

# Freethinker

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

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

VOLUME 89, No. 52

Saturday, December 27, 1969

Sixpence Weekly

## A HAPPY NEW YEAR?

*A year ago under this same heading—exact to the definitive and all-important question mark—I wrote: “Without wishing to appear unduly pessimistic one feels bound to point out that although 1969 may turn out to be happy for some individuals, for many and for the human race taken as a whole it is far more likely to be unhappy—that is if 1968 is anything to go by.” One could well change 69 to 70, 68 to 69 and reprint the rest of the leader with the briefest of alterations.*

*For instance Tom Mboya could replace Robert Kennedy after last year’s words “assassination of”. Last year I referred to: “the continuing wars in Vietnam and Nigeria, the strife between Israel and the Arab States, the restriction of freedom in Greece”. And I wrote: “It seems also we have the makings of a police-state in our midst in Northern Ireland”. It could be construed from this that 1969 represented no improvement on 1968, and that therefore should this trend continue in the long term, the combined lack of progress of a given number of years will result in the eventual end of the world. However, a year ago I paid not enough attention to the two overwhelming problems, only one of which if brought to fruition—if such a word can be used—would be responsible for the world’s downfall, namely the bomb and the population explosion. Enoch Powell, Religious Education, The Springboks, The Pope and even the Vietnamese and Biafran wars are of little import when set along side these twin supreme horrors.*

*That the more everyday element of world politics have a bearing on our progress towards removing these ghastly threats there can be little doubt. For instance a movement such as that inspired by Enoch Powell*



# Freethinker

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

Editor: David Reynolds

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

(Continued from previous page)

cannot but worsen the situation, for to irrationally distinguish between races and colours is to exacerbate hatred, therefore war, therefore ultimately the bomb—but perhaps more importantly, Powellism worsens the situation in that it relies on ignorance for its dissemination and in so doing helps to perpetuate ignorance. On the other hand the Abortion Act, for instance, tugs society in the opposite direction—forward—not only by reducing the birth rate, but by creating more stable women, therefore more stable men, therefore a more stable society less willing to destroy itself.

The smaller steps backward or forward can thus be seen to be important in relation to the whole. And it is undeniable that in the western world as a whole the forward steps overwhelm the backward ones. This is the result of the universal awareness which is increased each year by more communications, more education, and more breakthroughs in science. Certainly we have had the Pinkville massacre and certainly much scientific progress is made in the field of weapons, but at the same time no one can deny that individual awareness is increasing. Those who died at Pinkville may well be deemed martyrs to the cause of awareness. Their deaths have served to enlighten many to the horrors of modern warfare. Of the Eastern block, with the exception of China, awareness is no doubt increasing also. The 'communist' governments have not the power to restrict the spread of education even if they wished to, and East-West relations are on the increase as a result. China at

least has its collective belly full, and one can only hope that the children of Mao's Cultural Revolution are taught only to kill Americans if Americans try to kill them.

Communications, education and science are thus creating a collective awareness. The question is, will this awareness reach the requisite degree before it is too late? Who knows? But permit me to repeat the conclusion of last year's leader: "...personal happiness can be derived during collective hardship by those who are satisfied that personally they are contributing towards the alleviation of the misery of the human race as a whole. Hence, one hopes that one will not be dubbed patronising when one shouts, loud and long, 'A HAPPY NEW YEAR.'"

## UNEXPECTED XMAS PRESENT

MR NORMAN ST JOHN STEVAS has given humanists a most welcome Xmas present by launching a society called 'Bearings for Re-establishment'. The society is intended to help Roman Catholic priests and nuns who decide they wish to leave the active ministry. 'Bearings' will replace 'Compass', which did a similar job but only on a part-time and voluntary basis. The new society will cost £6,000 a year to run and will employ a full-time social worker. St John Stevas is to be applauded for helping to provide a service for which many humanists have agitated over a period of years. The Conservative member for Chelmsford put the views of us all when he said: "A number of us have been seriously concerned about the number of priests and religious who have been unsettled by the recent changes in the church, unsettled by certain features of modern life, who need advice and help. There is no body, in fact, devoting itself to this task".

It has been stressed that the new organisation is to be independent of the Roman Catholic church and its hierarchy. One hopes this will be sufficient to encourage those priests, for whom their jobs provide a livelihood and nothing else, to shake off hypocrisy and enter the secular world.

## COMING EVENTS

### 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.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.
- Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.
- Humanitas Stamps: Help 5 Humanist charities. Buy stamps from/ or send them to Mrs A. C. Goodman, 51 Percy Road, Romford, RM7 8QX, Essex. British and African speciality. Send for list.
- Christmas Cards—peace themes, many-language greetings, bargain parcels, excellent gift selection, generous discounts for sales. 24 samples 12/6 post free. List free. Proceeds to *Peace News*, c/o Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1.

## HUMANIST FORUM

A public debate on

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

between

DAVID TRIBE

President of NSS

Rev. K. N. SENIOR

The City of London School

on

Sunday, 4th January, 1970, at 3 p.m.

in

The Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1

Admission Free — All Welcome

## ON WHAT WE PRAY FOR

NICHOLAS GRIFFIN

WHEN I WAS very young and devout I used to pray every day during the school holidays that the next day would be fine. I don't think that the records of those years indicate that my earnest petitions ever prompted God into any special meteorological activity, and since then disillusion has set in. Religious friends have sought to convince me that this disillusion is altogether inappropriate. They have argued that my prayers must have lacked that (conveniently) indefinable something which separates genuine earnestness and piety from the counterfeit versions that I confused them with. Or, they have argued, more practically, that I could scarcely expect my trivial and frivolous requests to prevent God from satisfying the farmers' deep and genuine need for rain (which, so far as I remember, He satisfied abundantly).

