

The Freethinker

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IN THE YEARS before the second world war, a remarkable pamphlet appeared in Belgium—one that excited considerable interest in ecclesiastical circles both here and in its land of origin. Unfortunately, it is many years since I read the pamphlet in the Library of the British Museum and, as I have by now forgotten the name of its clerical author, I am consequently unable to cite it directly. In any case, I do not suppose that the pamphlet in question could now be obtained anywhere except in the Bloomsbury institute or its Oxford counterpart, the Bodleian. However, the author was, I recall, a Jesuit and the personal sequel to the appearance of his highly controversial pamphlet, was an unfortunate one. The Jesuits, the *corps d'élite*, the ecclesiastical "Old Guard" of the Black International, are not wont to tolerate unorthodoxy in their highly disciplined ranks and promptly expelled their erring brother. But at least as far as I remember, he was not actually excommunicated from the membership of the Roman Catholic Church itself.

The Trojan Horse

What, in brief, this daring Belgian Jesuit proposed in his thesis that aroused the wrath of his superiors in the great Fascist Order of the Catholic Church, was what one could relevantly term a revolutionary move in traditional ecclesiastical strategy; a daring innovation in ecclesiastical politics. The English, argued our percipient Belgian author are (shall we say?) a peculiar people who must, to produce any lasting effect, be handled tactfully and with a due regard for their insular peculiarities. A frontal attack is quite useless against the impregnable walls of this island Gibraltar, the Protestant bulwarks of which have so long proved to be such an impassable obstacle to Roman claims and penetration. What is required for the much-discussed and hoped-for conversion of England is something more subtle; one of those turning strategies so familiar in clerical manoeuvres but which so far, the Vatican has signally failed to apply to this country. England, argued our clerical psychologist, cannot be stormed from without; it can only be finally taken by what is sometimes called in political circles, the "Trojan Horse" tactic, by boring from within.

The Road Through Canterbury

Our author then delineated the main outlines of this new ecclesiastical strategy that so roused the alarm of his Jesuit superiors. Briefly, it amounted to this: it is useless, and the historic results already prove that it is useless, to convert the stiff-necked English to the One True Church by permanently maintaining a sectarian Church in England, the "Italian Mission", as an Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury (Archbishop Temple), once described it. What is wanted is quite a different approach; the preliminary conversion of the Church of England itself. The road to the final conversion of England runs through Canterbury. It has really, so the argument continues, been a sheer waste of time to recruit, as is done at present, isolated

Anglo-Catholic clerics to change their current spiritual allegiance from Canterbury to Rome. What is required is the corporate adhesion of the official Church of England to Rome. This, our Jesuit author frankly recognised, cannot be effectively accomplished as hitherto attempted, by merely demanding immediate and unconditional submission (in ecclesiastical phraseology) to Rome. Concessions will have to be made on both sides. The Church of England must become the Church *in* England under the supreme jurisdiction of the present Primate, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as it was prior to the Reformation. The future English department of the "Universal" (Catholic)

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

The Vatican and the Church of England

By F. A. RIDLEY

Church, must be accorded all the privileges long granted to the "Uniate" Catholic Churches in the Orthodox East, with a married clergy and an English Liturgy (i.e. in the Roman Catholic Church at present, several "Uniate" rites in other languages are recognised as valid). Presumably in the future reunited Uniate Catholic Church in England, the present Catholic hierarchy would either be abolished or at least effectively subordinated to the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, i.e. the first appointed by Rome since Bloody Mary's Archbishop Pole. It is consequently perhaps understandable that our Belgian Jesuit's (or now ex-Jesuit!) radical strategy for the conversion of England, was most unfavourably received, not only by his immediate superiors in Belgium, but by the present English Roman Catholic hierarchy. The latter evidently did not relish the prospect of being placed under the ecclesiastical supremacy of the then still heretical and schismatic Archbishop of Canterbury. Our author and his iconoclastic proposals were quietly relegated to obscurity, and during the course of the many intervening years I have never heard of any reference being made to his daring proposals. As I said above, I have even forgotten both the name of the author and the title of his pamphlet.

Pope John

Actually, the ecclesiastical strategy adumbrated above, was not original, or at any rate, not entirely so. For in the years immediately after World War I, Cardinal Mercier, the then Primate of Belgium and runner-up in the Papal elections (and former tutor of Fr. Anthony—alias Joseph McCabe) opened discussions with Anglo-Catholic leaders, presumably with a view to some sort of reunion by agreement between Rome and Canterbury. But these "Malines Conversations" were abruptly halted upon the accession of Mercier's successful rival, Pius XI (1922-39) by direct order of the new Pope. They have never since been resumed, and Rome continues to repeat her old demands for "unconditional surrender" for unqualified ecclesiastical submission by the fallible Church of England to the infallible Church of Rome. However, since the accession of Pope John, a new approach appears to be evident in ecclesiastical strategy. The cordial reception given to Dr. Fisher, when the then English Primate visited the Vatican, marks one indication of this perhaps impend-

ing reorientation of Vatican strategy in relation to "our separated brethren" in England. The projected Ecumenical Council to be held for the express purpose of effecting "Christian Reunion" represents another perhaps even more significant one. The Roman Catholic Church is, in matters of ecclesiastical strategy and tactics, a very adaptable organisation, and in particular it has never demonstrated any marked reluctance to utilise, where possible, the ideas of its critics. Is our (perhaps still living) Belgian ex-Jesuit about to be justified after all? It does not seem to be at all impossible, particularly since the Church of England under the direction of its new Primate, Archbishop Ramsey, itself now appears to be desirous of loosening its traditional connections with the State (*Praemanire* and all that) which hitherto has prevented any major negotiations with Rome: i.e. the last

word lies, not with the Anglican hierarchy, but with a perhaps non-Anglican Parliament, whilst simultaneously, Britain's now probable entry into the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Common Market, must increase the political pressure that the Papacy will be able to exercise upon the Church of England. In view of all this, it is not impossible, though fortunately unlikely, that the English road to Rome may eventually run through Canterbury or that by 2061 AD, England will be again, as before the Reformation an officially Roman Catholic land with its spiritual headquarters in Canterbury, an historic See which, after all, was constituted as such originally by Rome.

