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NORTHERN IRELAND: LORD RAGLAN SPEAKS

"To me this is not just a matter of civil rights", said Lord Raglan in a House of Lords debate on the Northern Ireland situation on 2 February last, "it is a matter of religion. I am an atheist—or, to put it scientifically, an agnostic . . . I have always been, I like to think, moderate in the expression of my views, partly through temperament and partly through the belief . . . that the teaching of Christianity has much to do with the ethical behaviour which we admire in this country. . . . But I have slowly turned to the conclusion that too often Christianity has had not so much to do with the teaching of good and kindly behaviour as many people would like to think."

The following is an extract of Lord Raglan's further comments.

I have come to the conclusion that the amount of human misery which belief in Christianity has caused through the ages has frequently outweighed what it may have done for good . . . I believe that the evil that in some respect lies in Christianity comes from the celebration and glorification of a brutal death, and unpleasant murder, and that this, combined with its emphasis upon poverty and acute distress as ways of going to heaven, has made Christianity a justification and a motivation for behaviour which, by our modern standards in this country, is considered grossly inhumane.

The Crusaders, Catherine de Medici and Luther, who were responsible for the slaughter of the Catholic peasants, were all Christians. At the same time as Christianity preaches peace it seems to incite to violence, and it tolerates oppression . . . If anything was needed to underline the violence which lies or seems to be tolerable within the doctrine of Christianity, then the situation in Northern Ireland is just such an instance. I do not know whether it is possible for mainland Britons, who have been reared in a tradition (albeit a recent one) of religious freedom and tolerance, to comprehend the Northern Ireland situation if they have not studied Christian history. For it is a fact—and I believe it should be stated—that in spite of the outward show and all the talk and propaganda to the contrary, mainland Britain is no longer a Christian country. But Ireland, on the other hand, is one. There, especially in Northern Ireland, you are judged or distinguished not by the kind of person you are but by your religion and your loyalty to it. There you have a well-preserved (indeed, a fossilised) specimen of a sixteenth or seventeenth century sectarian confrontation, and we witness at first hand the special type of viciousness which Christians traditionally used to reserve for those of another sect.

My noble friend Lord Longford says that there is nothing like the Northern Ireland situation anywhere else, though . . . there have been numerous instances in the

past. I can indeed find something for him very much like it in Glasgow at the present day. These people are urged on in fear, hatred and contempt of each other by their priests and hard-line men on both sides, and no one dares or cares to make a conciliatory gesture because of them in case they are accused of disloyalty to their sect . . . You have to be Christians all, in appearance, anyway.

What is to be done? Hatred and bitterness go so deep that the IRA plant bombs indiscriminately, and of course place crosses and sing requiems over their fallen, and are harboured by the Catholic population. The Orangemen provoke and scorn and bang drums, sing hymns and psalms and look to the British Army to maintain some sort of order. One's hopes for change often rest with young people who are resilient, adaptable, not entrenched; but in this case the sectarian schools inculcate religion from earliest youth, together with large helpings of slanted and romantically-dressed-up history to engender the traditional antipathy.

The best hope that I see is for younger people to come forward who have backgrounds from either side but who have the courage to declare their own lack of religious conviction and a determination to proclaim their atheism as something constructive, good, and not to be hidden. In my belief only atheists or agnostics, or those to whom religion is a personal and not an overt belief, can gain trust from both sides. It is only when religion ceases to be the dominating factor and when Ireland begins to work towards being a modern, civilised, non-theocratic society, that the people will start to learn to live together.

I think that upon this overriding matter of religion there has almost been a conspiracy of silence. But unless religion is recognised for the force that it is; that both sides . . . are of opposing sects of the same religion; unless enough people are prepared to confess to . . . be ashamed of, and condemn out loud the historic evils of Christianity . . . we shall never understand the situation and there will never be a permanent settlement in Ireland.

PHANTASMAGORIA POLITIQUE

WILLIAM WELSH

Polling day was Thursday. I had conducted a vigorous campaign. My ambition, I thought, was near realisation.

Wednesday night I spent tossing restlessly in bed. Sleep evaded me. As the night wore on, however, I dozed and had a violent bout of dreaming.

I was at a cocktail party, a party given by Enoch Powell. Enoch the Powerful. Enoch the white man. A white man who saw red. Red as often as black. *Le Rouge et le Noir*. The red Tiber. The streets of Wolverhampton flowing with blood.

A grotesque dream in some ways. Everyone at the party was chattering, but strangely enough, they all spoke in different languages. Enoch liked that. He felt very much at home. It was good practice. Not that he really needed that. He had studied in the Tower of Babel and spoke thirteen languages with fluency.

At that moment he was talking English, and talking it with the most careful and deliberate precision. As a form of protest against Pompidou's boosting French as a Common Market lingo. After vague references to alienation, integration and miscegenation, Enoch realised he was only half understood. Particularly as nearly everyone was by this time more than semi-inebriated.

