

The Freethinker

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BETWEEN THE YEARS 1933 and 1945, during the Nazi regime in Germany, the world witnessed with incredulous horror, a systematic and largely successful effort on the part of a modern "Chosen Race"—the Aryan Germans—to exterminate another and far older one, the Semitic Jews. For, whilst the unprecedented massacres that went on between 1940 and 1945—throughout Hitler's New Order—were largely due to political and economic reasons, they were carried out in the name of a definitely racial ideology, and this racial ideology actually represented the dominant motive behind the unutterable horrors that transpired in Auschwitz, Belsen, Buchenwald and the rest of the monstrous brood of concentration camps. For it was in the name of the sacred Aryan Swastika, and of its earthly prophet, Adolf Hitler, that the modern German Chosen Race set to work coldly, deliberately and systematically to exterminate their historic religious predecessors, the Semitic Jews who had (if we may trust the record of their sacred books in the Old Testament) coldly and systematically exterminated the lesser breeds without the Law of Jehovah whom they overran in the course of taking possession of their Holy Land of Palestine in a much earlier phase in their racial and religious history.

Chosen Race—But Which?

In the course of his brilliant book, *The Curse of Ezra*, a former Jewish, but anti-religious and therefore anti-Zionist Jew, my esteemed friend, George Maranz, has summarised the real point at issue between the two Chosen Races. "Both the Nazis and the Zionists knew what a Chosen Race is", he wrote, "they only disagree as to which it is" (my italics—FAR). Our Jewish author and Freethinker went on to add that *Mein Kampf*, the modern Nazi gospel, was the German (Aryan) equivalent of *The Book of Ezra*, the ancient (c. 400 BC) gospel of the ancient Jewish (Semitic) Chosen Race. Indeed, the modern racial Nuremberg Laws of the Nazi regime often bore a detailed resemblance to the ancient racial legislation expounded in *Ezra* and the Mosaic Law. No doubt there were more terrestrial economic reasons behind this modern clash of ideologies, but it appears also indisputable that it was the rival Jewish claim to rank as a superior Chosen Race, that inflamed the fanatical Nazi devotees of the Swastika with such a peculiarly bitter venom against their historic predecessors in this Chosen role. For after all, the two ideologies, Nazi and Zionist, were very similar. Nor was it only in words that the modern crusaders for racial purity, who condemned the inferior breeds to the gas chambers, resembled the ancient Israelites who "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord" and who gave no quarter to their victims.

Chosen Races

In the case of Maranz's two Chosen Races, the Jews had a religious, and the Nazis, a quasi-religious cult as the essential basis of their assumptions of unquestionable racial superiority, but this has not always been the case.

Not all races who have divided the world into two categories—between sharp divisions of their civilised selves and their barbaric neighbours—have done so in the name and interest of religiously-inspired sanctions. For example, the Ancient Greeks and ancient and modern Chinese were obsessed by racial arrogance, yet they were the two *least* religious of any recorded civilised race. Both the Greeks (or more accurately Hellenes) and the Chinese citizens of the Celestial Empire, divided their current worlds into two categories: themselves and the "Outer" Barbarians. Nor were these merely academic distinctions: they were embodied in their current institutions. For

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Race and Religion

By F. A. RIDLEY

example, at the classical Olympic Games, the high watermark of Greek social as well as athletic life, no non-Hellenes were permitted to take part. No Barbarian could ever hope to wear the prized laurel wreath of an Olympic champion, the crowning glory of the Greek world and of the Hellenic culture. His bloodstream (literally) put him out of the running. Similarly, at no period during its long historical and cultural existence did the Chinese Celestial Empire ever receive a foreign ambassador. For the exchange of ambassadors denotes equality between the senders, and no foreign potentate—by definition a Barbarian—was, or could conceivably be the equal of the Chinese Dragon Throne. Hence, the Chinese Court, throughout its long existence that predated the Roman Caesars, only received "bearers of tribute" from all foreign courts—the natural and inevitable relationship in Chinese cultural appraisal between the civilised "celestial" Chinese and the outer Barbarians from beyond the seas and the Great Wall. When Lord Macartney arrived as the first British Ambassador to the Court of Peking, he was registered in Chinese annals as "a bearer of tribute to His Celestial Majesty". Yet this "Chosen Race" attitude of inherent superiority had no ascertainable *religious* foundation.

For, as a modern French historian of China, my valued friend Robert Louzon, has aptly commented, of all known historic cultures, that of China has been the most pragmatic and empirical and the least mystical or metaphysical: a point recently factually illustrated in this paper by Mr. Adrian Pigott in his most interesting and instructive series of articles on Confucius that ancient Agnostic and Humanist, who has probably influenced Chinese thinking more than any other single man. M. Louzon also indicates the Chinese necessity for constant irrigation against the perennially recurring overflow of their Blue and Yellow Rivers (Yangtse-Kiang and Hoang-Ho) as a potent material cause of the empirical character of their civilisation (cf R. Louzon, *La Chine*). Similarly in the case of the Ancient Greeks, religion seems to have played little part in their persistent illusion of generic superiority over any other race. The Olympian gods do not seem to have been racialists, unlike their Semitic colleague, Jehovah, the "jealous God" of his Chosen

People, the Jews. Nor were the Greek cultural counterparts of Confucius any more superstitious for the most part than he was.