[Footnote: In Rome's Eastern "Uniate" Churches, priests can marry before, but not after, ordination.]

Progress or Priest?

By D. W.

WHILE OTHER RELIGIONS have compromised in the face of Rationalism the Roman Catholic Church, relying on the credulity of its followers, has stood firm. Regardless of the absurdity of its beliefs, the inconsistency of its thinking and the disastrous effects of its domination, it has refused to yield. Many leaders of other religions, fearful of the rising tide of reason, decided that half a loaf was better than no bread, and compromised over long-held beliefs, abandoned parts of their faith and sought refuge in sophistries such as the plea that the Biblical fables were symbolic. This attempt to come to terms with rational thought had an enervating effect in their religion, for observers, seeing the amendments made, wondered how something which was literally true in the 18th century could only be symbolic in the 19th. The Roman Catholic Church, however, without a tittle of evidence to support its statements insisted that the Pope was infallible, that it was the one true Church and that it was the final arbiter of the truth. The colossal arrogance of its claims to knowledge and infallibility is only matched by the gullibility of those who believe them. In so believing they sacrifice their reason and betray their fellow men.

The lively intellect doubts, wonders, speculates and theorises. It is troubled when it fails to find the truth but cannot accept anything less than success and boldly tackles the giant of ignorance. From the restless minds of courageous men who refused to accept as true that which was unproven and unreasonable have come the great discoveries of the ages. Men, refusing to believe that all had been revealed by a God no one had seen or heard, and whose commands were delivered secretly to a small band of favoured followers, progressed in knowledge and, as a result, mankind benefited. By denying that anyone had a monopoly of the truth, men like Galileo rejected long-held beliefs which had been stamped with the authority of the Church, and made startling discoveries. These were made in the face of opposition from petty-minded men concerned only with the protection of their own powers—at the expense of human happiness if need be—and who hated anyone who exposed the revelations of their Church as untrue. Galileo, forced to bend the knee to the priests, was a tremendous indictment of the Church and its ignorance and maliciousness. Fortunately Gagarin lives in a time of waning Church power.

The increase of knowledge is opposed continually by the Vatican, which is retrograde in the extreme. It insists that men must believe only that to which it gives its

approval, as it apparently has God's confidence in a way which is denied to the rest of the human race. The favoured position of the priests as interpreters of the divine will do not, however, save them from the inhuman dictates of their own Church, which cause them untold suffering by forbidding them even to marry. This ban was placed by a medieval Pope and remains today as an example of what men will accept when they forfeit their reason. Vatican demands on lay adherents are scarcely less severe. Having insisted on absolute obedience it forbids contraception in an overpopulated world faced by starvation, orders that, if necessary, mothers must be sacrificed to save the foetus, and forces many of its followers to lead a lifetime of unhappiness because they cannot be divorced. Roman Catholicism invades the life of the individual, trampling underfoot his freedom, reason, rights and desires. There is nothing it will not presume upon; no impudent demand it will not make; no privilege it will not usurp.

What a reflection it is on men that this plague, this enemy of freedom, this assassin of progress, should be so powerful. Men, instead of striving together towards Utopia are bedevilled by this rapacious organisation which attempts to suppress any discovery which does not agree with its own absurd beliefs. Truth, freedom and happiness all suffer at the hands of the Holy Roman Church which, while promising a future heaven, does its best to create a present hell.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, September 20th: Present: Messrs. F. A. Ridley, (Chair), Arthur, Barker, Cleaver, Corstorphine, Ebury, Johnson, McIlroy, Mills, Mrs. Ebury, Mrs. Venton, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths) and the Secretary. Apologies from Messrs. Corina, Hornibrook and Tribe. The Committee expressed its sympathy on hearing of the death of Mr. Corina's father. New members were admitted to Marble Arch, Merseyside and Sussex Branches; there were also 2 new Individual members. Mr. E. Mills was elected to speak to a Surbiton group, "The Diggers", on behalf of the Society. A letter from Mr. J. C. Saffin regarding likely support in a Welsh mining village, was noted with approval. Glasgow, Manchester, Nottingham and San Juan Branch matters were dealt with. World Union of Freethinkers weekend conference report was given and motion re concern at the food and population situation was approved. The possibility of LCC plaques for Freethinkers and possible date of annual dinner were considered. Further matters concerning adoption were noted. The usual monthly contribution of £5 to the Building Fund was handed over by Mr. Ebury on behalf of the North London Branch. The next meeting was fixed for Wednesday, October 18th, 1961.

Dialectical Materialism

By R. STUART MONTAGUE

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT MARX intended to write a book on Dialectical Materialism. If he had only lived another ten years he might have managed it. Incidentally Marx never used the expression "Dialectical Materialism" anywhere in his works. The term was coined by George V. Plekhanov.

