

Freethinker

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SET BACK FOR 'RED-COATED SKINHEADS'

AT ITS SECOND READING the government's Bill to make hare coursing illegal was passed by 203 votes to 70. The government undertook sponsorship of the Bill following the realisation that Mr Arnold Shaw's Private Member's Bill would not get through due to lack of time, despite its widespread support. The new Bill differs from Mr Shaw's in that it does not also seek to ban deer hunting, and replaces Mr Shaw's proposed penalty of a fine or up to three months' imprisonment, with a fine only. This last seems an unfortunate alteration since the kind of people who engage in blood sports tend to be those who can easily afford the maximum fine which is be £100 for a first offence and £200 for subsequent offences. It is to be hoped however, that the possibility of being branded a criminal will discourage these people from flouting the law.

Should Mr Wilson call a June election, the Bill will almost certainly be shelved yet again. (This has already happened twice during this parliament with Mr Eric Heffer's and Mr Robert Shelton's Private Member's Bills of 1966 and 1968 respectively.) And should a Conservative government be returned to power, it will doubtless be a long time before such a Bill can again have a chance of success.

This would be a blow not only to the hares of Great Britain (the Bill does not affect Northern Ireland) but to the League against Cruel Sports, the body whose activities have contributed enormously to the public and parliamentary opinion which has prompted the government at last to take action. The Annual Report of the League has been published recently and makes satisfying reading for those of us who abhor blood sports:

"We enter the 1970s in expectant anticipation that this decade will see the end of bloodsports in Britain and the end of the hypocrisy and humbug which now envelops the conservation of wild life.

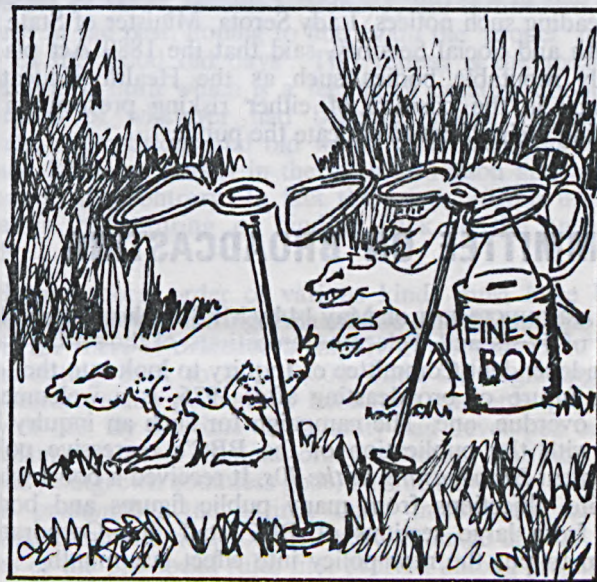
The Executive Committee are not unmindful of that there could shortly be a change of Government. If the Tory Party is elected, in view of the number of blood-sportsmen likely to be returned to Parliament there will be no anti-bloodsport legislation for the period that Party is in power. Accordingly, the League is preparing to meet this possible new situation with campaigns that will ensure that there will be no respite for the hunts during this time, and that bloodsports will not be swept under the carpet and forgotten."

During 1969 the League was able to purchase two areas of land, formerly staghunter's paradises which are now sanctuaries for stags. The Devon and Somerset Staghounds were determined to prevent one of these becoming the property of the League. "The fact that we were able to outbid them and outmanoeuvre them has made the staghunters realise as never before that the League is an ever growing threat to their existence." Further on we find: "Following the conviction of the Joint Master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds for assault, a campaign waged by the League resulted in this hunting magistrate being suspended from the Bench for a year."

The war against fox-hunting has continued unabated with at least two Masters of Foxhounds being successfully prosecuted. "There have also been a number of successful

out-of-court settlements for those who, but for our help, would not have received a penny piece after having had their pets killed, or their land trampled on by the red-coated skinheads of the countryside."

The other important point to come out is concerned with the currently misnamed RSPCA. Reflect on what those letters stand for, and then consider how they tally with the Association's lack of opposition to blood sports, its new Chairman, Mr. John Hobhouse, being unopposed to members of the British Field Sports Society sitting on his Council, and its newly appointed vice-chairman, Mr F. Burden, being President of the Kent Wild-fowlers Association, a bloodsport organisation affiliated to the British Field Sports Society.



The League against Cruel Sports is clearly doing an excellent job in combating both blood sports directly, as it were in the 'field', and the moral anomaly which makes the RSPCA a shabby mockery of its own title. The League's address is 17/21 Chandos House, Buckingham Gate, London, SW1 (telephone 799-4109).

Freethinker

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Editor: David Reynolds

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

THE 1889 INDECENT ADVERTISEMENTS ACT

FOLLOWING on last week's debacle with regard to The Indecent Advertisements Act, the law which may be found to make a criminal of any individual or any local authority which offers advice to sufferers from venereal disease, a Bill designed to rectify this incredible discrepancy, dating from 1889, was passed at its second reading in the House of Lords on May 11. Moving the second reading of the Bill, The Indecent Advertisements (Amendments) Bill, Lady Birk said that the Health Education Council of which she is Chairman, had embarked on a campaign aimed at 16 to 30 year-olds utilising posters and leaflets to explain the facts about venereal disease. She explained that due to the 1889 Act every poster and leaflet had to carry a warning that if it was displayed where it might be visible to someone passing along a street or public highway there was a risk of prosecution under the Act. Without doubt she said, this was a hampering factor in the fight against venereal disease.

