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IRELAND'S PROBLEM: CHRISTIANITY

ULSTERMAN CONDEMNS CHURCHES AND ORANGE ORDER

"Christianity, with its stupid glorification of suffering and death, its persecution of opponents and its intolerance, has divided nations, communities and families," said the Ulster-born Secretary of the National Secular Society on Sunday. He was addressing a meeting on Humanism and Ireland organised by South Place Ethical Society at Conway Hall, London. "No country has been more dominated by Christian influence than Ireland," Mr. William McIlroy continued, "and today we are witnessing the result of centuries of religious fanaticism and bigotry. Of course the churches are denying responsibility for the hatred and violence which has been tearing Northern Ireland apart for the last three years and which was just under the surface for many decades. They claim that the problem is a social, economic and political one, and that religion has nothing to do with it. This myth has been fostered by the Irish churches in order to hoodwink the British public; they have no illusions about being able to mislead their own followers on this matter."

Religious segregation—"almost total"

Mr. McIlroy said that two important factors had led to the present predicament in Northern Ireland. "First," he pointed out, "there is the religious segregation which is almost total in educational, social and political spheres. The Roman Catholic Church is the most adamant opponent of mixed schools. The quality of education and school life should be given top priority by those responsible for children in the classroom; the most important thing to the Roman Catholic Church is that the parish priest is free to come and go as he pleases."

However, the speaker explained, mixed schools were not opposed solely by the Catholic Church. "Secular education was proposed in Northern Ireland fifty years ago, but it was abandoned because of opposition by the Protestant churches and the Orange Order."

A secret society of religious fanatics

"This," Mr. McIlroy continued, "brings me to my second point—the influence of the Orange Order in Ulster affairs; for it should be realised exactly what British money, lives and prestige are being sacrificed for in the streets of Belfast and Londonderry today." Ever since the Northern Ireland state had been in existence—for more than fifty years—it had been ruled by a secret society of religious fanatics. "The Orange Order is not a minority movement within the Protestant churches. It has the support of most church members; the lodges have their chaplains, many clergymen are members and take part in Orange processions."

Christianity had led to the political and intellectual degeneration of the people of Ulster. "It is now difficult to realise," said the N.S.S. Secretary, "that the Ulster Protestants were once the moving spirits behind the Irish independence movement. It is sad that many of those who cheer demagogues like Craig and Paisley are descendants of the radical and libertarian Ulstermen who were amongst the first supporters of Thomas Paine and the rights of man."

From Paineites to O'Connellites

"Many of the leaders of the 1798 rebellion were ardent Paineites. They were opposed by the Catholic bishops who saw the rising in its wider, European context, and feared that it would lead to attacks on church privilege and wealth." It was unfortunate for Ireland, said Mr. McIlroy, that Daniel O'Connell's influence on the nationalist movement in the first half of the nineteenth century had led it to becoming a largely Catholic force, and had driven many uncommitted Protestants into the equally reactionary Orange Order.

"Those who think that the opposing forces in Northern Ireland will eventually sit down and resolve their differences are living in a cloud-cuckoo-land," the speaker concluded. "A solution will have to be imposed by Britain; but it will have to be done on a different basis to previous 'solutions' which took into account only the wishes and threats of Ireland's Protestant minority."

MALE VASECTOMY BILL

We are pleased to hear that the Government has decided to provide time for Mr. Robert Carr's National Health Service (Family Planning) Amendment Bill which would offer male vasectomy under the N.H.S., and which was 'talked out' by Catholic M.P.s earlier this year.

Given further time in the Commons the Bill stands a good chance of becoming law. Its passage will surely be eased if freethinkers write to their M.P.s in the next week or two asking them to be sure to be present when the Bill is next discussed, and to vote for it. There will doubtless be the usual gamut of half-baked opposition, ranging from "sin on the rates!" to "castration!" A little reassurance from the electorate in such circumstances never comes amiss.

THE FREETHINKER

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The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Board.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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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 Street, London, SE1 1NL. Telephone: 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the N.S.S.

Freethought books and pamphlets (new). Send for list to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1NL.

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.

National Secular Society/Progressive League joint Weekend Conference, High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts. 3-5 November: "Religion in the Seventies." Speakers: Lord Raglan, John Capon, Lt.-Col. Gunter-Jones. Details from N.S.S., 103 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL (telephone: 01-407 2717).

EVENTS

Haverling Humanist Society. Tuesday, 31 October, 8 p.m.: Hallowe'en Social c/o Bill & Evie Brown (telephone Hornchurch 46477 for details).

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. Sunday, 29 October, 6.30 p.m.: Alex Acheson, "What is Happening in Northern Ireland Now?"

London Young Humanists. Sunday, 29 October: visit to St. George's Chapel, Windsor (contact Robert Smith, 01-385 4070 for details).