For a change, Enoch approached an Oriental whom he addressed in Urdu. Then he suddenly turned in my direction. "Hello, Snodgrass", he shouted, in English, of course, since he knew I didn't hold with these foreign tongues.

That steely gaze transfixed me. Enoch's eyes narrowed. They were two slits. He frowned, the frown of a Greek, a Greek who saw the beauty of ancient Greece threatened by the barbarians thronging the banks of the River Trent. He was in no mood to be trifled with. I must watch my step. Then he fulminated:

"These confounded blacks", he bellowed.

"Hush, hush!", I hissed, knowing it would have no effect. Enoch was breasting the waves of a storm, a storm of vituperation. White crests on the waves were the foam of his diatribe.

"Immigration figures", he pronounced. "Must be reduced, and now. No more fiddling with the statistics."

Other Figures

Personally, I thought "figures" a more appropriate term for the occasion. Figures, and cute ones at that, were circling the dance floor. I pondered for a moment on "statistics", recalling my agent's propensity for these, but ended up by guessing the vital statistics of one of Georgie Best's girl friends who had admitted that her relationship with Georgie was quite platonic. "We're only friends", she told the society columnist of the *Daily Liar*. "No question of romance."

Enoch was now addressing the entire party. Their Terpsichorean gyrations and cavortings were for the moment abandoned. His tone was of the kind usually reserved for the hustings.

I knew, of course, that pro-Marketeers made him see red. He was becoming incoherent, but his voice maintained its customary resonance.

"French", he shouted, "the language of Adam and Eve after the Fall. A French *pomme*, not an English pippin, caused man's fall from grace." I couldn't quite follow Enoch's tortuous reasoning, his suspect thelogy, his

anti-Market account of Original Sin, but I daren't for the life of me tell him so.

But this wasn't all. He now gathered a small but select coterie around him. Mostly young Conservatives. The men public-school types, clean-limbed, stiff upper lip and all that. One of these sported, much to Enoch's disgust, a Mexican-type moustache. Another, certainly not in need of depilatory treatment, flaunted artificial sideboards. Couldn't wait for them to grow, he told a somewhat academic member of Women's Lib. who was having trouble with an incipiently hirsute upper lip.

At that point I awoke. Just as well. Such tormenting dreams were most unusual. I hadn't suffered such a dream since falling asleep one Sunday evening after hearing Mr Malcolm Muggeridge declaim on TV, with evident satisfaction, that the end of the world was at hand. Malcolm was certain of that. Especially since viewing advertisements for female underwear alongside the escalators on London's Tube Stations. Poor man. He'd been on holiday following the steps of St Paul. And existing on camel sandwiches, and silently cursing the desert sand that settled between his toes and caused him much nocturnal discomfort.

My Favourite Prophet

I awoke with a tummy pain. My wife hastily, and in the manner of the best commercials, fetched me aspirin, soluble of course (the kind that doctors prefer). Had I not woken at that point, I should have found myself, along with Mr. Muggeridge, moaning and groaning at the Waiting Wall. After all, Jeremiah was my favourite prophet.

Gradually, I fell into unconsciousness. The scene changed. I was among my constituents. At my weekly surgery. Constituents came and went. One announced herself as Mary Whitehouse.

"Not *the* Mary Whitehouse?"

"Yes, *the* Mary Whitehouse", she answered with composure.

"And what can I do for you?"

"Mr Snodgrass, you know very well you have the support of the Clean up Britain lobby. I'm looking to you to do your stuff."

Before long, Longford stepped in. Where he had come from I couldn't for the life of me imagine. But I heard, later, that tired as he was from a tour of Soho strip clubs, he had gone to Blackpool for specimens of porn, soft or hard-core. In actual fact, all he could collect were some seaside postcards he bought on the Golden Mile. And Segal's *Love Story* in bourgeois Lytham St Annes, where he also collected a copy of last week's *People's Friend*.

"The purest man in pop", Mary was saying.

"What's that?"

"I was referring to Cliff Richard", she answered shortly.

Mary was by now fidgeting on her chair. Longford hurried off to compile a list of rude words in *Love Story* and to view *Growing Up* for the eleventh time in a week.

"Comfortable?" I asked Mary. I knew perfectly well she was not. But it was something to break the silence.

"Your chairs are so hard. My dear man, if you had sat through a dozen performances of *Oh! Calcutta*, as I have done, your sit-down would hurt as mine does."

"Why, of course. Yes, Mary, yours is a hard life. And don't you think, if one must sin, it's as well to sin in comfort?"

Mary looked at me disapprovingly. She was not amused. As for me, I was more and more bewildered. One minute the blacks. Dear old Enoch. Now *Oh! Calcutta*. What did it matter? India was a common factor. And I was fairly certain Mary thought *Oh! Calcutta* common. Perhaps revolting. Who knows?

She resumed: "My dear man, it's not a question of colour. Rather one of shapes, contours and . . . well, I'll not particularise. I can't say I enjoyed it."

"Then why a dozen performances?" I asked ingenuously.