In the debate which followed Lady Summerskill said that the Act of 1889 was passed at a time of great hypocrisy, the disease being unspeakable in those days. She was sure that in a permissive society no one would be shocked by reading such notices. Lady Scrota, Minister of State for Health and Social Security, said that the 1889 Act placed highly reputable bodies such as the Health Education Council in the position of either risking prosecution or limiting their efforts to educate the public.

COMMITTEE ON BROADCASTING

THE ANNOUNCEMENT on May 14 by Mr Stonehouse, the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, of the setting up of an Independent Committee of Inquiry to look into the long term future of broadcasting after 1976, is a welcome, if long overdue, one. The campaign for such an inquiry began with the publication of the BBC's regressive policy statement *Broadcasting in the 70s*. It received a boost when, despite objections from many public figures and bodies and from large sections of BBC staff, the Corporation began to put the new policy into effect last month.

The committee whose chairman is Lord Annan is to present its report at the beginning of 1973, thus allowing time for a Bill to be formulated by the end of 1974 and passed through parliament during 1974 and 75 in order for its provisions to be put into effect when the existing BBC and ITA charters run out in 1976. The committee will be in a position to recommend that the BBC and ITA

should be replaced by other authorities, and to suggest how the country's broadcasting administration should be related to parliament.

Including Lord Annan the committee will have anything up to twelve members. The names of the other members have not yet been announced, but it is to be hoped that a substantial proportion of them will be not just from the world of broadcasting but from the practical rather than the administrative side.

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: Wednesdays. 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

INDOOR

Humanist Housing Association: Annual Garden Party at Burnet House, 8 Burgess Hill, London, NW2: Saturday, June 6, 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.: There will be a Bring and Buy sale to raise money for the residents of Burnet House. It would be appreciated if you would bring a small gift for the stall.

North Staffordshire Humanist Group: Cartwright House, Broad Street, Hanley (near Cinebowl): Friday, May 29, 7.45 p.m.: "The Open Society", Roy Beardmore.

West Ham and District Secular Group: The Community Centre, Wanstead (near Wanstead Underground): Thursday, May 28, 8 p.m.: Meeting.

BERTRAND RUSSELL. A meeting in his honour at the Central Hall, Westminster, London, SW1, on Monday, June 8, 7.30 p.m. Speakers include Sir Alfred Ayer, Sir Edward Boyle, Lord Brockway, Michael Foot, MP, Professor Joseph Rotblat, Baroness Wootton, Rupert Crawshaw-Williams (chairman). Admission free. Tickets available (5d stamp) from the sponsoring organisations which include the National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1.

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

RELIGION AND MORALITY

ISOBEL GRAHAME

HUMANISTS ARE FAMILIAR with that Old Chestnut—if you don't believe in God what's the point of morality? Even Lord Ritchie Calder was confronted with it by the Bishop of Stepney on TV.

Are our morals really less civilised today than in—say—the seventeenth century when pious religious clichés were on every tongue as part of common speech? To answer that one need only read *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, or *The Man in the Making* by Sir Arthur Bryant. When my grandfather was a small child the Cholera Act of 1832 opened with the words, "Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God to visit the United Kingdom with the plague called Cholera . . ." Such patterns of words were customary and therefore acceptable, so it was no wonder that my father was given funny ideas about what constituted Divine pleasure and the morals of God.

Is morality merely the response of prudent people who go in fear of God or the Police? Of course not—neither the Church nor the Home Office really believes that, so why is the Old Chestnut still trotted out and how can it be answered rationally?

Morals and ethics come respectively from Latin and Greek words meaning the same thing—customary behaviour. Behaviour can be eugenic—meaning species and environment preserving, or dysgenic—meaning the reverse. Obviously the customary behaviour of all social animals must be largely eugenic if those animals are to prosper and survive, whether they have developed religious beliefs or not. Dysgenic behaviour is by definition damaging and, if persisted in, is unlikely to remain customary for very long as extinction will be the ultimate result.

The behaviour of one individual living in total isolation from all others could not properly be called eugenic or dysgenic, moral or anti-moral since it would have no effect for good or ill on others.

Social living—gregariousness—evolved among animals whose behaviour exploited the advantages to be had from co-operation and mutual aid in groups larger than the natural family. For instance—extra safety while breeding, migrating, food gathering; greater alertness to danger; stronger defences against predators and enemies; and the ability to bring down and kill food animals too large to be tackled by one alone.

