

DRUGS: YOUNG PEOPLE HARASSED BY POLICE

'GREAT MAJORITY OF THOSE SEARCHED ARE INNOCENT'—BARONESS WOOTTON

Baroness Wootton, moving an amendment in the House of Lords last week to the Misuse of Drugs Bill, proposed the removal of a section which gives a constable the right to detain and search any person if he has reasonable cause to suspect that that person is in illicit possession of a controlled drug. She said that this clause, in fact, gave the police unrestricted power to search any person even in the absence of arrest, and added: "A right to detain seems to be creeping into our law . . . The law relating to arrest, or wrongful arrest, is well established, but this vague power to detain is not so well established, and I think it has rather sinister potentialities when it is a means of detaining in the absence of arrest". Other speakers referred to the growing feeling that the police stopped and searched people, not because they had "reasonable cause" to believe they were in possession of drugs, but simply because of the length of their hair, and if they were wearing colourful clothes. The vast majority of those searched were, in fact, completely innocent.

Searches Made on Personal Appearance

Baroness Wootton said that searches were made at random, and continued: "They are not totally random, and it is very unlikely that many of those present in this Committee this afternoon will be detained and searched for illegal possession of drugs. What happens is that random searches are made of people whose appearance is unusual. That means, of course, of a particular and a now very considerable section of people; those who have an unconventional, or perhaps I ought to say a pre-conventional, appearance in dress or hairstyle. This seems to me to be a very unfortunate situation. It is partly inherent in the nature of the situation that you cannot establish reasonable suspicion. Therefore if the police are to search at all they are inevitably driven to making these random searches of people of a particular kind of appearance. The result is considerable resentment by a large number of innocent persons who are subjected to these searches."

Baroness Wootton recalled that the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence was divided as to the merits of this particular clause. But, on one thing, they were in agreement; searches should not be made on personal appearance. She also quoted evidence submitted to the ACDD by the Association of Chief Officers of Police for England and Wales, and by the Chief Constables of Scotland Association. These organisations were of the view that people do not carry drugs in their pockets. They use the folds of the body in such a way that a casual search in the street is going to reveal them.

"The practice of police forces varies, and that it is not customary, in the majority of cases, to carry out these very radical searches which involve going to the police station and stripping the person to be searched. But they are carried in certain cases, and we are now in the dilemma that unless they are carried out we are not going to catch the important people, and if they are carried out and nothing is found, it is going to be extremely humiliating for innocent persons."

Baroness Wootton pointed out that the great majority

of those searched were innocent, and that the "best record" quoted to the Advisory Committee on successful searches came from Birmingham, where one in three were successful. In other parts of the country it may be as little as one in 16.

Drug "Planting" by Police

Lord Montague said that young people are acutely aware of the deterioration of any rapport between them and the forces of law and order in this country. Young people believe, and with good reason, that they are being persecuted for their appearance and the length of their hair.

Lord Montague continued: "Although I have no desire to make any aspersions on the police, there is no doubt that the young people widely believe that an immense amount of 'planting' is going on at the moment by those in Drug Squad. In this matter some of the views of the older generation . . . often show great ignorance of the whole drug scene, and they are expressed so dogmatically that they are held in contempt by a great many young people".

Lord Montague said that it would not be responsible for any Government to abdicate responsibility for control of drugs in one way or another. "But the use of methods which are suggested in this clause, and which young people feel are objectionable, can lead only to greater division between the generations and give a great boost to those who are pushing drugs for criminal means".

Code of Practice

Lord Windlesham said that the matter of a code of practice in search is being considered by chief constables, and that it is the intention of the Home Secretary to issue a standard code. Baroness Wootton welcomed this announcement but, as there is no code at present and she did not know what the code will contain when it appears, was not prepared to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment was defeated.

THE TRIAL OF BRUNO

F. A. RIDLEY

Giordano Bruno was one of the most famous intellectual pioneers and martyrs for independent thought and of a scientific cosmology. He was imprisoned and eventually burned at the stake by the Roman Inquisition on 20 February, 1600. Many articles and books have been written about Bruno, and I have no intention of adding to their number here. But I propose to summarise the information, some of it probably new to English readers, contained in the recently published and very informative book, *The Secret Archives of the Vatican*, by Louisa Ambrosini. This book is, as far as I know, the first to transcribe and quote directly from the Vatican Secret Archives themselves. By so concisely summarising (pp 215-22) the process against Bruno, conducted over a period of seven years, the authoress has rendered an important service to the study both of ecclesiastical and general history. The prophetic "heresies" for which Bruno was condemned are of special interest to our present age of space travel and cosmological speculation. In the annals of universal history, Bruno was the prophet of the Space Age, an age that indeed, is only just beginning to value his daring speculations.

