

# FREE THINKER

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Friday,  
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## MR PRIME MINISTER

WE, THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM,

congratulate you on your victory in the Battle of Hustings, 1966. Although only three quarters of us turned out to vote and fewer than half of those who did actually voted for you—a common feature of Anglo-Saxon elections—you may be assured of our loyalty in any honourable plans to advance the national and world interest (which need not necessarily conflict). Your political opponents were given thirteen years in office, mostly with a substantial majority, and we feel you are entitled to at least five years of stable government to show what you can do. From your actual vote as distinct from your majority, you will have gathered that many of us who were fired by your promises of radical and imaginative government in 1964 were disappointed by your actual achievement in the last seventeen months. We are nonetheless prepared to make allowance for your difficulties then and look only towards the future now. Before the election most of us did not demand specific bribes or threaten you with specific blackmail. But we now ask you to give urgent consideration to the following questions:

### THE ECONOMY

It is imperative not only for the welfare of the British people but also for the security of the whole sterling area and the many Commonwealth and other poor countries which rely in some measure on our economic aid, that the country's finances be made sound. Many of the possible measures you will have to consider are so technical we do not presume to advise you, though we incline to feel that, if desperate short-term measures were to prove necessary, import restrictions would cause less international concern than devaluation. In the long run we shall have to increase production, and that means working something like as hard as the Americans or the Chinese, though we hope we can avoid respectively a ratrace and a propaganda war. When in Opposition you promised an economic policy based on incentives and not the old stop-go system of the then Government. Hitherto you have simply followed in their footsteps. In any constructive plan to modernise Britain, now that you have a healthy majority, you must take firm action against both inefficient or monopolistic management

and restrictive union practices, never forgetting that workers have nothing to sell but their ability to work whereas complaining businessmen have irons (or steel) in many fires. While the big estates in this country continue to dodge death duties you cannot expect the man in the council flat or private tenement to touch his cap for five bob a week increase. Efficiency and industry in workers, professional men and managers who actually manage must be rewarded by incentives and the vision of a just social system. We know you have had to borrow £1,000 million, which has to be paid back inside four years, but we would remind you that you are spending double this sum every year on

### DEFENCE

We feel obliged to say that we do not believe we are getting value for money. When the crunch comes—and we hope it will never come—Britain cannot compete with Washington or Moscow in military potential or with Peking in manpower. The Royal Navy is no longer able to preserve a *pax Britannica* west of Suez, much less east of it. Much of our defence budget is ostensibly to enable us to fulfil our obligations to our allies, but the ordinary people of many of these countries have a sneaking suspicion it is simply a form of neocolonialism, designed to "safeguard" strategic supplies and so-called strategic bases by supporting a venal ruling class which has entered into the appropriate commitments. We would point out that there is no better security for the future than the goodwill of ordinary people everywhere. Most of us are not unilateral disarmers and believe that to be really effective settlements have to be internationally negotiated, but we feel that much more attention than hitherto should be given to the problems of peace and disengagement. We welcome your announced intention of getting out of Aden. We applauded your appointment of a Minister for Disarmament and a Minister for Overseas Development and want them to have more influence. Though we are as a nation as selfish as any and more insular than most, we recognise the longrange dangers of a world where the rich get rich and the poor get poorer. As we want to improve relations with the Afro-Asian world, whose discontents could be the tinderbox of tomorrow, so we hope to come to terms with the Communist world, whose suspicions are the tinderbox of today. Partly these are the legacy of Stalinism, partly the result of actions of the West. Foremost of these is the operation in

### VIETNAM

Many of us know little and care less about this oriental

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trouble-spot, but those of us who do think can think of no good reason why a single American or Australian soldier should fight there another day, save to preserve short-term status for the United States. The Vietnamese earned their independence from the West in 1954 and were promised free elections throughout the country by 1956. There is age-old hostility between them and the Chinese, and the only thing that could really throw them into Peking's arms is continued American intervention. Supposedly Uncle Sam is in South Vietnam to preserve the country's "freedom", but the attitude of even its non-Communist citizens to American-controlled military dictatorships is in striking contrast to that of the North Vietnamese people to their President Ho Chi Minh. America has never hesitated—and rightly so—to tell Britain when she disapproved of her imperialism, and Britain must be no less frank. Especially is this so when she is co-Chairman with Russia of the Geneva Conference responsible for an ultimate settlement. Though both you and Washington have denied it, it is still widely believed that you are under duress to support American actions in Vietnam through a secret clause in the agreements advancing Britain international (Wall Street-dominated) credit. Be that as it may, if Britain is to support American-style "containment" diplomacy she will need an American-style budget to support it, and so will live forever in America's debt. If France can afford to be independent, so can Britain. There is another overseas area where, despite your "instant government" and "fearless policies", too little has been done too late. We refer to