Although moral order must have been known to exist among social species, probably ever since Mankind learned to hunt, Charles Darwin was the first to subject this phenomenon to scientific observation and documentation. He noted the eugenic pattern of reserving destructive aggression for enemies and strangers, while con-specific rivalries were controlled by a kind of courtesy and ritual still observed in mock fights such as fencing, boxing and the rules governing sports and games, as well as committee procedure and international diplomatic protocol. Since Darwin's time it has been observed and demonstrated that destructive aggression breaks out among members of the same species only under conditions of acute stress, such as too cramped territory or too little food. However, under satisfactory living conditions formal courtesy as a habit—not just to individuals we happen to like—is an age-old safety device.

Gregarious animals had established moral behaviour before Mankind appeared on Earth and theories about exist-

ence now called religions developed out of his power of speech, imagination, conjecture and fear. We have an insatiable desire to ask Why? and an irrepressible desire to answer Because, and we weave ideas and ideologies out of practical experience and fanciful imagination.

Religions were not moralities, but they reflected the customary behaviour of their followers, codifying it into rules and creeds, justifying it by imaginative reference to supernatural powers, and enforcing the rules through dominant people such as magicians, priests and religious institutes who threatened transgressors with the wrath of the gods. Such codes and creeds hardened with time into doctrines, were passed on first verbally and later in scriptures, eventually becoming incorporated into military, political and judicial policy as civilisation developed.

Among sub-human species, individuals who, because of injury, disease, or physical malfunction, are incapable of conforming to the herd's eugenic habits, are driven out or killed, usually by the dominant male. For animals as well as tribal and even civilised Mankind, expulsion from the protection of the group—outlawry, banishment—resulted in speedy death from predators, enemies or sheer starvation.

While human customs could remain static for long epochs through countless generations, religions reflected eugenic social behaviour, but in times of rapid change, communities must adapt their behaviour quickly to the new conditions and the new morality becomes contrary to the old religiously sanctioned customs. Sudden climatic change, volcanic eruption, conquest by an enemy, the discovery of new knowledge and new techniques are just some of the kinds of situation which give rise to behavioural change.

During periods of moral upheaval when the whole way of life must be questioned and re-thought, people who are illiterate, anxious, or narrow-minded, are inclined to take refuge in the past, hoping to find again the 'proper' morality of the 'good old days'. This retreat is the result of conditioned faith which is a feeling of certainty about the rightness of whatever had become familiar. Irrational beliefs, superstitions and old wives' tales based on conditioned faith can persist in the teeth of reason and of evidence to the contrary. In fact the word *religion* used to mean a re-ligaturing or binding back to the ancestral gods.

Human moral order of various kinds must have been developing slowly during Palaeolithic and Mesolithic cultures for there is evidence of highly developed social customs dating back to 8 or 9,000 when the beginnings of agriculture made permanent habitation the only practical way of life. By the time Christianity had developed out of Judaism and other contemporary systems, Mankind had already outgrown countless gods, but the surviving religions (and presumably the extinct ones) incorporate, as the unique commandments of their special image of God, versions of the pro-social rules first evolved among gregarious animals. To these were added various injunctions and threats about ritual behaviour of a purely religious or ideological nature. The Ten Commandments are an example—numbers 1 to 4 are concerned with religion, and to break them does little harm except to the faithful and to the authority of their religion. But the essence of num-

(Continued on page 165)

THE SECULARIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

A. SOLOMON

INDIA HAS one of the best Constitutions in the world. It guarantees fundamental rights to the citizen and provides for a secular state. However, Indian society by and large is permeated by the religious mode of thought and obscurantist ideas.

There have been several attempts in the past to establish organisations for the promotion of secularist, rationalist and humanist ideas in India. In 1930, a group of rationalists, most of whom were members of the Rationalist Press Association (RPA) of London, formed the Rationalist Association of India (RAI) in Bombay.

The RAI and the RYL

The aims of the Rationalist Association of India were: "To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country".

In 1934, some young rationalists formed the Rationalist Youth League (RYL) in Bombay. It was very active among the students in the colleges and in the university, arranging debates and discussions and printing pamphlets. After three years of activities, it merged with the RAI in 1937, when one of its secretaries became the secretary of the RAI.

The Rationalist Association of India did very useful work for more than 20 years. Although it was situated in Bombay its members were spread out all over India. Its official journal *Reason* was known for its high standard and vigorous, forthright, and thought-provoking articles. In 1934, its editor, the late Dr C. L. D'Avoine (1875-1945), was accused of blasphemy, or according to the Indian Penal Code, of hurting the religious susceptibilities of His Majesty's subjects, in an article on "Religion and Morality" written by him and published in *Reason*. His acquittal was hailed in the press throughout India as a triumph for freedom of expression. Dr C. L. D'Avoine was succeeded as editor of *Reason* by the late Prof. R. D. Karve (1882-1953), a veteran rationalist and pioneer of family planning in India. He was also prosecuted several times for his writings.

