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1688 REVOLUTION HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH DEMOCRACY, SAY MPs

Tercentenary celebrations of the 1688 "Glorious Revolution" have commenced, with the Government, the National Front and the Orange Order as chief sponsors. There was a meeting in Westminster Hall last month when the Queen received loyal greetings from the Lords and commons. It was an ecumenical occasion. As the Duke of Norfolk, England's leading Catholic peer, explained: "In these happy ecumenical times, we're all trying to get along together. It's quite disgraceful to try to bring religion into this event".

At least one Catholic peer was absent. Lord Longford said he would have found the whole thing "vastly depressing". Anyway he had a good excuse to stay away from Westminster Hall. "As it happens, I went to the funeral of a dear old friend, Barbara Wootton", he explained.

A fortnight previously the Prime Minister had moved a humble Address to the Queen begging leave to express great pleasure in celebrating the events "that established those constitutional freedoms under the law which Your Majesty's Parliament and people have continued to enjoy for three hundred years. . .

"The Address commemorates the 300th anniversary of one of the great events in the history of these islands: the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

"Those who invited William and Mary, and who drew up the constitutional settlement, wanted to secure our liberties and safeguard our institutions — Parliament, the common law, the jury system, local government by justices and corporations".

Mrs Thatcher said the Glorious Revolution established in our political life such qualities as tolerance, respect for the law and the impartial administration of justice. It was "the first step on the road which, through the successive Reform Acts, led to the establishment of universal suffrage and full parlia-

mentary democracy".

The humble Address was duly endorsed, although it did not command unanimous support of the Commons.

Tony Benn (Labour, Chesterfield) said that what happened in 1688 was not a glorious revolution. "It was a plot by some people", he declared.

"That plot sought to replace a Catholic king with another king more acceptable to those who organised the plot.

"It was not bloodless. I do not know how the House can discuss the arrival of William of Orange without referring to the hideous repression for which he was responsible in Ireland. He was not alone in the long history of British repression in Ireland, but he was responsible for much of it".

Mr Benn was dismissive of those who constantly referred to the Bill of Rights. How many Members had actually read it?

"I will quote one passage from it", he said. "It referred to 'An Act for the more effectual preserving of the King's person and government by disabling papists from sitting in either House of Parliament'. That is in the Bill of Rights. Are we to say today that we welcome a Bill of Rights that says papists could not sit in either House of Parliament?"

Referring to the claim that 1688 saw the birth of our democratic rights, Tony Benn said: "Only two per cent of the population, all of them rich men, were represented in this House in 1688. No working people or middle-class people and no women were represented. That had nothing to do with democracy, and that is no doubt why the National Front joined the Prime Minister in welcoming the Glorious Revolution. When Exeter celebrates the landing of William III at Torbay, the National Front will be

(continued on back page)

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Vol 108 No 8 CONTENTS August 1988

1688 REVOLUTION HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH DEMOCRACY, SAYS MPs ...	113
NEWS AND NOTES	114
Education Act of Faith; The 'Sixties; Mrs MacLeod's Lament; Shroud of Secrecy; A Christian's Campaign	
BARONESS WOOTTON OF ABINGER, CH	117
A SPASM OF SCHISM	118
Barbara Smoker	
MANDELA AT 70	119
Barry Duke	
POLITICS AND THE PRESS	120
Ted McFadyen	
BOOK	122
Thomas Paine	
Reviewer: Beverly Halstead	
DURHAM FUDGE	123
Daniel O'Hara	
A "HOOKER" FOR JUSTICE	124
Irene Fearn	
THE BISHOPS AGAIN — AND SOME OTHERS	125
T. F. Evans	
MISCELLANEOUS	
Advertisement Censored, 126; Marcinkus Goes, 128	

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NEWS

EDUCATION ACT OF FAITH

A statement on religion and education was sent on behalf of the Freethought movement to Members of Parliament during the Education Bill debate. It was sponsored by the British Humanist Association, National Secular Society, Rationalist Press Association, South Place Ethical Society, and the editors of *New Humanist* and *The Freethinker*.

They criticised a series of clauses and schedules covering religious worship and education which had been incorporated into the Bill. These had been introduced by a group of Peers representing the main Christian churches and denominations.

"The main effect of these amendments is to strengthen religious education and religious worship, and to make them specifically Christian for the first time", the statement declared.

It described the existing system, embodied in the 1944 Education Act, as "flexible enough to allow for developments from time to time and from place to place to accommodate the many changes in and varieties of belief and behaviour over half a century. School assemblies have tended to express collective identity rather than religious worship, and religious lessons have tended to cover serious issues in general rather than narrow doctrines and conduct. Christianity has been supplemented by other religions and also by some non-theistic and non-religious systems.

"The new amendments would halt and indeed reverse this process, going back to the situation not only before 1944 but even before 1870".

It is agreed that children should learn about religion and about Christianity as the main form of religion in this country. But they should receive education about religion, not indoctrination in religion.

"We argue that the proper place for religious worship and instruction is not in school but at home and in church. . .

"The State education system should take account of some basic facts about the British population revealed by repeated public opinion surveys — that only about three per cent follow non-Christian religions; but about twelve per cent call themselves atheists or agnostics; that about 25 per cent, whatever they call themselves, have no religious beliefs; and that about 50 per cent, whatever they believe, never voluntarily attend any religious ceremony.

"We argue that all sections of a free society should be treated equally and that all serious ideas should be treated educationally with respect in the State schools of such a society.

"The new clauses in the Bill threaten to prevent

AND NOTES

this happening, and the dead letter of the 1944 Education Act may become the dead hand of the 1988 Education Act".

One of the underhand tactics used by the Government was its refusal to publish a report on religious education produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. They spent many months researching and consulting RE teachers. Their report was suppressed but, *Spycatcher*-like, copies were circulated to interested parties in defiance of the Government. It was described in *Education Guardian* (12 July) as "just the kind of intelligent and informed document one would wish to have to hand before pitching into the flurry of last minute amendments chucked into Parliament".

Commenting in the same newspaper (also 12 July), Dr J. G. Priestley, a Religious Education specialist at Exeter University's School of Education, said the HMI report "would have informed the current debate with measured facts and objective presentation of evidence. It has never been published despite constant requests.

"Instead, great prominence has been given to a shoddy little pamphlet entitled *The Crisis in Religious Education*, written by two teachers, one a chemist and the other a computer scientist (foreword by Baroness Cox) and published by a group calling themselves the Educational Research Trust, who raised the money from we know not where.

"What we do know is that heading the names of the support group is that of none other than Professor Antony Flew".

Professor Flew is not only a far-Right guru whose appearances at Moonie gatherings have been recorded in these columns. He is also a vice-president of the Rationalist Press Association. So while that organisation and the rest of the Freethought movement have been campaigning against the divisive and discriminatory religious clauses of the Education Bill, Flew has been supporting the Christian indoctrinators. In particular, he has championed Baroness Cox who, with the Bishop of London, was the driving force behind the parliamentary campaign to further entrench Christianity in the education system.

The question has been put: How does Baroness Cox get away with it? We put three further questions. First, will the Rationalist Press Association allow a vice-president to get away with his backstabbing activities? Secondly, were he plain Mister, instead of Professor Antony Flew, would not the RPA directors have quietly asked him to resign years ago? Thirdly, have they got the backbone to do so now?

THE 'SIXTIES

If anything causes foaming at the mouth by authoritarians and religious dinosaurs, it is the mere mention of the decade usually described as "the Swinging 'Sixties". Musicians like the Beatles, fashion designers and radical publishers are blamed for leading young innocents astray, encouraging them to indulge in unmentionable (and usually undefined) vices. Long hair, outlandish clothes, and a deplorable urge to "make love not war" are among the excesses we are assured have undermined society and the family. Christian fundamentalists decry the 'Sixties as the decade in which, according to Angela Sanders in the current issue of *Evangelical Times*, "the nation's young dramatically turned from the Lord".