"All in the way of duty, my dear man, all in the way of duty."

Mary was still fidgeting. I hastily fetched a cushion, and in trying to wedge it between the seat of her chair and her own seat, was careful not to touch the latter.

Scarcely was she comfortable than she was off.

"Nine o'clock," she cried. "All the good material—no, I mean the bad material—is on TV after nine!"

As she left, I could hear her sing with abandon:

"Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he."

Just then, my tummy woke me up again. Once more my wife fetched aspirin, soluble, of course (the kind that doctors prefer).

A Conservationalist

No more sleep that night. Sleep meant dreams. And dreams are disturbing. You see, there was a misunderstanding. It was not Mrs Whitehouse's idea of pollution I was fighting. Not at all. I was a conservationist, anti-Cublington and all that.

I took an early walk. At first light. My supporters were chasing litter bugs, scrubbing pavements. Some sprayed detergent around the University of Aston. This called for immediate investigation. They were as confused as I was about the Clean up Britain campaign.

I approached the Faculty of Erotica, taking care to include in my inspection two seminars then in progress. One for students specialising in lubricity; the other for those opting for concupiscence. A film show was being shown. And I noted that adults were not admitted unless accompanied by children under ten.

But you want to know the sequel? Well, I topped the poll. And I had the seats in my surgery upholstered.

INVESTING IN POLLUTION

TONY MILLS

The narrow scruffy side-streets in the neighbourhood of London's Portobello Road are lined at night with huge container-lorries often larger than the mingy houses they are parked against. The containers bear names like Trans-Europe Removals or Antiques International. It is said that a thousand of them leave Britain every week. Every week, too, at least one of the small family shops, which have served the district, often for generations, is turned over to the sale of what can only be described as junk.

You can let your one small shop-room opening on to the street, with a few feet of display window beside the peeling door, for a weely rent of £20 or more to an "antique dealer"; and that is probably double what you and your wife have been making standing 60 hours a week behind the counter. And you've still got the rest of the house to spend your declining years in. So the contents of the display window change over-night from consumer-perishables to collector-durables.

"Durable" is the word, all right. You can watch the goods being unloaded every morning, fresh up from the country, like cucumbers or brussels sprouts, but considerably less appetising. They are picked up for a few shillings at the "sale" of a retiring farmer or an emigrating garage-hand or a rebuilt council office. Not, mind you, for a few shillings per piece; they go for a few shillings per "lot"—half-a-dozen kitchen chairs, two sets of fire irons and a wash-stand.

New Signs of the Times

Ten years ago no one would have thought of even *trying* to sell most of this stuff; they'd have given the dustman a couple of bob to take it away. But today these objects are "antiques". Articles that would not so long ago have ended their days being decently re-cycled as wood-pulp or scrap-iron are now promoted to "piccolo mobile", "petites pièces de meublement dans le sous-sol". For these are the new signs on the North Kensington shop-fronts

that have taken the place of "2d off tea". (It is only fair to mention that there are a few beautifully-kept shops filled with very lovely things.)

The buyers are mainly from Europe, where the goods are known in the trade as "Vicky Ugliers" (i.e. Victorian trash). Most of the articles, in fact, end up much further afield than Europe, but it is in the traditional centres of European culture, especially Italy and France, that the *nouveaux riches* of the Western Hemisphere have always hunted for their curios. One remembers those "bibelots" around which so many of the characters of Henry James used to build their lives. Those were not, usually, picked up in London. And today it still pays to lug the stuff to Florence before you flog it to your unsuspecting millionaire.

But the cultured gentlemen of the Henry James novels are nearly a century out of date now, and things have changed since their day. Edward Rozier or Austin Sloper wouldn't have looked twice at the rubbish now being hawked around the antique markets of Europe. The things they bought were, for the most part, genuine works of art, made in very small quantities by highly-skilled craftsmen for a small but rich aristocratic market in the centuries before the industrial revolution. But the articles nowadays being loaded by the dozen off the pavements of Westbourne Grove were mass-produced in the factories of Victorian England for a rapidly growing "lower-middle class" and for a vast expansion of offices and institutions. It is these disposable and purely utilitarian products which are now in process of becoming part of the permanent furniture—one might almost say, the artistic heritage—of the human race.

Presumably the basic reason for this phenomenon is the flight from money. If you've got some cash over, don't, for God's sake, save it; it'll only devalue. Go out and buy

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NEWS

THE FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The *Freethinker* is obtainable at the following addresses. London: Collets, 66 Charing Cross Road, WC2; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, N1; Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street (Angel Alley), E1; Rationalist Press Association, 88 Islington High Street, N1; Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1; Freethinker Bookshop, 103 Borough High Street, SE1. Glasgow: Clyde Books, 292 High Street. Manchester: Grass Roots Bookshop, 271 Upper Brook Street, 13, Brighton: Unicorn Bookshop, 50 Gloucester Road, (near Brighton Station).

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.

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

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.