From about 1945, those responsible for the activities of the RAI found it difficult to carry on due to inadequate funds and various other reasons. The war and the political situation in the country also added to the difficulties. Finally in 1950, the RAI decided to merge with the Indian Rationalist Association, which had been formed in Madras, mainly due to the efforts of Mr. S. Ramanathan.¹

The IRA

The Indian Rationalist Association (IRA) was formed in Madras in December 1949, at a conference inaugurated by the late Sir Raghunath P. Paranjpye (1876-1966) who had also been a member of the RAI and was an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist Press Association of London. Most of the members of the RAI now joined the Indian

Rationalist Association. The IRA also did valuable work. It held several successful conferences at various places in India and published the *Indian Rationalist*. Due to the usual difficulties the *Indian Rationalist* ceased publication for some time, but resumed publication from January 1966. However, recently again the IRA has been facing financial difficulties and has suspended its activities for the present. The *Indian Rationalist* ceased publication at the end of December 1966. The Indian Rationalist Association is affiliated to the World Union of Freethinkers (WUF).

The IHU

In June 1960, mainly due to the efforts of Mr Narsingh Narain a group of humanists formed the Indian Humanist Union (IHU) in Naini, Tal, Uttar Pradesh State, in northern India. This Union is affiliated to the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU).

The Indian Humanist Union has been very active and doing very good work in northern India. In August 1962 the Union was represented at the third world congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union at Oslo, Norway. In August 1966, it started publishing a quarterly journal, the *Humanist Outlook*. Since its establishment the Union has been making steady progress. It holds regular meetings and conferences in Naini Tal, Lucknow, Varanasi, and a few other places. However, the financial resources of the Union are very modest.

In March 1970, a few members of the IHU established the Humanist Endowment Fund Society. The main aim of the Society is to build up a fund which, according to its rules, is suitably invested and only the income therefrom is used towards supporting organisations and activities which promote humanist ideas. The Indian Humanist Union is the main beneficiary at present.

The RHA

A significant contribution to the promotion of rationalist and humanist ideas in India has been made by what has come to be known as the radical humanist movement. Historically, it is political in origin, initiated by the well-known thinker and revolutionary M. N. Roy (1887-1954). He founded the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehra Dun, Uttar Pradesh State, in 1946, and in 1948 after dissolving his Radical Democratic Party, he launched the Radical Humanist Movement, which is also affiliated to the International Humanist and Ethical Union. The radical humanists, until recently did not have a formal organisation or association but they met frequently on the local or regional level to discuss political, economic, and social problems, and at annual reunions on the national level. They operated mainly through the Indian Renaissance Institute and its weekly journal *The Radical Humanist* which is now published in Delhi. In November 1969 a Radical Humanist Association was formed with headquarters in New Delhi. The activities of this Association will be mainly devoted to the propagation of the ideas propounded by M. N. Roy.

The ISS

During 1968, perturbed by the increase in the influence and activities of orthodox religious and obscurantist bodies in different parts of India, a group of persons committed to a secular, modern and scientific outlook formed, at the initiative of Professor A. B. Shah, what they called the Indian Secular Forum, which held its foundation conference in November 1968. The conference as well as the activities of the Forum received an encouraging response. In March 1969, the name was changed to The Indian Secular Society (ISS) and it was decided to make efforts to build up a strong and stable organisation for achieving the aims and objectives of the Society.

The main aims of the Society may be broadly described as: first, to combat obscurantist trends and their spokesmen on the level of ideas and public opinion; and secondly, to contribute to the creation of a positive secular outlook among the Indian people and thereby make them understand the relevance of secular ethics centring round the freedom and dignity of the individual to their own well-being and development.

The Society publishes a quarterly entitled *The Secularist*. It has been actively combating obscurantist trends, ideas and activities, through letters to the press, lectures, discussions and seminars. Among other things it is campaigning for a uniform civil code for the entire people of India as directed by the Indian Constitution.

With a view to building up a stable organisation the rules of the Society provide that all amounts received as life membership fees—a single payment of Rs.200 (about £12 or US \$30)—will be suitably invested and only the income therefrom will be used for the work of the Society.

* * * *

However modest these various efforts are, and have been, to promote secularist, rationalist and humanist ideas in a vast country like India they have had some impact at least on the educated and thinking section of the people.

In spite of the generally prevailing religious mode of thought and obscurantist outlook, there are many thousands of freethinkers, rationalists and humanists in India. It is necessary to establish centres all over the country in order to bring them together and provide a platform for the propagation of ideas which will lead to the creation of a tolerant and scientific mentality among the people of India.

SECULAR EDUCATION APPEAL

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY
103 BROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1

RELIGION AND MORALITY

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bers 5 to 10 is firmly enforced by the dominant males of all respectable communities of Chimps, Baboons and other higher animals to this day.

Whether we accept or reject religious beliefs and rites, it is a matter of sheer logic that we *must* base our behaviour to each other on practical pro-social principles, because social organisms whether human, animal, or simply cellular, break down when their individual members are no longer cohesive and supportive, no longer functioning according to an agreed pattern, that is—no longer can have confidence in the reliability of each other.

Truth is not some absolute emanating exclusively from God. Truth is the quality of being straight, accurate, balanced, honest, sincere and open minded. Honesty, respect for others, mindfulness of their needs as much as of our own, and responsibility for the consequences of our actions are seen to be necessary when we become aware of our inescapable life-long dependence on others; on their trustworthiness, their knowledge, competence, skill, personal health, hygienic habits and what used to be known as civilised human decency.

