

## **NSS DEPUTATION PROTESTS AGAINST ARMS SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA**

On 22 October Lord Lothian, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, received a deputation from the National Secular Society to discuss the projected sale of arms to South Africa and related matters. The deputation consisted of Dennis Brutus, Michael Christie, Hugh Jenkins MP, Abdul Minty, Professor Hugh Tinker, David Tribe and Martin Page. Welcoming the opportunity to participate, Hugh Jenkins MP (Lab., Putney), told the *Free-thinker*: "Peter Jenkins in the *Guardian* has said about the Prime Minister's determination to make friends with the South African Government that he is 'out to prove his virility with a harlot'. Mr Jenkins is no relation of mine but I entirely agree with him, and think he might have added that the harlot suffers from a racialist pox, and that more than one potential customer has walked out on the grounds that some degree of infection is unavoidable". We outline some of the points made to Lord Lothian by members of the deputation.

### **Disruption of Commonwealth**

Mr Tribe, who led the deputation, said that sea routes round the Cape are of vital importance, and as a trading nation we cannot entirely confine ourselves to relations

with those countries whose régimes we approve of. But there were other considerations: "It is problematic how strong the Soviet Navy is in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and it is unlikely that, short of total war, the Russians would disrupt British shipping. In such an eventuality, the Simonstown naval base would provide little protection".

Mr Tribe described the Commonwealth as a potentially exciting experiment in international multi-racial understanding. Already Britain's trade with all of Black Africa exceeds her trade with South Africa. There is, for the foreseeable future, no need for Britain to rely on uranium deposits in South West Africa, as there is a super-abundance in Australia, Canada and other Commonwealth countries. Any action of the British Government which lends respectability to South Africa at this time may not only disrupt the Commonwealth, but fortify feelings which could be a feature of future world conflagration.

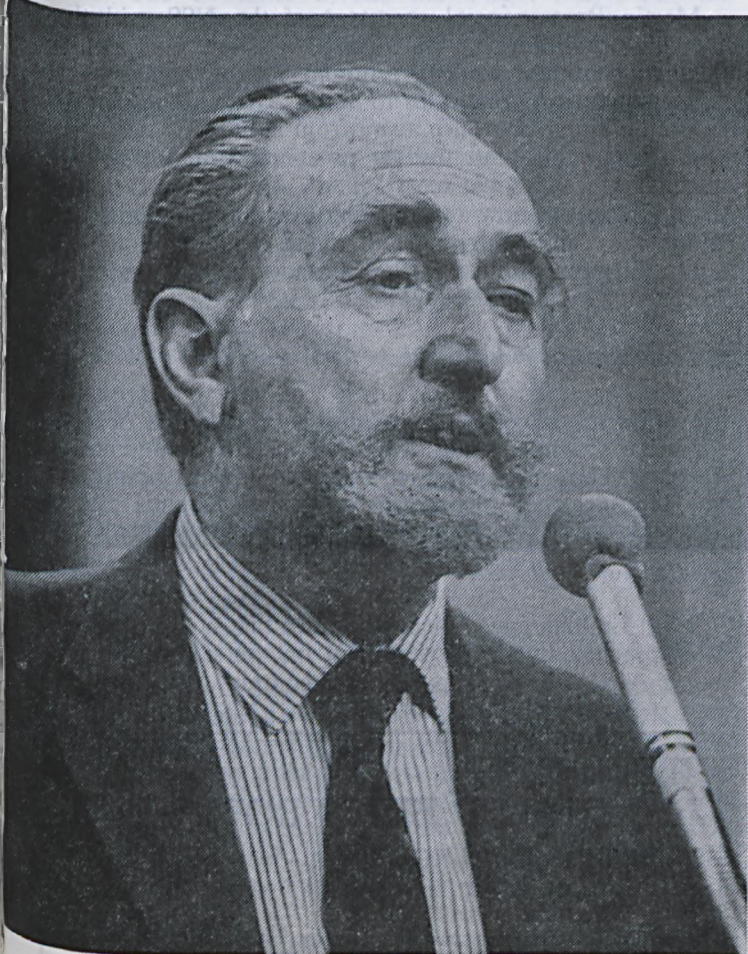
### **Parting of the Ways**

Professor Hugh Tinker, director of the Institute of Race Relations, said that people who were white did not see a problem, but to Africans the sale of arms to the Government of South Africa would be confirmation that we see things in racial terms. Unless we understand the significance of this action to one third of the world, then it can be as much an international parting of the ways as Suez was.

### **Respectability for Racialism**

Mr Abdul Minty, a South African who came to Britain in 1958 and was a founder of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, said that the sale of arms to South Africa was strategically unimportant, but it was positively harmful to international relations. What South Africa really wants is the political and international respectability she will achieve through such an agreement with Britain.