#### RHODESIA

It is preposterous that some 200,000 white settlers should continue to defy 4 million black fellow-countrymen, the armed might of Britain and the Commonwealth, private and international law, constitutional government and the opprobrium of all the world except South Africa and Portugal. The British Governor is virtually under house arrest, BBC representatives and other British subjects expelled, British MPs assaulted, the press censored, academic freedom flouted and the law courts threatened. And while the situation drags on inconclusively, the Smith régime and its supporters grow daily cockier, more confident that their racist neighbours will see them out of all difficulties. With voluntary oil and other sanctions in constant jeopardy, Britain must make the widest use of mandatory sanctions under Article 7 of the United Nations. We suspect that if the crisis had occurred in Aden or Hong Kong firmer steps would have been taken to deal with it. Firm government, combined with imagination and humanity, is also needed at home. Especially is this true with regard to

#### COLOURED IMMIGRANTS

Here we must admit that we had grave doubts about ourselves. The success of Mr Peter Griffiths in 1964 and subsequent polls questioned how decent and fairminded we were when it came to the point. No doubt you were influenced by these considerations last summer when you prepared your illiberal white paper on this subject. But, if it is not immodest to say so, in the light of the recent results we are rather proud of ourselves. We have told Messrs Griffiths and Bean—just as on Rhodesia we have told Monday Club champions like Messrs Amery and Fell—what we think of them. And we have made amends to Mr Gordon Walker and Lord (Fenner) Brockway's successor. Though we sometimes get irritated about housing and alarmed over jobs, in our heart of hearts we know that our nursing and transport services would virtually break

down without Commonwealth immigration. For centuries we have grown fat off our Empire, and many of its economic difficulties today result from the fact that we fostered single-crop or -mineral economies for our own convenience, and are now creaming off educated and trained personnel they can ill afford to lose. And sometimes we retire there because of low income tax. For all this we have advertised a legal system which claims to outlaw racial discrimination and let ourselves be known as the Mother Country. We think it time we now showed some maternal feeling. We also call for more feeling in our

#### WELFARE STATE

We know that there are some layabouts who will abuse any system, but we believe most people want to be useful in some way to the community. Today there are too many, too proud to go to the National Assistance Board, who through no fault of their own are on the bread line. We want to see more opportunity for healthy pensioners to work and better provision for those of any age who cannot. Any one of us may some day be in this situation. We also believe you could marshal the productive resources of the physically and mentally handicapped. With the proper use of automation and natural resources there should be no shortage of *things*, and you should then be able to devote more time and money to *care*—of orphans, unmarried mothers, the inadequate, delinquents, drug addicts, alcoholics, neurotics, potential suicides—and to education, sport and culture. Unless you help us to a vision of the great society, you must not be surprised if we seem unable to see past our pay packet. Though (perhaps because) we spend a great deal of time on bingo and the telly, we know there are many things wrong with our society and are prepared for, even if we don't often seem to demand,

#### LAW REFORM

Some of us are still snoops, prudes and puritans, expecting others to share our views and copy our actions. But as a nation we are changing quite quickly, and we expect you at least to keep pace with the change. Do not think of the defeat of Mr Humphry Berkeley but of the victory of Mr Sydney Silverman. Most of us recognise that men and women have diverse intellectual, sexual and social needs, and so long as those with special interests don't bother us we can't see why they should be penalised. However we personally may be out of sympathy with such things, let there be available family planning and abortion on the NHS, broadcasting and stage freedom and toleration of homosexuality so long as children are protected, Sunday freedom, divorce by consent with provision for children, premarital sexual experience with precautions against unwanted pregnancy and VD, and all the other things reformers talk about. Most of us don't call ourselves secularists, humanists or atheists, and really have no views on religion at all because we never think about it. But as it doesn't mean much to us and quite a lot of people actively have no belief but are jolly decent friends, neighbours, parents and colleagues, we can't see why religion should have any special place in our society. We know you have a Nonconformist background and don't wish to undermine it. But we ask your Nonconformism to include nonconformism, and to ensure that people who have no religious belief do not suffer when they want to adopt children or enter the nursing, teaching or welfare professions.

PLEASE DON'T LET US DOWN.

## DR RAMSEY AND THE POPE

F. H. Amplett Micklewright

IT WOULD BE no exaggeration to say that the world press has been agog at the visit of Dr Ramsey to the Vatican. Not that it is the first time that an Anglican dignitary has visited the Pope by paying a courtesy call. Indeed, it is said that such a course was always followed out by Bishops of Gibraltar and that on one occasion a Pope was believed to have remarked that he much appreciated the courtesy as he understood that he was resident in His Lordship's diocese! Both Lord Fisher and the Bishop of Southwark have paid unofficial and private visits to the Vatican. But, on this occasion, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the full panoply of office, has paid an official visit to the Pope in order that differences between the two churches might be discussed and ways to unity sought. For the first time in four hundred years the two warring protagonists came together and greeted each other with much show of brotherly love, worshipping together and finally signing together a somewhat non-committal document stressing their friendly search for unity.

