

FREE THINKER

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NEW ORGANISATION TO CAMPAIGN FOR BIRTH CONTROL ON NHS

A new organisation is to be formed to campaign for the provision under the National Health Service of a comprehensive birth control service with adequate facilities for contraception and sterilisation and, where necessary, abortion. This was decided at the annual general meeting of the Abortion Law Reform Association which was held in London last Saturday. The new Executive Committee of ALRA is to set up a steering committee for the new organisation, and will work out proposals to be confirmed at the inaugural meeting which is to take place early in 1971. Furnished office accommodation and secretarial facilities have been made available in central London, and it is expected that Mrs Dilys Cossey, who played an outstanding rôle in the campaign for abortion law reform, will be secretary of the new organisation. It was revealed that a memorandum sent to ALRA members in August resulted in a wide response which was overwhelmingly in favour of setting up another organisation. But ALRA itself will continue to function.

Full Implementation of Law

In the belief that voluntary control of reproduction is a fundamental human right, and that the future wellbeing of society depends on education in the responsibilities involved, the new organisation will also campaign for the provision of any other services which would increase the availability of birth control facilities to the individual. It will promote education and publicity for a responsible attitude towards conception, and report on the social, economic and demographic aspects of birth control measures. It will also encourage medical and sociological research in this field.

The new organisation will defend, and seek to improve where necessary, laws relating to birth control, and to ensure their full implementation. There will be regular contact with Parliament, and efforts will be made to persuade government departments and other statutory bodies

to provide funds and services necessary for the promotion of birth control. There will be a drive to publicise the organisation's aims through the publication of literature and the media.

Abortion Act Working Well

In the annual report for 1969-70 it was stated that the period under review was "one of mounting scares and sensations fostered by opponents of the Abortion Act and magnified by much of the Press, all of which has combined to give the public a thoroughly distorted view". While deploring abuse of the Act and concerned by the problems that have arisen, the Association claims that the Act is generally working well. But inevitably, any scandal which is an exception to the rule will attract more attention than thousands of cases where the Act has brought legitimate relief. It is expected that the coming year will see the strongest attempt yet by those opposed to abortion to restrict the effectiveness of the Abortion Act.

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

The Foreign Secretary's latest peace proposals for the Middle East have been welcomed by the National Secular Society. In a Press statement, David Tribe, the NSS president said: "There are details that the Israeli Prime Minister may like to discuss during her forthcoming visit. It is reported that Israel feels let down by the Great Powers and the United Nations. What Mrs Meir and her colleagues must remember however is that without overseas support the State of Israel would not have existed at all; and, as new neighbours in the Middle East they should make every effort to conciliate those around them. At the same time, the Arabs should now recognise Israel as a political fact and be willing to come to reasonable terms.

"It is to be hoped that Sir Alec will show the same overall grasp of affairs in Africa and not be misled by the supposititious threat of Soviet submarines into supplying arms of any sort to the South African Republic".

European Conservation Year, 1970

PUBLIC MEETING: A FREE AND COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICE FOR BRITAIN

Speakers:

RICHARD CROSSMAN, MP

(Editor: *New Statesman*)

Dr MALCOLM POTTS

(Medical Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation)

Sir DAVID RENTON, MP

(President, the Conservation Society)

RENEE SHORT, MP

Chairman: DAVID TRIBE

(President: National Secular Society)

CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, London, WC1

Tuesday, 8 December, 7 p.m.

Organised by the

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London, SE1

CHURCH IN A DILEMMA

JULIUS LEWIN

When the Archbishop of Canterbury arrives in Cape Town next week he will receive a warm welcome. But the hospitality he will enjoy will not rescue him from a cold intellectual dilemma. Asked about his attitude to apartheid, what can he say? Asked whether or not he approves of the sale by Britain of arms to South Africa, must he give equivocal answers?

Before he leaves England, Dr Ramsey ought to read a new book entitled *Violence in Southern Africa* (lately published by the SCM Press at 15s). This is a courageous report made by a working party of the British Council of Churches under the leadership of Philip Mason, who was until this year director of the Institute of Race Relations in London.

The report frankly rejects the theory and practice of non-violence, contending that the South Africa situation is not responsive to such a strategy. Non-violence is simply not acceptable "as a practical means of achieving" the end of apartheid. Knowing full well that South Africa is a police State, efficiently run, the authors put their case in a single sentence: "We have tried to show that in Southern Africa the radical change necessary for justice is not to be hoped for without revolution". This is strong medicine, and there is more like it in the 114 pages of the report.