Dennis Brutus, the South African poet who spent 18 months in prison and another year under house arrest,



*Hugh Jenkins, MP*

*(Continued overleaf)*

# FREEDOM ON TRIAL

MARTIN PAGE

In a world so dangerously threatened by the twin evils of anarchy and authoritarianism—which are not to be confused with anarchism and authority—“the best of causes” seems to be as menaced and frustrated as ever, though sometimes in far more subtle and insidious ways than before. In an age of mass media and of more sophisticated bugging devices that maintain an illusion of freedom while denying its essence, technology—which has done so much to liberate man from the burden of physical deprivation and ideological processing which are an inherent danger of all élites. The claims of truth are universal and many-sided; the demands of ruling élites are by nature sectarian, however “catholic” they may appear.

This seemingly perpetual struggle between freethought and the exclusive, constricting dogmas of élitism has been highlighted by the *cause célèbre* of Russia's leading contemporary novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who has been nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature. It is indeed paradoxical and ironic that this novelist of international repute and distinction has recently been expelled from the official Soviet Writers' Union, and subjected to a persecution and harassment that seem virtually unequalled since the Russian Establishment hounded Boris Pasternak, who was also offered a Nobel Prize: without the persecution that made possible the writing of such powerful novels as *One Day, For The Good of The Cause* and *Cancer Ward*, and without the sympathy that such persecution arouses in civilised men, it is conceivable that Solzhenitsyn might not have won the Prize. The production of such works of art may be explained in terms of this persecution; but the persecution is not thereby justified. The stupendous achievements of Soviet Russia in so many fields could scarcely be denied; but recognition of those achievements does not preclude the Freethinker from criticism any more than a lover a England is precluded from criticism of English society. Indeed, universal criticism (in at least two senses of that word) is the uncomfortable lot, if not the moral duty, of every Freethinker.

## Spiritual Murder

Commenting on the case of the Soviet geneticist Zhores Medvedev, Solzhenitsyn made telling criticisms of the repression characteristic of Soviet society: “It is precisely his [Medvedev's] sensitivity to injustice, to stupidity, which is presented as a sick deviation. Once you think in ways other than that prescribed—that means you're abnormal! As for well adapted people, they must all think alike. And there is no means of redress: even the appeals of our best scientists and writers bounce back like peas off a wall. Servile psychiatrists, breakers of their (Hippocratic) oath, define as ‘mental illness’ concern about social problems. Chaadayev (a thinker declared ‘officially mad’ by Emperor Nicholas I in 1837) did not even have a finger laid on him, but we have now been cursing his persecutors for over a century. The incarceration of freethinking, healthy people in madhouses is spiritual murder, it is a variation on the gas chamber, but is even more cruel”.

In view of pronouncements such as these, it is scarcely surprising that the conformist writer Alexey Surkov declared that “the works of Solzhenitsyn are more dangerous to us than those of Pasternak”. Solzhenitsyn's works would certainly be “dangerous” for a system that claims to be self-sufficient and self-justifying; and it is scarcely surprising that in such a system what is believed to be dangerous

has to be suppressed. Solzhenitsyn, in his life as in his novels, has remained vividly conscious of the suffering produced by human weakness and human wickedness, and of the fortitude, kindness and capacity to endure and hope often heightened by that suffering. In so doing, he has emerged not only as a considerable writer, but also as a noble and fearless Freethinker. No Russian novelist today seems more worthy of a Nobel Prize.

(Continued from front page)

referred to the growing feeling that although violence was evil, so is the South African way of life. Many believe that the African people may eventually resort to violence in order to rid themselves of racial oppression, and that they would be justified. In this instance the resistance of the people would be put down partly through the use of weapons manufactured in Britain.

Michael Christie, who lived in Rhodesia for several years and is now research officer at the Africa Bureau in London, pointed out that the Simonstown Agreements were originally negotiated for the defence of Africa rather than Europe, and it is inappropriate to supply South Africa with arms to defend the trade routes. The naval vessels South Africa wants could be bought elsewhere, but the main aim of the South African Government is to break the United Nations arms embargo by buying from Great Britain.

Martin Page, general secretary of the NSS said that Britain's credibility at the United Nations and on the African continent would be diminished by breaking the UN embargo on arms sales to South Africa. Black Africa would be tempted to turn away from Britain for economic and military aid, and trading prospects would be threatened. Coloured people regard South Africa with the same revulsion as we now regard Nazi Germany, and the sale of arms to South Africa would cause racial tension, thus contradicting a promise in the Conservative election manifesto that their policies would reduce it.

## Commonwealth Working Party

The deputation urged Lord Lothian to advise the Government to postpone a decision on the sale of arms until the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in January. They also suggested the Government should pursue the idea put forward by President Kaunda that a Commonwealth Working Party should investigate the reality of the supposed Russian naval threat in the Indian Ocean.