### Differences remain

According to press reports, there was little real agreement found on matters doctrinal and theological. The Pope may have given Dr Ramsey the apostolic blessing, but the organic unity of the two churches seems as far away as ever. Dr Ramsey had previously said that he wished to discuss the question of mixed marriages. But the Pope had forestalled this by issuing a statement prior to the visit. Save that certain promises may now be made verbally instead of in writing, the matter remains substantially as before. A Roman Catholic marrying under non-Catholic circumstances is no longer excommunicate but his marriage is still invalid. In fact, nothing has been said which undercuts the notorious *Ne Temere* decree, and the Pope must know that a verbal promise is morally as binding as one which is written.

There has been singularly little protest, although some of the Lutheran press of Western Germany does not seem over-pleased with this latest development. A handful of Ulster Protestants, headed by Dr Ian Paisley, kept up a running opposition mainly, so far as can be gathered, upon extreme Protestant and fundamentalist grounds. Certainly, their methods were somewhat crude and exhibitionist, although it must be conceded that Dr Paisley and his friends also reached international coverage and made their protest into a talking point of which TV took notice. The *Times* was content to remark upon the growth of a greater charity, as also was the *Guardian*. On the whole, public reaction was somewhat uninterested and seemed willing to leave the matter to the churches. There was little or no vital comment from the secular press. All that can be said is that the "No Popery" reactions which would certainly have blazed even forty years ago have left few lingering echoes in modern society.

### Outside whom there is no salvation

The freethinker will not wish to be churlish or nagging and will be ready to welcome all that makes for a greater unity among mankind, thus causing war and strife to recede further away. But he certainly should not welcome this latest step. On the contrary, he should consider it side by side with such a work as Avro Manhattan's *Vatican Imperialism*. The Papacy stands forth as a dicta-

torial power seeking political authoritarianism. Mussolini, Hitler and Franco have all been patronised and supported in turn. It is the great bulwark of political oppression and the great foe of democracy. Avro Manhattan underlines these charges with exact facts which show that the spirit has not changed since Pius IX formulated his notorious *Syllabus of Errors* a century ago.

In the end, a democratic philosophy is irreconcilable with Catholic sociology. The visit of Dr Ramsey can end only by encouraging Vatican imperialism and must be depressing to all friends of liberty and toleration in thought and in practice. It should be recalled that the Roman Catholic Church has never unsaid its claims to world domination by its corporate and theological totalitarianism. An official visit to its chief is a tacit acceptance of the general spirit of Vatican theocracy which it generates in the world of today and, apart from any theological differences, the modern democrat will find this spirit distasteful to a degree.

But Dr Ramsey is the official head of the state Church of England. He cannot melt his visit into that of a private individual. The standpoint of his church is that constitutionally of the Revolutionary Settlement of 1688. This settlement has only to be probed and measured by its outcome, the Bill of Rights of 1689, to illustrate that it was essentially a settlement aimed against the Papacy and directed by the demand that the events which marked the reign of James II should never recur. Allowing for all that has happened since through the Catholic Emancipation Acts of 1829 and 1927, this lasting settlement could mean only that the constitution of this country is Protestant and anti-Papal, refusing to accept the Papacy as a political institution in any conceivable way. Canon Law had been abrogated so far as England was concerned by an Act of Parliament passed under Henry VIII in 1535.

Dr Ramsey is head of a church which is controlled solely by a constitution upon which rests the common and statute law of the country. He is the state-appointed head of this church and his acts are those of a legal character bounded by the constitution of the land. An official visit to the Pope is not a mere act of friendliness or a social call but is nothing less than an eroding of the constitutional position reached in 1688. The ecclesiastical head of the Church of England, an institution within the church-state constitutional relationship, makes official recognition of a foreign sovereign pontiff who has been repudiated by the very constitution within which he acts! When it is recalled that the monarch is supreme governor of the Church of England, the inconsistency of Dr Ramsey's behaviour becomes all the more apparent.

### Canon Law

There is a further point. Dr Ramsey proposed to discuss with the Pope the question of mixed marriages in England and the rules laid upon them by the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church. But this so-called Canon Law is not recognised by the English legal system and has received no sort of recognition under English Law since 1535. Any appeal by an English subject to Papal legislation renders the subject liable to the penalties of *praemunire* by the statute which enacted in 1392 that appeals from the English courts to Rome should be visited

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## THIS WORLD

### The Future of Humanism

IN A REVIEW of *Inquiry into Humanism* (New Society, March 31), Barbara Wootton made the following observations:

Of all these interviews, perhaps the clearest, and the most direct were those of Lords Willis and Francis-Williams. Professor Ayer on the other hand performed a sort of Bishop-of-Woolwich act in reverse, leaning overbackward so far in order to be conciliatory to the Christians that one was left wondering just how much the term humanism could be stretched to cover.

He was, for instance, prepared to accept believing Christians as members of the Humanist Association provided that they shared its social ideals. Personally I think that this is a mistake. I would have thought that the distinctive characteristic of the humanist was his rejection of the supernatural, and that the object of the Association was not so much to promote social reform as to voice (and to make respectable) a philosophy of life which is rooted in human experience and in that alone.