"Too often", continues the argument, "it has only been when the secular power has turned against the Church as an institution that the Church has fought back. It has too often been reluctant to fight battles for others at its own expense—though its Master used force against the money-lenders but not for himself". On the other hand, "the erring Church" has sometimes been "rescued" by dissenters within its own ranks, the report recalls. To take one example, the abolition of the slave trade is attributed to the moral leadership of Christians like Wilberforce. "It is conveniently overlooked that because of the economic and social involvement of the Church of England with the power structures of the time, the bishops in the House of Lords voted to a man for the retention of the status quo, i.e. the slave trade." "Apartheid is the modern form of slavery", declared President Nyerere of Tanzania at the United Nations Assembly last month. "Africa can no more survive half slave and half free, than could the United States a century ago".

Dissenters Deported

On his visit to South Africa, Dr Ramsey will probably be protected from the dissenters there within the Anglican church. The Archbishop of Cape Town will surely offer him the reassurance that apartheid is not really as bad as its opponents allege. Nobody will tactlessly remind Dr Ramsey that ten years ago the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Rev. Ambrose Reeves, was summarily deported because he had shown himself far too sympathetic to the efforts of Africans to emancipate themselves from white tyranny. Perhaps some one will mention that, very recently, two Anglican priests, Robert Mercer and Bernard Chamberlain, were also given notice of deportation. Their offence was simple: they distributed a newsletter which argued that the World Council of Churches was right to support the African liberation movements south of the Zambesi. Mr Vorster, the prime minister, told Parliament that these two clergymen had abused the country's hospitality.

So Dr Ramsey will assuredly have to choose his words with care. No doubt he has not reached his present high

office without repeatedly displaying precisely this capacity. Yet intellectual equivocation, not to say verbal acrobatics, will hardly increase the Archbishop's prestige on this occasion. After all, in any school debating society there are gifted boys who know how to avoid undue honesty of expression. Unfortunately for the Church, however, this talent will not suffice in South Africa today.

For one thing, tens of thousands of Africans are keeping alert ears open to hear what the Church has to say. Not only the Anglicans but also the Methodists, and a score of other churches, all number their African members in hundreds of thousands, if not in millions. That is part of the trouble with Africa. Those who live in that continent still take religion much more seriously than ordinary people do in Europe or America. Africans truly believe that somehow Christianity (or Islam) will help them to a better life, if not on earth then in heaven. It was, of course, Christian missionaries who first brought modern western forms of education to Southern Africa. It was they who opened the first schools a century and more ago; and in these schools Africans first learnt to read and write. Of course, Mr Vorster and his predecessor, Dr Verwoerd (who was assassinated in 1966) have taken control of the schools and no dangerous ideas can enter their classrooms nowadays.

Advance of Nationalism

For historical reasons, African leaders have commonly felt a debt of gratitude to Christianity. However, time marches on, and today Africans of the younger generation are no longer content to remain under the influence of the missionaries. All over Africa the Church has lost its position on the commanding heights, while nationalism advanced till it brought political independence.

Only in the deep south has African nationalism not yet succeeded in throwing off white domination. Hence the current struggle, notably in the two Portuguese territories of Mozambique and Angola, where the Roman Catholic Church is the most prominent. When liberation comes, it will probably come first in these areas adjoining South Africa.

The struggle for racial freedom is likely to reach more decisive stages in the 1970s. Increasingly, everyone who cares will have to take one side or the other. Which side will the Anglican Church take, in England and in South Africa?

If it continues to try and sit on the fence, one result is certain. The independent African churches, already well established in South Africa, will increase their membership as Christians leave the respectable, orthodox churches controlled by white members with funds from white sources.

This is the danger already noticed in the World Council of Churches and, perhaps to a lesser degree, in the British Council of Churches. The latter faced a severe test last week when it tried to avoid discussion of the Mason report quoted above. It seems most unlikely that the report will prove acceptable today as it stands. The Archbishop of Canterbury also faces a stern test in Cape Town. It would be unwise to believe that he will come through it with immense credit. His dilemma is an inescapable one. "Smooth words", says the Mason report on its last page, "have been responsible for the failure to understand what is happening and have permitted an indecision which is a reproach to Christians in Britain". Yes, indeed.

OUT OF THE SILENCE

For many people, particularly women, Armistice day has bitter memories. While human ingenuity has enabled man to journey to the moon the solving of disputes between nations without incurring massive slaughter of his own kind has defeated him. Goodwill and common sense, the two most needful things are always lacking.