Lord Lothian gave a firm assurance that no decision had been reached by the Government on the sale of arms to South Africa, despite reports to the contrary.

## REBEL PITY: THE LIFE OF EDDIE ROUX

By EDDIE and WIN ROUX

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## PRUDES AND PRIVATE PARTS

DENIS COBELL

The stage productions *Council of Love* and *Oh! Calcutta!* have brought the ballyhoo about permissiveness and obscenity into the public circus ring yet again. The official criterion of judgement is whether a play or book will "deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it". Apart from the general vagueness of the 1959 Act, it is monumental hypocrisy and conceit on the part of our lawgivers to suppose that complete freedom of speech and print should be denied the people. Such protection as this Act provides is unnecessary. Anyone who does not wish to see nudity or hear blasphemy just won't go near these theatres. Most of us like it. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Ramsey, refused an invitation. The less fussy Bishop of Southwark went to *Oh! Calcutta!*; he pronounced it adolescent, a judgement not far from the truth, I think. But neither of these reactions have any significance beyond the personal attitudes of these two men.

All the four letter words bandied about in *Oh! Calcutta!* are the common language of the majority of people in this country, and attempts at stopping free public usage of them are prudish hypocrisy. There have been peculiar arguments advanced by progressive moralists—who nevertheless are *still* moralists telling other folk what to do and how to think—suggesting that some of these words may be seen in print or heard in speech, if the context is suitable. In other words their "taste" must be everybody's taste. The Catholics invoke the Virgin Mary, but the Protestants are more subtle in invoking Good Taste!

### Private Parts

Why should the mass of the people in this land be suppressed, in the manner they express themselves publicly, by a lot of pseudo-culture quacks? As an amusing aside to this personal opinion on how most people are in practice non-conformists when it comes to the moral judgements they are expected to obey, the American Institute for Sex Research has estimated "... that 95 per cent of the total male population could at some time be prosecuted as a sex-law violator of one sort or another". Dirty jokes from the public bar, bawdy talk in Hyde Park, is what most people know, and enjoy, not the intricate psychological analysis offered by D. H. Lawrence in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The canons of taste or good judgement of artistic works are purely subjective, and often employed only by snobs or philistines, in order to inhibit other persons' means of expression. Aesthetic and moral judgements should not be confused.

It was, remarkably, the *City Press* which made the most pertinent comment on *Oh! Calcutta!* It said Kenneth Tynan and his associates had tried out their show at the Round House before bringing it to the Royalty Theatre, thus avoiding a huge financial loss if it were banned. Since prior permission from the Lord Chamberlain has been superseded by possible prosecution once the performance has started, through the office of the Attorney-General, fresh difficulties have arisen in this connection.

Lord Fisher of Lambeth, former Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to *The Times* shortly after the opening of *Oh! Calcutta!* deploring the exposure of what he called

"private parts". He continued, "Should not such exposing of them be forbidden by law not only in theatres or other public shows but also when effected by literary or pictorial means?" This, he amazingly adds, "would not be any form of censorship"! Does Lord Fisher, tucked away in a rural Dorset rectory, also wish to remove many famous paintings from our galleries, and stop the publishing of medical textbook pictures? Needless to say, he did not actually state to which "private parts" he was referring, and since he had undoubtedly not seen the show on stage, one can only infer that a member of the gaitered class would dislike ankles exposed! Indeed, little over half a century ago similar moral pundits were equally vehement in opposing the exposure of women's ankles.

### Blasphemous Libel

In the 16th century, when the Stationers' Company was incorporated, it alone became responsible for the printing of books. The purpose was twofold; to stop seditious books which opposed the government, and heretical books opposed to the Church. Relaxation of this arrangement has been very gradual. At the end of the 18th century the publisher of Paine's *Age of Reason* was prosecuted because this work was alleged to contain a blasphemous libel which stated that the Old Testament had brutalised and corrupted mankind. It is strange that corruption of other's minds is still uppermost when today's moralists wish to censor and prohibit books and plays. There is a consistent line: all through the ages majorities have been exploited by minorities, and although interpretations have varied from time to time, anything made public which is thought to be giving the people their freedom has met with protests from these oligarchies and their vocal lackeys.

The only reason for protection under the libel and slander laws, arises from the denial of the same means of propaganda and publication to all men equally. An insulted party should be able to defend himself without being vindictive.

Telling other people how to behave is part of the professional moralist's duty—as he sees it. Making accurate observations on the effect of this behaviour is deemed far less significant to these Mrs Grundys. They have an axe to grind, a predetermined idea of how they want others to behave. This is not freedom, and all the efforts at censorship, lies about corruption and depravity. Bowdlerisms and opposition to freedom of speech and publication, must be vigorously fought against by those seeking honesty rather than hypocrisy.