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Sunday, 20 February, 6.30 p.m.: Mr F. J. Beer, "Astrology, a Legend not a Science".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1. Sunday, 20 February, 11 a.m.: Dr D. B. Halpern, "What is Personality?" Tuesday, 22 February, 7 p.m.: Dr Colin Campbell, "The Future of Rationalism in an Irrational Society".

Sutton Humanist Group, Trinity Hall, Hill Road, Sutton. Saturday, 19 February, 10.15 a.m.: book sale.

Thomas Paine Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1. Saturday, 26 February, 3 p.m.: general meeting.

Welwyn Garden City Humanist Group, c/o Richard and Betty Nicoll, 12 High Grove, Welwyn. Saturday, 19 February, 8 p.m.: musical evening.

NINETY YEARS AGO

"Mr. Redmond asked the Home Secretary whether the Government had power to seize and summarily suppress newspapers which they considered pernicious to public morals; and, if so, why that power was not exercised in the case of the *Freethinker* and other papers of that nature now published and circulated in England."

—Quoted in *The Freethinker* for 19 February 1882. William Redmond was Irish Home Rule MP for New Ross. In 1882 he also went to Northampton to campaign for the Tory candidate against Bradlaugh's re-election. Redmond was unable to nobble either Bradlaugh or *The Freethinker*. He died while serving in the British Army during World War I.

DAY OF PRAYER FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The announcement that Anglican and Catholic churches in Essex were to observe Sunday, 13 February, as "a day of prayer for peace in Northern Ireland" has been greeted by the National Secular Society in a press statement as "a good example of the hypocrisy and silliness of which only . . . followers of gentle Jesus are capable."

The Secretary of the N.S.S., William McIlroy (who was himself born in Ulster), goes on to say:

"Northern Ireland is one of the last outposts of Christianity in the British Isles. Its citizens are indoctrinated with religious beliefs from the cradle to the coffin, and the Christian religion pervades and poisons all spheres of social life. A large number of Protestant clergymen are members of the hatemongering Orange Order, and Roman Catholic priests regard the schools as breeding grounds for future generations of Catholic fanatics. Thousands of churches, chapels and mission halls flourish. Millions of prayers and Hail Marys are mumbled every day. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in the ear of almost every Ulster citizen. But hatred, bitterness and intolerance are nowhere more rampant than in that unhappy, Christian land.

"If we are to judge by past experience the Essex day of prayer for peace is unlikely to achieve the desired result. One of the first national days of prayer during the Second World War was 26 May 1940—and Belgium capitulated to the German armies. A month later another prayer orgy took place—and Pétain sued for peace. On 1 January 1942 there was an international prayer day in which the United States joined—Manila fell, and the Japanese advanced in Burma.

"The Christian God is either hard of hearing or totally indifferent to national days of prayer, so he is hardly likely to be moved by this county effort on 13 February."

HUMANIST HISTORY LECTURES

After several months' gestation (following its formation last autumn) the Freethought History & Bibliography Society has finally laid an egg in the form of four public lectures to be held on Saturday afternoons during the year. Speakers will include J. S. L. Gilmour, David Tribe, and D. B. Moore. The first lecture will be given on 11 March, and details of this and the other three will duly appear in the "Events" column.

AND NOTES

HEAVEN CLOSED DURING WINTER

Inscription over a church door in Cheshire: "This is the House of God. This is the Gate of Heaven (This door is locked in winter months)."

—I wonder if the Good Lord hibernates, as well?

"FAMILY PLANNING" STAMP

The United States Post Office is to issue an 8 cent stamp in March to publicise the need for birth control in the modern world. The stamp carries, below a "Family Planning" caption, a picture of two parents with the "desirable norm" of two children.

Just the thing, one would imagine, to stick on letters to France!

RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS IN ISRAEL

The Israeli Welfare Minister, Mr Michael Hazani, has been accused by a lower rabbinical (religious) court of transgressing *Halacha*, the rabbinical law governing Jewish life, by supporting the voluntary national service scheme for orthodox girls. Apparently a full-scale religion versus state row is in the offing.

Dr Georges Tamarin, an atheist and a former senior lecturer in psychology at Tel Aviv University, has lost his fight in the Israeli courts to be registered as of Israeli, rather than Jewish, nationality. Dr Tamarin, who came to Israel from Yugoslavia in 1949, claimed that he was not Jewish in a religious or racial sense. Israeli law distinguishes between citizenship (Israeli) and nationality (Jewish, Arab, etc.), but in practice "Jew" by nationality corresponds with the rabbinical definition of the term, i.e. someone whose mother at least was a Jew.

Ever since Israel was founded in 1948 there has been a running battle between those who want only the religious definition of a Jew to be presented in the law books, and those who want a separate, secular, definition. So far the rabbis seem to be winning. The president of the Jerusalem High Court of Appeal, in rejecting Dr Tamarin's plea, said that the wish of a handful of Jews to create a new concept of an Israeli nation was "not a legitimate aspiration".

Muddling? . . .