"War is immoral and senseless", are words expressing the feelings of an American mother whose son was killed in Vietnam, and would doubtless be echoed by countless other women and most Humanists. Vietnam has cast its gloomy shadow over the world on Remembrance Day 1970. It is time for women of all races and persuasions to unite in opposition to war. In his excellent pamphlet *Modern Humanism*, F. R. Griffin urges the necessity for all peoples to live in peace if the aims of Humanism for the happiness and well-being of mankind are to be achieved. But nations have short memories, and the "war to end wars" of 1914-18, now relegated to the history books is largely forgotten, except for the conscience-salving pious words uttered at war memorials and the perfunctory two minutes' silence once a year in memory of a useless sacrifice.

Two minutes' silence!

It is the silence of eternity for the men who fought and died for what seemed a noble end. They lie in their thousands in vast war cemeteries stretched across Europe and the world, having died for what they were told was a splendid cause. In what was presented as a nation's extremity they did not hesitate but freely gave their young lives. The love of parents, of wives and children, of sweethearts, the love of life and joys of home, these precious things they forfeited in order to kill men with whom they had personal quarrel. In the midst of destruction they were themselves destroyed.

TELEVISION: CHATTERBOXES

For the best talk on the telly one must turn to BBC-2. Good conversation in the home has almost been killed by those telly addicts who are not selective viewers and have the blasted box on all the time. And we have a surfeit of the phoney-personality on all the channels, but less on BBC-2 than on the others, where the well-worn features and sounds grow so maddening after a while that one is tempted to hurl the offending instrument out of the window; because on that screen is once again Malcolm the Wise One; A. J. P. Taylor with his irritating snarl; Jonathan Miller (surely the most "over-exposed" of all BBC (and ITV) humourists?), and all those chosen few whose opinions we are asked to listen to in silence. Because of course, and here's the rub, we cannot answer back. There's a fortune for the inventor who will come up with an idea for a counterblast to the pontiffs of telly-land; for BBC-2's turned off by the selective minority, but the fascination of other programmes for the fascinated-by-badness-majority, seems to be a matter of compulsion.

Marx Was Here—In London on BBC-2 should have been compulsive viewing but wasn't. It had an ill composed script, unimaginative treatment in production, and did not present a credible picture that wasn't as dry as dust. It

ELIZABETH COLLINS

"Thou shalt not kill" has no meaning in the world of war, the world of legalised murder. The disaster of the first World War begat an even worse holocaust; in its aftermath came Franco, Mussolini, Hitler; came Guernica, Coventry, Dresden, the gas chambers and the last obscenity, Hiroshima. And now Vietnam. The toll of this latest sacrifice to the god of war up to the spring of this year was in killed 48,400 Americans, 102,650 South Vietnamese, 607,886 North Vietnamese, not counting the numerous civilians, women and children slaughtered, napalmed and who knows what else.

As for the Churches, they have failed more miserably than the rest of us. They pray for peace yet do nothing to achieve it—in fact in some areas they actually inflame the situation. They bless the aggressor and all his works when it suits them to do so. The Catholic Church supported Mussolini (the man sent by God!), Hitler and the Diem régime in Vietnam. They pray for victory for both sides and for the victims afterwards. Out of the silence on this Remembrance Day they and we stand reproached before those victims. Courage they showed often in the face of unbearable odds, as at Passchendaele, when it was said men had almost reached the limits of endurance. But there is a higher courage—the courage shown by that great Humanist Bertrand Russell who preferred prison to killing his fellow men.

Remembering the millions who have been uselessly hurled into the silence of eternity it is up to women especially, and to Humanists, to try to mobilise Voltaire's most "powerful weapon", Public Opinion, in the interests of disarmament and the abolition of war.

SILENCE IS NOT ENOUGH.

PETER COTES

could have been titled *The Karl Marx Show* or *The Author of Das Kapital Lived Here* equally well. The editing was erratic and made nonsense of the similarity that was no doubt attempted between old and new "demos" in this cautionary tale of today and yesterday. There were too few stills (if you got to have them, have them!) and a patent lack of library material all round. The voice of that excellent actor and comedian, Alfred Marks, was heard as his differently spelt namesake. It was indeed a great pity that he was not *seen* as well; Marks playing Marx might have been able to infuse some life into the dim proceedings. For *life* it was that was so sorely needed.

Life was what another all-talking programme on BBC-2 received, when Lord David Cecil, in the feature *Conversations at Cranbourne*, showed all those regular TV chatterboxes how to chatter to some advantage. *Conversations at Cranbourne* was one of those television events where the talk is good, the viewing compelling and the standard of entertainment adult. The Cecils have always been a politically non-conformist family. I suppose one could class them as Tory and as Christian. What it would be difficult to do

(Continued on back page)

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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 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.

EVENTS

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.

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, 8 November, 6.30 p.m. Alan Bates: "Art For All?"

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8. Sunday, 15 November, 7.15 p.m. A meeting. Speaker: David Pollock.

Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group. Adult Education Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham. Friday, 13 October, 7.30 p.m. Edgar Eagle: "Humanism in Poetry".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1. Sunday, 8 November, 11 a.m. Lord Sorensen: "The House of Lords". Tuesday, 10 November, 7 p.m. Professor Frederick Jackson: "20th Century Changes in Music".

Correction

Freedom on Trial, by Martin Page, *Freethinker*, 31 October; first paragraph, second sentence should be: "In an age of mass media and of ever 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—has also enabled ruling elites to consolidate that spiritual deprivation and ideological processing which are an inherent danger of all elites."

NEWS

VOLTAIRE LECTURE

Deviance, Criminal and Other was the subject of Baroness Wootton's last Voltaire lecture at the Collegiate Theatre, London, on 28 October. She said that all the successful reforms in the world have been instigated by powerful emotional drives and that all reformers have been motivated by emotional disturbances: "Under any identification of psychological health with emotional calm or 'adjustment' . . . Charles Bradlaugh, Florence Nightingale, E. D. Morel and Emmeline Pankhurst would all certainly have qualified as in need of psychiatric treatment".

Baroness Wootton said it was "absolutely imperative" that the prison population be reduced. She continued: "Is it too much to hope that in the not-so-distant future the great majority of offenders will remain within the community, either under obligation to spend their leisure in a prescribed form of public service, or residing, under supervision, in hostels from which they would go to work outside in the ordinary way? Prison sentences would then be reserved for the small number with really serious anti-social tendencies, for whom no successful treatment has yet been discovered".

Baroness Wootton said she did not regard the concentration of convictions at early ages as a mark of deteriorating morality of the present generation: "Right back before the war it was substantially the same". She said that the genuinely convinced Christian who accepts the Gospel story as literal truth is now extremely rare, and continued: "Yet we base the moral education of the young on the dogmas of the Christian religion; although it is not always realised that the statutory obligation to include religious instruction and a daily act of worship in the curriculum of every county school dates only from the middle of this increasingly agnostic century. It could indeed be said that the 1944 Education Act was designed to inculcate in children beliefs which their elders were rapidly discarding.

"Inevitably increasing numbers of children will either critically reject the Christian dogmas as obviously fairy-stories of highly variable moral value, or, more probably, just disregard the whole business as meaningless and of no relevance to life as they know it—as their fathers and mothers have done. But the real danger lies in the fact that it is on these dogmas that current moral teaching is founded, and on the supernatural sanction which they imply that it relies for its enforcement.

"What we need to fill this vacuum is a moral system which accepts the fact that the only human experience of which we have certain knowledge is that which falls between birth and death; which invokes no supernatural sanction; and which derives its precepts from the importance of promoting happiness and welfare here on earth. No doubt there would still be those who, for reasons not yet understood, lack the normal human susceptibility to moral conditioning. But can it be doubted that a morality based on the general welfare and convenience would have a better chance of acceptance than one contingent upon the truth of so improbable a story as the incarnation of an omnipotent deity into human form by the conception of a virgin and his subsequent resurrection from the dead?"

S AND NOTES

THE GALLOPING MAJOR

Major Patrick Wall, Conservative MP for Haltemprice, is chairman of *Pro Fide*, an organisation of Roman Catholics dedicated to upholding the authority of the Holy See. The Major—always a great one for authority—is described as the unofficial spokesman for the “silent majority of British Catholics who deplore what they feel to be the excessive tendencies in the wake of the Vatican Council”. Certainly, the storm that greeted the Pope’s encyclical on birth control, the resignation of Charles Davis and the formation of groups like the Catholic Renewal Movement, have taken the wind out of the sails of all but the most arrogant Catholics. But there are still plenty of them around.

The launching of *Pro Fide* has been timed to coincide with the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs, and it will act as a focus point for “all who love the Church and have suffered silently during recent attacks on both Pope and Church by fellow-Catholics”. No doubt it will attract the support of the more dyed-in-the-wool Romanists (particularly those pathetic dupes, the converts), but its formation looks like another case of closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. Major Wall and the faithful will have to move with great speed if they are to catch up.

BROTHERLY LOVE—EXCLUSIVE

There doesn’t seem to be much love, brotherly or otherwise, among the Exclusive Brethren in Bromley, Kent, at the present time. Following a split in the ranks last July, one group took possession of the meeting house, changed the locks and refused admittance to some of the Brethren. Apparently there was a difference of opinion about the leadership of one James Taylor, Jnr. (who has since departed to the realms of glory), and this led to a number of the Brethren being unable to come in from the cold.

