

NEW ORGANISATION TO CAMPAIGN FOR FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

"Family planning is important because there is increasing evidence that children who are unplanned or unwanted can be at a disadvantage throughout the whole of their lives", said Dr Malcolm Potts, medical secretary of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, on Wednesday. He was speaking at a Press conference in the House of Commons to launch a new organisation, the Birth Control Campaign. The BCC has been set up on the initiative of the Abortion Law Reform Association and workers in the planned parenthood field. Its purpose is to urge on the Government the comprehensive provision of birth control as an integral part of the NHS. It defines birth control as contraception, voluntary sterilisation and, as a last resort, therapeutic abortion. It aims to do this by lobbying politicians at all levels, collecting and publicising information on the availability of birth control, and to encourage medical and sociological research in this field. Organisations like the Family Planning Association cannot, because of their charitable status, campaign in the political field or undertake pressure group activities, and the BCC plans to fill this gap.

Unpopular Subject

Dr Potts said that family planning is important because deaths of women trying to control their fertility are now forming a significant part of the total maternal mortality rate in this country. "There is definite evidence that couples in Britain find it difficult to control their fertility satisfactorily. The birth rate is low compared with many countries but is obtained at considerable cost in human suffering and dignity. There are approximately 90,000 legal abortions a year at the present moment and an unknown number of illegal operations. There are over 65,000 illegitimate pregnancies a year. The number of pregnancies amongst girls under 16 increased by 200 per cent between 1959 and 1969. There are over 60,000 pregnancies a year conceived before marriage, and within marriage there is strong evidence that many pregnancies are unplanned and some unwanted.

"Family planning still remains an unpopular subject in many quarters and is regarded with a great deal of prejudice. Successes cannot be individualised and are therefore not visible as failures. The tragic case of a woman who dies while taking the Pill makes the headlines, but the woman who does not die because she does not have a baby, and who does not have a baby because she used some form of contraception nine months ago, is never going to be reported in the papers. The woman who may have received (or thinks she has received) less than optimal care when having her pregnancy terminated may make her case into a public issue, while the many thousands who are relieved and grateful that they have had abortions are not likely to report this result in the correspondence columns of *The Times*."

Dr Potts said many aspects of family planning are often misunderstood. People feel there is a relationship between premarital intercourse and the availability of contraceptives, although all the evidence points to the fact that people embark on a particular pattern of sexual behaviour first and that some, with difficulty, use contraceptives after-

wards. "There is an impression that, because the abortion law has been liberalised, this may be connected with the present high rate of illegitimate pregnancies, although there is evidence in other countries that these two things are not associated."

Dr Potts referred to the analysis of women seeking abortions which shows that up to half did not use contraceptives, and sometimes 75 per cent took risks on the occasions they thought they became pregnant. "No doubt the problem of abortion could be reduced even though it is naïve to believe it could be eliminated in the foreseeable future."

Community Support for Voluntary Bodies

He continued: "The advertising and distribution of commercially available methods of contraception should be maximised. It is often forgotten that condoms are more commonly used than Pills, and the barbers, as main distributors, probably plan more families than all the doctors put together. Within the medical services general practitioners are the most important providers of contraceptive advice. At present this is one of the few services for which they may charge, while it is not unreasonable to question whether, in fact, they should not be paid to do this work.

"The Family Planning Association and other voluntary bodies have a long history of making an important contribution to contraceptive services. It is probably time their objects were more generously supported from community resources. The recent grants for domiciliary services are very welcome and an example of what informed public opinion, acting through Parliament, can achieve. At the same time there are still areas of the country where female sterilisation is not available, except on the most rigorous of medical grounds. Male sterilisation (vasectomy) can, in

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OUR NATIONAL PRESTIGE

DENIS COBELL

The financial collapse of Rolls Royce, Vehicle and General Insurance and the Beatles has assured almost every sociologically defined level of British society that our national prestige cannot fall lower. Even the Church of England is considered to be in danger of "running into the red"; which is hardly surprising if one realises that many of its gigantic Victorian-Gothic buildings regularly attract less than ten per cent of their capacity in congregation.

