

# THE FREETHINKER

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## THE FUTURE OF BROADCASTING

### INSTRUMENT OF STATE OR PUBLIC FORUM ?

"A year ago," said Barbara Smoker, "the slogan 'The Open Society' was fairly fashionable and we hope that this concept will always remain with us." She was introducing a symposium on Broadcasting for Democracy, organised under the auspices of the National Secular Society in London on 5 April. Miss Smoker continued: "The classic model for the Open Society was Periclean Athens, where it was possible for the free citizens to assemble in the market place and discuss the affairs of the day. In modern times this is no longer possible, though even in my own lifetime we used to have large political meetings, but of these only Speakers' Corner still remains, now largely the province of the tourist, and with the voices of the speakers often drowned by the roar of passing traffic. Today, the modern forum is in fact radio and television." It was, said the speaker, a rather one-sided forum, as the audience tended simply to sit in front of a box and accept what was presented, though there were signs of a more enlightened approach with the new phone-in programmes which gave the man in the street more of a voice.

#### Humanism and religious broadcasting

Some viewpoints, Miss Smoker added, were allowed generous facilities for their expression on radio and television, the major political parties, for example; "But when did you last hear a broadcast on behalf of the Socialist Party of Great Britain?" The humanist movement was a good example of one which was most unfairly excluded from the mass media of communications. "On the other hand, religious broadcasting is provided with more hours than it can fill—interestingly at least. Our voice is allowed to be heard on the odd religious programme, but only as a sort of devil's advocate."

"Under the present set-up," said Alan Sapper, general secretary of the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians, "you will never get exposure of humanism on a wide scale, just as you will never get working class views on the Common Market broadcast at top viewing hours, or fair reporting of the views of hospital workers and other strikers." Broadcasting was, in fact, a weapon used by the captains of society to keep the majority of the community under control by means of propaganda and fragmentation. Mr. Sapper was disturbed by the way in which the boards of the B.B.C. and I.B.A. preserved the *status quo* by cancelling serious programmes which they considered would offend small sections of the community. He also criticised the more subtle forms of censorship created by careful selection of "the right type" for senior management, or in the case of the B.B.C., the use of short-term contracts for writers and producers. He regarded phone-ins and access programmes as only providing a veneer of democratic participation.

#### Political broadcasts "boring"

Johnny Speight, the creator of Alf Garnet, disagreed. He thought that audience participation shows were marvellous, "so long as the audience *does* participate". To create the right atmosphere for this the audience had to be "warmed up" so that they would become uninhibited—but not too uninhibited. To produce the best results, someone had to be in overall charge. "Alf Garnet goes out to 18

or 19 million people," Mr. Speight said. "They like the programme, or they hate it, but they still watch it. I appear to be a thorn in the side of the TV authorities at times, but they have renewed my contract." He also pointed out that although party political broadcasts went out at peak viewing times, everyone moaned about them and was bored with them.

Philip Whitehead, M.P., a former television producer and critic, thought that broadcasting today was democratic, "but with terrible flaws". The main problem was that output was largely determined by the agencies of mass programming. "If a programme has an audience rating of 18 million a lot will be forgiven it, because of its sheer size; but if the audience is 180,000 it will be different. At the end of the day what counts is 'muscle power'." Because of the power/money relationship in broadcasting individual programme quality tended to suffer. Mr. Whitehead was also critical of the B.B.C.'s 'apparatchiks': "As the B.B.C.'s 'party line' changes these people jettison the things they cherished in the past in order to maintain, and even extend its empire," he said. On a hopeful note, Philip Whitehead thought that the technical revolution would bring about a number of improvements, particularly with the growth of little cable stations which could cater for local broadcasting. He hoped that the proposed fourth television channel would be used to cater for minority tastes and opinions, and not just be handed over to the I.B.A.

Rowan Ayres, producer of the new B.B.C.2 programme *Open Door*, said that as result of working "from the inside" he realised the importance of Fabian policies and the inevitability of gradualness. "The B.B.C. isn't a particularly malevolent organisation at all, albeit a misguided and misinformed one at times, and often ignorant and out-of-touch." Partly because of its size it was unlikely to be improved by violent or excessive measures. During his 12 years with the B.B.C., nine of them in B.B.C.2, Mr. Ayres had seen the progressive and gradual acceptance of new ideas and change. He had also visited the United

(Continued overleaf)



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States and Canada: there the viewers were dissatisfied with what they were served by mainstream commercial broadcasting, but on the other hand he was heartened by the enormous growth of local cable stations and by the production of videotape and home TV equipment which would bring about the democratisation of television in North America. He hoped that in Britain programmes like *Open Door* would not just be a token towards public accessibility to broadcasting. "I hope that this sort of programme will be extended to twice weekly, then nightly, and eventually regional nightly."

## THE GALLOWS TREE

The slogan, "Plant a Tree in '73" has been taken up, with a novel twist to it, by the gallows-herd, whose cries of "Bring back the Rope!" have become vociferous of late. It is not altogether surprising that a man like President Nixon should be advocating the re-imposition of capital punishment, but it is at least gratifying to hear that Mr. Heath and the British Parliament are not prepared to follow this example. A curious sidelight of this atavistic development in America is the fact that Mr. Nixon's 'spiritual adviser', Dr. Billy Graham, followed up the President's call for the restoration of the death penalty with a suggestion of his own that convicted sex offenders should be castrated. Dr. Graham has subsequently had the good sense to revoke this proposal.

Whether hanging has a greater deterrent effect against crime—as compared with, say, life imprisonment—is a contentious issue; it certainly seems to nauseate and distress those who actually have to participate in this macabre ritual. Further, and more serious, is the fact that once carried out it is final and irrevocable. If a man has been imprisoned through a miscarriage of justice, the state can give him some sort of compensation; but there can be no recompense for a corpse that has been rotting in quicklime for a few years. This argument holds equally well against castration, arm- and ear-lobbing, and other forms of mutilation, which are in any case barbarous and brutalising, and unworthy of any society that has pretensions to call itself humane or civilised. The gallows tree and its "adder-bitten root" should be left where it was put—to wither.

## RHODESIA: TYRANNY AND SUPERSTITION

The political 'trial' and sentence of journalist Peter Niesewand in Rhodesia shows that Mr. Ian Smith is living up to the "glorious Christian heritage" of which he is so inordinately proud: if a man's opinions offend you, lock him up (or worse).

Mr. Smith may be a Christian according to his own reckoning, but in order to maintain political security he is evidently taking no chances. The *Sunday Times* of 11 March printed translations of selected Smith-régime leaflets (printed by the Government Printer, Salisbury) intended to deter the local tribes from collaborating with African guerillas, and invoking the wrath of various tribal deities upon those who do. One example reads: "Mhondoro, your tribal spirit, has sent a message to say that your ancestral spirits are very dissatisfied with you." What was the old saying again?—"To the statesman, all equally useful."

*In our letters columns last month Roger Curry wrote about the three-year prison sentence imposed upon student Peter Cosgrove under the Northern Ireland Special Powers Act. The sentence has been commuted, on appeal, to a fine of £350. A Catholic fellow student of Mr. Cosgrove's commented to The Freethinker: "Such is the price of justice!"*

## FAMILY PLANNING IN ABERDEEN

In 1967 Aberdeen became the first city in Britain to provide an entirely free contraceptive service, the results of which have recently been published in a report written for the Birth Control Campaign by Alastair Service, *The Benefits of Birth Control*. "Thanks to its past service and the climate of opinion built up among its young people and families, Aberdeen has already begun to save itself considerable social services expenditure by reducing the number of births of unwanted, neglected and otherwise handicapped children," the report says. The city's infant mortality rate is now one of the lowest in the world; the maternal mortality rate was zero in 1969 and 1970; and its birth rate is now nearing "replacement level".

*Copies of The Benefits of Birth Control may be obtained (price 50p, including postage), from the Birth Control Campaign, 233 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9AE.*

## 'GOLD PAPER' ON EDUCATION

*A Golden Opportunity* is the title of the West London Schools Campaign's 'Gold Paper', published as "an alternative to the I.L.E.A.'s Green Paper". The Gold Paper has this to say on the subject of denominational schools:

"... Because—1. Interest in religious observance is declining. 2. Separate religious education often leads to misunderstanding and sometimes conflict—look at the trouble which separate education for Catholics and Protestants has caused in Northern Ireland. 3. And the fact that there is already compulsory religious education in all schools—we must query the heavy emphasis placed upon them [Church schools]—especially as we pay! And not with a small contribution either." (Emphasis as in original.)

*Copies of A Golden Opportunity may be obtained by sending a 3p stamp (not an envelope) to the West London Schools Campaign, Flat 15, Giles House, 160 Westbourne Grove, London W.11.*



# S AND NOTES

## ROMANI RIGHTS

*Rom: Europe's Gypsies* is the title of the Minority Rights Group's latest report (no. 14) written by Gratton Puxon, dealing with the plight of Europe's estimated 4 million Romanies.\* Despite the fact that they were systematically exterminated by the Nazis during the last war, the Gypsy community—unlike, say, the Jewish—has received "only a negligible official compensation".

Anti-Romani prejudice goes back a long way, as the report demonstrates: "They became marked as the first blacks in Europe, opposed by the pillars of mediaeval society, the Church, the state and the guilds." Even today, there are cases of wheels being ripped off wagons and horses shot to end nomadism (Czechoslovakia); of children being forcibly separated from their parents (Norway). In Yugoslavia, however, official recognition has been given to the Romani national flag and to the community's language and culture. The various Gypsy civil rights and socio-cultural organisations now have a Paris-based secretariat, the Comité International Rom. The report calls for an end to harrassment of Romanies, the provision of serviced camping places, and for the recognition of their right to be treated as having a national and linguistic identity. The abysmal economic condition of many Romani migrant workers also calls for a greater tolerance and concern by European governments and the community at large.

\**Rom: Europe's Gypsies* by Gratton Puxon, may be obtained (price 45p plus 6p postage) from the Minority Rights Group, 36 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NG. We regret that for reasons of space we were unable to give a mention to M.R.G.'s earlier report, *The East Indians of Guyana and Trinidad*, by Malcolm Cross (45p plus 7p postage).

## FORMER WOMEN MAY APPLY

Miss Lucretia Blackhead, General Secretary of the Gathering of Gloom, has expressed "surprise and profound shock" at an announcement in the March issue (no. 37) of the I.L.E.A. magazine, *Contact*, to the effect that induction courses for Infant and Nursery teaching "are open to former women teachers and older graduates with qualified teacher status" (our italics). Subsequent reports indicate that Dr. Ilych Haczetmann is skulking round the London Teachers' Centre with an orgone accumulator, seeking to prove that Professor Borman Mohl ("the Robespierre of the Sexual Revolution") and some of his patients are at the bottom of a gigantic permissive conspiracy!

