

# FREE THINKER

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## THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE: CATHOLIC BISHOPS' STATEMENT ON MORAL ISSUES

The Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales published their *Statement Concerning Moral Questions* on Thursday, in which they deal with a wide range of subjects including civil law and morals, race relations, abortion, euthanasia, violence, drugs and marriage. According to the Catholic Information Office, this is the first time that a joint statement of the English and Welsh bishops has ranged over so many subjects of concern. The bishops invited Catholic individuals and organisations to inform them if they felt such a statement would be useful, and of the subjects which should be dealt with. On the question of abortion the bishops say that if war can ever be justified it is on the grounds of defence against an unjust aggressor; "No such justification can be urged in the case of abortion". They claim to share compassion for the mother in difficult circumstances, "but the true remedy is to alleviate the difficulties." Prayers, exhortations and insertion of pleas to saints (who have often turned out to be mythical figures) in the personal columns of newspapers, may be amiable if useless practices, but unhappily an abortion is sometimes the only true remedy if the mother's life is to be saved. The bishops advise Catholics that "we cannot expect the civil law to do our work for us". But as David Tribe, president of the National Secular Society, said in a Press release, this document has something for everyone, and practically any action can claim derivation from it. The full text of the NSS Press release is published below.

### Imposition of Catholic Teachings

The *Statement Concerning Moral Questions* by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is, by the standard of pronouncements by individual bishops and the more vociferous laity, a moderate document which contains much with which everyone will agree. In an interlocking world the need to promote peace, social justice and good race relations should be apparent to all; though it must be recognised that morality is a practical matter which turns out to be more controversial in its application by "men of good will" than this episcopal statement suggests. Nevertheless a widespread recognition of such international obligations as the provision of affluent nations of one per cent of their gross national product for the development of poorer countries is a prerequisite of deciding how best this is to be done.

I hope that the noisier Catholics will note the observation that "we cannot expect the civil law to do our work for us". Unfortunately, however, this—like most Catholic documents—has something for everyone, so that practically any action can claim derivation from some part or other of it. After the observation just cited, Catholics are told that "if they hold that in any particular case the common good would be served by legislation they have the right, and may have the duty, to work for this by argument and persuasion". Even this injunction, interpreted in a liberal or simply a literal way, is not objectionable. Instead, what we usually get is an attempt to impose Catholic social teachings on the whole community by backstage intrigues in committees to vet library books and broadcasts, close down abortion clinics and refuse to set up family planning clinics; and campaign to promote or obstruct legislation by all the devices of bogus statistics and allegations, crude melodrama, outrageous filibustering and political blackmail of parliamentary candidates. Those who are given to these

methods will draw comfort, perhaps, from what follows: "But there comes a point at which the general sense of the community is so outraged that the reaction is likely to be vigorous and to swing towards total repression. It should not be impossible to advise restraints on methods of display, the flaunting of what is generally considered as indecent (and, in another sphere, the blasphemous mockery of people's religious beliefs). It may be hard to define indecency but it is still possible to recognise a public nuisance". No one has tried harder than some of the Catholic bishops to whip up a climate of opinion conducive to "modesty and purity" and inductive of "total repression" of the rights of others to be "immodest" and "impure". Little conviction therefore accompanies the further claim that "a repressive and narrow morality is not authentically Christian".

### Wasted Effort

In what is admitted to be "a largely post-Christian society" the bulk of the population cares as little about what morality is "authentically Christian" as about the dimensions of Christ's mythological crib. Even if they believe in the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, they are quite happy to let his "example", his hypocritical moralising (he never bothered to love his own enemies, the scribes, pharisees and temple traders who took no notice of his hotgossiping), his ancient parables (the great bulk of which are meaningless or irrelevant to the modern world), his maudlin beatitudes and his ranting threats of hell-fire, moulder with his body in its anonymous grave. It is a great tragedy that, in a world which badly needs common sense to solve the real moral problems connected with life and death, family and social life, greed and aggression, so much money and human effort should be wasted on nugatory gods, dead prophets, querulous popes and redundant bishops, however well-intentioned.

# IT'S A MAD, MAD MEDIA WORLD

JONATHAN STEELE

The worst-kept secret in Fleet Street is that the newspaper industry is in crisis. Tycoons will agree with unions on one thing—half the country's national morning papers are running at a loss. It is said the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail* are conducting fitful merger talks. The *Daily Sketch* is struggling in the face of imminent doom. Lord Thomson is pouring £2 million a year down the throat of *The Times*. *The Guardian's* circulation is up but so are its losses. So it goes on all the way down the Street.

As the shadows of bankruptcy and closure lengthen, the fight for advertising sharpens. Accountants, promotion experts and financial transplant men squeeze the few remaining editorial prerogatives. At the end of the road somewhere in the late 1970s or, if we're lucky, in the early 1980s, there looms the prospect of two dull consensus newspapers, one a so-called "serious" paper, the *Amalgamated Daily Guardigraph Times*, the other a "popular", the *Express-Mail-Mirror-Sun-Sketch*.