The reality is somewhat different, as a report published last month by the Family Policy Study Centre shows. Melanie Henwood, editor of the Centre's bulletin, describes the popular image of the 'Sixties permissive society as "grossly distorted". She says that despite appearances, "most of the hippy generation were a pretty conservative lot who got married in church, had children and established traditional families, with Dad at work and Mum at home with the children".

In fact it is 'Eighties Britain, ruled by the party of the family and Victorian values, that has experienced an upsurge of "permissiveness". For example, during the period 1960-64 only one per cent of women under 25 who got married for the first time had lived with their partner. Today the figure is 24 per cent. In 1964, 78 per cent of first-time marriages took place in church. In 1986 the figure had fallen to 69 per cent. The divorce rate for 1961 was 27,000; in 1986 it was 168,000. The percentage of illegitimate children born in the late 'Eighties has more than trebled that of the early 'Sixties.

Rather than swinging, the 'Sixties were years of drabness and want for many. Terence Conran, then a leading designer and now Sir Terence Conran, chairman of the Habitat-Mothercare chain, has always maintained that the "swinging" connotation was largely mythical. "Most of my friends were impoverished", he says. "We hardly ever ate out, and there were not many clubs, restaurants or cafes to go to".

Of course there was much in the 'Sixties that was trite, brash, or positively silly. But it was a decade that compares very favourably with this one. In the swinging 'Sixties young people adorned themselves, dressed up in psychedelic clothes and handed out flowers to passers by. In the vicious 'Eighties, aggressive, drink-sodden yobs have made Britain's name a byword for violence and thuggery. Those who made love not war in the 'Sixties were moral giants compared to the 'Eighties gangs of Union Jack-draped

"patriots" who attack anyone with a dark skin or a foreign accent. Certainly the young people of the 'Sixties were far more principled and humane than the Christian Prime Minister whose philosophy has made the 'Eighties a decade of Philistinism, selfishness and greed.

Police stood by at a West Midlands crematorium after threats had been made to disrupt the funeral of a "lapsed" Muslim who had lived in Britain for over forty years. The family (mostly Christian) had respected his wishes, but for several days they and the undertaker were pressurised by Muslims to alter the arrangements. The secular committal ceremony took place without incident.

MRS MACLEOD'S LAMENT

There must be something in the drinking water, or perhaps they use extra strong communion wine on the island of Lewis, off the Scottish coast. Scarcely a month passes without another example of dotty behaviour by local Christians.

The latest report is that they have been fighting the good fight against a terrible "evil", to wit, the "Have a break — have a Kit-Kat" television commercial. Apparently one of the advertisements depicted Old Nick and an angel "having a break" from the nether and the celestial regions respectively.

Mrs Chrissie Macleod, of Maryhill, has protested on behalf of the faithful to the Kit-Kat manufacturers, Rowntree. She reminded them that the firm was founded by Quakers, "who would never have approved such an indiscreet advert to promote sales".

Mrs Macleod said she concluded her letter "by saying that Heaven and Hell may be a joke to some people, but to millions of others they are realities. . . We shouldn't be silent in the face of evil".

Unfortunately she is justified in claiming that millions of people still believe nonsensical Christian teachings about Heaven and Hell. However, few modern Quakers would support her daft comments about the Kit-Kat commercial.

A Rowntree spokesman replied that the advertisement was "a bit of harmless fun". But fun is seldom, if ever, regarded as harmless by the dour, po-faced Christians of the Western Isles.

Italy's Green Party has warned the faithful to refrain from kissing holy relics and statues. Announcing a long list of diseases to be contracted from the practice, a Green Party spokesman warned devout pilgrims to expect "a dose of herpes at least".

Please note that copy for the September issue must reach the editor not later than Saturday, 20 August.

SHROUD OF SECRECY

Carbon dating of the strip of cloth known as the Turin Shroud has at long last been carried out by three laboratories — in Arizona, Zurich and Oxford — and the scientific results are now known. Known that is to a small number of scientists, theologians and church dignitaries, who are sworn to secrecy until September, when the announcement is to be issued from the Vatican. The exact date is highly significant, for the Pope will be in Turin on the 3rd and 4th September.

In the unlikely event of at least two of the three laboratories coming out with a "possible" date, the Pope's sense of theatre will ensure his making the announcement there and then. However, given the result that this journal confidently expects — that is, a date some twelve centuries after the alleged crucifixion — he would just as surely insist on secrecy being maintained until after his departure as it would put too much of a damper on the papal visit if the Shroud cult, which has put Turin on the pilgrimage map, should be exploded beforehand or, worse still, during that weekend itself.

So we prophesy that the carbon-dating results will be withheld from public knowledge until the second week of September.

A CHRISTIAN'S CAMPAIGN

Everald Anthony Irons, a deeply religious born-again Christian, has started an 18-year prison term. The 24-year-old Londoner was found guilty at the Old Bailey of six rapes, one attempted rape, and one indecent assault. Dubbed "the Putney Rapist", Irons carried out what was described in court as "a campaign of rape" in south west London. It is suspected that he may have been responsible for up to thirty rapes.

He and his policewoman wife, Ann, are both ardent Christians. Irons had a strict Baptist upbringing, and his wife was "converted" in 1979. They met at Longley Road Baptist Church, Tooting, and were married there two years ago. He was regarded by fellow-Baptists as "a deeply religious young man who worked hard, played hard, and led an exemplary life".

The police suspected Irons for some time and kept him under surveillance. Officers responsible for tracking him down were strongly criticised by members of the Christian Police Association for suspecting their born-again "brother" of such crimes. Irons committed the final rape that led to his arrest on the night that a Christian Police Association meeting was held at his home.

Anne Irons provided her husband with false alibis on a number of occasions. Her future in the police force is now "under consideration".

Baroness Wootton of Abinger, CH

Barbara Wootton, who died on 11 July aged 91, was one of the century's most eminent social scientists.

She was born in 1897 of parents who were classical scholars at Cambridge. Privately educated until the age of 13, she then went to Perse High School and later won a classical scholarship to Girton College. In her final year she switched to economics and took a brilliant degree. She became Girton's director of studies and lecturer in economics in 1920. She had then been a widow for three years, her husband of five weeks, John Wootton, was killed in France.

At this period she joined the University Labour Club and remained a lifelong adherent to socialism. One obituary writer described her philosophy as resting upon "a profound sense of the value of human life and of human personality. She was driven in all her work by a passion for equality by which she meant equal respect for every human personality — her definition of democratic socialism, a faith that she acquired in youth and from which she never turned aside".

She left Cambridge in 1922 and for a time was research officer in the TUC and Labour Party Joint Research Department. Then came her appointment as principal of Morley College, and in 1926 she became the first director of studies for tutorial classes in the Extra-Mural Department of London University.

In 1944 Barbara Wootton became head of the Department of Economics, Sociology and Social Studies at Bedford College. Eight years later she took up a research fellowship with the Nuffield Foundation. This resulted in the publication of *Social Science and Social Pathology* (1959), one of her fourteen books.

Barbara Wootton's record of public work was truly remarkable. She sat as a lay magistrate for nearly fifty years, and for sixteen years was a chairman of Juvenile Courts in London. She was a member of four Royal Commissions, four Departmental Committees, the Home Office Penal Advisory Council, the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence, the University Grants Committee and the National Parks Committee. She was a Governor of the BBC and the first chairman of the Countryside Commission.

Barbara Wootton went to the House of Lords, which she described as "a very nice club", in 1958, and was the first woman to sit on the Woolsack as Deputy Speaker. She was made a Companion of Honour in 1977.