## TOPLESS CHURCH

We received recently a report of a court case in Los Angeles last year where two members of the "Hi Life Social Church" of Monrovia, California, were each fined \$34 for "managing obscene conduct."

This particular religious establishment is based on the cult of hedonism, and its 'ceremonies' involve drink, music, nude dancers and sex films. (Apparently the local State Prosecutor was under the impression that the Church was only a 'topless' bar in disguise, and not a trendy, significant, and meaningful facet of modern *avant-garde* religious practice.)

The "Hi Life Social Church" would probably do well to transfer operations across the Atlantic. If it opened the First Hi Life Social Church, London, in Soho, it might even be given charity status!

*The Open Season for dissident hunting has begun in the Soviet Union. This year's bag includes Zionists, Buddhists, and, as in other countries, Jehovah's Witnesses. When, oh when, will the Russian authorities realise that the hallmark of a civilised state is that it tolerates dissenting and eccentric private opinions as far as possible.*

## FIFTY YEARS AGO

A little while ago the Government of Italy was the expression of a secular and liberal policy. It is now on the way to Canossa. It has delivered itself into the foul hands of the priestly barbarians. We shall now see things more shameful than ever entered into the minds of the vilest reactionaries to conceive.

Why is this? Frankly, we must blame the indifference and indolence of the vast majority of so-called emancipated people, who have shut themselves up a narrow circle of paltry egotism, and have refused to listen to the warning cries of the few real Freethinkers that have survived from the heroic age of our national re-birth to which we owe our freedom from priestly power and the fall of the temporal domination of the Pope.

In our elementary schools religious instruction is to be re-established . . . As a pledge of liberalism the Government has decided to take a *referendum* on the subject. They will ask the teachers if they are in favour of it or not. But who has the inquiry in hand? The lay authorities? Not at all. This delicate task is in the hands of religious educational bodies.

. . . The Government has just enrolled a sort of National Guard, made up of *ex-fascisti*, and called *Volunteers for Public Safety*. In one of the regulations of this new corps . . . we find this: The Voluntary Militia is dedicated to the service of God, and of the nation.

I have said that we are on the way to Canossa. I should have said that we are already there; and yet no newspaper has had the courage to protest.

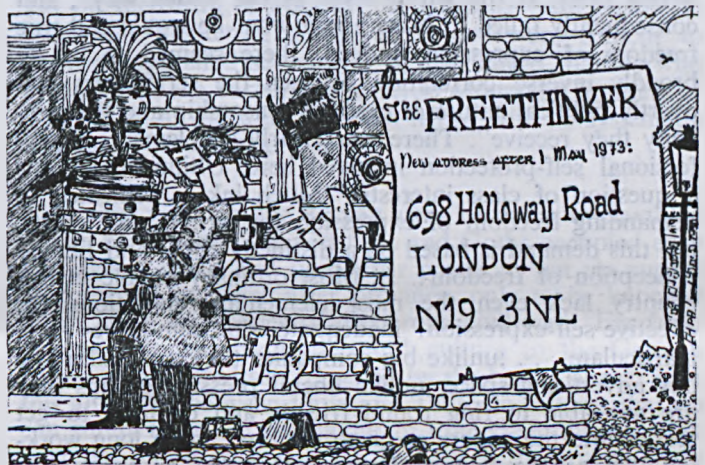
(Professor PIETRO PEREDA)

The new Irish Civic Guard . . . have been "solemnly consecrated" to the Sacred Heart. The ceremony took place in Dublin, and we regard it as a very bad omen for the future of the Free State . . . We had hoped that the Irish Government would set an example in maintaining a strict neutrality in matters of religion, but to take a start by identifying the forces of law and order with the Roman Catholic Church is to take a quite reactionary step. . . . It would have been all the better for it to have made a clean start, and so have avoided trouble later.

("Acid Drops")

From *The Freethinker* of 15 and 22 April 1923.

## MOVING ON



Will readers please note that at the end of April *The Freethinker* is moving to a new address: 698 Holloway Road, London N19 3NL. G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Ltd., will also be transferring operations from Borough High Street to the same Holloway Road address.

We would be particularly grateful if secretaries and editors of overseas freethought organisations and papers would see that the new address is passed along their local 'grapevine'.



## THE N.S.S. DINNER

More than 130 members and friends of the National Secular Society attended the Society's sixty-seventh annual dinner in London on 31 March. Barbara Smoker, President of the N.S.S., presided, and in her introductory remarks welcomed guests from as far afield as Portugal, Australia and Germany, as well as representatives of such organisations as the British Humanist Association, Brook Advisory Centres, the Defence of Literature and the Arts Society, Freethought History and Bibliography Society, Progressive League, the Society of Young Publishers, South Place Ethical Society and Women for World Disarmament. The theme of the dinner, Miss Smoker said, was to be Freedom of Speech, an appropriate topic, as the N.S.S. had always stood out for freedom of expression.

The first speaker was Marion Boyars, a partner in the publishing firm of Calder and Boyars and a co-founder of the Defence of Literature and the Arts Society, who proposed the toast to the guest of honour, Richard Handyside. Mrs. Boyars paid tribute to Mr. Handyside's personal courage in publishing *The Little Red Schoolbook*, despite his own slender economic resources and in the face of official prosecution. "It needs a very special kind of strength and integrity," said Mrs. Boyars, "to carry such an operation through to the bitter end, despite monetary and legal threats, loneliness, ostracism and ridicule." Authority in general had lost its belief in itself, said Marion Boyars, and if society was to survive it was therefore essential to reassess and re-evaluate almost all aspects of modern life. However, the "lunatic fringe of the establishment", fighting for its existence and its entrenched economic and political power, had a vested interest in trying to discourage freedom of expression. It had moved against the *The Little Red Schoolbook* not so much because of the sexual passages but because the book "questioned the authority of schools *vis-à-vis* the children".

### Censorship and class privilege

Replying to the toast, Richard Handyside said that all too often the battle against censorship was fought "on the wrong front, at the wrong level, in the wrong way", and consequently failed to bring about what he would call true freedom of expression. Indeed, there seemed to be "a broadly inverse correlation between the seriousness and overtly political nature of cases of censorship and the publicity they receive". There was clearly an element of professional self-protection involved here. Ultimately, it was a question of class interests. "Much ink is dedicated to demanding freedom of expression for writers and artists, but this demand is based on a distinctly elitist and limited conception of freedom . . . Most ordinary people in this country lack even the most elementary conditions for effective self-expression: inadequate education leaves them inarticulate . . . ; unlike big companies they can't afford to buy advertising space; unlike liberal pressure groups they are not able to ring round friends and contacts to get stories into the papers or on to the box; and a long working day at the factory leaves little time or energy for writing letters to the editor." For such people, said Richard Handyside, legal freedom of expression was basically irrelevant. We should be fighting not merely against censorship, but against the whole social system that makes freedom of expression effectively the privilege of a minority. (We hope to publish a more detailed account of Mr. Handyside's speech in a subsequent issue of *The Freethinker*.)

The toast to the National Secular Society was proposed by Edward Blishen, whom Miss Smoker introduced as

being an educationist, novelist, broadcaster and "literary tramp". Mr. Blishen suggested that the ultimate form of social censorship was that which was engendered by the traditional middle-class school, which fostered fear, sexual obscurantism, and limited social sympathies. He illustrated his point by some hilarious reminiscences of his own schooldays, and of his headmaster whose warnings were invariably introduced by the phrase "If you don't take yourself in hand . . ."—often repeated three times! "He was confident," said Edward Blishen, "that I would end up badly . . . How triumphant he would have been had he known that I would end up proposing a toast to the N.S.S." Secularity of any kind was deeply distasteful to this headmaster: it was "noisy". Charles Bradlaugh was regarded as a remarkably "noisy" man, so were Bevan, H. G. Wells, George Orwell ("fond of his own voice")—and of course, Shelley ("unwilling to bow to one greater than himself"—the headmaster obviously thought of himself as a sort of deputy-God.). Mr. Blishen's former school was "a model of the repressive society against which the N.S.S. makes constant war", and he drew a comparison between Richard Handyside and G. W. Foote, the former N.S.S. President who had been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for blasphemy ninety years ago. But the lowest crime, said Edward Blishen, was refusing freedom to a serious natural sense of inquiry.

Replying to the toast on behalf of the National Secular Society was Christopher Morey, a librarian and one of the youngest members of the Society's Executive Committee. Mr. Morey said that the N.S.S. was very grateful to people like Edward Blishen who, despite leading very busy lives, would volunteer to speak on its platform, often at short notice. On the subject of pornography, Mr. Morey said that everything in society was liable to be sold commercially: hence one saw *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Godspell*, as well as *I Am a Nymphomaniac*, offered as entertainment down the Charing Cross Road; but the whole idea of literary censorship was "incredibly paternalistic". Of the Christian 'backlash' he said: "However much they trim their sails, let none of us doubt that their ultimate aim is theocracy—to regiment us through the gates of Heaven." However much church congregations dwindled "the whole circus still carries on"—with official chaplains in hospitals and the services, the Queen as head of the Church of England, and religious broadcasting—"How many churches have *daily* services now? The B.B.C. does". He was proud of the fact that the N.S.S. was the first society to organise public opposition to the recommendations of the Longford Report.

Barbara Smoker brought the evening's proceedings to a close by quoting some of the more extreme letters that had been sent to her recently. One of them said, "Believe me, madam, if ever I am tempted to murder, you will be the first . . ." and went on to say, "I shall pray constantly for you. . . My heart is filled with pity for you."

### HIPPO STROGANOFF ?

Speakers at the Rationalist Press Association's dinner on 19 May will include Professors Bernard Crick and Antony Flew, and Dr. Colin Campbell and Antony Chapman. The venue will be the London Zoo Restaurant in Regents Park!

Tickets are £2.75 each, obtainable from the R.P.A., 88 Islington High Street, London N1 8EW (telephone: 01-226 7251).

*We apologise to William McIlroy's many weenybopper and Jesus-freak fans for the absence of "Jottings" this month.*



# THE TURNING OF THE ROMAN TIDE

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

Every so often there takes place a battle which historians chronicling the rise and fall of empires are able to pinpoint as decisive. We have all heard of Hastings, Waterloo and Stalingrad, and recognise their significance. Yet just a few years after the likely date of the birth of Christ, there occurred a battle which few people have ever heard of, but which is certainly one of the most critical in the history of the world, and whose repercussions extend right down to the Second World War. For what this occasion marked was the end of the expansion of the ancient world, and the failure of Greco-Roman civilisation to encompass the tribes of Germany, with consequences that have echoed ever since. In the year A.D. 9, a Roman army of three legions—nearly 20,000 men—was trapped and annihilated by a German chieftain, Arminius, in the forests of central Germany. This terrible disaster marks the definitive end of the Roman advance in central Europe, and of the advance of civilisation in the ancient world.

