Century Poetry", Vernon Daniel (Teacher and Poet).

Chelmsford Humanist Group: Lecture Room, Library, Civic Centre, Chelmsford: Tuesday, April 1, 7.30 p.m.: "Students Problems", Miss Ruth Bunday (Executive Officer—National Union of Students).

Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate: Sunday, March 30, 6.30 p.m.: "The Population Problem" (illustrated), Dr. E. A. Seeley (Progressive League).

National Campaign for the Abolition of Factory Farming: Church House Hall, Chalk Lane, Cockfosters: Thursday, April 3, 7.30 p.m.: Short Lecture by Mr Peter Reeve. Questions answered. Followed by a Mini-Mart.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1: Sunday, March 30, 11 a.m.: "Science and Social Responsibility", Professor Hyman Levy.

Worthing Humanist Group: Morelands Hotel (opposite the pier): Sunday, March 30, 5.30 p.m.: "A Philosophy for Modern Man", Richard Clements (Chairman, Birmingham Fabian Society).

MILES MALLESON

THE DEATH of Miles Malleison on March 15 at the age of eighty will be regretted by all those who have witnessed his superb performances on the stage and screen. The invaluable contribution he made to theatre and films would be a fitting testimony to any man, but Malleison will not only be remembered for his brilliant portrayals of fictitious and historical characters. His support of radical causes and peace organisations revealed the deep concern for humanity which lay beneath the greasepaint. He was a member of the National Secular Society and was a speaker at the society's dinner in 1967. In a powerful attack on religion he said that he didn't see why anyone should have a kind of myth to live by.

"All of us are born with two duties and two responsibilities: the first one is to ourselves, to develop and use any talents, gifts, genius, capacity, so as to bring ourselves as near a hundred per cent as possible of the best we can be; that is a perfectly good and selfish duty. The other is to our fellows, to those around us, whether its a small private group, or whether its a larger public group, to devote your life in whatever way you can to bring more civilisation and culture and justice into the world."

He went on to say that these two duties, often contradictory, selfish and unselfish, were quite enough to knit together in life.

One feels justified in saying that with his art and his concern for his fellow man, Malleison succeeded in fulfilling these criteria, which in themselves represent an exemplary humanist philosophy.

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PRIVACY

SIMON HAMMOND

A report drawn from the National Council for Civil Liberties Broadsheet "Speak Out".

*I give the fight up: let there be an end
A privacy, an obscure nook for me
I want to be forgotten even by God.*

(Robert Browning)

EVERYONE SOMETIMES feels the sentiments expressed above though perhaps not so poetically, namely the need to escape from his environment, to be completely alone and unmolested—this form of escapism is a natural part of the human character. George Orwell's *1984* is thus a terrifying prospect because life under Big Brother destroys that individual privacy and creates in one the feeling that nothing one does or even thinks is any longer a private affair. The saying goes that to be forewarned is to be forearmed but signs are appearing that erosion of privacy has already begun insidiously despite this.

The NCCL published recently the second edition of its broadsheet *Speak Out* entitled 'Privacy'—an exposé if you like of the ways our privacy is being threatened and by which it might be threatened in the future. Taking as its ideal Article 12 of the Declaration of Human Rights (which concerns individual liberty) it makes some points which are worth reiterating here.

Basically interference with individual rights can be achieved on two levels, technological and personal, the former being a rather hidden method and the latter an evident physical confrontation with interference. Consider the technological first: those of us who have had experience of celluloid portrayal of the spying business are aware of the potentialities of the 'bugging' devices and phone tapping in international espionage. But have you ever considered the possibility of their being used against the individual in society? They can be and, what is more, legally: the Home Office can issue a warrant to any authority for the interception of telephone calls or mail—this privilege has been used by fourteen such authorities, including the police, customs and excise and even the Home Office itself, according to the 1957 Birkett committee. However, naturally, no figures or details about this are available to the public. As for the new range of bugging devices, their ever-increasing sophistication has left James Bond's devices looking about as lethal as a crystal set. Details of these are in *Speak Out*. Shunned officially by the Association of British Detectives they are nevertheless used in a variety of ways—for instance in providing evidence in adultery (legally acceptable), and more significantly in industrial spying—and yet appropriation of board room secrets by photo-copying is not an 'arrestable offence' providing no damage is done to the building and no actual papers are stolen. Crazy isn't it?