Now, I hold no brief for offering a formula of recovery for our national economic ills, but I would like to distinguish them from the scaremongering evangelist's pronouncements, who see in them the symptoms of wholesale moral decline. There is a simple answer, though not a solution, to economic problems: they arise from capitalism. But to aver from this that our laudable trend away from a repressive morality is a cause of this decline in prestige is ludicrous. More than likely, it is adherence to many rigidities of the past, imposed by a tradition-revering nation, which have led to these current crop of bankruptcies.

A year or so ago I came across a little pamphlet published by the religious house of Marshall, Morgan and Scott entitled, *A Warning to the Nation*, which opened: "Britain is in real trouble". Following many prophetic quotations from the Old Testament books of Jeremiah, Ezra and Deuteronomy, its author curiously asked: "What about such exasperating things like the delay of QE2?" Apparently Jeremiah hadn't thought of an answer to that one! The author concluded that our present situation was akin to "revolution by stealth". He forgot that many of the features of modern Britain which he deplored, came about because people were protesting against injustices, perpetrated in the name of national interest and the God he was defending.

Trust and Obey

When the world map was covered in pink splashes, many of these evangelists thought there was little wrong, nor could be wrong until the countries governed within our Empire gained independence. How incorrect they have turned out to be. Their views were founded upon ideas of a kind which make Enoch Powell look like a benevolent uncle. The ideas of these missionary evangelists were rooted in suppositions that most men needed their instruction, and could not wisely be left to think for themselves.

I have read other, and more recent, literature (if that is not too polite a description of it) published under the auspices of our national denigrators, which asks readers to return to the good old days of obedience to authority. They, of course, claim that the authority they quote is divine.

The Lord's Day Observance Society makes the following diagnosis in an alarmist leaflet: "Britain's high standards are disappearing. The moral fibre of John Citizen is weakening". A recent issue of *Prophetic Witness* also carries trenchant warnings on "The Fall of Nations", for those who favour enlightened laws on sex. The Jehovah's Witness journal, *Awake*, also dislikes sex, and thinks it has something to do with economic downfall.

All these apocalyptic warnings have one thing in common; they infer that their ideas (which they assume are also God's ideas) are better than those of rational man, and if we do not follow their advice we will reap the reward the good Lord has prepared for sinners—eternity in hell. It was reassuring to hear Sir Compton McKenzie remark that there were similar moanings about falling moral standards in the "naughty 'nineties", when a foot of leg above the knee was displayed by Gaiety Girls at the Holborn Empire!

Facing Facts

The peculiar insistence on national greatness, once the preserve of the Moral Re-Armament brigade, has become a national preoccupation for those foolish enough to believe that the nation-state is of supreme importance, and that in God's grand plan for the universe Great Britain has a special role to play. For all the practical atheistic aspirations of this nation, many people still allow themselves to believe this fairy tale. To think on a broader scale, of humanity, is anathema to the religiously evangelistic; but for the rest of the population it is high time they threw these pretentious notions into the middle of the Atlantic.

The wave of militant anti-permissiveness has urged us into sackcloth and ashes; at Blackburn, as reported in the *Freethinker* in January, and more recently at Bristol, public officials have paraded together in denunciation of the age of sex and drugs. But what happens when the *Little Red Schoolbook* appears? This offers sensible advice to youngsters on both topics, as anyone who takes the trouble to read it and not rely on Press reports will find out. Has this book endeared itself to Mrs Whitehouses' friends? Not likely—they have seen to it that police have stopped sales. So one slowly discovers, this decline in national prestige, is really one more figment in the imagination of moralists and religious fanatics, who are determined to condemn what they think they see and hear, rather than notice the facts, especially if these are associated with a non-religious morality.

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many cases, have the advantage of safety, speed and cheapness (and even the possibility of reversal), but is still not widely used within the NHS.

"There is an urgent need for better methods of family planning and better channels of distribution. The Government may have to enter into this field in the way that it is entering into certain other technologies."

Dr Potts said that although the Birth Control Campaign is not committed to any policy with regard to the population of Britain, "but acknowledge the need to review this topic. Looked at globally, the current rate of population increase in this country is significant. England, with one seventh of the Indian population, is taking as much out of the world's resources as that great country. The present rate of population increase is probably one of the most significant factors in the history of mankind in the second half of the twentieth century. Improved family planning services in Britain will provide both example and experience which will help the less fortunate countries."

