

FREE THINKER

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MURDER

The Bodies on the Moor trial at Chester Assizes displays the usual horror and fascination of such events. Fundamental questions about human nature mingle with technical problems like the desirability of publicising committal proceedings, publishing detailed evidence in sordid cases, using tape recordings and allowing financial arrangements before the trial between witnesses and newspapers.

Revulsion against the perpetrators of hideous cruelty to children is happily a universal phenomenon. Few things in life are really unspeakable. Such activity is. Yet while hardly anyone will speak about it, over 7 million people pay the *News of the World* to write about it. The citizens of Chester are better behaved than most, so that sometimes the public gallery isn't filled. But we know from the past how easily a murder trial can become a junket. As our heads shake in disapproval and our tongues cluck scoldingly, our eyes dilate with curiosity and our mouths drool expectantly. Virtue is dull; vice is news; bestiality is sensational.

Red in tooth and claw

Whoever savaged and slaughtered the two children and a youth—Myra Hindley and Ian Brady are still innocent—were scraping the bottom of the barrel of human nature. Somewhere in all of us is an appetite for the macabre. Few have the capacity to be other than distant guilty witnesses. We are forced to ask ourselves what perversity (perversion seems too homely a word, merely kinky) of feeling could gain satisfaction from the terrified death screams of another creature, especially a child who in all innocence accepted an invitation home. At a time when the Royal Commission on the Penal System has been dissolved and is to be replaced by an Advisory Council, when capital punishment has been suspended, we stand impotent spectators of the judicial system. What use can such people be to society, how can they ever be reformed? What psychiatrist, or biochemist, or social worker can we call on to straighten out the crooked places of a degenerate mind?

It is not surprising that, in the wake of this case, an independent fighting Mr Sydney Silverman's seat at the recent election gained some 5,000 votes—in these days of mainstream politics, startlingly high. But a little reflection shows that the brutalisation of society that a hanging melodrama induces does not deter the unstable. It merely offers the morbid appetite a violent dessert after the main dish. The unstable—or the mad by M'Naughten's Rules, a class which may not appear very different to future generations, stripped of preconceptions about the theological free will—act out their nature. The ruthless professional criminal imagines he will not get caught.

Celebrated murder trials like the present one create the impression that this felony is usually mysterious, unmotivated, vicious, unpredictable. Such events are never overlooked by a competitive press, so occupy a disproportionate amount of news space; but they are really the exposed ninth of the iceberg.

A homely crime

The majority of cases occur in families or among associates. A woman is much more likely to be murdered by her husband than by a stranger while walking home alone along a dark street. Murder is a homely crime. Frustration or jealousy or exasperation in the family circle is the likely cause. That is why the figures show no significant trend. Other crimes rise or decline in a graphical way. Murder fluctuates erratically round a base line. It baffles criminologists, psychologists, sociologists. Bring in a welfare state, abolish want, improve housing, limit the size of families, but how can you stop the old woman and the old man from getting on each other's nerves, or a squawking baby from overwhelming both of them? To know that murders are more likely, statistically, to be committed on a Monday in spring may be useful to a brains trust, but ludicrously unrelated to the problem of prevention.

A Home Office Research Unit report *Murder*, published in 1961, showed that the percentage of killings in the execution of robbery or other acquisitive crime had risen from 7 before 1957 to 20 after. This trebling may tell us something about the murky adjuncts of the affluent society, with its status in possessing things rather than qualities, but does not help in deciding how the majority of murders could have been averted. They do not, for that matter, tell us anything about how to avert materialistic crimes, for we are surely committed to the affluent society, with its psychological *sequelae*. Another committee, composed of Louis Blom-Cooper and Drs Terrence Morris and Hyatt Williams, is to study homicides over the next 10 years. We look forward to a breakthrough. But not with much confidence.

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Trial topics

The present case abounds with matters of juridical interest: the admissibility of evidence, the use of exhibits, the definition of "accomplice". These are of purely specialist interest. Of concern to the general public is the question of reporting. Without in any way wishing to hamper the freedom of the press or introduce secret trials with all their opportunities for abuse, informed opinion remains anxious about the plethora of publicity in these cases. Not simply for its pandering to baser appetites, but for possible influence on the outcome of the case. In Australia, for example, a jury is impounded and isolated from newspaper comment for the duration of a murder trial, but in England, where jurors are unrestricted, it is clearly undesirable to expose them to reports in which the more sensational portions figure in detail in exclusion to duller yet possibly more significant material.