## Crisis in Broadcasting

In broadcasting the crisis is no less acute, though better disguised. Since the financial alarmbells are not ringing so loud, fewer people are prepared to recognise the crisis. But it concerns the issues of democracy, editorial responsibility, and accountability no less than in Fleet Street. When the first commercial television contracts were awarded on a seven-year basis, control over the companies' output was already minimal. Once a company had won its contract with a string of promises and glowing prospectuses about its aims, the Independent Television Authority had no way of ensuring it stuck to its contract, even if the ITA had wanted to be vigilant.

Awarding a company a licence was, as Lord Thomson blurted out, giving it a licence to print money. When the contracts were renewed in 1968 with £20,000,000 worth of advertising revenue a year as the prize for the successful companies, the same occurred. Now the companies are becoming greedier. They are lobbying the Government for longer, more easily renewable contracts.

Auntie BBC's ailments are slightly different. There the problem is the more primitive and basic struggle to blow a little democracy down the corridors and get the dust rising. Auntie still refuses to recognise the main television trade union in the business, the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians. Auntie won't let her children talk in public. Every member of the BBC's staff has to sign a contract forbidding him or her to discuss any of the Corporation's affairs in public, sign a letter to the newspapers or in any other way stimulate discussion about the BBC.

Over the radio there hangs Mr Chataway's shining sword of commercial "competition", a new opportunity for the same handful of multi-media monopolies and hastily-assembled consortia to take the pickings from another advertising bonanza.

## Participation

The Free Communications Group believes the crisis can be fought. A genuine variety of viewpoints in the media must be created. The will happen only if democratic control of all the media is made a reality. We believe in the social ownership of the means of communication. We want to be the voice of all those who work in the media and who share the view that all the people who produce newspapers, television and radio should control them. As the FCG

announced in the first issues of *Open Secret*: "The energy of the communications industry is in those who run it—who produce the news and entertainment. The FCG intends to turn that energy into power".

Since its opening meeting 18 months ago, FCG has gained 700 members mainly people working in the media. The first year was largely spent producing four issues of *Open Secret*, which revealed and published for the first time many of the inside stories of the industry which had been locked in company files till then. That was simply a muscle-flexing operation. Since this autumn FCG has moved into a higher gear, with a fulltime organiser, installed in 30 Craven Street, London, WC2, and a grant of funds over a three year period from the Rowntree Foundation. We can now go on to issuing a regular bulletin on the lesser but recurring iniquities in the media, and stimulating new efforts to put our control principles into action. But already in the brief period since FCG first started to publicise some of the participation schemes worked out by brother journalists and workers on some foreign papers, the groundswell has begun to flow in Britain. Journalists on the *The Guardian*, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Times* have started to demand a greater share in the running of their papers.

## Silence of Despair

The FCG makes no claim to have a blueprint for all the problems of the media. But it does want to break the suffocating silence of despair in which many of the workers in the media have been conditioned to operate. We need to develop ideas for new structures in the media, and we are doing this. As the number of newspapers shrinks, and redundancy threatens, these ideas are gaining ground. Workers on a paper can insist on greater access to the information by which the boards' oracular decisions are taken. They can, and are asking for seats at the boardroom table to be held by fully accountable delegates, not co-opted senior journalists. In today's defensive climate in Fleet Street they can, if they organise, block take-overs, and choose editors and executives. In France and West Germany some newspapers have already organised themselves on these lines.

In television, producers have been demanding a much higher ration of quality programmes, more news analysis, less admiss, more documentaries, less crowd-pulling trivia. If ITA "controls" the companies, who controls the ITA? At the same time FCG recognises the danger of replacing ITA control simply by producers' control. Production teams are beginning to talk in terms of collective decision-making, on the lines of the La Mama theatre group or Godard's latest film. Everyone involved in a production would have the right to decide how a film was made and edited. This is just one suggestion.

There is no shortage of permutations and combinations that can be devised to ensure that the day-to-day operations of the media are conducted democratically. The main thing is to get ideas flowing and start experiments. FCG believes that democratic control means two things. The media must be democratic internally, and democratic in relation to the whole community for whom they exist. Readers, listeners, and viewers must be brought into the picture. We know this cannot happen without a radical change in the present structure of society. But there is little sense in waiting passively for the golden dawn. A start has to be made.

## BOOKS AND JOHN CHAPMAN

ERIC GLASGOW

Perhaps the greatest appeal of Victorian England lies in its unusual manifestations of untutored genius, which seems to have become much less common or productive in our own age of more systematic and widespread education. Sometimes I think that we have now grown too professionalised, and dominated by certificates and qualifications in our educational and social system. Things were obviously harder and more resilient a century ago; and if there was then less State aid and no "Social Security", people were apt to value books and the knowledge and power that they could convey more earnestly, because they had often to struggle harder in order to obtain them.