These replies have never seemed to me quite adequate. After all, my prayers seemed completely genuine to me and I fail completely to understand what further action or attitude of mind was required to make them so. Or again, if God is omnipotent he would be able to satisfy both the farmers and myself. Indeed, I can even see how it might be done, for as I only wanted the sun to shine during the day and the farmers didn't mind when they had their rain, God could cause the sun to shine all day and make it pour with rain at night. As I remember, I think I added a proviso to this effect in my prayers to make God's task less tricky. But although these replies have always seemed inadequate they have never seemed inappropriate. I should have regarded my complaint against God as satisfied if arguments of *this sort*, but tighter more comprehensive and less slipshod could be produced to show why my prayers should have been unsuccessful.

It is only comparatively recently that certain theologians and philosophers have argued that the validity of these arguments is completely irrelevant to the question of the validity of my prayers. They have argued that not merely my disillusion but also my hopes about the fulfilment of my prayers were completely inappropriate. Let me quote what one of them, Mr D. Z. Phillips, says in his book *The Concept of Prayer*:

"When deep religious believers pray for something they are not so much asking God to bring this about, but in a way telling Him of the strength of their desires. They realise that things may not go as they wish, but they are asking to be able to go on living whatever happens. In prayers of . . . petition, the believer is trying to find a meaning and a hope that will deliver him from the elements in his life which threaten to destroy it: . . . his desires." (p. 121)

There are strong *prima facie* grounds against this interpretation. After all, utterances of the form "Dear X, please do Y" are usually intended to get X to do Y. It is not immediately obvious why this doesn't apply to utterances of the form "Dear God, please do Y". If, when we are making such utterances, we in fact mean something else it is not clear why we should continue to use this misleading form of language. Moreover, isn't it possible that someone might utter "Dear God, please do Y" in the hope of getting God to do Y? According to Mr Phillips, however, one who did this would not be a "deep religious believer". It would seem that, according to Mr Phillips, the same form of words has two meanings one pious and the other impious. To put the matter shortly, if prayers of petition don't express a petition it seems silly to call them prayers of petition.

But there are also strong reason for denying that utterances of the form "Dear God, please do Y" can mean what

Mr Phillips says they mean. It is immediately odd to suggest that "Dear God, please make the weather fine tomorrow" is a request to be able to survive even if it rains. It would seem that a request to be able to go on living whatever happens is best expressed by "Dear God, please let me be able to go on living whatever happens" without any reference to rain.

Furthermore, a request to be able to go on living whatever happens expressed in a prayer for something, sometimes entails that one asks God to bring that something about. A prayer not to be lost at sea is obviously a request to be able to go on living whatever happens and entails that you ask God to bring about your survival. In such cases "deep religious believers" are, even on Mr Phillips' interpretation, asking to do Y, and although they also "realise that things may not go as they wish" they are hoping (and requesting) that God does not allow this to happen.

This analysis of petitionary prayer conflicts with the other analysis Mr Phillips gives in the same passage. In his second analysis Mr Phillips denies that the deeply religious user of petitionary prayer is requesting anything, even to be able to go on living, he is merely informing God of the strength of his desires. Now, to say "Dear X, please do Y" is (usually) first of all a request that X does Y but it also informs X that the person speaking desires that Y is done. What seems strange about Mr Phillips' analysis is that the utterance "Dear X, please do Y" means "I desire that Y is done". Clearly it implies "I desire that Y is done" but this is not the same thing as meaning it. It would seem logically impossible that a request can mean a statement of fact. Moreover, if "Dear God, please do Y" is a request to be able to go on living whatever happens why doesn't it imply (or, in Mr. Phillips' terms, "means") "I desire to go on living" not "I desire that Y is done". Clearly the desire to survive is not the desire to which Mr Phillips is referring because he calls our "desires" the things that threaten to destroy our life and, anyway, it would be a bit fatuous to keep on informing God of the strength of our desire to survive. Indeed, if God is omniscient it seems odd that we should ever need to inform him of the strength of our desires. If we do adopt this interpretation, God's omniscience makes the whole concept of petitionary prayer redundant.

Mr Phillips finally gives yet another analysis of petitionary prayer: it is a request to be able to go on living whatever happens, it is intended to inform God of the strength of one's desires but now it also has a psychological or therapeutic significance. In a petitionary prayer the deep religious believer is "trying to find a meaning and a hope that will deliver him from . . . his desires". He is not asking God to deliver him from his desires, as might be expected; he is doing something that has no real reference to God at all. Again it is strange that an utterance which might well have the form "Dear God, please satisfy my desire for Y" should be uttered in the hope of being delivered (by a "meaning and a hope" not by God) from our desire for Y. Indeed, I'm at a loss to know how meanings and hopes might help in the matter. It is conceivable that one might be delivered from a desire for riches by the hope of becoming wealthy (though this scarcely seems to be what Mr Phillips might be meaning) or by a hope of entering the

(Continued on page 416)

# CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION

G. L. SIMONS

WELL, here we go again on capitalist exploitation! It sounds a cliché, doesn't it! And more than one reader I know will frown and mutter, "What a bore!" But the cliché nature of the phrase should never blind us to the grim truth that it represents. The article is confined to the US, but it applies equally, *mutatis mutandis*, to all the capitalist countries.