THE following Saturday there was the Seventy-first Annual Congress, described as probably the last, of the Ethical Union. Since the EU and BHA lost charity status, the Rationalist Press Association has been unable to offer direct support. A new *ad hoc* BHA committee is proposing to make private application to the Charity Commissioners to register a reformulated Association. This committee consists of officers of the Ethical Union, which has appealed against its loss of charity status. If both BHA and EU regain status it is proposed to wind up the older body and transfer its assets to the Association. The EU hopes that the RPA will do the same.

AT the meeting many members expressed hopes for more rather than less dynamic BHA activities, which would be incompatible with charity status. Though there was the suggestion of forming a non-charitable British Humanist Society or expanded Humanist Lobby, many felt that the original body, on whose advertising much has been spent, and which is already widely known, should be the independent one. Beside this many charities could exist. The RPA and NSS share this view.

### Holy Alliance

FOREVER fishing in troubled waters, Mrs Mary Whitehouse and her human detergents (whose motives seem as mixed as the above metaphor) is offering her support to Mr Wilson in his battle with the BBC. As he is complaining about political bias, they are complaining about bias in "social, moral and religious issues" and want machinery to "enable the viewing public to share the responsibility of shaping broadcasting policy which will truly serve the best interests of the people". Short of handing over the entire corporation to the Religious Broadcasting Department, one wonders what changes could possibly be made to get less Freethought or Secular Humanism.

*Avec quelle sauce mangez-vous votre Dieu ?*

KINGSLEY MARTIN introduced this quote from Voltaire into a piece on the Archbishop's visit to the Pope (*New Statesman*, April 1). "One man's religion is another man's anthropology". Recalling the enormous protest in this country in the middle of the last century when the Catholic Hierarchy was reintroduced, he attributed the comparative absence of protest today to the fact that our religion is now Science. He closed with a timely warning:

I think the Archbishop had better be careful. Rome is likely to get the better of any bargain, and it might easily make doctrinal concessions if it thought thereby to extend its empire or to maintain its hold over an increasingly recalcitrant Catholic public. Rome has always understood that not doctrine, but power, is the important thing.

### Suez Crisis

STUDENT marches are rarely popular with governments. But in Cairo recently a great demonstration was actually organised by the National Assembly in favour of family planning. The UAR population is rising at the rate of a thousand a day, and deep-seated religious and social convictions (e.g. that children anchor husbands to wives) have to be overcome.

### Trying to Save Saved

NOT normally radical, even the Arts Council is protesting against theatre censorship now that it has been extended to private clubs. It is suggesting a plan based on proposals by writer Ben Levy, MP, whereby the Lord Chamberlain's powers would be removed and managements safeguarded against trivial proceedings by local watch committees by requiring permission to prosecute from a judge in chambers and making the licensing of theatres independent of their actual productions.

### ALRA

THE Abortion Law Reform Association, to which the NSS is affiliated, is inviting all members and friends to begin a massive new lobby of Parliament. Record and advice forms can be obtained from Mrs D. E. Cossey, 19 Kenneth Court, 173 Kennington Road, London, SE11. Be sure to write to your local MP.

IN the current *Newsletter* there are many useful, if distressing, case histories involving "eugenic" considerations, schoolgirl and assaulted mothers, and (with a hard glance at Barbara Wootton) "inadequate" parents.

### Panacea

ADVERTISEMENTS are still regularly placed by the Panacea Society offering relief from "Crime and Banditry, Distress of Nations and Perplexity" by the opening of Joanna Southcott's box. This was left a century and a half ago by a female hot gospeller who announced, when 64, that she was about to bear the Messiah. The box was in fact opened in 1927 and found to contain only trinkets and a popular novel. But the Society, registered as a "charity" owning property where its officers live, is unlikely to be deterred by so trivial a consideration.

### Backdoor Aid

THWARTED by former Supreme Court decisions in attempts to give direct aid to church schools in the United States, the Federal and some State Governments have resorted to indirect measures. Examples of recent legislation are the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Michigan Auxiliary Services Act, both 1965. By such legislation health, remedial and social service personnel and facilities are provided free to church schools. Now the Michigan Act is being challenged by POAU on the grounds (*Church and State*, March)

that it constitutes an establishment of religion, that it restricts the free exercise of religion, that it violates the teachers' right of choice respecting teaching in religious schools, that it upholds racial segregation practised in some church schools, and that it supports religiously segregated schools.

A PITY that in England there is no written Constitution with a First and Fourteenth Amendment.

