

# The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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His Holiness Pope Paul VI graciously accepts the invitation to take his turn as world peace-maker. Is this, one wonders, an act of penance or of patronage? Has he undertaken the trip to New York as the august Representative of the Prince of Peace—or is this an inverted Canossa in expiation of long-term papal policies largely responsible for the mess the world is in?

Admittedly the patronising attitude was more in evidence on the last occasion of world showmanship—the jaunt to India in person. The spectacle of Great White Father moving with majestic pity among the swarms of under-privileged darker brethren was touching indeed, and the noble largesse flung to them from the papal coffers brought a lump to one's throat. At the same time one couldn't help reflecting on that obstinate determination to keep the swarms swarming, which somewhat lessens the dramatic impact of Great White Father as a fervent Indophile.

Maybe he is just too innocent to see the connection between swarms and starvation, exploding populations and exploding bombs. From this rarefied sphere of spiritual awareness he may even perceive a Mighty Purpose where we earthgrubbers merely see one hell of a mess. But with all due reverence for whatever goes on beneath the white skull-cap and the triple tiara, the overall picture of Paul's journeyings up-to-date would seem to bear the same sort of sainted futility that bored us to death—or goaded us to irritation—in the scripture classes of our youth.

## Auschwitz

No, there was nothing of penance—or remorse—in the trip to India. Nothing that showed, anyway. It's possible, of course, that underneath the papal paraphernalia there may throb the heart of a real human being. Paul's private thoughts and emotions may differ from Peter's. But this we are not permitted to know. Only the papal confessor could probe behind the persona. The Headman's mask must never come off: the show must go on.

But—this present venture into the scrum of reality? One can jeer at its futility or sneer at its hypocrisy, resent U Thant's well-meant gesture or shrug it aside with contempt. But papal displays have subliminal effects that have to be reckoned with, like those of the "telly" or any other advertising colossus. Apart from mob-hysteria of the fawning faithful, a phenomenon, alas, that is always with us, one can visualise deeper cracks in the contacted surfaces of humanity. Even chasms.

Before the benign advance of the Apostle of Peace, what depths of bitterness may be uncovered in certain memories? Those, for instance, that are stamped indelibly with images of dear ones torn from their homes, driven to death-camps, herded to the gas-chambers and crematorium ovens? With the knowledge evermore behind the memory, that this Grand Guignol of human agony was first set in motion by a Roman Catholic prelate, a chosen and trusted representative of the Papacy. Could such minds ever forget

that it was Mgr. Tiso, created Chief of the Slovak State in 1939, who sent the first-ever batch of Jews to Auschwitz? This signal honour of being "sent" by the Church did not cover these poor victims with the Church's cloak of mercy. "In 1941, at Auschwitz, the first contingent of Jews arrived from Slovakia and High Silesia, and those who were not capable of working were immediately sent to the gas-chambers in one of the rooms of the building which housed the crematorial ovens".<sup>1</sup>

Other memories of this holy Apostle of Auschwitz may crowd in, re-opening old wounds. His enjoyment of the favour, esteem and support of Pope Pius XII, whose dream (the world's nightmare) he so ardently shared: the inimit-

able words in which he expressed the reality at the heart of the dream: "Catholicism and Nazism have much in common, and they work hand in hand to reform the world".<sup>2</sup> The voice of Radio Vatican in June 1940: "The declaration of Mgr. Tiso, asserting his intention to set up Slovakia according to a Christian plan, is greatly appreciated by the Holy See"<sup>3</sup>—the holy Christian plan which included sending Protestants as well as Jews to the death-camps. And any grim consolation in the thought that this first supplier to the ovens of Auschwitz paid for his dream at the end of a rope in 1946, must be tempered by the rankling reminder that he was one of the few, the preposterously few, whose ghastly crimes were not washed in the Blood of the Lamb, that is, concealed beneath the white robe of Peter.

## Sons of St. Francis

Other abysses may open in other memories: of kindred burned alive or hacked to death in their Orthodox churches; of forced "conversions" to the Roman faith by the tens of thousands, "conversions" which by no means always saved the wretched "converts" from a horrible fate. Of nightmare figures in monastic or priestly garments, inciting their flocks to murder, torture, loot and massacre, often themselves leading the most barbarous expeditions. There may be old parishioners who remember the fervent exhortations of the Franciscan Brother Ante Klaritch, in a sermon preached in July 1941: "You have not yet killed a sigle Serb. You are nothing but old women who should be wearing skirts! If you are not all armed, take an axe or sickle, and whenever you meet a Serb, cut his throat".<sup>4</sup>

Some may still conjure up the grotesque image of another Franciscan, Brother Augustino Cievola, who "to the great amazement of his fellow-citizens, was going about the streets, a revolver strapped to his habit, inviting the people to massacre the Orthodox Christians".<sup>5</sup> And someone somewhere may shudder to recall "the Franciscan Brother, Miroslav Filipovitch, who went so far as to accept the role of executioner in the concentration camp of Jase-novac".<sup>6</sup> The sons of the gentle Saint Francis were by no means the only members of the Church Militia so zealously involved in the bloodbath, but they do seem to have surpassed all their brethren of the Christian dovecot in the

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

## The Leopard in a New Suit

By PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM

black arts of sadism and hate.

