

Freethinker

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

Founded 1881 by G. W. Footo

VOLUME 90, No. 17

Saturday, April 25, 1970

Sixpence Weekly

TRIUMPH FOR PAISLEY

THE victories in the Northern Ireland by-elections of the Reverend Ian Paisley and his 'running mate', the Reverend William Beattie, provide both Westminster and Stormont with more embarrassment than ever, as well as furnishing the United Kingdom with two of the most bizarre politicians yet to achieve success in any election. Many people must be wondering whether our precious democracy is after all the best form of government.

Major Chichester-Clark has been given a vote of no confidence by the electorates of two constituencies, his sponsored candidates having been defeated even after he himself and many of his ministers had spoken on behalf of Paisley's opponent. Though Chichester-Clark would not admit it, it is clear that were a general election held now in Northern Ireland his party would be hard put to it to prevent a majority of Protestant Unionist Paisleyites forming a government at Stormont, presumably under the leadership of the evangelical fanatic.

As far as Westminster is concerned one must ask how much longer it can tolerate the embarrassment occasioned in world circles by its fostering of the Stormont regime. Paisley after all is only putting forward with more gusto the policies which the official Unionists supported until they were forced to make a death-bed conversion to a policy of reform when summoned to Whitehall soon after the outbreak of the current unrest.



As yet it is futile to speculate how long Chichester-Clark, or his party, can retain power in such circumstances. But the hopelessness of their position is becoming increasingly obvious. To appeal to the electorate they have to take a tougher line on 'law and order', which would entail a reduction in the pace of the reform they have initiated. But at the same time they are subject to Mr Callaghan's and the Westminster government's insistence that reforms

must be carried out to bring the rights of citizens in Northern Ireland in line with those of their counterparts in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Thus, the chronic impasse. Though a freethinker, and presumably anyone who respects individual freedom and equality, finds Paisley and what he stands for utterly nauseating, it is not prejudice which leads one to indict Paisley and his supporters as the prime cause of trouble. For it is not only what Paisley stands for, but his methods of achieving it, which are at fault. If his party were to gain power it is clear that no British government would tolerate its policies. The result would be either the end of the union, or such restraint imposed on Stormont that Paisley would be powerless. It is this prospect that prompted some Catholics to vote for Paisley in the recent election. Paisley can thus be seen to be pursuing a policy which if successful would result in his downfall. Why? There are two explanations. First, he simply does not realise that British politics and public opinion have changed since 1920. The support that Unionists got then has all but dwindled away. Secondly, he believes God is on his side and will see him through. This last may sound ridiculous, but then so is Paisley's political strategy, and those who have watched the man's hysterical tub-thumping and those who have encountered fundamentalist evangelicals at close quarters will not dismiss the theory.

VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

AT LONG LAST there seems a possibility that the government will take more action on the question of violence on television. In the House of Commons last week Mr Callaghan, the Home Secretary, said that he will soon be having discussions with the BBC and the ITA and that he hoped these discussions will lead to a programme of research into the matter.

See inside :

"Till The Censor Do Us Part"

by FANNY COCKERELL

The emphasis in the Commons debate was on the lack of certainty about the effects of screen violence. It was suggested that, like pornography, the spectacle of violence may

(Continued overleaf)

Freethinker

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

Editor: David Reynolds

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(Continued from previous page)

aid people to purge their emotions and therefore not commit a violent act which otherwise they would have committed. To resolve such questions will indeed require intensive research. However, it should be fairly obvious that the amount of violence displayed on television is far more than the amount which the average person encounters in his daily life. And therefore, despite the argument that children should be brought up to see the world as it really is, the nation's children, whom one hopes have not yet acquired violent urges which require pictorial purgation, would benefit from a reduction in televised violence.

It has become clear during the recent wrangles over the BBC's new policy for radio and television that many people consider that the broadcasting media should educate and enlighten and not merely entertain. The prime object of education is to aid individuals to live the fullest and most rewarding lives. In so doing it should emphasise what is best in humanity and merely acknowledge the existence of what is worst. Television in Britain today succeeds very well in doing the precise opposite.

On April 17 a study of violence, sex and swearing on television appeared in *The Times*. Three men had watched our three TV channels solidly for a week, and had faithfully recorded each instance of these three most controversial qualities of our television broadcasting. Apart from reporting that the word 'bloody' was used 47 times, that 71 people died, that the sexiest scene appeared in a cigar advertisement and that they, the three marathon viewers, suffered severely from boredom, they concluded that: "To the dedicated viewer it rapidly becomes clear that portrayal of the life-producing act of love on our screens is virtually taboo, while the death-producing act of hate is not only permitted but even considered suitable in programmes aimed specifically at children. Sex is dirty: torture and murder are clean."

FICTITIOUS EDUCATIONAL DUTY

THE GOVERNMENT is expected to issue a Green Paper on Education in May, in preparation for a forthcoming Education Bill. The Church of England, in co-operation with the Church of Wales, has published its ideas as to what it would like to see in the Bill, in a document entitled *Evidence*.