So there were many rugged and self-taught pioneers amongst the Chartists and other radicals who devoured their books even as they worked, cobbling footwear or speeding the loom. They needed cheap books which would minister to their own concerns, interests, and insights. Those who tried to supply that market had to struggle amongst many obstacles and oppressions; and only a small proportion of them could achieve any enduring success or fame. One of those who did, however, was John Chapman (1822-1894), whose early tract, called appropriately *The Bookselling System* (1852), I have been pleased to locate.

John Chapman has rightly earned a very succinct biography in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, First Supplement, Vol. 1 (1901). The facts about him are recorded there: born in Nottingham, he had his early training as a watchmaker, but later he studied medicine in Paris and London. However, he did not then become qualified: certainly, he never practised at that time; but his first interest in bookselling came when he wrote a book on *Human Nature*, for he was induced to sell it himself, from a small shop at 142 Strand, London.

In those days, of course, a good deal of publishing, especially that of an unconventional or popular sort, was carried on in conjunction with the business of the bookseller, there was nothing unusual in John Chapman's early efforts, to combine the two roles. He continued to issue his own works—*Characteristics of Men of Genius* came out in 1847—and in 1851 he took over the celebrated *Westminster Review*, which had grown out of the initial publication of 1824. He was adventurous from the start, enlisting as a contributor the novelist Mary Ann Evans ("George Eliot"), at a time when she was being very effectively cold-shouldered by her local *Coventry Herald*. He was so pleased with her first articles that she left Coventry for London, at the end of the September of 1851, and spent the next two years, living and working as a sub-editor at John Chapman's offices.

### Eminent Friends

But John Chapman quickly gathered around him other literary folk of brilliance and merit, especially as a result of his campaign, started in 1852, to free the British book trade from the hampering restrictions of "price-fixing" and the commercial dictatorship of the more established and traditional publishers. He won much support, even from authors as prominent as Charles Dickens, for his agitation to promote the cheap and unrestricted sale of books. His friends included the eminent mathematician, Charles Babbage (1792-1871), the cartoonist George Cruikshank (1792-1878), John Stuart Mill, F. W. Newman, Thomas Carlyle, J. A. Froude and Herbert Spencer. It was

a discerning group whose cumulative presence effectively prevented John Chapman from ever degenerating, as the years passed, into a mere purveyor of second-rate or underground literature.

He attracted almost exclusively those who were concerned about religious, social or political reform. It is no exaggeration to conclude that John Chapman's associates, the sponsors and the inspirers of most of his publishing ventures between 1851 and 1860, involved the cream of ability and thought. Even Emerson visited him, when the distinguished American was in London; John Chapman knew also the Frenchman, Louis Blanc, and that outstanding and disturbing English pair, Harriet and James Martineau. He never lacked suitable and accommodating friends to put his publishing firm on the right footing. Even after he left in 1860, it was sufficiently vigorous and enlivened to be able to blossom out into the present, broadly-based publishing house of Chapman and Hall.

### Return to Medicine

No doubt, John Chapman would have stayed in publishing for much longer, had he not again become embroiled in his old pursuit of medicine and science. In 1857, at the relatively late age of 35, he gained a medical degree at St Andrews, and thereafter he practised, although chiefly in unorthodox fields. He evolved some quite curious and even startling theories on subjects as diverse as chloroform (1859), stomach disorders (1864), cholera (1865), and seasickness (1869). Usually, he had to arrange for their publication, because the consensus of medical opinion would close to him all the more conventional and accepted avenues for the dissemination of his ideas and discoveries. Partly for that reason, his medical tracts tend to be quite unreadable today for the general reader, and too visionary and slimly-based for the professional scientist or medical student.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to identify John Chapman's record as a publisher, completely with them. Apart from creating a new and reputable publishing firm, he contributed largely to the promotion of radical and progressive ideas and popular education not only with the *Westminster Review* which was to be continued until the beginning of 1914, but also with his extensive collections of cheap and accessible reprints of popular books, such as the 15 numbers of the *Chapman's Library*, 1851-1854, and the seven volumes of the *Chapman's Quarterly Series*, 1853-1854. They remain quite noteworthy and acceptable works, calculated to give John Chapman his enduring place in the story of British books, and in the development of the necessary literary and cultural equipment of the British system of society and democracy.

## SEX EDUCATION — THE ERRONEOUS ZONE

MAURICE HILL and  
MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

Foreword: BRIGID BROPHY

5s (plus 6d postage)

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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.

## EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Salisbury Hotel, King's Road, Brighton, Sunday, 3 January, 5.30 p.m. Martin Speight: "Conservation".

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 3 January, 6.30 p.m. Pat Sloan: "The Origin, Survival and Decline of Religion".

