

## CARDINAL HEENAN TOLD OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A London teacher has written to Cardinal Heenan requesting him to initiate an inquiry into discipline and forms of punishment used in the Catholic schools under his jurisdiction. Her action has been prompted by hearing a boy, whose parents recently placed him in a fee-paying Catholic school, talking about his new school. It was evident from the boy's remarks that corporal punishment was regularly inflicted by a teaching Brother. One of his victims was a boy whose handwriting was not up to standard, and the Brother used both a ruler and a cane in the presence of other pupils. Catholic schools, particularly in Ireland and Scotland, have long been notorious for the senseless and even sadistic use of corporal punishment. This is often particularly noticeable when there is a large proportion of members of religious orders on the teaching staff. The text of the letter to Cardinal Heenan is published below. The writer is well known to the editor of this journal.

### Symptom of Anxiety

Your Eminence,

Recently I heard a nine-year-old boy talking about his new school—a Roman Catholic private school in London. Yes, he was enjoying it. The arithmetic was not too hard. Brother had a ruler and a cane. He had not had the cane. One boy got the cane every week. Why? Because his writing was "all squashed together". Brother broke his ruler—the boy was crying—he was caned in front of the class.

Every modern educationalist knows that to cane a child regularly on account of his handwriting is likely to be counter-productive. The cramped writing may well be a symptom of anxiety. The child's handwriting and his nerves may be deteriorating side by side. Is the Brother so ignorant of the likely results of his punishments, or does he (perhaps unconsciously) enjoy what he is doing?

### Corruption of Children

The boy who is punished is not the only victim. All the children in the class are being to some extent corrupted. There was a peculiar smile on the boy's face as he spoke of it. Perhaps it was merely nervous; perhaps it actually expressed enjoyment of the other boy's suffering and his public tears. He is being taught that another child's inadequacies and pain are a fit subject for laughter. Compared to this, the danger of children being corrupted by sex films or pornographic books is infinitesimal. This is an introduction to sadism—one of the nastier sexual perversions—given by Brother, the person to whom these boys should be able to look for a moral example.

I have told this story to a number of people, some of them teachers, some former pupils at Roman Catholic schools. None have found the story improbable.

I write this not to score a point against the Roman Catholic Church and its schools. I write because I know there must be Catholic educationalists who are as shocked as I am by cruelty like this, and who are trying to end it.

I very much hope Your Eminence will institute an inquiry into these happenings, and prevent such things occurring in your schools. I have not here mentioned the

name of the school concerned, or the name of the boy who, talking with no idea that a long-eared secularist was standing by, provided the material on which this letter is based. But I will be available to give all possible information (except the boy's name) to an inquiry.

In fairness I wish to state that it is my intention to release the contents of this letter to the Press within the next few days.

### IMPORTANT CONFERENCE IN INDIA

The National Secular Society has sent a message of support to the Conference of Forward Looking Muslims which is to be held in Delhi on 4 December. It has been sent to Professor A. B. Shah, president of the Indian Secular Society, which is helping to promote the conference.

The NSS message is as follows: "We understand that the Indian Secular Society is helping to promote a Conference of Forward Looking Muslims in Delhi on 4 December. May we wish the conference every success. To us, as outside observers, it seems clear that the Muslims in India stand at an historical crossroad. Most Muslims in the sub-continent seem to have, unfortunately, rejected the secular solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem on the eve of Indian independence, and chosen to support the formation of a Muslim State on the sub-continent. That State has now turned not only against the Hindu minority within it, but also against the more populous Muslim half in the East so that Muslim refugees from Pakistan have had to flee for shelter into secular India. We hope the Forward Looking Muslims in India will help their co-religionists to draw the correct lessons from these events, and encourage them to participate in every activity in their secular State as secular minded, democratic individuals, rather than in a religious, sectarian manner".

The conference will be taking place at a time when the entire sub-continent is in danger of becoming involved in a catastrophic war which may involve other countries. It is imperative that voices of reason are heeded and everyone who values peace and social progress will join with the NSS in wishing this conference all success.

# THE LOGIC OF NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM:

## SOURCE DOCUMENTS AND THE MYTH THEORY

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

This article, in which the author surveys some of the arguments used in discussion on the subject, is continued from page 371.