We accordingly conclude, from the available evidence, that the recurring illusion of racial superiority is sometimes, as in the already cited examples of the Jews and Nazis, an illusion with a basic religious cause—or at least justification—and sometimes merely an empirical illusion based upon an actual but only temporary superiority, as in the case of the irreligious Chinese and classical Hellenes. One must add that in either case, racialism represents a demonstrable myth. For every race is the potential equal—or superior—of every other, given the requisite social, material and cultural environment. To deny this is to embrace demonstrably false conceptions. To a Greek of the 5th century BC (i.e. the Golden Age of ancient Hellene culture), the idea that say, a German or Briton

was, or ever could become his equal, would have probably seemed to be a self-evident absurdity. Nonetheless, it turned out to be true. Similarly, an Emperor of the Tang Dynasty (c. 700 AD, the Golden Age of Chinese culture), would have positively rippled with risibility at the idea that his barbaric Anglo-Saxon contemporaries would have ultimately become the conquerors of the Celestial Empire. Yet this also came to pass and, to add insult to injury, by the English use of the originally Chinese discovery of gunpowder! Whilst no doubt it would have appeared equally ridiculous to a Victorian Englishman, in an era of white world supremacy, that a Negro race may in time, come to take its place in the van of contemporary culture. But who could now say that this will never happen? Whether justified by religious illusions (or more plausibly by a temporary cultural superiority) racialism remains a scientific absurdity.

Uriel Acosta: Martyr of Freethought

By WALTER STEINHARDT

READERS MAY RECALL the name of Uriel Acosta being mentioned by Mr. Ridley some time ago in correspondence regarding Spinoza. And, as I hope to show, it is a name that deserves to be rather better known than it is among Freethinkers. Acosta was born in Portugal, possibly in 1590 (there is some doubt about his dates), the son of a well-off Jewish family who had been forced to embrace the Christian (Roman Catholic) faith (Maranos). At first, the Church seemed well disposed to him, and he was appointed as an official to a theological college. A promising and secure career seemed to lie before him. The sensitive and truth-seeking youth, however, became sceptical, especially in regard to the doctrines of immortality, eternal damnation and revelation, which he thought contrary to Mosaic teaching.

He determined, then, to return to the faith of his ancestors, and since this was impossible in Catholic-dominated Portugal, he fled to Holland, then the most enlightened of European countries. It was probably in 1615 that Uriel asked to be admitted to the rich Jewish community of Amsterdam and underwent the operation of circumcision (a pretty painful procedure at this age, however skilfully done!). Scarcely had he been accepted, however, when he disagreed violently with his new religious mentors. He began to doubt fundamental principles and the strict Orthodox practices imposed upon congregations. 1616 found him in Hamburg, where two years later the first Jewish ban was proclaimed against him.

Returning to Amsterdam in 1623(?) Acosta, disregarding all the solemn threats, prepared a further polemic against Jewish oral law, immortality of the spirit, divine origins of dogmas and notions of an immanent God. This brought about his total excommunication, and all Jews, local or otherwise, were exhorted to shun him completely. Utterly abandoned, but undeterred, he replied with even stronger denunciations of both the Christian and the Jewish religions. The embarrassed rabbis brought the matter to the notice of their Christian masters, and Acosta was tried for atheism (communism had not yet been thought of!). But a brief imprisonment (lucky to have been in Holland), a heavy fine and, of course, burning of his books and forced public recantation still did not silence him. What they did was to give him a foretaste of hell. In his own words: "By religion, my life was made a scene of incredible suffering. And that in Amsterdam which gave the Jews freedom to profess their faith. I was

abused and railed at: There goes the heretic, the apostate! At times, they assembled at my door, flinging stones at my window. They spat at me, and only did not stone me because they wanted (continued) power over me. This persecution lasted over 7 years . . .".

The final reckoning by the Jewish leaders came when he was persuaded to suffer "the extreme rigor of public penance". He had to enter the synagogue in mourning vestments, carrying a black candle, and was forced to use the crassest and most abusive language against himself. He was exposed in front of the assembled congregation. After this, he was ordered into a corner and stripped. 39 lashes (40 is the limit prescribed by the law) were administered with twisted leather thongs, accompanied by pious psalm singing. For further humiliation, Acosta was sent outside the main door of the divine abode to prostrate himself and to be trampled upon by members as they left. Women and children were allowed to witness this. His sins were now forgiven. An elder absolved him from his excommunication. "Oh, the ridiculous and disgraceful notions and conceits of mortals!" Acosta exclaimed. "I was to be an example to others. To what purpose am I commanded to do impossibilities?" And, after his ordeal, he returned home and wrote his short autobiography: *Exemplar Humanae Vitae* ("A Specimen of Human Existence") which ends with these words: "If the true story of my humiliation and suffering has moved your compassion, oh reader, let it teach you to lament the miserable conditions of mankind and remember your own share for all of them!"

Shattered in mind and body, Acosta took his own life in April, 1640(?). But his work and martyrdom made an impact on the founders of pantheism, and particularly on Spinoza, who was about 8 years old when the Acosta affair came to its distressing and shameful conclusion. An imaginative portrait shows the mature Acosta with the child Spinoza on his knees, apparently reading to him. Acosta postulated natural, as opposed to doctrinal law. "We love our children, parents and others from nature, not from religion. To love your enemies is absurd and impossible to fulfil. Natural law suffices all our moral needs."

He was perhaps brave rather than profound, in his attacks on established ideas, but Meinsma, Bolin and Freudenthal, three fairly recent Spinoza biographers, agree in recognising Acosta's share in the awakening of the liberalising mind of the 17th century.

