

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXIV—No. 49

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

"WHEN thousands of German anti-Nazis were tortured to death in Hitler's concentration camps, when the Polish intelligentsia was slaughtered, when hundreds of thousands of Russians died as a result of being treated as Slavic Untermenschen (sub-humans), and when 6,000,000 human beings were murdered for being non-Aryan, Catholic Church officials in Germany bolstered the regime perpetuating these crimes. The Pope in Rome, the spiritual head and supreme moral teacher of the Roman Catholic Church, remained silent."

These are almost the last sentences in Guenter Lewy's *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 42s.), a book compiled with a sufficiency of official evidence to make one wonder how the hierarchy can ever again deem itself the pillar of Christian love and charity. Mr. Lewy admits the inaccessibility of the Vatican archives concerning the more recent past, but this blank has been compensated for in good measure by careful combing of the archives of the German Foreign Ministry and of German diocesan archives, all of which hold a large number of communications from and to the Holy See. One cannot doubt the listed facts, although some of the casuistry may still be under cover.

No Excuse
Admittedly the story is one of great complexity, but any confusion does nothing to excuse the German bishops, the Vatican and an army of underlings. Hitler himself was never deceived about the corruptibility of the clergy. He knew that he could exploit Catholic support in his early years to manipulate those not yet fully indoctrinated with National Socialism and to confuse world criticism; but finally, when he had won the great war to end peace, he intended to suppress an institution which could so easily be led into any cause which glibly promised some material advantage. Meanwhile, he was so contemptuous of the Church that, even when he was accepting the priest as "a captive auxiliary of the Goebbels propaganda ministry", he could not resist instigating periodic campaigns to make the prelates look ridiculous. Of course, too, concessions and restrictions, applied in measured and alternating doses, were means for keeping the men-of-God at the cringe.

Extravagant Lengths
It has been suggested that the bishops in Germany simply hoped to exorcise the Devil of Communism with the help of Beelzebub; but in fact they went to extravagant length to extol the Fuhrer and his maniacal speeches. At times they did make some attempt to console the victims as well as to flatter the hangman; but their prime concern was to establish the affinities between National Socialism and Catholicism. Catholic books, with the *imprimatur*, were issued to this unholy purpose. Michael Schmaus, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Munster, reminded his readers that Catholic and liberal thinking could never be reconciled, and that Catholicism and National Socialism should march hand in hand. The

new stress on authority, he wrote, represented the counterpart in the natural sphere of the Church's authority in the supernatural realm. "Catholics have always regarded the fate of the people, anchored in blood and soil, as a manifestation of divine providence, and for that reason they also have to share 'the just concern for maintaining the purity of blood,' the basis for the spiritual structure of the people."

Later, when the government wanted proof of Aryan descent, the Church was asked to aid the authorities since prior to 1874-1876 births had been registered only in churches. The Catholic clergy willingly co-operated right through the war, complain-

ing only that priests already overburdened with work were not receiving compensation for this special service to the state.

Yes, when it was convenient, the Church did not fail to use the concept "Jew" after the manner of the Nazis, as a term of racial classification. During one of the phased direct attacks on the Church, the Nazis made extensive use of a 19th-century rabble-rousing anti-clerical book, *Der Pfaffenspiegel*. "Soon," Mr. Lewy records, "the sorry spectacle developed of the Church trying to undermine the effectiveness of this piece by arguing that the Protestant author, Otto von Corvin, had been a half-Jew."

Sterilisation

It was not for lack of Nazi fervour that Hitler occasionally persecuted the Catholics. It must be granted that when the sterilisation laws were introduced, the bishops felt constrained to bleat a few protests; but soon the episcopate decided that Catholic physicians and social workers might report those inflicted with ills calling for sterilisation. "Reporting was material co-operation which was lawful, since the act of reporting in itself was morally indifferent, and since the official in question would otherwise suffer harm, that is, lose his job. To submit an application for the sterilisation of a person, on the other hand, was 'formal co-operation' which, being an essential part of an evil action, was sinful." Thus are hairs and humans split!

In 1940 the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome actually announced that Catholic nurses in state-run hospitals could assist at operations for sterilisation if "a sufficiently important reason was present"—if the nurse might be dismissed for refusing co-operation.

Morality, in the chopper's hands of the theologian, becomes mincemeat. Who indeed will ever again be able to bow with submission to the "Natural Law" after it was invoked by the Catholic Bishops in Germany to excuse almost anything from the cry for *Lebensraum* to the Nuremberg Laws. Bishop Hudal, head of the German Church in Rome, said that the Nuremberg Laws were a necessary and natural self-defence against the influx of foreign elements. The Church in her own legislation, the bishop contended, had held a radical position

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Written in Blood

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

on the Jewish question "until the walls of the Ghetto had been torn down in the 19th century by the liberal state first and not by the Church." Consequently, from the point of view of the Church, there could be no objection to laws containing discriminatory provisions for Jews. "The principles of the modern state [based on the rule of equal treatment before the law] have been created by the French Revolution and are not the best from the standpoint of Christianity and nationality."