If, then, there were Christians at Rome during Nero's reign (a fact, incidentally, which is attested both by Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* and by another references to the persecution in Suetonius), was the origin and nature of the sect known to the Roman ruling class? For if there were, indeed, an independent Roman tradition concerning Jesus, it would provide a very strong basis for the presumption that he actually existed. Whether such a tradition was based on documentary material, such as an alleged report by Pilate, or on hearsay, is irrelevant so long as we can show that the account of Christian origins circulating in Rome was most unlikely to have been composed by the Christians.

That this is so is clear when we consider that no Christian of Jewish persuasion would have gratuitously invented a story in which the founder of his faith had been crucified as a rebel against Rome. For, if Jesus was proclaimed as the Messiah by his disciples, as he was, the fact of his death constituted an enormous barrier to his acceptance as the saviour of Israel by the Jews. It was, indeed, precisely this difficulty which made it necessary for the Jewish Christians to argue that Jesus would return in glory to usher in the Kingdom of God and destroy heathen Rome. Only thus could the scandal of the Roman cross be removed. Furthermore, we know that the Church at Rome was initially Jewish in character, for when Paul went to Rome to preach his version of the gospel he found it necessary to vindicate his teaching to the Roman Christians, which implies that they were already acquainted with the Jewish Christian gospel of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, rather than Jesus as the universal saviour.

### A Pauline Invention

Paul himself, although he preached largely to a gentile audience, was aware of the problem constituted by Jesus' death on the cross: "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to gentiles" (1 Cor. 1 : 22-23). For although the notion of a saviour-god dying to redeem a fallen mankind was common enough in the Hellenistic world, there are no relevant parallels to a crucified god. If, as G. A. Wells' mythicist theory of Christian origins would have it, the drama of the crucifixion was more or less invented by Paul to facilitate the emancipation of gentile converts to Christianity from the Jewish Law, it does not explain why the Jewish Christians did not repudiate as absurd the entire notion. The gospels portray the disciples as firm believers in the messianism of Jesus and, in consequence, confirm their despair following his death: "... we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24 : 21). The crucifixion was an outrage to the Jewish Christians. If it had not been for the resurrection experiences of the disciples, the infant sect would assuredly have withered away following the death of its founder, as indeed did so many other messianic movements in first century Palestine.

The elucidation of the pagan testimony to Jesus leads us, I think, to the fundamental conclusion that the account in Tacitus is correct: Jesus was an historical figure, and

died as a rebel against Rome. This is confirmed by the evidence of the gospels and the Pauline epistles themselves. The Jewish sources are on the whole unhelpful, but what little they add to our knowledge of Christian origins tends to confirm the evidence of the Roman sources.

The Mishnah, which is the earliest part of the Talmud, the collection of rabbinical sayings and interpretations of disputed Old Testament texts, does allude to Jesus and the Christians, but in the service of anti-Christian polemic. The Talmud began to take shape only after AD 150, and no Jewish reference to Jesus exists before that date other than the disputed passages in Josephus. The Talmudic defamations of Christianity do, however, make it clear that from a very early period the heretics *par excellence* from the rabbis' point of view were the Christians. Yet, although Christianity is criticised for its doctrinal deviations, the historical existence of Jesus is never disputed.

Neither Philo of Alexandria nor Justus of Tiberias, both Jewish scholars of the first century AD who wrote extensively about Jewish life and history, make any reference to Jesus. We are thus left with Josephus. There are two allusions to Jesus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, which was written in the year 93, one of which (acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ) is universally admitted to be a Christian forgery. The other reference occurs in Josephus' brief account of the death of James, in the year 62, at the hands of the Jewish Sanhedrin; James is named as the "brother of Jesus, him called Christ". This may be a Christian interpolation, but it more probably represents Josephus' own view of Jesus, as Origen (writing at the beginning of the third century) tells us that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ. It follows that Origen used a version of Josephus' *Antiquities* which differed from the Greek version that has come down to us in giving an uncomplimentary verdict on Jesus. Uncomplimentary, in the sense that Josephus must have been aware of certain elements in the mission of Jesus and the Jewish Christians which underwrote the claim to Messiahship that Josephus rejected. And we know from his *Jewish War* that Josephus thought of the messianic hope of his people in political terms. Hence there must have been a political flavour to the activities of Jesus, attested by the claim of his disciples and, possibly of himself, that he was the Messiah; and it is this claim that Josephus expressly refutes, according to Origen, just as he repudiates the messianic pretensions of agitators like Judas of Galilee, who led a rising in AD 6 when Judaea came under direct Roman control.