*Council of Love* is an excellent satire on the twisted Judaic-Christian conscience most of us inherited. Maurice Girodias, publisher of pornography and director of Olympia Press, summarised this position succinctly in 1962: "The rules of behaviour to which we are subjected today—consciously or not—derive from Talmudic and Christian teachings meant for another era, for other peoples, and above all, for a restricted élite obedient to a mystic ideal. Those rules have been transformed in the course of the centuries, to serve the needs of an upper class, and have been incorporated in our laws, in our institutions, in our beliefs".

## FREETHINKER

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## 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 St., 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 Mout, 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.

## EVENTS

Irish Humanist Association and Northern Ireland Humanist Association. Rostrevor Hotel, Rostrevor, Co. Down, Saturday, 31 October and Sunday, 1 November. Second annual conference; theme: "Remember Your Humanity". Speakers include Margaret Knight and John Hewitt. Programmes from Basil Cooper, 46 Cadogan Park, Belfast BT9 6HH.

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group. Salisbury Hotel, King's Road, Brighton. Sunday, 1 November, 5.30 p.m. Martin Page: "Enoch Powell and the Permissive Society".

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group. Salisbury Hotel, King's Road, Brighton. Saturday, 14 November, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m. Annual Dinner. Tickets 22s 6d in advance from C. W. Millard, 142 Western Road, Hurstpierpoint.

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1. Sunday, 1 November, 11 a.m. Peter Cadogan: "Situationism—a Restatement of Humanism". Tuesday, 3 November, 7 p.m. David Tribe: "The Theatre—Should Anything Go?"

Belfast Humanist Group. War Memorial Building, Waring Street, Belfast. Saturday, 7 November, 8 p.m. Brains Trust.

Guildford Humanist Group, Lecture Theatre L, Surrey University. Thursday, 12 November, 7.45 p.m. "The Importance of Community".

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Sunday, 1 November, 6.30 p.m. A. E. Lee: "The Bible: Divinely Inspired or Intentional Untruth?"

# NEWS

## ADOPTION OF CHILDREN

The working paper containing provisional proposals by the Departmental Committee on the Adoption of Children was published last week. The Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir William Houghton, was set up by the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Scotland in July 1969. The working paper does not represent their unanimous or final views, and when the final report is issued it will take into account comments on the present document which all those with an interest in adoption are invited to submit.

Although the Committee was set up before the harrowing tug-of-war cases highlighted the urgent need for reform in the present adoption law, it is highly likely that the publicity which resulted made a strong impression. They are firmly of the view that the welfare of the child "should be the first and paramount consideration" in the application of the adoption law. In the past, support for this principle was more evident in the word than the deed, as was dramatically illustrated by the spectacle of children being forcibly removed from the only homes and parents they had ever known.

Two of the proposed changes in the adoption law have been long advocated by the *Freethinker* and the National Secular Society. The Houghton Committee recommend that a mother who wants her child adopted should not have the right to make a condition about the religious persuasion in which the child should be brought up. This anomaly is inherited from the days when Britain was a Christian country, and has acted as a barrier to many non-religious couples who were willing and able to provide for a child. Others had hypocritically to profess religious belief in order to become adopters.

Although the mother has the right to do so, it is very likely that in many cases she would not impose a religious condition without pressure being exerted by denominational adoption agencies. At a time of great emotional stress she is particularly susceptible, and many people have spent their childhood years in institutions because of a religious label attached by a confused mother or a religious adoption worker. In view of this, the Houghton Committee's recommendation that an adoption agency should "have regard to the parents's wishes (if any) as to the religious persuasion in which the child should be brought up" may, if accepted, be exploited by the more unscrupulous religious elements.

Another important recommendation is that there should be a nationally available adoption service, and to ensure this the Committee proposes it should be mandatory on the local authority that there is a comprehensive adoption service in its area. An adoption service should be part of its general child welfare provision.

The National Secular Society is listed as one of the many organisations which made submissions to the Committee. David Tribe, president of the NSS, welcomed the acceptance of the principle that the child's welfare must be the first consideration. He was pleased they had recommended that mothers should not specify the religious persuasion in which the child should be brought up. "We have been very concerned about religious incursion into a wide range of social questions, and welcome this proposed secularisation of adoption procedure", he said.

# S AND NOTES

Mrs Kirstine Richards, adoptions administrator and senior case worker for the Independent Adoption Society, said she was "most impressed" by the proposals. The attempt to control private placements and establishment of local authority adoption services were both long overdue. This will lead to problems because of a shortage of trained workers, but they must be overcome. There had been too much talk about the rights of parents, guardians and adopters, and not enough about the welfare and happiness of the child. But this was the most important consideration of all.