The Concentration Camps

The bishops, as Mr. Lewy reveals, had full knowledge of the abominations of the concentration camps; but the only response came from a few who whimpered a little about the sufferings of those "not of German blood." Not once was the word Jew used in this context. Catholics had been excommunicated for duelling, but no Catholic was excommunicated for the maiming and massacring of Jews. For that matter, Hitler was never excommunicated, nor was *Mein Kampf* ever placed on the Index. No, one cannot repeat too often that the German bishops lost no opportunity to fawn on the Fuhrer on the occasion of a birthday, a victory, a "miraculous" escape from a bomb, etc.; and it is quite sickening to read about such felicitations and about the public prayers for The Leader in Mr. Lewy's work. The Catholic Church has no answer to the question the young girl in Max Frisch's *Andorra* asks her priest: "Where were you, Father Benedict, when they took away our brother like a beast to the slaughter, where were you?" It must be remembered, too, that there was a round-up of Jews in the Nazi Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

The one thing the Church held sacrosanct—her subsidies. Hitler, to compromise the clergy, never cut off the subsidies even when he was turning on the heat and informing the laity of "the filth and vice" in monasteries. Such vilification always made the bishops squirm into new degradations of obsequiousness. It is almost beyond credence that the bishops thought they were acting in self-preservation and never realised that ultimately Hitler had no use for any rival organisation however much it might be reduced. The Gestapo, however, was indignant when the bishops, to demonstrate their conformity, started to preach "Jesus, our Fuhrer" and to greet one another "Heil Bishop". Instead of being lauded for "carrying all the items sold by the competition", they were rewarded with new instructions suggesting how they could better implement "the disgusting instrumentality of the lie" by relinquishing the right to publish Catholic newspapers. The papers ceased, for no humble pie was too tainted for the bishops of a Church which had once defended slavery as an expression of the "Natural Law".

Mr. Lewy gives space to the case of the apologists, of those who hold that the bishops could not have opposed Hitler because the "faithful" would not have understood, of those who assert that for the sake of the future of Catholicism in Germany the pontiff could not have protested and given the Germans an excuse to say that the Vatican had been responsible for Germans losing Rome itself.

Inevitably, there were exceptions, one or two ordained men who realised that genocide was an integral part of National Socialism, who spoke out and were executed. But it is sheer hypocrisy for the Catholic Church to hail now these men as martyrs who justify the glory of the hierarchy. At the time the bishops murmured politely that atrocities were "unfortunate side effects".

After his arrest the Pallotine priest Franz Reinisch was denied Holy Communion by the prison chaplain on the ground that he had violated his Christian duty by refus-

ing to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler—the oath worked out by a military bishop, which virtually freed anyone from the stigma of his acts. Reinisch was visited by a high Church dignitary who tried to persuade him to abandon his refusal, and who finally left in a fit of anger declaring that the priest deserved to be "shortened by a head".

Curate Roth wrote: "If in the course of proceeding against the Jews as a race some good and harmless Jews with whom immorality because of inheritance is latest will have to suffer together with the guilty ones, this is not a violation of Christian love of one's neighbour as long as the Church recognises the moral justification of war, for example, where many more 'innocents' than 'guilty' have to suffer." Roth, Mr. Lewy notes, was allowed to yield his poisonous pen without ever being formally disciplined by the Church, and was encouraged to become an official in the war. But all such quibbling is nauseous, for there is a time when if the truth is not stated all decency collapses. Maybe an apologist can marshal a few more specious excuses for the Vatican than for the Pope's bishops, but even if one chooses to forget the Pope's personal messages of encouragement to the Fuhrer, one can compile a terrifying list of sins of omission, the sins which Himmler praised as the "discretion of Rome".

Mockery

The Catholic historian Friedrich Heer felt driven to confess that "in 1945 the situation [the Catholic compromise with evil] was so critical that only a gigantic attempt at concealment was regarded as able to save and restore the face of official Christianity in Germany. Certainly one imagines that all the brains of the Church worked on the camouflage, for at the end of the war not a single bishop had to resign in Germany. And what can one say of the mockery of the Church Maria Regina Martyrum in Berlin which is supposed to be dedicated to heroic figures like Reinisch? What can one say, for the honest confrontation with the hideous mistakes which necessitated such a martyrdom is still to come.

Thank goodness there is Mr. Lewy's book to testify to the depths of the abyss, to warn and to reinforce the observation of Sidney Hook who averred that "in any crucial situation the behaviour of the Catholic Church may be more reliably predicted by reference to its concrete interests as a political organisation than by reference to its timeless dogmas." Clearly, owing to Mr. Lewy's patient documentation, one may now refer to the "Natural Law" as something flexible and ambiguous and able to accommodate almost any unnatural horror.

Then there is the doctrine of the just and the unjust war. The German bishops endorsed Hitler's foreign policy, and never once raised the question whether war waged for expansionist aims could be just and therefore legitimate for Catholics. One might ask when these bishops failed to support their own country's war? At the point which is brought home by Mr. Lewy's book—that the Vatican, rather than proclaim a war unjust and inflict "a conflict of loyalties among the Catholics of the aggressor nation", is prepared to tell all Catholics that they should fight with valour on whatever side they fight themselves. Hence the vaunted moral leadership of the Papacy is limited to what people will accept; and as Zahn concludes, this kind of advice reduces "the whole structure of the 'just war—unjust war' theology to the status of a patently useless and socially meaningless intellectual exercise." Mr. Lewy lets us see that the best of a pontiff could be earned by fighting and dying for Hitler, by giving one's life to the anti-Fascist struggle.

(Concluded on page 388)

Anarchists and Anarchism

By F. A. RIDLEY

In his recent book, *The Anarchists*, (published by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 35s.), an Oxford historian, James Joll, attempts to compress within the confines of a single volume, both an outline of anarchist history and a summary account of the philosophical (for it would be most un-anarchistic to describe it as political) theory of anarchism. The net result of this ambitious attempt represents, sometimes in a rather marked manner, both the strength and weakness of academic historians who have (or so I would assume from the text) no first-hand acquaintance with actual revolutionary movements. Mr. Joll is usually objective and invariably well-documented, but to anyone who like this writer has been personally associated with the anarchist movement (I met Emma Goldman and knew most of the English anarchists of the 1930s including Guy Aldred and M. L. Berneiri) there is a remoteness and even at times, a sense of unreality in Mr. Joll's treatment of concrete anarchist movements.