But it must be admitted that in divorce cases where full reporting is forbidden, the synopses can be even more slanted and misleading than fuller reportage. During the hearing jurors may however be so absorbed in the case before the court that they hardly bother to read the pale shadow of a newspaper report. The same cannot be said

of reports of committal proceedings. Where the details are unsavory it is wellnigh impossible for readers, potential jurors, to face the trial unclouded by distaste for the whole affair and indignation against the accused, who has not at this stage presented his defence. This can easily suggest to the layman that he has no defence to offer.

Witnesses for hire

Clearly the gravest social issue raised in the moors trial is the vested interest in the verdict brought about by newspaper contracts with witnesses. David Smith does not seem to have endeared himself to the judge, Mr Justice Fenton Atkinson, by his pop appearance and a journal which began:

God is a superstition, a cancer injected into religion. In the event he made a good witness, and there is no evidence that his testimony was in any way altered by the golden bearhug of the *News of the World*. Wined, dined and vacationed during and before the trial, he is moreover under contract to write his (ghosted) memoirs. Clearly there is little of interest the laws of libel would allow him to say if the accused were to be acquitted, so he stands to gain substantially from a conviction. A temptation even for George Washington.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

(The following is the full text of a speech given by the Duke of Edinburgh at ICY's Conference on Overseas Service, held at Manchester University on United Nations Day, 1965, and first published in ICY's final Newsletter, March, 1966. I am very grateful to the ICY Secretariat and to His Royal Highness for kind permission to republish—Ed.)

IT is very easy to be cynical about International Co-operation Year and all it stands for. The United Nations Organisation itself has been sniped at without interruption since it came into being 20 years ago.

The brave, peaceful, friendly and co-operative new world which seemed to be promised by the formation of the United Nations is only remarkable for the fact that it never appeared. Even the word "United" seems to be mocked by the facts of world tension and discord.

Disappointments

International co-operation doesn't look much better. There is scant evidence in the daily papers or on radio or television of any significant international co-operation. All the evidence seems to point to the exact opposite: strife, jealousy, hurt feelings and petty nationalism.

One is led to believe that even aid programmes have assumed political significance. Of course if you dig a bit deeper there is plenty of international co-operation going on but apparently none of it is sufficiently important to make the news headlines.

The sad fact is that it is easier and apparently a great deal more enjoyable to carp and to criticise than to make any constructive contribution. The best of all is to criticise from a position of total ignorance of the facts. Like the wartime American saying—"My mind is made up but don't confuse me with the facts".

It is, of course, a great deal safer to criticise than to create. The critic or the cynic can shoot from a strong defensive position; the doer is virtually defenceless.

Whether we like it or not this is a fact of human nature, and I believe that it should be the very first rule in any constructive endeavour to make a realistic allowance for human nature.

No matter how high our ideals, no matter how worthy the cause, no matter how obviously reasonable the idea may be, no matter how sensible our approach, it is doomed to a precarious existence, in a vacuum at best or complete failure at worst, if we ever forget that men are not angels. If governments had angelic qualities then any political system would be tolerable.

The problem, therefore, is to see the good idea in relation to human nature. Mankind has been having good ideas since prehistory. Virtually every great religious system is full of good ideas. The very simple Christian message, for instance, that love is better than hate is probably the best idea of all.

But somehow or other that isn't enough. Our reason can recognise good ideas but then something else in our human make-up comes along and torpedoes the good idea with devastating effect.

The crux of the matter therefore seems to lie in our human nature, and only when we begin to take a realistic view of what makes man tick, what are the origins of his instincts, and what are the causes of his emotions, shall we ever be able to present good ideas in such a way that they are acceptable in practice as well as in theory.

Science of behaviour needed

We talk glibly enough about the age of science, we accept without a thought that scientists have made wonderful discoveries; we are quite prepared to use those discoveries which are convenient to our material existence but we ig-

more those which explain human behaviour. We continue to live with a philosophy about human nature which has been virtually unchanged since we were cavemen.

But if we need to be more realistic about ourselves I think we also need to be rather more realistic about our good ideas. For instance it is obviously a good idea that nations should live peacefully together and not go to war. If by any chance two nations should start fighting it is no good condemning war or telling them they shouldn't use certain weapons. The only sensible thing to do is to try and remove the cause of the conflict.

If you want to get people to co-operate you have got to create an environment in which it is in their interests to co-operate. You cannot expect them to co-operate in an environment in which there is a cause of conflict.

People are perfectly prepared to get on together until they are given some reason, or some reason crops up, which creates conflict between them. If you put a lot of young people together from different countries without pre-conceived ideas, without responsibility and with some common objective everything goes with a swing.