In his article "Dialectical and other Materialism" (1/9/61) Colin McCall mentions the dialectical leap of trees into woods or forests and I agree with him that this is no case of quantity into quality. The only qualitative change is in the words used and not in the trees. It is in the head of the observer when he thinks there are enough trees to call it a wood or forest. Whereas for a qualitative change in the things themselves I will give a few examples.

First we will take chemistry. A simple mixture of oxygen and hydrogen is possible in any quantitative relation, but in the forming of the qualitatively new body — water — these two elements unite only in definite quantitative proportions. Thus between water and the other combination of oxygen and hydrogen — peroxide of hydrogen — there are no intermediate compounds whatever. In the formation of peroxide of hydrogen, exactly twice as great a relative quantity of oxygen enters into the compound as in the formation of water. Not any, but only a definite quantitative difference conditions the difference of qualities, of leaps from one chemical combination to another. If three atoms of oxygen unite into a molecule, instead of the usual two, we get ozone, a body which is considerably different from ordinary oxygen in its odour and reactions. The various proportions in which oxygen combines with nitrogen or sulphur, produce various substances qualitatively different from any of the others. How different is laughing gas (nitrogen monoxide N_2O from nitric anhydride (nitrogen pentoxide N_2O_5). The first is gas, the second at ordinary temperature a solid crystalline substance. And yet the whole difference in composition is that the second contains five times as much oxygen as the first, and between the two of them are oxides of nitrogen (NO , N_2O_3 , NO_2) each of which is qualitatively different from the first two and from one another.

Here is the rather novel example from Napoleon. He describes the combat between the French cavalry, who were bad riders but disciplined, and the Mamelukes, who were undoubtedly the best horsemen of their time for single combat but lacked discipline, as follows: "Two Mamelukes were undoubtedly more than a match for three Frenchmen; 100 Mamelukes were equal to 100 Frenchmen; 300 Frenchmen could generally beat 300 Mamelukes, and 1,000 Frenchmen invariably defeated 1,500 Mamelukes".

For a homely illustration we will take the man who is a candidate for Parliament. If 4,500 votes are necessary for a majority, the candidate is not elected with 4,499 votes, he remains a candidate. With one vote more, the quantitative change determines a qualitative change, for the candidate that was becomes a member of Parliament.

Or another example from the social system in which we live—Capitalism. A member of the working class is a proletarian because he is propertyless in the means of production. He lives by the sale of his labour power for a wage or salary. He is a member of the vast majority of society. The capitalist class on the other hand is that minority group in society who own the means of production and distribution; the factories, mills, mines and transport. They live by their ownership on rent, interest or profit.

Yes, many capitalists work and many workers have a little money and a few shares in companies. Yes, there are a number of people which it may be hard to define as either members of the capitalist class or the working class. The professional man, the dentist for instance, is paid by the government according to the amount of work that he performs. The little shopkeeper; he is a salesman for the products of the great combines.

Can you put your finger on the exact spot where your shoulders end and your neck begins? But you are in no doubt which are your shoulders and which is your neck.

For the qualitative leap to take place of a member of the working class into a member of the capitalist class a minimum amount of money must be acquired before it becomes capital on which the worker can live without working, that is without the need to sell his labour power for a wage or salary. But what is better than to quote the old master of the subject. Marx describes it differently three times. Here is one description. "... Just as, at first, the capitalist is relieved from manual labour so soon as his capital has reached that minimum amount with which real capitalist production begins, so now, he hands over the work of direct and constant supervision of the individual workman, and groups of workmen to a special kind of wage-labourer."

In the capitalist system we have the second law of dialectics; the Unity of Opposites, the thesis and the antithesis; the capitalist and the working class, "the contradiction that leads the way forward" to quote Hegel. The antithesis, the working class in capitalist society or the rising bourgeoisie, the middle class, in feudal society. The antithesis, first the negative force, becomes the positive force and the previous positive force is overthrown. A dialectical leap has taken place of quantity into quality. A new social system is born from the womb of the old. In the case of the feudal system it is the developing bourgeoisie who finally overthrow the feudal nobility and landlords and the capitalistic system is born. Capitalism is the synthesis, the triad. But no sooner does capitalism begin to develop than the same process begins again. The stability is again upset by the same general laws of motion. The contradictions arise. A new class is born, the proletariat, the negative force, the antithesis. The working class grow in numbers and strength and becomes the positive force. Another dialectical leap takes place. The capitalist system is overthrown and the new synthesis is socialism.

The previous description of the dialectical movement in human society is rather concentrated and dogmatic but Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action. Here I like to express my personal views.

The English, French, Russian and Chinese bourgeois revolutions were typical dialectical leaps from a dying feudal system to the beginning of the capitalist system. But now it seems to me that new factors have entered into historical development. The Russian revolution of 1917 was the overthrow of the dying feudal system, Russian capitalist industrialisation was constructed through the State by the Bolshevik Party, there being few bourgeoisie to fulfil their historic role. The Chinese revolution which began in 1927, is also industrialising the country through the State. Russia and China construct the capitalist system at its future world stage; i.e. State Capitalism. This has been my personal view since 1943.

(Continued on page 318)

This Believing World

We have often wondered why only "saints", that is, people who were so devout that they spent all their time praying on their knees, or fasting, or weeping for the sins of other people, and so on, should nearly always be honoured in paintings or stained-glass windows? Most of them never did a day's work in their lives, and expected other people to feed them to continue to be religious, and their exploits in miracle-mongering are perpetuated in holy and sacred books looked upon by the godly as completely true. We are therefore pleased to see that a footballer has now been honoured by having a stained-glass window erected in his home town of Dudley at St. Francis' Church.