Like most non-revolutionary historians of revolutionary movements, Mr. Joll exaggerates out of all due proportion the conscious influence of ideas. Revolutions, and very especially non-political revolutions like anarchism, spring from life, not from conscious theory. In as far as ideas have influence, it is primarily because they coincide with and accurately reflect contemporary reality. For anarchism would have evolved in much the same way if Proudhon and Kropotkin (its two major theorists) had never lived, as for that matter Marxism would necessarily have evolved from the current social conditions even if Marx and Engels had never existed either. Authentic revolutionary movements, like authentic religions, spring from the actual experience of the masses and not from the brains of "great men."

His failure to appreciate this cardinal fact about revolutionary movements seriously lessens the value of Mr. Joll's otherwise generally lucid and well-informed narrative, for to anyone at least who has any practical experience of the movement it involves a flight from reality to catalogue the evolution of anarchism under a series of biographical chapter headings. For example, the Spanish anarchists who stormed the military barracks in Barcelona in 1936 almost with their bare hands, did so because they loved liberty and hated tyranny not—as one would imagine from reading Mr. Joll—primarily because they had read Proudhon. Making due allowance for this perhaps necessary weakness in the writing of revolutionary history by non-revolutionary authors, there is a great deal of valuable material assembled in *The Anarchists*, mostly marshalled in a lucid and interesting manner. For the author surveys the evolution of the movement from its ancient and medieval forerunners in classical Greece and in sects like the Anabaptists, who repudiated the state and church simultaneously and appeared to the ruling classes of their day as iconoclastic, much as the anarchists themselves were to do during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, one can hardly term the Anabaptist kingdom of Munster (1534-5) an anarchist experiment; after all, it was a "kingdom", a state, though a very peculiar one. Incidentally, Mr. Joll appears to show some credulity in apparently accepting at their face value, the tall stories circulated about King Jan of Leyden and his Anabaptist "kingdom" by contemporary defenders of law and order including both Luther and the pope. It may be relevant to recall that, when I debated with him a few years ago,

the fanatical Catholic convert Sir Arnold Lunn (who was in Spain during the civil war) claimed to have evidence of similar unmentionable atrocities by the Spanish anarchists. Revolutionaries rarely get objective treatment! However, as Mr. Joll does not fail to remind us, anarchism, both as a major European (and American) movement and as a concrete social theory, really began with the French Revolution; and its "heroic" era lay between the revolution of 1848 and the Spanish civil war of 1936-39. It is consequently and necessarily with this classical century that the bulk of the narrative is concerned.

There have, of course, been several variations of the anti-statist, anti-government movement generically described as "anarchist", including religious, e.g. the German-derived Bruderhof, spiritual descendants of the Anabaptists, who still practise a kind of Christian-anarchist communism in Shropshire. There is even a Catholic anarchist movement in present-day America, which would appear to be a contemporary example of the dialectical principle of interpenetration of opposites. But such historical curiosities apart the main stream of anarchism, may be said to have begun with that tempestuous personality Michael Bakunin, and then passed via his Russian and Spanish successors into the Labour movement of certain pre-industrial agrarian lands like Russia, Italy and above all, Spain, where the ideas of Bakunin (and to a lesser degree, of Proudhon and Kropotkin) gained influence on account of their immediate congruity with the prevailing social conditions.

Mr. Joll recounts the amusing story of the original foundation of the Spanish anarchist movement, destined to become the most powerful in the world, by Fenelli, an Italian disciple of Bakunin, who could not speak a word of Spanish. Incidentally, Bakunin could not go to Spain himself for want of the railway fare.

The highlight of anarchist evolution in the nineteenth century was the embittered conflict for control of the First International between Karl Marx and Bakunin. But it is quite inadequate as well as being quite contrary to the tenets of historical materialism—which incidentally both Marx and Bakunin accepted—to describe the clash between even these two titanic personalities in individual terms. For these powerful protagonists represented incompatible and rival stages in the evolution of the European masses—Marx, the proletariat in the advanced lands of the industrial revolution and Bakunin the still pre-industrial agrarian lands; Marx stood for the workers and Bakunin for the peasants. It was left to Lenin, who in practice borrowed impartially from both Marx and Bakunin, to evolve the modern formula of the union of the rival classes, workers and peasants (I learned from an old German Social democrat who knew him personally, that before 1917, Lenin was widely regarded in "orthodox" Marxist circles as a Bakuninist).

The twentieth century anarchist movement has continued to flourish in agrarian lands like pre-Tsarist Russia, pre-Fascist Italy and above all, in pre-Franco Spain. In passing we must note such ephemeral phenomena as the propaganda by deed, the assassination of several monarchs and statesmen by anarchist (or alleged anarchist) terrorists; and the rather uneasy alliance in France (and to a certain extent in pre-1914 England and USA) of anarchist ideas with syndicalist organisations in the traditions of which

(Concluded on page 388)

This Believing World

"Bishops in Revolt" was the startling headline in the *Daily Mail* (November 20th). Not Anglican bishops, mind you, dying to go back to the infallible Church which, during 19 centuries has stood like a rock defying the puny attacks of heretics and unbelievers alike, and showed a completely unchangeable front all the time, as befits a divine religion. They were actually good Roman Catholic bishops at the Vatican Council, and what they wanted was a break in infallibility, and a more tolerant approach to modern problems.