The following comment on *Evidence* from David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, points out the flaws in the Anglican approach:

"It is very proper that, like many other voluntary organisations, the Church of England should affirm that 'its concern is with the educational needs of all'. It is however quite another matter when the Church of England and the Church in Wales speak of their 'educational duty to the nation'. Such a duty existed only during the time when the Church successfully opposed the introduction of State education.

When, exactly a century ago, this was introduced, all educational duty of the Church vanished. It is the nation, represented by its taxpayers, ratepayers, parents and teachers, which has this duty today. However well-intentioned the Church may be today, any assumption of 'educational duty' is officious and unwanted.

"Not content with advocating the continuance of compulsory religious education and worship in maintained schools, the Church is now seeking to encroach on tertiary education, and is calling for religious brainwashing in colleges of further education. Soon we may find conferences of vice-chancellors urged to open with prayer.

"The Church is also calling for the continuance of maintained religious schools. At the same time it is not opposing 'non-selective secondary education'. To have in the same catchment area three or more 'comprehensive' schools (county, Anglican, Roman Catholic and perhaps other denominations) is to make a nonsense of 'comprehensiveness' and 'non-selectivity'. Now that the Government is having to re-introduce its Comprehensive Schools Bill it should take this opportunity to abolish maintained voluntary (mostly religious) schools. The sects can then follow out their 'educational duty' at their own expense, like everyone else.

(Continued at foot of page 131)

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. Humanist Holidays. Details from the Hon. Secretary: Mrs. M. Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey (Tel.: 01-642 8796).

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: Wednesday, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

INDOOR

Independent Adoption Society: The Post Graduate Centre, Royal Northern Hospital, Holloway Road, London, N7: Saturday, April 25, 2.45 p.m.: Annual General Meeting and film 'Who Am I?'

Portsmouth Humanist Society: 99 Victoria Road South, Southsea: Thursday, April 30, 8 p.m.: Policy Meeting.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, April 26, 11 a.m.: "New Frontiers in the Mind of Lewis Mumford", Peter Cadogan, BA. Admission free. 3 p.m.: Humanist Forum—"Peaceniks or Freedom Fighters", Roger Moody and others. Admission free. Tuesday, April 28, 7 p.m.: Discussion—"The Deification of Power", Geoffrey Ashe. Admission 2s (including refreshments), Members free.

Sutton Humanist Group: Friends House, Worcester Gardens (near station) Sutton: Saturday, April 25, 11 a.m.: Book sale. Details from Mrs Mepham (Telephone 642-8796).

Worthing Humanist Group: Morelands Hotel (opposite the pier): Sunday, April 26, 5.30 p.m.: "The Future of Marriage", Hector Hawton, editor of *Humanist*.

Julie Van Duren—An exhibition of sculpture: Woodstock Gallery, 16 Woodstock Street, London, W1 (near Bond Street Underground Station): April 27 till May 16.

DO COMPUTERS LIVE IN A SOCIETY?

PAUL ROM

MR G. L. SIMONS, who enlightened us as an expert about the work of computers, seriously dealt with the question as to whether computers think. He also said, computers calculate much quicker than we; so one day they may be better than man at making love. This freethinker's materialism seems to be mechanical and not historical.^{1,2} Embracing the cosmology of classical mechanics which dominated human thought for 300 years,³ he holds that if only we could grasp everything in our complex existence then we could clearly see all behaviour as a link in a chain of material causes and effects and would be able to predict events accurately.

Marx was one of those savants who realised what had been forgotten by the materialists, namely that man is both the product, and the producer of his circumstances. His thought was not mechanical but dialectical.

Indeed, to compensate for the human misery under the capitalist mode of production he proposed the goal of a classless society, dominated by human solidarity and co-operation. This would not be the effect of material causes in the past; socialism would not be the natural and necessary consequence of capitalism and its inner antagonism. It would rather be the result of a rationally chosen ideal which then motivated the striving of the class-conscious, organised workers. The Humanist Marx replaced the inadequate theory of mechanical materialism by one of social organicism.

But each individual member of the working class also forms an opinion about himself. When he errs about his potentialities and instead of perceiving a historical mission accepts the ideology of the bourgeoisie, he may either drop into the *lumpenproletariat* or side with his exploiters. But courage and correct insight into the economic-political development can lead not only workers, but also wealthy individuals to chose the ideal of Socialism (or Humanism) as the guiding image for their daily life.⁴

It is true that most people remain socially ignorant and politically indifferent; their potential "social interest" (*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, Adler) was not developed in their infancy and they allowed adverse circumstances to discourage and isolate them. But Marx and Engels, and after them Alfred Adler, were great encouragers and teachers of mankind.

As materialistic as he may declare himself to be, Mr Simons also speaks seriously about "the essential" and "precise nature of thought", the "nature of memory", the "nature of emotions"—as if these were entities in our minds. Is this not scholasticism or anthropomorphism? There is no "thing in itself" (*Dinagn sich*, Kant); there are only things *for us* (Lenin). When the study of Marx has freed us from the belief in idols and fetishes, we also see that computers are just things for us. We programme them for our purposes and make them "think" what we want them to think. They have no opinion about themselves, cannot compare themselves with others and do not worry about danger and death. The latter event originally let human beings develop their feeling and thinking together with their striving for security and "perfection" (Adler).