GIVE THE ARCHBISHOP HIS DUE

"Among the many tributes paid to the outgoing Archbishop of Dublin I failed to notice one which might even have appealed to that most bitter of his opponents—Dr Noel Browne, TD: Within a few weeks of his appointment as Archbishop Dr McQuaid arranged (quietly, firmly, though not without some difficulty) that the hospitals within his control should immediately open clinics for the treatment of venereal disease. He was profoundly shocked to find that the attitude which prevailed previous to his appointment was: 'The wages of sin is death!'"

—Gabriel Fallon in the *Catholic Herald*, 4 February 1972.

BURNLEY COUNCIL REBUFFED

Solid, respectable Burnley Council, somewhat peeved by their failure to prevent the establishment of a local club for homosexual men and women (following a row last summer, including a public meeting of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality), sent forward a motion to the Association of Municipal Corporations, only to receive the following reply:

"The Association has been asked . . . to look at 'the problem of the inadequacy of local authorities' powers to control the establishment of a social club specifically for homosexuals and lesbians'. We do not consider that the establishment of a social club of this nature presents a problem requiring local authority control."

Tough luck, duckies!

UNITARIAN POSSE GALLOPS ACROSS WILD WEST

"While a Welsh Unitarian Association meeting was being held at the St. James' Hall, Cwmann, Cardiganshire, a bullet was shot through one of the windows. Rev. D. Jacob Davies gathered a posse on the spot . . . Three youths with a rifle were seen disappearing up the road. The posse gave chase, but failed to apprehend the culprits (Members of the posse were unarmed at the time)." —From *The Inquirer* of 5 February 1972.

PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

"The pagan philosophy is a natural creed, and therefore I prefer it for poetry. The Christian one is based on suppositions. It therefore is restricted and limited in its character. Who knows if it will still exist in 300 years? The pagan one will exist, it will stand as long as the world exists and the human beings remain human." —From *Aesthetic Studies, Dramaturgy, About Destiny* (1819), by Franz Grillparzer, 1791-1872.

ONSLAUGHT AGAINST "ROME ON THE RATES"

According to the *Catholic Herald* (4 February) the British Humanist Association "has circulated members of the Catholic Teachers' Association and others with copies of a document containing a barely concealed attack on Catholic schools"; a dastardly act which has been worrying Bishop Gerard McClean of Middlesbrough. At a formal dinner in Middlesbrough recently the Bishop said that this was "a thinly disguised repetition" of the old cry of "Rome on the rates". He further commented: "This is one of the most specious documents I have ever read . . . I think this attack has been prepared by the same people who lobbied for the abortion law. This time we must take the opportunity to prepare a defence. I believe they have instructed their members all over the country to stir it up. I do not know how strong they are . . . I think we must get ready for an onslaught".

Quite so, dear Bishop. Frankly I would advise that in this case discretion is the better part of valour. By the time that this is published Comrade the Hon. Peregrine Burke (editor of *The Episcopophagist*) and his sledgehammer swinging hordes of humanist Huns will be battering on the gates of Middlesbrough. Flee while there is yet time! If necessary, to cover your withdrawal, use a smoke-screen of good quality incense; I hear tell that Burke, at least, is violently allergic to the stuff!

PAMPHLET

THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE AT THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

by Robin Jenkins. Independent Labour Party, 12p.

A misfortune has befallen the infant industry concerned with the study of race relations in Britain. Research since 1959 has centred around the Institute of Race Relations, a set of offices in Piccadilly, London. From these a dull quarterly journal and also a sprightly monthly emerge. A number of research projects are continually in the making, leading to the publication of respectable but never radical books. To the staff of about 40, a recruit last year was Robin Jenkins, who brought an outlook obviously influenced by the sort of contemporary Marxism now widespread among the ablest young people.

You might have supposed that an Institute run by experienced men under the control of a heavy-weight Council would face calmly and contain easily the ferment one bright young radical could produce. Not so. The astonishing and deplorable thing revealed by this valuable and instructive pamphlet is the behaviour of the rich or noble gentlemen who dominate the Council of the Institute. Not to put too fine a point on it, some of them jumped around like cats scalded by hot water.

The hot water was, of course, the element intended for Robin Jenkins. How, then, did it come to upset his employers so badly? That is the story he tells; and I, for one, even allowing for possible errors and omissions in it, accept the substance of his case and find my sympathy on his side.

What Jenkins did was this: he wrote a serious academic paper criticising, in sharp terms, the Institute's policy towards research. He focussed his indictment on the big book edited two years ago by E. J. Rose, *Colour and Citizenship*, and on the shorter paperback edition edited by Nicholas Deakin. He argues that, while professing liberal ideals, those two writers are confused in their aims, assumptions, and purposes. Accordingly, the impact of their work tends towards conservatism and the maintenance of the status quo. In particular, they lack a suitable theory of social change, one which would enable them to perceive that the most hopeful force for change must come from the coloured immigrant communities themselves. This perception, in Jenkins' view, should displace the woolly belief that somehow public opinion in Britain will put things right (or left?). Those who cling to this belief are simply allowing Enoch Powell and his allies to push public policy in the wrong direction.