The United States of America is the richest country the world has ever seen. The assets of some of its corporations vastly exceed the capital reserves of many of the nations of the world, and the money worth of some of its richest families is reckoned by the thousand million dollars. And yet, despite the unprecedented affluence, despite the unequalled generation of wealth on a gigantic scale, despite a world control of over half of all earthly resources—there are areas of destitution and misery in the United States that baffle description, large fields of deprivation that in many instances are comparable to those regions of poverty to be found in underdeveloped countries.

We were first made aware of the American poor in Michael Harrington's *The Other America*—here was spelt out the appalling truth that between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 American citizens lived in poverty. All right, so what is poverty? Harrington acknowledged that definitions vary, and he detailed his own in a lucid appendix. Whatever the academic definition, the clear facts are presented and Harrington spells out the message—"tens of millions of Americans are, at this very moment, maimed in body and spirit, existing at levels beneath those necessary for human decency. If these people are not starving, they are hungry, and sometimes fat with hunger, for that is what cheap foods do. They are without adequate housing and education and medical care". The American poor do not exist only in "pockets", but represent a "massive problem" involving almost one quarter of the total population.

Here then is part of what the American middle classes and the American rich base their wealth on. Here is the nauseating truth about the immoral system so diligently sanctified by bourgeois press, Church, and working-class dupe. In a land of affluence, simple men and women—and their children—are crippled in body and mind by an exploitation that knows no humanity, no fellow-feeling, no sensitivity to human suffering. The successful American climbs to the top of the stinking pile and then uses the police and the law—and the troops if necessary—to ensure that the stinking pile remains. The American nation, as an entity is RICH, RICH, RICH, and the criminally unjust way in which its wealth is distributed is the most eloquent condemnation of the capitalist system. American capitalism is capitalism at its most successful—and at its most brutal, nauseous, and insensitive. So you want some examples of what I am talking about! Try these for size:

The slum problem in our great cities is worsening. Today some 17 million Americans live in dwellings which are beyond rehabilitation—decayed, dirty, rat infested, without decent heat or light or plumbing. The problem afflicts all our metropolitan cities, but it is most severe in the biggest, richest, most industrialised cities. (William H. Whyte, Jr., *et al*, *The Exploding Metropolis*, p. 93.)

And here's another one, from Fred J. Cook and Gene Gleason, 'The Shame of New York' in *The Nation* (31/10/59):

New York is a sprawling, voracious monster of a city. It covers 315 square miles; it is crammed with some eight million people. At least a million, a full eighth of its population, live in packed squalor, six and ten to a room, in slum tenements so rat in-

festated that on the average one hundred persons are badly chewed and, so far this year, two have been actually knawed to death. Symbolically, perhaps there are in New York more rats than people—an estimated nine million of them.

As some years ago, Bertrand Russell pointed out that there are more cockroaches in New York than there are rats.

In Washington it is common—yes, common!—to find patients, often children, admitted to hospital for food deficiency diseases. In October 1969, it was reported that Dr Arnold Einborn, Director of Pediatrics at Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, New York, admitted that the hospital was treating four to five cases of extreme kwashiorkor every year. It was stressed that many mild cases of kwashiorkor probably go undetected as the hospital only has 90 "acute" beds to take the desperately ill children of 86,000 families.

Many of the kwashiorkor cases are in the negro ghetto, but sometimes they are on the fringes of the area. At Morrisiana Hospital in the Bronx, a doctor spotted kwashiorkor in a ten-month-old boy.

The *Sunday Times* quoted from a report in a New York magazine: hospital staff watched helplessly "as a child suffering from severe malnutrition slipped away. He was brought to us too late". And the report included the words—"It isn't such an unusual occurrence."

Now these horrors are happening in a country that deliberately pays farmers NOT to cultivate their land—hundreds of thousands of dollars are paid out each year so that farmers, particularly on the Southern plantations, will NOT plant on the fertile land. Food is destroyed, milk is tipped into the sea, stocks are hoarded. The capitalist must make the maximum profit—the *starving child a block away is a total irrelevance*. What can we say about an economic system that operates on so criminally a stupid basis as this?

And we have said nothing about the underdeveloped world. Where does the US get its raw materials from? Where does Britain? Where does Western Europe? In all instances—even the US now, because of its profligate exploitation of its own natural wealth—the answer is the underdeveloped world. What does this mean? It means that the poor countries are robbed, systematically, ruthlessly, endlessly. Their wealth is conveyed away in trucks by the thousands of tons. Look how the poor of Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Malaysia live. Think what life in a shanty-town means, living with rats and diseases and human excrement, living with miscarriage and haemorrhage, infection and despair. And why is it so? Are the natives unintelligent? Do they lack capacity for work? Are their countries poor? None of this is true, as we all know. Where does oil come from? The Middle East, Latin America. The Third World is rich with raw material—much richer than Britain or France or West Germany. Why do the peoples of the Third World suffer? Why do they persistently fail to advance? Why is the way to affluence closed to them? The answer—a simple answer that answers so much—is *capitalism*.

