

OLD PEOPLE COMPELLED TO ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

"A NAUSEATING COMBINATION OF HEARTLESSNESS AND PIETY"—NSS PRESIDENT

After a meeting held behind closed doors Brighton Council last week accepted a report by a six-member committee which had been investigating allegations of cruelty in four of the town's 16 old people's homes. The chairman of the investigating committee described the atmosphere in some of the homes as Dickensian, and the committee made 77 suggestions "to ensure that their old folk would be able to live the fullest possible lives in the modern homes provided by the corporation". One matron has been dismissed and another transferred to an administrative post not connected with old people. The enquiry, which lasted eight months, followed complaints about ill-treatment of residents in corporation homes. Although the committee rejected charges of cruelty, it is clear that conditions were repressive and unnecessarily restrictive. Councillor John Munton, who called for the enquiry said he believed that justice had been done and that nothing had been brushed under the carpet.

Forbidden to Watch TV

It was claimed that residents were compelled to attend religious services, and those who did not were forbidden to watch television and ordered to go to bed. One old lady was prevented from seeing a visitor because she was compelled to attend a Salvation Army service.

Commenting on the case, David Tribe, president of the National Secular Society said: "The scandal of the Brighton old people's homes broke just before a session of the NSS working party on old people, and is a supreme example of the nauseating combination of piety and heartlessness which is so often meted out to vulnerable groups like dependent old people".

R. J. Delaurey, chairman of the Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, told the *Freethinker*: "There has been much concern locally about the alleged treatment of residents in some of the old people's homes. If the committee's recommendations are carried out, life will be a lot brighter for the residents. We particularly welcome the corporation's assurance that in future no one will be compelled to attend religious services or other functions".

The Brighton Corporation has sensibly acted on the recommendations of its committee, and we can accept Councillor Munton's assurance that nothing has been swept under the carpet. It would be difficult to imagine the unhappiness caused to residents by the pettiness, piety and priggishness which caused the committee to make no less than 77 suggestions for improvement.

Invasion of Privacy

Old people like to retain a degree of independence, and there are many still alive who remember the days of the workhouse. Their determination to keep out of institutions has often led to death by neglect or accident, and has

caused many to end their lives. Conditions in old people's homes have improved enormously in recent years, and, while there are exceptions, those who care for the elderly deserve nothing but praise and gratitude. One of the results of the publicity arising from the Brighton case is that it may deter some old people seeking local authority accommodation when they are not longer capable of looking after themselves. But those who initiated the enquiry acted properly, and the publicity may affect the lives of residents far beyond the boundaries of Brighton.

Some invasion of the privacy of the old is inevitable, but this should be reduced to a minimum. They should not be subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment, and should not be troubled by unnecessary and complicated questions. They should be allowed to wear their own clothes and adopt whatever hair styles they choose. One of the recommendations accepted by the Brighton Corporation is that residents' mail should not be censored. It is incredible that such censorship was taking place.

Captive audiences

The Brighton case illustrates once again how captive audiences in institutions, financed and maintained by the whole community, are pressurised into participating in Christian activities. Children are indoctrinated in schools, hospital patients have to endure caterwauling and preaching by evangelists, servicemen are compelled to attend religious functions, and even the iron bars of Pentonville and Wormwood Scrubs will not keep out these religious intruders. People in hospitals, homes and other institutions which serve the whole community who ask to be visited by representatives of religious organisations, should be granted such a request. But it is totally unreasonable that born-again Protestants, nuns and others, should be allowed to inflict their views and musical efforts on these who do not want them.

EUROPEAN CONSERVATION YEAR 1970

JOHN DAVOLL

Among topics for a retrospective review at the year's end, ECY 1970 has been a favourite candidate, and the question as to whether it was really only European Conservation Year has already become a cliché. Much of the confusion about its effects doubtless depends on the writer's view of what it was supposed to accomplish, and it is advisable to begin by identifying the distinct problems in this field.

Those who have been immersed in conservation and environmental problems for some time often forget how rudimentary is the knowledge of the general public on these subjects, and it is easy to become impatient at what looks like talk without action. However, action will only be taken after public education has prepared the ground for it, and has generated a demand for change among the electorate. In fact, the retrospect in *Newsletter* (7), issued by the ECY secretariat, does place much of the emphasis on just this effect of ECY 1970, in addition to its encouragement of those already working in voluntary societies throughout the country. Although the *Observer's* editorial comment (3 January, 1971) that: "It (ECY 1970) burned an awareness of what we are doing to the environment so deeply into men's minds that interest is not now likely to fade" is, I think, a little over-optimistic, a great deal has certainly been accomplished.