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Sunday, 29 October, 11 a.m.: Dr. John Lewis, "East Germany, 1924, 1934, 1972: a Personal View."

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, Marine Parade. Sunday, 29 October, 5.30 p.m.: Richard Clements, "Teilhard de Chardin and Modern Humanism."

NEWS

PERSECUTION OF WITNESSES

We have precious little sympathy for the tenets of the sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses; equally, we are disgusted by the treatment being meted out to the Witnesses by members of both the black—and the white—tribes of Africa.

Zambia, to her credit, has given sanctuary and emergency relief to some 9,000 Jehovah's Witnesses who have fled there in recent weeks from Malawi, where a series of "pogroms" has been carried out by the Malawi Congress Party and its Young Pioneer youth wing. President Banda has denounced the sect as "Devil's Witnesses"—perhaps he knows the Devil better than they do.

In the Orange Free State, nine young Jehovah's Witnesses have been expelled from Kroonstad High School because they refused to stand for the South African national anthem and failed to "honour" the republic's flag.

There are times when we are heartily glad—nay, proud—to be living in a "decadent", permissive society which still accepts wierd, fuddy-duddy notions like freedom of opinion and belief. One of the privileges of living in the "rotten" Britain of the 1970s that rightist Jeremiahs are continually decrying is that we can sit down for the national anthem, use the national flag as a drying-up cloth, or insult the local superstitions without living in fear of the lynch mob or the official midnight knock at the door. A little decadence, in the right places, would do Africa's present disease of toleration-deficiency a power of good.

BACKWARD, MOSLEM SOLDIERS

Libya's ruler, Colonel Gaddafi, is nothing if not a devout Moslem—even to the extent of being a downright embarrassment to more humane and liberal adherents of that faith. In his efforts to resurrect the Shariah (Moslem religious law) in Libya he has celebrated Ramadan by reintroducing the penalty of mutilation: offenders over the age of 18 are now liable to forfeit their right hands on conviction for ordinary theft, and armed robbery carries the penalty of the loss of both right hand and left foot.

Needless to say, this mediaeval legislation has full scriptural justification. Does not the holy Koran say, "And the thief, male and female, cut off the hands of both, as recompense for what they have earned"? At least Colonel Gaddafi makes one concession to modernity: limb-loppings will be carried out by surgeons under anaesthetics.

As one of our illustrious predecessors used to say: "Religion and decivilisation are always and everywhere convertible terms."

ECUMENICAL FEINT

"... The Church of Ireland Bishop who said recently that he had met three members of 'The European Committee of the Official I.R.A.' must have 'been conned by a crowd of chancers'. No such organisation as the European Committee exists, says [Official] Sinn Féin stonily."

—The *Irish Post* (9 September).

S AND NOTES

HISTORY OF LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

As F. J. Gould's *History of the Leicester Secular Society* (1900) has long been out of print, Miss Gillian Hawtin's new pamphlet, *A Century of Progressive Thought: the story of Leicester Secular Society* (with a preface by Lord Brockway)* is both timely and welcome.

Founded in 1851, Leicester Secular Society is the oldest Secular Society in the world, and has had a lively and fascinating history. William Morris delivered his famous lecture on "Art and Socialism" in the Secular Hall at Leicester, and other famous names associated with the Society include Charles Bradlaugh, G. W. Foote, G. J. Holyoake, Joseph McCabe, George Bernard Shaw, H. M. Hyndman and Prince Kropotkin, to name but a few. Leicester Secular Society has played an influential rôle in promoting freethought throughout the Midlands; may it long continue to do so.

*Copies of *A Century of Progressive Thought* may be obtained (price 7½p plus 2½ postage) from Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

SCHOOL WORSHIP "UNDESIRABLE"

"We suggest that the time has come to give up the notion that a county primary school assembly ought to be an act of Christian worship in the commonly accepted sense," says a Schools Council working party's report recently published under the title of *Religious Education in Primary Schools*. "Even some convinced practising Christians are no longer sure of themselves," says the report, and in one school the staff felt that "Christian teaching contributes nothing of value to education."

The *Daily Telegraph's* comments (19 October) on this report omitted any mention of the above recommendation (perhaps significantly) but instead emphasised findings that "schools are finding it increasingly difficult to teach moral and religious values to children because parents fail to set a good example." The Leeds University research team which carried out the report interviewed some 3,000 teachers, but, pointed out the *Telegraph* "only 19.5 per cent of teachers and not a single head come into the category of atheism, agnosticism and humanism."—A fact which will lend credence to the nasty misgivings many freethinkers have had for some time about the appointment of school heads.

We hope to review this report in more detail in the near future.