Capitalism robs ordinary people in almost every country of the world of the means to their own elevation, the means to health, the means to decency. The humanists fulminate about birth control—plan world agriculture rationally, scientifically, and you can feed ten times the present world population. Plan food production for people, and not for profit—and you could eliminate world malnutrition in a

decade. Rising living standards would then be followed surely enough by smaller families.

The earth is rich in raw materials and human intelligence. It is rich also in fellow-feeling and compassion. Capitalism squanders and hoards the raw materials, applies the intelligence for injustice and oppression, and clamps down the fellow-feeling that would flower progressively in a sane social system. Under capitalism, man is nasty—selfish, avaricious, rat-racing, status-seeking, culturally parochial, socially insular, conditioned to be suspicious of generosity, immune to reason, receptive to any prejudice or superstition that will make the system secure. Under

capitalism the successful are complacent, arrogant, insensitive, and intellectually unimaginative: the unsuccessful live dull boring lives in slum or tenement (in developed countries), and die early elsewhere, sometimes through starvation, sometimes through napalm. Under capitalism, the economic *means* to a possible civilised community is taken as an end, and what should be the *true* end is never envisaged.

Under capitalism, man is nasty. I believe he would be far from perfect in any workable social system—but that he could not be very much better and happier than he is today I refuse to believe.

## ADAM DUFF O'TOOLE: AN EARLY IRISH HERETIC

NIGEL H. SINNOTT

UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES one thinks of Ireland as a land steeped for centuries in Christian orthodoxy (whether Protestant or Catholic), and it is strange to find that one of the first martyrs for Freethought in the British Isles was, of all things, a fourteenth century Irishman called Adam Duff O'Toole (Adam [Adamh] Dubh Tuathail).

In Holinshead's *Chronicles*<sup>1</sup> we read how "Adam Duffe, an heretike . . . , a gentleman of the familie of the Otoolies Leinster . . . , possessed by some wicked spirit of error", was tried and sentenced to be burnt on charges of heresy and blasphemy at Dublin in 1327. O'Toole was said to have denied the Incarnation, the Christian Trinity, and the resurrection of the dead; said the Scriptures were fables, and accused the Apostolic Sec of falsehood. Worse still, as Holinshead politely phrases it, "The virgin Marie he affirmed to be a woman of dissolute life". The public records,<sup>2</sup> which refer to him as "Adam Duff, filius Walteri Duff, de Lagenia de cognatione Othoiles", were more explicit ("Asseruit Beatissimam Mariam, matrem Domini, esse meretricem" [*meretrix*, harlot]). Very little is known of the details of the trial; McDermott<sup>3</sup> describes O'Toole as a "wild and unmanageable" boy, a great reader of books, who had come to Dublin at the age twenty-two and a year later issued heretical pamphlets for which he was tried—a fact I find it exceedingly hard to believe of an age a century before the development of printing in Europe!

The place and date of O'Toole's ghastly death has been the subject of some confusion. McDermott states that the execution took place somewhere near St Stephen's Green, but that the exact location was unknown. However, the old records state: ". . . die Lune post octavas Pasche, anno Domini MCCCXXVIII, combustus fuit apud le Hoggis, juxta Dublin". 'le Hoggis', or Le Hogges<sup>6</sup>, was an ancient mound near the site of St Andrew's church, Dublin [from the Norwegian *haugr*, mound. Dublin was a Viking settlement]. Webb<sup>7</sup> calls it Hogging Greene, and equates it with the modern College Green. Despite the date given above, all other authorities give O'Toole's death as 1327, and it is quite clear from the context of these records that 1328 is a misprint. From the mediaeval Latin we can thus determine the execution as being on the second Monday after Easter, 1327.

We know very little else for sure about Adam Duff O'Toole, and most of the books on mediaeval Irish history published in recent years make no mention of him at all. He is briefly mentioned in the dictionaries of Irish biography of Webb and Crone,<sup>8</sup> and is disparaged in a couple of lines by Mac Lysaght<sup>9</sup> in his account of the O'Tooles. The historian Leland,<sup>10</sup> writing in 1773, describes Adam Duff as "a man of considerable Irish family in Leinster", which was true enough. His father, Walter Duff, is prob-

ably the same 'Walterus Duf' whose name occurs frequently as a witness to charters of the period, and is mentioned by Eugenius,<sup>4</sup> Bishop of Clonard, in ratification of a land grant in the district of Scrine, Co. Meath.



Coat of arms of O'Toole (after Mac Lysaght<sup>9</sup>)

Several questions remain to be answered about O'Toole. Did he have a wife, children, or any siblings? He was probably born in Co. Wicklow, but nobody seems to know when. If McDermot is right in giving his age as twenty-two on arriving in Dublin (though he gives no source for this) then O'Toole would have been about twenty-three years of age when he was put to death, suggesting a date of birth around 1304. Another question that presents itself is the motive of the Church authorities who put him on trial for his life. Was he simply too outspoken for the sensibilities of the faithful, or were there other reasons? It is clear from several sources that Adam Duff's trial came at the end of a series of prosecutions, mostly for witchcraft and sorcery, which reached such paranoiac proportions that anyone defending those accused of witchcraft ran a serious risk of being indicted himself. Also the O'Tooles, a very ancient Irish clan (Tuathail simply means a landowner), are well known for the persistent way in which they opposed for several centuries the Anglo-Norman invaders who established themselves in Ireland after 1171. The trial

could well have had secular motives as well as religious, for it was not at all unusual in the Middle Ages for heresy charges to be brought against persons of 'undesirable' political views or eccentric sexual habits.