Basic Problems

The more difficult question to ask is whether all this campaign of public education has correctly identified the basic problems, rather than merely drawn attention to their symptoms, and whether pressure has been generated to compel the government to face them. The answer here is much less reassuring. What are the basic problems? In principle, they are easy enough to state; they are rooted in the fact that, for the first time in man's career on earth, the combined effects of population growth and increasing per capita demands on the earth's resources and ability to absorb pollution are reaching the limits of the planet's capacity. To quote again from the *Observer* editorial mentioned above: "More serious, no society has yet fully grasped the essential message of conservation: that the earth cannot much longer support an expanding species that tries to get rich by living recklessly off capital resources while excreting its wastes into any convenient hole. Our soaring growth curves and a healthy global environment are totally incompatible; our survival depends on paring our demands and *expectations* to the finite capacities of spaceship earth."

In practice, this means that since world population cannot now be prevented from further large increases before levelling off, any reasonable equitable future will necessitate the developed countries' cutting back their demands on the environment to ease the transition to the inevitable "steady state" economy which must succeed the present brief period of exponential (compound interest) growth. Clearly, this transition will involve the most profound transformation of our economic system and social values, but any sign of a recognition of this fact in official circles is impossible to discern. In contrast, we have something very different; a bland assumption that there is no unavoidable clash between growing population and economic expansion on the one hand and the maintenance of a decent (and indeed a habitable) environment on the other.

Evasion

Listen to the Prime Minister, Mr Heath, speaking to the Third Countryside Conference at the Guildhall last October: "If we also want to see a steady improvement in standards of living for this growing population, this again will require still further development of our economic resources and our industrial capacity. This means continual pressure for more industrial use of land. At the same time, our multiplying population will themselves always expect to enjoy what the countryside has to offer. So while we are going to need all the help that technological progress can offer, we shall have to try to ensure that the requirements of technological progress and the increasing demands for leisure and refreshment are harmonised with the desire to preserve what all of us value in the English countryside." In these vague and soothing phrases, all questions are begged, all awkward decisions are evaded. Of course, what is being suggested is manifestly impossible; the demands are conflicting and no balance is conceivable between environmental preservation and a supposed necessity for continued economic expansion. Something has to go, and in the absence of firm government action to defend the environment for the future, it will be the well-organised and wealthy exploiting interests that get their way, and short-sighted greed will wreak more havoc than did the Victorian industrialists that we now condemn.

In the light of this situation, the results of ECY 1970 may not be wholly beneficial. Too much has been done to create the impression that all of us—the public, industrialists, farmers, the services—are simply men of good will only separated by misunderstandings, and that once we are all brought together at a series of conferences, a commonly agreed policy for the preservation of the environment will somehow emerge naturally. Nothing could be further from the truth; since any effective policy is likely to transform (among other things) the distribution of economic power it is hardly likely to escape bitter opposition.

To sum up, then, if ECY 1970 is regarded as a means of increasing public awareness that the problem exists, then it has been beneficial; on the other hand, if it has left an impression that the problem is now fully understood and being effectively tackled, then it will have done more harm than good.

SEX EDUCATION — THE ERRONEOUS ZONE

MAURICE HILL and

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

Foreword: BRIGID BROPHY

5s (plus 6d postage)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London, SE1

A REPLY TO MY CRITICS

To uphold an unpopular cause is a perilous task, since the wrath of the "righteous", most of them self-proclaimed, will sweep away reason no less than logic. But then, any would-be Don Quixote knows that tilting lances against windmills entails risks. Recently the present author did so on behalf of Northern Ireland. And although he expected the Irish windmill to be one of the most intractable, he was somewhat taken aback by the asperity and variety of his critics.

They were a picturesque bunch ranging from a tomistic nuclei of Trinity College to the semi-rural invokers of St Anthony, from the pinkish, jasmin-tea drinkers of Fabianism to the extreme red purple Irish Republicanism Army cells of Dublin and Belfast. Not to mention the mercurial groups of London, plus certain pockets of rationalist dodos still intellectually rooted in the last century. They all thirsted for Manhattan's "innocent" blood. What prompted such crude intellectual cannibalism? Manhattan had written a book on Ireland. Any naïve Martian would have thought that a harmless effort, considering that more than a dozen other writers had done the same lately.