Sources of The Process against Bruno

Louisa Ambrosini informs us that "the original records of Bruno's Roman trial that went on for seven years, have been lost. Apparently they disappeared between 1815 and 1817 when the secret archives were being returned to Rome after the defeat of Napoleon. (Napoleon had transported them *en bloc* to Paris.) However a 59-page summary of the trial was discovered in one of the cabinets of the Secretary of State". The author goes on to record how Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) "gave emphatic orders that the Trial Records were to be shown to no one". As our Catholic author ironically comments: "By now the Church realised that burning geniuses was bad for public relations; disclosure of the document would have been a gift to anti-clericalism". As it was, the document remained undiscovered until 1940, when the Italian scholar Angelo Mercati discovered it after a 15-year search. It would consequently appear that this important source document was unknown to Lewis McIntyre when he wrote his standard English biography of Bruno.

The Indictment

We are then informed that "the compiler sometimes reproduces the testimonies verbatim and sometimes summarises them, but is always careful to indicate in the margins the corresponding pages in the original document which he must have had at hand. From this we can tell that the lost Process of Giordano Bruno, from which this summary is made, had at least 295 pages. The summary deals with 12 main points: the Trinity, Divinity and Incarnation, Transubstantiation and the Holy Sacrament, Hell, the Existence of Many Worlds, the Adoration of the Magi (whom Bruno saw as riding on giraffes), the Eternity of the World, Cain and Abel, Moses, the Prophets, the Virginity of Mary, and the Immanence of God". A formidable list! As the Catholic narrator drily comments: "Even without Bruno's cosmological views, the Church had enough to hang him". In view of some modern misconceptions, it should perhaps be noted that advocacy of the then novel Copernican system of astronomy did not apparently feature amongst these charges: the trial and condemnation of Galileo was still in the future. There can however be little doubt that Bruno's cosmological heresies, impossible under the then prevailing static

Ptolemaic astronomy got Copernican astronomy a bad name at Rome, and probably contributed to its later condemnation.

Bruno's Cosmology

There can be little doubt that most serious charge in the eyes of Bruno's ecclesiastical judges (presided over by the famous and now canonised Jesuit theologian, Cardinal Bellarmine) as in the eyes of posterity consisted in his unambiguous assertion of the infinity and eternity of the Universe. This theory had been already advocated, notably by Leonard Digges, in Protestant England, then the headquarters of Copernican astronomy during the period between Copernicus himself and Galileo. (Incidentally, it was a theory unknown to Copernicus himself, who held that the sun was the centre of the Universe.) However, Bruno's daring speculation was probably unknown to Catholic Europe. Theologically it was of course a monstrous heresy that made God superfluous and the Book of Genesis meaningless! The purely theological charges were probably familiar to Bruno's judges, but the very possibility of the eternity of the Universe was equally repudiated by both Catholic theology and by the then prevailing Ptolemaic astronomy.

The Infinite Universe

"It was in England in the age of discovery", comments Louisa Ambrosini, "that he wrote the work on which in modern eyes his martyrdom depends, *On the Infinity of the Universe and Worlds*". The universe, he said, stretches endlessly; since only an infinite could be worthy of an infinite God. "Why should we, how can we, think that the Divine Power is inactive? Why should we assume that Divine Goodness would will to be scarce, to remain sterile, rather than to become reproductive, a father, prolific, adored, beautiful? Why should we think that God is limited?" This God of the unlimited world was immanent in his universe, present in every atom, every grain of sand, anywhere in the world. Like Teilhard after him, he believed that all matter was moving towards consciousness." The author continues: "Even more dangerous was Bruno's belief that the infinite worlds are peopled like our own". For the infinite excellence manifests itself incomparably better in innumerable indications than in those that are numerable and finite. Therefore it is necessary that of an inexcessible divine countenance there be an infinite image". Louisa Ambrosini adds, "everywhere he went, he wrote, and everywhere he went he talked. He satirised the Church and the social order; he questioned transubstantiation and the virgin birth. Bruno was unstoppable, fatally indiscreet in a Europe where free speech was only a grey light on the horizon". In place of the limited anthropocentric medieval universe, Bruno disclosed an infinite and infinitely habitable universe in which "the observer is always at the centre of things".

Condemnation and Execution

With a list of charges such as this against him, culminating in what was in theological eyes the most monstrous of all, the denial of the Creator, Bruno's chances of an acquittal were obviously slim! Only a frank and complete submission on all the controverted points might have saved him. From the long and frequently tortuous examination

(Continued on back page)

POPULATION DEBATE IN HOUSE OF LORDS

Lord Snow, who introduced a motion on world population and food supplies in the House of Lords last week, said we are moving into a situation which the world has never known. One of the unique features of this unique situation is that we know all about it—or at least enough about it—in advance. But having seen the crisis, we then look away.