BELL

TALKING TO DAVID HALLIWELL

LAURENCE BECK

David Halliwell was born in 1936 and after studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art he became an actor. He was also writing plays and his "Little Makolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs" won the "Evening Standard" Most Promising Playwright Award in 1966, and Halliwell formed the QUIPU production company the same year. "The Experiment" was produced at the Arts Theatre, London in 1967, and at an off-Broadway theatre. Another play, "The Last Belch of the Great Auk" was recently performed at the Mercury Theatre, London.



David Halliwell

Laurence Beck: Your latest play is a short conflict between a young man and a young woman. Tell us more about this play.

David Halliwell: They start off by having preconceptions about one another, they've never met, and so they see each other as types. The man sees the girl as a model type which he's seen around in magazines and films and so on; an upper class girl. She sees him as an ornithologist and thinks he will be very stodgy, boring and puritan. And these are quite strong preconceptions and they're based to a very great extent on ignorance because I don't suppose either of the characters has ever met a real model or ornithologist. When they meet they're surprised; they see each other differently. Of course, they don't appear like their preconceptions, and how could they because nobody actually is a preconception. But as time goes by the old preconceptions start to come back and at the end of the play each has imposed his preconception on the other so that they're seeing each other as they'd imagined they would be before they met. And, of course, the conflict is restored. They're arguing together as they imagined they would be in the first place. And I think this happens. Perhaps not quite as graphically as in this play but I think it does happen.

Beck: At the end of the play the two characters have retained identity but are in total conflict and are hurling incredible abuse at each other. Can there only be conflict between differing identities?

Halliwell: No, I don't think so. We all see each other differently, and we all have a different view of each other. But I think these can overlap sufficiently and there can be sufficient liking and tolerance for people to get on. In that particular little play, *A Last Belch for the Great Auk*, the two characters don't, but I'm not saying that nobody can.

Beck: Can you envisage a play in which an aftermath of conflict was dealt with?

Halliwell: I can. And I think that could be dramatically very interesting. What comes after a civil war, for example, is some kind of diffusing. At best some kind of settlement in personal terms and in national terms. It's something I intend to use in future plays.

Beck: Will you be working from any specific viewpoint?

Halliwell: The way I work in my plays now there's no objective viewpoint. You see the characters as they see themselves. We see them through their own eyes the way they appear to themselves and as they appear to other characters. So everything's seen through somebody's eyes. I find this much more dramatically exciting and potentially rich than taking what you call the old "fly on the wall" position, which is what I certainly didn't do in *A Last Belch for the Great Auk*. That is a play about identities in the sense that each one sees himself as a particular kind of presence.

Beck: And it is then an exploration of conflict between these identities or presences as you call them.

Halliwell: Yes. And it ends in conflict. I don't believe in resolutions in a play. I don't believe there can be, I don't wish to write that kind of thing. I think resolutions where the playwright says this is "the happy ending", this is "the tragic ending", or just this is where it all ends, are false, because it never happens that way. There's never an absolute resolution in life. I think there can be an aftermath and settlement as I said before, in national politics and individual affairs. But I don't think that's the end. It's never the finality, there'll always be new conflicts arising. New battles. I think a lot of relationships, of course, are neither totally conflict nor totally co-operative. They're a mixture of both.

Beck: And there is always a rebel somewhere to create these new conflicts and battles?

Halliwell: I wouldn't call them rebels. Some of the characters I'm interested in now are rebels in a way, in that

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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 sought and sold). For information or catalogue send 5p stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Salisbury Hotel, King's Road, Brighton, Sunday, 2 May, 5.30 p.m. Tea party followed by Annual General Meeting.

Humanist Holidays. Summer Centre in the Lake District now full. Youth Camp being arranged 24 July to 1 August in Salop. Details: Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey.

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 25 April, 11 a.m. Professor D. G. MacCrae: "Survivals and New Arrivals". Tuesday, 27 April, 7 p.m. Stan Chisman: "Computers—Friend or Foe?"