A Humanist perceives events rationally as being determined—but he realises that this determination can be a material cause in the past, and/or a future goal, a purpose. Man's achievements cannot be reduced to the mechanism

of a machine or to biological instincts like libido and aggression (Freud)—forgetting about "gifts" of God, like talents or genius.

As I said elsewhere, "a determination at a higher level can supersede a lower one. The causal laws of physics, chemistry, physiology, enable us to predict certain effects, although with less exactness than in the case of a machine. But on the psychological level of human behaviour an individual's free choice determines what is going to happen; here the observer can predict only a "statistical probability".

When physically tired, I determine to fall asleep or to stay awake. I decide whether I eat greedily like an animal or dine in a cultivated manner, or suffer hunger to demonstrate for political ends. I have a sex instinct but I also form an opinion about myself as a lover. Thus I arrive at either an animalistic, or perverted, or a humanised form of sexual intercourse.

The working of my car is like that of any other machine, the exactly predictable effect of a number of causes—but I may use it as a means to do a job, or as a status symbol, and I as the driver choose the goal and determine the speed and the way unless stopped by a traffic bottle neck, which is a determiner on yet a higher level. This organic, humanistic model of man as a self-determining, goal-directed, free and responsible person which Adler developed with his Individual Psychology half a century ago now more and more supplants machine and animal as a model to explain human behaviour.⁵

¹ Marx, Karl, Ed. T. B. Bottomore, M. Rubel, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, London: Watts, 1956; Pelican Book, 1963.

² Collingwood, R. G., *The Idea of Nature*, New York: O.U.P., 1960.

³ Matson, Floyd W., *The Broken Image—Man, Science and Society*, New York: Braziller, 1964. Anchor Book, 1966.

⁴ Fromm, Erich, Ed., *Socialist Humanism*, An International Symposium, Doubleday: New York, 1965. Anchor Book, 1966.

⁵ Rom, Paul, Alfred Adler Centenary, in *Humanist*, February 1970.

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VISION AND REALISM

Annual Report of the

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

THE FREETHINKER BOOKSHOP

103 Borough High Street,

London, SE1

FICTITIOUS EDUCATIONAL DUTY

(Continued from previous page)

"The Daily Telegraph for 16 April says that 'compulsory religion in schools is almost certain to be continued for the foreseeable future under the terms of a new Education Act'. If this forecast proves to be correct, it will represent a shameful sellout by the Government to minority religious pressure and the personal convictions of the Secretary of State. We trust that, whatever may have been the Government's intentions, better counsels will yet prevail."

TILL THE CENSOR US DO PART

FANNY COCKERELL

ANNOUNCER: One of the most striking and popular shows of the sixties was Johnny Speight's irreverent, outspoken series about the terrible Alf Garnet and his family. It came to an end because, apparently the author found that too many people complained. But many of us miss it and wish it would return in the seventies. Is there any other possible form in which it could have been handled?

Enter Author and BBC Mogul.

BBC MOGUL: (*waving sheaf of papers*) Now look Johnny. Something has to be done about this show of yours. More complaints. More and more and more.

AUTHOR: You mean they don't like it?

MOGUL: Of course they don't. You can see for yourself.

AUTHOR: The public's offended?

MOGUL: That's it. Most offended. We can't have that.

AUTHOR: *Then* I'll drop the show.

MOGUL: Certainly not. You can't do that.

AUTHOR: Why not? You say they don't like it.

MOGUL: I didn't say that, I said they were offended.

AUTHOR: But they still *like* it?

MOGUL: Johnny don't be difficult. I've told you they're offended and insulted.

AUTHOR: All right. I'm taking the show off.

MOGUL: You can't. It's too popular.

AUTHOR: But you just said . . .

MOGUL: Be your age Johnny. You know it's the most popular show of the lot. Tam rating says it's watched by twenty million people.

AUTHOR: Twenty million? That's a hell of a lot of viewers.

MOGUL: It sure is Johnny. It sure is.

AUTHOR: Then what are you complaining about?

MOGUL: I've just told, you. You're offending them.

AUTHOR: But they're still watching it.

MOGUL: That's right.

AUTHOR: Why?

MOGUL: Search me. It seems they just do.

AUTHOR: Then what are you complaining about?

MOGUL: I've told you. They're offended. They're insulted. I keep getting letters. Phone calls. Something's got to be done.

AUTHOR: (*angry*) Look I don't get this. I write the most popular show you've got. Twenty million viewers. And you say they're all offended. What are they? A lot of masochists or something? I don't want to write for a lot of machoshists. I'm quitting.

MOGUL: Now, now Johnny, take it easy. I didn't say they were all offended. Just some of them.

AUTHOR: Ah, now we're getting somewhere. Some people. What people?

MOGUL: Well for instance. Nice people. People who don't like bad language.