The relatively new world of computers becomes heavily incriminated in this. Apparently the Home Office is considering a National Police Records computer which would record information not only about criminals but about people who have never been in trouble with the police as well. A link with computers containing information of National Health and Insurance records is also a possibility. The logical end point of this line of computer development is a National Computer Bank encompassing all forms of information. Too fantastic to be true? I am afraid not for two main reasons. First it is a technological possibility using a lasar process which can store on *one* tape the equivalent of twenty pages of information about every man, woman and child in the USA—in other words a

complete dossier on your life ranging from details of sexual morality to your current bank balance, any piece of which can be extracted from the record in minutes. Secondly, this type of computerisation is apparently already taking place in the USA. Perhaps there are advantages in this process in that government and industrial efficiency may be increased, and perhaps even the crime rate may be lowered, but on a very basic level of criticism computers can make mistakes, sometimes very embarrassing ones as the NCCL points out. Furthermore consider the possibility of such information about your private life getting into the hands of someone unscrupulous enough to make use of it.

Finally on this question it is not only the government who could attain this technological access to information—it is also the hire purchase companies, the private detective agencies, the security organisations and the 'information gatherers'. The NCCL quotes an example of this concerning a company called Management Investigations Ltd. The disclosure last year of their business methods understandably caused quite a disturbance. Apparently they had compiled a black-list of employees discharged because of (a) a criminal offence, (b) a wilful act of dishonesty, or (c) they had behaved in a manner which threatened the security of the firm. One can only conclude that this type of technological interference constitutes a most lethal threat to individual liberty in the near future unless it can be checked quickly.

Secondly, consider examples on the personal level. In 1967 the Dangerous Drugs Act provided the police with the right to interfere with any group of people or single individual if they were suspected of possessing drugs, a power superimposed on their 130-year-old power of being able to 'stop, search, or detain' anybody suspected of being involved in stealing. What this power could amount to is a ready-made excuse for the police to detain anybody, the ulterior motive being adequately protected. Certain instances seem to indicate that the police have indeed taken advantage of this new power. What is more, any investigation into complaints about police personnel is conducted amongst themselves—very often the offended parties hear no more about the matter except for an announcement that 'disciplinary action has been taken'.

Did you know that the privacy of your home can be abused by a whole host of government officials (National Insurance men, Income Tax officers, etc.) legally? If they carry Justices' warrants they can *forcibly* enter your house, any attempt by you to prevent this constituting a punishable offence. Even the students political activities are not free from investigation (preferably using student spies) by various organisations. Seemingly this invasion is like a relentless consuming growth—nothing remains unaffected in the end.

The purpose of the NCCL broadsheet is to make the public aware of this danger and to help halt its insidious growth by signing a petition demanding the upholding by law of Article 12 of the Declaration of Human Rights. This is to be presented to the government on December 10, 1969, Human Rights Day. Make no mistake there is no existing legislation on privacy although attempts have been and are being made to rectify this situation. If you value your personal liberty I cannot advise you strongly enough to join the campaign, read the NCCL *Speak Out* on Privacy in full, and thereby help to make sure legislation is brought to prevent the growth from swallowing society's freedom in its entirety.

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

F. A. RIDLEY

IN HIS recently published biography¹ of the famous Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, the well-known church actor and Catholic biographer, Robert Speight, has turned his attention to perhaps the most controversial figure in the chequered evolution of the modern Roman Catholic church. de Chardin (1881-1955), though unpopular in ecclesiastical circles in his lifetime, is widely regarded today, both inside and outside the Roman Catholic church, as perhaps the most outstanding thinker and writer produced by that church since Cardinal Newman. Paradoxically, but perhaps not altogether surprisingly, particularly from the point of view of social dialectics, this most original exponent of intellectual individualism in the modern Church of Rome, began, and remained down to the end of his days, a loyal, if at times, an impatient member of the most traditional, authoritarian, and rigidly disciplined order in that church, the "Company of Jesus", a para-military organisation, founded by Ignatius Loyola expressly in order to defend the intolerant principles of the Counter-Reformation of the 16th and succeeding centuries: "The Catholicism of a state of seige", as I have elsewhere defined it. It represents perhaps the most paradoxical element in the strangely assorted career of this peculiar Jesuit, that this primary exponent of a thorough-going evolutionism, that appears to be the very negation of the inflexible dogmas of the Counter-reformation; should yet have emerged from the "Praetorian Guard" of that counter-reformation, the "Company" of Jesus! But after all, did not Lamarck, the precursor of Darwin in the theory of evolution itself, and, himself also a pupil of the Jesuits, announce the then world famous theory of the giraffe which "deliberately grew a long neck in order to survive"? To reach this biological conception, all that the French naturalist really had to do was to study attentively the actual evolution of the Jesuit order that had taught him. For what has the famous Company of Jesus ever done in reality except "grow successive long necks in order to survive". Teilhard de Chardin himself and his evolutionary Catholicism no doubt represents the latest to date of these "successive necks".