There may be some who weep still for the massacre of their (non-Roman) priests and bishops; some whose smouldering anger may flame again into execration of that monstrous key-figure in the holocaust of blood and terror, the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. All the old buried wrath and anguish may surge again if the publicised peace-hunting Paul should, unwittingly, resurrect the ghost of the sly and sinister Stepinac. With all the Christian goodwill in the world it is hard to forget the papal plotter in his place of Zagreb, the centre of terrorist activities, basking in Vatican approval while his brother-in-Christ, the Orthodox Bishop of Zagreb, was beaten and tortured till he went mad; while his faithful Ustashis were adding to the lustre of the Church of Rome by dealing with such venerable schismatics as Bishop Platon, that octogenarian tortured in ways too horrible to imagine, before he was finished off with hatchet-blows and flung into the River Vrbanja. It is possible, too, that the ghosts of other monsters may rise again; that of Saritch, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sarajevo, for example, a member of the Ustashi movement since 1934, who exalted "the use of revolutionary methods in the service of truth, justice and honour", and declared that "it is foolish and unworthy of the disciples of Christ to think that the battle against evil could ever be conducted in a noble manner, with gloves on"—and who nobly implemented these lofty sentiments by permitting the torture and death of his brother-in-Christ, the Orthodox Bishop of Sarajevo, whose throat was slit like a pig's.

As His Present Holiness floats earthwards in his 'plane, like Christ descending from the clouds of heaven, material (possibly sordid) meditations may occupy the minds of some who are not dazzled by this miracle of Christly condensation. Quite irrelevantly, of course, they may find themselves pondering what would seem to be one of the more stupendous miracles of Mammon: the fantastic world of finance represented by this suave Envoy of the Prince of Peace. For no one knows — outside the secrets of the Vatican — what masses of treasure found their way into the papal coffers during those years of the savaging of Europe. The elimination of the rightful owners accomplished, almost the entire property of the Orthodox Church in Nazi territories was seized and taken over by the Roman Catholic authorities. The Vicar of Christ, of stronger metal than Judas and quite unafflicted with scruples, never made any fuss about betraying the innocent or accepting the price of blood. Indeed, *could* the enemies of Holy Church be called innocent? As for the Jews — guilty of the blood of Christ they were manifestly criminal. Their property as well as their persons could therefore be disposed of with perfect equanimity. Thus, at the fall of the Nazi régime, the fleeing criminals (the Christian ones) were able to deposit their loot in the safe keeping of Holy Mother Church, who thereafter acted as their Banker while remaining their loving Protector.

A macabre but fascinating speculation (if one is not emotionally involved) is to wonder just how many gold teeth, wedding-rings, children's bracelets and ear-rings, and other pathetic human relics, went to swell the account at the Vatican. In consolidated stock, of course.

This could suggest another line of thought as we gaze — possibly on the world "telly-screen"? — at the reverent bowing and scraping of officials at the airport reception.

There are some who were sickened by their first sight of the death-camps in all their unvarnished horror at the liberation, and who were angry still because so many of the monsters responsible were allowed to escape retribution. Some of us who did not see are angry too, and we are in no

doubt as to where the blame lies. "There are laws for the punishment of those who conceal wrong-doers and help them to escape the investigations of the police; and above all there are laws to prevent the association of such wrong-doers and the preparation of crimes. But the Pope is above the law."<sup>8</sup>

Yes, indeed. The Papacy obeys some mystical law of divine charity far removed from our rough ideas of human justice. It is this, no doubt, which shows mercy to the one lost sheep while tranquilly ignoring the ninety-and-nine — or shall we put it at fifty-seven million, the estimated total of all who perished by the Nazi régime? It is this, assuredly, which covers with the seamless robe of papal peace such Christian champions as Ante Pavelitch, the Croatian Führer, and enables them to flee from the cruelties of human justice to the comfort of well-earned retirement under divine protection. I hope I shall be forgiven for this one last dip into the lurid pages of Europe's bloodiest patch of history. It offers such a splendid vision of papal magnanimity — and perhaps a highlight on the rather curious tastes of Pius XII in particular.

Pavelitch (with two political murders to his credit before the mass-extirminations got going) was a special protégé of Pastor Angelicus, who frequently sent him blessings and kindly messages, honoured him with audiences, supported him in action and succoured him in defeat. And no wonder, for this stout-hearted Catholic assassin showed the most apostolic zeal in running his country on Christian lines, just as the Holy Pontiff ardently wished it to be. If his methods seem to us somewhat rough and ready, that is because we are outsiders: we cannot penetrate the dark inner core of the Catholic mystique.

The Transalpine writer Curzio Malaparte supplies us with this glimpse into a world beyond our ken. As war correspondent of the *Corriere della Sera* he was granted an interview with Pavelitch. "The Croatian people want to be governed by kindness," proclaimed their Führer. "As he spoke," continues Malaparte, "I noticed there was a wicker basket on the desk . . . the lid was raised, and one could see that the basket was filled with what appeared to be oysters. Ante Pavelitch . . . showing me the molluscs . . . a mass of gluey and gelatinous oysters . . . told me, smiling his lethargic smile, 'This is a gift from my faithful Ustashis: twenty kilogrammes of human eyes.'"<sup>9</sup>

More credible in darkest Africa than in Christian Europe? No doubt, but it was common practice among the fervent Roman Catholic Ustashis to gouge out their victims' eyes, "which they wore as garlands or carried in bags, to be given away as mementos." Did any of these strange jewels find their way into the Papal treasure? Surely such a gift from his beloved Ante would have honoured and delighted Pope Pius XII, surnamed by some "The Inquisitor". . . .

But all this was twenty odd years ago. Haven't we forgiven and forgotten? Pius XII, the unpunished war criminal, lies

In the shroud of crimson  
where the dead gods sleep —

and his successors — as yet — have come upon no Nazi-Fascist giants to harness with the Warriors of the Cross to the juggernaut of war.