The need for moral order and ethical behaviour can be tested and demonstrated by asking two questions: What can I do which will have no effect whatsoever on anybody else? and, What can I do which does not involve any article or service whatsoever provided by somebody else?

PUBLIC FORUM

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Tel.: 01-407 2717

THE SLAVONIC JOSEPHUS: RIVAL TO CAESAR

THOMAS W. HOGAN

AS A RESULT of an important discovery made in the last century sixteen manuscripts in an Old Russian language entitled *On the Capture of Jerusalem* and bearing the name of Josephus were noticed to be different from *The Jewish War*. They contained additions not found in the standard text. The world of scholarship looked forward in eager anticipation for it was thought the additions referring to Jesus, John the Baptist, and the early Christians might have some bearing on the origins of Christianity. As is well known the copies of *The Jewish War* found in our Western libraries are silent concerning Jesus of Nazareth. It was also thought that the manuscripts *On the Capture of Jerusalem* would shed some light on the much disputed passage concerning the resurrection of Jesus in Josephus' other work *The Jewish Antiquities*.

Circumstance, however, favoured the sceptic for the passage in *The Jewish Antiquities* is no longer considered to be authentic.¹ It would appear from this that Josephus had not escaped the vigilance of ecclesiastical censorship. Therefore, in order to extract the genuine text of Josephus care should be exercised. Propositions unfavourable to Christianity must be his work; favourable sentences are Christian additions to the original.

Dr Robert Eisler took up the task of reconstructing the Slavonic manuscripts *On the Capture of Jerusalem*. In 1925 he announced to the German Philological Congress at Erlangen that he had succeeded in reconstituting the primitive text of Josephus. A commentator added: "Eisler must be regarded as the author of a formidable religious revolution, and future ages will call him the father of Christian history. But if he is wrong, his theory in spite of his immense scholarship and dialectical skill, can only exhibit one of the most prodigious errors of judgment and method ever made in the domain of historic studies".²

The standpoint which Eisler embraced had lain dormant for one-hundred-and-fifty years. Like Reimarus, Eisler contended that nascent Christianity was a revolutionary movement against Rome in a political sense. This viewpoint, Eisler claimed, was borne out by the Slavonic manuscripts.

Even apart from the Slavonic Version there is in the Gospels evidence pointing to the existence of a political element in the original Christian movement: Jesus crucified by the Romans; armed resistance offered at his arrest; his triumphal entry into Jerusalem; the attack on the Temple bank; Barabbas; the question about the tribute money; the inclusion of a Zealot (a political extremist) among the disciples; and the slaughter of the Galileans and the fall of the Siloam tower.³

Let us consider just two of these elements in order to appraise a point. The question of the tribute money will serve its purpose. Palestine in the first century of our era was a cauldron of political ferment. Since AD 6 the Jews had been annexed to the Roman Empire. Political extremists (Zealots) threatened to murder Jews who paid taxes to Rome. The question of the tribute money, so innocuous to present day readers, was designed to draw out the intentions of Jesus towards Jewish Nationalism. That Jesus fully understood the significance of this question can be seen from his answer "Why tempt me, ye hypocrites?" recorded in Matthew.

Mention of the Zealots brings us to our second point. In AD 70 the troops of Titus destroyed the Zealot armies who were fighting for Jewish independence. Josephus, in the standard text, gives an astronomical figure for their losses. Professor Brandon has noted how the Gospels written at the time of the national disaster conceal from their Roman readers the fact that a member of the little band of Jesus was a Zealot.⁴ Luke, who was writing when memories of the Jewish war were becoming dim, does not have to be so cautious. "Simon the Zealot" is expressly mentioned. It would appear from this, then, that an allegiance to Jesus and to Jewish Nationalism were not incompatible.

Interpretations such as Eisler's are sufficient to rock New Testament research to its foundations. Although novel the theory that Jesus was a Warrior King is completely in accordance with the history of the times. Professor Brandon has unravelled a point long obscured when he noted how the fall of Jerusalem left an opportunity for the rivals of the Mother Church (i.e. Paul in his letters) to present accounts of Jesus which differed considerably from the originals. The conflict is, in some circles, regarded as more fundamental than the dispute over the rite of circumcision. The removal of one party promulgated the emergence of the other.

The Slavonic passage of the Wonder Worker on the Mount of Olives is most striking. Dr Eisler contends that the words he bracketed contrive to make the historian Josephus a witness for Christianity. Such bracketed phrases and words, according to Eisler, are Christian interpolations. On this occasion I shall furnish the full text to show Christian misrepresentation:

"At that time there appeared a certain man, if it is meet to call him a man. His nature and form were human but the appearance of him more than (That) of a human (being): yet his works (were) divine. He wrought miracles wonderful and strong. Yet it is impossible for me to call him a human (being). But, on the other hand, if I look at (his) ordinary nature, I will not call him an angel.