Why, then, such murderous clamour? Simply because whereas the other books were advocating the cause of the Catholic Church and the Irish Republic, this one had the effrontery to do the opposite: it boldly advocated the cause of Protestant Ulster. An obvious perversion. Divested of all the trimmings, frills and faults, the basic thesis of *Religious Terror in Ireland* is as follows.

What's Sauce for the Goose . . .

If it is wrong for a Protestant majority to bully a Catholic minority—e.g. present-day Ulster—it is no less wrong for a Catholic majority—e.g. Catholic Eire—to bully a Protestant minority into submission should Northern Ireland be forcibly incorporated into the Irish Republic. The fact that Ulstermen are Protestants is immaterial. I would defend them were they Buddhists or freethinkers.

Religious Terror in Ireland never said that the Protestants were right and the Catholics were wrong. It said that wrongs existed on both sides. Also that bigotry was rampant in the Catholic and in the Protestant fields. Murderous energy is not the monopoly of the IRA. Certain leaders of the Orange Order suffer from the same destructive fever. Each side has real grievances. The Civil Rights people, for instance, were partially justified, as are the Catholic nationalists, since no one can deny them the right to want their country to be free, independent and united.

Sinister Implications

The reasonableness of such aspirations, however, does not justify the carrying out of crass injustices. The typical Catholic weapon, the petrol bomb, is child's play compared to the inflexible Catholic nationalistic objective, namely, the forcible annihilation of Northern Ireland as a semi-autonomous province, its forcible incorporation into the Irish Republic, plus the forcible disregard of the will of one million Protestant Ulstermen who do not wish to be absorbed and digested by Dublin. And since we mention

AVRO MANHATTAN

the word Protestant, let us clear a current misunderstanding repeated in England and abroad, beginning with the *New Statesman*, one of whose main feature articles about myself recently was ominously headed *The Man Behind Paisley*.

The quasi-sinister implication of the title, no less than the article in the *Freethinker* (26 December, 1970) entitled *Beating the Drum for Ian Paisley* in which the editor wrote, "it is a sorry spectacle when an intelligent and cultured man like Avro Manhattan throws in his lot with Ian Paisley's mugwumps", are both unjustified.

While admitting that I am a friend of Mr Paisley, I utterly reject the allegation that I am one of his followers and even less, supporters. I unequivocally abhor Paisley's pre-silurian theological fundamentalism, no less than his virulent politico circus folklorism.

I am as opposed to Catholic intellectual impertinence as to Protestant biblical sub-culture. Both are reprehensible obstacles to moderation and to tolerance. The further criticism aired in the *Freethinker* that I am prejudiced anti-Catholic is also incorrect, since it contradicts my open support of the ultra-Catholic Opus Dei, now operating in Spain.

Concerning my condemnation of the British Press, Harold Wilson and others castigated it many times even more virulently than I did. As for my "Right-wing stand", I have not rejected one iota of my old idealism. What I have radically changed is my belief that Left-wingers can put society right. I am appalled at the current universal anarchy, as opposed to the dreamed of tolerant and sane freedom we all hoped for in the past.

Democracy and some of its most basic tenets are being stultified everywhere. I can testify to that from personal experience.

International boycott

My books have been seized and suppressed in many lands. One of the USA Attorney Generals, as testified by G. W. Elderkin, Professor Emeritus of Princeton University, declared my book, *The Vatican in World Politics*, "non-mailable throughout the USA". In Australlia, Senator Henty announced that my book, *The Dollar and the Vatican*, had been held up. Five hundred copies were arbitrarily seized in Sydney Harbour. It took the Australian Premier, Mr Menzies, to get them released.

In England, my current book on Ireland has suffered an incredible boycott. W. H. Smith, Foyles, Hatchards, Selfridges, Harrods and other bookshops have refused to sell it, and papers have rejected even the simplest paid advertisement.

Apart from my works being thus universally boycotted, this last decade I have been banned from entering three continents; from the USA because I was an alleged Communist, from Soviet Russia because I was a "bourgeois

(Continued on back page)

FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

EVENTS

Humanist Holidays. Easter Holiday at the Belgravia Hotel, Bournemouth. Details from Mrs M. Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone: 642-8796.

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, Kensington High Street, London, W8, Sunday, 17 January, 7.15 p.m. Jack Parson: "Population and Liberty".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 17 January, 11 a.m. Basil Moore: "Humanism as Catalyst". Tuesday, 19 January, 7 p.m. Maurice Hill: "Sex Education".