SURVEY OF DAY NURSERIES

"The opinion of local authorities still seems to be that women with husbands must expect their husbands to support them. The 'normal' place for a woman is still in the home." This is the conclusion drawn from a survey by Pat Knight of local authority day nurseries and nursery schools in the London area and published recently by the British Humanist Association's Women's Liberation Project Group.*

The survey, covering 32 Greater London boroughs, shows that local authority day nurseries provide places for only 1½ per cent of children between the age of 0 and 5.

and there are also considerable variations in the facilities available from borough to borough: Brent, for example, has 13 day nurseries; whereas, at the other extreme, Bromley and Bexley have none at all. The average London borough provides between 2 and 4 nurseries, each catering for an average of 50 children.

Maximum charges at nurseries averaged £5 or £6 a week, but in one case exceeded £10 p.w. Few working mothers would be able to afford such an expense. The nurseries only provide places for priority cases—mainly unsupported mothers; and it is generally impossible for ordinary women to find places for their children. Most nurseries have long waiting lists.

It is hoped that the Project Group's survey will provide ammunition for women campaigning for better provision of local authority day nurseries.

*Copies of the *Survey of Local Authority Day Nurseries in the 32 London Boroughs* may be obtained by sending a self-addressed foolscap envelope and 4p stamp to Mrs. Pat Knight, 37 Crofters Mead, Courtwood Lane, Croydon, Surrey, CRO 9HS.

"CHRISTIAN-NATIONAL" EDUCATION

The Transvaal's new system of 'Differentiated Education' is, we are told, to be based on "Christian-National" principles. (As if we did not already know!)

Louis Hotz of the *Times Educational Supplement* says that the aim is to enable the South African child to achieve "the necessary social, ethical, political, economic, but particularly the Christian and national moulding." The Dutch Reform Church and the Broederbond will, we feel sure, approve; the hard-pressed Rationalist Association will not. We hope that the latter will cock a successful snook at this particularly nasty piece of religious and Chauvinist totalitarianism.

GREEK PROFILE

"When you launch terrorist activities from an arsenal full of arms you are not entitled to complain of the treatment you receive."

—The reply of the president of a Greek court martial to George Sayias (24), student, who claimed in his defence that his 'confession' had been obtained by means of torture.

Sayias was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment.

(*The Guardian*, 6 October)

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Postmaster-General has withdrawn his objection, and this journal is again registered 'for transmission through the post, in the United Kingdom, and in foreign parts.' We thank the numerous journals who have asked fair play for us in this matter, and we tender our sympathy to the one or two bigotted editors who prematurely rejoiced over our suppression.

—Charles Bradlaugh in the *National Reformer*, 27 October 1872.

NINETY YEARS AGO

The People's Concert Society gave their first Sunday evening concert at South Place Institute last Sunday.* An excellent programme of secular music was put forward. The admission is free, but visitors would do well to remember that these concerts are dependent upon contributions received at the door.

—From *The Freethinker*, 29 October 1882.

*The concerts, of course, are still very much alive. Details of the 1972/73 programme may be obtained from the secretary of the South Place Sunday Concert Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

A GOOD TRY

The Guardian of 10 October carried an interesting little note about a white-robed figure who appeared inside Pope Paul's summer residence at Castelgandolfo. The papal guards at first mistook him for a bishop, but when he said that he was on a mission from God to see the Pope they handed him over to the Italian police instead. The latter found him to be mentally disturbed and sent him home to the Dominican Republic.

Well, it was a good try! But, as the old saying goes: many are called but few are chosen.

WAR OF REFERENCES

In Germany, according to a recent report in *The Guardian*, a political wit has been at work in Bonn, inscribing upon Christian Democrat election posters: "Isaiah 41: 24." An apt, swift and efficient form of counter-propaganda. This is, of course, a biblical reference, and the verse in question reads: "Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you."

We will bear that one in mind!

THE USTASHA IN AUSTRALIA

ALAN RICKARD

Until recently only left-wing newspapers in Australia had mentioned the likelihood of Ustashi organisations surviving in that country. However, a wave of terrorist bombings in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne finally drew the general attention of the Press and the law—and even that of certain politicians—to the realities of the situation.

The smokescreen of deceptive statements now emanating from some Yugoslav sources and from Federal and State "Liberal" governments, who think that any right-wing force is desirable as a counter to communism, has to be seen to be believed. In fact it is this very facet of "Liberal" government that has been responsible for what is now happening, in view of their screening out of left-wing migrants but turning a "blind eye" to those on the right.

Ustashi origins

The Ustasha appeared in the Croatia during World War II, when an Italian-trained Croatian army returned home to establish a Nazi-orientated government under their Fuehrer, Ante Pavelic, who was closely supported by the Zagreb-based Cardinal Stepinac.