AUTHOR: Nice people, eh?

MOGUL: You must admit your Alf uses some pretty foul language.

AUTHOR: Of course he does. It's his nature.

MOGUL: And he makes some pretty offensive remarks about coloured people.

AUTHOR: I know he does. He's a racist.

MOGUL: And about Jews.

AUTHOR: Obviously. He's an anti-semite.

MOGUL: He calls his wife an old cow who spends her day sitting on her ruddy arse.

AUTHOR: So what?

MOGUL: So you've offended the Purity League. And the Mothers Union. He even says rude things about God.

AUTHOR: Is God offended?

MOGUL: The clergy are.

AUTHOR: Look. What do you want me to do about it? This man is foul-mouthed, bigoted, stupid, anti-semitic, racist. He's a monster. He's got to behave like one.

MOGUL: But people identify with him.

AUTHOR: They do? With that monster?

MOGUL: That's right. And it makes them uncomfortable.

AUTHOR: Then why do they watch it?

MOGUL: Why does a rabbit watch a snake?

AUTHOR: I give up. I've had enough.

MOGUL: Johnny, Johnny, please. You can't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. I'm not asking you to do that.

AUTHOR: Then what *do* you want me to do?

MOGUL: Nothing much. I just want you not to be so offensive to all these minority groups.

AUTHOR: You mean the nice people? And the Jews. And the coloureds.

MOGUL: And the Purity League. And the Mothers Union. And the clergy.

AUTHOR: Damn the Purity League. And the Mothers Union. And the clergy. Damn and blast them all to hell. I'd like to shoot the blooming lot.

MOGUL: That's it. That's it. Now you're talking.

AUTHOR: What *do* you mean?

MOGUL: Now you're talking. Now you've got somewhere. Shoot them. All of them. Not just with words.

AUTHOR: Are you seriously suggesting . . . ?

MOGUL: Yes, yes, I am. Of course I am. Not you—your Alf I mean.

AUTHOR: Alf? That old so and so? Shoot people?

MOGUL: That's right. Give it a bit of action. A lot of action. Just what the show needs.

AUTHOR: But where'd you suggest he gets a gun?

MOGUL: You're the author. That's your business. You'll soon find a way.

AUTHOR: And you think the public will like it?

MOGUL: They'll love it. Think of it. All those targets. All those people who identify with him.

AUTHOR: Perhaps you've got something after all.

MOGUL: (*eagerly*) And we can keep it absolutely clean. No bad language. No need to offend a soul.

AUTHOR: No more abusive letters.

MOGUL: That's it. That's it. Instead of swearing at all the people he dislikes, all he needs do is shoot them.

AUTHOR: But there's such a lot of them. Won't it get a bit monotonous?

MOGUL: No, why should it? You can vary the circumstances. Each week something different. Keep it up for ages.

AUTHOR: Yes . . . yes . . . I'm beginning to see possibilities.

MOGUL: I knew you would.

AUTHOR: But what happens if I get tired of it? Or the audience does?

MOGUL: Oh—very simple. One of them shoots him.

AUTHOR: Yes. Yes. You've got it. And you're sure they'll like it?

MOGUL: Not a doubt of it. Just think. The originality of it.

AUTHOR: Maybe, maybe.

MOGUL: Sure thing. And I'll tell you what. I'll change the time for you. Put it on at the favourite viewing time. Sunday afternoon. Instead of the religious programme. It'll be viewing for the whole family. The kiddies will just lap it up.

AUTHOR: I'll think it over. Yes, I'll certainly think it over.

FREETHOUGHT AT EASTBOURNE

MERLE TOLFREE

THE 2,000 delegates and visitors at the NUT Conference at Eastbourne this year had a bonanza weekend at Easter, apart from the luxurious conference hall and the sea breezes. A number of NSS supporters with members of the Humanist Teachers' Association joined the Eastbourne Humanist group for a distribution of envelopes containing information about all the organisations concerned, with particular reference to the meeting to be held the following day on the subject of Religion in the School.

In spite of the competition from Nature, and also from the churches, which had, funnily enough, arranged a religious service for the delegates at the same time as our meeting (or could it have been the other way round?) the meeting itself, held in a fine large room at the Central Library, was very well attended and successful in every way. Edward Blishen, a former secondary modern school teacher and author of that delightful best-selling book, *Roaring Boys*, pointed out in a thoughtful and penetrating address, that children are actually being deprived of a study of wide areas of human thought. The studies of philosophical ideas, and of the history and development of different religious beliefs are made virtually impossible by the narrow requirements of the Agreed Syllabuses. Those RI teachers who attempt these studies in schools are acting counter to official policy, and not until the restraint of compulsory religion is removed will education be able to broaden out in the way the times demand.

Mr Blishen said that the present arrangements were responsible for a refusal to be interested on the part of children, and for the moral undermining of the teaching staff who accept, for career and also even professional reasons, a position that many consider shameful. However since none of us is untouched by the present position we are all responsible for its removal.