The good Pope John, however, proved pretty zealous in maintaining the cold war, failing a hot one. Violent opposition was offered by the Vatican to the proposed summit conference between East and West, fixed for May 16th 1960. The horrible idea of Christians sitting at a table with Soviet atheists aroused the righteous wrath

(Concluded on page 326)

## Secularism and Glamour

By KIT MOUAT

ONE DEFINITION of "glamour" refers to the value of the wrapping being more than that of the contents. It is easy, however, to scoff at showy or elaborate wrappings without having any idea as to the worth of the contents and so unjustly belittle them both. I believe that glamour ("magic" or "enchantment" as the Oxford Dictionary defines it) is something we Secularists can ill afford to ignore. Its superficial magnetism is too strong; its potential nourishment for the human appetites too important.

"Heaven forbid" (to borrow an expression) that I should ever take seriously anything that Malcolm Muggeridge says, but in a recent review of a book about Bradlaugh he wrote: "Atheists tend to be more solemn, righteous and basically respectable than believers." If this time he is right, it is a grey summing-up and not one I would want as an epitaph. The image of a sort of Quaker-Puritanism is unlikely to appeal to the young of 1965 or indeed anyone with a strong desire for aesthetic satisfaction, be it educated or uneducated.

We hear a lot today about the new label "Humanist" and its inferiority to the old "Rationalist" or "Secularist", and I have already said that I would probably have remained forever unlabelled if "Humanist" had not been coined. I would prefer "Hellenist", but, not being a scholar, cannot claim it. "Epicurean" has always attracted me, but sounds masculine through and through. And so I call myself a "Humanist", qualified by "secularist" or "atheist" as others with more justification use "scientific". If anyone wants to try and prove that I am, as a result, more "religious" than the "Rationalists", so be it. In the meantime I consider the matter of glamour.

We may deplore all that is tawdry in the Roman Catholic trappings as far as the eye is concerned, but who can deny the "enchantment" of plain-song (or for that matter of a Russian Orthodox choir at its best)? We may dislike the triviality of Protestant hymn music and disapprove of the sentiments expressed, but who can remain unmoved by the sight of light shining through a medieval stained-glass window? Surely we no longer need be afraid of those who would try to prove that we have a hidden craving for a religious faith just because our ears and eyes can appreciate the "enchantment" that is sometimes part of religion? I for one can appreciate a well-designed chocolate box even though chocolates make me sick. Once you have seen the desperate poverty in some European cities, it is not hard to understand why the mass provides such a necessary ingredient in life for those who do not otherwise experience peace or beauty. We must get rid of the poverty, but I believe Secularists (who would also get rid of the faith) must be the first to realise that we also have to replace or provide beauty.

We have a much better message than any Christian or Jew, Muslim or Hindu, and this is primarily what we have to get across; but the world is getting uglier as populations increase, and far too many of us need to escape from the concrete jungles of cities or suburbs. If we are not careful, people will not even realise their need for beauty, as I believe they are mostly unaware today of their need for facts and truths instead of superstition. So long as the Churches provide the glamour, there will be people enough who do not care about the contents.

I was thinking along these lines while waiting for the curtain to go up on Marlene Dietrich; and then it did, and there she was, incredible in her absurdly exaggerated furs

and spangles, her blonde hair denying her grandmotherly status. She was even more enchanting than I had imagined from her films and records. With her reinforced-concrete voice she crooned the most trivial of songs and had her audience groping for their handkerchiefs. That's what we need, I thought. Marlene Dietrich in the freethought movement. My knowledge of German is slight, but her Berliner accent immediately reminded me of that splendid sense of humour and its Cockney irreverence. I remembered how as a student Marlene Dietrich had had to get out of her country in the thirties, and how she had been booed for her "treachery" on a recent return visit to West Germany.

And when I die  
Don't tell the preacher  
To sing of my glory or my fame . . . Just  
See what the boys in the back room will have . . .

she sang and the audience cheered. A man near me in the gallery was on his feet, drumming his heels and shouting. We joined in, and then Miss Dietrich was singing a love song. "I'll give you bluebirds . . ." or something equally square, shoddy and unmusical; but, she had explained, this was a love song for a child, and it immediately became charming. That's what we need, I thought, more love songs for children.

The songs from the *Blue Angel* (a film which for me was not made any less horrible by the famous legs) were cheered, and again Our Man in the Gallery was on his feet. This time Miss Dietrich seemed to spot him, for she waved back, a wide, uninhibited "saying-hello-to-a-liner-about-to-dock" wave. And then a complete change to a song in French; a letter from a man in prison to his girl. Perhaps it was not as socially significant as some of the songs sung by Joan Baez, but she could still dampen the eyes of her audience. Unlike Joan Baez, who sings in a plain dress, without make-up and accompanied simply by her own guitar, Marlene Dietrich managed to conjure up the prison in spite of her glittering, low-cut gown and a second-rate orchestra. Her own humanity was winning, and somewhere there was a lot of love within the glamour; a lot of real beauty inside the sequins and furs.

When Marlene Dietrich was stranded on a Desert Island with her eight "discs" she explained to Roy Plomley that she had no religion and wasn't worried. She was humble in her fame, touching in her admiration for other artists, and confident. This film-star (how old-fashioned that sounds!), great, established professional of the stage and entertainment world, renowned for her glamour rather than for any world-shaking talent in music or acting, is (if unlabelled) one of us. And is there any label that could possibly fit such a woman?

Marlene Dietrich gave me a lot to think about. I couldn't quite see her fighting battles for secularism except as an individual woman to whom anything less than honesty would be unthinkable. I couldn't see her calling herself a "Rationalist" (with those legs?) or even a "Humanist", and yet she gives the impression of someone in whom the heart and reason are happily wed. I would like to suggest that she is the essence of femininity, with her warm-hearted and uninhibited tributes to love, but I would be deceiving myself. Men can love and deal with the subject as unflinchingly as women. One thing is certain, she understands the emotional needs of human beings from the cradle to the beer-cellar, or the Wild West

(Concluded on page 324)

## This Believing World

IN THE article "Battle of Britain ace flies again" by Dave Lanning (*TV Times*, 16/9/65), there is nothing about God Jesus or religion; which rather goes to show that they didn't play much part in the victory—or anything else. However, this unaccountable omission, we are glad to say, was rectified in the commemorative service on September 19th in Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Queen and Prince Philip, when God was suitably thanked with the singing of "O God our help in ages past".