Now there is nothing wickedly subversive about Jenkins' view. Nor is he alone in presenting it. Professor John Rex of Warwick University and Michael Dummett of All Souls College, Oxford, have in fact written on similar lines. Jenkins read his paper at a small meeting of a section of the British Sociological Association. It would have gained little publicity if the men of distinction who run the Institute had behaved with vauncular tolerance. If they had been wise, they would have published Jenkins' article in their quarterly journal and then invited Rose and Deakin to reply. That would have been the proper liberal spirit to display. Instead, they behaved like the conservatives they really are when events or even incidents come to a crisis. They suspended Jenkins: held a series of emergency meetings marked by a sense of acute embarrassment; and in effect forced Jenkins to resign, although his col-

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leagues on the staff supported him and expressed the opinion that he should not be sacked. The big businessmen on the Council were no doubt prodded by the American foundation which adds its funds to theirs as the major source of income for the Institute. They thus proved the validity of Jenkins' contention that under our economic and social system research is seldom free enough to contradict the golden rule that he who pays the piper will in the end call the tune.

The pamphlet is obtainable from the Independent Labour Party, 197 King's Cross Road, London, WC1X 9DB.

JOHN GILD

BOOK

SUICIDE WEAPON.

By A. J. Barker. Pan/Ballantine, 50p.

"The annals of war yield many instances of death-defying tactics. Throughout history soldiers of many nations have been taught that duty must be performed at the risk of life. But in western eyes the deliberate exploitation of Japanese willingness to die for emperor and homeland was the nadir of degraded brutality."

This is the conclusion reached by Mr Barker, who served in the Burma campaign, in this book which forms part of the Pan/Ballantyne History of World War II.

In Britain today we are familiar with two aspects of Japanese suicide as a result of the last World War: *seppuku*, or *hara-kiri*, ritual suicide with a sword; and *kamikaze* dives by Japanese airmen on to military targets. Mr Barker also deals with the other methods of Japanese fighting tactics which were, overtly or covertly, suicidal. On land, the *banzai* charge, often with soldiers tying explosives to their backs, turning themselves into human grenades. In the air, the Imperial forces used tactics ranging from merely crash-diving normal bombers on to targets (mainly shipping) to the construction of custom-built suicide aircraft, such as the *Okha* or *Baka-bomb*, which was released from a mother-bomber when nearing the target. It is sometimes forgotten that the Japanese also used suicide tactics at sea, such as the *kaiten*, a manned torpedo, and the *shinyo*, a suicide motor boat whose bows were packed with high explosive.

Attitudes to suicide vary from culture to culture, and hence objectivity on the subject is difficult. Islamic and Christian traditions, for instance, strongly frown upon the practice, though they have no specific objection to death in the normal course of warfare. Suicide, in many instances in Europe, is regarded as "cowardly", though this view, at other times, was not shared by the Classical Stoics, or by the officer corps of Britain and Austria in the last century. The concept of suicide as a dignified and honourable death is, within certain contexts, not unworthy of respect in this reviewer's submission. An exasperated airman who has used up all his bombs and bullets, and so crashes his plane into a ship to sink it is a brave man by any standards: so is a soldier, overrun by his enemies, and who commits suicide as a final gesture of contempt and defiance, rather than submit.

REVIEWS

With these, the western mind can find some sympathy, as they are matters of personal choice, but one's capacity for empathy breaks down when faced with the phenomenon of a deliberately fostered mass-suicide mind. The Japanese soldier who meticulously and calmly gunned down fifteen women and children, one after the other, to prevent them surrendering to the Americans, and who then blew himself up with a grenade is not my idea of a folk-hero, nor, I should imagine, any other reader's. It is clear that towards the end of the war suicide in Japan no longer became a matter of individual fervour, but one of mass-hysteria backed by propaganda, as is evinced by hospital staff in the Pacific wiping out all their patients to prevent them falling into Allied hands. On Guam and Iwo Jima suicide became not so much an "honourable death" as a depraved sado-masochistic orgy.

Given its restrictions of size and format, this book tells its story well. There is no index, an infuriating omission in any historical work, even a popular one, and the print is monotonous and cramped (albeit large). The book is, however, profusely illustrated with monochrome photographs and drawings, and these serve to keep the reader visually informed and they greatly enhance the text as a whole.

It is a pity that Mr Barker did not have the space to go into detail on one or two intriguing points that he throws out as he goes along. For instance, he mentions that the appalling treatment of prisoners by the Japanese in World War II contrasts markedly with their impeccable conduct towards captives in the Russo-Japanese War at the turn of this century. Now this contempt for those who surrender is part and parcel of the Japanese *bushido* code, essentially Feudal in origin, that emphasised suicide as honourable, and a means of "saving face". One wonders, therefore, did the Japanese government in the 1940s have an already pliable population upon whom to foist the *kamikaze* cult, or had the suicide-cult of old *bushido* largely died away until, with difficulty, "revived"?