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, The Pier (West), Sunday, 25 April, 5.30 p.m. Barbara Smoker: "Freedom for Women".

CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, London, WC1

FRIDAY, 30 APRIL, 7.30 p.m.

The National Secular Society and
South Place Ethical Society present

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MARIE-HELENE GEORGIO Soprano

SHEER PLEETH Pianist

Tickets 40p from

NSS, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1, and

SPES, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1

NEWS

BLOODBATH IN BENGAL

The Executive Committee of the National Secular Society passed a resolution at a meeting last week in which it "views with concern the sequence of events which have led to the tragic situation in East Bengal.

"The military rulers of Pakistan have suppressed the Constituent Assembly, illegalised the party which held an absolute majority in the Constituent Assembly and over 98 per cent of the seats allotted to East Bengal. It has then gone on to unleash a campaign to terrorise the population, massacring civilians, men, women and children, killing thousands in Dacca and Chittagong. The unexpected medieval ferocity of the Pakistan Army can only be explained when one recalls that Pakistan is a State based on the religious ideology of Islam, and its military leaders and soldiers probably imagine themselves as soldiers of Allah, entitled to annihilate, with impunity, dissident Muslims and unbelieving Hindus."

The NSS Executive Committee calls on the British Government to publicly express, on behalf of the British people, "our dismay and shock at the actions of the Pakistan Army". It says Britain should stop the supply of arms, spare parts, and all war material to Pakistan, until the military regime gives way to constitutional processes and democratic rule.

"Stop economic aid to the Government of Pakistan until democratic rule is restored; the Pakistan Army's campaign of repression is proving extremely expensive and any financial assistance now will go indirectly towards helping this campaign. Since the Pakistan Government have refused to allow International Red Cross to land aid in Bengal, send medical aid, food, seeds and fertilisers to the people of East Bengal, through the Indian frontier wherever it is open. Aid should also be sent for the benefit of refugees who have sought shelter on Indian soil. Extend recognition to a Bangla Desh Government if and when it is formed."

VETERANS

Although the Birth Control Campaign is the newest body in the family planning field, it has a number of veteran campaigners to guide its work. Vera Houghton, a vice-president, was executive secretary of the International Planned Parenthood Federation for ten years, and chairman of the Abortion Law Reform Association during its most productive period, 1963 until 1970. Alastair Service, chairman of the management committee, was ALRA lobby organiser at Westminster from 1965 until 1968. His tireless efforts contributed significantly to the success of the campaign to reform the abortion laws. Dilys Cossey, general secretary of the Birth Control Campaign, also did sterling work for ALRA.

Lord Gardner, Lord Chancellor from 1964 until 1970, is president of the Birth Control Campaign, and the vice-presidents include Lena Jeger, MP (Lab., Holborn and St Pancras South), Sir George Sinclair, MP (Con., Dorking), David Steel, MP (Lib., Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles), Lord Boyle, Helen Brook (founder and chairman of the Brook Advisory Centres), Dr Edwin Brooks (Labour MP

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for Bebington, 1966-1970, and sponsor of the 1967 National Health Service (Family Planning) Act), Michael Schofield, author of *The Sexual Behaviour of Young People*, and Professor Glanville Williams.

Those who have welcomed the formation of the new organisation include David Tribe, president of the National Secular Society. He said: "It's encouraging news that the abortion lobby is diversifying into birth control promotion. Nobody regards abortion as a good thing in itself but simply as better than producing unwanted or deformed children. If this can be prevented through contraception everyone should be happy. At one stage the National Secular Society was the only body prepared to speak out on this issue. It is good to see so many more today".

The address of the Birth Control Campaign is 233 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 9AE (telephone 580 9360).

DOUBT IN DAWLEY

A report just published by the University of Birmingham Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture reveals that little more than half the churchgoers in Dawley, Shropshire, have no doubts about the divinity of Jesus Christ. Eighteen per cent had "some doubts"; 21 per cent held what are described as "liberal views" and three per cent doubted his existence completely. The report, *Mobility and Religious Commitment*, is based on a survey organised by Dr Geoffrey Nelson, senior lecturer in sociology at the City of Birmingham Polytechnic, and Rosemary Clews, a lecturer in social studies at Bilston College of Further Education. Dawley is to be the centre of Telford New Town, which will eventually have a population of 250,000.