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 17 January, 6.30 p.m. Public meeting.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

SOCIAL EVENING

at the OPERA TAVERN

23 Catherine Street, London, WC2

(opposite Drury Lane Theatre; nearest Underground stations: Covent Garden and Holborn)

SATURDAY, 30 JANUARY, 1971, 8 p.m.

Cabaret:

ANDREW MASSEY and Company

DEREK WILKES

ERIC WILLOUGHBY

Compere: **MARTIN PAGE**

NSS members, *Freethinker* readers and friends invited

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NEWS

ABORTION: CHANGING ATTITUDE

The contents of the current issue of the Family Planning Association's quarterly journal, *Family Planning* are particularly interesting, and include an article entitled *Abortion Law Reform: How the Controversy Changed*. In this article Madeleine Simms discusses the move in public opinion on abortion, and suggests why the three issues that excited most public disagreement in 1966—the foetal abnormality clause, the medico-social clause and the sexual offences clause—are no longer live issues.

This does not mean that the supporters and opponents of abortion law reform have become reconciled, but that the ground for public debate has shifted to issues that seem more promising to the active opponents of reform.

Reformers seek to concentrate public attention on the health benefits that the Abortion Act has brought in its wake, on its social benefits in helping to stabilise the illegitimacy rate for the first time in a decade, and in the reduction of the number of unwanted children. Roman Catholic opponents of reform seek to highlight the shortcomings of the Abortion Act as they see it working out in practice. The writer says that any serious attempt to interfere with what is now considered to be reasonable medical practice may prove counter-productive from the point of view of the opponents of abortion law reform.

Madeleine Sims writes that the "foetus affair" last year was inflated out of all proportion by vast publicity. It was claimed that foetuses were bought to full term and then slaughtered for medical research, and it was alleged that a consultant attempt to link a foetus's blood supply with that of a dog. Donald Longmore, the heart surgeon and the consultant supposedly involved, wrote to *The Times* pointing out that foetal material had been used in medical research for over a quarter of a century. He added that "sensational and inaccurate revelations of this nature serve only to alarm the public and hinder the advancement of scientific knowledge."

Mr Longmore was right; the public had been alarmed, and the Secretary of State for the Social Services ordered an inquiry into all aspects of foetal research. He stopped private nursing homes supplying foetal material for research, though NHS hospitals could continue to do so.

On 1 December, 1970, David Steel MP (Lib., Roxburgh Selkirk and Peebles), challenged the minister to reveal the results of the Department of Health's own investigation. "But", writes Madeleine Simms, "Sir Keith Joseph preferred to maintain a discreet silence about the matter. Thus ends yet another 'abortion scandal'."

Family Planning is obtainable from the Family Planning Association, 27-35 Mortimer Street, London, W1A 4QW, price 3s, including postage.

RUDI DUTSCHKE

The decision to expel Rudi Dutschke from this country is disturbing. The country which survived the residence of Karl Marx has made itself look rather ridiculous by giving Dutschke and his young family the order of the boot. Herr Dutschke has been offered a post at a university in Denmark, and Britain's reputation as a liberal and tolerant country prepared to offer refuge to those who suffer persecution, has taken a knock.

The five-man tribunal admitted that Dutschke's presence in Britain had not constituted any appreciable risk to

S AND NOTES

national security. Mr Maudling's grounds for deciding against allowing Dutschke to remain were somewhat different from those stated by the tribunal. He is reported to have said that new evidence came to light after telephone tapping by the Secret Police.

It would appear that the tribunal accepted evidence under procedures which contradicted principles of British justice. One of these principles is that the accused should know details of the charge against him. Dutschke was deprived of this right, and it is unlikely we shall ever know all the evidence on which the tribunal's findings were based.

Although it is certain that Dutschke will be out of the country by the end of the month, a storm of protest has blown up over the case. It is encouraging to know that there are plenty of people who are not willing to smugly accept a perversion of justice.

BHA CEREMONY

A pleasant ceremony took place at the London headquarters of the British Humanist Association when 13 Prince of Wales Terrace was officially reopened after extensive alterations. Lionel Elvin, the distinguished educationist who "dedicated" the building, warmly praised all concerned with the planning and work which had been carried over a period of many months. He made particular reference to the staff who worked under great difficulties.

Organisations and publications represented at the function included the National Secular Society, Rationalist Press Association, South Place Ethical Society, Social Morality Council, Voluntary Euthanasia Society, Campaign for Moral Education, National Peace Council, the *Freethinker*, and the *Ethical Record*. David Pollock, chairman of the BHA, presided.