Another intriguing question is that of Japanese navy-army rivalry. Readers who saw *Tora! Tora! Tora!* the film about the attack upon Pearl Harbor, with recall that the Imperial army chiefs were "for" entering the war, whilst the admiralty were reticent, were the "doves". Now Mr Barker notes a similar, though more restrained, reluctance by the Japanese navy to permit the expenditure of lives by the development of specifically suicide weapons for naval personnel, and he suggests that this may have something to do with the Japanese navy's having traditional links with their British counterpart, and its philosophy of "Fight bravely, but not in vain".

On the whole the author tends to stick to straight narrative and description, though when he does turn to analysis and theories of the Japanese psychology his ideas are compelling. This book presents a powerful argument for the use of the atomic bomb on Japan (some of the military "hawks" were prepared to expend 20 million civilian lives in an Oriental *Götterdämmerung* if the Americans invaded Japan proper), and it could be cited as evidence of the terrible evils produced by religion when carefully stage-managed by a totalitarian military élite.

In brief, this is an excellent 50p's worth for the World War II aficionado or for the armchair *samurai*.

NIGEL H. SINNOTT

THEATRE

ROMEO AND JULIET by William Shakespeare.
Shaw Theatre.

After *Hamlet* the most popular of Shakespeare's play has always been *Romeo and Juliet*. This is not my assessment. Perhaps I am unromantic; or perhaps the mechanical plot, with its love at first sight, neatly timed potion and other devices, and characterisation which seems strangely at variance with the supposed age (or, as the text is inconsistent, ages) of the characters are really as unconvincing as I imagine. From a humanist viewpoint, of course, the central message of reconciliation in a society riven by factional strife cannot be faulted. There has long been a dispute over the dramatist's attitude to religion, and the programme notes offer us two interpretations, those of Andrew Murray and Granville Barker. One observes that "Shakespeare also considers 'divine' love through the church in the person of Friar Lawrence"; the other, "Friar Lawrence is sympathetic, but he is compact of maxims, of pedagogic kindness; he is just such a picture of an old man as a young man draws, all unavailing wisdom. There is no more life in the character than the story asks and gives". Unless Murray is being ironic I rather agree with Barker. A sympathetic friar in communication with both the Montagues and the Capulets through his role as father confessor, who is also in a position to marry the lovers and provide Romeo a refuge (in his cell) which would be unlikely to be searched, is essential to the plot and I do not think his presence should be taken as an index of Shakespeare's Catholicism.

After a shaky start the present production by Michael Croft has much to commend it, especially since one of the theatre's chief functions is to help young people in their study of the Bard. Veteran playgoers will have seen lusher balconies by moonlight and heard greater performers extract more passion from the verse. But I doubt if many will have witnessed more convincing performances. While Simon Ward and Sinead Cusack as the young lovers are somewhat older than the text specifies, they are still both young and attractive and do not cause the slight embarrassment that lingers when ageing stars essay the parts. Because of the freer climate today it is possible to bring out the homosexual feeling (to put it no higher) among Romeo and his companions, Benvolio (Richard Howard) and Mercutio (Maurice Roesves). All who participate in the sword play, spectacularly staged by Ian McKay, are to be congratulated on their athleticism, and Roesves is also very nimble with the blank verse. The scenes with Capulet (Joseph O'Connor), Lady Capulet (Rowena Cooper) and the Nurse (Constance Chapman) have just the right tension, and O'Connor's rage when his daughter defies him is a *tour de force*. Christopher Lawrence's multi-purpose set and John Bright's costumes add to the enjoyment.

DAVID TRIBE

INVESTING IN POLLUTION

(Continued from page 59)

something; buy *anything*; it doesn't matter what; it doesn't matter whether you need it or even like it. Whatever it is, in five years' time it will be worth more than the money you now spend on it. Besides, you never know your luck, it might even go *up* in real value, which is something money certainly won't do. In future, remember, your credit won't be judged by the amount of cash you've got in the bank. It will be judged by the amount of rubbish you've got in the attic. There's nothing to beat pollution as a safe investment.

LETTERS

Belfast Humanists disagree with BHA Statement on Ireland

The Belfast Humanist Group dissociates itself from the statement of Kenneth Furness, General Secretary of the British Humanist Association, as published in the *Belfast Telegraph* of 24 January [and *The Freethinker* of 5 February]. It considers the time for argument about the causes of the present unhappy state of Northern Ireland has long passed.

Two facts should be recognised. One by the Northern Ireland Government that there will never be a return to the administration in operation prior to 1969. In this connection the opposition parties should be re-assimilated into higher Government posts in a system of proportional representation. These should be representatives of the Westminster Government of Ministerial standing and resident in Northern Ireland, whose function would be to observe how the various changes in the Government of Northern Ireland were being carried out in practice and spirit. All political parties and members of the public should have the right to work for a united Ireland by all democratic means.