★

WE HAVE never been able to see what the Almighty did during the Battle of Britain—or for that matter what exactly he did in any battle. The only battles in which we are assured he ever took a hand were those so graphically described in the Old Testament; though here again we find the horrid hand of infidelity creeping in with the modern belief that all these terrific conflicts never took place. Still, God has to be thanked somehow or somewhere, even if he never did a thing.

★

IN THE *Radio Times* (16/9/65), there is an article on the important subject of "Education and Broadcasting" by the Minister of Education, the Rt. Hon. Anthony Crosland, MP and, strange to say, again there is not a word on Jesus or his religion and the absolute necessity of Bible lessons. Surely Mr. Crosland does not negate the value of religious periods every day? What would Lord Reith say about it?

★

BUT even Raymond Postgate, who is BBC Controller of Educational Broadcasting, writing in the same number of the *Radio Times* on "Back to School" with "Something for Everyone", appears to have forgotten all about religion. He mentions a number of subjects like "French for Beginners" and "Discovery and Experience", but not a word about religion. Surely it is not being suggested that "French for Beginners" has more educational value than the miracles of Jesus?

★

WE always, when we can, read the London *Evening News'* pet theologian's "Saturday Reflection" and the latest (11/9/65) gem is that Paul is "outstanding among the great letter-writers of the world". The one thing which characterises the greater part of his "letters" is that few people can understand them; and successive Bible translators have had more or less to apologise for not being able to make them intelligible to ordinary readers. Even then, Paul's violent tirades against women are among the things which Christians have never been happy about. The cry, in fact, is in general—"not Paul but Jesus".

★

SO GOD Almighty—or perhaps we ought to say the God Almighty of millions of Negroes, Father Divine—has died at last! This very important event appears not to have even raised an eyebrow among white people. Yet lots of his followers really believed that when he was hauled once before a New York court, and convicted of being a nuisance, the apparently healthy judge was made to die of a heart attack four days later (*The Observer*, 12/9/65). And as his followers would tell you, only a genuine God could do that.

★

THE Christian God has many mansions in Heaven: God Divine had twelve restaurants, eight barber's shops, and many other businesses, and even had a heaven in Switzerland and Australia. Moreover, his wife was a "virgin"—white of course—and before him, there was no drinking

(so unlike Jesus) or swearing. But like Jesus his followers refuse to believe he is dead. Perhaps we shall soon have a Gospel according to his most holy disciple.

★

THE Methodist Press Office might deny their dissenters' claim of 50 per cent support from all Methodists. But as a precautionary measure no doubt—the Rev. Gordon A. Maland, Chairman of the North Lancashire district, has ruled that no public meetings opposing the decisions of the Methodist Conference could be held on Church premises (*The Sunday Times*, 26/9/65). And the *Methodist Recorder* has banned the dissenters from advertising in its columns. All for unity with the Anglicans!

## JESUIT GENERAL DECLARES WAR ON ATHEISM

LAST summer, Pope Paul gave the Jesuits a mandate to wage war against atheism "with fresh ardour". Even so, bishops and other members of the Society of Jesus—not to mention those Humanists who look forward to a resumption of their dialogue with the Catholics—were "startled" by the militancy of Father Pedro Arrupe's speech at the Vatican Council on September 27th.

Atheism, the Society's General told the bishops, crosses the ramparts of God, insidiously influencing the minds of believers, including even friars and priests with its hidden poison, which spreads in the Church as "naturalism, distrust and rebellion" (*The Guardian*, 28/9/65). "This new godless society", said Father Arrupe, "operates in an extremely efficient manner, at least in its higher levels of leadership. It makes use of every possible means at its disposal, be they scientific, technical, social, or economic. It follows a perfectly mapped out strategy. It holds almost complete sway in international organisations, in financial circles, in the field of mass communications, press, cinema, radio and television". Which is quite a compliment, coming from the Black Pope.

The General pointed out that after two thousand years, Christians make up only a small fraction of the world's population. In 1961, the percentage of Catholics was 18 per cent; today they accounted for only 16 per cent. And these percentages it should be added, are based on the Church's own grossly exaggerated figures.

Atheism, the General said, should be fought on a modern scientific basis! A world-wide plan of action, sufficiently supple to be adapted to particular circumstances, should be drawn up and presented to the Supreme Pontiff. Then, said Father Arrupe, "animated and united by a spirit of absolute obedience to the Pope, and with charity, let us all, without exception, go to work in an organised fashion".

With charity, mind you! With equal charity we take up the challenge. Not all Humanists, Father Arrupe, are foolish enough to place faith in dialogue. There can be no reconciliation between Rome and reason.

## SECULARISM AND GLAMOUR

(Concluded from page 323)

saloon to the gaol. She despises nothing, or so it seems, and she can make something good even out of what is second-rate. Of course she could not make truth out of falsehood or honesty out of hypocrisy, and the fact that there is one Miss Dietrich to create the "magic" is no reason for allowing the second-rate to come into existence and survive unchallenged; but she did remind me, at any rate, that although a beautiful binding won't improve a bad book, if the contents of the book are good it is a pity to let it be thought drab or even unimportant from the binding.

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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 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 (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 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

Bolton Humanist Group (Central Library), Thursday, October 14th, 7.30 p.m.: G. HOLT, "Some Aspects of the Peace Pledge Union".

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, October 10th, 2.45 p.m.: Public Meeting, Speaker: WILLIAM CRONAN (Edinburgh).