### Josephus

This analysis is admittedly based on a series of inferences from the present text of Josephus' *Antiquities* and what we know of the Jewish historian from Origen. Accordingly, it must remain tentative. Wells argues that since Josephus devotes space to Judas of Galilee and other messianic aspirants, it is remarkable that Jesus receives so little attention. One possible explanation of this silence on Josephus' part is that he thought Jesus' movement too insignificant to mention, but in that case it is odd that Josephus does not seize the chance to denigrate Christianity; for above all he was concerned to present Judaism in

(Continued at foot of next page)

## ON AND OFF SEX AND DRUGS

CHARLES BYASS

Between prudes and progressives it could perhaps be agreed that there are important differences between "feeling sexy" and "feeling like taking a drug". Moreover, the practice of "having sex" is surely different to that of "taking drugs". Furthermore, whereas most people who practise sex "know" what they are doing, with drugs the situation is less certain. Perhaps anything that is "taken" which affects the balance of "personality" could be called a drug. After all, even religion has been described as the opium of the people. However, if with drugs some substances are more chemical than others, with sex some people are more sexy than others.

To simplify matters, sex is here considered as something we "have", a drug as something we "take"—other than any of those unpleasant concoctions prescribed for us by kindly doctors. The point is that there are important differences between "liking" to have sex and "liking" to take a drug. The urge to have sex is something to which we have been addicted by nature; the urge to take drugs is by comparison a circumstantial addiction. We may well ask: "Why do we take drugs?" We may well see less point in the question: "Why do we have sex?"

Now although copulation is clearly a healthy prerequisite towards procreation, the practice of "actual sex" can have unhealthy "side-effects". Apart from the problem of over-population, there is the problem of catching venereal diseases. Such diseases, however, do not make sex unhealthy—any more than an occupational hazard makes an occupation unhealthy. There are, nevertheless, certain distortions of sex which do present physical, mental and emotional hazards. In general, the important points is surely that between the urge for sex and the practice of sex there should be preserved a healthy state of "body and mind". Prostitution is professional promiscuity and as such is surely an unhealthy practice in that it offers sex as an impersonal "thing". Pornography offers the "thing" of impersonal fantasies. Sadism and other related "isms" offer the practice of impersonal fantasies plus "things" which directly oppose personality. In short, the urge for

and the practice of sex only become "unhealthy" when they cease to involve persons in a mutual caring for and sharing of "sexual personalities".

### Healthy Activities

Sex, then, is something to be shared between persons; with drugs, this sense of sharing can never be anything but an indirect experience. We can enjoy a drink or two in the company of others, but we are only indirectly sharing in the practice of taking drugs. Indeed we each drink for ourselves and from our own glass. Taking drugs is always in this sense a lone experience. Moreover, the urge to smoke or drink does not—as it were—come from the same stable as the urge to enjoy sex. The least complex reason for taking a drug is perhaps that it "will make one feel better"; one hopes to feel less inhibited and more carefree. The point here is that the urge to "feel better" in some way derives from an unhealthy condition. The temptation is to continue resorting to the taking of something which makes one "feel better". However, practically every drug that we take has *some* unhealthy effect on our systems. The habit of an occasional "uplift" with only slight "after-effects" can so easily become an addition with very serious permanent effects. Indeed, instead of "feeling better" a person may begin to feel worse and worse; one ends up by becoming permanently sick and in many cases, tragically, sick to death.

Concern over sex and drugs should surely have nothing to do with "established" values, mores, etc. People who enjoy their sex (and that of their opposite) should be concerned with preserving their healthy activities. Concern over drug taking should be with the prevention of and the remedy for personal illness; there is the need to discover and to try to understand the reasons for the practice of harmful drug taking.

Surely no one really wants to become a sick person—or to make another person sick. Despite all prudes and progressives, let's enjoy sex if we feel like it; and, if we take care, let's enjoy taking the occasional drug.

(Continued from Previous page)

the best possible light to his Roman masters, which is why he represents the Jewish people as deluded by the Zealots. For the Zealots, to Josephus, were the direct cause of the fatal Jewish war against Rome of 66-70, and of the catastrophic destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. If Christianity were a kind of proto-Zealot movement, it is surprising that Josephus did not condemn it. Here we are faced with an insoluble problem, owing to the evidence of Christian tampering with the text of Josephus' works. The relative silence of Josephus on Jesus can be interpreted either as evidence that Jesus did not exist; or that he did exist, and that what Josephus said about him was so unflattering that it has been edited out by the Christians; or that Jesus existed, but was too unimportant to mention. My own preference is for the second interpretation, for the reasons already given; but any argument based on the extant Jewish sources must be inconclusive.