From the time that man became man—roughly half a million years ago—until 1830, the population of human beings on this planet rose to about one billion. During the period 1830 to 1930 it increased to about two billion, and it is now about three and a half billion. By the end of the century it will be seven billion, give or take one or two per cent on either side. This flood of increasing human life would be bad enough in any circumstances, but it is worse because it is very unevenly spread around the world.

Lord Snow said it was very good that people should be interested in pollution. But although that is important, it must be remembered that pollution is the symptom, and not the real condition. It is like trying to remove a spot on the face when there is something much more seriously wrong with you.

False Optimism

Dealing with the optimists who think that “something will turn up”, Lord Snow said: “There are some who believe that the food will be forthcoming, that human ingenuity will always find a way, that God’s mercy will somehow descend and we can feed not only 15 billion but 30 billion or even 60 billion people. That seems to me to be false optimism gone mad. False optimism, in the experience of most of us, is one of the most dangerous of human attitudes”.

Lord Snow praised the work done by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations in setting up a laboratory in Mexico headed by an American Scandinavian, Dr Borlang. With limited resources, he produced grains of wheat and rice which can survive in tropical conditions and give much increased harvests. Dr Borlang got the Nobel Peace Prize for his work, but in his acceptance speech he said: “You must not exaggerate what I can do, I have done very little. What anyone like me, all my collaborators, the whole agricultural science of the world can do, is to win mankind breathing space, perhaps 20 years to cope with the situation; certainly no more than a generation. If we cannot reduce the human rate of growth, then the species will destroy itself”.

Lord Snow said there was one ray of hope: “I believe that the educated young all over the world, in the West and perhaps in this country as much as any, are extremely sensitive to the problem”.

A Finite World

Lord Beaumont said we may have been thrilled by the expedition of man to the moon, but if we rely on the moon for the future of this planet, we are indeed crying for it. “This is a finite world with only so many resources. We may discover more of them, mine more of them, recycle more of them; but however fast we do so we are populating this world faster than we can produce the resources”.

Lord Beaumont outlined a number of steps which must be taken to stabilise the population of Britain. One of these was having a population policy. He continued: “We must establish a National Family Planning service to work with the National Health Service. As an immediate step

we must see that local authorities exercise the powers that they now have to spend rates on family planning clinics. Long-term reliable contraceptives should all be on the National Health as should sterilisation for both men and women”.

RC Opposition

Baroness Llewelyn-Davies said the difficulties about family planning are political, ideological, sociological, religious and even racial.

“Wherever you go, you will arouse the most fundamental emotions and reactions. The programme in India has been bitterly criticised by the Communists as just an effort to cover up the economic failures of the Government. We all known about the broader religious difficulties, the fact that Roman Catholic influence slowed down the United Nations programmes for curing the population problem, but Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam also have their own difficulties”.

Changing Mood

Lord Sorensen said there are those who argue that the noblest way of limiting population is by what is known as sexual or moral restraint. That is practised in Ireland where they enlist a large number of people into the priesthood, convents and monasteries, where they are celibate. “But I believe that that method is utterly impracticable. Malthus’ advice is all very well for those who are not human, but those who are human will ignore it. If we reject war, exercise compassion for the aged and the young, and consider that to encourage moral or sexual restraint is not only impracticable but fundamentally unsound, then there is only one method by which the population of the world can be restricted; that is, by contraception”.

He went on to say that today the mood of this country is strikingly different to what it was not very long ago. The conversion of the Church of England was encouraging; the Lambeth Conference, 1958, declared that planning is a right and important factor of in Christian family life. Lord Sorensen recalled the decision of the 1908 Lambeth Conference: “This Conference regards with alarm the growing practice of the artificial restriction of the family, and earnestly calls upon all people to discourage artificial means of restriction as demoralising in character and hostile to national welfare”.

Atheists and Infidels

Lord Soper intervened to say that whatever may be the laggard behaviour of the Episcopal Bench, the Methodist Church has set up family clinics in the last two years. Lord Sorensen retorted: “In the last two years! What a pity it did not do so 50 or 60 years ago instead of leaving it to atheists like Charles Bradlaugh, and infidels and heretics who were denounced at the time as filthy and wicked people. I do not remember a single minister of any church saying openly ‘This is not so, this can be a divine gift’, as they do today”.

Lord Sorensen concluded: “Little has been said on the more human side of this population problem: the burden on women who in the past found that maternity, instead of being a glory, has become a tyranny. Little has been said of the strain and stress that unwanted pregnancies have imposed upon women far more than men. For though men have the financial strain of trying to meet the needs of a growing family, it is nevertheless the woman who bears the child”.

FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

EVENTS

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

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 21 February, 6.30 p.m. R. W. Morell: "The Resurgence of Thomas Paine".

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8, Sunday, 21 February, 7.30 p.m. Five speakers from the Women's Liberation Workshop, Notting Hill.

The Progressive League, Imperial Hotel, Eastbourne, Friday 26 —Sunday, 28 February. Subject: "Mechanisms of Social Change". Details from booking officer: Miss Terry Gabriel, 24 Stanley Gardens, London, NW11.

Rationalist Press Association and Glasgow Humanist, Glassford Hotel, 90 Glassford Street, Glasgow, Friday, 26 February, 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m., Dinner. Speaker: Christopher Macy: "Humanism in the Seventies". Tickets £1.25 from Mrs. Slade, 21 Kearns Avenue, Glasgow, W5 (telephone: 041-944 1017) until 21 February.

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 21 February, 11 a.m. H. J. Blackham: "What has Happened to Existencia?" Tuesday, 23 February, 7 p.m. G. K. Young: "Loyalty".

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NEWS

PROBLEMS FOR THE VATICAN

Although the Roman Catholic Church waged an unremitting, if unsuccessful, battle against divorce in Italy, the hierarchy is not enthusiastic about proposed moves to force a referendum. At least two groups of fundamentalist Catholics are planning a campaign to bring this about.

The reason for the Vatican's lukewarm attitude towards these enthusiasts is that it is endeavouring to have an important addition to the divorce law. This is that couples who marry in church would be bound to inform their diocesan tribunal before applying for a divorce. Ostensibly this is to give the bishop a chance to hear their problems: in practice it would enable the Church to exert all possible pressure to make them change their minds.

But there is an even more important reason for the Vatican's reluctance to force a showdown on the divorce question. This was expressed last week by a Liberal deputy when he said a referendum "would fatally unleash a conflict between the Church and State, and between Catholic and lay values". If this happened, the Concordat of 1929 would be seriously endangered. There is already much hostility to the Concordat. Traditionally, opposition has come from Left and secular sources, but this is not longer the case.

At a meeting in Milan, representatives of several lay organisations have called for the abrogation of the Concordat. They have formed themselves into a single body to plan their activities.

In Rome itself, the Assemblea Ecclesiale Romana, whose membership includes priests and laymen, is to discuss the abolition of the Concordat at its next meeting. It has declared that during the recent controversy over divorce reform, "those who make up the Church, the people of God, have never been asked an opinion by the hierarchy. Introductory notes which have been issued include the following statement: "We believe that the moment has arrived for Italian Catholicism to give up the regime of privilege which it has enjoyed for 40 years, and to introduce a real dialogue between the faithful and the hierarchy".

The hierarchy may condescend to enter into a dialogue with the faithful. But there is little hope of the Church voluntarily giving up the Concordat; for although the Pope and the bishops exalt the joys of the next world, they know a bargain when they see one in this vale of tears.

HPG MEETING

William Hamling, MP, presided at a recent meeting of the Humanist Parliamentary Group in the House of Commons. Representatives of the sponsoring organisations, the National Secular Society and the British Humanist Association, were in attendance. David Tribe (president) and Martin Page (general secretary) represented the NSS.

There was a discussion on the problems facing some of the national humanist organisations whose charitable status was threatened.

AND NOTES

The need to meet the threat of some backwoodsmen to recent liberal and humane reforms was emphasised. This applied particularly to abortion law reform. The new education act, blasphemy and Sunday law reform were also discussed. It was agreed there was a need for a broadcasting council, and that there should be facilities for the adequate expression of minority and anti-religious opinion.

WARHOL FILM FOR LONDON

Once again the police and self-appointed guardians of public morality have made asses of themselves. Andy Warhol's film, *Flesh*, is to be shown publicly at a London cinema without a single cut being made.

A year ago the film was seized when 30 policemen raided the members-only Open Space Theatre in Tottenham Court Road. Their "haul" was an audience of 65, and the film. It was later decided not to prosecute, but the theatre was convicted on technicalities of licensing regulations.

Commenting on the decision to allow the film to be shown in a public cinema, John Trevelyan, retiring secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, said: "Here we have a film which received some very good notices when it opened to club members. The decision of the authorities not to prosecute appears to me to indicate that they do not think the film obscene. In these circumstances it would seem that the film should not be withheld from the public".

Critics are not the most loved toilers in the media, but most people would agree they are better judges of films than even the top brass at Scotland Yard. If they will participate in religious demonstrations in defence of "morality", and carry out raids like that on the Open Space Theatre, the police have only themselves to blame if claims that they are impartial, overworked, etc., are beginning to pall.