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 10th, 6.30 p.m.: D. NANDY, "Racial Equality".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, October 10th, 7.30 p.m.: G. N. DEV, "The Kashmir Conflict".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, October 10th, 11 a.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "I Discover America".

Tuesday, October 12th, 7.30 p.m.: Mrs. N. GURNEY-TAYLOR, "The Work of Citizens Advice Bureaux".

### Notes and News

THE text of the revised *Schema* 13, on "The Church and the Modern World" has not been made public, but George Armstrong reported from Rome on September 22nd, that the general comments in the Ecumenical Council chamber "indicate widespread dissatisfaction among the bishops" (*The Guardian*, 23/9/65). Those who last year thought the *schema* unsuitable for discussion seem to have disappeared, said Mr. Armstrong, "but its once enthusiastic supporters now appear to feel that it will never be perfect because of the material it covers". Cardinal Siri of Genoa and others objected that it was "humanistic and naturalistic rather than based on deep faith", but Cardinal Döpfner of Munich warned against over-optimism. The "solutions" offered could, he said, "easily prove to be a genuine let-down for the world at large".

★

ARCHBISHOP Amici of Modena, in the Italian Communists' stronghold in the Emilia province, asked for more direct answers from the Church. "Our aim in approaching these problems should be to give straightforward answers based on the Gospel", he said. "An example is the problem of

birth control which should be answered and not dragged out any longer". The birth control *schema* annoyed the conservative Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo. It presented the Church in a bad light, "as though we were almost getting down on our knees in shame to beg pardon for past opposition to science". The Brazilian Archbishop Sigaud wanted the text changed to state that "since the end of the Middle Ages the progress of science has been remarkable in Christian nations". Provided, Mr. Armstrong added, that those nations "have had some Protestant rulers and a good sprinkling of Jews". And provided—we might add—that the scientists were prepared to defy both Catholic and Protestant opposition.

★

SOME months ago Rouen's co-adjutor, Archbishop André Pailler forecast a schism in the French Church before the end of the year if the Vatican Council approved the *schema* on religious liberty. French *intégristes* (conservatives), *Time* reported (11/6/65), deeply fear an "accommodation" with Communism: liberal Catholics by contrast are convinced that the Church must be "on the march"; they are eager to revive the worker-priests (condemned by Pius XII) and to "carry on a dialogue" with Marxists. The tension between the two groups has led to a number of demonstrations and a "noisily public war of words". In Paris last December, Dominican Yves Congar, one of France's leading theologians, "was hounded at a lecture by young *intégristes* yelling 'Go to Moscow, Marxist priest!'" And in some parts of France, the conservatives objected so strongly to the introduction of the vernacular in the mass, that they responded in Latin when the priest addressed the congregation in French. Disturbed by the publicity given to his speech, Archbishop Pailler later said that by "schism" he meant a spirit of disobedience towards the Council's decrees, rather than a formal split. But he would not have spoken out, *Time* suggested, without the advice and consent of other bishops. And it concluded, the bishops "face a touchy task of reconciliation in a land where those people who are serious about their faith are very serious indeed".

★

*New Statesman* editor Paul Johnson was in trouble with some readers over his criticism of Pope Paul. "How insensitive and bigoted can journalists get?" asked Bernard Gay, who was not a Catholic or even a Christian, but took particular exception to Mr. Johnson's comment that "the hand [of the Pope] hesitates to reach for the hot line to the Holy Ghost". A. S. B. Glover, who is a Catholic, regretted the lack of "ordinary courtesies of reference" in the designation of the present Roman pontiff as Pope Paul Montini. "Is it some kind of esoteric sneer . . . Or does the editor fear some confusion between the two Paul's?" Mr. Glover asked. What never occurred to him was that Mr. Johnson might be reminding us of the former Monsignor Montini, Pro-secretary of State to the late Pius XII.

★

A WELCOME letter from John Shephard informs us that his son David has made remarkable progress following a delicate brain operation. "Although much remains to be done before recovery is complete", Mr. Shephard writes, "we do feel that the darkest clouds have receded"; and he now intends to re-open his campaign against the Lord's Day Observance Society. He also thanks all those who wrote to him following the notice of his son's illness. And the ordeal has deepened Mr. Shephard's conviction that "it is in good, solid, sound people, who are ever-present in time of trouble, that one must pin one's faith".

## The Leopard in a New Suit

(Concluded from page 322)

of the Holy See, and a storm of condemnation broke over Christendom. Apparently the peril of atomic war is preferable to association with the infidel.

This good Pope John, two months after his coronation, announced in his "Letter to the Bishops of Germany": "So far as We are concerned, We are not departing from the example set us by Our Predecessor with regard to the highly estimable German nation." On July 24th, 1959, he nominated as his Privy Chamberlain the notorious Franz von Papen, condemned to eight years' hard labour for his collaboration with Nazism. On December 14th of the same year he gave the red hat to the Jesuit Father Bea, German confessor to Pius XII — a signal favour, since the happy recipient jumped straight from the ranks without having to scale the intermediate grades of the canonry and episcopate.

So this stout peasant pope, who frisked his merry way through a term of office that startled the world with its daring innovations, raising wild hopes in all sorts of breasts and seeming to promise a new golden age, appears, on closer inspection, and beyond the dusty levelling of death, to have been after all fair-and-squarely planted on the same old track.