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8, Sunday, 3 January, 7.30 p.m. Robin Osner: "Compulsory Birth Control?"

Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group, Adult Education Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, Friday, 8 January, 7.30 p.m. Ken Fleet: "Common Ground Between Christians and Humanists".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 3 January, 11 a.m. Peter Cadogan: "From a Market to a Gift Economy". Tuesday, 5 January, 7 p.m. Colin Hamer: "What do we Mean by Education?"

## SECULAR EDUCATION APPEAL

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**NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY  
103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1**

# NEWS

## TWO TRIALS

The death sentences passed on six Basque nationalists came as a shock even to those who were most pessimistic about the outcome of the trial. The International Commission of Jurists and others have criticised the proceedings, particularly the court's refusal to examine allegations that the defendants had been tortured, and that defence lawyers had been obstructed.

It is significant that the military court, which consisted of five officers, handed down sentences more severe than those demanded by the prosecutor. It is doubtful if this could have happened in a civil court.

The sentences may not be carried out, for it is widely believed that the West German consul, who was kidnapped and held for 24 days, was released on the basis of a secret agreement that no executions would take place. If the Basque nationalists are executed there will be more bloodshed, and it is to be hoped that, unlike the members of the court, the Spanish Government realises that repression and terrorism will not deter its opponents.

In Leningrad two people were sentenced to death and nine received long sentences in labour camps which, in some cases, may be virtual death sentences. The sentences and the fact that they were imposed after a secret trial, have caused a storm of protest in which Communist parties have joined.

When people attempt to hi-jack aircraft and endanger the lives of passengers they must expect little sympathy, however worthy their cause. But the would-be hi-jackers who faced the court in Leningrad were only accused of planning such an operation. In fact, they were apprehended before they boarded the Soviet airliner. In these circumstances the sentences are all the more reprehensible.

If people were allowed to emigrate freely from the Soviet Union this would possibly reduce the possibility of such drastic attempts to leave the country. It is difficult to believe that the country would be damaged by the loss of those who wish to live in Israel and elsewhere. The real damage to the Soviet Union's image is being inflicted by squalid episodes like the Leningrad trial. Such a travesty of justice will be condemned by humanitarians and exploited by those who are by no stretch of the imagination friendly towards Jews.

## DEMOCRATS

During 1970 we were constantly reminded how God-fearing Americans were defending freedom, democracy and justice in Vietnam and elsewhere, despite local embarrassments like the Pinkville massacre. The United States itself was the scene of many odd happenings which, unlike Pinkville, did not hit world headline. Nevertheless, some of them were quite significant.

Colin Dangaard, a reporter on the *Miami Herald* approached people in the streets and invited them to sign a typed copy of the American Declaration of Independence. Only one person in 50 agreed to do so. One of those asked described it as "Commie junk", while another advised Dangaard: "Be careful who you show that kind of anti-government stuff to".

# AND NOTES

A questionnaire circulated among young adults attending a Youth for Christ really revealed that nearly one-third of them thought that excerpts from the Declaration were written by Lenin. The youths, mostly high school seniors, were asked to briefly describe the kind of person they thought would make such a statement. They said: "A Communist, someone against our country"; "A hippy"; "A red-necked revolutionist".

Dangaard then typed the Declaration in petition form and invited middle-aged people to read and sign it. One said it was the work of a raver, another described it as meaningless, and a patriotic citizen shouted: "Somebody ought to tell the FBI about this sort of rubbish".

## NO HERO

The Birmingham boy who shot an intruder at his home with an air pistol last week was rash and foolhardy. Fortunately for the boy, and anyone else within range, the only damage inflicted was a wound in the intruder's leg. The wisdom of his father who presented the gun as a 12th birthday present is to be questioned, but much greater criticism is due to adults with infantile minds who have tried to turn the boy into a hero. His father is reported to have said: "The police commended Kevin for his initiative", and if this is true the officers concerned should be severely reprimanded. It is not the duty of the police to encourage children to take up guns even to stop someone stealing an electric kettle.

Following this incident a character named James Wentworth Day related in the *London Evening News* what happened when "my private secretary complained that a man lurked in the bushes in our drive each night. I rang the police and told them I was going to shoot at him. 'Not at him', a voice said judiciously. *Over him. Good shooting*". If the police are really giving such advice then we are justified in asking: "Who is going to protect the public from the police?"

## IN DOUBT

The *Catholic Directory* the standard reference book to the Roman Catholic Church in Britain will not appear in 1971, and its future is in doubt. The publishing firm which acquired it last year have found it impossible to produce the *Directory* on a viable basis. The circulation has remained at about 3,000 a year.

The origins of the *Catholic Directory* can be traced back to 1782 when it appeared as the *Laity Directory*. The name was changed in 1839. It contains a wealth of information about the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, including the addresses and telephone numbers of every parish priest in England, Scotland and Wales. The contents of the 1970 edition also include details of over 100 Catholic organisations, and the commissions which have been formed to deal with the problems within the Church since the Vatican Council.