A few remarks on one recurrent problem in the logic of New Testament criticism may be in order to conclude this article. The silence of ancient writers of this period on topics that we now consider vitally important is a major barrier to our understanding of what actually happened in

Palestine in the first century AD, not only for obvious reasons but because it then becomes tempting to draw illegitimate inferences, such as the non-existence of Jesus from the lack of reference to him by his contemporaries. But Josephus, for example, does not mention the rabbis Gamaliel or Hillel, who played an important part in the evolution of Pharisaic doctrine of his day. The Talmud does not mention the great Jewish national hero, Judas Maccabeus. Astonishingly, the sole source of consequence for Roman history in the second century is Cassius Dio, writing in the reign of Severus Alexander in the early third century. There are no contemporary Roman accounts, preserved in narrative form like the *Annals* of Tacitus, of this critical period in Roman history when the empire ceased to expand and was forced on the defensive by the barbarian onslaught. There is no first-hand Roman (or, for that matter, Jewish) chronicler of the savage Jewish rebellion of 132-135, which was undoubtedly the most serious uprising against Roman rule in the second century. This dearth of historical documentation that is characteristic, for various reasons, of this period, constitutes a powerful warning against jumping to conclusions from the silence of contemporaries of Jesus on his life and movement.

## FREETHINKER

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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 5p stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

## EVENTS

Ashurstwood Abbey Secular Humanism Centre (founded by Jean Straker), between East Grinstead and Forest Row, Sussex. Telephone Forest Row 2589. Meeting every Sunday, 3 p.m.

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Imperial Centre Hotel, First Avenue, Hove (sea front), Sunday, 5 December, 5.30 p.m. A speaker from the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.

Humanist Holidays. Details of future activities from Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey, Telephone: 01-642 8796.

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday 28 November, 6.30 p.m. P. Miller, A. Ross, A. Humphrey: "Anarchism, Direct Action and Illegality".

Merseyside Humanist Group, City High School, Queen's Park, Chester, Saturday, 27 November, 2.30 p.m. Sex Education Seminar. Film: **Growing Up**. Discussion led by Mary Whitehouse and a representative of the Institute of Sex Education and Research. Tickets 30p from Marion Clowes, 26 Speedwell Drive, Barnston, Wirral L50 2SZ (enclose stamped, addressed envelope).

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 28 November, 11 a.m. Peter Cadogan: "A. N. Whitehead and Humanism". 3 p.m. John D. Stewart (Belfast) and Antonia Healy (Dublin): "Northern Ireland—is there a Humanist Solution?" Tuesday, 30 November, 7 p.m. Colin Hamer: "Encounter Groups".

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, Marine Parade (west of Pier), Sunday, 28 November, 5.30 p.m. Michael De-la-Noy: "The Work of the Albany Trust".

# NEWS

## THE PATRIOTIC CENSORS

It was inevitable that pressure to censor news from Ulster would come to the surface and that it would be initiated by occupants of the Conservative back benches. For that small corner of the United Kingdom is mainly occupied by thick conformist diehards, whose acceptance by Conservative associations is a guarantee of their certainty to support reaction and repression. Their predecessors in the 1930s praised the efforts of such defenders of Christian civilisation as Franco and Mussolini; in the immediate post-war years they sang the praises of John Foster Dulles and Senator Joe McCarthy; today their heroes are Enoch Powell and Brian Faulkner.

These "patriots" are always ready to speak up for firm action, particularly if it is being taken against the wogs or the micks. And they will be baying for firm action should any section of the British people get too dissatisfied with society and their conditions.

Of course the dispensers of instant patriotism realise the power and influence of the media, particularly television. The newsreels which showed the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ian Paisley in action did far more to turn public opinion in this country against the Stormont regime than a thousand IRA communiques. It is every significant that cameramen and reporters have been attacked and their equipment destroyed in "loyalist" (ultra Right Tory) areas of Belfast. It is also significant that the call for censorship did not come from the Army. Presumably the military chiefs prefer the British people to realise the conditions and dangers which the soldiers face every day in Ulster. The politicians who are calling for censorship are prompted by knowledge that the British people have been unhappy about the whole operation in Ulster. This has been clear from the very beginning, and has become increasingly evident as the cost in lives and money has dramatically risen.