NO CHANCES

The East Midlands Gas Board is employing an interpreter and a team of trained girls to explain natural gas conversion to some immigrant housewives because of religious beliefs. The Board's male employees have come up against problems with immigrants belonging to a West Pakistan religious sect who do not allow their women to talk to strange men while their husbands are at work.

DEFENDING THEIR BIRTH-RIGHT

The Prime Minister will, in due course, receive a petition signed by a number of Southall (Middlesex) residents. They say: "We appeal to you to stop immigration as promised in the election manifesto of June 1970, and to think of the plight of the people in Southall and elsewhere who are deprived of their birth-right".

What has prompted this high-blown appeal? What new threat to their birth-right have the public-spirited citizens of Southall discovered?

It seems that an Indian film society in the town is trying to purchase a ten-year lease of the local Odeon Cinema. Their assurance that they would continue the policy of showing English speaking films on six days of the week did not prevent a howl of protest from some of the local whites. The petition has been organised by Mrs Gillian Goold, and she claims it is non-political. No doubt it is a mere coincidence that she is a member of the Monday Club's Middlesex branch.

In recent years hundreds of cinemas have been demolished or converted into bingo halls, supermarkets, warehouses and bowling alleys. There have been very few protests and petitions in the past, and it would be interesting to know when the majority of those who have signed the Southall petition last set foot inside a cinema.

EXHIBITION

Oswell Blakeston is an art critic, writer of surrealist thrillers, poet and painter who has exhibited at many galleries in London and elsewhere. He started his working life as a camera boy in silent films (where one of his fellow-toilers was David Lean), and, with Francis Bruguiere, pioneered abstract films. He has contributed to a wide range of publications (including the *Freethinker*), and is working on a new novel which will be published next autumn.

There is an exhibition of Blakeston's work at the Studio Gallery (one of Jacey Galleries, Marble Arch, London) until 6 February. It is the first in a series of exhibitions being arranged at the Studio Gallery as a contribution to the recognition of the problems artists face because of shortage of space and inflated rents. The aim is to assist painters who would have to face the prospect of destroying some of their work just to "make space", and to offer paintings at appreciation-token prices.

A LAST LINK

Mrs Beatrice Dorer, one of the last people in Britain who remembered meeting Charles Bradlaugh, has died at the age of 89. Mrs Dorer was a native of Kings Lynn where her father, a staunch secularist, was prominent in public life and mayor on two occasions. He entertained Bradlaugh when he came to speak in the town, and although a child at the time, Mrs Dorer clearly remembered meeting the great parliamentarian and reformer. Mrs Dorer was a keen secularist all her life, and a member of the National Secular Society. She is survived by a son, two daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The editor of the *Freethinker* conducted the secular committal ceremony at South Essex Crematorium, Upminster, on Tuesday.

FREETHINKER FUND

Readers contributed nearly £100 to the fund last month, and we are particularly grateful to two Canadian friends who sent £50. We also hope that organisations will follow the example of the Manchester Secularists who sent £5. And now the *Freethinker* faces 1971 with many problems arising from postage and other increased costs. Readers and organisations are urged to help the only weekly free-thought journal in it would face its commitments.

Our thanks to H. A. Alexander, 8s 8d; R. Ansay, 8s 6d; Anonymous, £1 1s; W. J. Bickle, 10s; R. Bott, 13s; C. Byass, £1; D. Campbell, £5; W. Collins, £5; R. J. Condon, £10; S. Clowes, 18s; O. Grindahl, 17s; Mrs E. Hay, 10s; E. J. Hughes, 10s; Mrs N. Hornibrook, £1; W. Holland, 10s; D. L. Humphries, 3s 6d; D. Heath, 5s; F. James, 6s 6d; J. McCorricken, 10s; Manchester Secularists, £5; E. A. W. Morris, 18s 6d; S. Marshall, 10s; A. V. Montague, £1; A. C. Mason, £2; J. & E. MacLennan, £50; C.M., 3s 6d; M. H. Nash, 5s; W. Parry, 7s 6d; Mrs K. Pariente, 10s; W. R. Price, £1; Mrs M. Rupp, 10s; A. V. Rojahn, 15s; Mrs. L. F. Stupart, £1 10s; H. R. Scobell, 8s 6d; A. E. Stringer, 10s; D. C. Taylor, £1; Mrs L. Vanduren, 5s; E. Wakefield, 2s. Total: £96 6s 2d.