William Hamling, who spoke not only as an MP but as a former teacher of—among other things—RI, said that after the debate in the House of Commons a year ago he had received many letters from ministers of religion who themselves objected to compulsion in religious matters on the grounds that it was counter-productive. Compulsion is

actually an obstacle to belief. It is realised that many people called to teach RI have no real conviction, and tend to plough through the Bible in an unimaginative way. School assemblies without the religious element could be a useful and lively part of school life, but the necessity of having to conduct services of worship imposes an intolerable strain on many Heads who have come to see the aridity of the routine exercise. Parents who send their children to such schools thinking to procure for them the benefits of Christian education are in a sense being cheated. They would do better to send their children to church for an hour, instead of having to depend on the perfunctory services of a half-committed staff, anxious to get on with their real job. Mr Hamling mentioned the problem of withdrawing children. Whatever one does the result is unsatisfactory. All children have a right to know of the great contributions that religions have made to civilisations, but this should be undertaken by teachers who have had some broad philosophical training. Mr Hamling concluded with a plea for personal and individual freedom for the young and their parents in matters of conscience.

Mr Tribe raised, among other points, the question of the dual system, by which we pay out millions of pounds a year for the upkeep of church schools. True comprehensive education is not possible while we segregate some children in these schools. Moreover although there is practically universal condemnation of the practice of apartheid on racial grounds in South Africa, can we say that apartheid on grounds of religion is any better? Like the other speakers he denied that there was any real agreement in society about religious or moral questions. Certainly there are no easy answers, and the Agreed Syllabuses are useless.

A final word, which summed up the whole argument very well, was spoken by Edward Blishen. In answer to a critic who said that all the reforms asked for were already being practised by teachers of religion, he said that the point was not that the subject was badly taught, but that it was indefensible. The success of the meeting was ample reward for the efforts and collaboration of the three humanist groups concerned.

THE LIBRARY OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH

ROBERT W. MORRELL

IT HAS BEEN SAID that a man's library gives a good insight into his character. The truth of this is debatable, but it cannot be denied that something of the character of an individual is revealed through the books he owns.

Many secularists built up very fine libraries and it is not unusual to meet pensioners who after a lifetime spent in hard manual employment have collections as good, if not better, than many a university don. I well recall one old secularist at Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, who despite a lifetime in the mines—and this involved periods of intense poverty such as that during the interwar period—built up a collection of Byron English and American first editions supplemented by several original letters and works on the poet. Housed in a little terrace house in a mean back street it was a collection many a wealthy collector or institutional library might well envy.

Back numbers of Freethought journals give information about the publishing activities of the Secularist Movement, but also for many present-day readers most of the works listed are now out-of-print and very difficult to obtain secondhand, though if found they need not be expensive. Against this must be set the fact that in recent years there has been a growing interest in Freethought literature on the part of university libraries, particularly in the United States, which must eventually force prices up. This pattern which is reflected in other fields of book collecting must, one fears, be expected in view of the increasing academic interest in politics and sociology.

Many leading figures in the Freethought Movement assembled extensive libraries. Most have now disappeared without trace. However, in a few instances some information as to their contents has come down to us. F. J. Gould wrote a series of articles for the *Literary Guide* (now *The Humanist*) on visits to the homes of famous Freethinkers. These were later reprinted in book form. In these short essays he includes much on the books owned by the people about whom he writes, and thus we learn something of the richness of the private libraries of Moncure Conway, the biographer of Thomas Paine, John M. Robertson, the historian of Rationalism, and G. J. Holyoake the Co-operative Movement pioneer and historian. Of these Holyoake seems to have had the most interesting collection for it extended to paintings and prints. It might be interesting to recall that it was Holyoake who gave the National Portrait Gallery its magnificent painting of Richard Carlile.

Not all the libraries of famous Freethinkers have gone without leaving any trace. That of G. W. Foote, founder and first editor of the *FREETHINKER*, is known from the sales catalogue of it issued by a London bookseller. I learned that the library of Charles Bradlaugh, MP, founder of the National Secular Society, has a similar memento in a catalogue cum sales list issued in 1891 by his daughter, Mrs Bradlaugh Bonner.

The catalogue is a paperback and on its cover and title page bears a copy of Bradlaugh's signature while on the rear cover is a photograph of the library as it was housed in Bradlaugh's home in Circus Street, St John's Wood, London. In the preface Mrs Bradlaugh Bonner stresses just how important his books were to Bradlaugh. Even during times of acute financial difficulty he would not part with any of the books—though he was quite happy to loan them out while keeping a record on a slate as to who bor-

rowed what and when it was due for return. In all the library numbered over 7,000 volumes plus 3,000 blue books and large numbers of unbound pamphlets. Mrs Bradlaugh Bonner tells us she had hoped that the library would be purchased as a whole, but it seemed "Library Committees were afraid to buy this collection: probably they feared possible controversial theology, or perhaps the even more dangerous books discussing vital social questions".