Evolution of a Jesuit

Teilhard de Chardin S.J. was born in Auvergne, France, in 1881, and died in New York in 1955. He entered the Jesuit society at an early age, and remained in it until his death, despite successive difficulties with his ecclesiastical superiors over his apparently unorthodox speculations. For example, his best known book *The Phenomenon of Man*, now-a-days a world best-seller was refused permission for publication during his own life-time. In his own day, Chardin was known outside his church chiefly as an anthropologist and paleontologist of international repute. Particularly so in his capacity as an expert on the anthropology of the Far East; and, very specially, as one of the discoverers of Peking Man (*Sinanthropus*); one of the most important vestigial discoveries of early man (or ape-man) yet made by modern research. In his scientific capacity, de Chardin enjoyed an international scientific reputation, was elected to several learned societies, and made the acquaintance of a number of learned scientists, including Sir Julian Huxley, who was later to contribute a preface to the English translation of *The Phenomenon of Man*. Though the view has been expressed in some Rationalistic circles that this introduction reflects more credit on Huxley's heart than on his head! In any case, this work has come to rank as the best known scientific (or perhaps pseudo-scientific!) philo-

sophical work so far produced by the new pro-evolutionary Catholicism with which the French Jesuits' name and fame are primarily associated.

de Chardin and the Vatican

Within his own Church and Order, Teilhard de Chardin was chiefly known in his own lifetime as the foremost exponent of a reconciliation between modern scientific theories of evolution and the traditional theology of the Roman Catholic Church. He was frequently referred to in this capacity in contemporary discussions on Evolution in the Catholic press. (Compare footnote at end of article.) His still bolder and more unorthodox pantheistic theories of "a Cosmic Christ", and of the eventual absorption of all separate human individuality into this "Cosmic Christ", did not fully appear until after his death when his major works were published outside the church and without the permission of the ecclesiastical authorities. However, enough of this esoteric teaching seeped out during his lifetime to cause him to be regarded as the *enfant terrible* of the Jesuits, and as a source of perpetual embarrassment to the Vatican. The then Pope Pius XII (1939-58) personally expressed disapproval to a French visitor: "de Chardin is a great scientist, but he is no theologian. In one of his essays he speaks of 'the Problem of God'. But for us there is no such problem". However, the unorthodox Jesuit was never condemned by Rome, after all, he was a mystic rather than a modernist and his considerable scientific reputation was useful to the church in an age of scientific inquiry. But it is evident from Mr. Speight's narrative that amongst the Catholic "Fundamentalists" of that day there were many who would have liked to have seen de Chardin thrown out of the church bag and baggage. As for example, the Superior of a Jesuit hostel in Peking who told his unwelcome visitor that the sooner he returned to France the better, since the Jesuits in Peking had no room or time for Evolutionists or Communists. When de Chardin pleaded guilty to a belief in evolution, but went on to deny that he was a communist, the Peking Jesuit promptly retorted, that if he was an Evolutionist he must necessarily be a Communist. Obviously, this conversation must have taken place some time before the era of Christian-Marxist dialogue.

A new "St Thomas"?

In his assessment of Teilhard's apparently rapidly growing influence in the church with which he was at loggerheads so frequently during his stormy career his biographer points to the more liberal atmosphere of social and theological discussion which prevailed during the second Vatican Council since the French Jesuit's death. Perhaps the most permanent result of that important ecclesiastical gathering convened by that shrewd Papal strategist, Pope John XXIII, has been to introduce the concept of evolutionary thinking into the formerly static framework of the old scholastic catholic theology. This latest change in the ecclesiastical climate actually represents a sheer necessity for Rome if she wishes to make her theology credible in the mental atmosphere to which evolutionary thinking supplies, so to speak, the place of life-giving oxygen. But this evidently implies the speedy, and now-a-days, long overdue deposition of St. Thomas Aquinas from the undisputed throne of catholic theology that he has now occupied since the origins of the Counter-Reformation at the Council of Trent four centuries ago. Since St Thomas, writing during the High Middle Ages obviously knew nothing of biological

evolution any more than incidentally, he did of religious toleration. His static views on biology are concisely expressed in a lengthy quotation given on Mr Speight's title page. The present growing influence and importance of Teilhard de Chardin as perhaps the most widely known representative of the most recent post-counter-reformation epoch in the long and chequered evolution of the Roman Catholic church; would appear to arise from his present increasingly possible role as the ultimate successor of Thomas in the post-scholastic evolution of the Roman Catholic theology? As in brief, the "Angelic Doctor" of a coming evolutionary phase of Catholicism?

"St Teilhard"?

At any rate, just at present de Chardin appears to lead the field in the present hunt for the eventual successor of St Thomas. As noted above, his *Phenomenon of Man* represents the most ambitious attempt yet made to produce a Catholic interpretation of the modern cosmos consistent with modern evolutionary cosmogony. In this 20th century, our French Jesuit attempts to define God in terms consistent with evolution, just as previously in the 13th century, Aquinas had defined God in the then alien terms supplied by Aristotelian logic. Incidentally, if de Chardin was in

trouble with ecclesiastical authority in his lifetime so also was Thomas Aquinas, then regarded by 13th century "Fundamentalists" as a dangerous Aristotelian modernist who infiltrated traditional Christian theology with the Pagan science of Aristotle. As such, Aquinas was condemned by the University of Oxford, even then apparently "the Home of Lost Causes"! It is perhaps this dazzling future elevation of the French Jesuit, "St Teilhard", that gives to this well-written and comprehensive biography by Mr Robert Speight a permanent intellectual importance.