More Light on Jesus?

By H. CUTNER

SOME TIME BACK a reader of this journal asked me to write about a work written by Rupert Furneaux entitled *The Other Side of the Story*. It was first published in 1953 by Cassell's, and has a provocative "blurb" aimed, I am sure, at the Mythicists. It is, "Once censored, Long suppressed. Now reconstructed. Brings to light what contemporary observers knew and wrote about the life of Jesus Christ, of which the Gospel story has long been the only publicly known version." I was at once intrigued, and turned first to the Index which should have given the words "contemporary" and "observers" but didn't; so I read the book to find out the names of the observers and contemporaries. Hence this article.

Let me state bluntly that we are *not* given the names of any contemporaries and observers who knew (or saw) Jesus Christ in the flesh. What we get is a discussion on "a manuscript discovery" by Dr. Robert Eisler which helped Mr. Furneaux to "re-create" the "long suppressed evidence."

It was, I think, before the last War that I dealt with Dr. Eisler's *The Messiah Jesus* and he made in reply a personal attack on me for having the impudence to differ from him on such a subject. His attack was not published.

But the statement that "the Gospel story" about Jesus "is the only publicly known version" is sheer nonsense.

There are numerous stories about Jesus written about the same time as the Gospels—a little before, a little after—which should have exactly the same credence and reverence for they are, in dozens of places, just as silly. The "Church" guarantees the four in the New Testament, but what is this guarantee worth? Literally nothing. When it comes to the "supernatural" or "talking to Almighty God" or performing "miracles" or flying with Devils or meeting Angels, the so-called "canonical" Gospels can compete with the so-called "Apocryphal" Gospels on equal terms.

It cannot be repeated here too often that we simply do not know the origin of *any* of the Gospels. We do not know the dates of their composition, or even in what language they were originally written. What we do know is that, as they stand, the canonical Gospels are so packed with absurdities that there is not a single statement in them which can unreservedly be accepted.

Now Mr. Furneaux knows all this as well as I do, but the fable of Jesus has been too long in history to be thus summarily disposed of. If Jesus is not now our "Saviour", he is far too great to be relegated to mythology—where he rightly belongs. In fact, it is Jesus himself who now must be "saved".

Like so many modern Jews, Dr. Eisler saw in Jesus a Jew worshipped as a God by all Christians, and this was far too good a thing to be lightly given up. If it did nothing else, it gave Judaism a status with Christians. And Eisler refused to believe that such a Jew was as mythical as Jupiter. Hence he must have spent many years examining ancient documents; and almost shrieking "Eureka!" when he discovered what is now called the Slavonic Josephus. Here indeed was the find he had sought for.

The one great proof that there may not have been a Jesus was in the silence of Josephus regarding him. It is true that the manuscript copies we have all contain two (or is it three?) references to "our Lord" but even Christian writers have in the past been content to admit

either that they were forgeries, that they were written to take the place of other passages, or were some kind of interpolation. Indeed, it has been definitely asserted by Christian scholars that the passages cannot be accepted as they now stand.

Josephus was the great Jewish historian of the first century dealing in detail with the history of his own time; and the absence of any reference to Jesus is far more than the average Christian can bear. And it is a pity that those readers who are interested in Christian origins, so rarely take the trouble to find out to what sorry shifts the champions of Jesus will go to explain the silence of Josephus on the most momentous birth and activities of the God who became Man, so far recorded only in "Gospels" and similar literature, but never in secular history.

How then does the Slavonic Josephus differ from the one we know so well? In his *Courses of Study* (1932) John M. Robertson says that its date is the 11th or 12th century, that it is a late MS translation of the *Wars* in the Slavonic tongue from the original Aramaic, and that "the great preponderance of opinion [is] against the authenticity of the interpolations"—that is, against the account the Slavonic Josephus gives of Jesus as a political agitator. In fact, against Eisler we have the statement made by Dr. R. Dunkerley in his *Beyond the Gospels* (1957) that "many critical reviews of Eisler's work appeared. His use of the documents in question was generally felt to be so arbitrary and uncritical that his theory based upon them was utterly discredited."

What was his theory? Eisler insisted that Jesus was the King of the Jews, that he was the leader of a band of robbers, and that when he was not performing his royal functions and robbing people, he would enter into theological disquisitions with contemporary rabbis. This was the fantastic twaddle which I attacked, and in answer to which Eisler made a savage personal attack on me. Whether Mr. Furneaux still champions it, I do not know;

The difficulty I have in dealing with his book is that he constantly makes statements for which he gives no authority whatever, though perhaps the authorities can be found in Eisler's *The Messiah Jesus*.

For example, we are told that "Josephus thus wrote a detailed chronicle of events in Judea drawn from official sources to which he was accorded access in Rome. That these records contained a record of the trial of Jesus is evident". *Evident!* Evident to whom? Dr. Eisler and Mr. Furneaux?

No *evidence* whatever has been discovered that any trial of Jesus took place at all unless merely saying so is evidence. The trial in the Gospels is the only trial we have, and even Dr. Eisler gave that up. The date of the Gospel trial is quite unknown though Eisler puts it at 21 AD, which is as true or not as true as any other date. Mr. Furneaux admits that it cannot be "stated with any certainty."