Here was a problem indeed, but instead of taking it to the Lord in prayer the Brethren took each other to the High Court. Mr Justice Goff thought they could have shared the hall, but as the legal representative of one group pointed out, the doctrines of the sect made it virtually impossible for the two groups to live under the same roof.

The case has been adjourned. No doubt both sides are praying for victory. Poor God!

MEMORIAL EDITION

WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Preface DAVID TRIBE

Introduction Professor ANTONY FLEW

PRICE 3/- (plus 6d postage)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London, SE1

REFORMS

A Bill before the Portuguese Parliament forbids all forms of religious persecution. The Bill—which is almost certain to be approved—contains proposals that parents will have the option of religious education of the children in schools, and that it will no longer be compulsory for members of the armed forces to attend public Catholic services. Cabinet Ministers will not have to declare their religious convictions, and there will be no deprivation of rights because of religion.

Although these proposed reforms are mild—and even if accepted in Parliament will probably be flouted by some authorities—they are a step forward, and would never have reached Parliament if dictator Salazar were still alive. And Roman Catholics will hardly have the neck to deny now—as they have consistently done—that for years there has been religious persecution and discrimination in Portugal.

TOM MOSLEY DIES

Tom Mosley, one of Nottingham’s best known “characters” and a prominent figure in Freethought circles for many years, has died at the age of 86. He took up residence in Nottingham over 70 years ago, and joined the Cosmopolitan Debating Society in 1912. He was its secretary for 30 years, and in 1958 published *Cosmo Memories and Personalities*, to mark its diamond jubilee.

Mr Mosley came from a mining family, and worked underground for many years. He was an active trades unionist. He was attracted to the Freethought movement early in life, and for many years addressed meetings in Nottingham Old Market Square, and in other parts of the Midlands. About ten years ago he was cut and bruised after being knocked off his platform.

Tom Mosley was twice married. His second wife (who died earlier this year) came from an old Midlands free-thinking family, and accompanied him to many functions organised by the National Secular Society and other bodies. We extend our sympathy to his daughters and other relatives.

J. M. Challand conducted a secular committal ceremony at Nottingham Crematorium on 30 October.

SECULAR EDUCATION APPEAL

Sponsors:

Dr Cyril Bibby, Edward Blishen, Brigid Brophy,
Professor F. A. E. Crew, Dr Francis Crick,
Michael Duane, H. Lionel Elvin,
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Professor K. W. Wedderburn, Baroness Wootton

All donations will be acknowledged

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1

BOOKS

THE CONFESSIONS OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER

by James Hogg, with an Introduction by André Gide.

Panther Books, 6s.

One of the more questionable beliefs of the early Romantics, and one which persists even today, is that genius, like love and pease pudding, will find a way. The great artist can always be relied on to find the right form in which to express his vision and society, if it sometimes ignores him in his lifetime, can equally be relied on to rally round and appreciate him after his death. Ironically, exceptions to this comforting creed are profusely provided by the careers of the English Romantics themselves, especially those of the lost generation which flourished in the second quarter of the last century. T. L. Beddoes, the most gifted poet of his age, successfully buried the finest blank verse since Milton in a series of unreadable pseudo-Jacobean tragedies, perhaps the genre for which his sympathies least fitted him, and a similar fate was chosen by George Darley for his exquisite lyrics. Thomas Moore, having produced some of the most amusing satirical verse we have, devoted his more mature powers to the maudlin and totally humourless *Lalla Rookh*. Even Coleridge, Wordsworth and Keats wasted a disappointingly large proportion of their energies on literary projects to which they were utterly unsuited, a waste we can only hopelessly mourn.

The reader of James Hogg's poetry, however, could be forgiven for finding no evidence of misplaced talent, no such incentive to unprofitable regret. Indeed, its comfortable and competent mediocrity has earned it a place in the hearts of his country men which has been denied, all too understandably, to *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself*, the novel which he published anonymously in 1824. Yet in this astonishing book, against all reasonable expectation, Hogg found what so many promising poets of his generation had looked for in vain, both a subject and a form capable of unleashing all his imaginative resources. It is not merely his own masterpiece, but the one supreme achievement in prose of the English Romantic movement. It is a worthy rival to the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* or *Christabel* for the attention of posterity; yet, and this is the peculiar irony of Hogg's case, it has not merely failed to become a "classic", but has remained unread. Its sheer uniqueness may have something to do with this: Hogg is indisputably a "minor poet", a sort of latter day Burns as his nickname of the "Etrick Shepherd" testifies, and there is nothing in his verse and not very much in his prose to prepare either admirer or detractor for the shock of the *Confessions*. Furthermore, its originality makes it disconcertingly difficult to "place" in the context of its own period. Hogg's handling of historical and local colour at first recall Scott, but he is from the start much more concise and taut in his descriptions, working to a much more exacting ideal of artistic unity, and in the main part of the novel he moves into a world of the imagination into which few readers of his own century could easily have followed him.