The emperor Augustus (30 B.C.—14 A.D.) drew up a grand design for the northern frontier of the Roman domain. Julius Caesar, campaigning in Gaul (France) in the last years of the Republic, had seen the Rhine as the natural frontier of Rome between the Alps and the Atlantic. Augustus, however, was more ambitious. Already by 9 B.C. a brilliant military campaign had secured for Rome the entire Danube basin to the Black Sea. The huge tracts of mountainous country, presenting formidable problems to the engineer-legions of Tiberius (the future emperor) and Drusus, were overrun by the Roman armies, and all resistance swept away. Now a Rhine frontier did not seem so attractive, for if Roman arms could be pushed to the Elbe to link with the Danube, to give a frontier stretching from what is now Hamburg to Vienna, the new line of defence would be shorter and more manageable; and Germany would be added as a new province to the empire. Tiberius and Drusus, under the approval of their emperor, took up the challenge.

## The Romans overreach themselves

By A.D. 6, almost all of this great strategic plan had been accomplished. Roman arms had reached the Zuyder Zee, in Holland, and the Elbe. Tiberius, commanding twelve legions, was on the point of crushing the most important German tribe, the Marcomanni. But not for the first, or last, time the Romans had overreached themselves. An enormous revolt broke out in Pannonia, in what is now Yugoslavia, and it required nearly four years in the field for Tiberius to stamp out resistance in this recently-pacified province. This diversion, which caused near-hysteria in Italy, gave the Germans their chance.

Augustus, who was 69 in the year 9, had lost his nerve and his judgement. He appointed Quinctilius Varus, the efficient though cruel legate of Syria, to the command of the remaining Roman legions in Germany, despite Varus's lack of military prowess. On a reconnaissance mission across the Rhine, Varus and his army were surrounded by the barbarians and almost wiped out. This appalling loss of men and arms virtually decimated the frontier defences. Widespread panic in Rome followed the news of this disaster, for it was expected that the barbarians would sweep their way south, into Gaul, Italy and Rome itself,

with nothing to withstand them. Fortunately, the German tribes were too disunited to conceive an all-out attack on a Roman empire whose military weakness had been so alarmingly exposed. And in the subsequent reign of Tiberius, the brilliant Roman general Germanicus won a series of victories over the barbarians which quelled them for some time.

Yet there was no doubt about the immense significance of Arminius's devastating victory over Varus. Writing of the event a hundred years later, Tacitus says that Arminius was indeed the liberator of Germany. He fought against the Romans at the peak of their imperial glory, and defeated the mightiest military machine the world had yet seen. And the lesson was not lost on the Romans: gone for ever was the dream of pushing the frontier of Roman civilisation to the Elbe, and bringing the "pax Romana" to northern Europe. Augustus, who was haunted by the disaster of Varus to the end of his days, never replaced the lost legions, and bequeathed to his successors the advice not to undertake the further expansion of the empire.

## Rome on the defensive

This policy was, by and large, followed by future emperors. The conquest of Britain by Claudius and Nero brought into the empire a province that scarcely justified the vast effort in men, money and materials that Rome was to invest over three hundred years. Trajan (98-117) conquered Dacia, now part of Romania, but Roman arms were withdrawn by the emperor Aurelian in 274. On the German frontier, Rome was permanently on the defensive after A.D. 9. Only in the declining years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius (174-180) was a serious attempt made to extend the northern frontier, following the successful repulsion of a massive invasion of Germans across the Rhine. Yet on the death of Marcus, the Romans—still unable to forget the shattering defeat of Varus—were content to reach a negotiated settlement. It was indeed Marcus who first allowed the barbarians to settle within the frontiers of the empire, as quasi-independent tribes, with no systematic attempt to "Romanise" them.

As time wore on, the Roman army became the plaything of the barbarians. The Germans and Goths occupied even the highest posts, and used their power to put up puppet emperors in province after province, only to be knocked down again in a series of disastrous civil wars. Far from bringing Roman civilisation and culture to the German tribes, Rome was itself humbled by the barbarians. It is in this antipathy between Latin and Teutonic cultures that we can surely trace the beginnings of Franco-German conflict over the centuries; and it can be seen at its virulent work in the hatred of Catholic and Protestant for each other in medieval Europe. The deep detestation of the German protestants for Rome and all its works, would not have been historically possible if the Roman empire had extended its sway over Germany, and implanted the beginnings of a Latin culture. The battle in the forests of central Germany in A.D. 9 has had consequences far beyond its impact on Roman foreign policy in the last years of Augustus. It was one of the most decisive battles in the history of the world.



# FROUDE'S CRISIS OF FAITH

ERIC GLASGOW

It seems that the fashionable reaction against Victorian greatness, effected by such writers as Lytton Strachey, is already being replaced by a mood of appreciation, if not of adulation, for the essential features of Victorian England. This is probably because the Victorian Age possessed exactly those qualities which are most needed and lacking in England today: stability, a set of firm moral standards, and a preoccupation with non-material values and considerations. At any rate, it is interesting to examine the recurrent oscillation between faith and doubt of those distant, but immensely formative years.

Unlike A. L. Rowse in 1944, I did not encounter J. A. Froude's *Nemesis of Faith* whilst travelling in a train through Devon. On the other hand, like him, I appreciate Froude's great style, his vast historical judgement, his clear, sceptical intelligence, and his infinite capacity for moral courage and forthright avowal. It should matter not at all that what moved and challenged Froude, in the nineteenth century—intellectual integrity, passion for truth, and concern for abstract thought—is now chiefly forgotten in the welter of materialistic claims of our own times, and in the confusion of so many unselective voices and opinions. We need such principles still, and especially in the response of free thinkers to the problems and the pressures of the late twentieth century. Nor should we lightly discard or reject Froude's literary elegance and skill as a necessary factor in his claims to examine and to disclose moral and philosophical truth.

## Froude's "breach with orthodoxy"

Recently I bought (for the price of a cup of tea) a good copy of the 1903 edition of Froude's *Nemesis of Faith*, with a useful introduction by Moncure D. Conway, that stalwart pioneer of South Place Ethical Society. As I re-read Froude's detailed and largely autobiographical attack on the religious establishment, I could not but admire its intellectual force, its resolute acceptance of the requirements of reason, and its steadfast moral courage. After all, when it was first published in 1849 it meant, in effect, that Froude was obliged to relinquish the security of his Fellowship at Exeter College, Oxford, and to earn his bread as a freelance writer (including the editorship of *Fraser's Magazine*, 1860-74). Froude had taken deacon's orders in 1845, but in 1847 he published, under the pseudonym of "Zeta," his *Shadows of the Clouds*, with its story of religious scepticism, and he wrote tendentiously about Spinoza later in the same year. *The Nemesis of Faith*, when it came out, therefore represented the completion of Froude's "breach with orthodoxy."

Froude himself later called this work "heterodoxy flavoured with sentimentalism;" but it was supported by Baron Bunsen (the German Ambassador in London, 1841-54), and by F. D. Maurice (1805-1872), who taught English literature at King's College, London (1840-1853), and the furore which the book aroused (including the public burning by the theologian William Sewell, of a copy found in the possession of a student in Exeter College Hall), created a large demand for it: a second edition came out later in 1849, and Froude was urged, though without result, to re-issue it as late as 1880. However, the book was re-published in the U.S.A. (as the custom then often was) without Froude's consent or his approval.

On 19 July 1872, Froude was able to disclaim his deacon's orders under the terms of the Clerical Disabilities Act of that year. So his breach with clericalism became

complete—and he was given in return the freedom to write his subsequent historical works, such as his *History of England* (12 vols., 1856-70), his edition of Carlyle's *Reminiscences* (1881), and his *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (1894).

## Reputation as an historian

It seems that in Froude's case the loss of the Church was the greater gain of historical scholarship. He demonstrated that history could be vivid and lucid, without any sacrifice of scholarship; and, of course, his great books always rested upon the same scrupulous intellectual integrity which burst upon the British public with *The Nemesis of Faith*: the effective turning-point of Froude's life, when he moved "from mild tractarianism to scepticism."<sup>1</sup> If he had not so moved, then it is unlikely that Froude would ever have attained and kept, as an historian, a reputation which has rivalled that of Macaulay.

Perhaps it is difficult today to understand how a book about religious beliefs, such as *The Nemesis of Faith*, could agitate early Victorian Oxford. Not surprisingly, Froude was then preparing to teach in Van Dieman's Land<sup>2</sup> (although he never actually went there); and on 25 February 1849, he wrote to A. H. Clough, "I can't read, write, or think, or do anything but groan, and it is a bore to see old friends turn their backs on one—only the Rawlinsons still stick to me."<sup>3</sup> Strange as that may seem, in our own, less theological age, the episode of Froude's crisis of faith is a part of the Victorian experience of faith and reason, which is still significant even for us today.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 1967 edn. *Chambers' Encyclopaedia* vol. 6: p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> The modern Tasmania.

<sup>3</sup> DUNN, W. H. 1961. *James Anthony Froude: a biography* vol. 1: p. 132.

## IRISH EASTER SONG

The red owl stirs the ashes of the world,  
His stiff, curled claw  
Clutching the moon's dead bones  
Over the grave of lovers. Gently  
He strokes the dying cat that killed him.

She writhes and purrs.  
In her glazed eyes he sees  
The black-capped judge;  
The empty bench melts to her hot-lipped sighs,  
And burns the dreams trapped in her Roman flames.

And primitive skull encased in its pagan tomb,  
Though embalmed with oil,  
Is blind to the unrolled stone  
And homeless woman  
Stumbling with child to stable.

CECILY DEIRDRE BOMBERG.

## THE FREETHINKER

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# THE OTHER RESURRECTION

R. J. CONDON

From the time of Paul the Resurrection of Jesus has been the fundamental doctrine upon which the whole structure of the Christian religion rests, and its celebration forms the climax of Easter, the principal feast of the Church. The importance of the Easter miracle has tended to obscure an even more remarkable case of recovery from death, for it has never been suggested that Jesus began to decompose after his burial, as did Lazarus, whom Jesus restored to life.

The Raising of Lazarus, if it really happened, was by far the most convincing demonstration of the divine power possessed by Jesus, yet of the four Evangelists only John thought it worth reporting. According to him, the miracle was performed before a crowd of people, and it quickly became common knowledge (12 : 17-18). The silence of the Synoptists is strange indeed, particularly as all three mention the supper in the house of Simon the Leper without the slightest hint that the main attraction there was the risen Lazarus (John 12 : 9). Even Christian scholars have found the story impossible to believe. The Rev. Dr. E. A. Abbott (*Encyclopaedia Biblica: Lazarus*) calls it "non-historical . . . like the records of the other miracles in the Fourth Gospel, all of which are poetic developments." He adds that "John writes as a mystical poet, imbued with Jewish traditions from Egypt . . ."