Mr. Furneaux claims that the Gospels were written "between AD 70 and the end of the century". There is no evidence whatever for this statement, though it is constantly being made more or less in the same form. The four Gospels are *never* mentioned by name anywhere before about the year 180 AD, though of course there were in all probability some kinds of Gospels floating about, as well as "Sayings" of Jesus, earlier than that if

(Continued on next page)

This Believing World

At Istanbul recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury again spoke about "Christian unity", and sadly declared that "formal unity with the Roman Catholic Church" won't occur in his lifetime. That is quite true, because most of the adherents to the Church of England can never forget the Reformation. There is a small minority who hate the word Protestant, who call themselves "Anglo Catholics" and who are always ready to talk with the Vatican on rejoining. It's a pity that they don't join up.

★

Of course we don't know whether Dr. Ramsey would welcome wholeheartedly joining up with Rome, but we do know (as mentioned in Views and Opinions last week) that the Rev. W. Jackson, the new President of the Baptist Union would be dead against it. He declared that the financial methods of Rome "are unworthy of the name of Christ", and that he regarded the Roman Church "as the enemy of truth". He added many other unpleasant charges, among them that it "had almost made a saint of Bingo". Unfortunately, the Baptists are a shrinking minority of Christians, so few people care what they think. And certainly not Anglo Catholics.

★

But on top of all this barrage on "unity" we note that that home of orthodoxy, Oxford, where many priests and parsons have been trained, has just given its sacred precincts a terrible shock. The Oxford Union voted the other day on the motion that "this house does not believe in God"—with the result, 295 in favour of the motion and 259 against.

★

We were not surprised to find that the Bishop of Southwark, like all good Christians, immediately becomes an out-and-out Fundamentalist when recording a visit to Palestine. Dr. Stockwood went to Nazareth, that is, the Nazareth of Jesus, and in the London *Evening Standard* the other day, he told us that he actually drank from a well there—and if that doesn't prove the truth of the Gospel story, what in heaven could?

★

One of the stories which amused us in our youth was the way in which the Flood story complete with Noah and his Ark was unerringly proved true. A Sunday school teacher brought back a stone he had picked up on Mount Ararat, and showing it to his class insisted that no better proof of Noah's Flood could be given—an actual stone from the actual mountain upon which the actual Ark had rested. Dr. Stockwood's drink from a well at Nazareth proves the Gospel story exactly as a stone from Ararat proves the Flood.

★

There is in actual fact no evidence that there was a Nazareth at the beginning of our era; and though the Bishop really believes that Jesus preached in a synagogue at Nazareth, there is not a scrap of evidence for it. The Jews have no record of Jesus preaching in any synagogue; nor have they any record that Peter and Paul ever did. But it will take a long time before Christians disbelieve the fairy stories in the New Testament.

★

Cassandra of the "Daily Mirror" (April 16th) calls the sacred Mrs. Eddy a "hysterical woman", and her Christian Science "crackpot healing theories". The even saintlier Dr. Buchman's religion, like that of the Mormons and similar Christian cults and religions, "have always had a cracked ring about them". And to cap all he hails their religion as "Christianity Inc., whether it comes from Salt

Lake City, Los Angeles, or Boston" as "the Coco-Cola of religion". But is not the religion of Dr. Heenan, Dr. Soper, and Dr. Ramsey, more or less the same?

THEATRE

THE CLASS STRUGGLE ON THE STAGE

It is not Arnold Wesker's fault if those against whom *Chips With Everything* (Royal Court Theatre, London) is directed are the very people who will applaud it. Mr. Wesker has written a witty play about recruits to the RAF, and who can resist laughing at the lighter side of service life? Certainly not those who are destined for the officer class by birth and education—or destined to be their wives. But Mr. Wesker has in fact written a ferocious play about the class struggle—something we don't talk about in England today (now we've never had it so good)—for which he has chosen an RAF setting.

One recruit, Pip, is the son of an ex-general, now a banker. He alone sees (or knows) the object of the system, and he sets out to defy—if possible, to defeat—it. Inevitably he fails. Like the rest he is forced—or "persuaded"—to conform. But not before he has caused a few heart-flutterings among the officers, and not before he has exposed the workings of the system—at least to those with the power to see it (probably a minority of the Royal Court audience on the day I saw it).

The truly superb scene in the play is the Christmas party in the NAAFI, where the officers urge, and almost get, the men to accept their culturally inferior status. Pip thwarts the scheme by inducing a Scots recruit to recite poetry and an Englishman to sing "The Cutty Wren". One by one the others join in the ballad, accompanying with hand-claps, stamps, spoons on bottles and jars of all sorts. In this the genuineness of a people's culture is splendidly asserted. Here the men are not the automatons the Wing Commander wants them to be: they are separate individuals co-operating.

Opinions differ among the officers on the best way to deal with the traitor to his class, and the second half of the play shows the breaking down of Pip's resistance. Once that has been accomplished, the way is set for the passing-out parade and "God save the Queen". The system wins; the individuals have become a unit—a fighting unit for the opposing class.

It should be obvious that *Chips With Everything* is a rare and important play—a thoroughly "committed" play. It is also a subtle, finely-written play, with convincing characters. Especially the thoroughly-conditioned Corporal (Frank Finlay) whose basic sympathies are yet (almost unconsciously) with the men, and the Wing Commander (Martin Boddey), but also the recruits whose individuality slowly surrenders to the merciless "discipline". Director John Dexter and Designer Jocelyn Herbert share in the credit, but the final applause must be for Mr. Wesker.

C.McC.

MORE LIGHT ON JESUS

(Continued from page 155)

—and it is a big "if"—we can trust Church history only a little way. The older I get, the less I trust any chronology served out by the Churches.