## NO BANANA REPUBLIC

Opponents of an arms deal with South Africa marked United Nations Day in London by holding a public meeting at Conway Hall. It was sponsored by a number of organisations, including the National Secular Society, whose representative, Professor Julius Lewin was one of the speakers. Professor Lewin said:

"It would be an error to suppose that South Africa is tottering on the brink of revolution. The country is no banana republic. In economic and military terms it is the strongest state on the whole continent, capable of defeating the combined forces of the rest of Africa in a five-day war. We must face the hard fact that an unjust society is not necessarily an unworkable society, or a weak one.

"South Africa has been strengthened by the extension of its investments in a wide circle of neighbouring territories—South-West Africa, Rhodesia, Angola, Swaziland, Mozambique and Malawi. Pretoria and Johannesburg are now the heart of a new colonial empire. Yet, paradoxically, this source of economic strength is also a source of political weakness. South Africa is *most* vulnerable through the instability of its Portuguese neighbours.

"Here lies an opportunity for British people to do more than exercise their sense of compassion. Mere compassion for the victims of tyranny has never yet unseated any tyrant. Britain could make a start by refraining from helping the Portuguese to continue their old policy of colonialism. Britain could initiate—with or without UN co-operation—a policy of *disengagement* from southern Africa. We could diminish, instead of increasing, our vested interests there. Moreover, South African trade should no longer be allowed to benefit by Commonwealth tariff preferences or by membership of the sterling area."

Professor Lewin went on to say that the sanctions contemplated under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter had never been invoked. These included breaking off communications by air, sea and rail, as well as radio and postal communications. Some people in high places shrink from trying to disturb the South African régime because they were afraid that the African leaders were too Left-wing. These people brood over the question: "How red are the Blacks?" But nobody can give an assurance that the political colour of Africans, whether tomorrow or in 1984, would be a convincing shade of pale pink. No political organisation here ought to try and tell Africans how far or how fast they should travel along the road into the future. If majority rule was not an empty phrase, this was a matter for Africans to decide.

## NO BLISS IN IGNORANCE

The annual report of the chief medical officer, Sir George Godber, highlights once again the folly of those who have been making wild and unfounded allegations about the dangers of sexual instruction in the classroom. While the number of illegitimate births to girls over 16 has fallen, there is a marked increase in such births to girls under 16. There is a 24 per cent increase in gonorrhoea cases in the under-20 age group, which should be a matter for concern for all except bloody-minded police officers who were responsible for the prosecution of Richard Branson of the Student Advisory Centre for advising young people, who suspected they had caught VD, where they could get advice and treatment.

One lesson to be learnt from this report is that ignorance will not prevent illegitimate births or safeguard anyone's health. This is probably accepted by the public, if not by all Moral Rearmiers and Roman Catholics in health and education departments.

Teenagers should be honestly given the facts of life, including facts about abortion, venereal disease and contraception. And as a large proportion of teenagers happen to be schoolchildren, the classroom is the proper and practical place in which to impart this information.

## TRIAL IN TENNESSEE

The death of John Scopes in Shreveport, Louisiana, recalls one of the most famous American trials of the century in which the renowned Clarence Darrow appeared for the defence. Scopes was the young teacher whose lessons in evolution led to the "Monkey Trial" at Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, for violating the law against teaching the Darwinian theory. The case was lost, and Scopes moved to another State where he lived in obscurity until a few years ago when he undertook a lecture tour speaking about his trial.

The law under which John Scopes was indicted was repealed only two years ago.

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## BOOKS

## GOD'S ENGLISHMAN: OLIVER CROMWELL AND THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

by Christopher Hill. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 50s.

The 17th century was certainly a most exciting and probably the most important in "our island history". Its central and decisive event was the English revolution (1640-1660) that effectively ended the Middle Ages in Britain. And the central figure in that revolution was Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), the 17th century English prototype of Robespierre (or should it be Bonaparte?) and of Lenin in later revolutions. He was "by far the most famous man of the century", as the Venetian ambassador described Cromwell on the day of his death (3 September, 1658) in a remarkable memorandum written to his Government.

Looking back upon the political and social evolution of more recent centuries it becomes clear that the English revolution of the mid-17th century may be said to constitute the decisive watershed between medieval and modern times in English, and even perhaps in world history. All the major institutions and events which have pre-eminently characterised modern England and the English-speaking world; from religious toleration and from the political unification of "Great Britain" to the industrial revolution and to the rise of the subsequent English world empire, all ultimately stem from the cataclysmic series of events which culminated in the English revolution and in its military and political leader, Oliver Cromwell. Even, by a peculiar irony, the entire course of British constitutional and parliamentary evolution ultimately stems from that violently unconstitutional train of events. Our parliamentary democracy owes its existence to the sword: the arbitrary dissolution of Parliament by Cromwell actually represented the historic prerequisite for the unviolable sanctity of modern Parliament!