★

In other words, the infallible Church has collapsed as an infallible Church. The intolerance which it has always shown to "the winds of change" has done Romanism more harm in a few years than aggressive Protestantism in a few centuries. The Church now has to deal with the advance of science, with birth control, with religious liberty, and many other urgent problems. It may, under the present Pope, still try to hide its bewildered head in the sand, but that cannot be for long. Perhaps the Pope and his advisers are sorry they continued the Vatican Council.

★

Most, if not all, "miracle" healers try to cure human beings, but there is one lady who is out to cure incurable animals, and every week a queue gathers with them to be "faith-healed" by Miss Hazel Ward in New Milton, Hants, where she has of course an altar with a painting of Jesus above it. Miss Ward has had in her small "sanctuary" many remarkable cures of quite incurable animals but, says a reporter in *The People* (October 11th), "she was reluctant to tell me the names of the people whose pets she had successfully healed". This reluctance appears to be a characteristic of all successful healers of animals and humans. They are so very modest. The reporter felt it necessary to warn animal owners of a danger of "bitter disappointments" if pets were not healed. Not healed: what an outrageous idea!

★

The task of rehabilitating our "glorious and holy Fuhrer", Adolf Hitler, was bound to come, and it will be in full swing when, in 1965, all Nazi criminals not caught will be unconditionally pardoned in Germany. After all (we are already being told) the Fuhrer believed "that in annihilating the Jewish people, he fulfilled a sacred mission" (*Daily Mail*, October 8th). In defending five Nazi policemen for butchering 7,000 Jews, Herr Heinecke claimed that they could not be guilty as they were not activated "by malice". And Hitler was not a murderer even if he did order the massacre of millions of Jews; he didn't do it through "malicious motives", you see.

★

It is needless to add that Herr Heinecke was never a Nazi but a thoroughly convinced Christian. We have no doubt that the five gallant policemen will get off, for they were not Nazis either. They were only doing their duty as Christian gentlemen, and it isn't done to convict a sincere Christian.

★

As the Vatican Council drew to a close the Pope announced another honour for the Virgin Mary. He made her the Mother of the Church—but whether this is a greater honour than being the Mother of God Almighty is something we prefer to leave to Catholic theologians to thrash out. However it seems that all the bishops and cardinals at the Vatican Council hailed this great distinction with one mighty shout of approval. Full unity there of course.

WRITTEN IN BLOOD

(Concluded from page 386)

as well as by refusing military service on the ground of conscience.

One may argue that war is a fever in which all men lose their heads, hearts and humanity; but Mr. Lewy records that before the war the only comments the German bishops had to make on the barbarities of the concentration camps were hosannas for the system which had brought about the nightmares. The story of the concordat between the Vatican and Nazi Germany, as told through Mr. Lewy's scholarship, is one of the shabbiest. The Church was in no position, politically or intellectually, to oppose Hitler when he plunged the world in chaos—even if the German bishops had wanted to do so. "Thank God and Hitler" had been their anthem for too long; and the veteran Father Sern had hailed Hitler in 1934 as "the tool of God, called upon to overcome Judaism."

Without centuries of the Church's anti-Jewish record, Hitler might have found it harder to promulgate his passions. But in Bavaria, way back in 1337, the performance of an anti-Jewish play by a Benedictine monk had so fired the pious citizens of Deggendorf that they had killed off all the Jews in their town "out of legitimate zeal pleasing to God." This is only one typical item from the anthology of the years. Is it any wonder that Freethinkers hold that "religion" is an X subject for children and should be banished from our schools? Read Mr. Lewy and learn how willingly the religious instructors in Germany taught their pupils "the healthy core of Nazism". Then you may marvel once more why so many still equate "religion" with "good citizenship" and "ethics". Vicar General Steinmann told a meeting of several thousand Catholics youths in 1933: "We know that he who stands at the head [Hitler] is given us by God as our leader." Isn't it enough?

Every Freethinker should buy *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*—or at least make certain that there is a copy in the local library.

ANARCHISTS AND ANARCHISM

(Concluded from 387)

the French Georges Sorel was the best-known spokesman, and the American Industrial Workers of the World the most militant exponents. The anarchist revolution in Russia eventually suppressed by the old Bolsheviks and (again) the heroic epic of anarchist participation in the Spanish civil war represented the high-water mark of anarchist activity within this century. They are adequately recorded in Mr. Joll's well documented pages.

Theoretically, anarchism presents itself as a utopia: as an abstract idea only hitherto realised locally and spasmodically; as a fact (if at all) of the far future; and indeed anarchist ideas have inspired many utopias, including the most delightful of all, *News from Nowhere*, by William Morris, though Morris himself cannot be unreservedly classed as an anarchist. In her book *Journey through Utopia* many such utopias have been vividly described by Marie Luise Berneiri, that brilliant Italian anarchist whose dazzling personality and tragically early death will always be remembered with admiration and regret by those who knew her. But is the anarchist society itself a utopia? At least the anarchists do not think so! For them it is the reality of tomorrow. But will tomorrow ever come? Is anarchism a utopian myth or a prophetic reality? The only answer at present would appear to be a question mark: preferably a large one.

THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1

Telephone: HOP 2717

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 17s. 6d.; half-year, 19s.; three months, 9s. 6d. In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.25, half-year, \$2.75; three months, \$1.40.

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. Inquiries regarding Bequests and Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street). Sunday Evenings

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

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, December 6th, 6.30 p.m.: Ald. E. MARSTON, Cllr. D. B. RADFORD, Cllr. E. M. HARDY, Cllr. F. C. TUCKER "Any Questions?"