As a young woman, Barbara Wootton rejected religious claims and beliefs. She never concealed her unbelief and publicly supported the freethought

movement. She was on the National Secular Society's Distinguished Members Panel and an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist Press Association.

Interviewed in 1970 by David Reynolds, the then editor of *The Freethinker*, Barbara Wootton affirmed her rejection of religion and described Christian dogmas as "intellectually completely incredible". She said the New Theology had emerged "because intelligent people cannot believe this extraordinary story and all these miracles . . . gradually the scales have dropped away from their eyes and they have found themselves in a very awkward situation. One has sympathy with them because many of them depend for their living on their profession as priests. It's true that unless they're bishops they don't get very much living, but nevertheless it's all they've got. . .

"I would say that they are hypocrites, particularly when they are bishops and in a much more influential position than perhaps some unfortunate parish priest who has lost his faith".

Asked if she would describe herself as an agnostic or an atheist, Barbara Wootton replied: "I don't much mind . . . I'm quite prepared to be called an atheist but I suppose that intellectually we ought to say agnostic since there is no proof either way as to the existence of the deity. Still, I would be greatly surprised to find out I was wrong as an atheist".

Would it worry her if she had children who went to church? "I shouldn't much care whether they went to church or not. I regard that as their business". But to become religious would show "at the very least a lack of intellectual perception".

One of Barbara Wootton's last pieces was published in *The Freethinker* (October 1982). It was a long and perceptive review of Walter Southgate's *That's the Way it Was*. Subtitled "A Working Class Autobiography 1890-1950", it graphically described the dire poverty and squalor endured by the working class in Victorian and Edwardian times. The author and his reviewer were contemporaries, but the circumstances of their upbringing were vastly different. Her background was one of middle-class affluence and comfort in a university town; his of deprivation and hardship in London's East End. The review exemplified a profound insight and understanding — without the slightest hint of being patronising — that characterised Barbara Wootton's life and work.

Nicolas Walter represented freethought organisations at Golders Green Crematorium, London, where an informal committal ceremony was held. In his address, Lord McGregor of Durris emphasised Barbara Wootton's rationalist and secularist outlook.

A Spasm of Schism

BARBARA SMOKER

On 30 June, the Church of Rome, confronted by an obstinate old man, succumbed to its first major schism since 1902; three weeks later, at the Lambeth Conference, the international Anglican Church, confronted by women priests with episcopal ambitions, was threatened with a similar schism. In both cases, the underlying cause was the magic powers of bishops conferred in the supposed apostolic succession. A bishop may lose his jurisdiction, may even be excommunicated — but since he is a link in the living chain of magic ritual, his sacramental powers can never be taken from him.

The coincidence of schism striking simultaneously at the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches is matched by the irony of the timing of it — a time of ecumenical fervour, when, in response to the common enemy of disbelief, there is a concerted drive to paper over the earlier schisms within Christianity, and even to form an extended religious family with the non-Christian religions of Judaism, Islam, and the various strands of Hinduism. The heady ecumenical vision is of a reconciliation of all the major Christian sects and of friendly relations with all the other major world religions. But it is the new disputes within a sect that tend to prove the most intransigent.

Indeed, ecumenism itself is a basic cause of both disputes. In the RC fold, it gave rise a quarter of a century ago to the historic Second Vatican Council, the far-reaching ecumenical reforms of which were bound to upset traditionalists within the Church.

As for the Anglican communion, even the elasticity that is its main characteristic has been stretched to breaking point by its attempts to meet with Rome on the one hand and the various evangelicals on the other. One obdurate issue of contention has been that of women priests, on which a truce has been maintained for some years by allowing them in some national churches and postponing the evil day in others. By now, however, there are thousands of Anglican women priests in the USA, some of whom were ordained as long ago as men who are beginning to be considered as candidates for episcopal promotion — and in a society opposed to sex discrimination, the day of women bishops can be postponed no longer. But could a mere woman receive episcopal powers in the apostolic succession? In the eyes of those who thought so, a female bishop would be empowered to ordain priests, and if those priests were recognised as valid priests in some parts of the Anglican communion and not others, that could only mean schism.

However, it is the RC schismatic upheaval that has caused the most stir.

Just as the previous schism of the Old Catholics,

spreading from Germany to a number of other countries from 1870 to 1902, resulted from their rejection of the First Vatican Council, particularly its definition of papal infallibility, so the present schism results from the rejection by the French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his supporters of the Second Vatican Council's ecumenical reforms — for religious liberty, participation by the people in liturgical rites, and the revised Mass in the vernacular. It is said that on the very day the Council ended (8 December, 1965), Lefebvre declared to some friends with whom he was sitting in a cafe near St Peter's that he would never accept the conclusions of the Council in which he had been a participant.

The rejection of papal infallibility by the Old Catholics made it comparatively easy for them to defy the Vatican, but the fact that Lefebvre has always been a stickler for papal authority adds a paradoxical element to his rebellion.

However, eighteen years have now passed since he first openly raised the banner of revolt in 1970, founding the Priestly Fraternity of St Pius X (dedicated to the pope who was the scourge of modernism in the years 1908 and 1909) and opening his first seminary in Switzerland for future priests — eighteen years during which he has hardened his position as the professed upholder of the one true faith and of Catholic tradition and has come to regard the present pope as one of the "anti-popes" of history whose names have subsequently been expunged from the official list of popes. At the same time, Lefebvre's claims for himself and his new bishops have hitherto been carefully limited to the pastoral power of Order (*pastestas ordinis*), not extended to the power of Jurisdiction, which would set them up as a separate sect, like the Orthodox and Protestant Churches. Seen in this light, his revolt does not amount to schism, but the official Vatican daily paper, *L'Osservatore Romano* (in a front-page, black-bordered article) declared the consecration of the new bishops to be a schismatic act.

Since it takes a bishop in the apostolic succession to pass that succession on to new priests and bishops, the Old Catholics were faced a hundred years ago with pastoral extinction within one generation — but then an heretical Dutch bishop offered them the laying on of his hands to ordain not only new priests but, more importantly, new bishops who could in turn ordain new priests and bishops. Consequently, there are still today some 2.4 million members of the Old Catholic communion.

Lefebvre's consecration of four new bishops of his own choosing on 30 June was, according to BBC news bulletins, "the last straw" that broke the Vatican's lengthy negotiations with him and thus

caused the dreaded schism. But the use of a phrase like "the last straw" shows the ignorance of the BBC — though it is not surprising that they should fail to grasp the significance of the new bishops, since even the Catholic press has skated around it. The possibility of creating his own bishops was the ace that Lefebvre had held in his hand for almost two decades, using it as a bargaining-counter to gain concessions and avoid excommunication. But he finally decided to play the ace, because, far from being a "straw", it was crucial to the historical survival of his breakaway traditionalist group.

In eighteen years it had proved to be viable — now boasting five seminaries and countless schools and churches, as well as the support of around one per cent of all Catholics — but hitherto, its supply of new priests had, apart from the uncertain continuation of an influx of dissident priests from Rome, depended on the ordination powers of only two aging bishops in the apostolic succession. The succession had to be secured.

In attempting to prevent the creation of new Lefebvrist bishops, with all the magic powers bestowed on the original twelve apostles, the Pope had humiliatingly, and often secretly, given way to Lefebvre on point after point during the past few years, including a return to the Tridentine Mass for those who want it. The Pope even offered in the end to appoint a younger bishop himself to the Society of St Pius X, and the date of this proposed appointment had been agreed — 15 August, which marks the end of the great Marian year of pilgrimages, dedicated to papal supremacy within Christian unity, and which was to have been the day of the prodigal son's return to the bosom of Holy Mother Church. The agreement also incorporated the setting up of a Roman commission of liaison, comprising two of Lefebvre's members and three Vatican nominees, to help run the Society and give traditionalists more say in Church decisions.