★

He is Duncan Edwards, one of the footballers who was killed in the tragic 1958 Munich air disaster, and the window will, so claims his old manager Mr. Busby, "keep the name of Duncan Edwards alive for ever". At least, Edwards gave pleasure to thousands of fans watching the secular game of football, while all or nearly all Christian saints rarely gave pleasure to anybody, and were in the main crashing bores. And now what about stained-glass windows to cricketers, jockeys and swimmers?

★

Stained-glass windows are so to speak religious posters, but the Churches have to use printed ones every now and then. We are not surprised therefore that there is quite a rumpus over one outside the Ivy Evangelical Church, Didsbury, Manchester, which boldly proclaimed that "The blood of Jesus Christ washes whiter than them all". Objections to it poured in for, of course, the Church—or Churches—have been trying for years to abolish as far as possible the "pulling power" of being washed in the blood of Jesus, so long considered literally necessary for all Christians who long to be saved.

★

This latest slogan was thought to be a grand variation of advertisements dealing with detergents, the idea being that no matter how white one of them with or without blue particles can get clothes, the blood of Jesus will get souls whiter than any detergent so far discovered; and we are pleased to see that the slogan stays.

★

Anyway, the London "Evening News" in its "Saturday Reflection" recently enthused over "God's hospitality". It appears that the Lord "offers without money and without price something which no one could ever deserve or buy". The Old Testament is thrown overboard, and we now have a "new revelation", that of Christ, which "is therefore mostly aptly represented as a feast". And just think of it—you can have this feast for nothing! How marvellous is God's Grace to give you such a sumptuous banquet for nothing! No wonder the starving millions in the "underdeveloped countries" are rushing to be converted in their millions to Christianity to enjoy the bountiful and soul-filling meal. Or are they?

★

It was only to be expected that ITV's "About Religion" programme would include a discussion on the burning question of the Churches advertising themselves in the Press. The speakers all differed from one another, though naturally they all agreed that it would be wonderful to induce the population of Britain to go regularly to church especially on Sunday—an agreement only to be expected. About the only sensible remarks came from the Roman Catholic priest who pointed out that whatever else they did, advertisements could not appeal to unbelievers—that

it would be quite useless to expect them to take any notice of such advertisements and, that being the case, why advertise? Genuine believers do not want to be told to go to church. In other words, the discussion simply fizzled out. We are not surprised.

★

Instead of banning teenagers who are "Atheists" the Hatfield parochial church council will welcome them into the youth clubs they plan to build. No one will try to "convert" them, we are told by the Rev. J. Snow. He thinks that eventually these teenage "Atheists" will emerge "as strong Christians when they become adults". All this goes to show how little our parsons know of Atheism. They confuse it with the ignorance and apathy shown by so many young people towards religion, which in their opinion can easily be dispelled by a little argument. This may well be true for the very simple reason that ignoramuses in general know as little of Atheism as they do of Christianity. Mr. Snow should try his hand with some of the readers of this journal—first!

★

The campaign for the Sunday opening of public houses in Wales, has, we read (*The Guardian*, 19/9/61) "been given a substantial lift by a fresh intervention by the Archbishop of Wales, Dr. Edwin Morris, who has called drink 'a gift from God' and one of the good things of life". Indicative, though, of the type of religious opposition is the need for Dr. Morris (in a 15,000-word booklet) to say that "there is no biblical evidence for teetotalism". What if there were?

★

Immediately alongside this in "The Guardian" (19/9/61), was the report of a rather different effort to bring Christianity up to date. The Rev. K. S. Pound, training Officer of a new centre for young people near Castleton, Derbyshire, played a guitar and wore "sharply pointed shoes, drainpipe trousers and a bright blue sweater" with his clerical collar, and he asked 21 young students: "Has Christianity had it?" Not that the Church of England (which has organised the scheme) intends "to throw religion" at the youths. Rather does it hope that "the result of a week's stay at the centre would be a greater awareness of the problems and significance of everyday life". One student seemed to have the situation weighed-up however. "I don't believe in the Church", he said, "and as far as I can make out, they're going to try to show me that I'm wrong".

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

On September 12th, T. M. Mosley gave a talk entitled "The Beliefs of an Unbeliever" to the members of the "Apex Group", a Christian society within the Youth Leaders Training College, Humberstone Drive, Leicester. The meeting went very well, Mr. Mosley speaking for 40 minutes. There was no discussion, but a number of questions were asked about a "future life". Mr. Mosley stayed for dinner afterwards, and the Secretary of the "Apex" plans to visit the Secular Hall when the season starts.

On the same day, C. H. Hammersley addressed Leicester Letter Writers Club, of which he is a member on "Why I Am Not A Christian", and he repeated the talk to the Belgrave Liberal Club Debating Society on September 19th.

Both meetings went very well, though opinions varied from "I agree with everything" to "outrageous, blasphemous, etc.". Mr. Hammersley will be giving the same talk to the Coffee Pot Club (for young people in the professions) in November.

WITHOUT COMMENT

Talks on possible church unity between the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church were resumed in Cambridge yesterday. The talks began five years ago

—*The Guardian* (26/9/61).

THE ANSWER?

Church site as supermarket—Answer to the Vicar's Problem.
—Headlines in *The Guardian* (26/9/61).

THE FREETHINKER

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Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1

Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Members and visitors are welcome during normal office hours. Inquiries regarding Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S.. Thursday lunchtimes, THE FREETHINKER on sale, Piccadilly, near Queen Victoria Statue. (Platt Fields), Sundays, 3 p.m.: Messrs. G. H. MILLS and G. A. WOODCOCK.