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, December 6th, 7.30 p.m.: Rev. J. SONG, Subject to be announced.

National Secular Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.), Friday, December 4th, 8 p.m.: Marlowe Quatercentenary meeting: Lecture and readings. RICHARD CLEMENTS, PAUL HANSARD and DAVID TRIBE

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, December 8th, 11 a.m.: KATHLEEN NOTT "Psychology and Scientific Humanism". Tuesday, December 8th, 7.30 p.m.: GILLIAN HOLROYD "Agnostics and Adoption".

The Grammar School (Heanor, Derbyshire), Wednesday, December 9th, 4 p.m.: Debate, "That God Has No Function in Modern Society". Speakers T. M. MOSLEY and The Vicar of Heanor.

Notes and News

"We must now consider whether with the growth of psychological knowledge and new medical discoveries, the Church should not formulate a fuller doctrine." These words on the pill are—believe it or not!—Dr. Heenan's, spoken just before he left Rome for Bombay to make the opening address at the Eucharistic Congress. Asked if the doctrine forbidding contraceptives was undergoing a change, he answered: "No I would say it is developing" (*The Guardian*, 23/11/64). As if development isn't change! Undeterred, the Archbishop informed us that, "When Pius XII condemned the pill in 1958 it was because it was considered a sterilising agent. Now we have some doubts about that. That is why we must listen to science. By applying scientific knowledge we can show that the doctrine remains unchanged because it was prohibiting the pill for an effect it may not produce. Now scientific study may possibly show us that there is no reason for banning the pill." But how, one must ask, does the matter reflect on Pius XII's infallibility?

APPARENTLY the great majority of the bishops leaving Rome after the third session of the Vatican Council were dissatisfied, "incensed" even—according to the *Daily Telegraph* (23/11/64)—at the postponement of two decrees until the fourth and final session, for which no date has yet been announced. The decrees are, of course, those on religious liberty and on non-Christians, including the Jews. Most of the bishops believe the postponement to be due to "obscurantism and obstruction by the Roman Curia", and the *Telegraph*, considered it "unfortunate" that "the world must wait a year or more for this proof of the reality of the Roman Church's intention to 'modernise' itself." Could it be that the Pope himself doesn't really want anything truly changed in traditional doctrine?

★

THE general response in India to the International Eucharistic Congress has been "spontaneous and warmly enthusiastic", the *Times* informed us (23/11/64), apart from "Some small opposition from fanatical communal groups referred to in the local press as the 'lunatic fringe of extreme rightists.'" These accuse the Roman Catholic Church of proselytising (of which there can surely be no doubt) and "winning over India's poor and needy... through free doles and donations during the Congress." We confess to having some sympathy with these "extremists"—as the *Times* called them. They have seen a lofty altar surmounted by a cross "soaring higher into the sky than the encircling six-storey buildings"; they will witness nine days of ceremony, including the consecration of a bishop from each continent by the Pope on December 3rd. And they know that Indian central and state governments, city civic authorities and other official bodies have "contributed generously to the needs of the Congress." No secular government could have done more for it, said the Indian Cardinal Gracias.

★

THE COMMISSION of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has called on the Caledonian Steam Packet Co. to abandon its plan for Sunday ferries to the Isle of Skye. The Rev. Professor G. N. M. Collins, convener of the Public Questions Committee, described the proposal as "a grievous violation of the Lord's Day" (*The Glasgow Herald*, 19/11/64). It would turn not only Skye, but the whole of the Western Isles into "a kind of Sabbath playground" for any whose inclination lay in that direction. And the commission's unanimous resolution argued that "to develop tourism at the expense of disloyalty to the Lord of the Sabbath... and to force an unacceptable way of life upon the God-fearing and Sabbath-loving community would be an action at complete variance with our boasted democracy." It is not undemocratic, mind you, to enforce sabbatarianism on those whose inclinations lie in the direction of Sunday enjoyment.

★

SCIENTISTS who would not accept evidence of psychic phenomena and those who would not accept the Bible because of its miracles were criticised by Canon J. D. Pearce-Higgins, Vice-Chairman of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, when he spoke at Nottingham University recently (*Nottingham Guardian-Journal*, 14/11/64). We have heard the Canon on this subject and were appalled at his naivety. "Much authenticated evidence of spirits, levitation, fire-walking and spiritual healing had been accumulated by many people of good repute," the *Guardian-Journal* cited him as stating. In fact, he is prepared to accept practically any absurd story at second or third hand—so long as it involves ghosts.

Religion in America

By LEON SPAIN

THEOLOGIANs and religious commentators have gone to great lengths to appraise the "recent surge of piety in America." The increase in church membership and the prominence given to the role of religion in American life has both enheartened and emboldened various religious leaders to declare, in effect, that religion has not outlived its usefulness, but is coming into its own and taking, what they deem, its rightful place in American life. However, keen and critical analysts, even in the higher echelons of the clergy and religious laity, have come to the realisation that such optimism is unwarranted, and that the apparently formidable array of statistics compiled by the spokesmen of the various denominations cannot survive scrutiny.

Such an instance of the hollowness of religious statistics is evinced in an article written by Louis Cassels in the November 14th, 1964, issue of the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*. Mr. Cassels is a syndicated UPI writer whose principal newspaper forte is writing about religion in American life, and on the whole it cannot be denied that he has never refrained from calling a spade by its proper name, even if it would reflect upon the cause which he is undoubtedly dedicated to promote. In the above article, Mr. Cassels proves positively that the claims of the increase in church membership by the various proponents are hollow. And he has done this in a manner which cannot be gainsaid. In fact, what he has presented should have been obvious—indeed it can be safely said that it was overlooked because it was so obvious.