Mr. Furneaux gives us a "chronological" table, but it mostly follows the usual Christian one except where he prefers Eisler's "reconstruction". He gives the stoning of Stephen as 32 AD, while the AV gives it as 33 AD; but it obviously never occurs to him that the whole story of the stoning of Stephen is just fiction. The poor "martyr" actually said before being stoned, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God". And as if this nonsense was not enough, he cried, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit". The AV date for this is 33 AD but there are some Christian authorities who give the date for the Crucifixion as 35 AD, so how could Stephen talk about the "Lord Jesus?"

Of course, just as Mr. Furneaux says "on the evidence of the Gospels alone there is no proof even of the existence of Jesus", so he says, "From the Gospels alone there is no means of dating the crucifixion". He even adds, "if the Christian tradition is correct . . . the crucifixion took place in AD 36". So we must go "to the disputed passage in Josephus", that is to an arrant forgery to find out! Could nonsense go further?

(To be concluded)

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, May 20th, 6.45 p.m.: F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT, "Havelock Ellis, Pioneer Humanist".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 20th, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, O.B.E., "Arnold Bennett, Novelist and Critic".

Notes and News

WE ARE PROUD to print this week a first hand account of the Portuguese students' strike. It is the first report from Portugal by a student whose name must for obvious reasons be kept secret, who admires the outspokenness of THE FREETHINKER. We in turn admire his courage in acting as our Portuguese Correspondent, for he would suffer at the hands of the Political Police (PIDE) if his identity were discovered. We pledge ourselves to do all that we can to help his cause, the cause of freedom in what he rightly describes as the most backward country in Europe.

★

THE BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION, which so promptly yielded to Roman Catholic pressure and banned the Family Planning Association poster from the London Underground, may soon receive other complaints from the same source. At a Brains Trust in St. Anselm's Church Hall, Tooting Bec, on April 29th, underwear advertisements were condemned as bad and poisonous (*South London Press*, 4/5/62). Mr. James Rudden, headmaster of the Bishop Grant Roman Catholic School, Streatham, said that the posters attracted the lowest instincts of people and that their whole tendency was poisonous. "He urged Catholics to protest against them". This time, though, we feel the protests will be in vain. A few hundred Family Planning posters are neither here nor there, but the Transport Commission's revenue from underwear posters must be considerable. Likewise with cinema advertisements. Mr. Michael de la Bedoyere might call them bad and

seductive, but one can't imagine the Commission removing them on that account. ★

"BY NOW," said Dan Jacobson, reviewing *Letters from a Traveller*, "it seems to be almost an established tradition for any book by Père Teilhard de Chardin to be received with applause from reviewers of every persuasion—Christians and agnostics, aesthetes and world-reformers alike" (*New Statesman*, 4/5/62). Mr. Jacobson gave his reasons for "standing aside from the rush". The book, he said, was humanly empty, and he didn't consider it unfair to connect this human emptiness with "certain disturbing aspects of Père Teilhard's thought, as it is revealed to us here and in *The Phenomenon of Man*". What Mr. Jacobson particularly had in mind was Teilhard's "aggrandisement of the collective, and his systematic derogation of the individual", and the reviewer suggested that Teilhard himself "seems to have found some of the implications of his thought disturbing". "Monstrous as it is", he wrote, "is not modern totalitarianism really the distortion of something magnificent, and thus quite near the truth?" Mr. Jacobson rightly drew attention to that "and thus", then remarked that though Teilhard resolved his difficulties by making a distinction between "personality" and "individuality", it was a distinction that he (Mr. Jacobson) could not understand. ★

TEILHARD ALSO postulated a divine "Omega Point" towards which humanity is supposed to be evolving via ever-increasing psychic "agglomeration and convergence" until everybody is "enclosed in a single thinking envelope". It seems surprising Mr. Jacobson said, "that so many believers and non-believers in a creative divinity should apparently have found this prospect an attractive and stimulating one". And, we may add, it is particularly deplorable that Sir Julian Huxley should have lent his name and scientific prestige to such mystical nonsense. ★

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND is under severe stress, according to a Stewardship and Budget Committee report cited in the *Daily Telegraph* (7/5/62), and "not only from attacks by atheists and secularists but also through its members' failure to provide adequate financial support". We are glad to see that our efforts don't go unnoticed. All the same, the General Finance Committee reported an income of £6,616,649 in 1961, and stated that for the first time for many years it did not have to exercise its borrowing powers to finance the Church's business. So the *Telegraph* headline, "Church of Scotland under Financial Stress", should be taken with some reservation. ★

THE CASE of Patrick Wolrige-Gordon, 26-year-old Conservative MP for East Aberdeenshire, has been presented as one involving the principle of religious toleration. This is very far from the case, said Colin Welch (*Daily Telegraph*, 2/5/62), and we agree with him. "When a man enters public life his belief or lack of it inescapably becomes a matter of public concern", said Mr. Welch. "Nor are Mr. Wolrige-Gordon's beliefs only religious, for MRA has political and social as well as religious aims and interests and is thus a matter of legitimate public concern". His wife might vow that "Patrick would never, ever force his MRA views down anyone's throat", but in that case, said Mr. Welch, he might well have been unique in the movement. "In fact he appears to have rammed his views, as in duty bound, incessantly down every available throat . . ." And his triumph, "certainly local and probably temporary", is "of arrogance and ill-manners, aided and abetted by rather vulgar publicity".