A vast literature, embracing all shades of political, religious and social opinions, and including the most violently antagonistic points of view, has arisen around this so absorbing theme. It includes some of the greatest names in both English and Scottish literature, such as Clarendon, Goldsmith, Macauley and Carlyle. As I have suggested elsewhere, one would probably be justified in adding the even more illustrious name of Milton if we suggest that the Satan of Paradise Lost who "would rather reign in Hell than serve in Heaven", actually represented the imaginative embodiment of the English Revolution and Cromwell (compare my book *Revolutionary Tradition in England*). The latest, and by no means least addition to this impressive literary corpus is represented by *God's Englishman* by Christopher Hill, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, historian and specialist in 17th century revolutionary studies. To judge from his general theoretical approach, our author holds radical views and appears to be strongly influenced by Marxist theories: even Oxford, the traditional "home of lost causes", appears to be moving with the times at last!

Hill attempts, if he does not entirely succeed in accomplishing an ambitious dual task: he seeks to present simultaneously both a summary account of the English revolution and concurrently, a kind of "potted" biography of its leading figure, military leader and ultimately Lord Protector. Despite the author's generally lucid style and obviously vast learning, I do not think that he entirely

## FREETHINKER

succeeds in this ultra-ambitious attempt: an attempt to achieve a task perhaps inherently too vast for inclusion in a single volume? His "Cromwell" never really seems to come to life; whilst at times the generally easy flow of the narrative appears to oscillate unsteadily between the personal biography of Cromwell and the impersonal course of the English revolution.

One or two more concrete criticisms could perhaps be added: there is hardly any detailed description either of Cromwell's military character or of his victorious tactics and strategy in the battles of the Civil War; and yet Cromwell's military talents represented the foundation stone of his entire career. While alone making the ultimate victory of the English revolution possible, it would perhaps be an arguable thesis that Cromwell ranks with Marlborough and Wellington as the three best generals in the annals of warfare in Britain. A minor but significant point: even this learned and at least quasi-Marxist historian falls for the myth of the "British Empire", though he himself forcibly demonstrates that this Empire, of which Cromwell may be regarded as the founder, was essentially an *English* empire, and that "Great Britain" was forcibly united by Cromwell by methods not essentially different from subsequent imperialist conquests on other continents. The author himself describes Ireland as "England's oldest colony", a phrase and thought in which Karl Marx had already anticipated him. While after the "Crowning Mercy" of Worcester, the Scottish prisoners were sold *en masse* to the West Indies, "Great Britain" first effectively conquered by Cromwell (1649-1651), was actually England's first *colonial* empire.

However, these are mostly secondary points. This book is extremely informative, both shrewd and well documented, academic history at its best. Though Mr Hill apparently does not see eye-to-eye with his Oxford colleague Professor Trevor Roper—at whom he directs a sharp aside—he can produce a good phrase too. I particularly relished the definition of the traditional "John Bull", as "Oliver Cromwell minus his ideology". In his account of the evolution of the English revolution he shows how it reached its zenith in the much maligned Barebone's Parliament (1652-54), which amongst other things abolished the laws against heresy and established civil marriage. He goes on to show that socially, by his suppression of the radical "Levellers", Cromwell ended up (like Bonaparte and the French Revolution) as a representative of a new conservative, bourgeois class-rule in place of his feudal predecessor.

Incidentally, this book also adds much to our knowledge of certain lesser known aspects of Cromwell's character. I had never heard previously of the Protector's interest in science and music; nor did I know before that his brother-in-law John Wilkins lived to become the first Secretary of the Royal Society after the Restoration. Whether as a general account of one of the most important events in English annals, or as a personal account of one of the most outstanding Englishmen, this is a work of great interest and importance. One can add that it is of particular interest both to all students of English history, and very particularly to all Freethinkers. Since, as our author conclusively demonstrates, by one of those ironic paradoxes of which history is full, it was those militant Calvinists, Cromwell and his Ironsides in the English revolution, who first laid down the great principle of religious toleration, making

# REVIEWS

possible the subsequent secular evolution in Britain of all shades of Humanism and Freethought. This fact should make the epoch and personality with which this book deals, of special interest to Humanists of every shade of political, social and religious opinion.

F. A. RIDLEY

## INTERVENTION AND REVOLUTION

by Richard J. Barnet. MacGibbon and Kee, 45s.

We are encouraged from the cradle to believe that the Western World, the "Free" World, is the repository of all virtue and wisdom, and that the Communist World—and those in the West who think like Communists—the source of all sin and perversity. The West, the West tells us, believes in freedom and democracy; the other lot support oppression and totalitarianism.

The truth of the matter is that the main motivation of the West—led by the United States of America—particularly in its relations with the Third World, is in preventing the riches of the earth being appropriated for use in the interest of the mass of the world's population. A situation in which—by military power, subversion, or diplomatic contrivance—the USA, with one eighteenth of the world's people, can sustain ownership of 60 per cent of the world's natural resources, is nice enough for America but rather less satisfactory for the underdeveloped countries whose natural wealth is pillaged.