### Aftercare

ONLY gradually has it been realised that transition from prison to ordinary society is a far from smooth operation and needs more than a railway ticket and a few pounds in the pocket. For a long time certain University Settlements have had hostels where tiny numbers of discharged

## FREETHINKER

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

### INDOOR

- King Alfred School (Manor Wood, North End Road, London, NW11), Day Conference, "Ethical and Moral Values in Education". Speakers: JOHN WILSON, JAMES HEMMING, JOHN WREN-LEWIS and MARGARET KNIGHT. Saturday, April 30th, 9.30 a.m.—6 p.m. Conference fee (including morning coffee, lunch and tea) £1 1s. 0d. Details from Edwin Savitt, 25 Grove Court, Circus Road, London, NW8.  
British Humanist Association, Essex Branches (Civic Centre, Chelmsford), Saturday, April 16th, 2.30 p.m.: District Rally, Speakers: MARGARET KNIGHT and DERRICK LEE. Transport from Havering, children looked after. Details, S. Goodman, 51 Percy Road, Romford.  
Progressive League (109 Lancaster Gate, London), Sunday, April 17th, 7.15 p.m.: Dr DAVID PITT, "The Racial Problem Today".  
Progressive League (13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8), Tuesday, April 19th, 7.30 p.m.: M. M. R. KAHN, "The Myth of Effortless Living".  
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Tuesday, April 19th, 7.30 p.m.: ANDREW CHEYNE, "Magnetic Healing".  
Thomas Paine Society, 175th Anniversary of the publication of "Rights of Man". Exhibition of books, prints, pictures, coins and pottery. Co-operative Education Centre, Heathcote Street, Nottingham. Monday, May 9th—Saturday, May 14th. First day, 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., other days 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, E11). Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.  
Humanist Letter Network (International): send s.a.e. to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

### THIS WORLD continued

prisoners could stay till completely rehabilitated, but these lacked money and trained organisers. Now this function is coming within the purview of probation officers, while the antiquated National Association of Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society has become transformed into the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders to train voluntary auxiliaries.

### Blood-Tie Baby

LATEST development in this distressing case is a denunciation of the legal system and its delays. It has been asserted that the natural father first sought custody when the baby was 2 months old—16 months ago!

Kinder, Kirche, Küche

IN a letter in the *Guardian* (March 31), Michael Crawford

pointed out that one of the most powerful factors in conditioning women to second-class status is religion. "To me the real tragedy is that by being the keenest supporter or organised superstition, women is her own executioner."

### Progressive

THE REGULAR social and cultural activities of the Progressive League are too numerous to mention. Apart from these there is news of two special events: an Arts Activities Conference, Braziers Park, May 13-15, and the 1966 Summer Conference at Grittleton House, Wilts, July 29—August 6.

## I FOUND ANOTHER GOD

Gerald Jackson

I AM A JEW and come from a fairly orthodox home, as orthodox as any working class family can be, living in a modern world. Although I still call myself a Jew, I no longer practise the religion. I am now an atheist. The decision was not an easy one to make; it took a lot of courage to make the change, for I was turning my back on what I had been brought up to believe in, and indeed, did believe in.

The change was not a sudden decision but something that had been building up over the years. When I finally turned away from religion my first reaction was one of guilt, but the more I thought about it, the more illogical religion became. I have no guilt complex now because I sincerely believe that I have done the right thing.

### Hostility towards me

Now that I am an atheist, my greatest surprise is to find out how hostile people are towards me: people who are not in themselves religious, people who never go to church, people who never utter a prayer, yet call themselves Christians or Jews and look upon me as a traitor. In fact, one person refuses to speak to me since I became an atheist. This same person, some years ago, told me that the only reason he went to the synagogue on a Saturday was because it was good for business, he met the right people.

This hypocrisy was one of the many reasons that turned me away from religion. For some reason, which I am unable to fathom, because an atheist has no God he is looked upon as something evil. All the atheists I have met have been far more understanding, far more tolerant and less violent than many who profess a religion.

### Religious aggression

One has only to look at past history or the world today to see how violent some religious people can be. All worship the same God, yet can have a violent dislike of one another that has often led to a bloody massacre. Ireland and India are two examples. Many of these so-called religious people will commit the most abominable crimes, but because they go to church and confess their sins all is forgiven, the slate's wiped clean, their souls are cleansed and their conscience cleared.

I can no longer think this way. My conscience is my God. The good I try to do each day is my religion.

## DR RAMSEY AND THE POPE

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by crimonous penalty. There is only one law governing marriages in England and this is the English constitutional law as it rules in church and state, resting as it does upon parliamentary sanction. It is not only a highly indecorous act for an Archbishop of Canterbury to make such an approach to the Pope but it is constitutionally dangerous.

If the Pope needs any message it is that of the Thirty-Nine Articles, that "the Bishop of Rome hath no authority in this realm" and that his canon law has no legal meaning for any English citizen of any allegiance whatever. If the Pope wishes to follow out the *Ne Temere* decree and say that certain marriages valid by the law of England are invalid, he should be told that his remark would render him liable to a prosecution for crimnal libel should he fall within the jurisdiction of the English courts and that, be he the Bishop of Rome or of anywhere else, the ordinary Englishman is certainly not willing to stand by and see the law flouted or people insulted by this mere piece of Papal impertinence.