This is not to say that there were no Catholic clergy speaking against what was happening, though they were few and far between; when Cardinal Tisserant died early this year in Rome, a vitriolic attack was made on him by the newspaper *Spremnost*, which styles itself the "Organ of Croats in Australia." Tisserant had bitterly attacked Ustashi activities during the Second World War. In all of Croatia only one or two lonely clerical voices had been raised. Bishop Misic of Mostar vigorously condemned what was happening, while Father Loncar of Zagreb was condemned to death for preaching against Pavelic a few months later. His sentence was afterwards reduced to hard labour for life.

The present writer does not believe that the anti-Serb pogroms in wartime Croatia were basically against the Orthodox religion, but rather that the centuries-old Croat-Serb nationalistic hatreds had been given free rein under

LABOUR OF LOVE

"Help for Catholic schools is an indispensable ingredient in any programme to help Australian schools."

—Mr. Whitlam, Federal Opposition Leader, outlining the Australian Labour Party's education policy to the Catholic Luncheon Club of Melbourne (quoted by the *Weekend News*, 21 June).

TENNESSEE TO CALIFORNIA

Anyone remember the 1925 "Monkey Trial" when John T. Scopes was prosecuted for teaching evolution in his school in Tennessee? Well, in this Year of Grace, 1972, the Members of the California State Board of Education (appointed by Governor Reagan, no less) are trying to insist that the Genesis creation myth be inserted into science textbooks for the schools in addition to Darwinian evolutionary theories. They claim that the evidence used in support of Darwinism can equally well be held to verify what they term the "Design Theory." A public hearing is due to be held.

(*Times Education Supplement*, 13 October)

Pavelic and that forced bayonet-point conversions to Catholicism were intended as a Serb humiliation. The slaughter of those who resisted was horrifying in its barbarity. The Ustasha also supported the Nazi slaughter of the Jews and it has been said that not one Croatian Jew survived apart from those who fled and joined the resistance under Tito or Mihailovic. That Moslems of other Yugoslav nationalities were involved with the Ustasha seems to support the viewpoint that the basic reason for the anti-Serb terrorism was nationalistic.

The post-war Ustasha

Over the last few years in Australia there have been numerous knifings, shootings, bomb attacks, as well as extortion of money for the purposes of various Ustashi front organisations. There have been murders and attempted murders of Croats who have opposed the Ustasha. One Croatian who made a stand against the terrorists was shot, together with an Australian who shared his home in an inner Melbourne suburb, four or five years ago. There have been many attempts against the life of Port Melbourne tugmaster, Marijan Jurjevic, originally from Croatia, who has waged a continuous battle to expose the Ustasha over several years, largely against the indifference of the Australian government.

The writer has personally known Croats in Sydney who have no sympathy at all with the Ustasha, or for that matter with any concept of Croatian nationalism, and who merely want to make a worthwhile life for themselves in Australia and forget ancient troubles.

There are, of course, others, who, whilst making endless statements and manoeuvres to avoid being known as contacts of nationalist organisations, are nevertheless deeply involved. Nationalism in various forms is being instilled even into children in Croatian social clubs.

Catholicism in Australia is not guiltless. St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney holds an annual requiem mass on the date of Pavelic's death. Several Croatian-born priests

are deeply involved. A Father Josip Kasic is active in Croatian nationalist organisations and his church, in the Melbourne suburb of Clifton Hill, has often been used on Ustashi ceremonial occasions. Another priest in Sydney is almost certainly involved in the provision of arms and training to terrorist groups. The basic purpose of this increasing activity is the overthrow of the Tito government in Belgrade and the establishment of a Croatian state independent of what the Croatian right wing sees as Serbian domination. Australia has probably become a principal base for much of this activity, due to the almost paranoid obsession in the minds of many politicians with the "red bogey" to the north and their (one would hope) naïve disregard of the danger from the right.

Support of Australian politicians

On the other hand the celebration of "10 Travanj" (10 April) is widely observed in Australia and it is difficult to believe that all the Australian parliamentarians who grace this occasion with their presence (often under Pavelic's photograph) can be unaware that this was the date of the Nazi victory in Yugoslavia in 1941 and of the establishment of the Ustashi government under Pavelic. A very dangerous path is often followed in the name of anti-communism!

REVIEWS

BOOKS

SCIENTIST EXTRAORDINARY: the Life and Scientific Work of Thomas Henry Huxley 1825-1895 by Cyril Bibby. Pergamon Press, £2.95.

"Oh, there comes Professor Huxley; faded, but still fascinating!"

Professor Bibby already has three books on T. H. Huxley to his credit. In the latest one he takes the considerable gamble of riding two stylistic horses at once: of presenting both 'Huxley as genius and prophet' and 'Huxley as human being.' It is probably a tribute to both author and subject that this approach is so successful.