FOOTNOTE

Unfortunately we lack space for any adequate assessment of the new-evolutionary Catholicism of which Teilhard de Chardin was one of the most important pioneers. In general, the old pre-evolutionary Catholicism appears to be more logically consistent. For example, if one accepts simultaneously Genesis and evolutionary concepts, Adam, "the first man", must surely have been born of pre-human ancestry in which case he must have undergone a simultaneous transformation, simultaneously losing his tail and finding his soul? de Chardin himself, appears deliberately to have evaded this crucial dilemma for the Catholic evolutionist by abruptly dismissing Adam and Eve in a single sentence: "Man entered the world as a crowd". It is surely scarcely surprising that he found it impossible to get permission in his lifetime to publish views so novel and startling to traditional Catholic orthodoxy?

¹ Teilhard de Chardin, *a Biography* by Robert Speight, 45s, 1967.

CHINA'S SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

G. L. SIMONS

FOURTH OF FIVE ARTICLES

THE CHINESE REVOLUTION is a unique event in the history of communism. In the last hundred years a number of socialist and communist revolutions have been attempted. A number—such as the Paris Commune and the 1920's German revolt—ended in disaster; a number were successful, the revolutions in Russia and China being the most obvious examples. The idealism that attended the Russian revolution will be apparent to anyone who has read John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, and a similar passion existed in China in 1948 and 1949. The unique significance of the Chinese revolution was that its leaders saw it had to continue beyond the mere taking of economic power.

Marx had always stressed that after political and economic power had been assumed by the proletariat the workers and peasants would face severe challenges to the consolidation of the revolution. The reasons for this are clear. When the working class takes power it does so in circumstances where there is powerful bourgeois social grouping with influences in the fields of finance, education, scholarship, journalism, broadcasting, etc. When the working class takes power it is impossible to change the bourgeois orientation of many people brought up in a capitalist framework. *The class war continues beyond the people's revolution or the revolution is lost.* China is alone amongst communist states (with the possible exception of Cuba) in sustaining the revolution in the days when the essential foundations have to be laid.

What are the essentials of communism which must be created in the state? In the first place economic power must be taken by the working class (or by the peasants); secondly the broad mass of the people must be involved in political and economic activity; thirdly there must be a continuous battle to eradicate bourgeois influences from one's own mind and from the minds of others. The aim is to create a just and durable society, where men's needs are met as of right, where exploitation of man by man is ended,

and where democratic activity permeates the very fabric of society—in its factories, its banks, its government, its farms, its armed forces, and all social institutions. Essential to these ideals is the creation of "socialist man": until human nature has been remade the thorough-going socialist state cannot be made durable.

The question of economic incentive is central to the debate between the Soviet Union and China. In the Soviet Union the recent economic "reforms" have increased the financial incentive for individual activity; the reason why such a scheme should encourage labour is that the acquisition of superior consumer goods is being lauded as an ideal. A large salary differential already exists: government officials, scientists, "approved" writers and some other favoured social groups receive very much larger salaries than ordinary workers; and others privileges attend, such as country dachas, official cars, travel permits, etc. In Yugoslavia recent laws have increased the permitted number of adults who may be employed by a private individual; in Czechoslovakia there is talk of a multiparty political state; in Poland more and more emphasis is being given to private farming. In Yugoslavia there is even talk of deriving investment from workers' savings, with a return to the workers in invested capital. Such a scheme is not intended to give investors voting rights in companies, in the Western style, but it would involve the creation of a Stock Market and subject the economy to the vagaries of free enterprise capitalism. Already unemployment is a problem in Yugoslavia.

This is not the place to argue the case for (truly) communist society. I will simply state without argument the position as I see it. The values praised in capitalist society are individual economic success, ruthlessness, pride, acquisitiveness, greed, avarice, selfishness and the like. The successful man is one who can make others dance to his tune, who can have economic power over them. The

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successful man must ensure the relative failure and economic insecurity of the rest. Some brands of Christians pay lip-service to the ideas of selfishness and fellow-feeling, to the rejection of material acquisition and competition. But these concepts have never been the mainsprings of economic free enterprise, and a more ruthless and bitter philosophy has been applied.

If men are to co-operate in society it is essential that personal economic incentives be replaced by collective social incentives. The creation of "socialist man" may not be possible in the long term, but if it is not then a durable, just society cannot be created either. It is because of this that the Chinese attempts are such an important and exciting experiment.