## Lazarus and Osiris

Many traditions from Egypt can be traced in the Bible, and few more faithfully reproduce the original than the story of the Raising of Lazarus. It is demonstrably a copy, with locale and actors the same in name, of the Resurrection of Osiris. The substance of the story can be found in the Book of the Dead (hereinafter called the Ritual for brevity) and the Litany of Ra in the form of scattered allusions. These refer to a drama represented in the Egyptian Mysteries, whose characters and scenes were as well known as are those of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

Lazarus, says Dr. Abbot, is a contraction of Eleazar. El is Lord, while Azar has the meaning of help or strengthen. In Egyptian, which has no letter z, Azar reads Asar. And Asar was how the Egyptians spelled the name of Osiris. The Coffin of Osiris, constellated in the Great Bear, was known to the Arab astronomers as the Bier of Lazarus, confirming that the two characters were one and the same.

Bethany, where Lazarus was restored to life, is said in the Gospels to have been fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. This of course fixed its position for the Church, and in due course a Lazarium was established complete with the tomb of Lazarus. But there had never been a Bethany in Palestine, nor did the Church succeed in imposing the name on the village which grew up around the Lazarium. Its inhabitants called it, and still do, El Azariyeh, or the Place of Azar. Thomas Inman (*Ancient Faiths*) gives Bethany the meaning of Temple of Anu. Beth is house, place or temple. Anu was a Babylonian god, but in the context of the Lazarus story the probable meaning is Annu or Heliopolis. It was in Annu that Osiris, in Egyptian legend, was raised from the dead by his son Horus. Gerald Massey, whose *Ancient Egypt the Light of the World* is here being drawn upon, considered Horus to be one with the god Iu or Imhotep. If so, Horus is Jesus by name, for as late as the ninth century of the Christian era we find Iu as a spelling of Jesus. It was noticed by the

present writer on a monument of that period in the church on Caldy Island, Pembrokeshire.

## Mary and Martha; Mer and Merti; Isis and Nephthys

The parts of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, were played in Egypt by Isis and Nephthys, the divine sisters of Osiris, the two Merti or eyes who kept watch over the dead god. Mer means eye, Merti is the two eyes, and Mer and Merti reappear thinly disguised in the Gospels as Mary and Martha. The sisters may be further identified. Mary is described as sitting at the feet of Jesus, while Martha is busy working about the house (Luke 10 : 39-40). After the death of Lazarus, "Mary still sat in the house" (John 11 : 20). Isis is often portrayed sitting at the feet of Osiris, in fact she is the Seat personified. Ast, a form of her name, means seat, and she wears the sign of the seat on her head. Nephthys, the other sister, carries the sign of the house on her head. Her name is written Nebt-hat, or Mistress of the House, and Martha in Aramaic means mistress. In the Gospels Martha is very much the Mistress of the House, being represented both as house-keeper and house-owner (Luke 10 : 38-40).

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11 : 5). The speaker in the Ritual (chapter 9), impersonating Horus, says: "I am the son who loveth his father Osiris." Jesus denies that Lazarus is dead. Osiris in Annu, like Lazarus in Bethany, is not dead but sleeping. The only death recognised in Egypt was the final extinction of the wicked. The virtuous slept until Horus came to awaken them.

On the way to the sepulchre in Annu, Horus meets the two sisters and informs them that he possesses words of magical power for the raising of Osiris (Ritual, chapter 37). Jesus likewise tells Martha of his power to raise Lazarus (John 11 : 23).

## The place of weeping

Bethany was the place of weeping for the dead Lazarus. Mary wept, the Jews wept, and "Jesus wept". No wonder, for Annu was the place of weeping for Osiris, "the dwelling of the god Rem-Rem" (Ritual, chapter 75). Rem signifies weeping, and Jesus here plays the part of Rem-Rem or Remi the weeper (Litany of Ra 1 : 21).

Lazarus stank after four days in the tomb. The corruption which befell the inert Osiris is referred to more than once in the Ritual. In chapter 38b the speaker, as Horus, says: "I am the herald of his [Ra's] words to him whose throat stinketh." The four days are probably the four days of mourning for Osiris mentioned by Plutarch.

Jesus call Lazarus to "come forth" from the tomb. Horus, as Ra, is "he who makes the mummy come forth" (Litany of Ra 1 : 68). He says: "Thou art raised up then, O Osiris . . . I make thee to stand up alive . . . Thy two sisters Isis and Nephthys come unto thee" (Ritual, chapter 181). "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes" (John 11 : 44), which was the Egyptian mode of burial. Lazarus portrayed in the Roman catacombs, in Massey's words, "comes forth from the tomb as an eviscerated, embalmed and bandaged mummy, warranted to have been made in Egypt." He is shown standing in the doorway of the tomb, with Jesus calling upon him to come forth and touching him with a wand



or sceptre. In chapter 92 of the Ritual, the "Chapter of opening the tomb", it is Horus who "bringeth along his divine father . . . by means of his sceptre." The final scene in John's version is the release of Lazarus from his grave-clothes. Similarly the risen Osiris is "given his hand", meaning that his hands are freed from the mummy-bandages (chapter 181).

#### Another parallel

We have not quite finished with Lazarus. He makes a brief reappearance in John chapter 12, where he is the star turn at a supper given six days before the Passover. This corresponds with the Egyptian festival of the risen

Osiris, celebrated on the sixth night of the Ten Mysteries. These are listed and briefly described in chapters 19 and 20 of the Ritual. The Sixth Day Festival, as it is called in chapter 1, was held of course in Annu. Similarly the sixth-day supper for Lazarus was given in Beth-annu or Bethany.

Osiris was the god who died and rose again, and it was in the hope of rising as he did that the dead began their passage through the Egyptian Purgatory in the character of Osiris and bearing his name. In Egypt the Resurrection was spiritual; it was not thought that the body would live again. The Evangelists re-issued the earlier mythic material as "history", and the gross physical resurrections in the Gospels were an inevitable outcome of the process.

# REVIEWS

## BOOKS

**THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind** by H. G. Wells; revised and brought up to date by Raymond Postgate and G. P. Wells. Cassell, £5.75.

This history was first written in 1918 and 1919, just after the First World War. Under that shattering experience there was a renewed effort to understand the past in relation to the present, and a widespread feeling that such a catastrophe must not be allowed to happen again. It was felt that history had been largely mistaught, "in nationalist blinkers" and because of this it had been possible to whip up periodic hysteria for senseless wars.

So, to Wells, the first thing that was necessary was a new view-point. Abandoning the nationalist stance, he aimed at a world history that would review the whole process, from the formation of the world and the beginnings of life. This was a long story. In 1779 it was thought that the world was six thousand years old. Now it is realised, through the study of the rocks and stars, that thousands of millions of years have passed to bring the earth to what we know.

In this long story human history is of comparatively recent growth. Neanderthal man appeared about 50,000 years ago. He was displaced by Palaeolithic man whose remains have been found in caves in Europe, at Cro-Magnon and elsewhere. It is interesting to note that the female Cro-Magnon had a brain capacity exceeding that of the modern male, but unfortunately her head seems to have been smashed by a heavy blow. All this early period is fascinatingly told by Wells. The Sumerians of 6000 B.C. had towns, hydraulic engineering and religion. Over the face of the earth, settled habits alternate with periods of migration, conquest follows conquest, races are swallowed up and new ones appear. Half the duration of human civilisation and the keys to all its main institutions are to be found before Sargan I, who lived in 2750 B.C. The time-scale is clearly illustrated throughout the book in diagrams. Cretes, Phoenicians, Chinese and Indian peoples cross the stage. We owe to the Semitic peoples our numerals, arithmetic and algebra. Ancient Greece was built on the ruins of a still more ancient civilisation.

Such a history is rich in themes. Wells traces the development of the class system in society. "A certain freedom and a certain equality passed out of human life when men

ceased to wander." Enslavement grew as civilisation grew. Towns had to be built; the head-man, assisted by the gods, grew in power and authority; the poor man gradually woke up to the fact that even the patch he cultivated (when not building towns and palaces) was not his own. Wars brought in many captives to supplement the army of serfs. Complications and refinements were introduced as time went on: in parts of the world the forms were fixed and lasted for centuries. In other parts it became slightly more flexible.

In all early civilisations, at the heart of the city was the temple. Religion and the priesthood developed with agriculture and settled habits. Wells sees religion (*religare*—to bind) as a set of common ideas which served as a cement to society and provided a set of answers at a time when knowledge was rudimentary. The priest and the government were one and the same, until a split arose between the secular rulers and the priests. The Pharaohs of Egypt united the two functions; they were god-kings. The theory of the divine right of kings had a long run in front of it.

A summary can only indicate some of the main themes. In relation to the underlying message of the book, however, it is necessary to express numerous reservations. Wells's main idea is that throughout history there is an urge towards universality, towards the transcending of individuality with all its selfishness, fears and aggression towards a universal human brotherhood. In the end this will lead to a world government based on a social revolution. He traces this idea, at first vaguely felt and enunciated by early philosophers, then inspiring great movements of mankind, until it becomes more and more the conscious and necessary goal.

One can sympathise with the longing of Wells for a universal brotherhood that would outlaw war and injustice, but whether such a purpose actually has existed throughout history in the semi-mystical way envisaged here, is open to doubt. To Wells it appears that this underlying urge existed from the first and has motivated many movements of history. To hold that there is such primary purpose, especially one to which the author is attached, is likely to lead to a certain amount of distortion, as he tries to make the facts match his desire: it is hardly, therefore, scientific. And if one holds that an *idea* is the primary motive in history, there is a danger of underestimating other factors, which are not in the realm of ideas.

The second questionable part of his thesis is that this idea of universal brotherhood reached its clearest expression and its chief power through the words of Jesus Christ. Wells accepts Jesus as an historical person, considers him an inspired revolutionary figure; he accepts that Christianity became an amalgam of elements from many religions,



that St. Paul introduced perversions and doctrinal absurdities, and that from the time it was adopted as a formal state religion by Constantine it became part of the power structure and played its part in the oppression of the human race, but nevertheless he is convinced that the essential idea of Jesus, that of the brotherhood of man, has persisted and that for more than a thousand years the idea of the unity of Christendom dominated Europe. Constantine himself adopted Christianity because it offered the best possibility of uniting his empire. The Church as it developed had immense powers of organisation, particularly in the field of education, and these were important in the period after the breakdown of the Roman Empire. So he sees the Christian religion as a unifying force; but he also sees it as the basic motive force behind early revolts against oppression, inspiring the peasants' revolts of the fourteenth century, the Reformation, and the early development of socialism.