Already received: £103 3s 8d; total for 1970: £199 9s 10d.

BOOK

THE SECRET ARCHIVES OF THE VATICAN

by Maria Luisa Ambrosini (Assisted by Mary Willis)
Eyre and Spottiswoode, 75s.

This large, expensive, absorbingly interesting and quite unique book is rather difficult to describe, and even more difficult to review! Under the general description of *The Secret Archives of the Vatican* the (presumably Italian) author, who has herself spent many years of study in these archives, gives within the confines of a single volume both an "outline of history" of the Papacy, an often detailed description of the contents of the secret archives themselves, plus a symposium of her own personal views upon subjects of the most diverse character.

The author commences with the modest disclaimer that she is not "a scientific historian", and her style (or perhaps that of her English collaborator, Mary Willis) is inclined to be discursive, though readable if not always precise. But she retains throughout, an essential lucidity, and manages simultaneously to give a vast amount of valuable information upon a wide variety of topics, all presumably culled ultimately from the Vatican secret archives, although not all related to ecclesiastical matters. Personally, I found the result fascinating, and one can only regret that the high price of the book may prevent any large circulation. However, the price in this case perhaps makes little difference since this is essentially the book of a scholar writing primarily for other scholars, and our present stage of civilisation is still far from the cultural level on which such books are likely to become best sellers!

Before glancing briefly at the very varied contents of secret archives and their recorder, one might relevantly comment that the author, whilst continuing to describe herself as a Catholic (presumably an essential qualification for the apparently rare privilege of a reader's ticket for the Papal Secret Archives), represents a type of modern liberal Catholicism of the latest post-Vatican Council II, Archbishop Roberts-Teilhard Du Chardin school of thought now struggling on the fringe of the Roman Catholic Church, against the still largely medieval superstructure that prevails at Rome. She is evidently a disciple of the reforming Pope John XXIII who started (with what success remains to be seen) a new epoch in the evolution of modern Catholicism.

If the present reviewer may interpose a personal opinion, the contents of this book, written exclusively on the authority of the most secret and confidential documents of the Vatican, lend strong support to the view (familiar to the readers of the great freethinking scholar, Joseph Turmel), that far from being the monolithic and uniquely dogmatic structure imagined by so many of her critics, the Church of Rome is now, and always has been, a flexible, essentially opportunist, and often divided organisation with a high sense of survival values, which has helped it to overcome so many acute crises.

This book gives numerous proofs of such a contention. For example, even in the most famous of all trials conducted by the Roman Inquisition, that of Galileo (1633), the church was split from top to bottom. Campanella, the

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most famous Catholic writer of the day, wrote a pamphlet in defence of the Copernican astronomy and four of the 12 Cardinals who sentenced Galileo—including the nephew of the Pope—refused to sign the condemnation. Even more significantly, as the author demonstrates, Galileo saved Darwin, for by the middle of the 19th century, the RC Church, which had by then been compelled to reinstate Copernican astronomy, warily avoided any open condemnation of Darwinian evolution. It left that to Protestant "private judgement" inspired by bibliolatry! One can perhaps therefore assume a similar future strategic retreat by Rome on the present vexed problem of birth control.

The publishers inform us that "Luisa Ambrosini gives an overview of the archives as part of history, illustrated by close-ups of the individual events and documents". The author herself adds that, "with the example of medieval manuscripts before me, I have not hesitated to decorate my margins". One cannot but agree with the publisher's further comment that, "these decorations add enormously to the value of even this wealth of material". Having given a description of the buildings in which these archives are housed, and of her own initial entry (always an exciting moment in the life of a scholar), our author adds this concise general description:

The secret archives of the Vatican, perhaps the most important archives in the world, contain about 25 miles of bookshelves laden with parchments and paper manuscripts of great historical value. The secret archives are not simply repositories of the records of the past, but a functioning organ of the church, dealing with every human concern; with art and science, as well as theology and politics. They begin with records of the struggle against Imperial Rome; they continue with records of the work of the church in the lands where the East is Red and in the Agnostic-alienated cities of the West.

In some ways the Papal archives are like those of secular Princes, particularly in the times of the Imperialist Popes, but they also reflect the Church's spiritual rule of that part of humanity which recognises its authority, and its concern for all humanity. It is this universal coverage that makes the Papal Archives far more inclusive than are those of the national states.