Another interesting possibility is that Adam Duff may at some time in his life have been a priest. An old document<sup>3</sup> mentions how in 1302 William, Abbott of Dunbroady, appointed two men to represent him in his absence: William de Kerdiff and one, Adam O'Thothyl. If this is the same man, of course, it would put the date of Adam Duff's birth back at least another twenty years.

A great deal remains to be found out about this brave and fascinating man. It is to be hoped that sympathetic readers in the Dublin area will endeavour to keep O'Toole's name green in Ireland and bring to light any information on him which may have been overlooked. He must surely rank as the patron 'saint' of Irish Humanism; indeed, had he not been killed the religious climate of Ireland, and especially Ulster, might have been very different from what it is today. In 1327 the orthodoxy of 'Holy' Ireland had a near escape! By some ironic coincidence the Irish idiom

corresponding to the English 'a close shave' or a 'near thing' is the following: Chonnaic mé caisleán Uí Thuathail agus an Tuathalach féin.<sup>11</sup>—I saw O'Toole's castle and the O'Toole himself!

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Holinshead, Raphael. 1808. *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. 6, Ireland: p. 252. London.
  - <sup>2</sup> Gilbert, John T. (editor) 1884. [Chron. Mem. Gr. Brit. & Ireland] *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin* [Rolls Series] 2: p. 366. London.
  - <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxxxvi.
  - <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1: p. 157.
  - <sup>5</sup> McDermott, Gerard. 1963. "The burning of Adam Duff O'Toole." *Evening Herald*, Dublin, 5 July; *Freethinker* 83: p. 250, 9 August.
  - <sup>6</sup> Olden, Rev. Thomas. 1895. "O'Toole, Adam Duff." *Dictionary of National Biography* 42: pp. 337-338. London.
  - <sup>7</sup> Webb, Alfred. 1878. *A Compendium of Irish Biography*: p. 426.
  - <sup>8</sup> Crone, John S. 1928. "O'Toole, Adam Duff." *A Concise Compendium of Irish Biography*. Dublin.
  - <sup>9</sup> MacLysaght, Edward. 1957. *Irish Families*: p. 276, pl. 27. Dublin.
  - <sup>10</sup> Leland, Thomas. 1773. *The History of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II. 1*: p. 287. London.
  - <sup>11</sup> Dinheen, Rev. Patrick S. 1927. *Foclóir Gaedhilde agus Béarla, an Irish-English Dictionary*: p. 1268. Dublin.
- The author would welcome any further information (c/o FREETHINKER office) on A. D. O'Toole.

## ANIMALS AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

R. ANSAY

WHICHEVER pro or anti-arguments may be brought up in censure of the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church, one strongly condemnable, unforgiveable attitude stands out on which honest believers and unbelievers are bound to be in perfect agreement to wit: the Church's encouraging attitude to the miseries which humans, in their lust for cruelty, inflict on animals in the course of commercialised bloodshows.

If humans choose to fight it out amongst themselves, it's their own choice and their own responsibility. But for humans to torture those harmless, defenceless victims, the animals, with no other purpose than to satisfy their passions for cruelty and ferocity, is inexcusable perversity.

Now it is a fact that the Catholic Church is the only religious body which sanctions the torture of animals for monetary gain. Only in Catholic, clergy dominated, countries are bullfights, cockfights, and live pigeon shooting tolerated and legalised.

Not only does the Catholic Church approve of these depravities, it encourages them. Priests are in attendance at the bloodshows to bless the tormentors and their weapons as well. It is a frequent occurrence in Spain for the Catholic clergy to stage their own corridas.

The cheers which go to acclaim the bullfight performers are insincere, for the crowd is well aware that the torero—the killer—only slaughters an exhausted animal. For the discerning human provided with steel weapons to face a brainless brute which obeys automatic previsible reflexes is downright treachery. If that man chooses to expose himself to unnecessary risks, he only wants to show off for the benefit of the onlookers who expect their money's worth of emotion. It is common knowledge that the unsporty bullfight is a fake fight, in which the doomed animal is not given the slightest chance. It has been subjected, prior to its appearance in the arena, to disloyal manipulations intended to weaken and misdirect its natural defences. Such manipulations include doping, shaving of the horns, dropping from the ceiling of heavy sandbags on its back, injection of pepper or pimento into the anus, confinement in darkness in narrow pens up to the moment when it has to face the ordeal in bright sunlight.

Why does not the Pope condemn these depraved prac-

tices of a bygone age? Why do the French bishops keep silent, never utter a single word of reprobation?

In an autocratic, clergy dominated country like Spain, it would suffice for the Pope to proclaim religious interdiction, and, if need be, threaten with excommunication, to put an immediate end to these horrors.

Bloodshows are known to be profitable business. Sadists are prepared to pay big money to indulge in their cravings. They enjoy an unnatural delectation in watching the tormenting of the bulls, the blood gushing from the inflicted wounds, the disembowling of the horses, and secretly hoping to see the performers come to grief.