The first part of the novel, the Editor's Narrative, gives the history of two brothers or half brothers, the sons of separated parents. George Colwen, who lived with his father, is cheerful and healthy enough, if by 19th century standards rather "loose", but his younger brother, Robert,

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Calvinist minister, who is probably his unacknowledged father. He is consequently morose, brooding and excessively religious. He develops a strong, though at first unreciprocated, dislike for his brother and takes every opportunity to do him harm, with considerable success. Eventually George is killed in suspicious circumstances and Robert, having inherited the family property, even more mysteriously disappears. This narrative is short and imperfect, having supposedly been gathered at second hand and long after the events it purports to describe, but it is the nearest thing that Hogg allows us to an objective view of the events dealt with in the confessions which follow. These take the form of a self-vindication by Robert himself. He has long believed himself one of the Calvinist elect, already saved and unable by any deed to endanger his eventual enjoyment of the blessings of heaven. He meets and falls under the influence of a mysterious alter ego, Gil Martin, and his divine calling is revealed to him: it is to rid the world of what we might describe nowadays as liberalising influences. Then follows a series of holy murders, culminating in that of his brother, before Robert's final decline and mental disintegration as he gradually comes to believe that his mentor was in fact neither an archangel nor the exiled Tsar, but the Devil. The book concludes with a short epilogue by the "editor" describing the discovery of the manuscript of the confessions together with Robert's body in an unnaturally good state of preservation.

Though the passage of 140 years has made it easier for us to appreciate the literary achievement and psychological insight of Hogg's work, it has certainly not made it easier, except superficially, to understand it. Indeed, Hogg's remarkable psychological precocity is itself the cause of considerable difficulties. What, for example, are we to make of Gil Martin and other apparently supernatural phenomena? That some mystification of the reader on this point is intentional is demonstrated by the care with which Hogg supplies possible material explanations, as in the famous scene of the vision in the sky at dawn; but can he really have intended to invest his novel with the sort of ambiguity which has only recently been read into *The Turn of the Screw*, for example? Or can he have expected his readers, steeped in novels of the supernatural, to probe and discover such explanations? But we come to an even more acute difficulty when we attempt to measure Hogg's intentions in his portrayal of Robert's character in the light of our own knowledge of the workings of insanity. At times Robert's confessions have almost the aspect of a Freudian case history: there are delusions of grandeur, not merely in Robert's conception of himself as an agent of God, but, more significantly, in his ready conclusion that Gil Martin is the Tsar of Russia incognito—a conclusion which Hogg is careful to show us is based on nothing like evidence at all. Then there are the delusions of persecution—and a seemingly textbook case of repressed homosexuality nicely and credibly brought out, complete with Narcissism. These are questions, of course, to which there is no answer and one is forced back, as in the case of a very few other masterpieces of Romanticism, such as *Christabel* or Schubert's *Winterreise*, to the conclusion that the artist's imaginative faculty has taken him into spheres of human experience perhaps beyond the limits of his own rational understanding.

TONY HALLIDAY

R REVIEWS

THE GOLD WAR by Ian Davidson and Gordon Weil.
Secker and Warburg, 45s.

One of the delightfully obvious defects in capitalism is the permanent problem it has with its monetary system. It matters not how vast a nation's wealth, how colossal its production, how energetic its workers: there are always—in the hallowed free enterprise system—the doom-laden threats of recession, run-away boom, variable (but permanent) unemployment. The vagaries of the trade cycle have been plotted over the decades, and more is understood today about financial causes and effects than in the unhappy twenties and thirties. But the increased understanding has not brought adequate solutions to the perennial difficulties of Western capitalism. Financial crises are so commonplace as to be part of a way of life, and though the recessionary extremes of the thirties have been largely avoided in the post-war world (at least in Western Europe), new tensions are arising for various reasons, not least the growing insistence among the nationalists of the underdeveloped world that national resources should be nationally-owned.

Despite the regular utterance of such phrases as “stop-go”, “balance-of-payments”, “international liquidity”, etc., we do not always know what the pundits are talking about (and neither do they). *The Gold War* is helpful, both in explaining the basic terminology and tracing the antics of governments in striving to protect their national currencies. There is attention here to the decline of the dollar in recent years, the efforts to prop it up, the hostility of the French, the circumstances of the British devaluation, and the general currency movement on the Continent, in Germany and elsewhere.