Suddenly, however, Lefebvre decided that for the traditionalists to be in a minority on the commission was not good enough, and to be allowed only one extra bishop — and that one with a suspect allegiance to the Pope (since his own four candidates had been turned down by the Sacred Congregation's Prefect, Cardinal Ratzinger) — would not ensure the survival of the Lefebvrists until Rome saw the error of its ways and recognised the traditionalists as the repository of the one true faith. So, breaking the agreement he had already signed on 4 May, he defiantly wrote to the Pope on 2 June that on 30 June he would be consecrating his own four new bishops — unlawful bishops, but valid in their divine orders. The Pope replied on 9 June:

"I ardently invite you to return in full obedience to the Vicar of Christ. I not only invite you, I ask you in the name of Christ. To this request and this invitation

I add my daily prayers to Mary, Mother of Christ. Do not allow this year, dedicated in a particular way to the Mother of God, to strike another blow to her heart".

But Lefebvre went ahead with his plans, and is now officially outside the Church — an octogenarian *enfant terrible* who has rocked the chair of St Peter.

The Vatican has responded by warning priests and laity not to "adhere to the schism of Mgr Lefebvre, since they would incur *ipso facto* the grave penalty of excommunication". Some will doubtless be frightened into renouncing their support of Lefebvre's fraternity, but this will probably mean no more than a shake-out of his weaker supporters. The schism prevails.

Mandela at 70

BARRY DUKE

Everyone knows the name Nelson Mandela, and most agree he is probably the most influential head of State South Africa has never had. To mark his 70th birthday, celebrated throughout the world in July, Barry Duke reminds us why Mandela was jailed in 1964.

Nelson Mandela is in jail because he is a terrorist, a man of violence sentenced for his crimes by a properly constituted court of law. That's what the likes of John Carlisle, Tory MP for Luton, North, and unofficial member for Africa, South, would have us believe.

The truth — a concept which would appear totally alien to these appeasers of apartheid — is quite different. Mandela languishes in jail because he sought desperately to avoid inter-racial violence and said as much at his trial for treason at Rivonia.

"We of the African National Congress had always stood for a non-racial democracy, and we shrank from any action which might drive the races further apart than they already were", he said.

And he went on to make the prediction that, given the continued level of violence used by the State to maintain its rule, small groups in urban areas would "spontaneously make plans for violent forms of political struggle" and that there was a danger that these groups "would adopt terrorism against Africans, as well as whites, if not properly directed. . .".

That prediction has been fulfilled — thanks entirely to the intransigence of a fanatical Christian fundamentalist regime which claims the God-given right to exclude blacks from all of South Africa's political and judicial processes, and which is given unabashed support by many influential Right-wing politicians in Britain.

Up until 1961 the ANC had steadfastly avoided violent confrontation with the authorities but violence remained the stock response by the Nationalist

regime to all peaceful forms of protest by blacks.

"When some of us discussed this in May and June of 1961, it could not be denied that our policy to achieve a non-racial State by non-violence had achieved nothing, and that our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism", Mandela told the court.

At the end of 1961 the ANC established a military wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), and in its manifesto it was stated: "The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices — submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom".

When the decision was taken to form Umkhonto "the ANC heritage of non-violence and racial harmony was very much with us", Mandela added.

"We felt that the country was drifting towards a civil war in which blacks and whites would fight each other. We viewed the situation with alarm. Civil war could mean the destruction of what the ANC stood for; with civil war racial peace would be more difficult than ever to achieve. . .

"Four forms of violence were possible . . . sabotage, guerrilla warfare . . . terrorism . . . and open revolution. We chose to adopt the first method and to exhaust it before taking any other decision. . .

"Sabotage did not involve loss of life, and it offered the best hope for future race relations. . .

"We believed that South Africa depended to a large extent on foreign capital and foreign trade. We felt that planned destruction of power plants, and interference with rail and telephone communications would tend to scare away capital from the country, make it more difficult for goods from the industrial areas to reach sea ports on schedule, and would in the long run be a heavy drain on the economic life of the country, thus compelling the voters of the country to reconsider their position.

"Attacks on the economic lifelines of the country were to be linked with sabotage on Government buildings and other symbols of apartheid . . . *strict instructions were given to Umkhonto's members right from the start that on no account were they to injure or kill people in planning or carrying out operations. . .*"

Mandela's words are part of a lengthy statement delivered at his Rivonia trial which left no doubt that here was a man of tremendous integrity whose commitment to non-violent change had been ultimately worn down by a regime which, after gaining power in 1948 with the promise of entrenching white supremacy, systematically set about dehumanising four-fifths of its population through the imposition of cruel apartheid laws.

Politics and the Press

TED McFADYEN

"What have we Tories got against the BBC? And why is it that, when we enjoy the best broadcasting in the world, and suffer from the worst newspapers, members of our great party complain so often of the one and so rarely of the other? Could the answer be that most newspapers are Right-wing?" — Julian Critchley, Conservative MP for Aldershot.

Triviality, sexual titillation, gossip about the Royal Family, a cynical disregard of the really important issues in our society — and frequent downright lies — are still the main characteristics of the British tabloid press. In the opinion of some informed observers, our press is the worst in Europe. "Why", asks Neal Ascherson of the *Observer*, "do millions of British people go on reading tabloids whose mental level would not strain the intellect of an over-sexed gnat? Foreigners, presented by British Airways with the *Sun* or the *Star*, think of protesting until they see smartly-dressed young British businessmen in the next seat immersed in the same papers".¹

More importantly, it is the political stance these papers take rather than their daily celebration of the trivial which gives cause for concern. We live in a varied and diverse society, which includes trade unionists, peace campaigners, feminists, gay people, and a range of ethnic minorities. Yet the tabloids continue to present these groups as targets for abuse, misrepresentation and contempt. Anybody who does not conform with the values of Thatcherite Britain is marked down for this kind of treatment.

How has this come about? The centralisation of ownership of our papers is a crucial factor. Mark Hollingsworth² points out that the ownership of the press has become increasingly concentrated in fewer proprietorial hands. Five multimillionaires — Robert Maxwell, Rupert Murdoch, Tiny Rowland, David Stevens and Viscount Rothermere — control 84 per cent of the daily and 96 per cent of the Sunday newspaper circulation. According to ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) figures, Maxwell, Stevens and Murdoch have secured two-thirds of total daily and Sunday circulation. Yet in 1948 the three biggest groups commanded only 48 per cent of the total circulation.

What is significant is that the five millionaires mentioned are more than simply press barons. They have many interests outside the newspaper business, including oil, transport, mining and other media like cable TV, publishing and the cinema industry. Inevitably this means they are concerned with promoting and sustaining capitalist values — by definition, the values which this Government eagerly espouses.

But there are two remarkable paradoxes which

strike any observer of the current state of the British media. The first is the different attitude of the Government towards the tabloids on the one hand, and the serious "heavy" newspapers on the other. As Donald Treford, editor of the *Observer*, points out³: "We have a Government that rewards the journalists it favours as never before . . . but takes its hostility towards papers that oppose its policies, or leak embarrassing information, to spiteful and vindictive lengths. The law doesn't touch papers who libel poor people, make up interviews, invade privacy, and engage in general muck-raking. But it makes life impossible for papers who want to investigate the rich and powerful, to probe the waste in Government departments and to find out about the financial connections of politicians or their families".

And even now, as a result of sustained persistent Government action through law courts in this country and Australia, three of our more serious papers are still prevented from publishing extracts from *Spycatcher*, even though the book has sold millions of copies throughout the world, including a substantial number in this country.