Bullfights were introduced in France by Napoleon III, or rather by his Spanish born spouse Eugenia de Montejo, just over a hundred years ago. All French administrators who have succeeded Napoleon III, including De Gaulle, have been urged to intervene to put an end to these horrors. All have remained silent. For what reason? Could the lure of money be the only reason?

The animal protection societies, which are doing so much for dogs and cats, remain practically indifferent to commercialised cruelties, thereby affording a certain substantiation to often expressed suspicions of a lack of good faith on their part. And it is no secret in France that some wealthy fans are using both their money and their influence towards their maintenance.

The question may well be asked: could the lure of money be the only enticement which accounts for the passivity of both the Catholic Church and the political leaders. Or is there some deeper, some psychological motive at the bottom of the Church's organised depravity? Perhaps some sort of motive similar to that which accounted for the horrors of the circuses of ancient Rome? Five centuries have not yet consigned to oblivion the horrors of the Spanish inquisition. Are we to conclude that having no heretics to torture, the Catholic Church victimises animals instead?

Some rabid Catholics go as far as to claim that as animals have no soul, and Christ never rebuked cruelties against animals, it is no sin to maltreat them. It is a fact indeed that had Christ definitely condemned maltreatment of animals, untold sufferings would have been saved the animal world.

## Book Review

*In Transit*: Brigid Brophy (Macdonald (Publishers) Ltd., 30s).

IN THE present state of dissatisfaction and uncertainty about the aims and uses of art, writers are at a disadvantage. Whereas painters, composers and dramatists can resign the responsibility of choice to the control of chance or of mathematically determined systems, writers are still committed to the exercise of judgement in their choice of subject, and, particularly, of words themselves. If the artist is uncertain of, or unconcerned with, the effect of what he writes, then how is he to decide how to write it and how is anyone else going to judge his success? For Pat, the narrator of Brigid Brophy's novel *In Transit*, the problem of communication is unusually and alarmingly immediate. Pat suffers an attack of 'linguistic leprosy' in an airport transit lounge and, however embarrassing this is for the hero(ine), as it later becomes necessary to call him/her, it provides his/her creator with the opportunity of presenting a parody, not of any single style, but almost of language itself. As words and syllables are detached from their original meanings and languages and float off to form new combinations, they produce a network of puns which control the progress of Pat's thoughts: a device which achieves its own stylistic identity and sets its own stylistic rules. As Pat, already deprived of the ability to communicate with much prospect of success, falls prey to yet more preoccupations of our time, more specific literary parodies, and consequently more conventionally ordered language, take over. The puns, however, continue to influence things, and language enjoys further punishment in a recurring pastiche of "L'Histoire d'O". Pat is temporarily soothed by a loudspeaker broadcast of "Alitalia", an opera seria by Bel Pausillo in which the entire cast performs *en travesti*, only to discover that he/she has forgotten his/her sex. Style of clothing (unisex) and material (corduroy), first names (Evelyn Hilary) and direction of sexual interest (ambiguous) are alike unhelpful, and the one place in the airport of sufficient privacy for the only conclusive form of self-examination is ironically the only one where segregation of the sexes can still prevent Pat in his/her present state from going. This is succeeded by further adventures, including an appearance on a TV panel game (What's My Kink?) and near-participation in two revolutions (a Lesbian "Butsch" organised by the airport porters and a more progressively nihilistic affair conducted to an accompaniment of non-stop pop). These escapades are described in a succession of virtuosic parodies, interspersed with interludes and annotations by a "scholiast". Amidst the debris (at the last, literally) of the morn world and word, Pat turns for guidance, though not with much success, to the light of reason—the classification of syllogisms in formal logic and a blurb by Brigid Brophy. Whereas, with the abandonment of anything that could pretend to be an universal culture, we have come to expect writers to use utterly personal fields of allusion and to create their own mythologies, Brigid Brophy with a fine irony draws her references from the very heritage which is now being forgotten, and the result, for those who have no knowledge of Greek grammar or formal logic, will probably be thoroughly esoteric.

A novel without plot or characterisation in any conventional sense, could very easily be no more than a *tour de force*, but in *In Transit*, though it certainly is a *tour de force*, Brigid Brophy has succeeded in producing a novel which is as rewarding for its treatment of our present culture, and of our language in particular, as it is amusing. And it is very amusing indeed.

## LETTERS

### Essex Forum

I WAS both pleased and dismayed at the review of the first issue of *Essex Forum* in the *FREETHINKER* (15/11/69). I was pleased because I had not expected *Essex Forum* to make such an impact on the humanist literary scene, however its initial success has guaranteed its future.

But how dismaying it was to find your reviewer attempting to defend the "some" secularists referred to in my editorial. Is he so sensitive that as soon as he sees the word 'secularist' written in a critical manner, he immediately springs into attack with guns blazing? It's more a question of shoot first, ask questions later. The reviewer in his blind prejudice failed to see what my editorial said.

The editorial merely stated that there is room under the umbrella of humanism for all those who wish to make the world a better place to live in; those who believe in the 'open society' which your reviewer scorned. The presence of dogmatic attitudes on both sides is a stumbling block to Humanist thought. What was

said in the editorial is not new, but merely repeating what many humanists, past and present have said. For example, H. J. Blackham in *Humanism* (page 166): "Christians who accept the 'open mind' and the 'open society' as major ideals and are ready to tackle realistically the common problems and tasks of modern society, are surely better friends of humanists than those who are fiddling sour old tunes regardless of what is really happening in Rome, or anywhere else. The seed of humanism is latent in the cultural tradition which the churches now share and may spring up and flourish within the churches, bearing its characteristic fruits".