Wells says of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, "There is now a great and growing mass of equalitarian belief and altruistic impulse in the modern civilisations which certainly owes its spirit to Christianity." Of the French Encyclopaedists of the eighteenth century he says, "Their chief error seems to have been their indiscriminate hostility to religion." Of the emergence of the working class as a political force in the nineteenth century he says, "It is the writer's belief that massive movements of the ordinary people over considerable areas only became possible as a result of the propagandist religions, Christianity and Islam, and their insistence on self-respect." Finally, of the development of nationalism he says:

Men have relapsed: it is but for a time. The idea of the World State, the universal kingdom of righteousness of which every living soul shall be a citizen, was already in the world two thousand years ago, never more to leave it.

Of course Wells mentions other factors in the development of political and social consciousness. The Black Death, for instance, which decimated populations in the fourteenth century; the extravagances of kings in France and England; the spread of industrialism; the pursuit of riches and power; the suffering caused by wars, all these were contributing factors leading to revolts and revolutions. He admits also that every attempt to form a 'righteous society' from Jesus Christ to the League of Nations has so far failed. "The first attempt to produce a world law had passed away like laughter in a tavern." But he concludes his story of the Spanish Civil War, apparently flying in the face of what was then observable fact, with defiant optimism:

And yet the human thrust towards that better order of freedom and brotherhood recurs with an undying obstinacy . . . To trace the history of mankind for the past ten thousand years, as we have done, makes us realise that, with an almost astronomical inevitability, we are moving towards a world unification based on a fundamental social revolution.

World unification may be an inspiring aim, under such conditions. But the weakness of Wells's position on the rôle of Christianity is seen in the fact that it does not explain the rise of popular movements in countries untouched by this religion: it does not sufficiently take into account the record of Christianity in such places as Peru and Mexico; nor does it account for the massacres and cruelties perpetrated in its name in Europe. Another World history might quite justifiably stress the conflicts and disunity caused by religion. It is even surprising that Wells took such a naïve view of the teaching of Jesus himself; movements of unrest are brought about more by bad conditions than by divine inspiration.

Professor G. P. Wells, the son of H.G., adds some illuminating chapters on the technological and population explosions. Raymond Postgate, who died in 1971, wrote some final chapters, but his account is too biased. On Vietnam, for instance, he is pro-American, ignoring all the criticisms of American intervention, even from Americans themselves.

The final impression that this book leaves is of the devastation that war has caused throughout human history. The squandering of lives to satisfy power-crazy maniacs, the wholesale destruction of villages, towns and peoples, all this makes one wonder why the urge to put a stop to it once and for all is not stronger than it is. Confused by religion and false patriotism, men have been dragooned over and over again into the slaughter of their brothers. We indeed need world brotherhood and social justice; by attributing this desire to the influence of one or two dying religions, Wells has himself reduced its universality, and to a certain extent distorted history. The desire for peace is on a bigger scale than even Wells contemplated.

Despite all one's disagreements, however, one must agree that Wells knew how to tell a story. It is an enthralling subject, vividly told.

MERLE TOLFREE

**THE UNKNOWN ORWELL** by Peter Stansky and Williams Abrahams. Constable, £3.

The unknown Orwell is in fact Eric Blair. This is a biography of Blair moving from prep school to Eton, from the Imperial Police Force in Burma to life as a struggling writer, interspersed with deliberately chosen periods 'down and out'. The latter experiences provided material for his first published book, at which point, according to the authors of this book, he *became* George Orwell. The book, in collecting material from memoirs and reminiscences offers interesting details and perceptive insights. Yet it is very much a book with a theory; and that theory I find an oversimplification.

The theory is that Blair chose to become Orwell, the word 'persona' is used and we are constantly reminded that the book is moving steadily towards the point when Blair was "becoming a writer" and "becoming George Orwell". I am suspicious of biographies containing too single-minded an explanation of the subject's personality, since I feel all human beings are too complex and multifaceted for such approaches to be convincing. It is true that Blair seemed deliberately to adopt rôles and, as this book skilfully shows, tended to edit his own version of his experiences. One of the strengths of the book is its demonstration that Orwell's essay "Such, Such Were the Joys" is a very partial account of his own school-days and that his period in Paris was less relentlessly harsh than his own description implies. Perhaps Orwell's awareness of such discrepancies was a factor in his final request that no biography of him should be written. Stansky and Abrahams themselves seem unconsciously to show doubt about their central proposition that Blair performed a conscious metamorphosis act in their account of how he chose his pseudonym: "Seldom can a man have shed one identity and taken another with less concern as to who he was finally going to be."

In the account of the early life the thinness of the theory seems to have forced into the book details of marginal relevance, such as a commonplace schoolboy letter or details of the Eton wall game. The authors also,



clearly aware of Orwell's later writing about the class system, seem almost obsessed with the nuances of the English class structure. Admittedly, Blair's need to expiate his guilt as an ex-Etonian, ex-Police Officer may be a partial explanation for his plunging into the life of the dregs of society; but the jargon of "a class lower than middle-middle-middle" or "upper-upper-middle" does not seem very helpful in an examination of social distinctions. This book seems less valuable as a biography than as a chronicle of certain aspects of life in the early decades of the century. One aspect of this which I find unsatisfactory is the now oft-repeated cliché of the war as the Great Divide, such as references to Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* and the writings of Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree.

This book will be useful for future Orwell scholars with its clear notes and diverse references, but for me it ends where I would have liked it to begin. It would be interesting to follow Orwell into the Spanish Civil War; this being a field that Stansky and Abrahams have explored with great insight in *Journey to the Frontier*, and an experience that was crucial in shaping Orwell's major works. For glimpses of Orwell the man I would turn to Rayner Heppenstall's *Four Absentees*; for a careful examination of Orwell's ideas I would recommend Raymond Williams' study in the Fontana Modern Masters series, and for a closer understanding of Orwell the writer I would study the collected essays, journalism and letters. And even though this is intended as a study of Eric Blair rather than George Orwell (supposing it were possible to separate the two) I think anyone writing about Orwell should not entirely lose sight of the masterpieces *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which have no mention in *The Unknown Orwell*.

JIM HERRICK

**OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE: An Evolutionary Approach** by Karl R. Popper. Clarendon Press, £4.50 (£1.50 paper).

It is nearly ten years since Popper's last book appeared, and so this collection of essays is most welcome. It contains many novel and exciting ideas which should make an impact in such diverse fields as biology, history, psychology and literary criticism. It is necessary to draw attention to the wide range of Popper's thought because he has become known, if at all, as the Falsification Man and the Anti-Inductivist in the philosophy of science. But his interests are far wider than the philosophy of science because he is concerned with the *growth of knowledge in all its forms*.

There is such an embarrassment of riches in this book that my review will be a summary of leading features rather than a critical appraisal. Perhaps the showpiece of the collection is "Of Clouds and Clocks" which was first published as a pamphlet but has been out of print for some time. In this essay Popper advances a new theory of evolution containing a revised version of Karl Buhler's theory of language. This is done in an attempt to come to grips with the perennial problem of rationality and human freedom in the context of modern physics and biology.

Running through the collection are two main themes which happen to be of particular interest for humanists and rationalists. One is his biological approach to personal knowledge allied with this theory of evolution and the

other is his sustained argument against "subjectivism" and belief philosophies.

Popper draws a sharp distinction between subjective or personal knowledge and objective knowledge. Further, he claims that subjective knowledge, which consists of concepts, expectations and dispositions, should be studied from a biological point of view. The same suggestion has been forcefully made by Piaget in his recent books. Philosopher usually fail to adopt a biological approach to subjective knowledge, and at the same time they attempt to reduce reality to subjective terms. Given a subjective theory of knowledge the ultimate question becomes "Do I exist?" and knowledge grows by the *expansion of consciousness* which provides a mixed-up rationale for drug-taking and excursions into mysticism. This approach can have other bizarre effects, for instance the philosopher may doubt whether the world and its contents actually exist. In a long chapter Popper defends commonsense realism, the theory that the world exists independent of our minds. He accepts that matter came before mind because he regards mind and consciousness as products of evolution. While he defends commonsense realism he attacks in great detail the "bucket theory" because on closer inspection it turns out to be another subjective theory.

This brings us to the major innovation in the book. Popper's pluralistic "three world" theory which is an attempt to go beyond the materialism versus idealism debate. In contrast to the materialists who argue that the mind is reducible to matter and subjectivists who argue that matter is a product of mind, Popper suggests that matter and mind both exist and in addition there is a "world 3" containing the *objective contents of thought*. The physical "world 1" interacts with the mental "world 2". World 2 interacts with world 3 and by means of these interactions the contents of world 3 make an impact upon the physical world. The most important contents of world 3 are probably scientific theories and theories of value but there are other contents such as problems and the objective contents of works of art. Popper's world 3 is rather similar to what the literary critic F. R. Leavis independently called the "third world"—". . . the realm of that which is neither merely private and personal nor public in the sense that it can be brought into the laboratory".

In a chapter on "The Theory of the Objective Mind" Popper argues that explanation of historical events should be objective, as opposed to the method of empathy or mental re-enactment expounded by Dilthey and Collingwood. His method of explanation by means of the 'logic of the situation' might be useful in our attempts to explain violence and to control it. Instead of trying to explain violence as a result of *either* environmental determinants or psychological factors alone, we should recognise that violence occurs through a combination of particular types of situation with myths or traditions which call for violence in these situations. Consequently we are presented with two tasks, one being to avoid these situations, the other being to undermine the traditions which call for senseless violence.

Throughout the book Popper is advancing arguments in attempts to solve difficult and important problems, so the text must be read closely and possibly more than once. But I am sure that the careful reading which this book demands will be amply rewarded.

RALPH CHAMPION



## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

edited by Sir Francis Vallat. Europa Publications, £2. (Paperback, £1.25.)

Based on a series of lectures given at King's College, London, this excellent book will interest particularly members of that "human race to which", as Shaw once put it, "so many of my readers belong."

Freethinkers will be gratified to see the prominent place given to Tom Paine, whose *Rights of Man* (1791), despite Burke and Bentham and government persecution, remained and still remains "powerful and popular", in the words of J. H. Burns, writing here on "The Rights of Man since the Reformation."

Professor Burns even reports, "in no spirit of derision", that a copy of Paine's classic was once found among "the usual fetishes" of a West African witch-doctor. So the Rights of Man are not always completely separate from the Rites of Man.