The second paradox lies in the Government's contrasting attitude towards the press compared with its distinctly apprehensive view of broadcasting and TV. Recently it has been announced that a Broadcasting Standards Council is to be set up, under the chairmanship of Lord Rees-Mogg, whose main concern will be to protect the delicate sensibilities of the British people from "sex 'n' violence". The Government seems to have conveniently glossed over the uncomfortable fact that the daily diet of sex 'n' violence offered up by the tabloids has increased beyond belief in the past ten years or so, but they don't propose to do anything about that. Julian Critchley, quoted at the head of this page, offers a convincing explanation.

So what can be done about this state of affairs? The Press Council, unhappily, has been proved time and again to be not only without powers but frequently ridiculed by the very newspapers it censors. In its last annual report it admitted that it was concerned at the cynical disregard and abuse that it had received during the previous year. And it notes that "voluntary regulation of the press is at risk".

However, there are hopeful signs that things may be improving for the Press Council. Louis Blom-Cooper, a liberal lawyer who is highly regarded as a man of energy and integrity, has been appointed the new chairman and may be expected to make some significant changes.

One of the major defects of the present situation is that individuals or organisations have little opportunity of seeking redress if they are misrepresented in the Press. Earlier this year the Labour MP Ann Clwyd attempted to introduce, with the help of the

Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF), a Private Member's Bill, the Unfair Reporting and the Right of Reply Bill. This would give consumers of all media a right to reply that would set the record straight quickly. It would extend legal aid to people taking action for libel, which at the moment is the preserve of the rich and powerful. Finally, it would create a media commission that would report annually to Parliament, would monitor media performance and issue guidelines on the treatment of sensitive subjects.

Unhappily, Ann Clwyd's Bill failed to get its scheduled second reading in February as a result of being "talked out" by Tory MPs who wanted to prevent it being debated.

Nonetheless the failure — temporary, let's hope — of the Bill does not prevent individuals or organisations from going ahead and seeking a right of reply. The CPBF has issued a Right of Reply Information Pack which gives guidance on how best to proceed; it includes an encouraging booklet entitled *Gotcha Back!* (a reference to the *Sun's* notorious Belgrano headline), which gives a number of case studies showing how groups of individuals, through organised and collective action, have themselves secured substantial retractions and apologies from newspapers in which they have been misrepresented⁴.

The final message is — always complain. Tell the media what you think (amongst other useful aids the CPBF publishes a Media Access Card which gives phone numbers for all the main press and broadcasting media). You may well get a letter published in the Letters column which may itself generate further correspondence or at least make some readers stop and think.

By keeping silent we are acting in complicity with those who seek to destroy *our* values and lifestyles. By speaking out we help to keep those values alive.

References

1. *Observer*, 15 September 1985.
2. *The Press and Political Dissent*, by Mark Hollingsworth. Pluto Press, 1986.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF), 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

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BOOK

THOMAS PAINE, by A. J. Ayer. Secker & Warburg. £12.95

"Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good". With these words Thomas Paine summed up the philosophy of his life — a life now dealt with by a professional academic philosopher, Sir Alfred Ayer. The very outline of Paine's life has immense drama, and no matter how the tale is told some of this must perforce shine through — it could not be otherwise.

The early years, in many ways uneventful, brought out his moral and political courage and also his deep compassion and generosity. These qualities never left him throughout the vicissitudes of his long and eventful life. Ayer portrays this period in the first chapter, "The Years of Obscurity", with care and sympathy. Then to place Paine in the philosophical and political context of his times, we are treated to a potted account of the ideas of nature and society as expounded by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and David Hume. This is an exceptionally valuable and lucid account, and provides an important insight into Paine's political philosophy.

Thereafter, Paine's life takes off. Again and again he is at nodal points in history. He had the awareness of the right moment and the ability to change the course of history. There is no doubt that his *Common Sense* was pivotal in convincing the thirteen American colonies that their only option was to fight for independence. As one is carried through the drama of Thomas Paine's life — with the occasional swipe at Margaret Thatcher from the author — it begins to dawn that Ayer really does not like Paine. It begins to look as if he wrote the book out of a sense of duty; he knew he ought to have approved of Paine for all he is reputed to have stood for. But really Ayer does not seem to understand what it was that drove Paine. Ayer has missed the core of Thomas Paine, which is his appeal that calls across the centuries — passion for justice and freedom for ordinary people.

So what we get is a book that tells us much more about the inside of Ayer than of Thomas Paine. And I must admit that all my sympathies go out to the warmth and compassion of Paine, not to the cold academic analysis of a former Professor of Logic.

Prior to Ayer's dissection of *Rights of Man* there is a chapter, "The Onslaught of Burke", which usefully contrasts the ideas of Edmund Burke with those presented by Paine. It was *Rights of Man* — or rather the second part published in 1792 — which sold some 200,000 copies and led to Paine being charged with sedition. He fondly believed that he

FREETHINKER

was entitled to publish his views and underestimated the Government's determination to suppress ideas. In the event, Paine fled Britain's shores to represent Pas-de-Calais in the French Assembly. He was tried in his absence; his defence counsel, Thomas Erskine, put up a spirited case for freedom of speech which still remains one of the classics in the struggle for a free press.

Ayer spends his time in a detailed demolition job of Paine's case for what was essentially the welfare state. After nearly two hundred years it would be surprising if Paine had not got a few details wrong. What is important is to understand the impact of his ideas at the time they were published in the context of English society. Although Paine was made an outlaw and never touched our shores again, his writings maintained their popularity and invoked the wrath of the authorities. People were sentenced to seven years' transportation for distributing the works of Thomas Paine, and one poor fellow received a sentence of fourteen years' transportation for merely advising people to read Paine's works.

While in France at the time of the Revolution and the subsequent Terror, Paine always strove for a humanitarian approach. He opposed the execution of the King and, indeed, narrowly missed being guillotined himself. He suffered many months of imprisonment and always bitterly resented the inaction on the part of the American Government to secure his release.

Prior to his imprisonment Paine wrote the first part of *The Age of Reason*, which was a spirited defence of deism. As a youthful and devout atheist, I was taken aback at the deep religious conviction of Paine. After the initial shock I did understand the driving compassion that led Paine to his views and the concomitant rejection of the entire mythology of cruelty, brutality and evil that is Christianity. The second part of *The Age of Reason* simply takes to pieces the catalogue of absurdities and horrors in both the Old and New Testaments. Ayer dismisses all this with condescension: "As for *The Age of Reason*, its deism needs a stronger defence and its way of discrediting the Bible appears old-fashioned, though I suspect that it is still capable of making converts, especially among younger readers".

Paine touched a chord with people and they fought for his ideas with astonishing bravery and fortitude. In 1812 Daniel Eaton was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment and two hours in the pillory every month for publishing *The Age of Reason*. Percy Bysshe Shelley as a young man immersed himself in Paine's writings, and his publication in 1811 of *The Necessity of Atheism* led to his expulsion

REVIEW

sion from the University of Oxford.

In 1819 the Society for the Suppression of Vice began a prosecution for blasphemy of Richard Carlile and his wife for publishing *The Age of Reason* and other works by Paine. They were sentenced to three and two years' imprisonment with fines of £1,500 and £500 respectively; as Carlile could not find the money he spent some six years in prison. During his trial in his own defence he read out *The Age of Reason* in its entirety. This enabled him to print it in the verbatim account of the trial. Ten thousand copies were sold at two pence each. The Chartists appended their Charter to *Rights of Man*. As Ayer writes, "the defeat of the Chartists may explain why Paine had little political influence throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, and even in the first quarter of the twentieth".

Ayer is apparently unaware of the fact that throughout this period right up to the present day, Paine's writings were "still capable of making converts, especially among younger readers". I know, for I was one of them.