The reaction to the censorship proposal was reflected in a number of editorial and verbal comments. The waffle about "patriotic censorship" was recognised for what it was—a demand to suppress facts which were not acceptable to ex-brasshats and the my-country-right-or-wrong brigade. The British people as a whole prefer the truth, however unpleasant, rather than ignorance and speculation.

However it is rather incongruous that Fleet Street and Auntie BBC should now be getting all hot and bothered because of attempts to curtail their freedom. For self-imposed censorship by the media in Britain during the last two decades played a big part in creating the present situation in Northern Ireland. When the current troubles started the majority of British people were genuinely surprised and indignant at the state of affairs in that part of the United Kingdom. They fully supported the reforms which were introduced—or to be accurate, imposed—by the British Government. But if the British public was unaware of the situation the same cannot be said for the politicians and a large section of the media. Time and again warnings and reports have been issued by organisations and individuals who were concerned about the discrimination and repression in Northern Ireland. These warnings were suppressed by the media and ignored by successive British governments. We are now paying for their folly.

# S AND NOTES

# PUBLICATIONS

Some of those who have been criticising proposals to censor news must not be surprised if their protests are regarded as an exercise in hypocrisy and humbug. They have not raised a word of protest against censorship in Eire which has done so much harm to the cause of a united Ireland. Eire governments, at the behest of the Roman Catholic Church, have maintained a system of censorship which has rightly earned them contempt and ridicule. At various times distinguished writers, many of them Irish and some of them Catholics, have been victims. One Catholic writer has said that the list of books banned in Southern Ireland might almost comprise "a concise index to modern literature". The ban has, from time to time, been extended to British newspapers and women's magazines which have published articles, usually on family planning and related questions, not acceptable to the hierarchy.

Attempts by British Tory politicians or Irish bishops to impose censorship should be resisted by all who value free expression and factual reports.

## BAD DAY FOR FREEDOM

Richard Handyside, publisher of *The Little Red Schoolbook*, spoke at the fourth in a series of public meetings which are being organised in London by the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker*.

In his speech Mr Handyside emphasised the political nature of the trial. He quoted the appeal judge's statement that "the book was harmful to proper respect to established authority, and an embarrassment to the impartial judgment of children". This was the aspect of the *Schoolbook* that the learned judge dwelt most upon in his summing up.

In view of the volume of really unsavoury material freely available, who can seriously doubt that the real objection to *The Little Red Schoolbook* was political, and that the objections to the wording of a few odd lines in the section on sex were merely a pretext? When one considers that the book was unillustrated, and written in a style which could not possibly titillate, the finding of obscenity was fantastic.

Fortunately it has been possible in the new edition to bring the book within the law without dropping anything of value. The section on venereal disease has been strengthened by a warning about the seriousness of some forms. The original, while by no means obscene, did treat the subject too lightly.

The new *Little Red Schoolbook* may be better than the old, but it is a bad day for freedom of thought when a publisher is prosecuted for obscenity on such flimsy grounds.

DAVID TRIBE

## THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS FRIENDS

Foreword: PHILIP HINCHLIFF

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## BOOKS

### MODERN BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

Edited by Bryan Magee. Secker and Warburgh.  
£3 (paperback, £1.25).

It is natural to compare this book with the first half of Ved Mehta's *Fly and the Fly-bottle*, first published just ten years ago in 1961 and later Pelicanned. Whereas Magee's dialogues began as a series of radio conversations, Mehta's highly personalised "Encounters with Contemporary British Philosophers" were originally commissioned by the *New Yorker* as a response in depth to the then recent storm in the thinking-shop aroused by Ernest Gellner's *Words and Things*. The present book comes out well from this comparison. Where Mehta was the philosophical layman doing his best to report what the specialists had said to him, and how he reacted to it, Magee is a philosopher by training who after several very active years in journalism has recently returned to teach philosophy at Balliol. Magee is thus ideally qualified to act the interpreter between the specialists and the layman. It is also to the good that the transcripts as broadcast have been extensively revised by the participants, and that Magee and his colleagues have been able to present their general picture undistorted by any need to respond to a rather peculiar challenge.

Magee says in his Preface that a second equally good volume might be produced with a completely different team of contributors. This is, surely, an exaggeration. For the present list of 14 includes at least four indispensable names—those of Professors Ryle and Strawson as well as those of the two philosophical knights Sir Alfred Ayer and Sir Karl Popper. But I hope that any second volume will make a stronger break with the assumption, common among men of the media, that almost all of this country's talent is concentrated within the Oxbridge-London triangle. Of Magee's 14, including Magee, all but two belong to that golden triangle; and of the remaining 12, at least two would not have appeared on my list, recruited from a wider field.