The Cultural Revolution, inspired by Mao Tse-tung, is a struggle for power, not in the petty sense of a conflict between individuals but in the sense of a class conflict between those who would consolidate and enlarge China's communist orientation and those who would place China on the same slippery slope as the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe. The Cultural Revolution also involves a purge of individuals, not behind locked doors where the mass of the people do not know what is going on but in the streets where maximum popular participation is encouraged—and it is this aspect that so frightens Western politicians. The idea that *The People* should have political power!—not according to some meaningless written or unwritten constitution, but in reality, in fact, *in everydady practice*.

By the example of the revolutionary cadres, workers and peasants are encouraged to discuss their faults, and those of others, in public. In this way resentments and bitterness are purged and the group solidarity and identification are increased. Every attempt is made to close the gulfs between workers and intellectuals, cadres and peasants, men and women. Selflessness and sacrifice are praised; selfishness and personal enrichment at the expense of the community are condemned without reservation. One of Chairman Mao's instructions is to "Fight self, repudiate revisionism", and an editorial in *Jiefangjun Bao* (8/10/67) points out that "Only when we have successfully eliminated self-interest, shall we be able to carry the struggle against revisionism through to the end more effectively". The Cultural Revolution is directed against a handful of people who would return China to the Western fold, perhaps not immediately but certainly in the long term.

The Chinese people are actively encouraged to discuss issues that affect their lives. At a time when workers in France, students in England, etc., are struggling to achieve some involvement in the making of decisions that concern them, the Chinese people are urged to participate, to discuss the deepest political issues, aspects of financial policy, factory planning, the orientation of education and journalism, the structure of the universities, social and economic planning for the future, and anything else that affects their lives. To the extent that the Chinese people are involved in decision making their society is the most democratic and vital in the world—and this is why the West trembles. If the Chinese experiment succeeds, the way will be open for oppressed people everywhere.

The Soviet Union had her chance and she is systematically and progressively throwing it away: the bourgeois ideology is coming to the fore and every new "reform" accelerates the process—personal enrichment and rat race in domestic affairs and the abandonment of proletarian

internationalism abroad. China is trying to establish what has been the age-old dream of idealists for centuries—the just and harmonious society where men live together as brothers and not as vicious competitors in the fight for goods. The breadth and depth of the Chinese revolution are without precedent—and it is to this gigantic experiment, rather than to the tired and disillusioned moralising of an avaricious and exploiting West, that we must look for the possibilities of a better and more rational Mankind.

FILM REVIEW

THOMAS DARREN

THE SERGEANT

HOMOSEXUALITY has been the theme of several recent films, but *The Sergeant* surpasses all of them, in bringing home the inner torments of a man hopelessly in love with another 'normal' man.

The setting of the film is an American barracks in France after the war, where the discipline has become relaxed, due to the command of an unprofessional soldier. The arrival of the sergeant sees an end to the slovenliness and apathy of the camp, but also sees the final breakdown of the real professional. A flashback to the war shows us that the sergeant is the complete, self-sufficient army man. This is what makes the film so interesting, moving and compelling, subsidised by the genius of Rod Steiger, who equals his magnificent performances in *The Pawnbroker* and *In the Heat of the Night*.

The camp is reluctantly pulled into shape, a huge resentment of the sergeant builds up, and Private Swanson is recruited to work for the sergeant in his office. Swanson is an intelligent youth who accepts the sergeant as his friend, though is reluctant to be around with him out of camp, when seeing his prospective bride in town. Not wanting to appear rude he takes the sergeant with him. Swanson sees the sergeant as a lonely man who wants a drinking partner. However, the sergeant becomes jealous of Swanson's girl, and from there on he follows Swanson everywhere, tormenting himself beyond endurance. The scene where the sergeant loses all control, and so loses Swanson completely as a friend, is so perfectly played that at the same time as feeling disgusted and embarrassed, we cannot help feeling pity for him. The complete ruin of a hard but fair man, and an excellent soldier, follows, so increasing our pity for him.

The script and the theme are excellent and are only overridden by the phenomenal performance of Rod Steiger. That the other characters were overshadowed did not matter since Steiger's presence was enough to make a memorable film.

BOOK REVIEW

DAVID TRIBE

THE HUMANIST OUTLOOK (Pemberton, 35s).

AFTER *The Humanist Frame* I must confess I began *The Humanist Outlook* with considerable misgivings. Both books consist of essays commissioned and edited by British Humanist Association presidents and were conceived and promoted as public relations exercises. An indefinable air of mysticism rose from the pages of the earlier publication, but the only reference I recall to mysticism's maestro in the current volume is a scathing 'Do we want to finish up with Teilhard de Chardin in the dream of a world-brain? Some leading humanists who ought to know better have relaxed criticism of this dream-state so far that they appear to be not far off it themselves already' (Kathleen Nott). Much more to my taste.