BEVERLY HALSTEAD

Durham Fudge

DANIEL O'HARA

In a recent interview given to the social work magazine, *Community Care*, the Bishop of Durham, Dr David Jenkins, defends himself against the accusation of destroying "simple faith". The Bishop told his interviewer, Terry Philpot: "It must concern anybody if distress is caused to anyone, but you have to think further what you mean by simple faith. My experience is that people of simple faith are not put off by my kind of questioning because they have their real belief in early traditions and are sufficiently on God's wavelength (*sic*) not to be put off by talk about the empty tomb. What causes distress is when you ask people why they believe — whether it (*sic*) can stand a real kick in the guts — and not my type of questions. What is it they have faith in? That's a discipleship question as well as an intellectual question. With too many people — and bishops, too — religion is a substitute for godliness".

It might be instructive to try to analyse the Bishop's statement. What he appears to be saying is that it is unacceptable to disturb the faith of believers, but that, in his opinion, people are unlikely to be disturbed by the sorts of questions he asks, which are questions about the object and content of faith. Questions of a more fundamental nature

about whether there are good reasons for believing in a god or gods should not be asked, because they are likely to distress believers, who will, presumably, not be able to answer them. It seems as though the Bishop is tacitly admitting that there are no good reasons for believing, and if the question is pressed people will be upset because they will have to admit sooner or later that their faith lacks any rational underpinning.

The Bishop also admits that the sort of simple faith of which he approves is based on a "real belief in early traditions". Not, be it noted, on any considerations about what is reasonable, what is historically probable, what is morally edifying and rationally justifiable, but on "early traditions". The Bishop here gives himself away completely; he still believes in the ancient doctrine of a "deposit of faith", something once and for all delivered unto saints (Jude Ch 3). This is, clearly, an esoteric knowledge, immune from and untouched by any need to justify itself rationally, historically or ethically. It is, in short, an occult and secret "knowledge" — a "gnosis". This interpretation is strengthened by the Bishop's use of the term "God's wavelength". Believers, he maintains, are on this mysterious wavelength, and that is why they are able to accept the "early traditions". Being on "God's wavelength" convinces the believer that they are true, just as the "early traditions" assure the believer that he or she is on "God's wavelength".

So there you have it: gnosticism pure and simple. No wonder the Bishop feels it so easy to dispense with belief in the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Jesus. Just like his second-century counterpart, Marcion, who excised the embarrassing birth and infancy narratives from his versions of the Gospels, and denied a physical resurrection, Dr Jenkins clearly believes that these crude notions are not helpful to the promotion of what he sees as the "true" gospel: i.e., a secret knowledge or "gnosis" which is immune to criticism.

To ask people *why* they believe, then, is clearly seen by Bishop Jenkins as a "kick in the guts" of faith. How right he is! And this is why freethinkers must never stop asking believers *why* they believe. Jenkins believes, like all religionists, that faith is "a good thing". He takes it for granted that it is. He does not even want to be asked the question about whether his belief in belief is justified, let alone whether his substantive beliefs are true.

Tension between Buddhists and Muslims in the city of Prome, northern Burma, led to violence in which one man was killed and seven others injured. The Burmese News Agency reported that fighting started in a tea shop where they had been "misunderstandings between one religion and another".

A "Hooker" for Justice

IRENE FEARN

Most scandals concerning religious charlatans have centred on their exploitation of young people who have been induced to reject their families, and abandon studies and careers. The case of Peter Fearn is somewhat different.

"If I were to make up a story as wild and bizarre as this one, no one would believe me. Sometimes I find it hard to believe that it happened to me, yet every day I am surrounded by the living scars and wounds which assure me it's all true". Deborah Davis, daughter of Children of God Cult leader, David Berg, will forgive me for echoing her sentiments. Bizarre religious cults normally prey on the searchings and insecurity of the young, but not this one. In 1976 David Berg declared: "I now want girls on my team who appreciate older men"; and "if he's 25 or 29 we might consider him if he has an important job".

When, in 1984, my husband Peter, a Ford Motor Company executive, returned from business trips to Brazil and became a religious maniac, after being an atheist, I turned for help to his vice-president, Adrian Castilla, to the Company doctor and to a consultant psychiatrist. Those who read my story in the newspapers during 1985-86 may recall the headlines: "Hunt for Lost Child of God" (*The Times*), "Nobody's Safe from the Mind Benders" (*Daily Mail*), "Hooker for Jesus" (*Daily Mirror*), "Wife in Cash Fight with Cult Seeks Law Change" (*Daily Telegraph*) and many others. For two years my telephone was a hot line for reporters eager to print a sensational sex-and-religion story.

At that time I knew nothing of mind-control techniques or cults. My efforts to find my husband were motivated by a belief that he was mentally ill, and also by the tactics of the Ford Motor Company — their indifference to a long-service employee who had clearly suffered a mental breakdown, their lies to me, to my Member of Parliament and to the press in an effort to cover up the truth.

A year later, suspicious of Ford's assurances that they were searching for Peter via the Consulate, church and police, I flew to Sao Paulo. My fears were confirmed. Within weeks of my visit, Peter was arrested for living illegally in Brazil, telling the police he did not know where he had been living for twelve months and could not find his way home alone. When the Consulate in Sao Paulo confirmed that Peter was living at the Children of God's indoctrination centre in Itaoca, I was shattered. Why could he not speak to me? Why could he not return home and settle his affairs? Why did the Ford legal department write: "No one in the Company knew about it until he had gone — when Adrian Castilla had encouraged him

to "go and try it for a month" and Ford had paid his salary?

Little did I know that for the next three years I should have to endure the harsh realities of a struggle for financial survival. The CoG kept Peter on the move and finally forced me to divorce him at a cost of almost £40,000 as well as the loss of our home. "I must give the money to the Lord, hallelujah!" Peter had shouted to me down the telephone. "Do not worry, Alison", Castilla told my daughter, "your Mummy will be well looked after". Some weeks later they towed Peter's company car away; and then mine, leaving me without transport in a village eighteen miles from my work.

While I still insisted that Peter needed medical help, and while close to a breakdown myself, Ford's representative wrote to the Brazilian Consulate: "It would appear from the nature of his conversation in the telephone calls and from letters addressed to his family, which I have seen, that he has completely changed in his mental approach and is no longer the responsible balanced individual who has worked for us for the last 30 years". Believing this, they entered into an agreement with Peter for a reduced pension package, refusing to show it to me and asking "Why do you want to see it?"

Finally I turned to my Church for help. Surely they would denounce a cult that "now perpetrates all forms of adultery, child sex, adult/child sexual relations, and teaches as a doctrine incest" (Deborah Davis).

"Your language is intemperate", said the Archbishop of York. "Religious freedom is indivisible".

From Canterbury: "The Church's attitude to anything that results in the break-up of marriages or families is and always has been absolutely clear". But, I pointed out, Peter had written in his little book of verses for learning: "And everyone that have forsaken houses, or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew, Ch 19 verse 29). And again: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke, Ch 14 verse 33). He says he is a Christian missionary. My attempts to question the contradiction between what the Church claims and the Bible teaches fell on deaf ears.

"Your husband needs specialist help", wrote Richard Cottrell, Member of the European Parliament. Tony Newton, Minister of Health, showed concern and understanding, this recently echoed by the Rt Rev John Wayne, Bishop of Chelmsford. But the Home Office maintain they can do nothing. The Ford Motor Company refuses to answer my letters,

preferring to remain indifferent to the trauma my family has suffered for over four years. We do not even know where he is.

I still weep when I read Peter's letters to me, to his son Stephen and to his father; they are indicative of paranoid schizophrenia. He wrote to his father, who died recently in a mental home: "God has been keeping you alive just so you could receive this letter. You can look forward to all the glories in heaven, including greeting me when I come!" A psychiatrist told me that by now Peter may believe he is Jesus Christ himself.