"Darwin's Bulldog" came from unpromising origins: he was born in Ealing, then a sleepy little village, the son of a very mediocre teacher, and he left school at the age of eleven. However, by the age of seventeen he had won the Pharmaceutical Society's (1842) Silver Medal, and at nineteen published his first scientific paper announcing the discovery of "Huxley's Layer" at the base of the human hair. After returning from a four year research voyage in H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* he wrote to his sister: "I will leave my mark somewhere, and it shall be clear and distinct . . ." and what a mark it was! At 27 he was already on the council of the Royal Society.

The young Huxley found himself struggling to make a living as a professional scientist in an age when such matters were usually left in the hands of gifted amateurs who had independent means. He looked round and cast a baleful eye on "the educated mob, who derive their ideas from *The Times*" and on the world of time-serving, obscurantist Oxbridge academics, "phrase crammed undergraduates," "cant, humbug and self-seeking" and "fine old crusted abuse." It was easy to give up, and Huxley nearly

There are attempts by Australian politicians and others to shift the blame for recent terrorism on to other Yugoslav groups. The writer was told by a member of Sydney's Serbian community that seamen from a Yugoslav ship had been sent to intimidate him into ceasing his writing and public speaking against the Tito government. However, there was something about the story that did not ring true.

It is quite correct to say that a large Serbian rightist element has always been active against Titoism from the period of the wartime activities of the Chetniks under Draza Mihailovic and many Serbs are connected with the Mihailovic Association in Australia. However, for a number of reasons it is difficult to believe that these groups, however far to the right, are actually responsible for the recent terrorism.

In any case, it seems to be ignored by those who are making such statements that Ustashi front organisations have actually claimed responsibility for one or two of these attacks, and that the Ustashi flag has been raised and Ustashi slogans chanted at soccer matches where Yugoslav teams have been involved.

It might well be asked how the writer is cognisant with so many undercurrents of these developments in Australia and elsewhere. The answer?—He was once married to a Serb.



T. H. Huxley

went off to Australia as a brewer, but, by 1895 he had effected not a few changes in the world of learning. In his own words:

There is a well-worn adage that those who set out upon a great enterprise would do well to count the cost. I am not sure that this is always true. I think that some of the greatest enterprises in this world have been carried out successfully simply because the people who undertook them did not count the cost; and I am of the opinion that, in this very case [scientific and technical education], the most important consideration is the cost of doing nothing.

If for nothing else, Huxley is remembered today for two things: for championing Darwin's evolutionary theories and for coining the term 'agnostic.' The list should be longer.

Almost all *Freethinker* readers are familiar with the famous rout of Bishop ("Soapy Sam") Wilberforce by Huxley in the debate on Darwinism at Oxford in 1860. It is sometimes forgotten that Huxley very nearly did not take

(Continued overleaf)

part, and only attended this particular session of the British Association at the last minute. As Professor Bibby suggests, the fact that Wilberforce had been "primed" by Sir Richard Owen was probably what challenged Huxley to hold himself in readiness for a counterattack. Owen had taken the young Huxley under his wing on the latter's return from the *Rattlesnake* expedition, but the flow of brilliant research papers from the young man's pen eventually aroused Owen's jealousy for his own reputation as the "British Cuvier," and he came to attempting the suppression of Huxley's work. Thereafter T. H. Huxley rarely missed a chance to deflate the great man's public image, often with conspicuous success, as in the written disputes in the pages of the *Athenaeum*. Professor Bibby also gives a most entertaining account of Huxley's later duels, for instance, with Mr. Gladstone in the *Nineteenth Century*.

Alas, the history of agnosticism, it seems, is a different story. Huxley coined the term to describe a method, a scientific approach to observable phenomena, and in his own words, "not a creed." Since those pristine days, however, the word has been prostituted to a pseudagnosticism, to serve as the badge of pusillanimous scepticism, drawing-room atheism, or just plain muddle. It is a pity, for Huxley had a healthy contempt for cowardice, and eschewed the contemporary craving for respectability, as this book well demonstrates. He was, by temperament, a natural intellectual warrior, one who was "quite ready to fight half a dozen dragons" in the name of truth as he saw it, and, like all the best and most useful fighters, he had that essential, compensatory streak of profound tenderness—"I have a woman's element in me," he once wrote, but the old canard persists that the Victorian rationalists were analytical automata, devoid of feelings, who could only describe and dissect physical things. The same Huxley who was found on his honeymoon dissecting a large fish and dictating notes on its structure to his wife also left in his boxes of manuscripts and drawings a shrivelled camellia which he scrounged from a young woman he met at a dance out in Australia; she eventually became his wife. As he was a devoted husband, so was he an enlightened father. The pen that so brilliantly savaged Owen, Gladstone, Wade, Liddon and Lilly could also write this—to Huxley's daughter:

I was quite overcome today to find that you had vanished without a parting embrace to your 'faded but fascinating' parent. I clean forgot that you were going to leave this peaceful village [London] for the whirl of Gloucester dissipation this morning . . . You are but a simple village maiden—don't be taken in by the appearance of anybody. Consult your father—inclining photograph and measurement (in inches)—in any case of difficulty.