UNITY AT ANY PRICE

The Warsaw newspaper, *Zycie Warszawy*, has published a call for unity between Roman Catholics and atheists in Poland. It refers to recent speeches by Mr Gierak, the new Communist Party leader, and Mr Jaroszewicz, the Prime Minister, in which they made overtures to the Roman Catholic Church. The newspaper says: "Poland does not intend to detach itself from the tradition of enlightened Catholicism".

The paper's idea of what "enlightened Catholicism" may be is not clear, but Polish Catholics must rank high among the most fanatical and reactionary of all Rome's followers. They are a most unsavoury bunch with which to join forces—even in the blessed name of unity.

DECIMALISATION

Please note that all cheques dated 15 February and after should be made out in decimal currency. They should not include new halfpennies which should be rounded up to the nearest whole penny. This applies to subscriptions, donations and book purchases.

SCANDAL OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

*Margaret McLroy writes: *Handicapped Children, the NCCL's second discussion paper on children's rights, is an admirable document, pointing out the intolerable injustice to which handicapped children, and often their families too, are subjected. It states clearly the basic anomaly that the more helpless a child, and therefore the more urgent his need for mothering, the more likely he is to be put into a hospital where he gets none; and the more desperate his need for mental stimulation, the more likely he is to be excluded from education altogether.*

Of its 21 recommendations, 20½ seem to me excellent. It starts right at the beginning with proposals designed to prevent, where possible, the birth of such children, by making genetic advice and abortion available to parents known to be at risk. Everything possible should be done to support parents who keep a handicapped child at home—a special family allowance, equipment, holidays, and accurate information should be available.

Special Homes

Most subnormality hospitals at present offer an environment calculated to turn any intelligent baby into a mental defective. There is a small proportion who really do need intensive medical care, but what long-term residential care is necessary should be in places much more like ordinary children's home. They should not be staffed by nurses, but by people with a nursery school teacher's, or similar, teaching.

Attention is drawn to the dreadful situation of the handicapped delinquent who may be sent to a subnormality centre for "care and protection"—in effect given an indefinite sentence in a place far worse than prison for a minor offence.

Concern for the handicapped young must not cease as soon as he becomes 16. Sometimes the sixteenth birthday means transfer from a relatively pleasant children's ward to a lifetime of hopeless imprisonment in an adult ward. Less severely handicapped youngsters are thrown abruptly out of the sheltered world of a special school on to the labour market without opportunity for special training. Much more needs to be provided in the way of training and sheltered employment.

Comprehensive Schools

With just one half of the 21 recommendations I do not agree. That is that "comprehensive schools must be enlarged to comprehend the handicapped". My own experience of comprehensive schools suggests that a child who, for any reason needs special treatment, is not likely to get it there. Only schools and headteachers who expect to be judged primarily by their work with educationally subnormal children are likely to do their best for them. Heads of comprehensive schools have far too many things to think about.

It would be splendid if we could look forward to the speedy implementation of the NCCL recommendations. But, the ways of governments being what they are, years of pressure will doubtless be necessary, and thousands of unfortunate children will rot in physical and mental neglect. We should determine to make that time as short as possible.

* *Handicapped Children*, National Council for Civil Liberties, 152 Camden High Street, London, NW1. 15p.

BOOKS

AN INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN PHILOSOPHY:
IDEAS AND ARGUMENTS FROM PLATO TO SARTRE

by Antony Flew. Thames and Hudson, £4.20.

Publication of this book roughly coincides with the venture of the Open University, and whether or not it was conceived with that in mind the book answers the eager expectations of the many not fortunate enough to throng academic groves who hunger and thirst after a course in philosophy. No better source than the University of Keele, pioneer of broader academic studies; no better author than its professor of philosophy, who combines with his academic discipline strong opinions of his own on several of the matters on which philosophers should be heard.

Professor Flew's novel method in this introductory course is to exemplify the major themes of philosophical argument in substantial extracts from the major philosophers, linking them with his own supplementary and critical commentary and thus weaving the argument to a conclusion or, more philosophically, advancing it to the present point at which the inquirer can pursue it further for himself, having learned the hopeful line to follow and dead-ends to avoid. In this way Flew demonstrates his thesis that the history of philosophy does show definitive progress, and is not inconclusive verbal argument about and about—as some deemed it to be the end of the classical period in the ancient world. Some essentials are firmly established, he says; and he is right. He signals these epoch-making (or "epoch-marking", as he prefers) insights or discoveries, most of them (philosophy being what it is) an insistence on certain distinctions which are logical distinctions: for instance, the distinction between analytical propositions (logically necessary) and synthetic propositions (saying something about the world); or between descriptive propositions (what is) and prescriptive propositions (what ought to be); or between a concept and its object. Once recognised, such distinctions make all the difference and the argument cannot be the same: some essentials have been firmly established. For the dead-ends Flew coins descriptive labels, e.g., the *But-there-is-always someone-who-will-never-agree-Diversion*.