It is reported that the matter will be raised at the next meeting of the England and Wales hierarchy, although no formal request for financial help has yet been made.

## FRANCIS CRICK

Dr Francis Crick, FRS, the distinguished scientist and Nobel Prize winner, has accepted an invitation to serve on the National Secular Society's Distinguished Members' Panel. He fills the vacancy caused by the death of Bertrand Russell.

Dr Crick, who was born in 1916, has had an outstanding career. He was educated at Mill Hill School, University College, London, and Caius College, Cambridge. He was with the Admiralty from 1940 until 1947, and then spent two years at the Strangeways Laboratory, Cambridge. He has lectured in the United States, and has been honoured by American, Canadian and French institutes. Dr Crick received the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1962.

Dr Crick's publications include *Of Molecules and Men* and many papers and articles on molecular biology in scientific journals. He has been Laboratory Scientist at the Medical Research Council Unit, Cambridge, since 1949.

The other members of the NSS Distinguished Members' Panel are: Dr Cyril Bibby, Brigid Brophy, Professor Antony Flew, Michael Foot, MP, Margaret Knight, Professor Hyman Levy, George Melly, Lord Willis and Baroness Wootton.

## POPULATION

The Registrar General's annual estimate of the population of England and Wales, which was published on Monday, shows that the population growth has fallen slightly. But the latest figures are compared with 1964 which was a peak year, and there is little cause for jubilation when we read that the population of England and Wales will probably be 49 million by the mid-1970s. The Registrar General's report should spur conservation and other organisations concerned about the quality of life to greater efforts, and emphasises once again the need for a Government population policy.

## JUSTICE

Most of the *Daily Telegraph's* third leader on the death of Lillian Board, the young Olympics runner whose courageous battle against cancer ended on Boxing Day, was a good example of the oily, pompous religiosity which oozes from its columns all too often. After being asked whoever in his senses thought there was perfect justice in this world—who indeed?—we are advised to strive for it although its attainment will always elude us.

But don't despair: "It is the Christian teaching that there is a world in which neither pain, nor grief, nor cruelty, nor parting, nor death". We know nothing of this other world, but if its inhabitants will include *Daily Telegraph* leader writers, television parsons and other purveyors of Christian goo, one can only hope everything ends at Golders Green.

## THE COST OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

By DAVID TRIBE

Foreword: MARGARET KNIGHT

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## BOOKS

**THE MARXIAN REVOLUTIONARY IDEA: MARXIST THOUGHT AND ITS IMPACT ON RADICAL MOVEMENTS** by Robert Tucker. George Allen and Unwin, 18s.

*"There can be no impartial social science in a society which is built up on the class struggle." (Lenin, Selected Works, 1942, 1, p 54.)*

This remark of Lenin's aptly sums up the dilemma of classical marxism as explored in Professor Tucker's new book. In so far as marxism attempts to be a scientific investigation of society, and of the mechanisms of change within it leading to revolution and socialism, it takes its stand on scientific method, as do the social sciences in general. Scientific marxists thus attempt to determine the modes of development of different societies, formulating scientific "laws" which are used as a basis of prediction. For example, private ownership of the means of production (capitalism) eventually becomes a constraint on the further development of the means—or "forces"—of production, and to continue social and economic progress the whole system has to be swept away in revolution and replaced by socialism. Whether this is a good or bad thing is irrelevant—the point is that the whole process can be analysed in a detached, scientific kind of way free of value judgements and moral overtones.

On the other hand, of course, marxism is nothing if not a fierce denunciation of the evils of capitalism and the inhumanity it produces. Socialism is not just what will come next in historical evolution; it is also an urgent ethical necessity. Moreover, those "social scientists" in bourgeois society who profess to analyse it in a "value-free" way are deluding themselves, or worse; for there cannot be any "impartial" study of society in a class system. Those who try to examine the state of society "objectively" are guilty of ignoring, or denying, the moral imperative to destroy it and replace it by a morally superior system.

There is thus a fundamental difficulty at the heart of marxism which is well brought out by Professor Tucker. And on both counts—its alleged scientific approach and its alleged ethical superiority—the marxist version of socialism must be held suspect. As Tucker rightly observes, marxism is a "sociology of revolution, a theory of the internal dysfunctioning of . . . societies, leading to their disintegration and downfall". Yet the mechanisms by which this internal dysfunctioning of capitalist society are to produce the necessary revolutionary consciousness in the workers are not clear. It is not that capitalism makes the workers worse off, causing them to rise in rebellion; the Communist Manifesto makes it clear that capitalism has, historically, been an enormous force making for material well-being. It is rather that, after a certain point, capitalism stultifies the natural aspiration of men to develop to the full the "powers of production", and in recognising this the workers rebel—with the object of substituting for the capitalist system a form of society which gives them "freedom", which in marxist terminology means freedom from the division of labour in the production process. Clearly all this ascribes to *ideas* (such as the rather abstract notion of "freedom") an important role in social change which marxist economic determinism would normally deny. Nor is it plain that the complex economic arguments on which marxists base their analysis of society are well-grounded, certainly not for the purpose of elaborating "laws" of social change.