And why not? The bloc of Germanic peoples, bequeathed by Charlemagne to the Papacy as the bulwark of its power, the "secular arm" to enforce its authority, has remained ever since its chief support in Europe and its springboard to world-wide activity and conquest. The split at the Reformation, and lesser vicissitudes, have made no essential difference. Hence the oft-recurring dream of a restored Holy Roman Empire, a bee that for ever buzzes dangerously in the white skull-cap, provoking the sort of papal brain-fever which culminates in bouts of delirium wreaking world-havoc. Hence the curiously persistent Germanophilia of each succeeding pontiff, the unswerving continuity of frankly pro-German policy. To this also — we may hazard a shrewd guess — can be attributed the miraculous resurrection of West Germany from the total ruin of the Second World War, a miracle which, only twenty years after, gains her the distinction — as we are continually being assured by press and radio — of being the strongest power in Europe. It is a fine thing indeed — leaving aside the nobler part of man — to possess the sworn friendship of the Vicar of Christ, together with a pass-book to the inexhaustible Bank of the Holy Spirit.

It is Germany's misfortune, not her fault, that the Germanic character should have been moulded, by a freak of nature, in the pattern which *par excellence* accords with the implacable scheme of papal ambitions. We cannot blame her for having been evolved to fit like a flexible iron hand in the velvet glove of the Papacy. And she at least has shown stirrings of conscience, expressed some remorse, attempted reparation for her share in the partnership.

The other partner has never yet been known to beat her breast, except liturgically. Everything she does is for the Glory of God, so even the darkest deeds can be justified. Since ignorant men cannot always grasp this, it is often expedient to hoodwink them into thinking these things never happened, or that somebody else was responsible. Any stooge will do, and having neither heart nor conscience she is happy to let her partner bear the full opprobrium while she gets on with the vital job of whitewashing the Barque of Peter. The faithful are thus induced to believe that Hitler and his gangs were violent persecutors

of the Catholic Church — and not only the faithful by any means. The strange illogicality of the wholesale salvation of Nazi criminals by papal agency is presumably attributed to an excess of Christian forgiveness and heavenly charity.

But such is the power of world-hallucination wielded by this Witch of Endor, so intricate the twists and turns of policy in her endless manipulations of human pawns, that most bewildered minds have no chance of getting at the truth, and many prefer not to do so. Like so much else in this unthinking age of face-values and mass-persuasion, our present Envoy of Peace will be accepted as precisely what he proclaims himself to be. And since the term "dramatic" has already been used (on radio at least) to describe beforehand his appearance at the peace conference, we may be sure that the guileless public will be totally absorbed by the "drama" and as totally unaware of the genuine Grand Guignol behind it. Fascinated by this new facet of one who has a face for every situation, every environment, the spectators will have no idea (they never have) of what operates behind the masquerade: a single Will, ruthless and implacable.

No, I do not believe the leopard is changed under his new-peace suit. His spots are still there, very much there, nasty, grim and bloody. And — never let us forget it — the leopard is the sworn, eternal enemy of primates.

So — Pope Paul — rise up from your ecumenical council, board your 'plane to New York and take your place among men on the platform of peace. A good moment, well-chosen, while the ears of the world are strained to catch your momentous decrees. This sublime act of yours will forestall, by the grace of God, any danger of their being distracted by explosions from Heathendom. How shocking it would be if the voice of the assembled Fathers were to be drowned in gunfire, if the world's attention were diverted from Yourself as Director of Human Destinies, to the plight of a handful of wretched human combatants in need of direction!

As a man, your intention *may* be pure. As Head of the Church of Rome, "the last autocrat of civilisation", we cannot accept your integrity. Does your Church really want peace? She believes that Christ will be with her "all days, even to the consummation of the world". Would not her supreme audacity, supported by this conviction, sooner see man bring about this "consummation" by his own folly, than suffer any lessening of her power in a peaceful world?

History and personal experience have taught us the insufferable truth. We know too well that your Church "rapacious, warlike, stirring up conflicts, turning to her own benefit — with unflinching perfidy — the interests and passions of the world, far from fulfilling her mission of guardianship, has always been the worst sower of discord among the nations she claims to pacify and unite."<sup>10</sup>

1. Lord Russell of Liverpool, Legal Adviser in cases of war criminals, in "Sous le signe de la croix gammée" (*L'Ami du Livre*, Geneva, 1955, p. 217).
2. Henriette Feuillet: *France Nouvelle*, June 25th, 1949.
3. *ibid.*
4. Hervé Laurière, *Assassins au nom de Dieu* (Editions Dufour, 18 rue Dauphine, Paris) pp. 120 *et seq.*
5. *ibid.*
6. *Op cit.* pp. 113 *et seq.*
7. *Op cit.* pp. 87-90.
8. Edmond Paris, *The Vatican Against Europe*. Tr. A. Robson. (P. R. Macmillan Ltd., London) p.18.
9. Hervé Laurière, *op cit.* pp. 136, 137.
10. Edmond Paris, *op. cit.* p. 22.

# Friday the Thirteenth

By T. HILL

WHENEVER WE entered our classroom, someone stood at the door and counted. After twelve, there was a blockage. Nobody wanted to be the "unlucky" thirteenth. And even today it is still considered peculiarly unlucky to be the thirteenth guest at table and many hotels number the room between 12 and 14 as "12A".

We have started exploring interstellar space, yet primitive superstitions die hard. In dreams and gambling, numbers are still considered charged with mystical potentialities; folklore and astrology tell you of lucky and unlucky days, whilst in particular the numbers 3, 7 and 12 have assumed a kind of sanctity. That of the three may have derived from the family of father-mother-child, and in all religions there is a reigning *trimurti* or trinity; a similarly simple explanation may be given for 5, 10 and its multiples, since counting must have started by means of the fingers and, in addition, the toes.