The relevance of political decisions to financial predicament—and vice versa—is shown nicely, and the Vietnam war is labelled as a central cause in undermining the strength of the dollar (“Vietnam is a monetary albatross around America's neck”). The authors seem uncertain as to whether United States aid is altruistic or pragmatic but are unequivocal about the worsening balance-of-payments caused by the political decisions to station troops, and their necessary support facilities, all over the globe.

This is a digestible volume, unusually readable for such subject matter, designed for the layman and, according to the blurb, “as exciting as a first-rate thriller”. It is certainly more palatable and entertaining than most other books on finance/economics that I have come across, and it is also most up-to-date, dealing with events as late as December 1969. Within its terms of reference it is a “good buy”. Yet despite all this, there is one respect in which I cannot help viewing the volume with a jaundiced eye—there is virtually no mention of the Communist world and the effects of Western speculation, investment decisions, valuation policies, etc., on national Communist economies.

The publishers talk happily about “the world's monetary system” and yet there are good reasons for believing that the financial/economic problems of the Communist world are less chronic or of a different type than those in Western Europe or America. It may be unfair to suggest that this particular book should have dealt with the financial scene on a more global basis (it is true that as far as it goes—in discussing, e.g. the sterling devaluation or the De Gaulle

fly in the ointment—it is excellent), but clearly there is a pressing need for a book on the world economic scene. Russian publishing houses pour out material on the Soviet economy as do Western publishers on capitalism. But in most publications the two worlds are distinct: it would be nice to know how they interact.

The authors of *The Gold War* appear to have no answers to the problems facing the Western financial system. They speculate about the role of an integrated Europe but give no reason to expect anything but “more of the same”. The central problem in the West is that, in an age of growing interdependence, capitalist economies are forced—through private vested interest and obsolescent ideology—to compete for labour, finance, markets and raw materials. A co-operative world economic system, i.e. a genuinely Socialist one, would be (will be?) saner and infinitely more able to meet the needs of the peoples of the world.

G. L. SIMONS

CINEMA

CROMWELL. Odeon, Marble Arch, London.

The expense and attendant paraphernalia of the screen epic are seldom utilised these days, and when they are the result tends to be an immensely popular but inconsequential musical. *Cromwell* is a welcome exception to this rule. The money spent on stars, extras, costumes, sets and so on combines with an excellent and pre-eminently truthful script to produce a picture, which is successful not only as a spectacle, but as an educator and enlightener. It will be of use to O-level history candidates and aspiring revolutionaries alike, as well as providing entertainment for all. Its other outstanding merit is that it does not fight shy of the involvement of religious belief in its theme.

The film describes the events leading to the execution of King Charles I, and the subsequent assumption by Cromwell of the office of Lord Protector of England. Perhaps the most striking aspect of its treatment is the great emphasis laid on Cromwell's reluctance at every stage to go along with the extremists. At the first mention of civil war he was profoundly unmoved; of executing the king, angry; of assuming dictatorship, hysterically amused. Nevertheless, he came to see in his personal conscience that each of these, for him unpleasant, tasks had to be done, and from then on he did his utmost.

It is significant however, that the film shows perhaps the greatest of the various turning points which occurred in Cromwell's attitude during the period, to be triggered off by the king's order for high Church ornamentation to be used in churches throughout England. This offended Cromwell's puritanism to an extent which made him doubt the king's right to rule for the first time. The story is in fact permeated with the influence of religious belief. The king's Catholic tendencies, stemming from his French wife Henrietta Maria, were probably a more fundamental cause of unrest than his disregard of Parliament and his policies which led to the ghastly exploitation of the serfs by the nobles. Further, it is Charles' attempt to get an army from

Catholic Ireland to save his throne which is the prime plank in the evidence at his trial for treason, of which he

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is found guilty and condemned to death. The film brings out the stupidity of the religious motive for bloodshed, with a subtle rendering of the old chestnut in which both sides are seen praying for victory to the same God. The comic side of the religious aspect is portrayed magnificently by Patrick Magee as an old and fiery Puritan priest who immediately before battle is to be found conducting the troops in a vigorous hymn, and during battle is to be seen in the thick of it waving his arms like a maniac in an attempt to goad on the soldiers around him.

Richard Harris' Cromwell is excellent, but despite this, one's enthusiasm has to be reserved for Alec Guinness as Charles I. This performance is just one more example of Guinness' magnificence and versatility. With hair flowing over his shoulders down his back, a little pointed beard and the extravagant clothes of the cavalier, Guinness' acting often only with his eyes portrays the extraordinary dignity and frightening enigma of this man, whose allegiance is divided between his wife, his kingdom and his own selfish aspirations.