# FREETHINKER

But can marxism command our consent for its moral superiority despite its lack of scientific justification? Lenin argued that marxism was "beyond ethics"; it had no need of ethical underpinning since its analysis stressed the causal relations at work which would inevitably lead to socialism. Yet marxists, despite their other failings, do argue passionately for justice in society, condemn capitalism on moral grounds, e.g. its economic inequality, and proclaim that there *ought* to be a world revolution. It is true, as Tucker points out, that Marx and Engels' condemnation of capitalism is not that the worker is "unjustly" treated under the system; since the only applicable norms of justice are those derived from the processes of production and exchange, the capitalist has just as much a right to extract from his labour force their surplus value as does the labourer to receive the full value of his labour power in the form of his subsistence wage. Yet if capitalist production is to be regarded as "fair" to all in this way, it is simply not clear how the "exploitation" of the workers by the capitalists is to be condemned—except by assuming a quite different, and presumably higher, set of values and ethical norms which in some unexplained way are to remain independent of the mode of production. But this is the very thing that values and moral judgments, which form part of the "superstructure" of capitalist society, and are thus determined by the economic base, cannot be. The dilemma is inescapable—and robs Marxism of intellectual respectability.

We are entitled to ask what the post-revolutionary future is to be like, if we are to be persuaded that marxism is indeed ethically superior to capitalism. And it is precisely here that Marx, Engels and the New Left revolutionaries of today are at their vaguest. Inequality will still prevail under socialism, according to Marx, and will not finally be removed until the "final stage" of communism is introduced. But communism, as Marx understood it, was nothing to do with "justice" in the abstract; it was rather to do with abolishing the division of labour as the source of inhumanity in society; with abolishing wage slavery that tied men to the need to obtain their living. The communist revolution would lead to a great upsurge in men's productive powers that would finally bring about material abundance for all and release men from their daily toil. The criticisms of this as a programme for the future have been made many times over, so suffice it to say here that the example of Stalin's Russia should make clear that material abundance will only be achieved by a far higher degree of organisation and specialisation—or the *extension* of the division of labour—than Lenin thought necessary in the early days of the Bolshevik triumph in 1917. Stalin was able to industrialise Russia with the speed and efficiency he did precisely because he was in a position to out-do the capitalists in extracting surplus value from the Russian workers.

Part of the reason for the current revival of a revolutionary approach to politics undoubtedly lies in the uninspiring performance of the social-democratic parties in the western world that Professor Tucker traces to (paradoxically) their very success. If two Trotskyists make a party, then three make a split; and since the beginning of organised marxist politics in the 1850's the movement has argued incessantly with itself about its aims and methods. In so far as the rejection of any central organisation at all can be designated as a "left-wing" position, the anarchist revolt of the First International left the nascent marxist movement that

# REVIEWS

much less "radical". The decisive weakening of the original revolutionary dynamic took place with the rise of Bernstein in the 1890's, who argued for a reformist, "evolutionary" perspective that would usher in socialism without violent revolution. Marxists have never cogently replied to Bernstein's critique of orthodox revolutionism, and the "gradualist" approach to socialism has become common ground among all social-democratic parties in the western world. Only the Socialist Party in Japan has consistently displayed a fighting élan, and has equally consistently lost elections in the entire post-war period. But this dilution of the original revolutionary spirit has taken place at the expense of radicalism. The very success of a social-democratic party in attaining power and carrying out a programme of reform tends to integrate it into that same capitalist structure it was once pledged to destroy. The "new revolutionaries" of today see this point clearly, and reject wholesale the reformist approach to politics. What they do not do is demonstrate how their own movements can guard against the "deradicalising" tendencies discussed by Professor Tucker.

A critical scrutiny of marxist dialectic is not everyone's cup of tea, and I wouldn't say it makes light bedside reading. But Professor Tucker is always trenchant, and his new book deserves the success it will surely have as a scholarly analysis of what is still one of the most important ideological systems in the world today.

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

## THE HUNGRY HALF

by Idris Cox. Lawrence and Wishart, 15s.

"Talk of the white man's burden is now a joke", wrote the novelist Joyce Cary in 1945. "Probably it is good that it should be a joke", he added, "for it was too easily used to cover a mean complacency and to breed that hypocrisy which, of all vices, most easily corrupts a nation".