Put together a conference of adults with the responsibility of representing a hardened political or national point of view, each one with his own conflicting objective, and co-operation is one of the things which you don't get.

Young volunteers

This is the value in practical terms of young people going abroad to do some form of useful work. The environment of this operation is right because the receiving countries get the skilled services of these people where they are most needed without any political strings. The young people themselves give their services in return for an added and most valuable personal experience. Provided the choice of volunteers is well made there are no problems and there are no causes for conflict.

Naturally there are occasions when volunteers feel they have not been properly used or have some complaint about the way they have been treated, and I daresay the host countries have also had some complaints. However, by and large, the fact that it is a voluntary scheme organised by voluntary bodies means that these difficulties are accepted more readily than if it were an entirely commercial undertaking.

The British scheme for sending volunteers overseas is run by a Committee called the Lockwood Committee, representing all the voluntary bodies involved—namely the United Nations Association, The National Union of Students, Voluntary Service Overseas and International Voluntary Service—together with representatives of the Ministry of Overseas Development which meets 75 per cent of the cost of sending the volunteers abroad. There is also a Council for Volunteers Overseas which meets to discuss general problems and future policy.

Costly challenge

The most difficult problem all these bodies have to face is how to pay for this programme. It costs on the average £600 to send a volunteer for a year overseas. Of this sum the voluntary bodies have to raise about £150. This means that for a thousand volunteers some £150,000 has to be raised from voluntary sources. A simple calculation will show that it needs £300,000 to send two thousand volunteers. This, as anyone with experience of raising money knows, is going to take some doing.

In 1962 fifty graduate went overseas, this year 901 graduates or otherwise qualified young people including sixty ex-apprentices have been recruited. In addition some 450 school-leavers have gone abroad.

Although the growth in numbers has been impressive they do not come up to the applications from overseas by a long chalk. In fact this year recruiting is 248 below the accepted applications. It has been particularly difficult to find ex-apprentices and people with agricultural qualifications.

I have no doubt that we can improve on this and even increase our target for next year but it is going to need the active co-operation of employers in industry, the medical service, local education authorities, local authorities, and universities.

Plea to employers

At the moment there is, unfortunately, an over-riding disadvantage about volunteering for service overseas and that is the reluctance of these employers to make any concessions or to make it easier for returning volunteers to get back into employment without loss of seniority, pay increments, pensions rights and so on.

I don't say this in any critical sense because I daresay they have very valid reasons and in any case there are a great many public spirited young people who come forward in spite of this disadvantage. However, I cannot pretend that many more would not come forward if this difficulty did not exist.

Virtually anybody of any age with a technical or professional qualification could be accepted for one or preferably two years overseas doing a job which the host country really needs to have filled.

The fact is that voluntary service overseas is a good idea in any context and it has the further advantage that it is practical, useful and does not cause any conflict. Furthermore, in both the returned volunteers and in the communities in which they have served there is a new and vivid understanding of the importance and value of international co-operation in human terms.

Overcome instinct with reason

Merely because international co-operation and the principles of the United Nations Organisation are obviously sensible and reasonable does not mean that they can be achieved by waving a wand or by sitting together and willing it. This is going to be a long and patient process of helping mankind to overcome instinct with reason; to create an atmosphere where the folly of conflict becomes obvious and the advantage of co-operation is manifest.

No single movement, no one programme can achieve this. It is going to need a growing army of organisations, each working in its own sphere, to make any impression. Overseas voluntary service is only one of these agencies but it is certainly one of the most effective and as it grows and becomes more co-ordinated with similar schemes in other countries, it holds out a great promise for the future.

If we hope to achieve any kind of peaceful understanding between peoples and nations we have got to throw all our dangerous primitive instincts—not all instincts are dangerous—on to the scrap heap.

Prejudice, jealousy, tribal nationalism and the desire to dominate, must all go. In their place we must make better use of our reason which recognises the vital value to the whole world of friendship, peace and co-operation.

THIS WORLD

No Place Like Home

IN THE FREETHINKER for January 7 there was a brief report on Kent County Council's King Hill Hostel. Here some 58 homeless families (minus father-husband) are housed in "workhouse" conditions for up to 3 months. That, at any rate, is the official position. Last week in the High Court the Council fought a test case against the Daniels family for overstaying, and last Monday against Messrs Daniels, Mills and Moore for moving in with their families. It claims that these restrictions are necessary because prior to 1952 families were unruly, stayed too long and the husbands gave up work.