Confirmation of this comes from Lord Denning, writing on "Freedom of Association and the Right to Work." We may grumble at the "fetishes" of the law, like Dickens at the "Chancery fog" in *Bleak House*. Yet, as Lord Denning takes us on his conducted tour of past abuses and how they were gradually remedied by legal precedent, we begin to understand the close connection between law and freedom. We have the right to heckle—"comme à Hyde Park" to quote Professor René Cassin, writing here on "l'Homme et l'Etat moderne"—but we have no right to shout a speaker down. Such action is an interference with another's liberty, which we should be highly indignant about if directed to ourselves.

"Except the common people!" King John's barons chorused in the musical version of *1066 And All That*. And the audience got the point. Nevertheless, 1215 eventually led to 1688, and 1688 to Tom Paine, and Paine to Beveridge and Bevan. "The right to starve" was often the Victorian right, so far as many of the poor were concerned. And in this book it is Lord Caradon who brings us down to earth from the high-sounding phrases of the United Nations. Writing on "Race, Poverty and Population", Lord Caradon vigorously intones his own Caradonian Creed: the three dangers are not three dangers, but one danger. "They are all one", he says truly. It is a large part of human rights to have enough to live on, not to be overcrowded, not to be discriminated against on grounds of race, colour or religion. The gap between the Affluent Society and the majority of the world is growing wider, Lord Caradon points out. "Except the coloured people!" is a 'barren chorus' that should not be applauded.

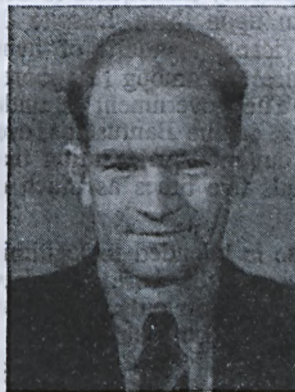
R. C. CHURCHILL

## REBEL PITY: The Life of Eddie Roux by Eddie & Win Roux. (2nd edn.) Penguin Books, 45p.

The present reviewer is unlikely to be ill-disposed towards a man whose interests—apart from politics—were botany, rationalism and Swinburne's poems. However, even allowing for prejudice in Roux's favour, I still found this to be one of the most fascinating books I have read for many years.

It is a story of poverty and idealism, success and tragedy, mixed with a blend of pathos and patient humour; the story of a young man, the son of a maverick Afrikaner, who espoused the cause of South Africa's underprivileged black workers, worked tirelessly for the embryonic South African Communist Party, and for many years edited its

paper, *Umsebenzi*. The book gives some fascinating accounts of the workings of the C.P. in the days before the Second World War: in the case of South Africa it reads in places not unlike Spike Milligan's *Puckoon* set on the veld. After breaking with the Party in the late 1930s, the Rouxs eventually gravitated to the South African Rationalist Association, to which Eddie Roux was elected chairman, and he later launched the Association's journal, *The Rationalist*, which still somehow manages to keep going.



Edward Roux  
(Photograph taken in 1940)

When Eddie Roux left the Communist Party he had little idea that more than twenty years later he would be persecuted for his former activities (under retrospective Nationalist legislation) by South Africa's Minister of Justice, Dr. B. J. Vorster—now Prime Minister. In 1964 when Vorster banned Roux from teaching and publishing the Rationalist Association elected him honorary president for life, and his wife Winifred took over *The Rationalist*. What hurt Eddie Roux most of all was being deprived of his livelihood—that of Professor of Botany at the University of Witwatersrand, but although cut off from the campus Roux carried on his researches into the ecology of the veld. The Government eventually gave him permission to publish his findings and his book *Grass—a story of Frankenwald* was published posthumously in 1969. In it Roux warned of the dangers of a "brave new world [where] there will be no jungle, forests, savannas or veld where men may roam, and no wild life".

Besides being a gifted scientist and political activist, Roux's work as a down-to-earth educationist should not be undervalued. To encourage the spread of literacy among the coloured workers of South Africa he pioneered the use of what he called Easy English—now largely supplanted by Basic English.

This book is a fitting tribute not only to Eddie Roux, but also to his loyal wife Winifred who edited and finished the text for publication after her husband's death. Their courage and perseverance have made 'rationalist' a label to be worn with pride.

NIGEL SINNOTT

## PAMPHLETS

**South Africa: THE "BANTU HOMELANDS"**  
by Barbara Rogers. International Defence & Aid Fund/  
Christian Action Publications, 30p.

The recent release of Father Cosmas Desmond from house arrest imposed for his part in publicising conditions in transit and resettlement camps focuses attention once



more on the South African government's draconian implementation of separate development by creation of the so-called Bantu homelands. This well-documented pamphlet outlines the background, present state and likely consequences of this policy.

The Africans are essential to the white economy, but the doctrine of separate development demands that they be admitted to white areas only as migrant workers. In fact, the numbers of Africans in white areas is increasing despite the removal of a million dependants to the Bantustans. These are, of course, hopelessly inadequate to bear the increasing burden being put upon them. Despite the government's claim for its Africans' standard of living the African areas of South Africa are among the poorest in Africa and getting poorer. The government is under pressure to spend less, not more, on the Bantustans, even though in some cases it takes out more in taxation than it puts in. Significantly, it spends five times as much on security as on the Bantustans.

Ironically, this terrible scheme is intended to legitimise separate development in the eyes of the world—we have our areas, they theirs. The outcome can only be guessed at, but it will be very unpleasant for both sides.

C. J. MOREY

**HUMANITY AND ANIMALITY** by Edmund Leach. (54th Conway Memorial Lecture) South Place Ethical Society, 10p.

This is, I regret to report, flashily but shoddy stuff. Thus Leach tells us that T. H. Huxley is supposed in the great confrontation at the British Association to have replied to Bishop Wilberforce: "I would rather be descended from an ape than a Bishop". Had Leach bothered to refer to the *Life and Letters* he would have discovered a consensus that what T. H. Huxley actually said was more pointed, and less schoolboyish: "He was not ashamed to have a monkey for his ancestor; but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man who used great gifts to obscure the truth."

Again, Leach very properly rebukes Desmond Morris and others for insisting that, because "evolution implies a physical continuity", therefore "the life style of baboons and even sticklebacks" must have "direct relevance for the understanding of human motivation and . . . moral judgements. There is a profound fallacy in such arguments." Perfectly true. Yet Leach does not manage to say what it is. To maintain that A evolved from B is precisely not to say that A is the same as B. It is instead to presuppose that it is not.

Yet again, Leach mentions Chomsky's advocacy of a new kind of innate ideas, in the special context of linguistics. Leach then suggests a drastic extension of this already bold and—many would think—unnecessary conjecture: "Are we endowed, by genetics, with a bio-grammar of cultural values?"

He calls this "a revival of the doctrine of original sin" In an atheist it certainly cannot be: sin is by definition strictly an offence against God. Even if it were, since the extension is an extension, it must be wrong to conclude by hoping that "I have been able to suggest to you that Bishop Wilberforce and Professor Chomsky are really saying the same thing". A Castro-type slogan would appeal to Chomsky: 'Hanoi and Chomsky, yes; Wilberforce and Chomsky, no!'

ANTHONY FLEW

## THEATRE

**THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA** by Garcia Lorca. Greenwich Theatre.

This play is remarkable in that it has an all-women cast; yet it is far from suitable for the annual Women's Institute play. An atmosphere of repression and brooding disaster hangs over the play. These are women without men and how they long for them. The play opens with the death of the father of six daughters, but their mother Bernarda maintains matriarchal control: she rules the house with a rod of iron. The eldest and ugliest daughter has the prospect of a husband and the other daughters seethe with jealousy. Pent-up emotions sometimes break out into powerful verbal hostility and vixenish physical strife. At the end it is revealed that the youngest, prettiest daughter, Adela, has been carrying on with her sister's intended bridegroom. Adela, skilfully played by Mia Farrow, is a furnace of repressed sexual desire and she ends by hanging herself.

It is Lorca's peculiar skill to purvey an atmosphere of poetic intensity. The company, with superb ensemble playing, display atmospheric contrasts between stillness and sudden movement, between silence and hysterical outbursts. From outside the clinically clean household noises invade the enclosed family circle: the doom-laden bells, the cries of a beggar, the stamp of horses' hooves. The set's strength is its scope for shadow play, in which women weave between light and darkness; its weakness is perhaps its inability to convey a sense of earth and whitewash that could be an undertone of the play. The company and the director, Robin Phillips, are to be congratulated on this powerful evocation of a deeply felt, poetic play.

JIM HERRICK

**UP SPAGHETTI JUNCTION!** by Malcolm Totten and others. Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

This revue, advertised as "a bright, lively show about Birmingham past and present", was colourful, polished and pleasantly informative. The team responsible for its execution showed warmth, ingenuity and sensitivity. John Baddeley was a very likeable, relaxed compère, and Jon Raven brought a quiet conviction to his singing.

The second half, though, abounded in damp squibs, and lacked the audience participation that could have lifted it to the level of an experience. I found the show became increasingly laboured and Brummagem-Brecht. I would have preferred an exhortation to join in the catchy songs that were printed on our souvenir songsheets, to sitting through quite so many dates, projected slides and naughty jokes about immigrants and 'queens'.

Being allowed to hob-nob with the actors in the bar does not constitute audience involvement, nor does it conceal the fact that an aspiration towards splendid isolation seems to be the main consideration behind the geographical location, the design and the running of this showpiece-theatre. Peremptory bells broke through the sound of piped music in the foyer; we moved into a steeply raked auditorium, seating 900. On stage, actors and singers wryly mourned the obliteration of country lanes by underpasses, of teem-

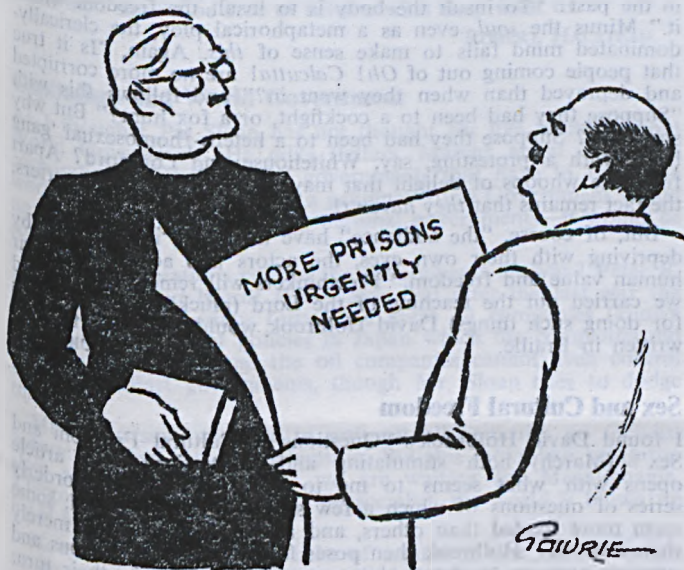


ing slums by impersonal dwellings, in the city of curry and chips with everything.