The catalogue runs to over 137 pages of closely printed matter and many of the items are small collections in themselves such as 298 volumes of pamphlets on various subjects—an addenda notes that these had been purchased as a lot by the National Liberal Club. Being divided into sections the catalogue provides an insight into some themes which interested Bradlaugh greatly, such as legal matters and India (Charles Bradlaugh was in fact known as MP for India).

The books and pamphlets form a wonderful list and while Mrs Bradlaugh Bonner speaks in the preface about the lack of rare items and first editions this statement is no longer true by the standards of today. When one reads of works by Toland, Carlile, Owen, Comte, and many other famous names priced under 5/- one's mouth begins to water. To discover works such as Carlile's *Deist*, *Lion*, and *Republican* (the last a complete run) at prices such as 10/-, 15/- and £5 respectively, or the *Chartist Circular* (1841-43) and Harney's *Red Republican* at 10/- (the latter again as a full run), the increase in prices since 1891 becomes very clear indeed. In fact in the same dealer's first list from which I purchased the Bradlaugh catalogue are advertised two volumes of Wooler's famous periodical the *Black Dwarf* at £35. In the Bradlaugh catalogue twelve volumes of the same periodical are offered for £3!

An interesting feature of the catalogue is revealed in the fact that very little fiction appears. Equally strange is the discovery of only one title by Charles Darwin (*The Descent of Man*) and none from the pen of the populariser of geology, Mantell. Few works by Thomas Paine appear and as far as can be seen no lives of the famous radical, though among the pamphlets is one the present writer would very much like to have, *Thomas Paine: Was he Junius?* One of course can speculate till the cows come home as to why some works one expects to find listed in a library such as Bradlaugh's do not appear: such speculation in no way affects the fact that the library was a wonderful collection and that it is a pity it has not come down to us intact. However, the catalogue (a rarity in its own right) serves as an excellent memento of the library of a truly great man.

FREETHINKER FUND

THE FREETHINKER is the only weekly Secularist-Humanist paper in the country. It is still only 6d. How much do YOU care how many people it reaches? To advertise we need money, and our expenses are ever-increasing. Whose copy are you reading now? Have you got a subscription? Couldn't you contribute something to the Fighting Fund, say 6d or 6s or £6 or £60? How much do you really care about Freethought and helping other people to hear about it? Do, please, help if you can. The FREETHINKER, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1

A CALL FOR A WORLD LANGUAGE

F. M. SKINNER

THERE HAS recently been a great deal of time, money and effort applied in the UK and other countries to bring monetary and measurement systems into line with more widely used standards. The advantages of these reforms are considerable and will, in the end, bring benefits to all from school children to international bankers. (Even if the latter don't need them.)

Many far sighted people had pressed for such changes long ago and it is good to see them being implemented at last. However another such call has been virtually ignored by the 'powers that be' which will have much greater and far reaching effects than any of these relatively local improvements. This is, of course, the call for an international language.

Several attempts have been made by various groups of people with an international turn of mind but so far, all have been ignored or the ideas shelved by those who could really do something about it. The UN has considered such a language but has not been very forthcoming with any concrete suggestions. Now that a global communications system is rapidly becoming a physical reality it is high time that more money and effort should be applied to make these men's dreams come true. Thousands of millions of pounds are being spent on installations and satellites and yet a fraction of one per cent of this would provide the basis for an accepted world language.

The advantages of such a language have recently become much greater, especially in areas previously unseen such as 'computer software', international education and television links but the more obvious ones still deserve a mention.

Properly designed, it would be very easy to learn to read and write. There would be a common language for translation computers, understood by all, as well as the computer, giving less chance of error by repeated translation. Education in the undeveloped countries could start by initial education to speak and read the World language and then to use this in a common satellite education system with the consequent saving of 'channel time'.

Political leaders could communicate directly with each other's peoples! (This, of course, would be in many circles considered a great disadvantage and will, no doubt, be the major cause of opposition.) Scientists and engineers would be able to explain problems and suggest solutions more directly than at present. Technical papers could be intelligible to all without translation. (Well, perhaps not intelligible, but readable!)

At present, we often hear of controversies over local language (e.g. Welsh, Flemish, French-Canadian, Tamil, etc.) which lead to riots and even deaths. If all legal documents were written in both the local and World language many of these disputes would not arise and the culture and literature could be kept alive in each area. Tourism would benefit, enlarging understanding between peoples and more direct contacts between cultures would highlight many of the irrationalities in each.

Implementation of such a system would, of course, entail considerable expense but it could be given a flying start by using the existing media. The output for one day of the world's newspaper industry would be sufficient for a primer required to start the necessary world education programme. Sub-titles in the World language could be

applied to the TV news bulletins or other widely watched programmes. Advertisers could be encouraged to use both local and World language in the printed form. An international appeal on the lines of 'Feed the Minds' by the UN might provide a start towards the initial costs.

Much of the above may well be over optimistic and I do not pretend that I have covered anything but the more obvious points. There are innumerable problems involved which are specific to each physical area or field of study, but I feel the time is right for another serious look at these problems before the new communications systems become too 'set in their ways'.

There is no greater agent for the reduction of irrational fears than free communication, and a World language would be a great step towards the idealistic motto of the BBC "Nation shall speak peace unto Nation".