Marble Arch N.S.S. (Marble Arch), Sundays, 12 noon: MESSRS. F. A. RIDLEY, D. H. TRIBE, C. H. CLEAVER and G. F. BOND.

Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE, J. P. MURACCIOLE and H. A. TIMMINS

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square, Nottingham).—Every Friday, 1 p.m., Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, October 8th, 6.45 p.m.: G. N. DEV (London),

"Religious Problems and Attitudes in India".

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, October 10th, 7.30 p.m.: Debate between

MAJOR G. ADCOCK and F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT, M.A.,

"Authority v. Freedom in Moral Behaviour".

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, Bath Street), Sunday, October 8th, 3 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Vatican and the

Common Market".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 8th, 6.30 p.m.: F. J. CORINA, "A Space Ship

to Heaven".

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street), Sunday, October 8th, 2.30 p.m.:

REV. J. W. TYSON, "Emotionalism".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, October 8th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM,

B.A., "Moral Re-Armament Examined".

Notes and News

THE REV. DR. LESLIE WEATHERHEAD, in a letter to *The Times* (20/9/61), repeated his warning (referred to in our September 23rd issue) that the nation is in "dire moral peril". Quite wrongfully asserting that "historians agree that the decline of Rome and of the other empires began with sexual depravity", Dr. Weatherhead talked of "sinister figures for homosexuality, marital infidelity, and violent sex crimes", and then touched on illegitimacy, venereal disease, strip-tease clubs, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. "Is there no brand of the Christian religion", he asked, "which can offer 'the moral equivalent of war' and so reveal the meaning and fullness of life which Christ offers us to win modern youth and save our nation from a greater danger than nuclear war?" (our italics).

★

THREE DAYS LATER, *The Times* (23/9/61), R. T. Marlow

of Llandudno contested Dr. Weatherhead's conclusions. Though illegitimate births have increased compared to 5 or 6 years ago, the figure is "similar to the inter-war period and much lower than prior to the first world war". Venereal disease has risen 66 per cent over a few years, but "it is still much lower than either the inter-war period or earlier times". As for statistics regarding pregnancy before marriage, "bad as they are they are no worse at the present time than 30, 40 or 50 years ago". Moreover, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, "written 30 years ago . . . falls beside some Classical and Elizabethan literature read in former times". In short, Mr. Marlow thought it "unfair on the present generation to assume that . . . morality has deteriorated on the basis of such figures for, in fact, these are more often than not better than comparable figures relating to previous generations".

★

ANOTHER CLERGYMAN who thinks nuclear threats are exaggerated is the Rev. Henry Elsley of Tokyngton Ave., Wembley. "There are some women in the Church who are really desperately worried about this talk of fall-out", he told the *Evening Standard* (20/9/61). However, he is going to tell them that, "If there is going to be serious fall-out it will affect the Russians before it gets to us". "I'll also tell them that Communist China is the one country that Khrushchev fears and that he is unlikely to start anything with us while he has that worry".

★

INCIDENTALLY, parsons seem to be in rather a belligerent mood at the moment, if *Evening Standard* reports are anything to go by. The issue of September 21st told us in headlines: "Vicar hits at 'dirty, careless English public'", and "Minister to slam Bingo over the 'mike'", while another story began: "A rector has made an outspoken attack on parishioners who indulge in scandal-mongering . . .". Two days before, the Rev. Ernest Pitman, of Dulwich, had turned his wrath on his fellow parsons. "What a pity dog-collars cannot choke some of the parson critics of the Church before they speak," he said.

★

TALKING OF BELLIGERENCY between clergymen, here is an Associated Press report from Kansas City (*Montreal Star*, 7/9/61): "Rev. A. G. Wright of Detroit, died today of injuries suffered yesterday during an outburst of jostling and pushing when two factions of the National Baptist Convention sought control of the rostrum at Municipal Auditorium. Mr. Wright fell off the stage during the struggle".

★

THE ABORTION LAW REFORM ASSOCIATION will be holding a public meeting in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, on Wednesday, November 1st at 7 p.m. Miss Joan Vickers, M.P., will speak on "The Status of Women Commission", and Mr. R. S. W. Pollard, J.P., on "Practical Problems of Getting the Law Amended". Admission will be free. Mr. Pollard is, of course, the author of that remarkably informative booklet, *Family Problems and the Law*, and of the longer work, *The Problem of Divorce*.

★

MRS. MARGARET McILROY's article, "The Catholic Church v. the Planned Family", written after the British Transport Commission had banned the Family Planning Association advertisement from the London Underground, has been reprinted in *The American Rationalist*. The article, first printed in THE FREETHINKER on January 20th, was later issued as a leaflet and was used extensively in the National Secular Society's campaign against the BTC ban.

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

(Concluded from page 315)

If one studies what is taking place since the Castro Revolution in Cuba and also Nasser in Egypt one will notice this same development. The British Labour Government of 1945 Nationalised the coal mines, the railways and the Bank of England and we shall be hearing the word "Nationalisation" or "Planning" or perhaps a new word, but meaning the same thing, a great deal in the near future.

And so instead of a dialectical leap from world capitalism to international socialism, there may be a slow transition period of one system into the other. One can put forward various theories on this subject. I could develop it from the Marxist point of view but this article would soon grow into a pamphlet.