The Second City puzzles me. Why is the Brum Studio, in the Repertory Theatre, not used more fully for experimental work? Why does the University Drama Department stay put on the campus? Why is the excellent West Midlands Arts Centre in Cannon Hill Park not more crowded? (I was impressed by the production of Edward Bond's *Narrow Road to the Deep North* which I saw there.) Why is the Repertory Theatre so called when the production monopolises it for a whole month?

Well, I reasoned, as I scurried home through Paradise Subway, what's in a name?

VERA LUSTIG



"Whatever would happen if we didn't teach them the Christian religion at school?"

"What is happening when we are teaching them it?"

## FREETHINKER FUND

The recent change-over of *The Freethinker* from a weekly to a monthly has meant a saving in postage and printing costs which has been passed on to readers in the form of a lower subscription. As a result, the paper's fortunes have taken a very favourable turn. Nevertheless, *The Freethinker* is still heavily subsidised, and the selling price kept as low as possible despite rising costs of paper, ink and printing. Please, therefore, remember the Freethinker Fund when renewing your subscription. Every little helps to ensure the continued existence of the oldest rationalist journal in the world.

We are much obliged to those readers who contributed to the Freethinker Fund last month. Our thanks to:

J. G. Burdon, 25p; R. Clements, £2; A. W. Harris, 25p; E. Henderson, £5; D. C. Johnson, 50p; Margaret Knight, £10; R. Marke, £6.36; J. McCorriskin, 50p; J. McMahon, 10p; T. Morgan, £2; P. A. Roddison, £1; R. H. Scott, £2.50; G. B. Stowell, £2.50; W. G. Twigg, 40p; F. White, £1. Total for March: £34.36.

## LETTERS

### Humanist Diaries

My two-year experiment of a Humanist Diary has, I think, provided a useful service, but it has unfortunately lost money. I had hoped that the sale of some 1,300 copies the first year would be exceeded in the second year, but in fact there was a slight drop in the number of sales rather than an increase—probably because the price was raised, in the light of more accurate costing. Had the sales numbered 1,500 instead of 1,300, the venture would have been economically viable, but it seems that 1,300 is about the limit of the current demand, and that is not quite enough to cover the cost of producing a specialised diary without pricing it out of the market. I have therefore reluctantly decided not to publish the diary again.

Since the Tutume project in Botswana was to have shared in the profits, if any, and some customers may have bought the diary with that in mind, I have made a donation of £10 to the fund raised by Mrs. M. Burnet to enable an intelligent student from a poor family to attend the Tutume school.

I should like to express my gratitude to this journal for its generosity in publicising the diary, and also to all those readers who bought copies.

Incidentally, one customer has pointed out to me that left-over 1973 diaries can be used in 1979, when the dates will fall on the same days! Anyone who would like to invest in their 1979 diary now (or who still needs one for the remainder of 1973) may have one at the bargain price of 20p, post free.

This year, in place of a 1974 diary, I intend to sell a range of amusingly heretical Yuletide cards, in varying degrees of the anti-Christmas spirit—the great commercial advantage in cards being that any stock remains saleable in future years! Look for details in your October *Freethinker*.

BARBARA SMOKER.

### The Case for Censorship

I am for censorship: clamouring against it is just not good enough. It is inseparable from opinion, custom, habit, fashion, respectability and taste, and these cannot be attacked as intrinsically evil but only as good/bad, right/wrong, and so on. To create arguments for and against censorship just clouds the issues at stake in society, or are we going to claim that *unwritten* censorship is better, more humane, than formulated laws? All I ask is for humanists to campaign that *bad* censorship harms society, and oppose those opinions or tastes they feel harmful. The argument should not be about censorship but *what* is to be censored and *how* it is to be proscribed, although I admit this is much more complicated and difficult as it involves value-judgements, not just black/white statements. One man's obscenity may be another man's sociology—but one of them is more right than the other, depending on circumstances.

What then does offend us—how to decide what is to be censored and when? Women can renounce the yashmak or burn bras without going naked. If clothes are generally worn in public then we *all* do so in public. To a nudist this will seem objectional prudery but nudists are a minority: we consider them harmless as a group, so therefore permit them their nakedness in private places. As an individual I can decide "I am offended, therefore I will not watch". It follows that as a Society we can decide "We are offended, therefore we will not watch." Call it good taste or call it censorship: I think they are two words for the same thing.

Even if censorship is given the more limited meaning of being the imposition by a minority of their own ideas of decency or acceptability, I still feel loath to oppose it entirely. (Minority ideas are sometimes proved right in the end, anyway.) Society needs laws to exist: the laws need to be good laws. Censorship can perform a useful, beneficial function. It need not be repressive; it can be inspiring and elevating. Complete freedom of expression can only be possible in complete lawlessness, and all people are not natural-born saints.

Barbara Smoker's statement, "Wherever laws have been introduced to repress freedom of expression on the grounds of good taste, such laws have been used sooner or later for political ends, through selective prosecutions" is not a condemnation of censorship, but only of people and politics. It can be true of any law. Any tool or practice of Society is double-edged, be it money, trade, police, gun-powder or government. All our institutions are capable of misuse by wrongly placed, despotic power. The object is to seek out and fight misuse, by opposing bad opinion, custom, habit, fashion, respectability or taste—but allow yourselves to be 'for' good censorship. Do not engage in this impossible fight against the use of censorship in Society.

ARTHUR MORRIS.



## Prostitution and Exploitation

Patricia Knight (*Freethinker* reviews, March) maligns women, by suggesting that the "sexual self-discipline" by which women resisted becoming prostitutes might lead "to an anti-sex attitude, repression of sexuality itself". Giving way to prostitution is not to be associated with 'good sexuality'; behind Patricia Knight's attitude surely lurks the idolisation of the prostitute that we find in literature and the arts, which is really an idolisation of the libidinal element in ourselves. As Wayland Young demonstrated, the prostitute seldom gets any pleasure out of her 'work', suffers painful consequences of the lack of satisfaction, and sometimes agonising 'engorgement'.

Viktor Frankl points out that women often suffer terribly rather than give way to prostitution: "Economic necessity would not force a psychologically and morally normal woman to prostitution. On the contrary, it is amazing how frequently women resist the temptation to prostitution in spite of economic necessity." (*The Doctor and the Soul*: p. 156.) There are immense barriers to be overcome, not least those of the inherent dignity and freedom of the body, its inner meanings (such as Merleau-Ponty has pointed to) which abhor any exploitation, and only permit the body happily to be given in love.

Those who are exploited in prostitution (or, by analogy, by being invited to 'perform' in today's sexual exhibitions) are fundamentally sick people, with insecure identities and a weak sense of reality. Prostitution would seem to be a schizoid problem—and it seems clear that certain people in our society who are continually exhibiting themselves in sexual acts are in fact trying to feel real, and trying to find sexuality, in desperation. While it is futile to try to cure prostitutes or to stamp prostitution out, it is obviously cruel for a society to tolerate the increasing exploitation of sick people, and it was certainly cruel of the wealthy to feel that theirs was a right to have a woman- or a child-prostitute whenever they felt like it.

I am surprised Patricia Knight does not mention the worst horrors, such as the sexual use of very young children in strait-jackets; or the way in which some of the 'madams' were drawn by Guards officers in triumphal chariots when they were cleared by the courts. The whole middle-class and upper-class tradition of cruel exploitation is repulsive: Walter, for instance, who gloated on his own exploitation of women, dismissed a servant immediately, on learning she was pregnant. This hideous tradition has nothing in it of generous warm-hearted sexuality, or equality; but it lies behind the present 'democratisation' of sexual depravity in our society—and the new forms of exploitation which the public at large is now demanding as a 'right', as did the rich brothel-customers of Victorian London.

DAVID HOLBROOK.

## "Stirnerism"

I can quite understand David Holbrook's concern (March *Freethinker*) to make Max Stirner one of the villains of the piece in his interminable and wearisome attempts to pan the pornographers. After all, Stirner, in his *magnum opus*, *The Ego and His Own*, is one of the most outspoken amoralists in the history of philosophy.

However, while Stirner certainly denied that one *must* feel concern for others, he never argued that one should *not* feel concern. Mr. Holbrook makes the common mistake of assuming that because one does not believe in moral imperatives therefore one must *necessarily* be indifferent to other individuals.

This is not the case, and even a cursory reading of the relevant passages in Stirner's book would show that the conscious egoist in his conception is not someone to be glibly bracketed with Brady, de Sade and the wretched inmates of Broadmoor. As for "concern" for that fictional entity "the community", such a mystification deserves all the contempt Stirner so cogently delineates in regard to it.

Mr. Holbrook's statement that *The Little Red Schoolbook* is "Stirnerism for children" raised my hopes, but inspection revealed it to be a rather innocuous reformist document, containing some useful information in a handy form, but hardly in the same class as *The Ego and His Own*.

As an adept practitioner of a kind of literary 'guilt by association', David Holbrook may have a certain attraction for the pious among humanists. To blind readers by sleight of names, however, is no substitute for argument.

S. E. PARKER.

## Pseudo-secular Jargon

In his "Questions of Cultural Freedom and Sex" (March) David Holbrook translates the rhetoric of the pulpit into pseudo-secular

jargon and presents to readers his ramblings and fears of a future hell upon earth, of hate, crime, violence, racism and the like, brought about by the open worship of the genitals. His talk about the "betrayal of the original 'sexual revolution'" sounds as fraudulent as the claims of Shakespeare's Iago, for his arguments have always supported reaction in the final analysis.

Freethinkers will not be excused for remembering that the original 'sexual revolution' took place when Christianity destroyed the public worship of genitals by the pagans, and then feverishly ogled and clutched these natural gods in the twilight and eventual blackness that descended on the Western world. This ignorance they call "freedom" and "privacy". The "cultural" (clerical-based moral training) "freedom" (the right to enforce this on others) Mr Holbrook proclaims, is another piece of fraudulence, concealed by his mental acrobatics and ethereal phraseology as contained in his "ethics". Never has the readership of *The Freethinker* been subjected to such torrents of unsolicited pornographic writings than those which have gushed from the pen of this person; and were we to follow his corkscrew reasoning (with its right-hand thread) then we must all, by now, have been depraved and corrupted by him.

A remarkable piece of his "cultured" thinking he has displayed in the past: "To insult the body is to insult the freedom within it." Minus the *soul*, even as a metaphorical ploy, the clerically-dominated mind fails to make sense of *this*. Again, "Is it true that people coming out of *Oh! Calcutta!* are no more corrupted and depraved than when they went in?" and follows this with "Suppose they had been to a cockfight, or a fox hunt?" But why stop here? Suppose they had been to a hetero-/homosexual 'gang bang' with a protesting, say, Whitehouse and Longford? Apart from the whoops of delight that may be raised in some quarters, the fact remains that *they haven't!*

But, of course, "the audience" have indulged "in depravity by depriving with their own eyes, the actors and actresses of their human value and freedom." Freethinkers will remember that had we carried out the teaching of the Lord (plucking out our eyes for doing such things) David Holbrook would have had to have written in Braille.