Joyce Cary had worked in the Colonial Service in Nigeria and knew West Africa well. He foresaw the end of the old British empire which had sung with enthusiasm Kipling's verses about the white man's burden. Like many other people, Cary no doubt believed that Nigeria would pay its own way and progress rapidly once it ceased to be a British colony. Like most other observers, he did not realise that the gulf between rich and poor nations was so wide and deep that it could not be bridged in a decade or two. Still less did he realise that the gulf would grow in the next generation.

This is the crux of the matter, as Idris Cox crisply shows in his very useful little book. The poor nations are not catching up with the rich ones in north-western Europe and north America, nor are they at all likely to do so in the foreseeable future. But they go on trying to modernise as fast as they can and as fast as the rich countries will let them. This last point is vital yet it is often overlooked by those whose sense of compassion is stronger than their ability to analyse the basic causes of Asian, African and Latin American poverty.

Mr Cox himself, though a hard-boiled radical, is better at drawing the contrast between the wealth of a score of countries and the poverty of the other hundred than he is at deeper analysis. He is inclined to the view that the wealth of some few is the root cause of the poverty of the many. There is, of course, an element of truth in this contention, but it is not the whole of a story that is more

complex than it appears. Nigeria, for example, is not a backward country just because Britain or France still draws a handsome profit out of investing and trading there. Both Britain and West Africa are part of one economic system which operates in such a way that Britain grows richer while Nigeria not only remains poor but actually gets relatively poorer as Britain advances. If "modernisation" means bringing Africa or Asia (excepting Japan) to the stage reached by the most advanced industrial countries in the 1970s, the developing tortoise may reach it some day in the future, but when it does the developed hare will not be waiting there.

How this situation may be destined to change, and whether or not the dynamic for change will come from outside western Europe, is a question beyond the limited scope of Mr Cox's book. Until radical change does come about, reformers will doubtless go on urging that countries like Britain really should allocate (as UN asks) at least one per cent of their gross national product for aid to the poor nations. Under successive governments British policy has failed to reach even this modest target—in spite of the fact (quoted by Mr Cox) that for every pound spent in aid, Britain gets resulting contracts worth 30s. That seems to measure the current cost of the white man's burden. So perhaps Joyce Cary was right after all.

JOHN GILD

## DO IT!: SCENARIOS OF THE REVOLUTION

by Jerry Rubin. Jonathan Cape, 35s.

Whatever you do don't let your children read this book. It might turn them into revolutionaries. It is one of the few books that one genuinely has difficulty putting down, and combines a surprising degree of dialectical cogency with continual humour and excitement, all from the terms of reference of an American Yippie.

On second reading it is clear that the bias is considerable: "Fidel leaped into a tank and went right to the battle zone. If anybody was going to die defending Cuba, it was going to be Fidel himself". The approach is frequently naive: "Kids should steal money from their parents, because that is true liberation from the money ethic: true family". And the viewpoint is as inflexibly anti-Right as Spiro Agnew is inflexibly anti-Left: "If Richard Nixon hates the Vietcong so much, why doesn't he volunteer to go to the front lines himself, instead of sending other parents' sons to die?"

But by then it may be too late. This is a book that feels more like a film or a song; in McLuhanist terms it is an aural, non-linear experience. Anyway how do you review someone who says: "We yippies are cocky because we know history will absolve us. We know that because we are going to write the history books".

I lent *Do It!* to several friends, and was not surprised to find that they split down the middle with their response. Half said: "It made me want to go out and burn a pound note in the street". The other half said, "Yes, I enjoyed it, but it doesn't really give an answer, does it?"

Having no inclination to debate in these columns the proposition that, like the hippies, this book may be its own answer, I will just warn you of the possibility that your children may join the first group, and leave you in group two.

DAMIEN DOWNING

*The Silence of Pope Pius XII and The Anarchist Basis of Pacifism* were reviewed by S. D. Kuebart and Denis Cobell in the 26 December, 1970, issue of the *Freethinker*. Their names were omitted, and we apologise for the oversight.

## TELEVISION: MISH MUSH

PETER COTES

Twenty years ago my friend Lillian Hellman referred to the pretensions in Art as so much mish mush talk. She was referring to those "method" players of the time who, having just discovered Stanislavsky, thought there was no more to do than *read* the Master and then concentrate; something that every actor worth his salt has done from the year dot even when he was only subconsciously concentrating. It seemed to me an admirable way of describing the posturing of those who, in lieu of delivering the real thing in the theatre in the way of directing, acting and writing, make an unnecessary noise.

Things have got worse since then in many respects, both in the cinema and theatre, and with television, where the callow whizz-kid directors direct dramas without regard for the dramatist's intention and a misunderstanding of the director's role *vis-a-vis* his cast. Much of the rubbish that is called "directing" spills over to other television areas, and even a programme as well intentioned as *Ad-Lib* (BBC-1) has now been relegated to become a platform for the show-off philosophy of the boys and girls who make the noise rather than the sense. This self-indulgent parlour game for adults (sic) has now become so compulsively viewable for its awfulness that on successive Sundays after viewing the literate and imaginative *Omnibus* programmes, one's set has remained switched on and, fascinated, I masochistically suffer what *next* from the latest *trend-setters*.