Mr. Cassels states explicitly that the churches virtually had it all their own way for at least fifteen years following the conclusion of the second world war. In his opinion, it was not necessary to go out and search for straying sheep, it was just enough for the gates to be opened and the sheep counted as they poured in vast numbers. It seemed, that during that period, nearly every one was joining a religious denomination: church membership increased at three times the rate of population growth, which even the most critical would admit was considerable. Sunday schools were so swamped with students that double sessions had to be scheduled, and the overflow of students necessitated classes in the hallways. A religious revival of unprecedented proportions had seemingly arrived upon the American scene, and an irrepressible "surge of piety" was having a telling effect which was not to be easily dismissed. Even the most indifferent realised that, whatever misgivings they may have had about religious tenets as such, going to a church was at least a social asset and a means to making friends, particularly if one lived in a small community. However, it is now conceded by many religious dignitaries that the mushroom growth of church membership did not have all the earmarks of a genuine revival, there was, in fact, much of the element of a social fad or nominal acceptance about it. The clergymen are even willing to admit that going to church was "a social must." But, it seems, with the passage of time the "social must" has nothing further to recommend it.

Mr. Cassels, in his straightforward manner says, "those who have no real interest in religion can now ignore it without fear of being subjected to social ostracism or even to raised eyebrows." The teeth have gone out of it. Further, Mr. Cassels points out that there is a considerable decrease in baptisms as recorded by several Protestant

denominations which, considering the rate of population increase, has meaningful implications. Mr. Cassels reveals that infant baptisms in the Methodist Church have declined from 212,799 in 1959 to 163,572 in 1963—a drop of 23 per cent over a four-year period. He also indicates that the United Presbyterian Church registered an 18 per cent decline in infant baptisms during the same four-year period, with declines of 16 and 13 per cent respectively in the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Reformed Church of America. Mr. Cassels further shows that baptisms have fluctuated during the same four year period in the Lutheran and Episcopal Churches, but the authority whom he quotes states that it has had no retarding effect upon "the sharply downward trend" in the baptism of infants in the principal Protestant Churches. Other figures could be given, but their mention would be needlessly repetitious; they would only further bear out what has been mentioned.

It can readily be concluded from Mr. Cassels's observations and comments that there is a developing indifference to religious observances in American life, and while, undoubtedly, religion will persist to a degree in the future it seems that its prospects for enjoying the prestige it had during the immediate post World War II days are reduced. The pressures to conformity in America were considerably increased during the McCarthy era and are only now being belatedly relaxed.

McCarthyism, during its heyday, was one of the most overt and unbridled movements in America creating a stampede to conformism in conventional politics and church membership. There has been also at all times the subtle type of Main Street pressure, or the acknowledged social compulsions of the community variety, which has made church membership a means to social acceptance but which under closer examination has all the earmarks of being merely nominal affiliation. In fact the basic disinterest to religion increased; what has been interpreted as religious revivalism asserted itself only when the pressures to conformity were greatest. Many parents sent their children to Sunday School in order to learn what they deemed "moral values," or the proprieties conducive to a "good upbringing." Mistaken, they might be but many still believe that Biblical myths and legends can be instrumental in promoting good social conduct in the younger generation. When parents realise that the Church's claim to be a moralising agency is groundless, and can just as well be promoted by secular agencies, the decline in Sunday school and church attendance is likely to decline still further.

Mr. Cassels concludes with the comment—which seemingly betrays an underlying uneasiness—that while the growing decline in church membership is to be deplored, it may lead to, "a sound and genuine religious revival." "True religion," he says, "has always flourished best in an atmosphere of freedom. And subtle social pressures can be just as inimical to voluntary choice as government coercion." What, it may be asked is "true religion," and in what particular time and place did it flourish? Mr. Cassels could well be reminded that religion flourished where ignorance was widespread or where the ruling powers gave it support for their own advantage. An afterthought that I offer for Mr. Cassels is that Secularism and godlessness could well grow in an atmosphere of freedom.

Labels and the Fifth Column

By KIT MOUAT

MR. Micklewright gives us so much good sense and legal advice that I am surprised when he talks of the "roots [of proper freethinking] being purified". Sounds more like MRA than the NSS. And can anyone really be taken to court on a libel charge for accusing a Humanist sheep to be some secular-papal committee to decide whether or not we are rational enough to be called Rationalists, thoughtful enough to be accepted as Freethinkers or human enough to be Humanists, we shall continue to choose our own labels, and while agreeing on objectives, continue to disagree on the methods of achieving those objectives.

I do agree, however, that Jesus-worshippers should not be accepted into the Humanist movement. This would rule out all the Unitarians and Quakers, clergymen and so on who like to call themselves Humanists while performing the Christian miracle of the twentieth century—that of eating one's cake and keeping it. But how to phrase the question on a membership form? How to give people the opportunity to emerge from Christianity via Unitarianism as active members of a Humanist organisation? It is not so easy.

I realise that those of us who have never been Christians, who were not even baptised in infancy and certainly would not have been confirmed into a religious faith "for anything", may sometimes need to be reminded of the dangers of acquiring the unnecessary prop of religion. We are too ready, perhaps, to distrust the fervour of those Rationalists who were, at one time, equally fervent as Christians, and we cannot help asking, "What on earth got into them and why should it come out now?"

My own appreciation of the present Humanist movement is in relation to my despair in the forties at finding only a dusty, male-centred (if not misogynist) edifice. I hope that the British Humanist Association will prove that it is not just *anti* (-Christ, -clerical, -religion and -women) but positively pro-human welfare, social reform-without-theology, and clear thinking. I am encouraged by its projects from the school in Bechuanaland to the campaign for Bihar, the University Humanist Federation, to the Agnostics Adoption Society. The Housing Association is, I think, splendid. I wish, however we could have more success with broadcasting.