TREVOR MORGAN.

## Sex and Cultural Freedom

I found David Holbrook's "Questions of Cultural Freedom and Sex" (March) both stimulating and frustrating! The article opens with what seems to me to be a somewhat disorderly series of questions of which a few seem absurdly illogical, some seem more loaded than others, and all seem intended as merely rhetorical. Mr. Holbrook then poses five numbered questions and suggests answers to them; those answers contain, in their turn, questionable and question-begging 'statements' interlaced with supporting snippets of beliefs, theories, opinions and sayings which involve the naming of 27 (at my last count) names.

One wonders, in passing, whether some of the supporting snippets do not disagree amongst themselves, for example, if pornography is "infantile" and, at the same time, "is depravity and corruption", what does that make the infant? And it does seem contradictory to argue *against* the view that we can only be civilised by strict control by arguing (implicitly) *for* control over the 'media' to enable us to be more civilised.

As regards the five numbered questions I would submit (somewhat desperately) the following suggestions: 1. The "real sexual revolution of our time" might perhaps be the one in which sexual phantasies could be 'released' beneficially. 2. Everyone needs "to explore forbidden themes" for their own good. 3. One cannot "exploit" something which is not there in the first place. 4. Those who like looking at nudes and sex like it, naturally. 5. We should be free to have "sexual depiction of all kinds" without any cultural pollution.

CHARLES BYASS.

## Christian Origins

Mr. Condon, reviewing my recent pamphlet on Christian origins, finds me ignorant of important evidence which would support my own thesis that there was no historical Jesus. In illustration he quotes Irenaeus' statement that certain heretics hold that "neither the Word, nor the Christ, nor the Saviour was made flesh", or "came into this world" (Heresies 3:11—not 1:11 as Mr. Condon alleges).

Anyone who actually reads Irenaeus' book (or even the rest of the chapter from which the quotation derives) will see at once that the heretics attacked in it make a distinction between heavenly entities, such as 'Word', 'Christ' or Saviour, and the man Jesus. Their argument is that the heavenly Christ could not possibly become flesh (which is necessarily corrupt and sinful) nor suffer



as the crucified Jesus did, as suffering implies change and is therefore foreign to the divine nature. They thus affirm that the heavenly Christ must be clearly distinguished from the man Jesus (although temporarily lodged in his body)—not that the man Jesus never existed.

One reason why it is today difficult to win a hearing for the thesis that Jesus never existed is that rationalists have discredited the whole idea by ill-considered overstatement, and by adducing evidence which any theologian can at once see to be beside the point.

G. A. WELLS.

**Freethought and Religion**

I used to be a freethinker but now I believe in God and that we all survive the death of our physical bodies. I know how difficult it is to believe in God when there is so much evil and suffering in the world and many orthodox religions do not help matters with their strange dogmas and greed for wealth and power.

I think freethinkers should applaud good actions done by religious bodies and even co-operate with them where possible, and only criticise bad aspects of religions, such as hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness.

All men should be free to believe what they want to.

ROBERT HALSTEAD.

**Capitalism and World Government**

As I thought! Pat Sloan has not thought for five minutes about World Government. He talks (letters, March) about "capitalist corporations controlling the governments that have to form the world government". Answer: a genuine World Government would not, repeat not, be formed by national governments—it would be something new.

Do the corporations control the governments anyway? Peter R. Odell, in *Oil and World Power* says that after the last war the U.S. military authorities forced the great oil companies (known as "majors") to adopt policies in Japan which the companies did not want to adopt. And the oil companies cannot even control the Middle East governments, though Mr. Sloan tries to dodge this point.

Mr. Sloan says we have to wait till all countries go socialist before we have a world federation. But this looks like being too slow a job. Suppose, while we are waiting for Megalomania, Kleptomania and Klotistan to go socialist, the world is blown up by H-bombs?

However, assume for the sake of argument that capitalism has to be smashed. If the world is united the workers can form one political movement and set up a world socialist government; while if it is disunited they can be played off against each other by nationalist propaganda. In my February letter I pointed out that if national sovereignty continues one of the super-powers will develop a super-weapon enabling it to dominate the world. Suppose it is the capitalist U.S.A., which is likely since this is the most advanced technically? By opposing world government Mr. Sloan is helping capitalism and hindering socialism.

However I am glad Mr. Sloan admits he says "nothings"; and his outlook is more like a flat-earthist's than anyone else's—he thinks we are still in the nineteenth century and he does not realise that national sovereignty is now a greater menace than capitalism.

Referring briefly to Miss Brophy and Mozart. In the chapter "Hell, Love and Society" of her book on Mozart she says: "The truest villain in *Die Zauberflöte* . . . is Monostatus, whose black face and soul bear witness to his obscurantism . . ." Is Miss Brophy implying Mozart was guilty of colour prejudice as well?

I. S. Low.

**The Public's Reading Habits**

"If people can only get through one library book a month", says I. S. Low's 'rejoinder' to me (letters, March), "that proves they have not enough time for proper reading—they should be able to get through a book a week."

But his original assertion was not about what he judges a "proper" amount of reading. He asserted (16 December) that people's reading-time was decreasing: "people", he wrote, "have less and less time to read". I pointed out that in fact the number of borrowings from public libraries increases annually. He has not replied.

It is irrelevant to his original assertion, but what makes I. S. Low suppose that grown-ups in this country don't read a book a week? He seems to have forgotten (a) that public libraries are

only one source of reading-matter, and (b) that the figure of 13 borrowings a year per head of population takes no account of the babies in the population. They cannot be expected to read books. As well as borrowing from public libraries, people borrow from non-public (including school and university) libraries. The number of loans from such libraries is not available, but their expenditure on printed matter is nearly twice that of the public libraries, so perhaps they account for nearly twice as much reading. People also buy books. The British home market sells £78 million worth of books a year (of which less than a fifth represents sales to public libraries).

Perhaps I. S. Low would care to withdraw both his original assertion that "people have less and less time for reading" and his new assertion that the public library borrowing figure proves that people "have not enough time . . . to get through a book a week"?

BRIGID BROPHY.

**Tolstoy**

May I thank John L. Broom for his correction as to the date of Tolstoy's death? Of course he died in 1910. I was misled by the introduction to the pamphlet, which gives the date as 1901, and the age as 73. This is a mistake which I should have corrected. My apologies.

MERLE TOLFREE.

**Spinoza's Philosophy**

I thank Mr. Gerald Samuel (letters, March) for his comments on my article "One or None". The author of the article clearly attaches no importance to any religious affirmations of Divine Unity if and when presented as the product of some supernatural revelation. He is concerned only with the kind of knowledge or wisdom that might contribute to the making of a humanist philosophy.

Jehovah, Jesus Christ, Allah and the Buddha all belong to the sub-rational or extra-rational world of the 'gods'. The 'gods' are no help to a humanist philosopher. Spinoza was essentially a humanist philosopher despite the fact that he dedicated his philosophy to making the thought of God as thinkable as that of Nature or the Universe. In the philosophy of Spinoza, God, Nature and the Universe are really one and indivisible; but he endeavours to give to moral imperatives the same kind of status as that enjoyed by mathematical equations.

The monotheism of Spinoza may have been illusory but was none the less a noble intellectual achievement and has won for its author a permanent place in the history of philosophy. I attach no importance to the fact that both Jews and Christians have classified Spinoza as an atheist.

PETER CROMMELIN.

**SONG**

I, seeking wisdom in my dream,  
Found phantasy and faëry lore,  
And windows opening all a gleam,  
On some long-sought-for mystic shore.

There (in my dream), I met my mate,  
That my most secret thoughts have known;  
So fair our love, I challenged fate—  
Then waking—faced the world alone.

SYLVIA WINCKWORTH

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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. Humanist Counselling Service, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG; telephone 01-937 2341 (for confidential advice on your personal problems—whatever they are).

## EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Imperial Centre Hotel, First Avenue, Hove. Sunday, 6 May, 5.30 p.m.: discussion or debate with Dr. MARGARET KNIGHT.

Eastbourne Humanist Group, Central Library. Thursday, 3 May, 7.30 p.m.: talk by MARGARET KNIGHT.

Havering and District Humanist Society, Harold Wood Social Centre, Gubbins Lane. *Tuesdays at 7.45 p.m.* 1 May: TONY MILLS, "Conservation and Politics: how you can help"; 15 May: STAN NEWENS, "North Vietnam: what happened and what is happening." (Social events on 21 April and 19 May—phone Roy Mason, Brentwood 226234, for details.)

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. Sunday, 29 April, 7.30 p.m.: GEORGE CLARK, "Alternative and Community Politics."

Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group, University Adult Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street. Friday, 11 May, 7 p.m.: S. J. SIMPSON, "Social Justice and Economic Inequality."

Rationalist Press Association Dinner, London Zoo Restaurant, Regents Park, London NW1. Saturday, 19 May, 7 p.m. *Speakers:* Professor BERNARD CRICK, Professor ANTONY FLEW, ANTONY CHAPMAN, Dr. COLIN CAMPBELL. Tickets £2.75 from R.P.A., 88 Islington High Street, London N1 8EW (telephone: 01-226 7251).

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. *Sunday Morning Meetings*, 11 a.m. 29 April: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "The Three Newmans"; 6 May: Dr. JOHN LEWIS, "Teilhard de Chardin and Secular Religion." 13 May: Prof. COLIN CHERRY, "Progress versus the Puritan Ethic." *Sunday Forums*, 3 p.m. 29 April: panel of speakers, "South Place: past, present, future"; 13 May: WYNFORD HICKS, "Inside Story." *Tuesday Discussions*, 7 p.m. 24 April: JOHN CALDER, "As a Publisher Sees It"; 1 May: Prof. DAVID MYDDLETON and PETER CADOGAN, "Why 'Welfare'"; 8 May: DAVID BEBB, "Housing"; 15 May: Dr. PAUL NOONE and Dr. STARK MURRAY, "The Health Service." (No meetings on 22 April.)

Sutton Humanist Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cedar Road. Thursday, 17 May, 7.30 p.m.: talk by GRAHAM TOPE, M.P.

Welwyn Garden City Humanist Group, Backhouse Room, Hand-side Lane. Thursday, 10 May, 8 p.m.: a meeting.

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, Marine Parade. *Sundays*, 5.30 p.m. 29 April: talk by Dr. MARGARET KNIGHT; 20 May: Annual General Meeting.

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