BOOK REVIEW

MADELEINE SIMMS

Euthanasia and the Right to Death: Edited by A. B. Downing with contributions by W. R. Matthews, Antony Flew, Eliot Slater, Joseph Fletcher, George P. Fletcher, Yale Kamisar, Glanville Williams, G. A. Gresham, Mary Rose Barrington, Raanan Gillon (Peter Owen, 40s).

NEARLY all of us reading these lines will die within, at most, sixty years. In many cases, our dying will be attended by unnecessary suffering, and in many cases this suffering will be prolonged. Religious persons often seem to enjoy suffering, or think it is good for the soul. Malcolm Muggeridge is the best known exponent of this attitude in our own time. Ronald Knox, the celebrated Roman Catholic priest who converted many of the great and the famous in the inter-war period, lamented on his death-bed that God had not made him suffer enough. Was he, he wondered anxiously, deemed unworthy of really intense suffering?

Happily, secularists are rarely afflicted with this peculiarly repellent form of masochism. They can generally be relied upon to take the view that preventable suffering should in fact be prevented. Thus, enlightened self-interest, if no more elevated motive, must make us take this powerfully argued and compassionate book very seriously indeed. It consists of a dozen contributions on different aspects of the problems including one by the former Dean of St Paul's, and one by a secularist devil's advocate, Professor Kamisar, an American lawyer. This is worth reading if only to savour to the full Professor Glanville Williams' devastating reply. Between them, the contributors explore all possible arguments against the principle of voluntary euthanasia, though this formidable sledgehammer will hardly be required by anyone who has actually witnessed at close quarters the agonising death of someone they love.

The book was published just as Lord Raglan's voluntary euthanasia bill was being presented in the House of Lords, and since then, Hugh Gray, MP, has presented another one in the House of Commons. Previously, two other attempts had been made, both in the Lords—by Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede in 1936, and by Lord Chorley in 1950. This continuous interest is encouraging. It shows that voluntary euthanasia is a cause whose time has come. In terms of English politics, this means a long series of parliamentary measures sponsored by courageous and convinced private individuals who get the subject, previously taboo, widely discussed—the essential pre-requisite for changing public attitudes. For their pains, they receive sackfuls of abuse from the dogmatic, the hypocritical and the reactionary. But all this is a necessary part of the process. These courageous individuals are the pace-makers of social change in our society, and history remembers them more gratefully than their contemporaries.

This book will prove a valuable ally in the cause of a humane and much overdue reform. It can also be warmly recommended as a text book for teachers in liberal studies departments since it rehearses with great clarity and simplicity some recurrent ethical arguments. It does not, however, succeed in answering one rather puzzling question—why is it, that those who are apparently most convinced of the after-life, are so anxious to avoid entering upon it?

LETTERS

Northern Ireland

I REFER to your editorial of March 21 dealing with the present situation in Northern Ireland.

I completely agree with your criticisms of the extreme right wing of the Unionist Party and of Ian Paisley and his bigoted followers, but I feel you have given a rather one-sided view of the whole matter.

The reforms which the Civil Rights marchers demanded have been accepted by the Government and, indeed have already been passed into law. Admittedly, this should have been done years ago, but you should not overlook the fact that tremendous progress has been made in the main industry of agriculture, in the establishment of new industries and in the field of social welfare and, by and large, the Catholic population have benefited equally from the progress as much as the Protestants.

To describe the present regime as "in effect a police state" is so wildly untrue as to be laughable if it were not for its irresponsibility. People who are ignorant of conditions in Northern Ireland might take the statement seriously.

From your editorial one might think that the poor Catholic minority were a downtrodden, oppressed people who only wished to live in peace and did not contribute in any way to the build up of tension and hate in the community. That this is quite untrue is admitted by ordinary law-abiding Catholics and the fanatical display by Catholic mobs of aggression against soldiers and Protestants during the past two nights in Belfast shows that it is "six of one and half-a-dozen of the other". We now await reprisals from the Protestants and so the usually vicious circle is reached.

As one who threw off the shackles of Christianity well over half a century ago I believe I am taking an objective view.

How simple the solution would be if decent Catholics and Protestants would unite and cry halt to all the nonsense. That this is impossible is largely due to the various religious leaders who are more interested in gaining adherents to their own particular brand of Christianity than in the integration of society as a whole.

DAVID C. GREENE.

More time for religious broadcasting ?

A PROMINENT NEWSPAPER asks 'what do you think about the time given to religion on TV?' As an atheist (and if I was more interested in the matter than I am) I should plump for *more* opportunity being granted to the evangelists than is now. Few people read the Bible, or have ever done so, it is safe to assume. So if they took it into their homes via the screen medium a greater proportion of the population would become acquainted with its content, and no surer way of helping people to throw off the incubus of religion could be devised, short of having them read it for themselves. As things stand it is, for most folks, something to be "taken as read" without the trouble of reading it; tradition holds sway and doubt is rarely felt. A wider dissemination of the Bible story, in its own words (especially in the Modern English version) should soon result in a reaction against it when seen in relation to the science-sessions with which it would have to be compared. If, say, Revelation could be serialised, either by word of mouth or pictorially quite a lot of listeners or viewers would, surely, say "What do they take us for?" or "Who do they think they're kidding?". Of course the argument against this would be that it would be a waste of time, but one is justified in thinking it would not be long before the godly would see that it is much safer to have the stuff decently shrouded in ignorance, something to have faith in rather than something to be "revealed" in all its absurdity, and worse, and so would be glad if publicity were withdrawn.