Recently this discussion circle usually a "free for all" had a good chairman in Sir John Hackett (the chairman is usually superior to his two visitors) but two terribly boring guests, when the discussion revolved around the Underground Movement both here and abroad. Apparently the young woman novelist, Germaine Greer, and the youthful doctor, Jonathan Miller (a sadly over-exposed telly personality, if ever there was one), were in a good deal of agreement about what, why and where this "Underground" is, and judging by their limited vocabularies and strained efforts to be simply articulate in presenting their respective cases, I would have suspected that they had also taken a course in "mish mush". Miller loves that word "identify" and has "hypothesis" as a close second, whilst the Greer (the dear *Dreary*) just made a number of noises and for all sense she uttered, might have been talking in a dead language. Of course it was no such thing; being, alas, the "living" languages of mish mush, Sir John Hackett got some of it, though. Having been in the company of real resistance fighters in the Dutch underground during the war, he quite properly consigned the lady novelist and her underground friends and "noises off" to the playground from which they came. What sort of serious underground movement was the one Miss Greer envisaged? "A *play* underground?" queried Sir John. Rebels without a cause; martyrs without a stake.

When one thinks of the quiet heroism and the importance of the work of less publicised members of untrendy underground movements the world over, the antics of those on the box on this particular occasion made for a slightly bilious feeling.

The second of the two Norman Swallow programmes on Eisenstein (*Omnibus*, BBC-1) suffered from no such alien language as mish mush. Living up to the standard of the first part, shown the previous week, it was a cool, calmly affectionate tribute to the great film maker. None of the

experts interviewed—Crierson, Montagu and others—theorised nor propped themselves up at the subject's expense. Apart from the superb editing by Eisenstein of his own masterpieces and the clips from both *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*, Norman Swallow, who both wrote and produced the programme, cut so selectively that the hour long second part seemed to pass in five minutes. With so much talent present it is perhaps churlish to complain that the "voices-off" on this occasion were a vulgar intrusion—vulgar because they were too effortful and failed to let the script intelligently talk for itself; intrusive because such a cinematic subject required no more than the minimum of dialogue, and what there was should not have been characterised, even well-characterised, which in this case it most certainly was not. But these were minor faults in a major programme dedicated to the memory of a great director from a director of sense and sensibility. He discarded the tricks of self-love and self-indulgence many moons ago—at the same time as he threw out their companion in artistic crime: mish mush.

## LETTERS

### Much Ado About Almost Nothing

I was somewhat taken aback at the announcement that the mosquito possesses a penis in your comments about a recent book about sex.

The reproductive activities of the insect world are complicated and a tedious subject for those studying for exams; and especially so in the control of malaria. But if my memory serves me correctly insects are not equipped with that male organ considered an essential part of the anatomical armoury of male mammals.

Perhaps the author is pulling our legs? It is true his claims are modest. An organ only one hundredth of an inch in size is certainly minute even in an insect half an inch in length. But as it does not exist even this must be considered a mere figment of the imagination.

Perhaps some of your readers more expert in the study of the insects can confirm or correct me? CLAUD WATSON.

### Jerusalem, 1970

I read with considerable interest Fred G. Shaw's letter (*Free-thinker*, 26 December, 1970) describing his impressions of Jerusalem in the 1930s. It has enabled me to compare his impressions with mine derived from my visit to Jerusalem last summer—three years after the "holy" city was forcibly unified. From what I saw, it would not be fair to describe the city today as "a shocking slum", with "more beggars to the square yard than in India"—although the foreign tourist (especially if he looks like an American!) is continuously besieged by swarms of Arab children touting postcards and other souvenirs. But, to me, the air was charged with tension; and the atmosphere of morbidity and death seemed heightened by the countless shrines and relics supposedly associated with Christ crucified.

My own experience in 1970—as well as my uncle's impression of "Jerusalem the Golden" in the 1940s—confirms, for me at least, sickening commercialisation recorded by Mr Shaw. This commercialisation in the modern world and the economic and psychological exploitation derived from the cult of relics in the Middle Ages remind us that such exploitation is characteristic of religion as such. Christianity apparently originated as a cult preaching contempt for private property and earthly riches in view of the coming end of the world and advent of the kingdom of heaven; and its transvaluation (to which Mr Shaw refers) was one of history's little ironies.

On one point only I would disagree with Mr Shaw. He confidently asserts that the supposedly historical founder of Christianity was a "humble Jew who walked by the shores of Galilee in his dressing-gown and sandals". But how can Mr Shaw be so sure? Moreover, a Messiah, virtually by definition, can scarcely be considered "humble". MARTIN PAGE.