—Hardly the stereotype paterfamilias!

Professor Bibby also reminds us that it was not only the traditional reactionaries whom Huxley attacked, but also the nineteenth century trendies like Herbert Spencer who tried to re-vamp *laissez faire* as 'economic Darwinism.' Huxley also had harsh criticism for the "pigeon fancier's polity" of 'positive' eugenics: "the 'liberal' illusions that babies are all born good . . . and that it is given to everybody to reach the ethical ideal if he will only try;" not to mention the Victorian hero-worshippers "who believe that the world is to be governed by its great men, who are to lead its little ones, justly if they can; but if not, unjustly drive or kick them the right way." The book also emphasises Huxley's interest in the application of philosophy to scientific method, and his own remarkable grasp of Hume's ideas in that field.

The advantages of this work include a good index, a proper list of references, and, particularly, a short bio-

graphical appendix of many of Huxley's contemporaries. Occasionally, on peripheral matters, the author strays from accuracy. On page 115 he speaks of the Stead case and the *Fruits of Philosophy Trial* as both occurring in 1881. In fact they took place in 1885 and 1877 respectively. His biographical note on Bradlaugh, Parliament and the oath is ambiguous, if not actually misleading. Otherwise, it was a very real pleasure to read this book, indeed, I think that this is precisely the sort of biography that Huxley would have liked to have had written about him in the wake of Leonard Huxley's excellent, but sober *Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley* (1901). William Irvine gave a charmingly human touch in his joint biography of Darwin and Huxley, *Apes, Angels and Victorians* (1956), but it was only on reading Professor Bibby's book that I could almost imagine the ghost of "Huxley Episcopophagus" peering over my shoulder, tut-tutting with mock solemnity or giving a discreet chuckle here and there.

Reviewing Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Huxley wrote, "Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules." But a few months ago I heard a young man at an allegedly humanist meeting express regret that Huxley and his ilk had been so rough and forthright in dealing with fundamentalism. We would do well to remember the words of one of the fathers of evolution, Lamarck: "It is not enough to discover and prove a useful truth . . . it is necessary also to be able to propagate it and get it recognised." Huxley did just that. Houston Peterson, writing forty years ago, said: "Huxley is not only a touchstone for the last half century. He is a power over us today . . . because he happened to be a literary genius, as well as a biologist." He was also a marvellously human, human being.

NIGEL SINNOTT

PORNOGRAPHY: The Longford Report. Coronet Books (Hodder), 60p.

This morning I woke up early with the following parody passing through my mind:

*Early one porning just as the thing was rising
I heard a peer performing in the valley below:
"Oh don't deprave me, oh never lave me,
How could you treat a porny peer so!"*

I offer this doggerel not for its wit or poetic beauty but as a demonstration that the Earl of Longford and his happy band of brothers and sisters have achieved the very thing one imagines they set out to escape. They have made pornography not only a subject for polite drawing rooms but something which is vaguely endearing; so that, since their exertions began, the word has been transmuted to 'porno' and finally to 'porn.' With its new status of affectionate abbreviation, who could possibly rail against it; who dare to admit that most of it is mediocre and unbearably dull? (I know; I've had to read a lot for a forthcoming book on censorship; but I recommend *Candy*.)

The terms of reference of his Lordship's committee—it began as a commission, but even this has been made more intimate—were "to see what means of tackling the problem of Pornography would command general support." This, as its initiator generously admits in his introduction, implied "a recognition that pornography does indeed represent a problem and one which is worth looking into seriously." Some of the original investigators, like Gyles Brandreth, fell by the wayside, but their dissent is happily unrecorded in the final document. Indeed their very existence is unrecorded. And, although Kingsley Amis and his

wife dissent from the central recommendation, they are cheerfully lumped in with the rest as signatories to the report. Never before has consensus politics achieved such spurious unanimity. The noble Lord may truly claim that there has been "no such Inquiry previously" in Britain. What he intended, however, was an impertinent dismissal of the report of the Arts Council Working Party, which came, of course, to very different conclusions.

His own luridly jacketed co-production is both better and worse than I expected; it is bigger, more imposing and more interesting. David Holbrook, Kingsley Amis and Elizabeth Jane Howard offer some controversial but well presented views on the history and nature of the erotic in art, there is an excellent research survey by Maurice Yaffé (which is blandly ignored, as it corroborates the findings of the Arts Council and Presidential reports), and the legal submissions, emanating from such distinguished jurists as Lord Justice Edmund Davies, are everything that an earlier and in some respects similar document by a group of Conservative lawyers was not: exhaustive, scholarly and well-written. The section on broadcasting is much livelier than the usual committee prose and reads like a purple-passaged jeremiad by Malcolm Muggeridge; and it turns out that he is the chairman of the sub-committee responsible.