Fifty-eight per cent of Church members accepted the miracles as related in the Bible. However, 33 per cent thought they could be explained by natural causes and three per cent are "doubters". And a large proportion of Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Methodists do not believe in the existence of "old Nick"; this is in line with a general decline of belief in the Devil.

There is a marked division between Church members and non-members on the question of "life after death". Forty-five per cent of Church members and only 15 per cent of non-members unreservedly believe in another life after we shuffle off this mortal coil.

Despite the outcome of this survey, and frequent gloomy references by Church leaders to the post-Christian society in which we live, Dr Nelson and Miss Clews say there is no evidence that man is less religious than his ancestors. They rightly point to the growth of non-Christian beliefs and "the rise of a large number of cults such as Spiritualism, Theosophy, Scientology and the Flying Saucer movement".

They do not think that the answer for the Church is "to jump on the secular bandwagon and proclaim that 'God is dead' in a futile attempt to attract a small minority of intellectual atheists and Humanists".

HOUSEPROUD

Councillor Norman Pollard, the Roman Catholic mayor-elect of Ripon, told the local housing committee last week that applicants for council houses should produce proof of marriage. He said it was wrong that people "married in the eyes of God" did not get houses in preference to unmarried couples. "Only morals can keep our council houses clean", opined this charitable defender of Christian morality.

The chairman of the housing committee does not share his views, and said: "If an unmarried couple have a greater need than a husband and wife we would allocate a council house to them first".

SEX EDUCATION FILM

The *Freethinker* was not invited to send a representative to the special performance of the sex education film, *Growing Up*, so we cannot comment on its merits or its shortcomings. Mary Whitehouse was there and Lord Longford turned up late. Both made suitable noises about the film's undesirability.

Although Sir Gerald Nabarro, MP (Con., Worcestershire South), did not see the film, he announced that his "observers" informed him that it is totally unsuitable for showing in schools. He intends to campaign vigorously against it being shown, and hopes it will be seen by the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to taking proceedings against the makers.

BARCELONA SEIZURE

The public prosecutor in Barcelona has ordered the seizure of an issue of the magazine, *Cedade*, following the publication of three articles considered to be "harmful and blasphemous to the Catholic religion and capable of causing public disorder". The magazine's managing editor has been ordered to appear before the judicial authorities.

THE COST OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

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BOOKS

THE VATICAN FINANCES

by Corrado Pallenberg. Peter Owen, £2.75.

Progressives, including perhaps some *Freethinker* readers, are inclined to believe that their enemies are backed by vast, and undisclosed, riches. And if men, money and banks can be frenetically linked to create an entire demonology of reaction, then the revelation of this awesome financial power is an admirable cause for battle. Mr Pallenberg's method is to proceed by well-researched innuendo of which the following breathless paragraph is quite typical:

... we find Massimo Spada to be president and managing director of L'Assicuratrice Italiana (capital 1,200 million lire), vice-president of Lavoro e Sicurtà (capital 750 million lire), vice-president of the Unione Subalpina di Assicurazioni (capital 480 million lire), and on the boards of directors of the Unione Italiana di Riassicurazione (capital 600 million lire) and of L'Italica di Assicurazione (capital 100 million lire).

Massimo Spada is also "administrative adviser to the Pontifical Society for the Preservation of the Faith and for the Building of New Churches in Rome, member of the administrative council of the Rome diocese, and represents the Holy See on the board of directors of the special fund of the Italian Home Office for charity and religion in Rome". So obviously Mr Spada is a quite undesirable character whose nefarious financial activities point up what everyone knew anyway—that the Catholic Church is just a lot of wicked old capitalists.

After exhaustively enumerating the Vatican's various commercial connections, Mr Pallenberg ends by posing the plaintive question: just what *is* the Catholic Church worth? His final estimate is that the productive capital of the Vatican is around £46 million, which however does not include subsidiary sources of income such as "Peter's Pence". What the grand total is, nobody knows—largely because of the secrecy with which the Church shrouds its financial affairs, though this is at last being dissipated. Perhaps it will come as a disappointment to the more militant secularists to learn, on Mr Pallenberg's last page, that the Vatican does *not* own shares in either Lancia or Alfa Romeo—after all, what better symbols of bourgeois ostentation?—nor does it own a controlling shareholding in any Italian company. To end on this diminuendo note unwittingly exposes the ludicrousness of Mr Pallenberg's technique of guilt-by-association.