"And all, whatsoever he wrought through an invisible power he wrought by word and command. Some said of him: 'Our first lawgiver is risen from the dead and hath vouchsafed many cures and artifices'. But the others thought that he was sent from God. But in many things he opposed the law and kept not the Sabbath according to the custom of (our) forefathers. Yet again, he did nothing shameful nor any daring acts, but merely by (his) word did he prepare anything. And many of the multitude who followed after him hearkened to his teaching. And many souls were roused thinking that thereby the Jewish tribes could free themselves from Roman hands. But it was his custom rather to abide without the city on the Mount of Olives. And he gathered to him of helpers 150 but of the mob a multitude. But when they saw his power, that he accomplished by a word whatsoever he would, and when they had made known to him their will, that he should enter the city and cut down the Roman troops and Pilate and rule over us, he did not disdain us. And when there after news of it was brought to the Jewish leaders, they assembled together with the High Priest and said: 'We are powerless and (too) weak to resist the Romans. Since,

however, 'The bow is bent' we will go and communicate to Pilate what we have heard, and we shall be free from trouble, in order that he may not hear (it) from others and we be robbed of (our) goods and ourselves slaughtered and (our) children dispersed. And they went and reported (it) to Pilate. And he sent and had many of the multitude slain. And he had that Wonder Worker brought up, and after he had held an enquiry concerning him, he pronounced (this) judgment: He is (a benefactor but not) a malefactor (nor) a rebel (nor) covetous of kingship. (And he let him go for he had healed his dying wife. And after he had gone to his wonted place, he did his wonted works. And when more people had again gathered round him, he glorified himself by his actions more than all. The scribes were stung with envy and gave Pilate thirty talents to kill him. And he took it and gave them liberty to carry out the will themselves.) And they took him and crucified him contrary to the law of (their) fathers".

¹ Brandon. *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*.

² Jack. *The Historic Christ*.

³ Brandon. *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*.

⁴ Brandon. *Ibid*.

Book Review

JEROME GREENE

Four Patients of Dr Deibler: J. C. Longoni (Lawrence and Wishart, 45s).

A MOST INFORMATIVE BOOK, *Four Patients of Dr Deibler* describes in detail the activities in France of four anarchists in the early 1890s. The first three are French bomb-throwers, while the fourth is Santo Caserio, the Italian who stabbed the French President Carnot to death in Lyons. One is astounded both by the extreme bravery of these men, and the equally extreme futility of their crimes which in each case led to their dying at the hands of Deibler, the monster whose job in life was to utilise the guillotine. The explanation of their behaviour would appear to differ in each case, though each was clearly appalled by the corrupt system and the ghastly poverty which prevailed and in which they were immersed. One gets the impression that Santo Caserio and Auguste Vaillant, who threw a bomb in the French chamber of Deputies which unfortunately for him harmed only some spectators in the public gallery, both came to their strange beliefs by way of emotion, rather than reason. To them anarchy was a religion, into which one suspects they were indoctrinated by others. This perhaps explains the zeal which led them to what constitutes suicide.

Francois Claudius Ravachol and, more particularly, Emile Henry on the other hand came out of the analysis as original thinkers. Both of them executed bomb attempts from which they had a good chance of escaping. Ravachol was again the victim of extreme poverty from birth. Henry though likewise raised in poverty is slightly different, being the son of a middle class engineer driven to exile for his part in the Commune movement of 1871. These two clearly believed by dint of their reason that their activities could influence the future of France and they were no fools. Many revered thinkers have advocated and practised causes of political action which have turned out relative failures. This is a fact which should not be forgotten by those who criticise rationalism on the grounds that a world dominated by reason rather than emotion would be uniform and dull.

This is the first book from J. C. Longoni, a retired London clerical worker. His account is purely factual and is enhanced with many quotations from the French press of the time. He makes no effort to analyse either the men's motives, as I have done, or the effect, if any, which their behaviour had on French politics in the long term, quite justifiably leaving all such presumptions to the reader.

A final noteworthy point to come from the book is that all four anarchists were adamant enough in their atheism to scornfully refuse the services of priests on the days of their respective deaths—a refusal which was described by a writer in the French paper *L'Intransigeant* in 1892 as depriving a civil servant of his bread and butter.

LETTERS

The Vietnam Controversy

I SEEM to have stirred up a hornet's nest over this Vietnam business, judging by the letters which have now appeared.

All good clean fun and no holds barred (Communists please note our freedom of the press—and copy); and I wish I was able to deal with more than a few of the points raised even if some of them appear rather absurd. Let me therefore confine myself to F. H. Snow's letter which I found the most interesting, as I assume he is my generation. I was actually able to agree with some of what he had to say. Letters which merely repeat leaders from *The Morning Star* are apt to be repetitive and boring and make no new point.

I do not wish to denigrate Neville Chamberlain unnecessarily. He was an admirable man in many ways, of complete integrity, and did his best against his ruthless opponent. But that he was completely duped by Hitler to start with there can be little doubt (Churchill never was) as was Baldwin before him. Because of this he did his country a great disservice in that we were far too slow in rearming so that we could speak to Hitler from a position of strength. I do not take the account given by Hitler's interpreter very seriously.