I pick for comment two or three of the points which may be of special interest to *Freethinker* readers. First, Ayer, with some hesitation, suggests that the proper reply for a Logical Positivist to the old challenge to fit the Verification Principle into one or other of his two permitted categories of assertive utterance should be to rate it as analytic and necessarily true. And there is, surely, nothing wrong with this reply once it is fully appreciated that to say that some contention is analytic is not necessarily to say that it is either trivial or obvious?

Second, Magee notices a revival of interest in "the German tradition in philosophy". In so far as this refers to a growing concern with the work of Immanuel Kant, the Sage of Kaliningrad, there is indeed such a revival and it should be wholly welcome. But we ought to be more cautious in our greetings in so far as this revival also includes—as Quinton suggests—"a great deal of enthusiasm for Marx", focussing "on the younger and more explicitly moral and humanitarian Marx—the Marx that is in closest relation to Hegel". For it cannot be taken for granted—however often it nowadays is—that the young Hegelian Marx with his abstract analyses of alienated labour was more concerned than the older Marx with the actual wishes of individual, flesh and blood, human beings. (To understand how this assumption first gained currency reflect for

# FREETHINKER

a moment what might have been the reception of some unpublished manuscripts of the young Jesus bar Joseph in the medieval heyday of ecclesiastical domination!)

When Moore and Russell first reacted against their philosophical seniors, one German tradition had had a lamentable effect on prose style. Typically T. H. Green preferred to write "in order to the completion of" rather than "to complete". There are in Magee's book signs of a similar flight from the verb, which should be noted and checked. He himself tells of young philosophers who "tend to be summarily dismissive of". Quinton records Chomsky's attacks on "the application of social science for politically dominative purposes". And Warnock escalates into "the very rapid dismissiveness with which Russell reacted".

Third, it is although ruinously revealing quite false to say, as Hampshire does, that Russell's importance is . . . that he introduced set standards of clarity in argument . . . which almost every philosopher of lasting value . . . in the English-speaking world has followed up to a point, then criticised and emancipated himself from". Certainly there are those in British philosophy who have up to some point in their careers maintained, but later abandoned, standards. But this is certainly not true of everyone; and necessarily not true of anyone whose later works are of lasting value. To speak in such terms of Russellian standards of clarity is a paradigm case of what Julian Benda labelled "la trahison des clercs".

ANTONY FLEW

### THE CASE OF THE MIDWIFE TOAD

by Arthur Koestler. Hutchinson, £2.00.

This book should be compulsory reading for professional scientists and laymen interested in science. As well as re-establishing the reputation of a brilliant scientist it underlines the importance of not creating dogmas in science.

Paul Kammerer, through a series of experiments in the early years of this century, produced results which suggested that Lamarck's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics was valid. His work was openly attacked by fellow research workers led by William Bateson, yet despite his scorn Bateson seemed unwilling to give Kammerer's specimens the close examination his criticism dictated he should. Due to the effects of the 1914-18 war Kammerer's experimental material was largely destroyed and one surviving specimen was eventually exposed as a fake. Kammerer, as the direct result of criticism and the destruction of his scientific reputation, took his own life.

In this brilliant work Arthur Koestler demonstrates that Kammerer's claims cannot be written off and that there is ample evidence to support them. Furthermore he shows that while the toad had been "improved" the blame for this does not rest with Kammerer. In 1949 Julian Huxley wrote in his *Soviet Genetics and World Science* that the Russians had produced a film "glorifying Kammerer and putting down the faking to machinations of reactionary enemies of true science". How right it now appears the Russians were. Will Huxley apologise?

# R REVIEWS

Huxley, in the above mentioned book, refers to Kammerer as "putting forward spectacular claims to have induced the inheritance of acquired characters in salamanders and toads. It was eventually found that some of the crucial specimens had been faked, and in any case nobody else was able to obtain similar results, so that his claims were soon entirely discredited". Huxley is wrong here on two counts; first, Kammerer was a highly skilled experimenter and non-duplication of his results can arise, as Koestler shows, from other workers not having the same skill; secondly, Kammerer was condemned on one specimen not "some . . . crucial specimens". Indeed, it can be legitimately argued that the toad in question was not crucial to establishing the validity of Kammerer's experiments. As the Soviet Union had taken Kammerer under its wing and was attacking the dominant hold Mendelian genetics had in scientific circles by supporting an alternative theory, the issue of political bias cannot be ruled out; indeed Huxley's remarks are taken from a volume with a marked anti-Soviet tone, although in fairness to Huxley he denies he is anti-Soviet.