In handling his material in this way, Flew makes no secret of his own interests and conclusions—which are very much those of the readers of the *Freethinker*. But the great thing about the book is its rigorous philosophical handling of great themes; it is not a tendentious reading of the history of philosophy, to make sure the damn'd Whig dogs don't get the best of it. It is, first, last, and all the time an introduction to philosophical thinking, in the way in which Plato's Dialogues are, but with the great advantage of centuries of further reflection and argument by some of the acutest minds in the West. That the author has his own strong convictions about matters on which the debate continues and the last word is never said, if he is as good a teacher as Flew manifestly is, imparts vigour to the treatment.

The course is divided into three parts. The first begins with Plato's quest for absolute values, which is then subjected to criticism from the point of view of Hume's modest relativity, and concludes with the argument on survival and immortality as dealt with by Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas. The second starts with Aquinas on faith and reason, going on to the existence of God and freewill and determinism. The third begins modern philosophy with the quest of Descartes for a starting point in certainty, goes

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on with the epistemological problems of classical modern philosophy, and comes up to date with existentialism and linguistic philosophy. Thus each part begins with the major figure at the head of classical, medieval, and modern philosophy respectively, but brings in thinkers from all periods in developing the themes and arguments which were broached by or which preoccupied Plato, Aquinas, Descartes.

Flew's execution of his own design is admirable. The extracts are unerringly selected and deftly combined to carry the argument forward and to make the points which the author wants to comment upon or to underline—as well as adorned with adroit poetical quotes. Of course his method might be followed by selecting different themes and passages, but this would almost certainly mean leaving mainstream philosophy. In any case, his purpose as teacher is fully served by what he does, and he has the added satisfaction of pursuing his own interests and vindicating his own convictions, with all the scrupulousness of the professional and the candour of a partisan in the Battle of the Gods and the Giants.

For teaching what is meant by philosophical argument and what has been achieved by philosophical methods, exemplifying this by allowing the masters to speak for themselves, Flew's treatment is appropriate and successful. But to carry it out may, and in his case does, distort the history of thought. Although he expresses interest in the history of ideas by high-lighting his "epoch-marking" points, this is in the interests of advancing the argument in the direction in which he thinks it had to go, rather than in the disinterested study of the history of ideas. For instance, Plato's essentialism and Aristotle's teleology did not have to wait for Hume for critical rejection and the plausible advance of contrary opinions. And it is important for the history of thought to show that the typical differences on the major themes were worked out already in Greek philosophy before the dominance of Christianity selected and established the type of thinking with which theologians found affinity. True, Flew does acknowledge this in referring to the "Stratonician Presumption" (that the world is given and does not require explanation), but this is to look back at classical philosophy from the point of view of Bayle or Hume, and misses the main contention between the sophists (and later Epicurus) and Plato. Worse, he uses the Stratonician Presumption to insist that on logical grounds of economy the onus of proof was on the theist, not the atheist, in the existence of God argument. This is to take the argument right out of history. Until the end of the 18th century (following the critique of Hume and Kant) the consensus was overwhelmingly against the unbeliever; the onus was on him to show why he was so *irrational* as not to believe in the Author of existence. Bacon could not think that anyone versed in philosophy would suppose that the universal frame of things was without a mind; and the "natural philosophers" of the scientific revolution were amateur theologians who thought of themselves as studying the "works of God", rather than the "word of God". Men found it almost impossible to think of an order in nature that was not purposive. This was the great significance of Darwin's theory, that it showed how this might be possible. The very meaning, historically, of agnosticism is the shift in onus of proof with this turning to positive science free from metaphysics. Comte could then say: "I am not an atheist."

REVIEWS

because that is to take theology seriously". This dates the "epoch-marking" shift. To take it both out of the classical context and out of the Christian context and treat the question on strictly logical grounds, as Flew does, certainly distorts "Western Philosophy" to which his course is an introduction.

But Flew's book is not a history of Western philosophy, in the sense in which Russell's was. He is initiating the inquirer into philosophical ideas and philosophical argument, with an introduction to some of the masters. This could hardly be better done; and his infectious enthusiasm for his subject engenders an enthusiasm for his introduction to it. "Flew's Course" is likely to be unrivalled for a long time, and it is to be hoped that it will soon be available as a paperback and will be bought or borrowed by many readers wanting to get their teeth into philosophy, not least readers of the *Freethinker* who will find much to their way of thinking—even if some may find they cannot logically think as freely as they wish.