**Keep Rome over the mountain**

Incidentally, a great deal slips past simply because the ordinary Englishman does not understand the effect of the canon law when it is applied to common life. In the aggressively Roman Catholic state of Malta, it is written into the municipal law. A case in the English divorce courts, *Chapelle v Chapelle* [1950] illustrates the result of this position in Maltese law. A couple were married in England in a register office, the husband being of Maltese domicile. This marriage was valid in England but the Maltese court declared it invalid because the *Ne Temere*

decree had been built into the local constitution.

During the week of the Archbishop's visit to Rome, an English woman tourist had birth pills confiscated from her luggage by the Maltese customs authorities because any possession of contraceptives is illegal in Malta. The reason for this legal ruling lies in the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to family planning, its claim to make legal enactments, and the acceptance of this claim by the law of Malta. Implicit in the whole Roman Catholic attitude to mixed marriages is this attitude to the canon law, and one is entitled to ask whether one wishes to see this law ever again occupying a place in English constitutionalism as it does in a Roman Catholic state such as Malta.

It is a matter for comment that the Archbishop should discuss marriage regulations with the Pope out of the overruling context of English law. But it is also a matter of serious constitutional misgiving that any official visit could take place at which such a matter could be discussed in this way. Freethinkers are not niggardly or carping in denouncing this visit by Dr Ramsey. Still less are they interfering in a matter lying out side their concern. They are doing no more than defend those constitutional liberties which had been challenged in 1688. The Bill of Rights of 1689 and the Act of Settlement of 1701 are monuments against Papal control. Those who are concerned with liberty and democracy have no less a duty than to see that they remain uneroded and standing forth as continuing bulwarks against Vaticanism in the England of today.

**GODS**

LOOKING BACK at the ancient past, we see an array of gods in all their glories. There were Egyptian gods, Greek gods and Roman gods. Today all of us know these never existed; they were inventions of primitive men. The ancient Hebrews worshipped a supposedly "True God", Yahweh, later called Jehovah by Jews and Christians alike. As we all know, He is "all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving". What more can we want in a God? Theologians—men who have spent ten years studying "theology"—describe and define Him variously as "Perfect Being", "Pure Being" and "Pure Spirit". Scientific atheists call it not "Pure Spirit", but pure baloney; not "Perfect Being", but perfect vacuum.

**Deistic god**

Man is never tired of looking for a new and better god. If he cannot find one, he'll invent one. Some intellectuals of the seventeenth century invented the deistic god. This god created the world and lived elsewhere afterwards. It was human to seek peace and leisure by leaving behind the tribulations and miseries of mankind. The deists, knowing that no prayer was ever answered by the Christian God, thought that their god and his policy of non-interference in human affairs explained the helpless condition of men at the time. Most Christians, however, thought such a god unworthy of consideration.

**Naturalistic god**

Since the Christians could not feel good and comfortable with the deistic god, deism faded away as "just one of those things". The nineteenth and twentieth centuries

brought forth heated discussions on the existence of the Christian God. These discussions in due time gave ideas to some enterprising theologians. They believed they could have an existing God; accordingly, they re-named an aspect or a function of nature, God.

Up to recent years, a naturalistic Humanist was supposed to be a scientific atheist who rejected belief in the existence of supernatural and personal Gods. Today the situation is not as simple as that. Because some characters called theologians need a God while assuming the category of naturalistic Humanists. These unusual doctors of theology, presumably learned men, deify a function of nature like evolution. They also reject supernatural and personal Gods. And so, to all intents and purposes, they are atheists. But they are atheists who want to appear as God-believers. Their want is very understandable; for what is the use of studying theology for ten or fifteen years if they cannot make something out of it? They have to make a living. Moreover, there is still much odium in atheism.

Today, therefore, a naturalistic Humanist is either an honest-to-goodness atheist, or an atheist masquerading as a God-believer to earn a living, to avoid the traditional odium in atheism and to satisfy the thinker's aversion against supernaturalism. His awkward position is the result of an attempt to reconcile theology with reality!

There is a *seeming rationality* in worshipping the personal, although imaginary God of tradition; but deifying an inanimate function of nature is *sheer nonsense!*

Gonzalo Quiogue

# HOW FAR CAN REALISM GO IN THE THEATRE

Kit Mouat

I DOUBT if even ten years ago anyone could have suggested over the air that sexual intercourse should be allowed on the stage in the "straight" theatre. Now Kenneth Tynan has suggested it, and the reactions are likely to be strong either way; against for so-called "moral" reasons, or in favour just because it seems at first hearing to be on the side of progress and liberalism.

When I was with the Corps de Ballet Rambert in 1937-8, I danced the part of one of the nymphs in *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*. I don't think any of us gave the fetish-symbolism of the Faune with the nymph's drapery a thought. In Holst's *Planets* we were rehearsed by Anthony Tudor as we lay writhing in what were meant to be the birth-pangs of Mars. In neither ballet was the imagery very accurate, and I don't think there was ever any suggestion that imagery should give way to realism. I suggest that the reasons for this which would have been given then still stand.