By far the most absorbing part of this book is the historical. The early Christians attached little importance to money, or worldly goods, since for them Jesus was soon to return to usher in the Kingdom of God. The question of the relationship of Church and State is often thought to have been disposed of, conclusively, by Jesus himself in the famous quotation (misunderstood by Mr Pallenberg) from Matthew 22 : 21: "Give unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things which are God's". Actually, this saying of Jesus—which has traditionally been taken as the justification of Christians paying taxes and upholding State power—ought to be interpreted in the context of first-century Palestine. At that time, to pay tribute to Caesar was, by implication, to deny the supremacy of Yahweh over the Holy Land of Israel. As a zealous Jew, Jesus himself would not have tolerated the idea that the resources of Palestine were to be bound over to Rome. There could be no doubt that the payment of tribute would be to withhold from God the "things which were God's".

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To maintain, therefore, that Christian entanglement in worldly affairs and commerce was authorised by Jesus (provided that spiritual duties came first) is to misunderstand the true meaning of the Matthew saying. The problem only arose when it became clear that the "second coming" would have to be indefinitely postponed and that in the meantime the Church could not stand forever aloof from the world.

One embarrassment facing the early Church was the Deuteronomy prohibition of usury. Originally, this referred to commercial transactions between Jews, which were forbidden; the lending of money by Jews to non-Jews was permissible. But when Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in AD 311, the official interpretation of the Deuteronomy text was that all money-lending, whether at exorbitant rates of interest or not, was sinful. It was always difficult to sustain this outright prohibition of a basic and necessary commercial activity, and indeed it failed to survive the growth of capitalism in the time of Luther and Calvin. The Protestant reformation brought about the new doctrine that it was only the lending of money at *excessive* rates of interest that was sinful. This in turn sanctioned the extension of the Vatican's already considerable temporal power, which dates back to the decision of Constantine in the year 313 to donate to Pope Sylvester the city of Rome and the surrounding Italian provinces. In the middle ages, the Pope was indeed a major force in European politics, and his revenue requirements grew accordingly. Hence the ruthless expropriation of wealthy Italian families and the notorious "indulgences" which were traded up and down Europe. The selling of offices in the papal courts and army was another scandal which outraged the Protestant reformers, yet the ambitious building programmes and military outlays of the Roman pontiffs had to be paid for somehow. Pope Sixtus V may have sold off jobs left, right and centre, but he did complete the building of St Peter's in 1590. By the time that papal power was finally ended by Victor Emmanuel II of Italy in 1870, the Vatican finances were in a sorry state; after getting the first Vatican Council in 1870 to declare papal infallibility, Pope Pius IX wittily remarked: "I may be infallible, but I am certainly bankrupt". He then rather spoilt the joke by excommunicating King Victor Emmanuel and retiring to the Vatican itself in a fit of the sulks. There followed a period in which successive Roman pontiffs emerged from their enclave at rare intervals, and for the purpose of pronouncing anathema on all and sundry. The Vatican finances were not put on a sound footing again until Pope Pius XI signed the Concordat with Mussolini in 1929. This gave to the Holy See privileges such as exemption from Italian taxes and import duties, plus a handout of £17 million to compensate the Pope for the loss of his temporal power in 1870. Mussolini did not receive much in return, unless we count the saying of prayers for his health in the churches on Sundays and the obligation of the Italian bishops to swear their loyalty. In retrospect, the abandonment of its worldly pretensions probably benefitted the papacy; the Vatican gained a secure, indeed favoured, position in the life of Italy, and much-needed financial largesse. It was thus able to exercise its moral and spiritual authority more decisively, and any further intervention in political affairs could take place discreetly through the Catholic Action party which actively supports the Christian Democrats.