H. J. BLACKHAM

PARLIAMENT AND CONSCIENCE

by Peter G. Richards. Allen and Unwin, £2.75.

Peter Richards, the professor of British Government in the University of Southampton, has written an informative and comprehensive book on recent Private Members' legislation in the field of capital punishment, censorship, homosexuality, abortion and divorce. He also deals with Sunday entertainment, the only one of these bills that failed. He discusses the moral issues, the legislative process, and produces statistical tables (alas, not easy to follow) analysing the voting behaviour of MPs according to numerous variables.

"What effect does religious persuasion have on the attendance records of Members?" asks Professor Richards. Freethinkers will be glad to learn that "the short answer is, that the irreligious Members are the most active". The tables show that freethinkers are not only the most active but also the most liberal and tolerant (followed closely by the Jews) and the Catholics are the most illiberal, except on the relatively trivial issue of capital punishment—which affects 100 persons a year, instead of, as all the other issues do, at least 100,000. (It will, I realise, be argued that the number of persons affected does not determine the importance of the issue, but this is not a view I share.) All kinds of interesting details come to light. A few years ago, it will be recollected, the anti-abortion lobby launched a nation-wide petition against reform which aimed at collecting one million signatures. Despite the aid of church and lay organisations, only half the desired total was achieved. Professor Richards tells us that when the Lord's Day Observance Society campaigned to defeat John Parker's liberalising measure in 1953, it too organised a nation-wide petition—which collected 512,735 signatures. Perhaps any bad cause can count on half a million names ("Save Concorde", "No Sex Education", "Increase Speed Limits"—you name it, they sign it) and this constitutes the stage army of the bad. The stage army of the good cannot hope to compete in numbers, but, despite this, as Professor Richards' book demonstrates, victory is sometimes to the reformers, provided they organise intelligently, and work at it.

As the book will certainly reach several editions, as it

richly deserves to, I hope the Earl of Scarbrough, Humphry Berkeley and I, will all lives to see our names spelt correctly. (Still, what splendid company to be mispelt in!) Possibly a more important error is to say that "abortion was the one case where the law was changed without some support from an official inquiry". As Professor Richards points out in another chapter, the Ministry of Health and the Home Office set up a joint committee to investigate the abortion law as long ago as 1937. A few months before the outbreak of war it issued a report advocating that abortion be legalised by statute where this was necessary to protect the mental or physical health of the pregnant woman. When reform finally came, it went somewhat beyond this—hardly surprising, since reform had to wait another 28 years. There's a moral in that too.

In commenting on this document, Professor Richards writes "the price, eleven shillings, was approximately four times that of other publications of similar size issued by the Stationery Office. One can but assume that the high cost to purchasers was deliberately designed to restrict circulation". All very mysterious, I am the happy possessor of no less than two copies of this historic document, and the price marked on each copy is two shillings and sixpence.

MADELEINE SIMMS

CINEMA

PERFORMANCE. Warner Cinema, Leicester Square, London, WC2.

There are some things it is impossible to describe like the Mona Lisa's smile, the colour of a chameleon, Edward Armstrong's thoughts as he put his foot on the moon. *Performance* falls into this category. The closest I can get is to call it a beautiful nightmare. For the film is dominated by paradoxes, but again paradoxically it contains much that is positive.

A criminal involved in the protection racket is on the run from his boss and follow mobsters. He finds his way to a basement room in a house belonging to what would conventionally be described as a wealthy hippy. The essence of the film is contained in the idea that these two characters who at first sight are at opposite ends of the moral spectrum are in fact very similar, not to say the same, psychologically. Both are fugitives from society, unable to face reality.

Most of the points are made visually. In style the film combines many techniques. The gangster sequences are done in the best Hollywood style, with a collection of stony-faced middle-aged uglies sitting round a table snapping their pencils when they feel that some subordinate knows too much and must therefore be rubbed out. The hip sequences on the other hand are done in a beautiful avant garde, or underground, style. For instance when the criminal, Chas, shoots the hippy, Turner, the lens of the camera follows the path of the bullet in slow motion into Turner's mouth which explodes in a kaleidoscope of red, which slowly settle into a representation of a vagina.

The different techniques are handled expertly and through this brilliantly versatile camera work the ideas are put across. Rarely can McLuhan's "The medium is the message" maxim have been demonstrated so convincingly. The similarities between Chas and Turner are expressed visually when a shot of Chas slowly becomes Turner. This kind of metamorphosis is a strong theme throughout the film. Turner turns into Chas's gangster boss. One of Turner's girl-friends while in bed with Chas changes into

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CRACKS IN CATHOLICISM'S FACADE

JAMES O'HANLON

Cracks are becoming very manifest in the facade of that ancient institution, the Roman Catholic Church. What with the differing views on the pill, the demand in some quarters for the right to the clergy to marry and the participation of Church dignitaries in activities once anathema to them, the Church today does not present the same front to the world as of yore.