*The Case of the Midwife Toad* illustrates the danger present in allowing any theoretical approach to assume the status of dogma. As Koestler shows the neo-Darwinian school viewed Kammerer and his experimental results with extreme alarm, but this alarm was compounded with a marked reluctance to give Kammerer's work the detailed examination it demanded. A recent illustration of this attitude is seen in the condemnation of Professor W. R. Thompson's criticism of the *Origin of Species*. His attitude was roundly condemned while his scientific case was ignored. This echoes the attitude to Kammerer.

In this superb book Arthur Koestler rights a great wrong. In doing so he tarnishes some reputations and pricks not a few bubbles of scientific vanity. His book also contains a mass of implications in respect to possible future trends in evolutionary theory. Indeed it might be rather unpopular in certain circles, but then when a book as hard hitting as this appears some toes are bound to be stepped upon, and anguished howls to be expected.

ROBERT W. MORRELL

## THEATRE

GENEVA. Mermaid Theatre, London.

Plot-construction was never GBS's strongest point, and the first act of his rarely played *Geneva* creaks loudly and embarrassingly. One by one a Jew, a social democrat, the widow of a former president of a banana republic, an Anglican bishop and a Russian commissar turn up, improbably, at the shabby Geneva office of the International Committee for Intellectual Co-operation to complain about subversion and violations of democracy. I have never heard of this committee, but in a programme note for the play's 1938 *première* Shaw explained that such a body had actually been founded in Paris and still had an office somewhere which listed universities and learned societies, and that the genesis of the play was a letter from Gilbert Murray urging him to correspond with the League of Nations on behalf of the committee. In his imagination and on the stage it came to life when its Geneva repre-

sentative, a typist from Camberwell, referred all complaints to the International Court of Justice at the Hague. As the world's statesmen could not "keep a coffee stall at Limehouse because you would have to be equally civil to sailors of all nations", there was universal consternation. Immediate upheaval occurred and nobody expected the arraigned dictators, Signor Bombardone, Mr Battler and General Flanco de Fortinbras, to turn up. When they did, Shaw saved the judge from the dilemma of implementing his sentence of execution for scoundrelism by the intervention of the quantum theory. All very Ruritanian, but a vehicle for some of the dramatist's wittiest and most iconoclastic dialogue. Whether or not anybody can, nobody does write brilliant conversation pieces like this today.

Shaw announced that he had made the best of the dictators to "challenge them to live up their portraits if they can", and there is nothing in the text to justify the caricatures achieved by Christopher Benjamin, Christopher Hancock and Edward Atienza, presumably with the encouragement of the director, Philip Grout, who improbably makes Battler enter by a trapdoor. It's all good clean ham, but I personally preferred the more subtle and convincing portrayals of the British Foreign Secretary by Ernest Clark, Commissar Posky by Denys Hawthorne, and the Anglican deaconess, who thought everything should be left to Jesus, by Daphne Newton.

DAVID TRIBE

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 MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES  
**SEXUAL MYTHOLOGY**

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Friday, 17 December, 8 p.m.  
 R. J. CONDON  
**THE NATIVITY MYTH**

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# LETTERS

## Mr Hinchliff's Naïvete

I have not read David Tribe's article *The Open Society and its Friends* and therefore cannot comment upon it. But Philip Hinchliff's review (*Freethinker*, 13 November) failed completely to present the slightest degree of clarity about the subject. As so often happens in the writings of Mr Hinchliff, he once again used the subject under review solely to amplify the political and historical bias and naïvete of his concepts. What he displayed to this reader was a remarkable feat of mental gymnastics. As he bounced about on his trampoline of assumption, his mental contortions fused with levitational grace and ease, those mutual twins of repulsion—metaphysics and materialism.

Philip Hinchliff opened his review: "A century ago it was widely believed by freethinkers that organised religion was the main enemy of progress. Sweep away the pernicious influence of the churches and humanity would advance in wisdom and knowledge under the umbrella of science". Surely this manufactured simplicity is no more than a model, produced to obscure the defects of his reference to Marxism: "... a ruggedly scientific doctrine that revealed once and for all the laws governing social and economic progress".