It is twelve years since the question of the Children of God was raised in Parliament and still there is no legislation to protect victims and their families. In London recently, I monitored two cases of CoG victims whose relatives telephoned me for help. One found herself, after two weeks' involvement, in the psychiatric ward of St Mary Abbots Hospital. The other, a young man of 23 with the initials J.C.M., was made to believe that he was Jesus Christ the Messiah, and ended up in Napsbury Mental Institute. His parents were distraught but afraid to publish the story; they just suffered silently as so many do. Both victims told me CoG members believed that, as God's chosen people, they would not catch AIDS!

For years victims and their families have been suffering from their experiences with extremist "religions". But if anyone speaks up about the mental problems caused by religion people think you are attacking the flag or Christ himself. The hypocrisy of those who preach Christianity while enthroning themselves in their palaces goes unchallenged, and those in authority fail to accept anything that is outside their line of vision.

My husband wrote to me from Brazil: "My Dearest Irene, I know that I have hurt you very much, but some day you will understand and you will be glad". Four years later I do understand. But how can I be glad that my husband was duped and exploited by trained mind-manipulators skilled in the prostitution of science? How can I be glad that a contrived out-of-body experience, an assault on the freedom of mind, impaired his critical judgement and enslaved his normal personality to a degree that made him unrecognisable by his family? How can I be glad when he sends his love, but we cannot speak to him or know where he is when his father has died?

It would have been easier to have come to terms with Peter's death. For the family it is a living bereavement when your loved one claims he is "a Christian missionary" but behaves like a fugitive.

The Bishops Again — and Some Others

T. F. EVANS

Even the most enthusiastic followers of television "soaps" tire now and again of an unadulterated diet of their particular favourites. They long for, if not change, some variety or unexpected twist, the introduction of a new element which, while not disturbing the regularity and even the predictability of the much-loved pattern, will nevertheless add some colour or a new tone. Thus, the mind wanders now and again to speculating on what it would be like for three regular habitues of the Bull (*The Archers*), or the regulars of the Rover's Return (*Coronation Street*), to drop in on their counterparts at the Queen Vic (*EastEnders*). Whoever would lose by this extension of fictitious worlds to meet each other, it would not be the brewers: art, if such it can be called, may not be so far from real life after all.

Reference to real life, whatever may be meant by that metaphysical conception, reminds us that two different long-running "soaps" have been occupying our attention close together in the various reports on radio and television and in the press. They are our own much-loved Church of England at the Lambeth Conference and the no less eagerly followed Democratic Party in what the wit, H. L. Mencken, always called the "Great Republic" on the other side of the Atlantic. As the leaders of the C of E and

those of the Democratic Party (the symbol whereof is a donkey) seek to find a satisfactory formula with which to clothe the nakedness of the schisms in their ranks, those of us who do not actually support either institution, but look with kindly interest on both, may well reflect on the state of the world mirrored in the great events at Canterbury and Atlanta.

Let us begin on the Home Front. Not for a long time have the affairs and opinions of members of the Church of England taken up so much space as in the last few months. Some of the events discussed in episcopalian, or even just ecclesiastical circles, are naturally of greater significance than others. Thus, a great deal of air, usually of the warm-to-hot variety, has been projected into the atmosphere of Canterbury on the subject of the appointment of women to the priesthood or even — the thought must be faced — to the episcopate itself.

There are some members of the Church (and there would be) who have no doubts at all. The Bishop of Durham, if his name, evoking as it does a whiff of sulphur and the vision of a cloven hoof, horns and tail, may be mentioned, has put forward the simple thought that no one half of the human race is inherently superior from another, and that therefore the Church should be just as ready to admit

women as men to all its offices. This thought, super-subtle in its apparent misleading innocence and composed of the most wicked complication in its misleading absence of guile, has proved too much for those clerics (and some laymen) for whom mystery and contradiction is of the very breath of the religious life. After all, if you cannot spend a great deal of time reconciling the irreconcilable, in believing that the bread and wine do literally turn into body and blood, or that by blowing people to pieces and poisoning forever those who escape the actual nuclear explosion you are carrying out the will of the Prince of Peace, you have no real right to be called a religious thinker at all.

It seems that so deeply ingrained is the primitive, atavistic belief that only the superior male sex can carry out the sacred rituals of the Church, and therefore would cease to have any meaning if performed by a woman, that even the present Archbishop of Canterbury who, if this thought may be uttered here without causing a drastic fall in circulation, seems to be a sincere man trying his way honestly through a minefield of prejudice and antediluvian thought. He has been forced to settle for an ignoble compromise, advising his sheep not to vote for a policy in which he had, only a short time before, declared his own personal belief. Sheep, of course, tend to act as sheep in more ways than one; but as we enjoy the joke, if joke it be, we might ask ourselves how many times in the day we ourselves compromise our essential beliefs in order to please the family, or stand well in the eyes of the neighbours, or serve some other not entirely admirable end.

Now that sex has raised its always attractive but usually puzzling head, the mind must dwell thereon for a few minutes. As the Church of England at Canterbury endeavoured to make its spiritual destiny coincide with the hard facts of life, and the Democrats in the US to bring their political necessities into a compromise with a sense of fairness and equality, both treading some questionable paths towards their goals, we find religion and politics coming into the same orbit in our own governmental system.

It was Bernard Shaw (and it is a sign of great restraint that he is not quoted more often on subjects about which he wrote with such wit and penetration) who said it was a non-adult mind that was not continually fascinated by the two means by which humanity has been deluded and bamboozled throughout the ages — religion and politics. Only a short time ago the Prime Minister addressed the Church of Scotland on the subject of her religious faith. The event was given greater piquancy by the fact that the speaker was a woman, a member that is of the sex that so many of the Church and State faction think has a natural incapacity to perform acts of great

importance and overwhelming significance.

By one of those delightful coincidences which continually bring balm to the bruised heart and broken fingers of a mere scribbler, the great Methodist leader, John Wesley, chose to have his reconversion (not conversion as most commentators put it) exactly 250 years ago in 1738. This enabled the Prime Minister to make a few comments on the nature of the new approach that Wesley brought to the life of his time. Briefly, the line was that Wesley was a Tory then and would be a Tory now. That, as the Prime Minister put it, was the truth pure and simple. With Sir William Rees-Mogg peering over our shoulders and Clause 28 written on the wall before us, we quote Oscar Wilde with some trepidation. But as *he* put it, the truth is never pure and rarely simple.

Advertisement Censored

A Compassion in World Farming advertisement about battery chickens has been withdrawn by Rank Advertising at the request of the Cinema Exhibitors Association. It is asserted that pressure by the National Farmers' Union has led to the blanket banning of such advertising in future. This will mean that cinema advertisements urging the public to buy free-range eggs will not be accepted.

Carol McKenna, CIWF's Campaigning Director, declared: "Cinemas are quite willing to show films like *Rambo*, which includes scenes of hideous violence and exploitation which many find offensive.

"Yet they are to deny the public the right to find out about real life suffering of animals, and other important ethical issues. Even worse, it appears that this policy change has arisen following pressure from vested interests.

"Groups such as CIWF, whose aims have mass public support, are slowly being squeezed out of the public eye. A recent CIWF advertisement was banned by *Reader's Digest*. We are prohibited from television advertising. Now our film has to be thrown out of cinemas even though it has been passed by the British Board of Film Censors and the Cinema Advertising Authority. What next?"

Carol McKenna said that the CIWF is appalled at the CEA's apparent surrender to pressure from vested commercial interests. She criticised its unethical stance whereby cigarettes and alcohol advertising will be permitted, but moral issues of the day are censored.

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom has also denounced the CEA action as "invidious censorship".

Interior Ministry officials in Abu Dhabi have banned bingo. They say it is contrary to Islamic teachings.