To maintain its economic dominance the US will resort to any practical measures; and these include naked aggression, contriving the assassination of democratically-elected leaders, arranging for a country to be economically crippled, fomenting race riots, supporting fascist dictators who are self-confessed supporters of Hitlerism, etc., etc. Now I can already hear some *Freethinker* readers muttering that all this is commie propaganda, a distortion of the facts. Very well, in defence I adopt the principle, espoused by Bertrand Russell and others, of evidence-against-interest—the idea that if the West itself is forced to acknowledge its own nastiness the assertion is more credible than if it emanates from the Soviet Union or China.

Hence for the sceptical Western reader a main virtue of *Intervention and Revolution* is that it is a sober, well-documented account written by an American *non-communist*. The book traces effective US intervention in the Third World from the overthrow of Mossadeq in Iran in 1953 to the continuing troubles in Vietnam. The author has no leftist axe to grind but is simply forced by the wealth of clear evidence to admit that the role of the US today, like that of Britain in the 19th century, is imperialist and in total disregard of the civil liberties so frequently praised by American leaders.

There is some speculation in the book about the nature of American intervention, the historic roots, the character of current revolution/insurgency; and there is a nice contrast drawn between the outlook of the "National-Security Manager", representing the eager preservation of the status quo (however brutal and oppressive), and the dedicated

revolutionary of the Third World, representing the overthrow of absentee landlord, exploiting elitist class, foreign investor and US military. But for me this speculation, readable enough, is less valuable than the wealth of detail about specific instances of US intervention.

Chapter ten (pp. 225-254), which could well be read first, conveys well the flavour of the book and comprises a potted account of US involvement in Iran (sending CIA agents to direct a coup against Mossadeq), in Guatemala (sponsoring a rebel invasion from Honduras to depose the democratically-elected Arbenz), in Indonesia (using the CIA to attempt the overthrow of Sukarno), in British Guiana (paying strikers to disrupt the administration of democratically-elected Cheddi Jagan, after Britain had agreed to a policy of subversion), and in the Congo (intervention to forestall the creation of a popular government). Other chapters deal with the US support for Nazi collaborators in the Greek Civil War, intervention in the Lebanon, in the Dominican Republic (23,000 marines sent in to defeat 53 communists), and Vietnam.

Finally there is the admission that despite brutal methods adopted, there are real credits on the side of communism that cannot be found in the reactionary states maintained by the US—"starvation in China, which was very widespread, has been largely eliminated . . . communism has produced profound change in a decade, whereas the process of modernisation in a non-communist country like India is mired in obsolete institutions, crippling traditions, and political malaise".

Mr Barnet has no answer to the problem of American imperialism whether in the form of troops, bombs, CIA subversion, or "aid" in the form of weaponry to support brutal police régimes and fascist dictatorships. All he can do, in common with all worried liberals, is exhort the US to be more reasonable and civilised. The Third World has learned the hard way that such appeals are futile. To throw off oppression the needed sterner doctrines are being found.

This is a well-informed, readable book, following in the factual, committed spirit of *Free World Colossus* (Professor Fleming) and *From Yalta to Vietnam* (David Horowitz), this last now in Pelican. Any one of these books would be a dramatic eye-opener to anyone—relying on the *Daily Mail* or even the *Guardian*—who inclines to view with sympathy US political/military activity throughout the world.

G. L. SIMONS

MEMORIAL EDITION

## WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Preface DAVID TRIBE

Introduction Professor ANTONY FLEW

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## TELEVISION: FULL SCORE

PETER COTES

"It's not a question of sanity or insanity, it's a question of adequacy or inadequacy", said one of the psychiatrists after an examination of paintings by mental patients which was the subject of a recent *Omnibus* programme called *Shapes In a Wilderness*. Both educational and sad, it chilled by its subject matter.

Another in the David Frost series showed Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe, one of the best of the TV personalities on the small box, perhaps because he is one of the easiest. Thorpe, so often referred to as a "born loser", was given every opportunity of expressing his minority viewpoint before the commercial break. In the second half of the same interview he was joined by those "wise ones", Malcolm Muggeridge and A. J. P. Taylor, and although such features always fail when over-exposed personalities get into the act, there were those still held in what Thorpe had to say. Certainly, unlike his colleagues on this programme, he did seem more interested in matter than manner. Jeremy has both at his command.