Direction is in the main superlative. The king's walk to the chopping block allows every scope for Guinness' talent. The heavenly choir whose voices envelop the figure of Cromwell at the end may stick in some aesthetic or agnostic gullets, for though the man was a believer he was humanist enough to flout the divine right of kings—Hobbes or no Hobbes—when he saw it threaten the people. In the more minor parts Dorothy Tutin, Robert Morley and the now regrettably late Patrick Wymark stick in my mind as Henrietta Maria and the Earls of Essex and Strafford respectively. Sets are also impressive, particularly the representation, both outside and inside of the original house of the Westminster Parliament.

DAVID REYNOLDS

LETTERS

RI for Muslim Children

The liberally minded tend to over-compensate for their guilt complexes arising from colonial exploitation by treating coloured immigrants as innocent children, never to be criticised. This neither helps the immigrant nor facilitates his integration into our society, which can only be done by treating him as a complex human being, no more and no less likely to be wrong-headed or reasonable, stupid or intelligent, wicked or saintly, than the native population.

When the Muslim Educational Trust forcefully affirms the principle of State aid to RI, wants to see it grow, and given a high priority, let us view these demands exactly as we would if they came from Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Exclusive Brethren, etc. The fact that they were made by coloured immigrants is totally irrelevant.

No one disputes the right of Muslims, or any other group, to bring up their children as they wish, in a private capacity, but it is no duty of a public service to provide facilities for any form of indoctrination. Humanists must firmly oppose these demands whether from a Christian or any other body and we must not be afraid of saying when we disagree with immigrant views. As Merle Tolfree points out, the Muslim attitude to women is deplorable and must have caused considerable suffering. Do we want teaching of this kind in our schools?

If we acceded to Muslim demands we must provide similar facilities for all other religious groups in the schools, and these

include Sikhs, Buddhists, Greek Orthodox, Hindus, etc. At the least the teacher's job would become more difficult with frequent absences by various groups at prayer, observing religious ceremonies, or on religious holidays. Some groups worship so many gods, they would have good reason for frequent absences.

Let us make no more excuses for supporting Muslim than any other RI. The alternative is to produce a divided society where the differences, not the areas of agreement, are emphasised.

DOROTHY ROBERTS.

Nationalism, Imperialism and World Government

It looks as if Nigel Sinnott was suffering from some form of myopia himself. When I say "Nationalism is a bad thing" he thinks I'm saying "Down with Garibaldi". Nationalism may have had something to be said in its favour in 1848, but it hasn't now!

It was Mr Sinnott himself who said: "It seems incredible that the Italy of the Garibaldi should, within two generations, have started along the tawdry path of empire-building in Africa . . ." In other words he admits—Italy, soon after its outburst of nationalism, started doing something wrong. And he can't explain it. I think I can!

If you have nationalism—that is, the world divided into different nations—each nation has to be as strong as possible to prevent other nations invading and pushing it about and to get the economic resources it needs. This leads to imperialism. Far from "imperialism being a parody of nationalism", nationalism is a cause of imperialism! Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, the two World Wars—these are the results of nationalism.

Mr Sinnott says, "One cannot create Utopia in one fell stroke". Perhaps not. But if people had thought and done more about World Government, and less about outdated 19th century ideas like nationalism we would be a long way further on the road to Utopia than we are now.

I. S. Low.

TELEVISION: CHATTERBOXES

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is label them conventional. Principle has always played a considerable role in their dealings, and as this particular member of the famous family said the other night: "We have always scorned the package deal". Thus, although Tories by conditioning, each member of the family has in effect found himself upon a vast number of occasions aligned with liberal, socialist and anti-reactionary forces where matters affecting humanitarian causes are concerned. If the attitude of any church, does not conform with Cecil morality, based as it is upon justice and humanity, then the family, or individual members of it, will step out of line and embarrass those members of the Establishment who believe blindly in the status quo which they serve as holy writ. Perhaps the best thing about Lord David was his complete naturalness, his lack of inhibition, the fact that he was prepared to substantiate at length what he had to say about Hardy (whom he loved), Melbourne (perhaps his most famous "subject" through his best known biography), and Maugham (a host, companion and colleague he could not wholly like, try as he would). With Max Beerbohm (another subject for one of his elegant biographies) he really let himself go and his contrasting of "Willie" with "Max", to the detriment of the former and the enhancement of the reputation of the latter, was the type of cultivated table talk—perceptive, wise, balanced and witty—heard so rarely on the box as to make such a feature as this an event to be recalled with pleasure. A mental repast easily digested; washed down as it was by the cool, serene wine of well composed pictures. The type of setting which served as a background for this right (with a small "r") sort of man. A raconteur who might well exchange the title "Chatterbox" for that other more endearing bill matter: "The Intellectual Chery Chappie".