Freethinker Fund

Tom O'Malley's article, *A Threat to Freedom of Debate*, in last month's issue, highlighted the threat posed by the monopolisation of media ownership and control. There is another cause for concern: the demise of independent radical journals. Some of the casualties were long established, financially stable and with impressive circulation figures. Nevertheless they were unable to survive.

It is highly unlikely that Rupert Murdoch plans to absorb *The Freethinker* into his publishing empire. The real danger to this paper is a tendency to take its monthly appearance for granted.

To ensure continuation it is necessary to increase circulation and keep *The Freethinker* solvent. During its 107-year history the paper has relied on the goodwill, voluntary work and financial support of its writers and readers. They have never failed it. We thank all of them, including the latest list of contributors to the Fund.

P. R. Foss, J. McPhee, J. O'Neil, W. H. Simcock and J. E. Sykes, £1 each; R. Ruxtable, £1.50; J. W. Carter, A. T. Horton, M. Howgate, A. F. Pendry, R. W. Simmonds, F. A. M. Stevenson and F. Walker, £2 each; C. Begg, £2.50; J. M. Azab, E. Stockton and J. W. White, £3 each; R. F. Stratton, £3.30; A. R. Harford, £3.80; K. M. Barralet, £4.40; N. Blackford, R. Forder, G. Greig, B. Halstead, J. L. Hutchinson, H. Jack, J. P. Leonard, R. B. Ratcliff, W. H. Sefton, C. A. Sellen, K. P. G. Spencer, A. Standley, M. F. Villiers-Stuart, C. Williams and B. A. V. Young, £5 each; E. J. Willis, £8.80; C. Bayliss, £10; Anonymous, £21.60.

Total for June: £158.90.

The Scottish Humanist Council has arranged displays at this year's Glasgow Garden Festival. The Festival is expected to attract over two million visitors, many of them from abroad.

The police have told owners of night clubs in London's West End that they are breaking a 200-year-old law by allowing Sunday dancing. Commercial dancing contravenes the Sunday Observance Act of 1790.

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EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group. Summer programme obtainable from Joan Wimble, honorary secretary, Flat 5, 67 St Aubyns, Hove.

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group. New Venture Theatre Club, Bedford Place (off Western Road), Brighton. Sunday, 4 September, 5.30 pm for 6 pm. Jim Herrick: Humanism in India.

British Association for the Advancement of Science. The Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, Friday, 9 September, 2 pm. Debate: The Religious Implications of the Theory of Evolution. Speakers: the Rt Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, and Dr Beverly Halstead. Information obtainable from the BAAS, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB.

Edinburgh Humanist Group. Programme for Forum meetings from the secretary, 59 Fox Covert Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 6UH, telephone 031-334 8372.

Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Meetings on the second Friday of the month at 7.30 pm. Annual General Meeting and Social, 9 September.

Glasgow Humanist Society. Information regarding meetings and other activities is obtainable from Mrs Marguerite Morrow, 32 Pollock Road, Glasgow, G61 2NJ, telephone 041-942 0129.

Humanist Holidays. Summer holidays at Shanklin, Isle of Wight, 3-17 September. Details obtainable from Gillian Bailey, 18 Priors Road, Cheltenham, GL52 5AA, telephone 0242 39175.

Norwich Humanist Group. Programme of meetings obtainable from Philip Howell, 41 Spixworth Road, Old Catton, Norwich, NR6 7NE, telephone Norwich 47843.

Sutton Humanist Group. Friends House, Cedar Road, Sutton. Wednesday, 14 September, 7.30 pm for 8 pm. Roger Thatcher: Social Trends in the UK.

West Glamorgan Humanist Group. Information regarding meetings and other activities is obtainable from Georgina Coupland, 117 Pennard Drive, Southgate, telephone 044 128 3631.

Worthing Humanist Group. Programme of meetings obtainable from Bob Thorpe, 19 Shirley Drive, Worthing, telephone 62846.

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there because it knows what it was about”.

He said the humble Address and supporting speeches were to justify a celebration in Westminster Hall.

“The contractors have not waited. They are already building the structures in Westminster Hall to allow the Queen to reply to a humble Address that we have not even passed. If we want to have a celebration, have a celebration. But do not ask the House of Commons to falsify history to justify a party in Westminster Hall. . .

“If we were to celebrate parliamentary democracy, we could perhaps celebrate Wat Tyler’s campaign against the poll tax. We could celebrate the Levellers. We could celebrate Tom Paine, whose books are still not allowed to be read by prisoners in the Maze. We could celebrate Tolpuddle, or the Chartists, or the Suffragettes.

“Those are the people who gave us parliamentary democracy. Indeed, the Prime Minister would not be Prime Minister if the Suffragettes had not broken the law”.

Jeremy Corbyn (Labour, Islington, North) said there was no historical basis for the selection of William and Mary except that it suited the land-owning classes of the time to have a Protestant King and Queen.

He added: “We should recognise that the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 paved the way for the processes of imperialism and colonialism. Implicit in the wording of the Bill of Rights is the domination of colonies throughout the world, and all the disgusting and degrading events that followed from that, such as slavery and the domination of subject peoples. All of them stemmed from the Bill of Rights and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which once more imposed the monarchy on this country”.

Mr Corbyn said it was an insult to celebrate the Glorious Revolution “when we have a Government who have centralised more powers than almost any other since 1688, who are busy pushing through the poll tax — the most unfair, unjust tax imaginable — and who allow poverty to grow at unparalleled rates, and people to sleep in the streets. At the same time, this Parliament passes taxation laws that are a gift to the wealthiest”.

Eric Heffer (Labour, Liverpool, Walton), said it was vital that we have a modern Declaration of Rights.

“At this juncture”, he declared, “we have a Government who are upsetting, undermining and slowly but surely destroying all the real freedoms that have been achieved by the British people over the years. . .

“The real rights we have in this country have come because of the struggle of the mass of ordinary

people. Such rights have never been achieved by people looking down from on high and handing them to us on a plate. We have had to fight for everything that we have”.

Another Liverpool Member, David Alton (Social and Liberal Democrat MP for Mossley Hill), announced that he would vote against the Address. It commemorated an event in 1688 “which did enormous harm and distress to many people living in these islands”.

He said: “The trouble with motions such as this is that they stir up old memories and hatred”. It was deeply offensive to “many of Her Majesty’s loyal Catholic subjects. I am surprised that the Government have shown such insensitivity”.

Mr Alton warned against the danger of becoming prisoners of our own history when it is as selective as that incorporated in the Address. It is events in the struggle against slavery and for the emancipation of Catholics and Jews we should be celebrating.

He concluded: “Democracy, as we experience it in this country today, is highly inadequate. We need a new constitutional settlement which looks again at many of the questions raised during the debate.

“A proper Bill of Rights, freedom of information legislation, a Select Committee system that is able to hold the Executive accountable, a proper and fair electoral system, a decentralised form of government — those are the developments we should be looking forward to, instead of simply looking back to a period that does this country no great credit, and is a period of which we should be deeply ashamed”.

Marcinkus Goes

Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, president of the Institute for Religious Works (the Vatican Bank) is to be replaced. His successor is Angelo Sironi, head of Credito Artigiano, a Catholic banking house.

The move follows years of scandal and controversy involving the Vatican Bank. Experts believe it had dealings with the crooked banker, Roberto Calvi, whose Banco Ambrosiano crashed after having amassed colossal fraudulent debts. Police investigators believe the missing money found its way into ghost companies run by Calvi and his associates. These included leading members of the now outlawed P2 masonic lodge and Archbishop Marcinkus. Calvi ended up hanging under a London bridge.

Although the American-born Marcinkus, a favourite of John Paul II, has been removed from the Vatican Bank, he will continue as pro-president of the Pontifical Commission for the Vatican City State. It is expected that he will become president in two years’ time, a position that entitles him to a cardinal’s red hat.