The absence of mysticism didn't really surprise me. But I did expect plenty of salesmanship, dubious optimism and the nasal note of ecumenism. More on this later. Let me say at once, the book lights up the whole humanist spectrum. Largely this colour balance arises from the skilful selection of contributors and the fact that A. J. Ayer confines his editorial Introduction chiefly to linking the essays which follow. Anyone familiar with the politics of the humanist movements will observe some notable but not unexpected omissions but there are some surprising inclusions. Professor Ayer even echoes a tribute to the nineteenth century freethinkers by Cyril Bibby, who urges the movement to cease 'confusing contemporaneity with novelty' and study past debates so that 'a good deal of repetitive discussion would be saved and a fair number of inconclusive conferences seen to be superfluous'. But it is a pity that the editor continues to date the origin of humanism to the renaissance and not to the pre-Christian Greek world. This makes it either an adjunct of Christianity or a rebel against it, and he shies off the latter: 'I think it would be a mistake for the humanist movement to expend its main energy on an anti-clerical crusade'. Few would object to admonition phrased in this

way: but it is a far cry from being, as the Americans say, positively motivated, and giving one's major energies to framing compromise statements on education at joint Christian-Humanist committees, meeting Catholics at Amersfoort and subsequently refusing to criticise segregated, state-financed, Catholic schools (a secret undertaking?), and encouraging Christian imperialism in Biafra at the behest of the Social Morality Council. Margaret Knight and Antony Flew however show no such inhibitions.

Most of the contributors are scientists or educationists of one sort or another, and the editor has, I think, made the right decision in featuring throughout the book the three pressing issues of our time: population, conservation and moral education. But the two contributions that I found not only the best written but the most original and perceptive were from the lady novelists, Brigid Brophy and Kathleen Nott. Some of the essays, though interesting in themselves, seem to have little connection with humanism. Lord Francis Williams's piece on 'Mass Media and the Coming Revolution in Communications', for example, might as well have appeared in a symposium on cybernetics; while Sir Karl Popper's 'Emancipation through Knowledge' is the translation of a German radio script on Kant and makes, by the way, some dubious comments on his relations to the romantic movement.

One suspects that the hostile reviews that have appeared stem in the main from hostility to humanism. But there is, perhaps, something unsatisfactory about this *genre* of books. F. A. E. Crew has just the right amount of space for this personal testament 'The Meaning of Death'. In most other cases the authors don't really seem to have room to develop their themes as they might have liked. One is forced to ask what sort of audience is aimed at. The movement wasn't founded yesterday and this isn't the first collection of its kind. Quite frankly the scholarly reader is likely to expect something more high-powered and incisive. There is a certain amount of the bland liberal idealism that flows like warm butter across the pages of the *Guardian*. Despite some dire warnings about the future this is especially true on the science side. H. J. Eysenck gives a timely caution against the 'Principle of Certainty' that impels many intellectuals into unwarranted dogmatic statements on social questions: but then interprets a few

contradictory experiments on rats and dogs and the way they react to 'punishment' (though they could have no notion of having done anything 'wrong') as demonstrating the futility of penology. There happen to be studies on convicts themselves that challenge the value of simple retribution, but this is a somewhat different story. Nor do I share Dr Bibby's confidence that 'it is, in principle, scientifically discoverable how far the maintenance of private property or of marital fidelity may contribute to the most general end of universal happiness, and thus warrant acceptance as intermediate ends'. The newly-formed British Society for Social Responsibility in Science will serve a useful purpose if it persuades scientists to think about what they are doing and agree on some things they ought *not* to do; but I shall be amazed if it ever reaches unanimity over what they ought to *do*. The real world of ethical decisions is rather more complex than *The Humanist Outlook* suggests.

It may be said the book wasn't intended to be high-powered but was directed at the 'enquirer' or the general public. I think it unlikely however it will make many recruits for the BHA or be widely read in the laundrettes and railway carriages. There are some who say that in the present climate of religious scepticism, organised humanism ought to become a mass movement. They seem to have made little study of the mechanics of mass movements. If the book has lapses in intellectual rigour, it altogether lacks bestseller *charisma*. Inevitably, with many honest independent voices, it present different 'images' and 'self-knocking copy'—both bad for sales. There might be some hope of building up a sizable movement—if size were the only criterion—by concentrating on Paisleyite hysteria ('join the humanists and fight the papist traitors') or Grahamite uplift ('humanism holds out an anchor for those who are drifting in the currents of life') or Scientological scientism ('through humanism you can achieve the omega-potential of your human capabilities'). The alternative is to try to make a worthwhile donation to the fund of ideas, without fear or favour, regardless of popularity or trendiness. But those who, without advertising or PR expertise, try to be all things to all men will end up as nothing to anyone. Setting aside any question of impact, however, everyone is certain to find something to interest or instruct him in this book.