However, mensuration and arithmetic started not only by counting but also by observation of the stars and in particular the moon which, by its regular changes (phases) every 7 days made it possible to measure time; the moon-god, therefore, was considered the teacher of mankind. By combining the mass of stars into imaginative figures, and in particular selecting the zodiacal belt of 12 figurations and observing the seasonal passage of sun and planets through it, planned husbandry (i.e. timing of planting and reaping of crops) became possible. In order to memorise the zodiacal sequence, simple stories were invented and later collected as "Holy Scripture" (all religious stories from the Mahābhārata to the Bible show the same utilitarian trend). It is easy to show that arising from the 12 signs of the ecliptic the number 12 has become sanctified, as being represented in the 12 tribes of the Old Testament and the 12 disciples in the New. But why 12 was chosen in the first place and not, say, 10 is still a moot point.

We know that the Babylonians divided the day into 12 *kapsu* = double hours, but what does it prove? They wrote their numbers on a combined scale of 10 and 60 (in Mesopotamia the decimal and sexagesimal systems existed side by side) and we still make 60 seconds = 1 minute and 60 minutes (12 × 5) one hour. Was the 12 arrived at through the division of 60 by the number of fingers, or perhaps by multiplying the 4 phases of the moon with the most popular of mystic numbers, the 3?

During geocentric times, it was believed that there were 7 planets; according to the observable speed of their orbital motion they were allotted a day each to "govern"; starting with sun and moon, thus Saturday fell under the sway of Saturn, the most sluggish planet whose gloomy aspect aroused awe in the primitive mind. Saturn became the visible representative of death and the day of saturnial influence — Saturday — a day of ill luck (Babylonian *ibbū* = day of wrath). During their Babylonian captivity, the Hebrew tribes became acquainted with astronomy and its outcrop, astrology, and they adopted the Babylonian custom of complete Sabbath rest, since all activity on this ill-starred day must end in catastrophe. When, back in Palestine, they enthroned Saturn, the irate and unpredictable "Baal-Seven", as their supreme god Jahve, the importance of the Saturn-day was still enhanced.

Generally in our temperate zones people forget that the sun is an inimical force in the tropical countries. In antiquity both sun and moon were simultaneously invested with opposing aspects, as benefactors and enemies: as

light-bringer and life-giver the sun (particularly in its spring aspect) is venerated, but as destroyer it attains Mars' qualities. The pale new moon is representative of death before resurrection, but in general the moon-god is the particular friend and teacher of mankind. The beneficial and malignant qualities of the "Heavenly twins" (e.g. Simon-Peter and Saul-Paul) were fused. With the spring equinox in the constellation of Taurus (the bull), they were believed to start from two neighbouring star groups: the moon from the Hyades or "rainy sisters" (from Greek *hyein* = to rain; they were the wet-nurses of Dionysus) — a group of five stars in the head of Taurus. The helical rising of this cluster coincided with the beginning of the rainy season. Accordingly Michelangelo's Moses bears the crescent in its symbolical form of bull horns, and during the — legendary — 40 years in the desert he strikes water out of a rock. It also explains why there have to be five books of Moses, the Pentateuch.

The sun, on the other hand, "dwells" in the Pleiades, which form the shoulder of Taurus. Of this group 7 stars were visible to the eye; accordingly the Indian sun-god has the epithet *Sapasapti* = Lord Seven, driving a chariot with 7 horses. The mystical 12 may just be the sum of the Heavenly twins, viz. 5 + 7.

We have 12 months of unequal length; the Jews have lunar months and, in order to keep up with the solar year, they have to duplicate one month periodically. The Greeks and Romans, too, had to annex additional days (*epagomenai*), and the uncertain nature of these additions may have given a sinister flavour to the 13. In Mexico, and according to Nordic belief, these were the days when the forces of the underworld (death and hell) were let loose (Woden's chase). These days belonged neither to the old nor the new year.

Friday, the day of Frejja (Venus), was dedicated to love and marriage, but as in Christian mythology the sunhero Jesus is resurrected on Easter Sunday — after three days — he must have died on a Friday, and this day therefore has been observed as a day of half-fasts. You eat fish because the fish was holy to Venus.

Our calendar is a purely conventional (and not too practical) way of measuring time. However, every New Year's Eve people behave as if virtually something would change. When we write Friday the 13th, people with a different calendar have a different day and do not even dream it may bring ill luck. However, it is high time to dispense with all these ludicrous superstitions altogether, and once the one connected with 13 is overcome we may be able to revert to a calendar with 13 months of 28 days each and have a stable calendar with every date falling on the same fixed day.

## NO US ENVOY TO VATICAN

IN May of this year, Dr. Louis D. Newton, national president of POAU (Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State) addressed a letter to President Lyndon Johnson protesting against the rumoured appointment of a United States envoy to the Vatican. A letter dated July 9th, signed by James L. Greenfield, informed Dr. Newton that: "Although there has been recent press speculation on the question of United States-Vatican relations, I assure you that the Department of State has no present plans to alter the existing situation".

## NEW MARRIAGE ROOM AT RICHMOND

THREE years ago it was brought to my notice that facilities for civil marriage in Richmond were very inadequate, couples wishing for this having to go to the Kingston register office. I therefore wrote to the Town Clerk suggesting that when the new Borough of Richmond-on-Thames came into being, which would necessitate certain reconstructions, a suitable and dignified Marriage Hall or room should be provided. It was hardly fair that those members of the public who had no religious allegiance, or who did not wish to incur the expense of a journey to Kingston, should be driven to make a convenience of the churches; neither was it fair to the latter. The Town Clerk replied that the matter would be borne in mind.

Later on when the new Borough was about to take office the local Humanist Group, through its Secretary, Nigel Sinnott, sent a letter in much the same terms, but mentioning the very interesting broadcast in the BBC Home service by a registrar (anonymous) on the tremendous response his own borough had enjoyed after setting up a handsomely equipped Marriage Room in their Council offices.