In its range, if not in its attitude, the report is worse than my fears. There need be no surprise that, having failed to demonstrate that depravity and corruption were occasioned by obscene material, or at any rate that this could be proved satisfactorily in court, the Longford commission settled for some new legal test like an "effect, taken as a whole . . . to outrage contemporary standards of decency or humanity accepted by the public at large." That done, however, the commissioners proceeded to abandon the defence of public good through literary or scholarly merit (which was anomalous only under the old test of depravity), and sweep the theatre, the cinema, private clubs (from a skin-flicks basement to the National Film Theatre), broadcasting and even sex education in schools into their net. If these proposals were ever to be accepted, psycho-social evolution would come to an end, since every new idea initially outrages the bulk of the population. I do not suppose they will be implemented, but who can be too sure? After all, Lord Longford is not a backwoods peer who turns up at Westminster every decade to vote on fishing rights, but was quite recently a prominent member of a Labour government, and one who has gained some reputation as a penal reformer.

DAVID TRIBE

TOWARDS A NEW IRELAND by Garret FitzGerald.
Charles Knight, £2.50.

Oscar Wilde's mentor, Sir John Mahaffy—I learn from a recent biography—once proposed a "solution for the Irish question" in "a constitution on the Swiss model" with "four provincial assemblies and a central parliament."

This seems to have been very similar to a suggestion by the Provisional Sinn Féin which is cited by Garret FitzGerald in the present book: a federal Ireland, with four provincial parliaments, including the Ulster province with its Protestant majority.

Does Dr. FitzGerald agree? He gives very detailed reasons for agreeing with a federal scheme, but he disagrees with the 'four assemblies.' "There seems nothing to be gained," he concludes his argument, "by playing around with the existing boundary; for good or ill, it exists,

and if a federal system is to be created, it is more likely that agreement can be reached on the basis that this boundary would be let stand, than on a basis that involved a radical change in it."

This is an eminently practical book, and on the whole an encouraging one. Dr. FitzGerald, son of the late Desmond FitzGerald, first Minister for External Affairs in the Irish Free State, is in a peculiarly favourable position to take the long view required. "It would not need much detective work," he tells us, "to establish from internal evidence that the author of this book is a Roman Catholic from the Republic of Ireland . . ."

But, he continues, "I am of mixed ancestry—half Ulster Scots and half Southerner. Apart from some immediate relatives, almost all my relations in Ireland are Northern Protestants, with whom throughout my childhood and ever since I have had close ties."

His personal inheritance makes it impossible for him to accept what he calls "the *simpliste* theory" that there are two quite separate nations in Ireland, or on the other hand "the equally *simpliste* counter-theory" that Ireland is one nation with a single neo-Gaelic, Roman Catholic culture, to which all citizens, North and South, should conform.

Why on earth, he asks, should Northern Irishmen learn Irish? Why should Irish be a compulsory subject for examinations? Why, for that matter, should the children of mixed marriages be brought up in the Catholic faith? Dr. FitzGerald's grandfather remembered a time when they weren't! "The author's family tradition relates that in the middle of the last century a relative who contracted a mixed marriage gave birth to five boys and five girls." The father used to take the boys to the Protestant church, while the mother and daughters went to Mass.

But much has happened since those comparatively tolerant days—and since Sir John Mahaffy taught Oscar Wilde and "Buck Mulligan" at Trinity College, Dublin. Partition was probably a mistake in the first place, and a blunder which has tended to be self-perpetuating, which has created a new pattern. It is what to do *now*, with the *present* situation, that engages Dr. FitzGerald's attention. He has no truck with theories, whether Northern or Southern, Protestant or Catholic. *Everything* must be taken into account, he insists; and so far as one book can cover every facet, Dr. FitzGerald's does so.

Sympathisers in England, in what Shaw might have called "Kathleen Ni Houlihan's Other Island" (there must be as many people of Irish stock in England as in Ireland itself) will take heart from Dr. FitzGerald's very reasonable proposals. "1690 And All That" has done enough damage. The recent *Humanist* special number, and now this book by an authority who is "catholic" in every sense, are encouraging straws in the wind. Perhaps it is not too late, even now, for common sense to prevail.

R. C. CHURCHILL

THEATRE

COSTA PACKET by Frank Norman.
Theatre Workshop, Theatre Royal.

Picture a huge B.B.C. weather map of Europe, with such horrors as monsoon 'Mafia' from Italy, 50,000 Asians from East Africa, hurricane 'Hello Dolly' from America, and 37,000,000 tons of Icelandic cod, all converging on the exhausted, worn-out Britons, not to mention the inevitable

(Continued on back page)

fog; and it is not surprising that an assorted group of English odds and sods decide to exchange their savings for a holiday in Spain, run by the dubious firm of Costa Packet Tours. The events and mishaps which occur during that long-dreamed-of holiday away from it all are so delightfully predictable that there could not have been one member of that animated, balloon-blowing audience of largely local inhabitants who had not experienced at least a few of the unfortunate happenings.