WHICH FIRST—RELIGION, SEX OR MORALS?

ISOBEL GRAHAME

WHILE IN LEICESTER on November 10th last I bought a copy of the *Sunday Sun* which carried an excellent well documented article by Jane Fenwick on 'VD—the dangerous teenage girls'. The first two paragraphs went as follows:

"At first glance she is no different from many another teenage girl. She's neat and pretty in her miniskirt, keeps up with all the latest records, and can be the life and soul of any party.

But veneriologists see her in a different light. She's the Enthusiastic Amateur, the irresponsible, anti-social adolescent who can infect a dozen or so men in a month with venereal disease without batting a false eyelash."

Yesterday evening I found my front doormat scattered with grubby bits of paper bearing crude drawings and cruder writings. At first, as I gathered them up, I thought some local psychotic had conceived a grudge against someone and tipped his filthy gestures of hatred and contempt through my letterbox my mistake.

The collection turned out to be an elaborate invitation from a schoolgirl to have sexual intercourse with her, making it abundantly clear that she had reached puberty and wished to be made pregnant. Later I discovered an envelope from which the papers must have fallen, for it was too small to contain them if properly closed up and had skidded under the dining-room door. This envelope was addressed 'Privat. Rede this Rishad—Luv C'. So it had been intended for the 14-year-old son of my neighbour.

This girl and boy are typical of their age group attending a large comprehensive with beautiful modern buildings surrounded by vast playing fields and a heated swimming pool, all on the outskirts of a small market town of some 14,000 inhabitants.

I am no prude, having brought up a son and daughter and see many graffitti during my 12 years as a school manager, but what worried me was the clear evidence of pro-

found emotional shock and loathing, not only of her own body and its functions and that of the boy, but of the whole process of procreation and her bitter detestation and neurotic hatred of babies.

How many schoolchildren receiving classroom instruction in sexual knowledge are similarly affected by the shock of receiving information they are not able to accommodate and, having suffered this experience, will they ever be able to develop into confident mature people with the capacity to really want and love their own children?

Throughout, the drawings and writings disclose a dangerous mixture of precocity and educational retardation. This girl and her intended victim are of course receiving RI and attending compulsory worship. They have also had sexual education at school for at least a couple of years, probably longer. Fortunately the boy's parents have made a better job of his sexual education in their amateur way at home, but he is at an impressionable unpredictable age, nevertheless.

I think the Humanist movement must be careful to go on public record as having its priorities right. Before flaunting our belief in sexual freedom for all, we should concentrate on the campaign for compulsory moral education. It is no use offering contraceptives all for free to every pubescent girl if mismanaged sex education causes some to become hell bent on having babies to hate. Have educationists got enough knowledge about the effects of classroom sex lessons on mobs of 40 or so children of vastly differing home backgrounds and a variety of mental, intellectual and emotional stages of development?

And is it in fact inescapable that human reaction to sex knowledge must be primarily one of smutty degradation,

(Continued on back page)

LETTERS

Free Speech

IN HIS so-called reply of March 15 to my letter of February 22, Mr Simons suggested that I believed that "vested interest groups" yield their wealth and privilege "as a result of polite discussion as to what is right and just". This naive suggestion is a figment of Mr Simons' imagination, a product of his "will-to-believe", and has no foundation in anything I said or implied in my letter. I did assert that social *progress* (not simply change) is forged in the white heat of clashing ideas and ideals; but Mr Simons seems impervious to the obvious fact that the dialectic of ideological warfare finds expression in a civil war or a world war no less than in the chambers of constitutional assemblies. No student of human history can, of course, fail to be acutely conscious of the frequent resort to force to achieve social change. "Mr Page does not understand the dynamics of social change". Unlike the self-styled 'Pope Simons I', I do not pretend to know all the answers; but, in any event, his over-hasty assertion was framed in ignorance of my views on historical causation. "The history of social change in Britain is not a history of free speech, but the history of strikes and threats, hunger marches, mass meetings and demonstrations". These remarks absurdly suggest that the social phenomena referred to are somehow unconnected with free speech; as these phenomena are patent examples of organised freedom of expression sustaining social progress, Mr Simons' argument corroborates my thesis. "We are continually told that militancy is against the British character." I made no such assertion—and perhaps unlike Mr Simons, I am highly suspicious of generalisations about national characteristics. Moreover, by what divine dispensation can Mr Simons presume to know that the radio and TV appearances of political non-conformists are "completely ineffectual"? Is Mr Tribe or Lord Russell to decline to appear on radio or TV simply on the principle that his appearances would be "completely ineffectual"? Is that why Lord Russell agreed to give a Reith Lecture? Mr Simons has convinced himself that industrialists, bankers, press-barons and millionaires support my attitude to free speech: but how many of these top people, Mr Simons, support my view (clearly expressed in my letter of 22/2/69) that we democrats should "sustain equality of access to freedom of expression by furthering the democratic diffusion and control of economic power"? To imply that liberalism and militancy are somehow incompatible is nonsense. To talk of the "sterile liberal game according to the rules laid down by capitalists to preserve their vested interest" is to ignore the undoubted success of liberal forces in weakening and undermining the power of capitalist vested interest. If capitalism is to be overthrown or transformed out of all recognition, that process will be achieved by those anti-capitalists who exploit the internal weaknesses of capitalism by seizing every opportunity, even restricted TV and radio appearances, to spread the cause. It is very sad that a well-meaning and articulate person like Mr Simons should squander his energies by misrepresenting and distorting the views of fellow freethinkers.