I was recently writing in these columns about one of the best chroniclers of our times, Sir Neville Cardus who

is our best known music critic and to my personal knowledge a great many other things as well. We now have another volume of his autobiography. It is not often that one can go all the way with the publisher's "blurb" but *Full Score* (Cassell, 36s) really is the marvellous distillation of a life compounded of wine, women, song and cricket. It is a unique record of a big-hearted and generous extrovert who compels his audience to share his experiences as he introduces them; with folk from all walks of life who have peopled his all-embracing world down the years. Cardus is now 81, and looks back with nostalgia, getting his readers to feel as he does about the past. Chapman Cohen used to say that the first requisite of a good writer is to be simple in style and thus unaffected in manner. Cardus is such a writer. Having recently devised a centenary tribute to that "darling of the halls", the late Sir George Robey, in which Sir Neville participated with a rare distinction, I was particularly interested in the memories evoked by the chapter about the Edwardian Music Hall. But then the whole book is fascinating, as indeed it should be coming as it does from the pen of a great original.

## LETTERS

### Abortion

Perhaps I may be permitted to comment on Martin Mears' remarks on abortion as the "rant" of which he accuses the earlier reviewer of his pamphlet is not entirely absent from his own writings. Neither are they marked by complete logicity, although this is to be expected in one who obviously views the whole subject from a religious, rather than a rational, viewpoint.

Let us look again at this vexed question of whether or not a foetus is human. Of course, the cells of which it consists are human as opposed to reptilian, insect, or what have you. Exactly in the same way our liver, skin and blood cells are human—but we do not accord to them full human status nor pontificate on the "sanctity of human life" when we cut a finger and living human blood cells are destroyed. These, as other cells and tissues in our bodies have the potentiality under the right conditions of constituting human life, so do those cells and tissues which make up a foetus—a very different matter from showing a foetus (or a liver) is a human life or is *not* human.

So those of us who believe legal abortion is preferable to illegal abortion (and, unfortunately, these are the only two *real* alternatives today) are prepared to say the potential is of less value than the fully developed when the two come into conflict.

Now for Mr Mears' quotes about the "foetus that cried for half an hour but was still put in a bucket". I was present at the meeting at which the story was originally told, and it was interesting that the anti-abortion doctor reported it as having happened to an unidentified "friend". When later questioned by the Press he still refused to give any indication of when, where, and to whom this had happened although the story has been repeated *ad nauseum* since. The facts are that for a foetus to "cry" for half an hour it must be viable, and therefore the abortion concerned was in breach of law and should have been reported as such to the police instead of being passed on as tittle-tattle to a fellow doctor.

As for the leader in the *British Medical Journal* which quoted a report from the Royal College of Gynaecologists (always against abortion), one must take the statement about admission to hospital of women with pelvic cancer being delayed because of abortion operations, with the same size pinch of salt as it is necessary to take many of the RCOG's other statements. A careful reading of their most recent survey shows up discrepancies large enough to invalidate most of their findings as scientific facts.

Regarding illegal abortions, only last week Sir George Godber, Britain's Chief Medical Officer, in a speech in New Zealand, said that deaths in this country from illegal abortion had decreased by

about 30 per cent. I suggest Sir George, whose Department receives all notifications and statistics, is in a better position to quote facts than is Mr Mears.

Indeed, in May 1968 Mr Mears wrote to this Association saying he was "writing an article on the recent Abortion Act", asking for a vast amount of detailed information, including "the estimated number of illegal abortions performed before and after the Act?" and "the date of the formation of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Child, its present officers and address?". He also required detailed Parliamentary information about MPs' voting records, and although I sent him the relevant Hansard references, I had a telephone call a week later from a "research agency" asking the same questions on his behalf.

Of course, things may have changed, and he may have spent the intervening period doing nothing but reading up the subject. If he has not, and in view of the vast literature available on the subject, I suggest he cannot really set himself up as an expert on the subject.

(Mrs) DIANE MUNDAY, *General Secretary*,  
Abortion Law Reform Association.

### Campaign to Eliminate VD

The humane, ethical, and hygienic course of action *vis-à-vis* the major venereal diseases is to eliminate them. A properly mounted campaign to this end could free our society of syphilis and gonorrhoea in, say, five years. Yaws, which is caused by a spirochaete similar to the one that causes syphilis, has been successfully abolished in areas where it was formerly endemic.

All that is needed to eliminate the major venereal diseases is (1) a determined drive to that end, and (2) a body of doctors and auxiliaries who are quite free from prudish attitudes in their approach to VD patients. Many young people who are infected fail to obtain—or follow through on—treatment because of what they hear, or find, about the superior, condemnatory front of those who are supposed to be helping them. Here, as in many other instances, prudish attitudes do monstrous social harm. But, given the will, it would certainly be possible to assemble the right people, and provide the right circumstances for treatment, to back up a campaign for elimination.

JAMES HEMMING.

### Point Taken

D. R. B. Hope (*Freethinker*, 17 October) thinks I "missed the point completely" about your long-haired schoolboys comment. Did I? But I said the criticism was warranted (which I should have thought showed that I had grasped your point) but the manner of expressing it was not warranted. It rather seems it was Mr Hope who missed my point completely!

F. J. CORINA.