## Theatre is symbolism

The theatre is an art-form which *represents* tragedy, comedy, cruelty and so on; its imagery and symbolism are essential to it. If actual sexual intercourse were to be permitted, then logically why not real cruelty, real birth-pangs, real sufferings? And logic would not be practical where murder, or bereavement, or even exaltation was concerned, even if every other reason against theatrical copulation were broken down. As a Secular Humanist I must admit I shrink from the thought of yet another field where fact and fiction would be confused. With the Christian Humanists trying to preserve their religion by translating myth into phoney fact, it is some comfort to be able to go to the theatre where everyone admits that it is "pretend" without risking a loss of face. One reason, then, against Mr Tynan's suggestion is that the art of theatre would be abused by the introduction of such realism.

## Personal difficulties

More important would surely be the abuse of human personality, and if only the act were "real" and the emotions were faked then that abuse would be intolerable. Take the male actor first. A woman might be able to disguise (or act away) her sexual dislike of the hero; but male impotence could ruin the scene. Intensive concentration on work can diminish the sexual urge, and what audience would be able to forgive a power-failure at such a moment? But let us imagine that the leading man has an insatiable sexual appetite and can cope not only with matinées but also a long run; isn't there still an insurmountable Humanist objection to the idea of deliberately depriving the sexual act of pleasure by its enforcement? What greater abuse can there be than to insist that two human beings mate just because they have been paid to do so?

If the discussion must continue, then let's get down to even more practical details. Mr Tynan seems to have forgotten the basic biological facts of the female. Even if he ignores the fact (pointed out by Marie Stopes among others) that female sexual needs can range during one month from "strong" to nil-plus-boredom, he would still have to reckon on at least two actresses to take this all-important role. I suppose that pep-pills could be provided to anti-

dote any natural inclination for the couple to sleep, or the "act" could provide a finale and calls be taken by the rest of the cast in front of a curtain hiding the sleepers.

How anyone could greet Mr Tynan's suggestion with unqualified cheers, beats me. What about the theatrical agents having to insist on highly-sexed, indiscriminating heterosexuals with no religious guilt complexes for the part? What price a beautiful voice, acting ability or theatrical sensibility in any other type of person?

## Mr Tynan's reply

In a letter replying to my queries, Mr Tynan raised the question of voyeurism; but I doubt if this is very relevant. As I have said in another article, eroticism doesn't depend on realism, and even if the Lord Chamberlain gave permission for symbolised sexual intercourse the theatres could be filled with deprived, unsatisfied and sexually hungry crowds. But both symbolism and realism could be very unfair to playwrights, for I suspect a company could fill a theatre by just reading out a telephone directory if it were advertised that such permission had been given by the censor.

Mr Tynan's remark that the "obvious disadvantages attached to presenting sexual intercourse on stage" were especially problems of "sight-lines and audibility" still has me guessing. Don't tell me that we could expect an exchange of wit or poetry during such a scene? "If it helps the author to make a point", Mr Tynan "can't see any moral objections".

## Private or public mating

Well, even if we put aside what is (I believe) the purpose of the theatre, the practical problems and restrictions on actors and actresses applying for the parts, there is still the question of public mating. Haven't we all the right to give birth, to die and to copulate in private, without being criticised for the way we do it, without being displayed to the view of those who care nothing for us and who might be able to give a better performance? Surely we have, Mr Tynan, surely? And if we, the audience, have this human right, so too must actors and actresses. I suggest that we haven't yet won nearly enough genuine freedom to enjoy life and to live it with dignity to risk losing what we have in a lemming-dash for the never-done-before. But if we ever do have sexual intercourse allowed on the stage of the legitimate theatre, then I think I shall found a Society for the Protection of Performing Two-footed Animals and try to introduce a close season when *homo sapiens* can mate in peace. The trouble is Mary Whitehouse and her gang would probably join for all the wrong reasons, and I would much rather agree with Mr Tynan than with them . . .

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## NO COMMENT

"The Church has now solemnly professed her belief in religious liberty for all men. But it should be borne in mind that the object of the Declaration is very limited. *It simply means that the State has no right or authority to decide what religion its subjects should follow. . . . This statement does not imply that one religion is as good as another*"—*Sunday Bulletin* of the Redemptorist Fathers, March 27.

"Hochhuth's *The Representative* . . . comes to Czechoslovakia three years late because of the original reluctance of the author to see his play performed in a socialist country, for fear it might be used as 'anti-religious propaganda'. After long negotiations, he agreed to its production on the condition that the full text of the play be published simultaneously . . . and this condition has been met"—*Prague Newsletter*, March 19.

## LETTERS

(Many excellent letters from overseas cannot be printed because they arrive after the relevant correspondence has been closed. Letters from abroad should be on general rather than topical issues, on principles rather than particular articles—Ed.)

### Cost of Church Schools

MORE THAN £100,000 of ratepayers' money is being paid out every year in Scotland to seven denominational schools: five Roman Catholic, two Episcopal. Moreover, only figures for 1961-62 have, as yet, been released.