I am afraid the impression is left that your reviewer is not so much attacking my editorial but humanism in general. Therefore if your readers would like to see what was really said in the *Essex Forum* editorial; copies are available upon receipt of 1s or a year's subscription of 5s.

CHRISTOPHER A. PETTITT,  
Editor, *Essex Forum*.

### Humanist Open Forum

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, which, since its inception in 1793, has always provided a platform in London (originally in South Place but for the past forty years in Conway Hall, Holborn) for all manner of social controversies—from the Corn Laws to the Hippies—is starting a Sunday afternoon Open Forum (on two or three Sundays each month) for responsible organisations or individuals, whether household names or relatively unknown, that have a cause or a genuine grievance to air or a view to debate with others of a contrary opinion.

The series, which opens on January 4 (at 3 p.m.) with a debate on Religion in Schools, is intended to bring to public notice matters of social concern which might be given scant or one sided attention by the main media of communication. Potential participants should write to the General Secretary, SPES, Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, WCI. BARBARA SMOKER.

### Religious Education/Joseph McCabe

1. IF HOWARD MARRATT objects to being called a "Modernist" I apologise most profoundly. Let me assure him that I am well aware that the terms "Modernist" and "Ethicist" are archaic, and am not unfamiliar with groovy theological writing about the differences between say, Modernists and the "New Radicalism", one of the latest trendy terms. The trouble about contemporary trendiness is that it tends to date even more quickly and to be more ambiguous than nineteenth century jargon. It is very difficult for humble outsiders to know whether "liberal Christians" support Tillich, Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, the American Death of God school or their private phantasies. Apart from cathedrals, churches, livings and divinity departments, what the hell, one asks plaintively and in all reverence, do they believe in?

I confess I have never discussed Mr Marratt's churchmanship with him and have been unable to ascertain from the *BNB* that he has ever written on theology. But it is quite pointless these days to review a document by "a Humanist and a Christian" without trying to indicate to readers the approximate wave-band, in the vast spectrum represented by the two terms, each of the writers belongs to. Dr Hemming was perceptive enough to recognise this difficulty and gracious enough not to quibble over the short-hand description I used for him.

Let me also assure Mr Marratt that I am quite familiar with educational controversies over child-centred, subject-centred and interest-centred teaching, and that I have enough psychological knowledge to know that, like much of the current smoke-screen about RI gradually being transformed into comparative religion, the sophistications in this pamphlet are applicable chiefly to an age range above the average school leaving age and, I obstinately repeat, to particular personality types.

Mr Marratt's latest comments serve to point my original observations. If he were familiar with the writings of the Cercle Ernest Renan or John Allegro he would know that mythicists are not "already dead" but have been disobliging enough to live on and continue to write. I don't class myself among them as I don't think their case is yet proven. By the same token I am not a

I confess I have never discussed Mr Marratt's churchmanship convinced historicist. There may or may not have been a historical Jesus. But if there were, he was clearly not "great" in the archival sense—as no contemporary wrote about him—and, as Margaret Knight has well shown, it is much to be questioned whether he was "great" in the moral sense.

When I spoke of cruelty as "a simple issue" I did not mean that its psychological causes were simple but that if a teacher were to tell his class it was "wrong" to be cruel most people might agree with him and not accuse him of "indoctrination". But what if he were to say it was "wrong" to drink, smoke, swear, have pre-marital sex, gamble, plan a family, masturbate, get a divorce, read obscene books, not go to church, blaspheme and so on? As the churches know only too well, you cannot always tell young child-

ren, "Some people take this view but others take a contrary view and you must decide". Following Parkinson's Law moral instruction syllabuses would tend, except perhaps at the sixth form level, to get filled with injunctions and taboos. Now, while there might be a case for insisting on rigid school rules in a number of matters, it would be most unfortunate if they were to become confused with the "moral law", so that automatic obedience to authority took on a saintly as well as a serviceable complexion.

In *The Times* for November 27 there was an interesting letter by Archbishop Fisher. Declaring that it was improper for schools to indoctrinate with religion, he said their aim should be the fostering of social morality. And he had two ideal textbooks to recommend: the Old and the New Testament. So the blessed book is to be wheeled out the front door as a declaration of divinity and smuggled in the back as a manual of morality. Considering that many Christians still believe that morality cannot exist without religion, is anyone so naive as to think there would be the slightest change from the present system? Insofar as the largely ecclesiastical Social Morality Council expresses support for the Campaign for Moral Education, freethinkers would do well to be alert.

2. I can assure D. M. Chapman that I have never had any intention of keeping skeletons in freethought cupboards. But every book has its terms of reference. Movements are influenced by a subtle blend of ideas and personalities, as I tried to show in *100 Years of Freethought* and my forthcoming biography of Bradlaugh. Elements of scandal—like Parnell's divorce—can thus gain historical importance. They may however be entirely adventitious.