R REVIEWS

In fairness to Mr Pallenberg, he does attempt to draw up a spiritual balance sheet for the Church—and points out that there is quite a high return on capital. In the areas of education, culture, medical provision and welfare, the donations of millions of ordinary Catholics are channelled by the Vatican into worthwhile projects with the minimum of waste and inefficiency. That being so, I do not myself see why it should be such a bad thing that a lot of Vatican money is tied up in luxury hotels with swimming pools—though I wonder which adviser to the Pope urged him to invest money in the Istituto Farmacologico Serono—a very worthy body, which happens to manufacture the Pill. Or maybe the Pope doesn't know?

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

CONVERSATION WITH ELDRIDGE CLEAVER

by Lee Lockwood. Jonathan Cape, 60p.

In California in the autumn of 1962, Bobby Seale, a young black student, met Huey P. Newton, another negro student. The two men found that they shared the same views on black nationalism and liberation. They became close friends and decided to form an organisation to go out on the streets and serve the black community.

Malcolm X had advocated the carrying of guns for defence against white racism. This view, given a new emphasis by Malcolm X's assassination, fitted in with the political philosophy of Frantz Fanon, whom Newton and Seale both admired, and they decided that this would be the basis of their new party. For their political symbol they chose a panther: "The nature of a panther is that he never attacks. But if anyone attacks him or backs him into a corner, the panther comes up to wipe that aggressor or that attacker out, absolutely, resolutely, wholly, thoroughly and completely". (Huey Newton, quoted by Bobby Seale in *Seize the Time*.)

Whilst the Black Panther Party was being formed, another negro was serving a sentence of up to 14 years in Folsom State Prison. He was passing the time by writing the essays which were later to be published as *Soul on Ice*. His name was Eldridge Cleaver.

In December 1966, Cleaver was released on parole, and Newton, who was impressed by Cleaver, asked him to join his new party. But within a few months of this, Huey Newton was himself in jail facing a charge of murder, and Cleaver became the official spokesman of the Black Panthers.

Shortly afterwards Cleaver was involved in a shoot-out with the police (in which Bobby Sutton, a young Black Panther, was shot dead by a policeman under strange circumstances). As a result of this, the California Adult Authority cancelled Cleaver's parole and he had to go back to prison. His lawyer applied for a writ of *habeas corpus* which was granted but later revoked on a techni-

cality. Cleaver was ordered to return to prison, but he had made up his mind never to go back, and a few days before he was due to surrender himself he disappeared.

He went first to Cuba, which had encouraged the US black liberation movement, and where he hoped to work openly and to open up a Black Panther Party information office. But the Cuban authorities were preoccupied with domestic problems and insisted that Cleaver keep his presence quiet and refrain from any political activity. When he was eventually discovered living in Havana by a Reuters correspondent, the consequent publicity over Cleaver's whereabouts, caused the Cuban authorities to insist that he leave for Algiers.

It was in Algiers, re-united with his pregnant wife, living in a sleazy hotel, and short of money (the US Treasury Department had ruled that Cleaver was a "designated Cuban national" and so not entitled to receive his royalties from *Soul on Ice*), that Cleaver gave a lengthy interview to Lee Lockwood. This interview has now been published as *Conversation With Eldridge Cleaver*.

The major theme of this conversation is revolution. Cleaver believes that this is the only solution to what he sees as the American "racist, capitalist, imperialist, neo-colonialist power-structure". He believes that the present conflict between the force of liberation and those of repression will escalate into wide-spread urban guerrilla warfare and that this in turn will lead into the second American Revolution.

The aim of the revolution must be, declares Cleaver, a socialist America: "I feel that the United States as it exists today has to be totally obliterated and has to be rebuilt and restructured, and the wealth, the means of production, the entire system has to be rearranged. And it won't be rearranged peacefully because it's clear that those who control the United States have no intention whatsoever of modifying what's going on there, that in fact what they are doing is escalating the repression against the forces that are moving for change. The only fitting response to this repression can be implacable resistance, and the only implacable resistance that can possibly be manifested in this situation is open warfare against the system".