In all, there are 42 grant-aided schools in Scotland. Of the denominational schools themselves figures can be given.

1. Roman Catholic:	Grant
Convent of the Sacred Heart, Aberdeen ...	£16,606
St Aloysius' College, Glasgow ...	£49,886
Benedictine Convent School for Girls, Dumfries	£7,875
St Joseph's College, Dumfries ...	£16,982
St Ninian's Orphanage School, Falkland ...	£2,650
2. Episcopal:	
St Mary's Cathedral Choir School, Edinburgh ...	£3,230
St Margaret's School, Aberkir ...	£13,980

Comment: This particular ratepaye objects.

PETER KEARNEY

### Population Problem

I READ the essay entitled "Population" that appears in the February 4 *FREETHINKER*. I am interested in the declaration that sociological phenomena are the proper concern of the State.

Urgency in adequately resolving sexual-social problems is indicated in this country by Dr Harry Elmer Barnes, who declares in a national publication that "sexual ignorance and intolerance have been the cause of more human misery and suffering than all the wars, famines, diseases, and epidemics of human experience; indeed, have been a substantial if not outstanding cause of some of the latter, such as famine and disease".

In the interest of enhancing sexual emancipation to facilitate humanitarian social objectives, I am delighted to report enthused responses from public-spirited and socially conscious individuals who have copies of my recently released handbook *Spirit of Youth* (1965, Exposition, \$3) in their homes.

I see a strong connecting link between the population explosion and world problems. In the event that there is inadequate voluntary response to prevention of excess births, it is possible that large families would first be disapproved socially, then declared reprehensible and eventually perhaps punishable as contrary to the public interest. Here is a great human problem for responsible thought, action and leadership.

LEON ARNOLD MULLER (Chicago)

### Spiritual Healing

IN HIS LETTER entitled "Prayer" (March 4), Mr I. S. Low refers to the fact that Jesus Christ restored my health and strength and that he recovered from a breakdown (also in 1960)

by listening to the music of Wagner. He asks whether I think he should pray to Wagner!

Although I do not normally read the *Daily Mail*, it may be stated in advance that the Lord's Divine Mercy it has been granted me to see an article in it called "The Doctors and the Faith Healers" by Brian Inglis.

There are varieties of spiritual experience, and all do not involve prayer. For instance, prayer plays very little part in Buddhism, which teaches no belief in God. In addition, Gautama, the Founder, taught that his followers should not worship him.

What actually happens, I think, is this.

The Master (Schopenhauer) explained that when the Will to Live (which is the radical element in our make-up) is temporarily laid to rest, the intellect (assuming that, as in the case of Mr. Low, it is sufficiently strong and active) is set free to indulge in objective contemplation.

The Master taught that his philosophy (however paradoxical a statement this might appear to people who were inclined to take a superficial view of things, and not penetrate to the heart of the matter) was the only true Christian philosophy of his time; inasmuch as Christianity was essentially pessimistic in spirit and consisted of a denial or renunciation of the Will to Live, the will which is the origin of our existence and the source of all our sufferings.

The Master explained, however, that suicide thwarts its own purpose, being an affirmation rather than a denial of the Will to Live.

Schopenhauer thought that Jesus Christ did not really believe in a personal God, but that Christianity was to be distinguished from optimistic and theistic Judaism. On his opinion, Christianity was derived in some way from an Indian source. Its pessimism, its Avatar and its spirit of renunciation are all essentially Indian.

I believe that there is the Spirit of Good and there is the Spirit of Evil. Both are in every one of us all the time. There is continual conflict between them. Often it is difficult to tell which Spirit is in the ascendancy.

Both Spirits are real, and both eternal. The Spirit which you choose to serve is the one which wins in the end. We are immortal souls in mortal animal bodies. God is not a person (being the Spirit of Good). It is the personalising of God which has made man desolate.

Incidentally, in 1960 Jesus Christ arranged for me to have a drive in the country every day for three months. Did Wagner do this for Mr Low?

JOHN SUTHERLAND

OH THE THRILL I got from reading the poems in the *FREETHINKER* of March 18. To think that great new talents are following the path of Edward Lear and Ogden Nash and that the Editor of the *FREETHINKER* should have the foresight to allow two pages to satire, namely the mock-humorous mock-dialogue, "Mock Trial".

It is a great relief to know that if *Private Eye* were to go bankrupt the *FREETHINKER* is there to carry on the good work of providing literary satire for the masses and a literary outlet for the worst poetry to see a printing press for a decade.

PETER J. C. LESLIE

### Subsidising Catholics

I WONDER if those who object to free contraception under the NHS have considered the rights of those non-Catholic taxpayers and ratepayers who have to subsidise oversize Catholic families through maternity grants, midwife services, hospital and Family Allowances. I am myself a (agnostic) member of a Catholic family of 11.

E. J. McDONNELL (Manchester University Union)

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