MARTIN PAGE.

SHORTLY AFTER I read Mr G. L. Simons's letter, I also read in the Press a report of a hunger strike by Soviet writers in a prison camp in protest against the inhuman treatment of one of their number. I cannot help feeling that these men know a little more about what Mr Simons calls "the dynamics of social change" than your correspondent, for all his dogmatic assurance of style, does.

His main thesis, it seems, is that pursuance of rational persuasion under conditions of free speech and thought in a democratic society is an illusion and that the only progress we can make is by "strikes and threats". Only a singular ignorance of recent social and political history could sustain such a view.

In the past 50 years, the Labour Movement has achieved: the National Health Service, the nationalisation of coal, electricity, gas and steel, a system of social security (under which even the Ford strikers can obtain substantial assistance), to name but a few major items. In spheres of particular interest to humanists, we have achieved abortion law reform, reform of the penal laws concerning homosexuality, abolition of corporal punishment and the suspension of capital punishment.

Mr Simons will, no doubt, try to argue that these great social changes are of little real value or interest but I doubt if many will agree with him. The important point is that they were achieved by the exercise of freedom of speech and thought in a democratic society, not by violence, demonstrations, strikes or threats. Our forefathers, including men like Bradlaugh and other secularist leaders, had to fight hard for our present freedoms and our democratic rights as citizens and the facts show that their fight was not in vain. The great social advances I have mentioned were achieved

in the teeth of opposition from "the vested interest groups" but these people are not the all-powerful force Mr Simons imagines.

I doubt if the ruling classes are really so afraid of so-called "militancy" as Mr Simons believes. Most of our present-day "militants" are a danger to nobody but themselves with their noisy and irrational "demonstrations", their scuffles with the police, their childish sloganising and their semi-literate banners. These things have achieved nothing. The capitalist class of this country would far rather get rid of Harold Wilson than Tariq Ali.

What is so depressing is the fact that many of our self-styled "revolutionaries" seem only too willing to behave in such a way as to enable them to achieve this objective.

For, make no mistake about it, the alternative to the present Labour Government is not a nice, left-wing revolution which will take us all into the promised land, but a reactionary Tory Government which will bend all its efforts to putting the clock back. Do we really have to wait for the hangman to get his job back before we wake up to the realities facing us all? J. STEWART COOK.

Naive asides?

I HAVE been reading—rather belatedly I fear—the 15th February issue of the FREETHINKER. I have not read the book Maurice Hill reviews—and he has given me no enthusiasm to do so—but I must query some of his *obiter dicta*. The 'nice circle: if you have faith, you can interpret the Bible in such a way as to confirm your faith' is too sharp a weapon to be safe. It is liable to kill the user as well. A modest acquaintance with Polanyi, Marjorie Grene or Merleau-Ponty would induce caution. For example, Polanyi's essay 'Scientific Convictions' in *The Logic of Liberty* (Routledge, 1951) shows scientists very vulnerable to Mr Hill's comment. Elsewhere Polanyi points out that no critical observation will invalidate a theory except by a prior decision (over which scientists may differ) to regard it as critical.

The comment about 'psychological bases' is threatened by the same ambivalence. The psychological bases of science do not prohibit us from regarding its content as true.

It seems Mr Hill has some homework to do if he is to avoid such naive asides. They are liable to create an unfortunate image of freethought and to detract attention from the more serious points he is trying to make.

C. G. MARTIN.

(Continued from page 103)

physical loathing and excremental fixation, so long illustrated on walls and other convenient places? The psychoboy seems to consider it is normal customary behaviour in both sexes, but is what is normal and customary necessarily healthy and species-preserving in these rapidly changing times? Would sex instruction cause less excited disturbance if all schools had regular access to heated swimming pools in which mixed nude bathing could become customary from infancy? Could toddlers have at least some books illustrated by pictures of naked human beings instead of so many naked animals?

It is clear that neither religion nor sex are fit subjects for classroom instruction until many years of moral education have provided emotional maturation and some concepts of devotional relationships and parental responsibility commensurate with the physical capabilities of the contemporary teenage human body.

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