The title *Costa Packet* should indicate the style of humour of this musical show; from the Hotel Los Grande el Craq, which leaves much to be desired in the way of 'mod cons', to the midnight restaurant Casa Pasquale, serving 'finger bowls with chips', followed by the hilarious pork pie episode where that delicacy of the English palate is served up in *grande* Spanish style, complete with some brilliantly aggressive Flamenco dancing.

There are lots of lovely legs in this show, lots of suggestive Stanley-Baxter-type jokes, balloons and sticks of candy rock given away with the programme all wrapped up in a poke. The Theatre Royal has an atmosphere unique to London theatres, for the audience consisted largely of red-blooded smiling and laughing East Enders out for a good time, which is exactly what this Joan Littlewood production gave them. Songs were by Frank Norman, Lionel Bart and Alan Klein. Jellied eels were on sale at the door.

LINDSEY HARRIS

LETTERS

The Need for Rational Vision

Ralph Champion (14 October) may know his Popper but he certainly does not know his Bacon! The scientific model that he is so rightly condemning is Newtonian not Baconian.

There is no doubt from the record that Bacon had aesthetic and human sensibilities akin to those of Shakespeare (and may even have *been* Shakespeare, as the old arguments still suggest) and that he saw science in that light.

It is our *departure* from Bacon not our adherence to him that is our tragedy.

And what are we to make of Ralph's assertion that "visions of Utopia are usually only apparent to an élite"? What price then Bunyan's Celestial City and Blake's Jerusalem? And does he not know that if you scratch any reformer you find a utopian and that every religious, political or reforming society that has ever existed (including the N.S.S.) has always been moved by some kind of vision—and that without that vision the society and all its works would never have happened and are unintelligible?

For Popper to define freedom in terms of the State, and what it can or should do, only dates him, I am afraid. It refers to a past era so far as the Western world is concerned.

May I draw attention to Lewis Mumford's altogether deeper definition—that freedom lies in our capacity to do that for which we are *not* genetically programmed. And if that thought, out of context, is a little obscure to some, it is a reference to our ability to use imagination in the process of realising our potentialities.

Sir Karl Popper has done a great service in a ground-clearing operation on the lethal myths of fascism and communism and we are suitably in his debt in consequence. Whether he says much that is critically relevant to the future is another matter. He accepts the nation-state and makes it fundamental to his theory at a time when there are grounds for supposing that the days of the nation-state are drawing in and that a new vision of something different may soon become imperative. If so it follows that what we shall need are not just the negative virtues that Sir Karl extols but rational vision and associated passions that he so expressly denies.

PETER CADOGAN.

The Longford Report

May I respectfully suggest that the more salient examples contained in the obscenities section of *The Bible Handbook* be published in pamphlet form with a brief preface containing the case against the Longford Report?

May I also suggest that literature secretaries of N.S.S. and B.H.A. branches invite members to sell the pamphlet from door to door and perhaps in the vicinity of football grounds, theatres, etc. I am convinced that an impact can be made against the propaganda of Lord Longford and company by this means.

A. W. HARRIS.

The Editor comments:

The N.S.S. plans to publish Brigid Brophy's reply to the Longford Report as a pamphlet. *The Bible Handbook*, by G. W. Foote & W. P. Ball, is still in print, and may be obtained from G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd. for 37½p plus 7½p postage.

Neither the National Secular Society nor the British Humanist Association have branches any more; only local societies affiliated to them.

Countering the Malaise

I have now done all the homework set for me by Mr. Reader (letters, 7 October).

H. G. Wells, in *The Shape of Things To Come*, made a tough criticism of Marx and his interpreters, but Chairman Mao writes: "Do not cut the feet to fit the shoes." China is making a sweeping improvement on the Soviet approach; one might almost think that the Chinese have studied Mr. Reader and are determined to counter the malaise. Birth control is well organised; there is conscientious care of the countryside; and cities are not spreading.

No one can deny the problems that exist in the capitalist world, or in the world as Wells saw it; but Wells never knew the 'Third World.' It is even more novel to think of the Third World as a state of mind rather than in territorial terms—and the Third World grows.

As I see it Mr. Reader is wrong in using the term *World Malaise*. He is wrong in thinking of élites (8 February 1969); and he is also wrong in wishing his, and Wells's predictions on liberated men and women—optimists, of course.

Yes, it is a pity we are over 50: new world outlooks and work-styles are for the young—but we can help in small ways.

JIM LITTLE.

Correction

The last word of Barbara Smoker's letter of 14 October was "minority", and not "majority", as printed. Our apologies to Miss Smoker.

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