The Strike of Portuguese Students

ON MARCH 24TH this year, when students at Lisbon University began their students' day celebrations, they were confronted with a police force armed with machine guns. The celebrations were forbidden for no apparent reason, and the natural reaction of the students was to protest. Unarmed, they were brutally suppressed, some with bloody heads and broken ribs. Always on such occasions, those who can't run—the elderly, the women and the children—come off worst. There were no children or old people among the students, but there were girls, and when they fell they were set upon by several policemen. The girls' arms afterwards bore witness to the rough handling they had received. Some students were arrested.

The Government's action naturally caused consternation. The students went into academic mourning, wearing black ties and staying away from their classes. Similar action was taken by the students of Coimbra and Oporto Universities, and release of the student prisoners was demanded. After three days this was achieved, and an alternative students' day (April 7th) was promised. The classes would continue, but Salazar's popularity could not be said to have increased.

Then it was made public, through the controlled press, that the celebration had again been forbidden. The students, it was falsely stated, had not submitted their programme to the Minister of Education. This ignoble lie again provoked the students to mourning and to a mass protest of thousands in front of the Education Office on April 7th. Again they were disbanded by the police and their gun-stocks, and again there were bloody heads and arrests. There followed the simultaneous demotion of the two (Classical and Technical) Rectors of Lisbon University, Dr. Marcelo Paetano and Dr. Moses Amzalak, together with five Directors of Faculties, including Dr. Galvao Teles of the Law Faculty, not long ago decorated by the Government for defending the national cause at the Hague Court of International Justice.

The Minister of Education refused to receive the students' delegates when they asked at his Office for an explanation, and it became clear from talks with clerks that the Government did not intend to allow a students' day celebration, and that if the strike continued it would be treated as political in character. It should be borne in mind that in the Portugal of Salazar, striking is a crime punishable by imprisonment and other penalties. Nevertheless, the students continued their strike, many of them losing a year of their studies in consequence.

Happily the students have the support and protection of the majority of their tutors, among whom are many prominent figures in Portuguese life. Every day meetings were held near their faculties, their solidarity increasing with the increase in police brutality. Meanwhile the press published Government accusations of communist-instigation.

On April 10th, Law tutor Costa Leite Umbrales, a former Salazar minister, offered himself as mediator in an effort to resolve the deadlock. Having ceased mourning, the students were received by the Minister Adjunct of the Presidency. They demanded the right to celebrate students' day as a symbol of the dignity of their universities, and asked for an explanation of the Government's prohibition. Having said that he would refer the matter to the Minister of Education, the Minister then read a speech accusing the students again of communism and folly, and stating that the Government would never yield

in face of strike action, however justified.

The interview was reported in the press by Government order, as though the matter were settled, though nothing had been decided except reference to the Minister of Education. Further efforts were made by the students to see the Minister, but in vain. And on April 13th a Government press notice reaffirmed its determination not to yield in face of threat. This was published with a letter from Dr. Leite Umbrales betraying the students and grossly misrepresenting the events in a way that could easily be refuted. The Easter holidays in no way lessened the students' determination. Mourning bands are still being worn, lectures are boycotted, some students have gone on hunger strike.

The events I have described call for comments that I shall leave for another time (having no wish to tire readers) but it must be stated emphatically that the Salazar Government had no justification for employing police forces against the students. It can only be regarded as an expression of self-guilt. The Salazar Government transgressed human rights, but then, that is a normal practice of this Government. It lied publicly, then denied the students the space in the press to deny and refute those lies.

Salazar's Government insulted the University, the tutors and the students. It caused the demotion of the Rectors and Directors. As for the treachery of Dr. Umbrales; he is skilful at such machinations, having previously collaborated with the Government. What will be the end of the affair remains to be seen, but at least it will show the students of free countries the true nature of the Portuguese "tranquility" defended by Salazar and still believed in by the ingenuous.

SPARTACUS.

Blasphemous Crepe

Excerpts from an article in the German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, issue No. 11/62, Translated by Siegfried Kuebart

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH has forced one of West Germany's richest industrialists to change his business plans. Mercedes shareholder Friedrich Flick will no longer be able to market a new toilet paper produced by the Flick-owned "Feldmühle Papier und Zellstoffwerke AG" under the trade name of "Adios". "Adios" was to reinforce Feldmühle's traditional position in the West-German toilet paper market. To the old Feldmühle paper "Servus", was to be added an "up-to-the-minute toilet paper, hygienically wrapped, sharply perforated, finely creped and pastel shaded", at the suggested consumer price of one shilling.

In view of the enlarged touristic horizon of the Federal citizen, Flick's advertising psychologists intended to add the Spanish "Adios" to the Austrian "Servus". Prior to this, designations like "Au revoir", "Do Swidanija" and "Farewell" had been considered. The French farewell greeting on a roll of crepe paper appeared too frivolous to the ad-men, "Farewell" itself was too ambiguous and the Russian "Do Swidanija", under the shadow of the Berlin Wall, politically inopportune. So the inoffensive "Adios" became the registered trade mark.

It took half a million marks to acquaint Federal citizens with their "Adios". In railway compartments, on adver-

tising pillars, and on match boxes the slogans tempted, with "Adios" is better!" Sales were already rolling merrily along, when, at the beginning of last December, the telephone rang in the Munich branch of Feldmühle. The caller, Munich's Suffragan Bishop Dr. Johannes Neuhausler, angrily demanded information: "I have just read in *Der Spiegel* that you advertise a toilet paper called 'Adios'. What is the meaning of this?" The Feldmühle branch directed the Bishop to its Düsseldorf head office.