But how we learned to hate that word "Appeasement"! If there is one lesson we must have learned it was that giving way to the dictators never pays. It only leads to more demands. I really cannot see that Communist dictators are any different from Hitler in this respect.

Now for the Japs. They were no fools. Their attack against Pearl Harbour was a carefully planned stroke of treachery—brilliantly carried out. In the event they were finally defeated, but only after four and a half years of gruelling warfare. Suicide? No—calculated risk; and one which nearly paid off. They were banking on a German victory in the West to leave them a free hand in the East. And thanks to Russian treachery in 1939 when the communists signed a treaty with Hitler we in Britain very nearly were defeated. Why the Germans never invaded us is one of those mysteries which historians will always debate but never be quite sure of.

Mr Snow's point about capitalist regimes escapes me. Surely the whole point about parliamentary democracies is that they progress by *evolution*, which is peaceful, stable, and rational; whereas dictatorships take place by *revolution*, which is violent, bloody, unstable and irrational, as demonstrated by all communist regimes.

Mr Snow assures me that "the generality of peoples in Hungary and Czechoslovakia are communist in spirit". How does he know? As they have never had free elections nobody knows for certain. Merely voting between two alternative communists does not constitute a free election, but a fraudulent one. It would certainly appear that Mr Dubcek was tremendously popular among his fellow country men until Russian treachery dislodged him and disgraced him. Or is that just capitalist propaganda?

And oddly enough it is this very question of free elections in Vietnam which is constantly harped on by the communists (or fellow travellers or what ever name you call them) as being the crime of the Americans!

I am assured that when communism is ten years older we can make comparisons. It has been going now in Russia for over 50 years and I can make comparisons now! During those fifty years it has established a record of barbarity unsurpassed in the history of the world. Compared with Stalin, Genghis Khan and Attila were mere amateurs. The total number of wretched Russian citizens who have been illegally arrested, imprisoned indefinitely without trial (or only after a mock trial), tortured by the secret police and finally killed often after years of suffering as slave labour in the so-called forced labour camps must run into millions. One guess was 20 million (a conservative estimate). And everywhere that communism appears this ghastly oppression inevitably follows—as in most of Eastern Europe. Why should the peasants of South East Asia have this gruesome system forced on them?

Put out the olive branch? Willingly. It is only by doing so that Homo Sapiens can ensure his survival as a species—an event that now seems somewhat doubtful. But are not the Americans doing just that in Paris—and getting no response whatever from the communists side?

Man it is beginning to appear will end up in extinction as the victim of his own aggressive instincts. The world will become a dead, sterile, radioactive, useless globe on which nothing can live—much as the moon is now (and the planets).

Ten years? Perhaps. But we might not have that long to wait. And then where will Karl Marx and Co be? A few dead ashes like the rest of us!

CLAUD WATSON.

Professor Eysenck

OUR EDITOR'S recorded interview with Professor H. J. Eysenck (April 18) prompts me to comment upon certain of the latter's responses to Mr Reynolds' very pertinent questions.

Stating that his findings assess the proportion of eighteen-year-olds who have had pre-marital intercourse to be something like eighteen per cent amongst girls, the professor goes on to say, referring to what he knows of Victorian times, that he thinks there is no doubt that in those days the working class at eighteen would normally have had a good deal of experience.

Just what Professor Eysenck knows, by personal experience, of Victorian times, I would be interested to learn. In my personal knowledge of those times, I would most certainly say that Eysenck's 'a good deal of experience' does not equate the almost certain experience of girls today. 'I think', he says, 'you would find that in the working classes 90 per cent would have had sexual experience by that age whereas nowadays the number is very much lower'. He thinks! And how would he suggest that Mr Reynolds is to find out, unless he can contact some spirit-world Victorian who may or may not be knowledgeable on the subject? I do not often express myself forcibly in letters, but I say that statement by Eysenck is rubbish. 'I think', again says the professor, 'we are less permissive overall than were the Victorians'. Again unwarranted rubbish.

In reply to David's question: 'You think all those religious people (i.e. the Victorians) were in fact being hypocritical?', the professor answers: 'Well, religion is such a vague phrase. After all your typical Catholic will happily indulge in any kind of malfeasance, and then go off and be happily absolved. He can heave all his guilt on the 'Lamb of God' and leave it there. He's perfectly all right to go on and seduce any further number of virgins. He has no troubles.' Unhappily, I have to support Professor Eysenck in this view. *Typical Catholic*, yes. Let us be clear about this.

I must also disagree with the professor's view that in, say, twenty years' time there'll be virtually no religion, though Eysenck isn't sure about America in that regard. I assert that he's entirely wrong in so thinking. Don't let us hug pleasing notions because they suit us. Roman Catholicism despite certain disintegrating signs, will be vigorously alive in fifty years time, whatever happens to other Christian sects, some of which will be far from defunct in two decades. The fanatical Paisleyites of Northern Ireland will not be devoid of fervid successors, and Rome will be their healthy adversary, unless secular-humanism has a great re-think.