The second fact to be recognised by Parliamentary opposition parties, is that in the immediate future there is no hope of a united Ireland being brought about and that their energies should be directed to obtaining an adequate say in the running of the country at all levels, both at Headquarters and locally and proving that there are people here who have the capability and the will to administer affairs in a fair and efficient way and so help to heal the wounds in our society.

Both Government and opposition should endeavour to obviate the causes of the present polarisation of the community and recognise that the segregation of children in schools and the separation of training students for the teaching profession are two of the main causes of our bigotry and subsequent hatred.

All parties at Stormont should exhort their various religious leaders to set a more meaningful example of brotherly love.

PAULINE MENDEL, *Hon. Secretary,*
Belfast Humanist Group.

United Ireland—a misunderstanding

Your editorial "BHA calls for United Ireland" is an example of the general misunderstanding of the motives of those who have created the chaos in Ulster—despite the BHA's "consultation with leading humanists" throughout Ireland.

It is wrong and unjust to assume that the "troubles" have arisen from sectarian differences. Over the past fifty years it has been frequently made clear by politicians and industrialists in the Irish Republic, and most loudly and persistently by the IRA, that they believe that the heavy industry (and most the skill of the workers) in the North must be brought under the control of the Dublin government before their country can reach the economic position they desire. It has been simple to make sectarian differences a cloak for these ambitions, especially when there has been a threat of the indigenous population being swamped by the Catholic Church's policy on birth control.

My four and a half years in Dublin have left me with the conviction that whilst "confession" exists to exonerate killers, the sacrifice of a few hundred "patriots" or "bastards" is a cheap price to pay for "economic stability".

BEN MARCATO.

One would hardly think of plantation Protestants as "indigenous" to Ireland, if this is what Mr Marcato means (Ed.).

Avril Fox and Fox Hunters

Avril Fox accuses me of emotionalism on the grounds that my adjective "comfy" doesn't apply to her belief about maturity. Perhaps emotionalism prevented her from noticing that in fact I applied it to her statement "we might be said to be the friend of animals in that when we take them for food we deny them old age". I re-apply the adjective.

"Staggered" though she is by my statement that masters of foxhounds are adults, Mrs Fox will find that to be the ordinary meaning of the word if she tries to get one of them a child's fare on the bus. Her own use of the word is technical: it means what she approves of.

Why, incidentally, does she *not* approve of fox hunters for their friendly habit of denying foxes old age? Or does she suppose it's the being eaten afterwards that makes the experience nicer for a lamb than for a fox?

BRIGID BROPHY.

St Paul and the Historical Jesus

Mr Broom finds that all the myth theories on Christian origins (including my theory) suffer from "the grave defect of demanding a greater degree of credulity than Christianity itself". Had he done me the honour of reading my book before dismissing my theory, he would have found that—contrary to what he supposes—I do not regard as interpolations any of the passages to which he refers. Paul does not mention a brother of the historical Jesus, but a person whom he describes as "brother of the Lord", and in my book I give reasons for the view that the two are not identical. As for Peter, Mr Broom is assuming that the Peter mentioned in Galatians is the person described in the (much later) gospels as the companion of the historical Jesus. That, of course, is just what is in question.

G. A. WELLS.

What are Europeans?

Since Peter Cadogan so ably took up cudgels on my behalf over Philip Hinchliff's review of *What Are Europeans?* I do not need to defend my own argument. But I would like to comment on Mr Hinchliff's last assertion that our "affluent" societies consume far more than their share of the world's resources.

This is simply not true. The great bulk of commodities now originates in developed countries and not in the under-developed tropical and semi-tropical areas. For example the growing demand for animal feeding stuffs favours soya production so that the United States alone provides two thirds of the world's oils and fats. In "colonial" days Asia and Africa made a larger contribution to world grain trade than Australia: by 1966 only North America and Australia were significant exporters of grain. The ores and hydrocarbons provide the means of payment which has enabled the non-Western world to enjoy more of the material things of life than ever before.

Whether this is good or bad is another thing. But before Mr Hinchliff launches charges of half-truths and untruths he should get his own facts straight.

G. K. YOUNG.

Rational Evidence

In his review of *The Rational Society* by S. J. Gould, Philip Hinchliff points out that "actions which stem from principles or theories that a great many people would find morally repugnant... can be called rational". Mr Hinchliff then presents readers with the following sentence: "If, for instance, you really believe that the Jews are a menace to civilisation, as Hitler did, you presumably would not demur at their extermination". But surely, that is "presuming" too much! If, for instance, one really believes that "Purple Atheists" are a menace to civilisation, that does not necessarily mean that one believes in exterminating all (or any) "Purple Atheists". Indeed, one could, with consistency, believe in actions towards the removal of such a "menace" whilst preserving all "Purple Atheists"; also, one could, with consistency, do nothing about it at all ("... a menace, so what?"). There is, of course, no rational evidence to support a belief in "exterminating" anyone.

CHARLES BYASS.

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