I think Margaret Knight has said that "compromise is for the field of action and there can be no compromise as far as truth is concerned." I applaud her wisdom. I agree with Mr. Khrushchev who said that the only alternative to coexistence is non-existence. As one of the anti-Christians who is married to a Christian, I feel I do know from experience about the value of coexistence.

My own son has been given clear guidance about Christianity at home; an opportunity to see its best and worst. At twelve he rebelled against morning worship and compulsory RI, and then I went into battle with him. He is now a well-informed, atheist-freethinker (avoiding his mother's and his father's labels!) and whereas I am delighted that he shares my convictions, his father is just as proud as I am of his honesty and courage. Between us we managed to get the headmaster to ask an atheist master to give the Sunday service and it went down very well indeed.

I like to think that the real value of such a mixed marriage (and surely Humanists do not disapprove of these as Roman Catholics do?) is that children can see

that people who disagree on important subjects can still love and respect one another. On the whole my husband shows more tolerance than I do, especially now he has an atheist son. He encourages me to write and speak and keeps quiet when I am faced with opposition within my own organisation. He could so easily say, "You lot are really no better than Christians for all your holier than thou attitude, are you?" but he doesn't.

Many people have complained about the title, *Agnostics Adoption Bureau*. I don't like the label "agnostic" and have certainly never applied it to myself. We were very fortunate, however, to have two Christian adoption experts at our original working party and they supported and helped us a great deal. They made it clear that the sort of would-be-parents whom they have had reluctantly to turn away (because of the terms of their constitution) called themselves "agnostics" as often as not, and would be most likely to respond to a bureau with that name. They were proved right. And we wanted to help not just our own committed members, but all those people who wanted children but refused to perjure themselves to adopt them. So the Agnostics Adoption Bureau (and now Society) it became. Perhaps a better name will be found in the future, but it won't be easy to find one that will continue to attract the people who most need the sort of help we think we can give.

One more point on adoption and one, perhaps, that mothers are better able to answer than anyone else. Agreeing that it is monstrous that moral welfare workers should ask unmarried-mothers-to-be what their religion is in such a way as to make it almost impossible to admit atheism, is it a good thing that such women should be allowed to state exactly what religion they do (or do *not*) want their baby to be brought up in? Agreeing, also, that what matters is the good home and loving parents and security, would we, as mothers, want to be sure that any children we might have to have adopted would be protected from say, a good, loving and secure home with Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses or Exclusive Brethren? What matters, I feel, is that the mother should be able to admit she has no religion and stipulate that her child should go to a home where there is no fanaticism. But it is another question that is not easy to answer, and we really need the help of the young women concerned.

And with regards to secular education: I fully support the National Secular Society's drive during November to publicise the problems involved and put our point of view forward, but surely most of our disagreements are a question of method rather than basic principle? Starting from the point where it is recognised that morality is not dependent on any religious belief, it seems to me we have to decide: (a) how to make sure children are taught about Christianity so that they will not (from ignorance) plunge into it at a later and emotional stage of their lives; (b) if education were purely secular, would there be a drive to intensify the sort of Sunday school mockery of education that produces so many earnest churchgoers and Bible belts in the States? (c) how we can ensure that young people are given really responsible guidance in

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Quatercentenary of the birth of Christopher Marlowe

Hansard in the Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square,
LECTURE AND READING by Richards Clements, David Tribe, Paul
London, W.C.1., on Friday, December 4th, 8 p.m.

ethics, human relationships and sex, without their teaching being coloured by the personal faiths of the teachers? (I presume we are not going to imitate the Christians and penalise teachers who don't agree with us); (d) what hope there is for changing the drizzly "climate of opinion" and how much shall we, in fact, have to compromise in action?

There is also the point that whereas any indoctrination makes a mockery of education, RI is an excellent breeding ground for atheists! I deplore any suggestion that our children should ever be expected to fight battles for our convictions and resent those non-parents who suggest that they should.

CORRESPONDENCE

"FRENCH WOMEN AT RAVENSBRUCK"

Madam Pierie Pador, a lawyer at the Paris Bar and the chairman of the French survivors from Ravensbruck, approached the Defence Committee for Victims of Nazi Persecution, asking for support and assistance to stage an exhibition "The French Women in Ravensbruck," in London. We feel that such an exhibition would not only demonstrate to the courageous women of France our debt to them for their heroism, but it would focus attention on the serious situation arising out of the West German Government's intention to end all prosecution for war crimes on May 8th, 1965, in accordance with the twenty year rule. The West German authorities have refused to make special exceptions for Nazi crimes, in spite of the fact that these fall in quite a different category from "ordinary crimes", for which the twenty year rule would apply. The London Agreement of August, 1945, and other international agreements had made Nazi crimes a subject of International Law, and National Law could not apply. With great regret we noticed the absence of any comment in the British Press on the issue of the time limit on war crimes.

Recently Dr. Kempner, deputy US prosecutor at the Nuremberg trial, stated that only about one-seventh of the war criminals had hitherto been dealt with; the other six-sevenths, including many major war criminals, were just waiting for the twenty year rule to come into force.