F. H. SNOW.

ALTHOUGH I agree with Keith Felton's statement (April 25) about Professor Eysenck's pseudo-humanism, I object to his "cul-de-sac-discussion". Might not our dignified attitude be: perhaps he is the humanist and we are not? Let us find rational arguments!

As Professor Eysenck is known as a Behaviorist à la B. F. Skinner, the Interview published in FREETHINKER could not disappoint or shock those who had read for instance his paper on *The Ethics of Psychotherapy in Question 3*, January 1970. Its crowning statement is that "all methods of behaviour guidance are in essence akin to 'brainwashing' whatever that might be" (p. 12). Is this declaration not outside the field of ethics as well as of psychotherapy?

Professor Eysenck is honest enough in not pretending to understand the behaviour of unique human beings. Neither does he pretend to be able to help his patients to become free and responsible individuals who, cured, can then contribute to constituting a solid mankind. So I should like him to say what name he, "humanist", would give to those of us who believe: in order to become an understanding psychologist and humanist one would have (i) to free oneself of one's vanity, (ii) to experience both the grandeur and the misery of human existence—and yet (iii) to retain and increase one's courage and insight into human striving for perfection, so as to be able (iv) to live with one's contemporaries in mutual respect and help.

PAUL ROM.

I FAIL TO SEE that it is "propaganda in favour of reason" to talk—as Professor H. J. Eysenck does (April 11)—of "brainwashing a child into a belief in the supremacy of reason and fact". Apart from the somewhat confusing idea of 'brainwashing' a child against being 'brainwashed', it would seem an insensitive use of words, in psychological terms, to talk of 'brainwashing' a child into any belief. Surely, rationalists should rather stress the sense in which 'teaching the critical method' and 'inculcating a critical attitude' are inimical to 'brainwashing'.

CHARLES BYASS.

Celtic nationalism

IT IS OBVIOUS that Niall Aodh Sionoid (April 4) has acquired most of his Celtic history from purely English and Anglicized sources.

He trots out that old chestnut for example which would have us believe that the Scots were in the forefront of the building up of the so-called British Empire. Which implies that Scotland as a nation and real Scotsmen as individuals had a hand in the policy decisions that led to so much of the map once being coloured red.

This is of course a complete falsehood which English imperialists have consistently fed the brain-washed Scots in order that they would be more comfortable in their chains. The Scots along with the Irish, Welsh, Manx and Cornish had a very different role in this operation. They were firstly the cannon fodder and secondly the hewers of wood and drawers of water in this world wide enterprise.

Of course you will never read these facts in the usual English history books. No not even in the modern 'new approach to history' fair minded ones. Did you know for example Mr Sionoid how many a Scottish regiment of the English army was recruited in the good old days of "Empah"? Young men were told if they did not join up their parents would be evicted from their homes. So they joined up and once they were away on the troopship their parents were evicted just the same and of course there were no young men around to defend them from the evictors who had the whole force of the English government behind them.

Then Mr Sionoid comes very near to calling me a racist. If he had read my letter (FREETHINKER, Saturday, March 21, 1970) a wee bit more carefully he would have seen that I stated quite clearly that the Celtic people are so-called because their respective national languages grew from a common linguistic root. I of course agree that the inhabitants of these islands are of mixed racial origin and that linguistic and cultural differences are in the great majority of cases the only things that really set one nation apart from another nation.

Finally I must state that I personally do not hate any race or people under the sun. I in fact revel in their differences. This is what makes the world in spite of everything such a wonderful place—a colourful living tapestry. However I am sorry to say that I am daily more and more convinced that the great majority of English people be they skin-heads or FREETHINKER readers do not share my views. The "Bovver" boys of course are an extreme minority but nevertheless their attitudes are a crystallization of the generally held Anglo-Saxon opinion of foreigners.

The average Englishman instinctively hates anybody that is different from himself especially if that person speaks another language. He is only willing to soften his views if the foreigner shows that he is willing to drop his differences and assimilate into the English world.

SEUMAS MAC A' GHOBHAINN.

DESPITE Mr R. Mulholland's charming letter of April 25 I am not exactly unaware of the thoroughly nasty methods used by the London authorities in past ages for attempting to destroy the Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic), Irish and Welsh languages (e.g. see my letter of April 4). However, it does not therefore follow that I have to go to the same extreme and become a pan-Celtic chauvinist!

"Other readers of the FREETHINKER" and myself are very well aware of "the key role that religion played as an instrument in the development of the English Empire", which was why our nineteenth century counterparts, who realised the same thing, vehemently attacked British (not merely English) jingoism. Re the Afrikaners and the Nazis, whilst nationalism and fascism are not synonymous, neither are they mutually exclusive, e.g. Garibaldi was nationalist and a liberal; Hitler was a pan-German nationalist and a Nazi—at least as I understand these terms.

I offer no apology for my "affectation of Gaelic adornments", even if I have not read as much MacDiarmid as Mr Mulholland would wish, I do take that great Anglo-Irishman, Oscar Wilde, seriously when he wrote: "One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art".

NIGEL H. SINNOTT.

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