Are we to assume that the freethinkers of 100 years ago were of such limited views and intelligence, or that scientific minded people *believed*—a heavily loaded theological term, much loved by Mr Hinchliff—that the then recently announced infallibility of their adversaries was to be equated with the hypotheses of scientific materialism? And what on earth can one make of the Jesuitical banana skin of confusion upon which is balanced: "For Marxism came into being as a reaction to the inadequacies of liberalism and can be vindicated only in so far as it fulfils the liberal promise"? One wonders on what theoretical side-walk Philip Hinchliff found that one.

Perhaps the answer is contained in his vertiginous inducing exit: "In a very real sense, therefore (on maintaining freedom, T.M.), freethinkers have to be very determined conservatives". With a very slight adjustment to his last word, much would be clarified.

TREVOR MORGAN.

## The Peter Hain Fund

As you probably know, a private prosecution has been initiated by Francis Bennion against Peter Hain for his role in campaigns against apartheid in sport. As a result on 8 October Mr Hain was committed for trial at the Old Bailey on four conspiracy charges relating to the Stop the '70 Tour and other campaigns against all-White South African sports teams visiting Britain in 1969-70. The proceedings against Mr Hain follow Mr Bennion's original announcement of 22 May, 1970, the day the cricket tour was cancelled, that he intended to bring this action.

It has come to our notice that a "Hain Prosecution Fund" has been established and for the last six months or so has been widely advertised in the magazine of the Society for Individual Freedom and the *Daily Telegraph*, among other media. This fund is known to have the active backing of the Monday Club and similar groups.

Early in July Mr Bennion himself toured South Africa speaking at meetings and "gathering evidence". During this visit large amounts of money were contributed at his meetings and from officials of the SA Civil Service. In addition, addresses to which funds could be sent appeared regularly in the South African newspapers. The executive of the South African Rugby Board passed a resolution officially supporting both the fund and the prosecution, and two weeks later this decision was reported as having resulted in raising £3,000.

With the support of our sponsors, we have decided to establish the Peter Hain Fund, to ensure that Mr Hain's defence will not be limited at all by dependence on legal aid. The objects are obtainable from the address given below, and we should be extremely grateful for any financial contribution you can make. Cheques should be made payable to the Peter Hain Fund.

We feel sure you will agree that it was a great triumph for non-racialism when the '70 tour was stopped, and that it would not be

right if financial penalties were to fall on Mr Hain in particular, when so many others were associated with him in his campaign. Above all, if Mr Bennion's action were to succeed, a judicial precedent would have been created that may have serious implications for any future non-violent action on a moral issue.

Donations should be sent to The Peter Hain Fund, High Elms Farm, Downe, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7JL.

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## Objectivity

I thank David Tribe for his courteous letter on the "Saladin" controversy (*Freethinker*, 20 November). He trailed a large coat very temptingly: I will, however, attempt a little Malthusian restraint and keep my remarks as brief as possible.

Please, Mr Tribe, I do *not* worship my great-grandfather! He was a VD ridden, egoistical eccentric, who sometimes displayed literary merit—hardly the ideal centrepiece for a secular triptych. Nevertheless I still feel that there is not sufficient evidence upon which to state categorically that he was the instigator of Charles R. Mackay's *Life of Bradlaugh*. As I mentioned in my last letter, I have an ill-written and rather unreliable life of "Saladin" by R. B. Hithersay (author of an earlier pamphlet *Life*) and, despite its failings, this work does provide evidence contrary to that of David Tribe. I hope that my motives will not be misconstrued if I leave the matter there; no doubt we could go on filling the back page of the *Freethinker* until doomsday, but I don't think that we would end up any wiser, or that historical scholarship would be advanced one jot.

Finally, a comment on the style of David Tribe's new biography of Bradlaugh. There is a difference between "instant bitchiness" and historical objectivity, and there is a place for biography with a definite laudatory purpose. After all, the best selling book in the world belongs to this latter group. But there is no place for a book purporting to belong to one category while really belonging to another. From *President Charles Bradlaugh, MP* I sought historical objectivity, and I don't think that I was given it. That's all.

STEWART ROSS.

## DAVID TRIBE'S PRESIDENT CHARLES BRADLAUGH, MP

*The unhappy Gladstone administration of 1880-1885 was made even more unhappy and ineffective by the general preoccupation with Bradlaugh's fight. This part of Mr Tribe's biography is well told and engrossing, but the rest of Bradlaugh's career is also of interest.*

—Jewish Chronicle

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