In the course of our work dealing with victims of Nazi persecution, we have observed that the resurgence of neo-Nazism in the Federal Republic has now reached a very dangerous level. While the former SS enjoys freedom to continue its activities, it also receives the official support of some representative of political parties such as the CDU and the FDP, as for example in the case of the SS meeting in Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein

a weekend or two ago. The Mayor of Rendsburg not only welcomed the SS but ordered flags to be displayed in their honour. Among the guests of honour was the notorious war criminal Sepp Dietrich. At the same time, the persecution of former anti-Nazi victims, including many survivors of concentration camps, continues. Under these circumstances we feel it is imperative that all possible support for the exhibition "French Women in Ravensbruck" should be forthcoming. In this way, these important facts about the issues raised by the untimely intentions of the Federal Government, can be brought to the notice of the British public.

We appeal to you to assist us by sending generous donations. If we are able to raise sufficient funds to hire a hall in London, the exhibition will be staged during the first two weeks in February. Two women of the French resistance, both survivors of Ravensbruck will open the exhibition and remain in London for the duration of it.

P.S. Cheques and Postal Orders to be made out to: Defence Committee for Victims of Nazi Persecution.

(Mrs.) E. DALES,
Hon. Secretary,

Defence Committee for Victims of Nazi Persecution, 12 First Avenue, Gillingham, Kent.

HUMANISM ADRIFT

F. H. Amphlett Micklewright has, I think, been rather carried away by the notion of a fifth column inside the Humanist movement. Certainly he seems to put a wrong emphasis on Dr. Victor Purcell's article in the *Humanist* for November, 1964.

Dr. Purcell does not, so far as I can see, "categorically" claim that "a fifth column is at work, bent upon the destruction of humanistic and freethought endeavour"—Mr. Micklewright's words. Dr. Purcell's own words are: "Some of the attacks on Humanists are of a nature to suggest that they are part of the activities, of a 'Fifth Column.' I say this advisedly, for as a war-time Director General of Information in an Eastern country I claim to be able to recognise methods that are enemy-inspired."

There is quite a difference between "categorically" claiming and finding something to be "of a nature to suggest." There is perhaps an even greater difference in the general tone of the two articles. Mr. Micklewright's has I feel, a personal bitterness that is absent from Dr. Purcell's. Moreover, the only correspondence from individual—and probably obscure—Humanists which has appeared in the *Humanist*. Mr. Micklewright talks of "people who turn up in humanist groupings because they like to hold office, and no other organisation would be willing to give them an opening"; he even visualises "a great sell-out to the Black International of the churches." In short, he over-dramatises.

ROBERT DENT

EDUCATIONAL PAPERBACKS

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

- Sex in Society Alex Comfort 3s. 6d.
Affluent Society J. K. Galbraith 5s.
Business of Management Roger Falk 3s. 6d.
Child Care and the Growth of Love John Bowlby and Margery Fry 3s. 6d.
Child, the Family and the Outside World D. W. Winnicott 4s. 6d.
Diagnosis of Man Kenneth Walker 5s.
Dreams and Nightmares J. A. Hadfield 5s.
Education: An Introductory Survey W. O. Lester Smith 3s. 6d.
Freud and the Post-Freudians J. A. C. Brown 4s.
Fundamentals of Psychology C. G. Adcock 4s.
Hidden Persuaders Vance Packard 3s. 6d.
Homosexuality D. J. West 3s. 6d.
House of Commons at Work Eric Taylor 4s.
Introduction to Jung's Psychology Frieda Fordham 3s. 6d.
John Citizen and the Law Ronald Rubinstein 7s. 6d.
Local Government in England and Wales W. Eric Jackson 3s. 6d.
Normal Child and Some of His Abnormalities C. W. Valentine 4s.
Organization Man W. H. Whyte 4s. 6d.
Psychiatry Today D. Stafford Clark 5s.
Psychology of Sex Oswald Schwartz 4s.
Psychology of Thinking Robert Thomson 3s. 6d.
Queen's Courts Peter Archer 6s.
Queen's Government Sir Ivor Jennings 3s. 6d.
Sense and Nonsense in Psychology H. J. Eysenck 4s.
Sex and Society Kenneth Walker and Peter Fletcher 4s.
Sexual Deviation Anthony Storr 3s. 6d.
Status Seekers Vance Packard 4s.
Techniques of Persuasion J. A. C. Brown 4s. 6d.
Uses and Abuses of Psychology H. J. Eysenck 5s.

- Uses of Literacy Richard Hoggart 5s.
Waste Makers Vance Packard 4s. 6d.

GEOGRAPHY

- Applied Geography Dudley Stamp 3s. 6d.
Face of the Earth G. H. Dury 6s.
Geography of World Affairs J. P. Cole 5s.
Geology and Scenery in England and Wales A. E. Truman 5s.

HISTORY

- Dictionary of Modern History 1789-1945 A. W. Palmer 5s.
The Greeks H. D. F. Kitto 3s. 6d.
History of London Life R. J. Mitchell and M. D. R. Leys 5s.
History of Modern France Vol. 1
History of Modern France Vol. 2 Alfred Cobban 6s. each
History of Spain and Portugal William C. Atkinson 6s.
Queen Elizabeth I J. E. Neale 5s.
The Romans R. H. Barrow 3s. 6d.
Short History of the World H. G. Wells 5s.
Shortened History of England G. M. Trevelyan 8s. 6d.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

- Dictionary of Science 5s.
History of Science and Technology Vol. 1
History of Science and Technology Vol. 2 R. J. Forbes and E. J. Dijkstra 4s. 6d.
Human Physiology Kenneth Walker 6s.
Mathematician's Delight W. W. Sawyer 3s. 6d.
Metals in the Service of Man A. Street and W. Alexander 6s.
Physiology of Sex Kenneth Walker 3s. 6d.
Riddles in Mathematics E. P. Northrop 3s. 6d.
Plus postage from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop