

The Freethinker

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PROFESSOR Edward Roux, Head of the Department of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Chairman of the South African Rationalist Association, and a contributor to THE FREETHINKER, has been banned from entering any educational institution, from teaching and writing, and confined to the Johannesburg area. Last September, the South African Minister of Justice(!), Mr. Vorster, said that Dr. Roux and other alleged "Communists" would be prohibited from teaching at universities from January 1st, 1965. The principals of Cape Town and Witwatersrand universities made representations to the Minister on behalf of the three lecturers involved, but a series of 21 prohibitions were served on Dr. Roux at his home in Melville, Johannesburg, on December 16th, 1964.

The Ban

For the next five years he is forbidden to enter the premises of the University of the Witwatersrand or any other educational institution in South Africa; to teach or instruct anyone except his own children in any subject (Dr. Roux's daughter is married); to enter any location or township reserved for Africans, Coloureds or Asians, or any factory; to attend any gathering—even a purely social one—or any meeting; to publish or prepare for publication in any form anything he writes on any subject; to attend any court of law unless required as a witness; to talk or write to any other banned person. He has also been confined to the Johannesburg magisterial area, and will therefore be unable to visit his farm at Muldersdrift, near the city. The only exception allowed by the Minister is that Dr. Roux may continue to enter the premises of the University of the Witwatersrand until the end of January to attend to the affairs of his department.

Edward R. Roux was born in Pietersburg in the Transvaal 61 years ago, was educated at the Johannesburg university, and came to Cambridge on a scholarship. He was appointed to the Witwatersrand staff in 1946, and became head of the Department of Botany four years ago. When he was due to retire recently, the University authorities asked Dr. Roux to stay on for a further five years. They did this—as the South African *Sunday Times* pointed out in a leader on December 20th, 1964—because "they recognised his ability as a scientist. No less important, they were fully aware of Dr. Roux's political past and were satisfied that it belonged to the past. Dr. Roux, in fact, rejected Communism as far back as 1936; and his work at the University was devoted entirely to the teaching of his subject."

Principal Protests

A senior staff member at Witwatersrand described the ban as "much worse than we expected" (*Rand Daily Mail*, December 17th, 1964). "It not only deprives the University of a professor who has served it devotedly for the past 18 years, but also deprives the country of one of its best scientists". And Professor I. D. MacCrone, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, deplored the banning in a

statement to the South African *Sunday Times*. This reads as follows:—

"As the academic head of the University of the Witwatersrand, I feel that I must express my concern and distress at the brusque action of the Minister of Justice in terminating the appointment of Professor E. R. Roux, a senior member of our academic staff. Among the many reasons for my concern, the following appear to me to be the most important: To the knowledge of the University Council, of his colleagues and of myself, Professor Roux has since his appointment to the staff of the University in 1946, never been a member of the Communist Party, never attempted to promote the aims of communism within the University, nor has he engaged in any kind of communist indoctrination of students at the University.

"If any such information is available to the Minister, it has never been disclosed to the University Council. Since the action of the Minister has been taken under the very formidable powers vested in him by the Suppression of Communism Act, one might have expected that such powers could have been used to charge Professor Roux in open court. Instead, he has been compelled to resign his appointment and subjected to punitive restrictions, the reasons for which are known neither to the University nor to himself."

Serious Repercussions

"This action by the Minister will have serious repercussions on the academic staff, who are quite rightly concerned at what appears to be the unnecessarily harsh and arbitrary treatment of one of their own number", Professor MacCrone continued.

"Hitherto, both in theory and in practice, the University Council alone has had the right to dismiss or terminate the appointment of a member of the academic staff, subject to the right of appeal by the member to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science against a decision to dismiss him. This right, both of the University Council and of every member of the staff, has now been invaded.

"Whilst in my own mind I have no fear that similar action will be, or for that matter can be, taken against any other member of the staff, the fact remains that members of staff are disturbed and distressed both at the circumstances under which Professor Roux has been dismissed and the very severe consequences of such dismissal for himself.

"And finally, there are on the academic staff of the University over 500 people in full- or part-time employment. To single out one of them for this kind of treatment is not merely a blow against the autonomy of the University to employ (or dismiss as the case may be) whom it thinks fit. It will also have the effect of still further damaging the academic image of South African universities abroad. Those South African heads of universities who, like myself, have had some first-hand experience of the distortions and misconceptions about our universities that

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

South African Government Bans Rationalist Professor

By COLIN McCALL

prevail even in academic circles in other countries and who have tried so hard to remove them, will now find their task being made even more difficult by this action of the Minister."

Motives

The South African government's motives in issuing the ban are not entirely plain. Dr. Roux himself believes that they are mainly political and directed against the liberal University of the Witwatersrand. Some of his colleagues consider, however, that Dr. Roux is being personally victimised because of his book, *Time Longer Than Rope*, a survey of the non-White political movements in South Africa, first published in 1948, but revised and reissued in Britain and the USA this year. The book is critical of the Verwoerd administration.

Effect on the Rationalist Association

What effect will the bannings have on the South African Rationalist Association? The Association will not fold up, but may have difficulty in continuing its monthly journal, *The Rationalist*, which was edited by the Professor and his wife, and published from their home. Certainly he will no longer be able openly to write for it or to assist in preparing it for press. These blows against the Associa-

tion may, as Dr. Roux suggests, be only incidental. "It is not", he says, "a large or influential body."

True it is not large, but it may be more influential than Dr. Roux modestly allows. The Association had a following in university circles, and its organ had for some time been printed partly in Afrikaans. Disseminating rationalist ideas among the Afrikaansers may well have been regarded as a sin by the South African government, as well as by the powerful fundamentalist Dutch Reformed Church. For the present, however, we can only speculate on this.

Clearly, and sadly, Dr. Roux's academic career in South Africa is ended. The banning orders make it impossible for him to continue his scientific research either in the University laboratories and greenhouses or on his own farm. Many of his colleagues are urging him to leave the country so that he can carry out further research and publish his findings without interference.

Reluctant as he is to leave his native land, Dr. Roux may feel compelled to do so, providing, of course, that he can get a passport. Wherever he decides to go, he can be sure of the best wishes and support of his free-thinking admirers and friends.

Are You Saved?

By F. H. SNOW

When the words "Are You Saved?" appeared on my television screen, on a recent Sunday evening, I was rather startled. Surely *Meeting Point* was not staging an old time, evangelistic appeal to its listeners? The announcer promptly dispelled the notion. The question televised had little significance for most people today, he said, and, after more to the same effect, he proposed to introduce several persons well qualified to explain its meaning.

As one with some experience of the time when "Are you saved?" was a far more familiar interrogation than now, and was therefore perfectly clear as to its significance, I was very interested. I wanted to hear just how these gentlemen of differing denominations would deal with the question. I wanted to hear how far from the meaning which they knew to be the true one, they would go. I wondered if any of them would be honest on the subject.

At the end of *Meeting Point* my wonder was that those Christian spokesmen could have been so hypocritical. Their efforts to explain what we were to be saved from were remarkable examples of evasiveness. We were to be saved from the evils attendant upon a materialistic outlook; from our natural miseries; from the mental punishments which afflict those void of the grace bestowed by the Christian way of life; from sin. Nothing about hell and eternal pain. When I was young, and not so young, the penalties mentioned by the panellists were but a prelude to a hereafter in a fiery pit. By the mercy of God, through the atoning blood of Christ, repentant humanity was saved from everlasting burning. Have the Churches repudiated that doctrine? They have not. Hell is rarely, if ever, mentioned nowadays from a Protestant pulpit, and far less than formerly from the Catholic, but little children are still taught it by the Roman Church, and it is allowed to be believed in by other Christian bodies.

Many Protestant ministers still believe in a literal hell, and in the doctrine of salvation through Jesus from its physical agonies. And what priest of Rome disbelieves in hell's reality? A booklet written by a Catholic clergyman on the terrible sufferings of the damned was shortly

ago in circulation. Yet the Roman Catholic priest in *Meeting Point* of December 6th avoided all reference to the place of everlasting torture, in explaining what was intended to be understood by the question "Are you saved?"

I would have liked the opportunity of asking the pious panellists "Did God's supposed Son get himself crucified to save humanity from states of mind?" and "Was he acclaimed Saviour of the World on that account?" Of course, they were able to get away with their hypocritical show unchallenged, and very many of their vast audience no doubt accepted their explanations as satisfactory, especially those who have not got round to disbelief in God and heaven, but to whom hell is a foolish, old fashioned notion. In putting forward a mental hell as the punishment indicated by the question, the panellists were reflecting their Churches' policy of alignment with modern opinion on the subject. They deliberately misrepresented what they and anyone conversant with Christian doctrine knew to be the true meaning behind the words "Are you saved?"

To admit the reality of hell would be to provoke ridicule; to deny it would make God's salvation plan meaningless and deprive Christ of his title to Saviour of Mankind. This Christmas his birth was commemorated as that of humanity's Redeemer. The joyous bells rang out on Christmas Eve in eulogy of the Holy Babe born to save Mankind from what?—states of mind?

FOLLOW WHICH LEADER?

To be like Jesus meek and mild
(Tell atheists to go to hell . . .)
And suffer every little child
(But brandish the sword at them as well),
Praise God and love and fealty
(Let reason and beauty die in shame)
And while you bless the family
Divide and break it in God's name
So, in a pious paradox,
Attempt His way of life to follow
Or better still prepare for shocks
And praise him as you praise Apollo.

K.M.

Early English Copernicans

By F. A. RIDLEY

BEYOND any doubt, one of the major scientific turning points in human civilisation, was represented by what has been aptly termed the Copernican revolution. Not only did the heliocentric theory entirely revolutionise the science of astronomy, it perhaps influenced even more decisively and profoundly revolutionised human philosophical thought, and in particular the traditional religious concepts originally derived from within the perspectives of a geocentric universe.

Copernicus died in 1543, almost simultaneously with the publication of his masterpiece, *The Revolution of the Heavenly Worlds*. The work was dedicated to Pope Paul III, a Renaissance pope of dubious orthodoxy, and it did not incur any immediate clerical censure from Rome, though Luther sharply condemned it. This was perhaps due to a dishonest preface appended posthumously by its first editor, a Lutheran theologian named Osiander, which relegated Copernicus's heliocentric theory to the status of a mere hypothetical speculation. This was certainly not the view of Copernicus himself or of his more unequivocal followers.

For the next 66 years (1543-1609) the period between the initial publication of his system to Galileo's discovery of the telescope in 1609—which soon put the heliocentric astronomy on an unassailable foundation—controversy raged fiercely around the new scientific hypothesis. In the Catholic lands of the Counter-Reformation, the fear of the Inquisition which burned at the stake the most famous Copernican of his time, Giordano Bruno (1600)* and was subsequently to condemn Galileo (1616 *et seq.*), the controversy attracted was more or less forced underground, but in Protestant lands, where freer intellectual conditions existed, the heliocentric theory became the subject of an animated controversy and attracted influential adherents even before Galileo's empirical discoveries put the whole matter into an entirely new and radically different perspective.

An early centre of Copernican propaganda was Elizabethan England, where English Renaissance was represented by a galaxy of speculative, as well as literary geniuses. It will suffice here to recall such illustrious (and unorthodox) names as Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh and Christopher Marlowe. Italian fugitives like Bruno (who resided for some time at Oxford) rigorously criticised the pre-Renaissance scholastic theories still in vogue. But the great Polish astronomer also had his English disciples in influential scientific circles.

In a pamphlet published here a few years ago, a modern countryman of Copernicus, Mr. Henryk Huckharzyk, supplied us with some most informative details about these early English disciples of Copernicus. The first mention of Copernicus's *magnum opus* in England is to be found in 1566 in the catalogue of the library of Sir Thomas Smith, the first Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge, who had travelled on the Continent between 1540 and 1543 and, no doubt, obtained his copy there. It seems clear that the great book soon attracted attention in learned circles. For 13 years after Professor Smith's return, there appeared a book entitled *The Castle of Knowledge*, the author of which, a well-known scholar of

* According to a recent publication, Bruno was not actually condemned on account of his heliocentric advocacy, but rather because of pantheistic speculations inimical to Christian doctrines that he derived from it. But the affair Bruno certainly did Copernican astronomy no good in Rome.

the day named Robert Recorde, defended the new theory in a spirited dialogue, in the course of which he affirmed that "Copernicus, a man of great learning, of much experience and of wonderful diligence in observation", had revived the heliocentric theory of Aristarchus of Samoa, a classical Greek astronomer (3rd century BC) who had propounded the theory that the sun, not the earth, was the centre of the universe.

Recorde, however, declined to enlarge on the subject—perhaps for fear of the Marian Catholic persecution then at its zenith in 1536. A few years later when the more liberal Protestant regime of Elizabeth had succeeded Bloody Mary, several pro-Copernican books appeared, one of them by the celebrated Sir John Dee, better remembered now as one of the more famous English professors of the dubious "royal art" of astrology, but also (as our Polish author reminds us) an astronomer and geographer. Even the great astronomer Kepler, dabbled in astrology.

The greatest of the early English Copernicans was, however, Thomas Digges (1546-1595). Digges, also a leading contemporary mathematician and astronomer, translated Copernicus, besides issuing a major work of Copernican astronomical theory entitled, *A Perfect Description of the Celestial Orbs, according to the most ancient doctrines of the Pythagoreans lately reissued by Copernicus and by Geometrical Demonstration Approved*. Digges, however, was not an orthodox Copernican. For he outspokenly maintained the infinity of the universe, a problem which Copernicus had prudently (perhaps for fear of ecclesiastical censure) left open for future philosophical research. Moreover, whilst Copernicus appears to have regarded the sun as the centre not only of the solar system but of the entire universe also, Digges boldly proclaimed: "This orb of stars fixed infinitely up extendith in altitude spherically and therefore immovable, the palace of felicity garnished with perpetual shining glorious lights innumerable, far excelling our sun in both quantity and quality". It may be relevantly added that modern telescopic (and radio) astronomy has confirmed this brilliant speculation of Thomas Digges.

Though Digges was the most original of the English Elizabethan Copernicans, he was not the best known, nor a major scientific figure in his time. These distinctions must be reserved for William Gilbert, the discoverer of magnetism and physician to Queen Elizabeth I. In his *De Magnete* (1606), Gilbert earned the special praise of Galileo.

Perhaps the most intriguing as well as most unexpected advocacy of Copernican astronomy in Elizabethan England, occurred however in a most unlikely quarter and is not mentioned by our Polish authority. This occurs in *The Man in the Moon*, probably the first science fiction story in English literature, written (from internal evidence) about 1600 but published posthumously in 1638 by Francis Godwin, an Anglican clergyman who eventually became Bishop of Hereford (and grandfather of Dean Swift).

Godwin's Spanish hero flies to the moon in a chariot drawn by geese (!), where he finds everything larger than life and even duller (why are literary Utopias always so deadly dull?) Perhaps to enliven the monotony of the lunar voyage, the author suddenly introduces a vigorous argument in favour of the astronomy of Copernicus—then presumably little known in Anglican clerical circles,

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This Believing World

Those exciting Sundays when religion was so entrancingly put over on TV, appear to have vanished more or less completely. At all events, on ITV it continues its heavenly mission generally after 11 p.m. for five minutes or so, and it does not appear even then to do much harm. We get mostly a parson or priest answering questions put by out-and-out believers, "but . . .". On the programmes we have heard most of the questions seemed utterly irrelevant and childish.

★

One true believer and honest doubter actually asked why the Churches never "did anything", and when asked what did he suggest, he became as dumb as the gentleman described in Isaiah 53, 7. In actual fact, any "good" the Churches did or do is secularistic. What else? To feed the hungry and help the sick—what is that but secularism? Or to put it another way—of what use is belief in Jesus or a copy of the Bible to a man dying of hunger, or of an illness requiring medical attention?

★

Mr. Randolph Churchill has met Mrs. Dixon, who "prophe- sied" the murder of President Kennedy. Writing to the London *Evening Standard*, he described her as a "remark- able" woman. Anybody who could get such remarkable publicity all over the world certainly must be remarkable. Though in fairness to Mr. Churchill, he claims he had never heard of her prior to their meeting. In any case he insists that Mrs. Dixon never "prophesies", she only "sees". If this is true, it is rather strange she never saw the assassin.

★

However, Mrs. Dixon told Mr. Churchill that early in 1965 he "would receive a proposition", and that "1965 would be very favourable" for his fortunes. As the eldest son of a famous and very wealthy father over 90 years old, Mrs. Dixon no doubt did "see" something which does not require a "seer" at all. We ourselves prophesy that during 1965 there will be lots more trouble in the USA over the negro problem, and probably in Africa as well. Only we won't get any credit for our remarkable prophecies.

★

Just think of it the Rev. I. Roose-Francis of Bourne- mouth wants to abolish the Mothers' Union! That holy and outrageous group of true Christian women—perhaps the only ones in the Church of England—who oppose above everything else that hellish doctrine of divorce. Every mother in the Union must be grateful that their Institution has so valiantly fought for Jesus, his teachings, and above all his miracles, hell, and heaven. And a vicar wants to abolish it! Whatever is the matter with the Church—or is it with its parsons? Isn't there a scrap of unity left anywhere in it?

★

We are glad to see that Dr. J. C. Heenan has no illusions about the decline of belief in this country. "Most people" he declared (*News of the World*, December 12th, 1964) "practise no religion because no one has ever taught them the true facts about the Faith". Now if people believe very little about "the Faith", it is not because they have never been taught "the true facts" about it.

★

The real reason why so many people these days refuse to worship or go to church or bother at all with Christianity is that they have found it out. All its teachings about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as well as about its hosts of miracles, devils, and angels, are simply silly. And not all the Dr. Heenans in the world could prove otherwise.

Swedish Moral Rearmers at Sheffield

"I HOPE that the British Church and people will not allow themselves to become the voice of atheism in a crumbling modern world" said a Swedish Moral Rearmer at a meet- ing in Sheffield on January 2nd. Dr. F. Richter, a nose and throat specialist (whose wife is a niece of the late Dag Hammerskjöld) was deploring a visit to Sweden by the Bishop of Woolwich, and the publication of *Honest to God* in Swedish translation. Dr. Robinson should stay in his diocese "until he finds some faith in God", said Dr. Richter (*The Yorkshire Post*, 4/1/65). "We do not expect a British bishop to go to Scandinavia and spread moral confusion". That Dr. Robinson might spread con- fusion, we can well believe, but it would be theological not moral. But we do not expect a Moral Rearmer to make the distinction.

Another Swedish speaker at the MRA meeting, Sten Westling, a tutor at a teachers' training college, condem- ned the Swedish Parliament's threat "to remove the Chris- tian basis of education." Two million people had signed a demand to stop this move, he said, and parents and teachers should be watchful that it was not "slipped through Parliament."

EARLY ENGLISH COPERNICANS

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but so much superior to the traditional views of Ptolemy and Aristotle. It certainly seems surprising that an Eliza- bethan cleric, particularly one destined to hold high office in his church should have held Copernican views as early as about 1600. It was perhaps for this reason that its author did not publish his pioneer work of science fiction in his own life time.

It would seem to be clear from the above that, far from being the obscure scientific heresy that it is so often depicted as being before Galileo, the heliocentric theory was already widely accepted by eminent scientists in the Protestant atmosphere of Elizabethan England, where freedom of speculation evidently existed to a much greater extent than upon the Continent. Copernican astronomy was already a major intellectual force, even before Galileo turned his glasses towards the sky on that epoch-making night in 1609 and then finally deposed the earth from its immemorially unique pre-eminence as the centre of the universe.

Urgent Appeal

We feel your attention should be drawn to a trial due to take place in Madrid this month arising out of an appeal made to the Supreme Tribunal by defence lawyers representing three Spanish workers against sentences meted out against them by the Tribunal of Public Order on August 4th, 1964.

Francisco Calle, José Cases and Mariano Pascual were arrested at the beginning of 1964 and after trial were condemned to sentences of 6 years 4 months, 5 years and 3 years 3 months respectively with fines ranging from 25,000 to 100,000 pesetas.

We are therefore calling upon world democratic public opinion, on working class trade union organisations, and on all organisa- tions and individuals who defend liberty and justice, to send telegrams, letters of protest, and petitions for their release on behalf of these men to the Minister of Justice, Sr. Iturmendi and to the President of the Supreme Tribunal of Madrid, Spain.

What were the "crimes" of these three men? The struggle for the right to have working class trade unions, for the right to strike and for the freedom to hold meetings and for freedom of the press, as recognised by the Charter of Human Rights approved by the United Nations in San Francisco, which is now trampled on by the Franco regime.

We would like to assure all those who respond to our appeal for the release of these three men that this pressing call comes to them direct from Spain.

A. ROA, Secretary,
National Confederation of Labour of Spain in Exile

THE FREETHINKER

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Telephone: HOP 2717

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mount).—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

British Humanist Association (13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8.), Friday, January 15th, 7 p.m.: PATRICK and ELIZABETH VAN RENSBURG, "The Swaneng Hill School".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 17th, 6.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE and Rev. BILL MATTHEWS, "Christian Unity".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, January 17th, 7.30 p.m.: BRUCE SINCLAIR, "Moscow".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.), Sunday, January 17th, 11 a.m.: Dr. E. SEELEY, "Developments in Higher Education".

Tuesday, January 19th, 7.30 p.m.: Two British Humanist Association Counsellors, "Humanist Counselling".

Notes and News

MUCH was made of the Pope's recent gift of his jewelled tiara to the world's poor. It has now turned up in New York, apparently having been given to Cardinal Spellman as a thanks offering for the sums raised by American Catholic Relief Services, and will be exhibited throughout the United States before finally being placed in a shrine of the Immaculate Conception at Washington. Roy Shaw, of the University of Keele, complained to the *Catholic Herald* (1/1/65) that "Surely the original intention was that the crown should be sold and the money given to the poor, and not be merely transferred from one of the Church's pockets to another". Certainly the Pope's gesture was reported as Mr. Shaw indicated; it now turns out to have been somewhat empty—a publicity stunt, in fact. But the *Catholic Herald* had its reply. "Objections to exhibiting the tiara must", it said, "be weighed against the good which will be achieved. Cardinal Spellman's motive is to encourage in US Catholics a feeling of Christian brotherhood for their fellow men and to appeal to their generosity".

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THE *Herald* made no reply to another letter in its same

issue. Cyril G. Wilde of Pinner, Middlesex, pointed out that whereas Catholics represent only about 10 per cent of the population of this country, "their percentage of convicted criminals is apparently much higher". Moreover as the paper itself had reported on December 4th, nearly half the occupants of the only existing rehabilitation centres for alcoholics are Catholic. What is the reason for this lamentable state of affairs?" Mr. Wilde asked—and hoped that "some knowledgeable persons" would enlighten him in the columns of the *Catholic Herald*.

★

MRS. Brenda Wolfe of Wigan, Lancashire, thinks that the clergy should stay celibate, that "no decent, right-minded man ought to have the effrontery to ask any woman to take on such a lousy job" as being a parson's wife. "Never marry a cleric", Mrs. Wolfe warns in the January issue of the Anglican monthly *Prism* and, as the wife of a parish priest, her opinion has weight. Accompanying her husband to "tough parishes" and "mucking in" with the rest of the community doesn't worry her. The trouble is being "almost always second-best . . . almost like being the favoured mistress of a married man." Then there are the Mothers' Union and sales of work. "Serving the Church ought not to mean raising money for a carpet down the aisle—but it so often does." At 21, Mrs. Wolfe had "high-minded visions of entering with my husband into the great work of converting the world"; now, at 28, she is "surrounded by four children, tied to the house, expected to turn up at every cat-hanging, and feeling like a widow, as my husband is always on duty." A woman has a right to share in her husband's life, she says, but "For a clergy wife, it is an occasional privilege."

★

JUST over seven years ago, another clergyman's wife, Mrs. Ruth Saxon, was worried about the Mothers' Union, and decided with her husband to found an alternative organisation, the Churchwomen's Guild. The Guild admits single and divorced women—who are both barred by the Mothers' Union—and has been blessed by the Bishop of Manchester. But Mrs. Saxon doesn't see the two bodies as rivals. "On the contrary", she says, "we enrol members through the Guild for the Union" (*The Sunday Times*, 3/1/65).

★

THE Rev. I. Roose-Francis, vicar of the Church of Holy Epiphany, Bournemouth, might not thank Mrs. Saxon for enrolling women for the Union, which he regards as "useless, archaic and time-wasting", and "a divisive influence in family worship." The Mothers' Union central secretary, Mrs. Llewellyn-Davies, contested the vicar's words, "We are neither a divisive element nor a power bloc", she said (*The Sunday Times* 3/1/65). "We are an organisation of married women who believe in Christian family life based on the Church's teaching that marriage is a lifelong partnership".

★

THE November issue of the *American Rationalist* paid fitting tribute to the late Joseph McCabe, who was born on November 11th, 1872, and whose writings were described by William J. Fielding as "so extensive—one might well say encyclopedic". McCabe had, said Mr. Fielding, the intellectual equipment of a social and biological scientist and historian and "in addition had the unique, if painful, experience and background of several years in monastery life to give validity to his strictures on the stultifying results and erosive evils of ecclesiasticism".

The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews

By SOLOMON ZEITLIN

(Continued from page 14)

IN presenting historical facts an impartial historian must deal with all the sources available and also take notice of the different versions of the text found in manuscripts. As has been noted, different accounts are given about the Pharisees and the high priests in connection with the death of Jesus. We have noted that the words "to death" in the text are not found in some manuscripts. It is axiomatic that no Jew was ever entrusted with the copying of the manuscripts of the Gospels. It was done by pious, devout Christians, but nevertheless we find different versions.

A historian must inquire into the motive that led to the commission of an act. What motive did the Pharisees and the high priest have to plot to put Jesus to death? According to the Gospels it was the charge of blasphemy. When Jesus was arrested and brought before the high priest, he was asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" To this Jesus answered, "I am and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power (God) and coming in the clouds of heaven."¹⁸ According to the Gospels, when the high priest heard this he rent his clothes and turned to the members of the council with these words, "Ye have heard the blasphemy, what think ye?"¹⁹ The members of the council answered that Jesus was liable to death. According to the Judaeans law a person was liable to death only when he cursed God with the name of God, "cursing God by name of God."²⁰ Jesus did not curse God.

Jesus's declaration that he would sit on "the right hand of Power (God)," cannot be considered blasphemy nor false prophecy. Many pious Jews looked forward to the future world where they would sit in the company of God and enjoy the Divine Glory.²¹

If we should grant, which I do not, that Jesus was tried as a religious offender why was he brought before Pilate? The Judaeans had the authority to inflict capital punishment on one who had transgressed religious laws. We know this not only from tannaitic literature but also from Josephus.²² If Jesus was arrested for blasphemy or for any other religious offence why did a Roman cohort come to arrest him?²³ What had the Roman authorities to do with the arrest of a man who had committed a religious sin against Judaism?

Jesus was arrested and put to death as a rebel against Rome and was crucified as the king of the Judaeans. A serious historian can come to only one conclusion—the religious leaders of the Judaeans had no part in the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus. The early leaders of the church, in order to substantiate the truth of Christianity, placed the onus of the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus upon the leaders of the Jews. This was the purpose of Christian theology. It must be emphasised that the Apostolic Fathers did not make the accusation of the crucifixion against the Jews. In all of their disputations against Judaism they did not accuse the Jews of the crucifixion of Jesus. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Trallians in giving the history of Jesus wrote that he was of the family of David and "was persecuted under Pontius Pilate."²⁴

Summing up, we must assert that the accusation against the Jews of the crucifixion of Jesus is theological not historical. Historically the religious leaders of the Jews had no part in it. The following statement by Daane is false: "A Jewish denial of history is, as any denial of

history, in the long run futile. There is no justification for a denial of the recorded history of Christ's death, for the authenticity of the records is not doubted by responsible scholarship." Daane wrote as a medieval theologian, not as a historian. Responsible scholarship must deal objectively with the records. In doing so I must say, as a historian, that the verdict is—for the Jews not guilty.

It is regrettable that the libel against the Jews, an innocent people, for the crucifixion of Jesus is reiterated again and again not only in theological writings but also in the secular. In *Life*, March 27th, 1964, wherein appeared a photo essay on "The Greatest Story Ever Told" the caption reads, "While the Sanhedrin, the governing council of rabbis, was plotting his death, Jesus went into the city with his apostles for Passover." I pointed out in a letter to *Life* that in the New Testament it is never mentioned that there was a *council of rabbis* and that the caption is a distortion of historical fact, unjust to the spiritual leaders of a people. This letter was not published and I received the stereotyped reply that it could not be included due to space limitations. In the April 17th issue there was a note, "Some historians believe that there were two Sanhedrins or councils, and the one that tried Jesus was the state council, not the religious council of rabbis." It was stated that *Life's* caption of March 27th was based on the New Testament. My contention in the letter was that *Life's* caption of March 27th is not based on the New Testament since there is no mention in it of a *council of rabbis*.

Daane further states, "It was the chief priests and elders who moved among the rabble on the night²⁵ of Jesus's trial inciting them to cry 'Crucify him' Matt. 27: 30 (read 27: 20) . . . All this is not a fabric of prejudice against the Jews but historical record."

Let us now examine historical records. (I wish to emphasise again in this essay that I am not dealing with any theological problems or hypotheses but am analysing the records as a historian.) Pilate, according to the Gospels, sought to take advantage of the custom prevalent in Judaea of releasing a prisoner for the Passover Festival. He asked the Judaeans whether they wanted Barabbas, who was a robber, to be released or Jesus. According to Matthew 27. 20 "But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus." The Evangelist states further, "Pilate said unto them: What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all said unto him: Let him be crucified." According to Mark 15. 9, "Pilate answered them saying: Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Judaeans? . . . But the chief priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them: What will ye then that I shall do (unto him) whom ye call King of the Judaeans? And they cried out again: Crucify him." In Luke 23. 1-3 there is the following account, "And the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying: We found him perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar saying that he himself is annointed king. And Pilate asked him saying: Art thou king of the Judaeans? And he answered him and said: Thou sayest it." According to John 18. 28-40 we have the following "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment and it was early . . . But you have a custom that I shall release

unto you one at the Passover: Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Judaeans? Then cried they all again saying: Not this man but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."

According to Matthew the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude to ask for the release of Barabbas and Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, who is called Christ. Mark, on the other hand, said that Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, the King of the Judaeans. Luke relates that the accusation against Jesus was that he was a rebel against Caesar and prevented the people from paying tribute to Rome. In this Gospel there is no mention that the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to ask the release of Barabbas. John records that Pilate asked the people whether he should release Jesus, the King of the Judaeans or Barabbas. Again we do not find any mention of persuasion. Luke and John do not speak of the elders in connection with the cry crucify him. According to John the chief priests and the servants said crucify, crucify him.²⁶

As we know, Pilate was treacherous and cunning. The high priest, a hireling of the Roman authorities had sufficient reason to fear a trap, lest Pilate might accuse him later of having had a share in the conspiracy against Rome. The apprehension of the high priests was very strong. They were fearful that Pilate was scheming to involve them as accomplices of Jesus in his claim to be King of the Judaeans. When Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" the chief priests protested, "We have no king but Caesar." According to John, when Pilate wrote the *titulus* "the King of the Judaeans" the high priests protested and asked him not to write "the King of the Judaeans but that he (Jesus) said 'I am king of the Judaeans'".²⁷ The high priests feared the inscription on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Judaeans," because Pilate might use it as a weapon to punish them.

A historian in examining historical records must pierce through all the documents without prejudice. The records which we have presented do not agree. There are discrepancies and additions. From the accounts in the four Gospels we must conclude that the spiritual leaders of the Judaeans had no part in the crucifixion of Jesus. The high priests were the puppets of Rome and acted as quislings. An impartial historian would not accuse the Norwegian people of atrocities committed by Quisling in delivering Norwegian patriots to the Nazis.

Many Judaeans who were present at the trial were grieved when Jesus was condemned to death. When he was led to be crucified, Luke tells us, "There followed him a great company of people and of women which also bewailed and lamented him."²⁸ Indeed many Judaeans were distressed on seeing Jesus led to death.

(To be concluded)

18. Mark 14. 61-62; Matt. 26. 63-64; Luke 22. 69.

19. Ibid.

20. Cf. M. Sanh. 7. 5.

21. See Psalms 110. 1. A Psalm of David Adonai said unto my lord. Sit thou at my right hand.

22. See note 6.

23. Cf. John 18. 12.

24. 9.

25. The Gospels have in the morning.

26. 19. 6.

27. 19. 21-22.

28. Luke 23. 27.

In Praise of Mary Kingsley

PROBABLY there would be no trouble in Africa today if the English Government had listened to the sensible recommendations of Mary Kingsley. Dorothy Middleton tells the story in her instructive *Victorian Lady Travellers* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25s.). In stout Victorian skirts and prim head-dress, Mary voyaged in Africa. Faced with the cannibal Fans, she realised "We each recognised that we belonged to that same section of the human race with whom it is better to drink than to fight". She was gallant and shockingly tough.

Born in 1862, she grew up to find that she had to support her own feckless family by editing *The English Mechanic*. Her hobbies during this period were rearing gamecocks and reading anything she could lay hands on. In 1892, her parents died within a few weeks of one another, and Mary set out for Africa. On her first expedition, she spent a night talking to a witch doctor who wanted her opinion about a patient, she was able to help, for she had been brought up an agnostic. She ate the most terrible food and learnt to navigate a boat.

On her second expedition she explored mangrove swamps where crocodiles endeavoured to improve their acquaintance. She walked through forests and had a frill of leeches round her neck like an astrakan collar. No peril could paralyse her inquiring mind. She speaks in her books of a herd of hippos strolling towards her with "all the flowing grace of Pantehnicon vans in motion". She fell crashing onto a game pit-trap with terrible spikes. One of her native boys looked down at her and asked, "You kill?" "Not much", she replied. Once, when she slept under a tree, she was puzzled by a strange smell. She located some grisly human remains hanging in a bag overhead. She calmly tipped these into her hat "for fear of losing anything of value to research workers."

And what had this splendid woman to tell the people in England when she returned to her home? She assured them that missionaries did more harm than good by destroying the restraints of the African's ancient religion, and roundly asserted that gin was better for the natives than palm wine, and she held that the traders who really understood the people should take over all responsibilities of administration.

She died of enteric fever after having volunteered to nurse Boer prisoners in the South African War. "I never struck such a rocky bit of the valley of the Shadow of Death in all my days", she observed before she succumbed.

Her amazing exploits and her vigorous expression of novel opinions make her a real heroine for freethinkers.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

"Censorship"

FREETHINKERS, who have suffered so often from censorship, cannot avoid an interest in a new journal which exists solely to review the world censorship position. Professional censors, and the religious or political pressure-groups which are their amateur counterpart, are noted more for their indiscriminate enthusiasm (and sometimes cowardice under pressure) than for their good taste—or good sense.