In a letter to the concern's managing director, Herbert Rohrer, Neuhausler protested against the use of the word "Adios" as a name for toilet paper because—so thought the man of God—it would offend religious feelings. *Adios*, after all, means "God be with you".

The Feldmühle directors had anticipated similar theological objections when they started their "Adios" programme last summer. To protect themselves against an accusation of blasphemy in crepe, they had looked around for theological allies. University opinion had been sought whether "Adios" could be hurtful to any religious sentiment, and the professors had dispersed these apprehensions in detailed expertise. To give the voice of the people a hearing, the firm had taken a substantial opinion poll. 99% of those questioned had never heard of the word; only one per cent knew the salutation, and one half per cent understood its meaning.

The directors finally approached Cologne's Cardinal Frings to see whether he had any objections to the projected use of the word, but the shepherd of the Rhine metropolis carefully avoided the issue. After this, Flick's directors started the advertising campaign. At the same time Feldmühle's chief, Rohrer, ordered new high output machinery with a daily production of 100 tons of hygienic paper. Neuhausler's protest abruptly put this plan in peril.

Fortified with the university expertise and the result of the opinion poll, Feldmühle board member Helfried Krug visited Suffragan Bishop Neuhausler in Munich. But Neuhausler was impressed neither by expert opinion, nor the fact that *Adios* appears in at least twenty pop songs to which the Church had not objected. He remained adamant. "Adios" toilet paper would injure the religious feelings of Christendom. The Munich clergyman received assistance from a Herr von Pannwitz in Nuremberg; von Pannwitz started proceedings against Feldmühle for blasphemy.

Fearing that the Catholic clergy would call for a boycott of "Adios" from all their pulpits, Flick's directors stopped the advertising campaign, and the publicity department received orders to find a new name which should be acoustically similar to "Adios" without insulting religious sentiment.

Flick's advertising copywriters now created the name "Arios". But Düsseldorf soon had second thoughts about it, for this name too might injure religious feelings. At the beginning of the fourth century there started the movement of the Arians, founded by the priest Arius of Alexandria. Since the teachings of Arius (he denied the consubstantiality of the Trinity) were damned by the Roman Curia, the directors of Feldmühle shied away from the name "Arios".

In despair, Flick's copywriters finally hit on "Amios". This name has now been entered in the Munich trade register and is therefore legally protected.

It remains to be seen whether Bishop Neuhausler will pass this designation. "Amios" reminds one of the Old Testament prophet Amos, who once upon a time warned humanity against decadence in times of economic boom.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

[An open letter to the Hon. J. C. A. Pizzey, M.L.A., Minister for Education, on religious instructions in schools.]

Dear Sir,

Recently you introduced compulsory religious instruction into State schools. We protest vigorously against this action on the grounds that it is illegal and likely to produce evil results. Our Constitution makes Education free, secular and compulsory; that is, religion must not be taught by the State, either directly or by deputy, and to make such a subject compulsory is therefore doubly illegal. And, we ask, is there any provision for so much religious or non-religious freedom as to give parents the right to refuse to have their children indoctrinated with ideas which they neither believe nor respect?

Religion simply means belief in a supernatural being usually called God. This arose in the ignorance of primitive minds trying to solve the riddle of the universe. We think there is absolutely no foundation for this belief. There is as much reason to believe in the numerous gods of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans as in the Judaeo-Christian god. When an intelligent child is told that God made the world, he naturally asks, who made God? What reply can you honestly give? None, except by the intellectually dishonest trick of repudiating the principle of Causation you have invoked. Children find out these nasty tricks.

Atheism is spreading rapidly sponsored by men of the highest education and learning, so much so, that the Vatican has taken fright and has established a special department to deal with it.

The second main basis of Christianity is the Bible and Jesus. As the Old Testament and Jehovah are so repulsive we can forget them, and, by the standards of the best modern biblical scholarship, the New Testament can be regarded as a fake to prove that the old prophecies about the Messiah had come true; hence Jesus, who, of course, never existed, and the dreadful doctrine of the "Atonement"—the ugly, primitive scapegoat idea—can be rejected as unsuitable for the modern moral child. In fact all of the major doctrines of the Christians are derived from primitive folklore.

To teach children this rubbish as truth is to damage their minds, perhaps irreparably. This history of Christianity is a long dreary record of evil. The millions of lives lost in persecutions and in the tortures by Popes, Kings and Priests are symbolic of the inherent falsity of Christian doctrine. If such persecution and compulsion are necessary for its survival, it is better dead. We have no objection to the teaching of its true history. In any case, it is already morally and intellectually bankrupt and its influence is rapidly declining.

People are tired of commercial supernaturalism and superstition, and everywhere are realising the immense moral and intellectual superiority of atheists over religionists who have to use the cheap device of threats of punishments in Hell to influence people, where the atheist is sane, humane and rational. Religion has nothing to do with morality; it is concerned only with dogma, prayer and ritual—and all three are utterly useless.

And finally, Religious Instruction has a most awful record in the field of ethics, and people are beginning to notice it. Indeed many Roman Catholic parents send their children to wholly secular schools in order that they may remain morally sound.

We can supply you with a huge mass of figures on Crime, Delinquency and Prostitution, as well as records of Queensland religious schools, which prove that religious instruction does nothing to prevent these evils; indeed, in the case of one large Christian denomination, its schools promote them. All the records and figures we have are from unimpeachable official sources.