To pass on to the next point in the article. Colin McCall when mentioning the dialectical leap of trees into woods also mentions the doubtful dialectic of people into crowds and again I quite agree with him. But the dialectical change is there and he might find the following of interest. It is by Alexander Philipov, from *Logic and Dialectic in the Soviet Union* (Research Program on the USSR, New York, 1952.) ". . . Furthermore, in history, psychology, and sociology, the principle of transition from quantity to quality has long been widely recognised. Every sociologist knows for example, that society—far from merely being a sum total of its individual members—possesses certain characteristics that are not present in the mere aggregate of individuals. A striking illustration is furnished by mob psychology: a mob may be composed of benevolent individuals and yet be cruel; or it may be made up of reasonable people and yet prove unreasonable. Contemporary Gestalt psychology sharply emphasises that psychic organisation—both perception and image-formation—is not reducible to a sum of parts, simply joined by 'and'; psychic organisation always results in a totality that is completely new with respect to its parts. Even before the rise of Gestalt psychology Wilhelm Wundt was teaching that all psychic organisation was a 'creative synthesis' that could not be explained merely by reference to its component parts. Bergson also stressed that psychic organisation was something qualitatively new that was not simply an aggregate of its parts. Similar views have been expressed in various ways by many philosophers and psychologists beginning with Aristotle who maintained the precedence of totality over its parts, and going on to Avenarius, Ehrenfeld, Kruger, Schuppe, Cornelius, Muller, Meinong and others."

Next Colin McCall says: ". . . if they [the dialectical materialists] would give up trying to fit the world into a formula, their philosophy would gain, not lose, in consequence." He also quotes Eugenio Rignano who puts the same point of view but uses the word "framing".

The reply to the above paragraph is simple. Among my notes I have the answer rendered in different words by at least four dialecticians from Marx to Lenin. Take the two nearest to hand; F. Engels and Lenin. Engels puts it this way: "To me there could be no question of building the laws of dialectics into nature, but of discovering them in it and evolving them from it." And Lenin: "The dialectic of things creates the dialectic of ideas and not the reverse." But someone quite new to me, George Lichtheim, in his recently published book, *Marxism*, writes as follows: "Dialectical progress though mirrored in thought, is the objective history of the real world, which arrives at self-consciousness in philosophy."

As much as I would like to give more examples of the three laws of dialectics I will conclude with one short salvo

from Herbert Marcuse, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science, Columbia and Harvard University; Research associate, Institute of Social Research, New York and Frankfurt. Institute of Social Research, Geneva, etc., etc. He writes: "Dialectical logic does not deny, cancel or contradict the validity of formal logic; the former belongs to a different dimension of knowledge and is related to the latter as higher to elementary mathematics."

I began this article on Saturday, September 2nd; on Sunday I read the excellent article in *The Observer* by Sir Julian Huxley, from which I quote: "The unprecedented population-explosion of the last half-century has strikingly exemplified the Marxist principle of the passage of quantity into quality. Mere increase in quantity of people is increasingly affecting the quality of their lives and their future, and affecting it almost wholly for the worse."

A Reply to the Above

By COLIN McCALL

I WANT TO THANK R. Stuart Montague for his erudite criticism of my article on Dialectical Materialism. It seems to me, though, that he commits the very error that I wrote against: "trying to fit the world into a formula", and I am afraid I can't accept quotations from Engels, Lenin and Lichtheim (I don't know him either) in confutation. It is easy enough to say, "To me there could be no question of building the laws of dialectics into nature, but of discovering them in it and evolving them from it" (Engels), or "The dialectic of things creates the dialectic of ideas and not the reverse" (Lenin). But is this so? I suggest not.

Mr. Montague's article is a typical example of the Marxist practice of selecting facts to fit formulae. Nobody denies that when hydrogen and oxygen combine in varying quantities they produce varying compounds with varying qualities. What is easy to overlook is that hydrogen and oxygen, themselves, have different qualities: that is how we differentiate between them. And when they are subjected to certain treatment, or processes, all things change, the extent or degree of the change varying according to the process. We can thus, as I said in my previous article (1/9/61) scientifically refer to changes of varying degrees. Merely repeating the Hegelian "quantity into quality" slogan is not similarly scientific, even if blessed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Lichtheim.

Mr. Montague admits that trees, woods and forests will not fit into his formula. "The only qualitative change is", he says, "in the words used and not in the trees". I repeat my assertion that the so-called "dialectical triad" is verbalistic juggling. But more of that later. I have had no answer to my question: what does "qualitative change" mean? And the reason, to me, is clear. "Quality", and its derivatives, are used loosely, imprecisely, by Marxists. The word is well defined by Chambers as "that which makes a thing what it is: nature: character: kind: property: attribute", etc. As I say, all things have different qualities and these qualities change. What the Marxist does, in trying to defend his Hegelian heritage, is restrict the word "qualitative" to the description of "big" changes only.

If this helped us to understand the world—gave us a "clue to the 'riddle of the universe'", as my former critic put it—then it would be legitimate, but I maintain that it doesn't. Mr. Montague's succinct description of the different effects of different combinations of hydrogen and oxygen is not improved by his Marxian-Hegelian language. (Oh, those "leaps"!) One can't help thinking that

Marxists are surprised that different causes produce different effects.

The Napoleon example is termed "novel". Actually it is deplorable, for it reveals the serious imprecision of Mr. Montague's use of "quality". In chemistry the word has a precise meaning (well expressed by the Chambers's definition): we are here dealing with something inherent. "Quality" of soldiership (however it may vary according to numbers) is not inherent but—as Mr. Montague's reference to discipline indicates—largely a matter of training. As for the "homely" illustration, it shows how completely its author has fallen a victim to his formulae. Does Mr. Montague really claim that there is a parallel between H_2O =water and 4,500 votes=MP? I hope not.

What Marxists never seem to ask themselves—or if they do, they never seem to answer it—is, what does the dialectical conception add to our understanding—or our explanation—of the world? They are too busy looking for examples to fit into their elastic formulae.

And, whatever the deficiencies of linguistic philosophy, its good "qualities" can't be ignored. Terms must be used with more precision than Mr. Montague employs, following in the steps of his Marxist mentors. It simply won't do to repeat the alleged thesis, antithesis, synthesis, illustrations about feudal and capitalist society. It is inaccurate, for instance, to describe the capitalist and working classes as "opposites". It is true that, in some ways, their *interests* are opposed, but by no means in all ways. They have many common interests deriving from their both being human and living in a common society. Health and hygiene will do as examples. I don't wish, however, to follow my critic into political realms, as they are outside the scope of my philosophical criticism of Dialectical Materialism.

As for his psycho-social example, I must repeat my warning to beware of false simplifications of complex phenomena. Our aim should be to understand; and to understand "mob psychology" it is, I would point out, essential to remember that a "mob" is composed of individuals. "A mob", Mr. Montague quotes, "may be composed of reasonable men and yet prove unreasonable; a mob may be composed of benevolent individuals, and yet be cruel." But what is meant by "reasonable" men and "benevolent" individuals? May not a so-called "reasonable" man sometimes be unreasonable in his private as well as public behaviour, or a "benevolent" man be cruel when apart from the crowd? Of course, he may. Human behaviour, individual as well as social, is complex.

It will be seen, then, that I think Mr. Montague's article exemplifies the deficiencies of the philosophy he defends, Dialectical Materialism.

My Father

By F. J. CORINA

IT WAS not only delegates to National Secular Society conferences that knew my father, "Andy", but also Freethinkers in many parts of the country. They had met him on the trips he often loved to take with me when I was lecturing, especially since mother's death in 1945. He was not a platform man himself, but on the floor he could hold his own with anyone in defence of the Best of Causes. His active figure, eloquent tongue, and un-failing sense of humour made him well liked and respected.

But a true measure of my father's Freethought requires a little knowledge of his early days. A son of Italian immigrants, he was born in Bradford, but the family moved to Halifax when he was very young. He grew up in the Italian Catholic tradition. Meanwhile, his wife-to-be, Sarah, daughter of Irish immigrants, was growing up in the Irish Catholic tradition. So when these two "Children of Mary" were eventually joined together at

nineteen one would have expected the bonds of superstition to be indissoluble.

But G. W. Foote and his Freethought colleagues, and Robert Blatchford and his Socialist colleagues, were doing their work well at the turn of the century, and an impression was being made on my parents' inherent intelligence that even years of superstitious indoctrination could not prevent. While in that stage of doubt when a wavering Catholic wonders if it really can be true that the Church and the priesthood are as intolerant as they are painted the final push-over came, ironically, from a priest, Calling for Peter's pence one Friday night the priest found my father reading THE FREETHINKER.

A big man (my father was only small) the priest ordered him to throw the obnoxious paper on the fire. It was the moment of truth! Father told the priest he was not taking orders as to what he could or could not read. The priest tried to grab the paper, threatening to burn it himself, but Andy pushed it behind his back in the chair. The priest tried to take it by force, and they came to grips, but fortunately Andy's brother, Joe, a much bigger man, came into the house and pulled the priest away.

Thus did Foote, Blatchford, and a Catholic priest bring about the final conversion to Freethought of Andrew Corina. Moreover, a disintegration began in the rest of the family. Joe became a very indifferent Catholic; another brother, John, became a non-conformist, and actually played the organ for the Baptists! Rose married a nonconformist, and when told by the same priest that her child was illegitimate because she had not been married in the Church she slapped the priest's face and adopted her husband's religion. All this was greatly to the consternation of my grandfather, Lorenzo, for while his children had been seceding from Rome he himself had attained to the lay honour of becoming Patriarch of the Halifax Italian Catholic community!

My father joined the National Secular Society and thus had been a member, and a FREETHINKER reader, for close on sixty years. He was a founder member (together with myself at the age of 16) of the Halifax branch just 40 years ago, in 1921, and also of the revived Bradford branch in 1929.

Official excommunication of my father and mother followed their secession from Rome. No Freethinker, of course, would worry about losing the tender care of the Church itself, but this cruel penalty, publicly proclaimed in church, meant that they were to be shunned even by their own relatives. On the Italian side it did not work. They were sufficiently civilised to treat the bonds of human relationships as being higher than their relationship with the Holy Ghost; but on the Irish side I am afraid it did work. For many years father and mother were socially ostracised for their "sins", though my mother's younger sister eventually began to pay her furtive visits—a tribute to the supreme power of human kinship over ignorant superstition. Over the years the excommunication tended to weaken, but even at her death one group in my mother's family refused point blank to be even interested unless "she had had a priest"—which she had not, as the priest they had sent was removed from the hospital ward by my brother (Andrew, junior) when that cleric tried to stay at her bedside, although she had ordered him away.

Amid the more intense religious bigotry of the early part of the century, and with the added burden, in those days, of being a militant Socialist and trade unionist, a family of eight was reared, all of whom rose well above their original humble environment. Andrew Corina was naturally proud of his children, but the real importance of his family from a Freethought point of view was that he had himself proved one of our most important contentions—that children can be brought up completely free from religious beliefs, without criminal or anti-social tendencies, to make decent citizens who can play their part in human society, perhaps even better for being without god. It was the crowning achievement of his heresy.