The first issue of the quarterly *Censorship* (Autumn 1964, 2s. 6d.) reveals the manifestations of prejudice in several different countries, but exposes the sameness of the authoritarian or uncultured mind in politically diverse societies.

The positions in Britain, Australia, France, East Germany, West Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, the Soviet Union, the USA, South Africa and Yugoslavia are all subjected to searching analyses, and many of their absurdities are exposed.

It is noteworthy that some contributors—obviously writing from the "inside"—are unable to give their names. As one contributor states, "the miracle is that—writers continue to write and that—editors continue to fight" and that "despite all negative

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and positive controls, independent, serious work continues to appear . . . Perhaps the explanation of the miracle is simple; perhaps people whose vocation is writing creatively are constitutionally more intelligent than people whose vocation is control and censorship." We can, I think, wholeheartedly agree with this observation.

Supporters of the extreme Right or Left are unlikely to find this journal praiseworthy as a whole, although they will find it (like the curate's egg) good in parts, particularly when it is attacking their respective antagonists on the opposite wing. Those with libertarian inclinations will, however, welcome it. *Censorship* is published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and is edited by M. Mindin, with Professor Richard Hoggart (Britain), Daniel Bell (USA), Ignazio Silone (Italy), Armand Gaspard (Switzerland) and Anthony Hartley (Britain) as Advisory Editors. It can be obtained (2s. 6d. per copy or 10/- per annum) from Summit House, 1-2 Langham Place, London, W.1.

D.S.

CORRESPONDENCE

ATHEISTS AND AGNOSTICS

The perpetually recurring feud between atheists and agnostics, while it may add spice to life, is somewhat unnecessary and ridiculous. Granting that the term "agnostic" may have been coined to avoid the persecution by certain "love-one-another" Christians it may also be claimed that certain atheists like to retain their title as proof of their courage, militancy, and willingness to be martyrs for the "Cause". Of course, Christians have no right to take a perfectly legitimate term like "atheist" and abuse and smear it—atheists may justly be indignant and refuse to be calumniated—but it seems to me that there is no need for friction between atheists and agnostics since the two terms are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary or supplementary.

Both believe that the world of science is the only world that exists on the grounds that there is no evidence (that can withstand criticism) of any supernatural "other" world. Now it may be that such other world(s) do exist, inhabited by gods, angels, devils, demons, goblins, fairies, and whatever else one likes to imagine; but there are no grounds for believing so. Such a supernatural realm must always be unknowable insofar as it remains supernatural, for as soon as anything is truly known about it then it becomes part of the "natural" world. Thus, when the agnostic claims that nothing is known of a God or gods and the atheist says that he does not believe in the existence of a God or gods, then they are both saying the same thing—although possibly from different viewpoints. But if the agnostic denies

that nothing can be known of the supernatural, and if the atheist states that a God or gods do not exist, then they are both adopting dogmatic and untenable positions.

There is a different approach to this subject, another term that may be used that is also supplementary, and it is the description used by Professor Sidney Hook to describe himself as ". . . a still unredeemed, sceptical God-seeker." (p. 115 *The Quest for Being* St. Martin's Press, NY.) While it may be prudent to use such an expression in the Land of Liberty it has its merits in that it implies the open mind without the alleged wool-gathering of the agnostic or the alleged dogmatism of the atheist.

But one would think that atheism, etc., etc., was a complete Way of Life in itself instead of just a conclusion to one of the many problems of philosophy. No doubt the "god-ridden" Christian might think so, but the average modern pagan is too interested in other things. Christians tend to regard the humanists and others as "the fox that lost its tail", but we may just as easily regard the Christians as foxes afflicted with warts.

Whenever the term "god" is used it should be prefaced by "Christian" or "Muslim" so that its origin is clear. The modern "God" is actually the "Christian god", a tin-pot tribal deity blown-up by a fluke of history, imposed on Western civilisation, and attenuated by philosophers to its modern form.

D. L. HUMPHRIES.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

I am dismayed and disappointed that even THE FREETHINKER docilely observes convention and anachronistic tradition by keeping up with the face of "Christmas", and wishes its readers the hypocritical and meaningless compliments of the season.

Week in week out we read of the activities of religionists in your columns, we read scathing comments on all aspects of their beliefs and then on *their* key day you meekly bow the subservient knee to their outrageous and farcical festivity. Even if you contend that the season was originally a "pagan" celebration, this does not carry much weight, and anyway, why continue slavishly observing primitive rites based on the winter solstice in this age of progress and development?

It is an established fact that just as Christianity superimposed its feasts on primitive observances, so monopoly capital takes over Christian feasts for its own purposes of profit and exploitation. Without the twin supports of Christianity and Capital "Christians" would really be written off. And as long as you wretchedly pay homage to this spurious season of "peace and goodwill" the religionists will continue to make capital from it.

B. J. CLIFTON.

[Originally *Pagan, Christmas has, we suggest—and as Christians bemoan—been secularised—Ed.*]

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