COLLIN COATES.

Celtic Nationalism

MR NIGEL H. SINNOTT'S nonsensical attack on Berresford Ellis is completely unjustified and unfortunately this patronising attitude shown towards Ellis is only too typical of that detestable English largesse and arrogance which is bestowed on all things and peoples who do not necessarily adhere to the view that English culture and language is an 'obvious first choice'.

If Mr Sinnott's appreciation of the Irish language was serious, and I am not impressed with his affectation of Gaelic adornments, he might consider reading Mr Ellis's books with a view to acquiring an understanding of how the Irish language and the Scottish (Gàidhlic) language were deliberately suppressed in the same march of English imperialism which was directly responsible for the dislocation in the natural development of other people's cultures, e.g. Africa, Asia.

Mr Sinnott together with other readers of the FREETHINKER may be unaware of the key role that religion played as an instrument in the development of the English Empire. It is not by accident that the Highlands and islands of Scotland is the most severely indoctrinated part of Scotland. The role and expediences of the Reformation in Scotland were quite different to those put to use by Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I in England, a subject by the way which should be of the greatest interest to all free-thinkers.

As to Mr Sinnott's views and understanding of what constitutes nationality and 'outgrown nation-states', really, is he unaware that the United Nations has more than doubled its member-states since its inauguration. His misunderstanding of this subject is altogether reprehensible when he refers to the Afrikaner ruling clique as nationalists. They are no more nationalist than Hitler was (he also called himself Socialist), they are Fascist and racist.

I can only advise Mr Sinnott to read more widely, perhaps have a look at what our Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid says on the subject. As this subject which embraces not only politics but also languages, culture, religion, etc., is much too important for indulging in snide and fatuous remarks which should find no place in the FREETHINKER.

R. MULHOLLAND.

Conversational discrimination

F. H. SNOW (April 4) implies that he would discriminate against a person whom he found to be "unworthy of one's company". That is (?) a person whom he did not find to be 'cordial, conversational, clean and respectable'. No doubt not all 'home grown' would pass such a test. One wonders how E. Powell still manages to do so.

CHARLES BYASS.

The Social Morality Council Report

I CONSIDER that your leader in the FREETHINKER for April 4, 1970, is a well-deserved and timely rebuke to a group in the BHA for presuming to represent the movement as a whole.

It has long seemed obvious to me that any attempt to reach agreement with religious bodies would only succeed if the religious points of view were conceded as paramount, and I feared that any such agreement might, in the long run, weaken Humanism and even tend to disrupt it. The Report appears to justify my fears. Any attempt to appease religion seems to me to be a most dangerous policy.

Religions rely on faith and this tends to produce a rigid dogmatism. The believer assumes that his faith is the only truth, and that other points of view are only true to the extent that they agree with his own, thus making compromise almost impossible. Humanists, on the other hand, include members holding a wide range of opinions (some of which are quite undogmatic and are influenced by changes in the available evidence), so that they tend to be less dogmatic and more able to compromise. The agnostics and unbelievers will, however, very rightly object to any report which is claimed to be welcomed by Humanists, but which ignores their views in favour of religious claims.

It is clear that when—to quote your editorial—"The report wants . . . recognition of the nature and claims of religion" it does not mean, what many Humanists think, namely that the claims of religion are mainly false and are largely based on inadequately verified traditions, myths and superstitions.

Since religious beliefs should be respected, but not included as among the official objectives of the BHA. The membership of the committee was far too unrepresentative and limited to be qualified to pass judgment on such a wide issue. Should not the general members of the BHA have been consulted before the publication of such a one-sided report?

G. F. WESTCOTT.

Paine's influence in Ireland and Scotland

R. W. MORRELL (April 18) is quite right in pointing out the influence of Thomas Paine in the early nineteenth century (and thereabouts) period of Irish and Scottish history. Paine's ideas may well have been instrumental in fomenting a little-known Scottish uprising of 1820 (the story of which will shortly be reviewed in FREETHINKER).

I have just been informed that an edition of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* was published in Scottish Gaelic and that the Establishment took this seriously enough to publish a reply in the same language.

NIGEL H. SINNOTT.

Professor Eysenck

BRIEFLY re David Reynolds interview with Professor H. J. Eysenck (April 11).

Well, well, well, so much for Professor Eysenck's *pseudo* humanism! The tragedy is he's *deadly* serious.

Let us relegate his *brainwashing authoritarianism* to the rubbish heap where it belongs.

Beware the wolf in sheep's clothing.

KEITH FELTON.