The author then describes a comprehensive selection of the more important contents. They had been contributed to by practically every pope from St Peter, whom even this liberal scholar appears to accept as the first pope. (Her description of St Peter's first Epistle as "the first Papal Encyclical" is very controversial.) This book ranges from the Rome of the Caesars to the Rome of the current divorce law, which will no doubt itself also figure in the Papal archives of the future. (Incidentally, these archives are not part of the regular Vatican library, though there is apparently some interchange of books and documents between them.) Apparently the Secret Archives have only been made accessible to outside scholars within the present century. Thus for example, one of the most important exhibits, the process against Giordano Bruno was made fully accessible only in 1940. This transcript is probably the most interesting item from the freethought point of view. It deserves (and DV! will receive) a separate article.

Another very absorbing section deals with the life of one of the most curious converts ever made to Cathol-

REVIEWS

cism, Queen Christina of Sweden, daughter of the "Lion of the North" Gustavus Adolphus, Protestant hero of the 30 Years' War. Our author's comments both on the Reformation itself and such medieval heresies as astrology and witchcraft should also be of special interest to modern students of comparative religion. Evidently the Catholic Church has "evolved" since the days of Torquemada (many of whose fellow Dominicans are now busily engaged in studying Karl Marx) and today a self-professed Catholic can apparently freely indulge in heretical criticisms.

A final point: the author of *The Secret Archives of the Vatican* professes a firm belief in the idea of planets apart from the earth being inhabited. In 1600, they burnt Giordano Bruno precisely for supposing and saying just that. The infallible church that burnt him has now caught up with the ideas of Bruno in 1971. Evolution evidently applies even to institutions that still officially reject it.

F. A. RIDLEY

ART: SURVIVAL VALUES

The vital necessities for an artist are the conditions in which the art can happen.

One sees the non-realistic approach with much public patronage of painting. Public bodies may arrange special exhibitions or grants, but which of them has got down to the business of converting some white-elephant building into a place where local artists could store their work without charge? Yet lack of storage space is a killer for the contemporary artist who can only afford to exist in cramped quarters.

Exhibitions are not essential for an artist's survival, although desirable. Grants, though welcome, are often no more than temporary expedients. Neither tackle the business of the final soul-destroyer—the necessity to have to throw away a small body of work in the dustbins almost as soon as it is created.

A painter, even if he is a Sunday painter, needs past work for reference, for morale. And who knows what he may not be storing up. Think of the wonderful finds which have been made in the studios of painters who worked in an age when storage was not a problem because rents were accounts of a few shillings a week.

But it is more "romantic" for public patrons to stage an occasional festival, or award some grant, or offer some other temporary alleviation, rather than to think through a real first-aid programme for artists. There's a psychic block; but unless people do give priority to the conditions in which art can happen the casualty list will grow in alarming acceleration, year by painful year.

Yes, the writer is as unfortunate as the painter. The essential for a writer is to get his book published when he has completed a good bit of work that is publishable. Publication is the stimulus and the justification, the social value of the author's concentration. Yet public patronage fusses with grants and alarming schemes of public Lending Rights instead of organising the pressure to bring about the rationalisation and modernisation of printing which would prevent all but the best sellers being priced out of the market.

People, it seems, hate going to source. Postage goes up, and the book rate is abolished instead of being retained as a cultural gesture; and one publisher has told the Press that the current postal tariff has put the staggering sum of £70,000 a year on his post bill.

What is the use of talk about encouraging art if painters are going to despair because they have nowhere to keep their paintings, and writers are going to give up because they know their book can never be printed? A man can paint his pictures or write his book after he has done the daily job, but not if he knows the conditions do not exist in which his art can happen. Certainly it would be admirable if all talented artists could have grants to allow them to give all their time to their work; but this is not a priority. The other is the killer.

Yet who cares? It's more "showy" to offer a prize for a painter or an author than to get down to basics. Theatres are in jeopardy because of taxes, bookshops close, and on every art front there is a similar story; and it won't stop without basic thinking on the part of those who pay lip-service to the arts.

Of course if the conditions in which art can happen were established, the struggle would still remain for the artist; but he could go on struggling, secure in the framework of "art can happen", confident that it is worthwhile to work steadily towards some hope of recognition.

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CRUCIFIXION EVIDENCE

R. J. Condon writes: The first material evidence of a crucifixion has been unearthed by Israeli archaeologists. During excavations in an ancient cemetery in North-Eastern Jerusalem a number of ossuaries—stone receptacles for bones—were discovered, one of which, bearing the name of Yehohanan (John), contained the skeleton of a crucified man. The remains are thought to date from the beginning of the Christian era. A detailed anatomical study has shown that the victim was nailed to the cross in a sitting position, with both legs slung together sideways. The feet were nailed, but not the hands, the nails going through the forearms. A wooden seat-block had been provided. This is of course a considerable departure from the traditional conception of crucifixion.

Israeli scholars have agreed that the remains cannot be those of Christ. It would be extremely embarrassing for the Church if they were, for as St Paul said, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain". Jesus not only rose from the dead, he ascended to heaven, and from four separate places on three separate days according to the various accounts in the New Testament. Dean Inge remarked that if heaven is beyond the stars, Jesus, even if travelling at the speed of light, must still be somewhere in interstellar space.

Symbolism

In the Roman world crucifixion was reserved for non-Roman citizens. Its use is attested by Plutarch, Juvenal, Plautus and other writers. Whether or not a Jewish messiah was crucified around 30 AD—and we have no first-hand account of it—the main features of the story bear a strong resemblance to those of a number of dead-and-risen pagan sun-gods, some of whom were said to have been crucified. The fact that the event was celebrated at or near the vernal equinox, by the pagans as well as the Christians, points to an origin in astronomical symbolism.

The crucifixion of Jesus was never portrayed in painting or sculpture until several centuries after the alleged event. Instead we have Christ as a lamb at the foot of a cross, or as two fishes hanging from a cross. The sun at that period was ceasing to rise in Aries at the vernal equinox, and moving into Pisces. It was an interim period; hence the sun on the cross, or at its spring crossing of the equatorial plane, was typified by these two zodiacal signs, the Ram or he-lamb and the Fishes.

One of the earliest known examples of a crucified human figure in Christian art is in the British Museum, on an ivory-panelled casket of the fifth century. Another, of about the same age, is on the doors of the Church of St Sabina in Rome. These are exceptional, however, the zodiacal signs continuing in use until 707, when the Council of Constantinople ordered that in future the figure of a man nailed to a cross was to be used. By such arbitrary decrees is sacred "history" authenticated.

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Foreword: MARGARET KNIGHT

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A REPLY TO MY CRITICS

(Continued from page 19)

author", and recently from Australia, ostensibly because the Pope was there.

Where is the much proclaimed freedom of thought, freedom of controversy and freedom of movement? It is easy to talk about freedom in the abstract. Its crude repression, as carried out in Communist or Fascist lands, can be matched as effectively by the subtler methods of the degenerated democracies of the West.

Facing Facts

But, coming back to the Irish problem, the point of my book, *Religious Terror in Ireland*, is that whilst the Irish nationalists have the right to dream of Ireland's unification, one million Ulstermen also have the right to refuse forcible incorporation. A further thesis of the book is that if the Catholic Church were not so strong or involved in the struggle, a solution or a kind of *modus vivendi* would be feasible. This is one of the most imponderable factors of the problem.

The concrete reality is that the Protestants of Ulster fear the Catholic Church. Paisley and his supporters know this. Perhaps they use such fear to further their own sectarian or personal aims. The present writer, however, has come to the defence of Ulster simply because he believes her cause to be just. He is therefore the supporter neither of a reactionary Ulster nor of Protestant extremism, and even less of Mr Paisley. If he is "beating the drum" at all, he is beating it for what he sincerely considers to be reasonable and right.

LETTER

Compulsory Education

I found Eric Glasgow's biography of John Chapman stimulating—a remarkable account of what one man may accomplish. I particularly noticed his remark that the untutored genius of Victorian times seems to have become much less common in our age of more systematic and widespread education. Today we seem to think that you have only to pump facts into a boy to make a wise man of him. We tax ourselves ever more steeply to provide more expensive schools, forgetting that a more basic principle is that the best food becomes nauseating when one is forced to eat.

It is a melancholy fact that over 70 per cent of the children who leave our expensive schools never again read a serious book for all the rest of their lives. And in their daily papers, most of them turn first to the sport and betting news, and then perhaps to the latest divorce or murder case, and never to a political article. And let us remember that 80 per cent of the taxes to provide this education comes from the wage-earning classes. Even if we expropriated all the rich, it would make very little difference to the burden of the wage-earners.

The reason for this neglect of reading is, partly, compulsory education. Children are naturally enquiring, but the spirit of enquiry is intensely individual and is generally permanently crippled by being early forced into subjects of no interest to the child, who would be better occupied in running wild to develop a sound body. The intellect generally develops only at adolescence, and the young things would then come to books as a privilege instead of a forced task.

HENRY MEULEN.