In these days of increasing conformity his kind can ill be spared, but his unceasing advocacy of Freethought for nearly sixty years had been more than most men's share, and his rest is not begrudged.

Even near the end he could not resist a jest. The night before he died he smiled and said, "At four o'clock I thought the Old Man had come for me at last". With such men as the Devil's Disciples it must be true that the best company is Down Below!

PAPERBACKS

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- Miss Lonelyhearts and A Cool Million by Nathanael West (double vol.) 2s. 6d.
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OUTSPOKEN BIOLOGIST

"IF THIS REVIEWER had had any lingering doubts about the degrading effects of religious dogma on the human intellect, a perusal of this last section would have removed them". These are the words of J. Maynard Smith, reviewing the book, *Evolution and Christians* by P. G. Fothergill (Longmans, 42s.) in the *New Scientist* (21/9/61). The section Mr. Maynard Smith is referring to deals with the relations between evolution and the Roman Catholic dogmas of the Incarnation, Redemption, the Fall and Original Sin. The doctrine of the Fall requires that all present human beings are descended from a single man, Adam, and a single woman Eve, and the author of the book writes: "Our Faith can never be wrong; hence, at first sight, it would seem that the scientific finding is wrong". "But", says Mr. Maynard Smith, "he attempts to show that there is no contradiction between these dogmas and the theory of evolution, and is led to speculate that Eve may have been Adam's daughter as well as his wife". Mr. Maynard Smith also points out that "the difficulty in tracing the connection between reptiles and modern mammals lies not in the absence of intermediates, but in deciding which of the many intermediates are on the direct line".

CORRESPONDENCE

MEMBER'S DOUBT

Doesn't Mr. D. Kennedy "fear" the H-bomb?

A CRANK, WEIRDY OR HYPOCRITE.

MORE LAW BREAKERS

Seeing that you are publishing the names of National Secular Society law breakers, two others are worthy of mention, Mr. Harold Pooley, the Birmingham Branch Secretary spent the night in a London cell and was fined £2, while Mr. Norman Burns, another Birmingham member, was the guest of the Scottish police over the weekend. Up there the terms are much dearer, his bed and breakfast resulted in a fine of £10. This is the second time in recent months that Mr. Burns has been arrested and at the rate of progress will soon be one of Britain's youngest old lags.

W. MILLER.

"MAN OF REASON"

It so happened that the day before I saw my old friend Cutner's review of Mr. A. O. Aldridge's book I had seen the book on a library shelf, and had taken it away.

One surprising omission is an incident thus regarded by Sir Leslie Stephen in the Dictionary of National Biography. (His article here would, I think, meet with Cutner's approval.)

"The next evening (June 21st, 1792) he was at the house of Johnson the publisher when William Blake (Gilchrist, *Life of Blake*, p.12), told him that he would be a dead man if he went home. He started at once with John Frost who took him by a circuitous route to Dover. They were searched by the custom house officer, and were allowed to sail twenty minutes before a warrant for Paine's arrest arrived from London".

It is regrettable that Mr. Aldridge did not think fit to bring another great Englishman into the picture. Still, his is the best book on Paine since Moncreu Conway's. Cutner's review only falls short of excellence in one matter. He should never have written than Paine was really an atheist. Mr. Aldridge says (p. 219) that Paine avowed that he had written *The Age of Reason* to keep the French from running into atheism. Also, in a letter to Samuel Adams, January 1st, 1803, Paine affirmed "I had the work translated and published in their own language to stop them in that career and fix them to the first article (as I have before said) of everyman's creed who has any creed at all. I believe in God".

Labels must not be fixed upon dead men according to the taste and fancy of the labeller. The inference might be drawn that Paine was a humbug—professing deism when at heart he was, on orthodox assessment, something worse. WM. KENT.

THE TRUE CROSS

So far I have never had reason to dispute any statements in THE FREETHINKER. However, I really must protest at the gross inaccuracy on page 301 (22/9/61) regarding Our Lord's Cross. One third of the True Cross still in existence? According to my comprehensive records, conscientiously compiled during four decades, relics of the Cross—comprising oak, ash, elm, fir, cedar

of Lebanon, redwood, teak, walnut and hazel nut—exist in sufficient quantity to build fourteen 18th century ships-of-the-line, ten fishing smacks (one masted), three cathedrals, thirty-two wheelbarrows, four public conveniences, with sufficient surplus odds and ends (i.e. "offcuts") to keep the nation's kids amused till the Second Coming of Our Lord. An estimated 1,746,139 standards of timber (Petrograd Std.).

P.S. Veneration of the Relic, of course, dates back to ancient China, and is not unconnected, I believe, with phallicism, though I am open to correction on this point. A. O. SNOOK.

[The gross inaccuracy was not THE FREETHINKER'S, but the Church of the Assumption of Our Lady's, as the quotation marks made clear. Our own comment, "but the basis of reckoning is unfortunately not given", was intended to imply scepticism.—ED.]

BAD TASTE?

Mr. D. H. Tribe's contribution to "The Church and Advertising" (THE FREETHINKER, 22/9/61) may have caused amusement in some circles, but personally I found it in very bad taste. It is this kind of lapse that makes me loth to show THE FREETHINKER to friends who might otherwise find much to enjoy in it.

J. G. GOODWIN.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of Sidney John Crome, a relative by marriage of the late Chapman Cohen, and a great admirer of the latter's works. Mr. Crome was a staunch Freethinker and in accordance with his wishes a secular service was conducted at the City of London Crematorium by the Secretary of the National Secular Society.

We send our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Crome and her daughter.

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