Religion is false in its origin, and its teachings and its results are, on historical and contemporary records, irrefutably bad. Its present main function is to promote the financial, social and political power of the clergy.

On Constitutional, legal and moral, as well as intellectual, grounds, we therefore urgently request that the Government's rash decision on compulsory religious instruction in schools be rescinded.

And, as you yourself must accept the huge responsibility for the moral welfare of the children in State Schools, we think that you should ponder our representations very carefully. The delinquency figures from now on may tell a very sad story. We wonder if you think that people who evade paying rates on their homes are suitable moral guides for children.—(Signed) J. V. DUHIG and D. I. GRIFFITHS for the Queensland Rationalist Society.

[NOTE: In Queensland, Churches pay no rates on "places of worship" or homes of the clergy, and in Brisbane alone this is equivalent to an annual loss of £70,000, in rates.—J.V.D.]

CORRESPONDENCE

WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

With reference to the short article, entitled "What is the Catholic Church?" which appeared in THE FREETHINKER of 27/4/62, we are informed that it is the second of a series, which the National Secular Society intends to publish in leaflet form in response to requests.

While agreeing that such is the case and welcoming the praiseworthy attempt to meet wishes expressed at the last Annual Conference and elsewhere, I would like to point out that in such publications sponsored by the movement as a whole, great care should be exercised with regard to the accuracy of statements.

I have no criticism to offer of the previous article, but with regard to the one in question, which is otherwise excellent, I wish to point out that the statement as follows, "So it has done a deal with the Communist powers behind the Iron Curtain, where, despite its propaganda in the West, it enjoys freedom of worship and in some places even state-aid", as applied to "The Catholic Church" that is to say "The Vatican" is inaccurate.

That the Communist authorities for reasons of State policy have compromised with Local and National Churches in order to divide and split them in various ways is true. But the Vatican, so far as I am aware, has never supported, condoned or made pacts with Communist Governments or Authorities. Quite the contrary.

In the interests of truth, and the avoidance of controversy, I hope that the passage to which I refer will be omitted from the published leaflet.

LEN EBURY

(Vice-President, N.S.S.)

ALDERMASTON MARCH

In one of his *Essays in Freethinking* Chapman Cohen recalls the reply of a French wit to the proposal that women should not be permitted to study philosophy. The reply was—"Should women be permitted to learn the alphabet?"

The same situation exists today with nuclear weapons. If we do not want "The Bomb" then logically we must destroy all the records from Rutherford and Einstein onwards, demolish the physics laboratories and liquidate the professors and students. Given the know-how and we have the bomb. We cannot help ourselves, and marching to and from Aldermaston or sitting down in the street or framing Neo-blasphemy Acts (Neo-blasphemy—not treating the teaching of Bertrand Russell with respect) will not affect the practical situation in the slightest. One can imagine Chapman Cohen wondering what the devil the National Secular Society is doing in that *galère*.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

[The Secretary of the National Secular Society writes: "Mr. Nicholson may imagine Chapman Cohen wondering all kinds of things. but it will still only be Mr. Nicholson imagining, not Chapman Cohen wondering. Others may imagine Chapman Cohen applauding the Aldermaston marchers, but it would be equally irrelevant. The point is that in keeping with its immediate practical objects (which include 'the countering of militaristic propaganda') the NSS decided in Conference to support CND. This does not compel all members to support the Campaign, and it has no jurisdiction whatever over non-members like Mr. Nicholson, but it certainly justifies an official NSS contingent in the Aldermaston march. Opinions obviously differ on the value of marching or sitting down, but Mr. Nicholson might note that NSS members generally decide such matters for themselves without recourse to authority, either of Chapman Cohen or Bertrand Russell."—Ed.]

THE COMMON MARKET

Mr. Ridley is of course entitled to air his opinion that the Common Market is a "victory for the Vatican and perhaps even ultimately a decisive one", but my view is that it is quite as likely to be the opposite and, in view of the rise of movements like Humanism and Ban the Bomb, the eclipse of traditional religions seems inevitable. I think it is this weakness and pessimism in positions of influence like the presidency of the National Secular Society, that is holding up the real growth of a radical movement which will carry through some of the big social reforms which are implicit in the aims of all the non-conformist movements, such as the Freethinkers, Humanists, Rationalists, Nuclear Disarmers, etc. etc.

I am convinced that the people in the non-conformist movements can be brought together and be made to form a social movement which will go the whole hog in political reorganisation of human affairs in such a way that nationalist-minded politicians will be put out of office permanently. At the moment we are all scattered and at loggerheads with each other and thus the traditionally-minded people are able to retain control of public affairs whilst we hold conferences which are ignored by

the conformist press and run marches which are sneered at by the conformist press.

United, and with a press voice of our own which is supported by all non-conformists who are genuinely concerned for the survival of the human race, we could look forward to the merging of more nations than are involved in this Common Market exercise, because we would be seeking the merging of nations on a question of principle affecting humanity, and not merely a question of national advantage which is the way in which the Tory Party approaches the matter.

Still even on the latter basis I think—as a life-long worker for free-democratic world-government—that we should support any move in this direction and not worry overmuch about the power of the Vatican.

E. G. MACFARLANE

CORRECTION

We regret that in C. Bradlaugh Bonner's article last week, the Pope Alexander Farnese, was wrongly referred to as Paul II. He was, in fact, Paul III.

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