When I first took to the outdoor freethought platform, where questions on every conceivable subject might be thrown at one, I found the writings of Joseph McCabe enormously valuable. But in a history it is hard to say more about him than I did. He was very much a loner and had no impact on the organised freethought movement. By this I mean he provided for it a unique range of books and lectures but didn't change its direction. The real basis of his dispute with the RPA was, as I understand it, a purely personal and financial one: rightly or wrongly he thought he hadn't been getting the rate for the job. This dispute seemed to me irrelevant to both my books. With his constant travelling it is remarkable that McCabe wrote so much of such quality, but he was for all that a "prolific writer" with all that this implies. I retain my admiration for him when I say he was essentially a populariser (one of the most versatile the country has ever produced) who was overworked and had too little time for imaginative insights or detailed research.

The libellous biography of Bradlaugh is far less interesting than Mr Chapman seems to believe. There is nothing in it which doesn't appear elsewhere. It consists chiefly of innuendoes by secularist dissidents at a time when Bradlaugh was in line for office in a future Gladstone administration. Had he not taken legal action his enemies would have said he didn't care. After his death the RPA was founded under the inspiration of G. J. Holyoake and C. A. Watts, who had little in common except jealousy of Bradlaugh's memory and (in case of Watts) resentment at the harsh way in which I believe his father Charles Watts was treated over the *Fruits of Philosophy* case in 1877. Later they were joined by the Bradlaughites (notably Bradlaugh's daughter Hypatia and J. M. Robertson), who disliked Foote even more than they disliked Watts.

If Bradlaugh is treated by the movement as a saint it is because he had "saintly" qualities. Though he could be overpowering and overbearing, he was absolutely dedicated and genuine—in marked contrast to Holyoake, who sinks further in my estimation the more I read of and about him. Indeed, one of my complaints against McCabe is that his biography of Holyoake (as published) is very much an "official portrait" restricted to Holyoake's version of the many devious operations he was involved in, whether or not they involved Bradlaugh. While the founder of secularism and "father" of co-operation did a great deal of valuable work over a long life, the devil's advocate would have an easy job in any canonisation cause for him.

DAVID TRIBE.

### Moral education

THOUGH I AM in complete agreement with Maurice Hill in opposing religious instruction in our schools. I entirely differ with him on the kind of secular education with which he hopes to replace it. In his letter of October 25, he says 'no lessons should be set aside for moral teaching', and 'all specific morality teaching must be removed from the school time-table'. In my view, according with my knowledge of juvenility over many years, such prohibition would be behaviourally disastrous.

I have always understood that the first educational ideal of

secularism was the replacement of religious instruction by moral instruction. What signifies Margaret Knight's *Morals without Religion*, if there is to be no moral guidance for the young? To teach the doing of good for good's sake, to live decently for the sake of decency, to behave properly because it is respectable and civilised to so behave, to act in accordance with society's essential provisions for law and order, to conduct themselves entirely unlike the young savages of which there are so many examples today, to be courteous to all and polite and considerate to the aged and to adults in general, is surely essential. Mr Hill would have youngsters make their own morality. If Secular Education is intended by those who are, or expect to be, in the position of directing its policy, to mean utter permissiveness, I would rather retain religious instruction, hating though I do, with all my atheistic heart, the indoctrination of the young.

I think it apposite to quote the view of Dr Louise Eickoff, a child psychiatrist, of Selly Oak hospital, Birmingham, in regard to the teenage conduct with which she has had, and is having, to deal.

"The effects of sex education at an early age are frightening", she says. "Every one of the sex delinquents who comes before me has received sex education at school. Girls are now committing offences formerly in the province of boys. I hear more filth from schoolgirls than from any other quarter. Sex education leads them to all kinds of delinquency, theft and drinking. The illegitimacy and abortion rates continue to rise. Girls' toilets have now the most pornographic scrawls on their walls. Girls are forming gangs and keeping lists of how many men they had had intercourse with."

"I should have started shouting about this years ago", said Dr Eickoff.

Admitting that this may be a specially bad case, is it not a pointer to the state of things which will transpire, should moral instruction be ruled out of secular education, and the young be left to fashion their own morality?

F. H. SNOW.

### ON WHAT WE PRAY FOR

(Continued from page 411)

Kingdom of Heaven if one remains poor (which seems more appropriate) but meaning, as Mr Phillips should know, is a linguistic matter and what meaning might be relevant I can't say. Furthermore, what psychological mechanism enables these ritual utterances to deliver us from our desires? Which psychologists recognise it? And why should it be our desires which threaten to destroy our life? A desire for heroin might well threaten to destroy it, but does a desire for good weather or, even more pointedly, a desire to escape death?

Mr Phillips's efforts are directed towards evading the question of the efficacy of petitionary prayer by giving it a new meaning, to which efficacy is irrelevant. It seems to me that the meaning he gives it is one that will be recognised by neither Christians nor atheists. It is, further, an interpretation that is radically muddled and unclear and I cannot suppose that he would have thought of it had petitionary prayer been obviously efficacious.

#### FREETHINKER subscriptions

and orders for literature . . . The Freethinker Bookshop  
01-407 0029

Editorial matter . . . The Editor, The Freethinker  
103 Borough High Street, London, SE1 01-407 1251

#### POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

12 months: £2 1s 6d 6 months: £1 1s 3 months: 10s 6d

USA AND CANADA

12 months: \$5.25 6 months: \$2.75 3 months: \$1.40

The FREETHINKER can be ordered through any newsagent.