Cleaver insists that a socialist America would be unlike any other socialist state or communist dictatorship. He finds the justification for this in American history: "There's something very important about the history of revolution in the world, and that is that the United States of America was the first country that liberated itself from colonialism in this epoch that we live in. So that the American people have been imbued with a spirit of liberty". This acknowledgement of American history has been part of the Black Panther philosophy right from the very beginning, when Huey Newton included an extract from the Declaration of Independence in the party's ten-point platform and programme.

Cleaver is a political exile, but he is determined to return to America to play his part in the revolution. He expects to be killed doing it, but he accepts this as part of his plan: "If you're not able to come to terms with the prospects of death, then you have no business at all in defying or confronting or even arguing with the power structure".

This book shows Cleaver's development since the publication of *Soul on Ice* from a leading black militant into a leading socialist revolutionary.

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

TALKING TO DAVID HALLIWELL

(Continued from page 131)

they're at odds with the world they live in, but to some extent this is involuntary; an involuntary alienation. I should say they were alienated rather than that they were rebellious. They don't fit into things as they are.

Beck: And they're basically trying to integrate.

Halliwell: Well, I think they're ambivalent. My work's about ambivalence to a great degree because I think that's the area in which we live now and which we've got to cope with. We can't see black and white any more. I don't suppose anyone who really thought about things could. But a lot of people did have black and white values. I think anybody who's sentient knows that there's no one answer to anything. So in my work there's an ambivalence. If you look at any one problem, who's right and who's wrong? Things are complicated.

Beck: What is it that interests you in the characters you create?

Halliwell: A great deal of what I'm interested in, of course, is conflict within character. I think this is ambivalence again, because if you are ambivalent you're always questioning what you are doing: whether it's dangerous or safe, whether it's wise or foolish, whether it's right or wrong. This is really built into a great many people now.

Beck: Is an equilibrium found by people, do you think?

Halliwell: I think possibly a kind of equilibrium can be attained by individuals. I haven't reached it myself and possibly never will. But it's something I hope I may arrive at one day. I think some people reach a kind of balance, which is what maturity really means. It's somehow a balance of all the different parts of themselves in a relationship which they can accept, which is tolerable, and perhaps even better than tolerable.

We can evolve but we meet new problems as we go ahead. If we're successful then I think we may reach a stage where, even if there are problems, we can deal with them so that it is possible to lead a life which is more than tolerable. And I think this can happen. If I didn't think that were possible then I don't think there'd be any point in going on.

Beck: In *A Last Belch for the Great Auk* your character seemed to find his equilibrium in a belch!

Halliwell: Well, he hasn't reached equilibrium there. That's a sort of gesture of failure. He belches; he wishes he could do more. That particular character has rounded off what he said with a kind of joke which is part of his personality, certainly as seen by himself. I hope it worked as a dramatic ending for that speech. But he hasn't reached an equilibrium because he can't really express what it is that he's trying to find.

Beck: All the characters you write about seem to exist in a kind of squalor.

Halliwell: Well, yes, they're not used to luxuries. The characters I've mostly written about live in a kind of squalid environment because this is all they can manage. People who are as unsuccessful as they are, screwed up as they often are, and at war with themselves as they are, can't really live in anything but the dingiest place. But I think I might give my characters one or two small luxuries in the future. Most people allow themselves a little luxury now and again. I'm not, you know, one of those people who think drama exists only in the kitchen. But, personally, I'm not interested in what happens in a bank manager's home. Certainly not at the moment.

Beck: Let's discuss QUIPU, your production company. Is it an *avant-garde* group?

Halliwell: It's not part of the underground at all. The underground is a kind of underground Establishment. I would say QUIPU doesn't belong in that world at all. I see QUIPU as offering a complete alternative. In the old sense of the *avant-garde* it is *avant-garde* in that we're genuinely trying to do something that hasn't been done before, whereas a lot of underground people aren't. They're not going forward at all. They're looking backwards and they're very mixed up about what they're doing. Most of it has little value. In the sense that we're trying to explore new territories in new ways, yes, I would say we're *avant-garde*. But we've got nothing in common with the so-called *avant-garde* groups really.

Beck: What direction is QUIPU taking?

Halliwell: QUIPU is committed to multi-viewpoint drama. Characters see each other: there is no objective viewpoint. And that's how you can identify a QUIPU play.

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1971

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