There are ample signs today that things are not well with the Roman Catholic Church. An instance of this is the difference in thinking as revealed by the remarks made recently by Father J. G. Vink, lecturer on the Old Testament at the University of Utrecht, Holland, and leaders of the Church in Auckland. Father Vink, who was paying a visit to New Zealand, said in the course of an interview that doctrine such as the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of Christ and the virgin birth were mythological and not meant to be taken literally. He did not believe in a supernatural God. He also had strong views on priestly celibacy and believed that if the Church did not change its position in this regard, many of the priests would be looking for secular jobs.

Basic Teachings Questioned

Opposition to these views was expressed by Archbishop J. M. Liston, who declared that they clashed with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The teachings of the Church on the virginity of Mary, the bodily resurrection of Christ, the miracles and God were at the heart of the Christian religion, the archbishop maintained, and had been preached and accepted the world over through the centuries. While we do not accept these things, we agree that they are at the heart of Christianity. The significant thing, however, is that within the Church there are those who would dismiss as myths and legends what for so long has been taught as true.

The Roman Catholic Church, therefore, is not presenting to the world the solid front it formerly presented. It is true that, in the course of its long and chequered history it has sustained shocks (severe shocks at times), notably at the Reformation, but it has managed to survive these and continue on in the manner which evoked Macaulay's tribute. But the Reformation was staged in an age which was only just awakening to the new knowledge becoming available to mankind. Today our thinking shows considerable advancement on that of the sixteenth century, which saw the rise of Luther and therefore any questioning of the Church's authority is the more significant. In the past the effects of dissidence might have been difficult to detect, but with the passage of time the openings in the ranks of the upholders of the church become more and more apparent.

Impact of Science

As far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, the prospect is no more cheering than it is for the various sects that make up Christendom. With the passage of time the inability of theology to square with modern concepts will inevitably strengthen doubts. Thus the hold of Catholicism, as with the other sects, will weaken to the point where its influence in the community becomes negligible. The change, of course, will be gradual, but the impact of modern science on man's thinking is such that the time when the change will unmistakably be perceived may not be as far off as many think.

There are two delaying factors as far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned. First there is the influence the Church is able to exert upon the minds of the young during those all-important first years. Secondly, there is the vast Papal wealth that can be brought into play in an endeavour to stem the tide of progress. Readers of Nino Lo Bello's book, *The Vatican Empire*, can appreciate the magnitude of the Church's financial resources and realise how these could be used to the detriment of mankind. The demand for human development, however, will not be gainsaid. The cracks in the Roman Catholic facade are proof of the effects of these demands.

THE TRIAL OF BRUNO

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that followed on the various points of the detailed indictment, it would appear that Bruno, like Voltaire at a later date, "found the thought of the stake chilling to the blood", and was prepared to hedge, even perhaps to recant, on the purely theological points at issue. But one point he stood firm throughout, and that the most heretical of all; the infinity, eternity and viability of innumerable world. Upon this he resolutely refused to budge. After seven years incarceration and repeated interrogation (probably accompanied with torture, though this is not recorded), Bruno was conducted to the stake, uttering his last defiant challenge: "It is perchance with greater fear that you pronounce this sentence than that I hear it". After a last minute effort to induce him to recant, "he so insisted on his obstinacy that he was taken to the Campo de Fiori, and there undressed and nude and bound to the stake, was burnt alive". By a refinement of cruelty a wooden wedge was forced into his mouth to stop any final blasphemy.

Bruno's Epitaph

After alluding to his statue erected in recent years at the scene of his martyrdom, Louisa Ambrosini makes this final comment: "Meanwhile the Russians have given him a better memorial than ours, a large crater on the far side of the moon has been named for him. Above the graves of the Inquisitors, the quiet stars still bear their Arab names."

It is a fitting memorial to the prophet and premature martyr of the now dawning age of space travel, and perhaps of actual contact with Bruno's "rational beings" in other extra-terrestrial worlds.

* Reviewed by F. A. Ridley in the *Freethinker*.

CINEMA

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Turner. This tends to make the criticism that all of us are drastically unaware, unconscious of our fellows, of how similar we really are. These implications come out also in a beautiful sequence where the more beautiful of Turner's girl-friends (Anita Pallenberg) holds a mirror to her face and makes Chas look into it. He sees his face on her body.

The philosophy behind the film is obviously a matter for subjective analysis. All I can say is that it is memorable cinema, stimulating visually, erotically and intellectually. James Fox and Mick Jagger are both superb, and as is implied above Cammell's and Roeg's direction is very exciting.

DAVID REYNOLDS