Six months ago Richmond did itself provide such a Marriage Room in Sheen Lane, serving the whole Borough; and we now learn that the response has been equally phenomenal—600 weddings in the six months the room has been in use. I had the privilege last week of attending one of these marriages and was most impressed with what I saw; with the tastefully furnished modern room, beautifully carpeted and curtained, and the attractive flower arrangements. The short legal ceremony was performed by the Superintendent Registrar in a dignified yet friendly way, in the warm atmosphere of a family gathering. We felt that we were witnessing the sealing of a contract between two people in a civilised manner. There is a charming small entrance vestibule with flowers, comfortable cloakroom facilities, and an excellent car park. Those who planned and carried out this very necessary amenity in Richmond deserve sincere congratulations.

An immediate practical objective of Freethought and Humanist branches and groups throughout the country might well be to press for the establishment of attractive secular marriage facilities where these do not already exist.

ELIZABETH COLLINS

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE PRESS COUNCIL

Earlier this year a column in the *South London Press* criticised the Southwark Diocesan Catholic Parents' and Electors' Association for seeking 100 per cent state support of church schools. Invited by the editor to reply, the association submitted a 430-word letter with a proviso that it be published in full or not at all. As the *South London Press* is a commercial publication and not a haven for prolixity like a parish magazine, not surprisingly the answer to this ultimatum was "not at all". The association complained to the Press Council on the grounds that it was not invited to submit a shorter version and that the paper commented on without publishing the letter. The editor denied both charges.

The Press Council has just issued its adjudication. It states, *inter alia*, that "the way in which the Editor handled this incident is not calculated to improve relations between Press and public. The complaint is upheld".

This decision would not have occasioned comment if it were part of a consistent policy of defending public sensibilities. It is, however, in striking contrast with other judgments.

The most notorious of these involved the *Daily Express*. On March 2nd, 1964 an editorial attributed manslaughter and hooliganism at Cambridge and overall "Lost Standards" to "a stream of propaganda from so-called free thinkers". Letters of protest were at once sent to the editor from the organised Freethought movement of the country. Not only were these letters not pub-

lished but a further editorial on March 6th attributed teenage indecency to the same "noisy band of propagandists". Official complaints were made to the Press Council by the Freethought-Humanist movement. They were dismissed.

It will be seen how impartial is this anomalous pseudo-independent body, putting itself forward as defender of the public interest, what are the interests it really defends, and how much attention need be paid to its findings.

DAVID TRIBE,  
(President, National Secular Society)

### THE MAN JESUS

Mr. H. Cutner is so naive that he really believes that because Sir James Frazer did not mention anything about the non-historicity of Jesus in his own abridged one volume of *The Golden Bough* he therefore must have changed his mind regarding his belief of Jesus as a true historical figure. What kind of logical thinking is this for a man who prides himself on being a rationalist, atheist and freethinker?

Surely he must think that the readers of THE FREETHINKER are quite easily gulled. Sir James Frazer never detracted what he said about Jesus in the unabridged volumes of *The Golden Bough*, and therefore what Mr. Cutner says to the contrary is meaningless. Sir James Frazer knew all about the hypothesis of a mythical Christ, but he did not accept it; in fact, he advocated the very opposite.

If Mr. Cutner can produce any substantial evidence that Frazer changed his mind regarding the historicity of Jesus, I would like to hear it, and if he can't I advise him to stop making rash statements about Frazer's change of view towards Jesus as an historical figure. Is Mr. Cutner a mind-reader or what? I am not interested in what Mr. Cutner thinks but whether he can produce real evidence to substantiate his thought.

None of the greatest thinkers deny the existence of Jesus, and even H. G. Wells in his book *The Outline of History*, said this about Jesus: "In spite of miraculous and incredible additions, one is obliged to say, 'Here was a man. This part of the tale could not have been invented'". Wells was, of course, anti-Christian, but was not silly enough to deny the historical existence of Jesus.

R. SMITH.

### ABORTION LAW REFORM ASSOCIATION

York Room, Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, London, S.W.1

Thursday, October 14th, 1965 at 8 p.m.

#### "FORUM ON ABORTION"

Speakers will include Dr. Eustace Chesser, Dr. David Kerr, MP, Miss Dee Wells. Questions (to be selected in advance) to Alastair Service, 47 Boundary Road, London, N.W.8.

## Books of Interest

- Ten Non-Commandments *Ronald Fletcher* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
- The Thinkers Handbook *Hector Hawton* 5s. postage 8d.
- The Humanist Revolution *Hector Hawton* 10s. 6d. postage 8d.
- Pioneers of Social Change *Royston Pike* 15s. postage 10d.
- The Origins of Religion *Lord Raglan* 2s. 6d. postage 6d.
- Man and His Gods *Homer Smith* 13s. 6d. postage 10d.
- Evolution of The Idea of God *Grant Allen* 3s. 6d. postage 6d.
- The Age of Reason *Thomas Paine* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
- The Rights of Man *Thomas Paine* 9s. 6d. postage 1s.
- Thomas Paine *Chapman Cohen* 1s. postage 3d.
- Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought *Chapman Cohen* 3s. postage 6d.
- Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare *David Tribe* 2s. postage 5d.
- Why Are We Here? (a poem) *David Tribe* 10s. postage 5d.
- An Analysis of Christian Origins *Georges Ory* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
- Rome or Reason? *R. G. Ingersoll* 1s. postage 5d.
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- Evolution of the Papacy *F. A. Ridley* 1s. postage 5d.
- Freedom's Foe—The Vatican *Adrian Pigott* 3s. postage 6d.
- The Vatican versus Mankind *Adrian Pigott* 4s. postage 6d.
- Catholic Action *Adrian Pigott* 6d. postage 3d.
- The Bible Handbook *G. W. Foote & W. P. Ball* 5s. postage 8d.

from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop  
103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.