LED by Andy Anderson and Secularist Jim Radford, an action committee has been fighting their case for some time. Granted legal aid, they have submitted to the court a number of propositions:

- (1) Families do not stay at King Hill, an abandoned air force barracks, from choice but because they have nowhere else to go. One family was moved there by Rochester Council as it is Kent's central home for displaced persons, and then struck off the housing list because they had "moved out of" the area.
- (2) The restrictions against husbands and other conditions are inhuman and in contrast with those prevailing elsewhere. The wife of Mr Douglas Jay, herself a member of the Greater London Council, was called as witness and described the different provisions at Morning Lane Hostel, Hackney.
- (3) The hostel was set up under the National Assistance Act of 1948, by which it was to be under the administration and guidance of the Minister of Health. This condition has not been fulfilled.
- (4) There were already men on the premises, viz 2 maintenance men and the husbands of the matron, assistant matron and welfare worker.
- (5) The welfare worker is inadequately qualified and has made prejudicial and inaccurate reports on residents to Kent County Councillors.
- (6) The site is 2 miles from the nearest shops and school and 5-6 miles from the nearest work, so some husbands cannot get jobs and have to help their wives, all with large families.
- (7) Outside is a dangerous, ill-lit road, where a 12-year-old hostel was recently killed.

JIM RADFORD himself has been served with a summons for trespass and an injunction to keep off the premises. With other members of his committee he staged a poster parade outside the Law Courts while the test cases were being heard. Less obtrusively they have arranged complete family planning facilities for the residents (or should one say "inmates" ?).

AT the Annual Conference of the Association of Child Care Officers, President Mr Tom White referred to the shortage of officers and the reasons for taking children into care. One of them was housing. In the North one local authority is paying £3,800 a year to keep 7 children of a homeless family in care. It would be enough to purchase a terrace cottage for them and their parents.

Freedom for Rhodesia

WITH TALKS being canvassed between Harold Wilson and Ian Smith, the Rhodesian situation may yet be amicably solved. But on the assumption that illegality may continue, the Anti-Apartheid Movement is launching a National Campaign on Rhodesia, inaugurated by a briefing meeting at Conway Hall last Sunday. In a press release it declared

We are doing so because we believe the removal of the Smith régime and the establishment of full democracy for the people

of Rhodesia to be the most urgent issue now confronting Southern Africa.

IN a letter to members and supporters it relates this question to its primary concern: —

As long as the present régime in Rhodesia is able to depend on the South African Government for economic support it will be able to survive. It has existed as long as it has largely because of South African help.

JUNE has been declared "Freedom for Rhodesia" month, with a march from Hyde Park and rally in Trafalgar Square on June 26.

Cosmo

IN PREPARATION for the Government White Paper on broadcasting, Mrs Avril Fox is inviting all interested in broadcasting freedom to contact Murray Kaye (14 The Greenway, Potters Bar, Herts), enclosing sae at least 6 by 9 inches, for petition forms and leaflets about her organisation. She invites everyone to congratulate the BBC by phone or letter when he approves as well as censuring when dissatisfied. Secularists, by the way, might take this opportunity of writing to their MP calling for the implementation of the Beveridge and Pilkington Reports in the field of Secular Humanism. Copies of an NSS pamphlet *Looking and Listening* which gives background information can be obtained from 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1. As Mrs Fox says,

There is no doubt that if it is felt that there is strong public opinion on these questions it will affect the decisions made, and the Clean Up people are well aware of this fact. We now have just as many members as they have, but we don't as yet make as much noise.

Abortion in Britain

THIS was the name of a conference organised by the Family Planning Association in London recently. Speakers notably ALRA supporter Mr Peter Diggory, a consultant gynaecologist, stressed that even under the present law more abortions could be performed than at present. Of his 110 abortions, 10 were performed on eugenic grounds. Many doctors were too timid of colleagues, patients' relatives and Irish Catholic nurses.

LORD SILKIN has reintroduced his bill.

Whicker Report on Spirits

PSYCHIC Geraldine Cummins was filed by a documentary team demonstrating "automatic writing". The message came from the late Victor Weisz (Vicky). A good indication of Miss Cummins's integrity is to be found in Alan Whicker's column in the *News of the World* (April 24):

Afterwards she declared she had never heard of Vicky, knew nothing of him.

Better to Marry Than Burn

AN ARTICLE appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* (March 12) by an anonymous priest "who has taught the beauty of marriage, the sacredness of sex, and the picture of divine friendship contained in the image of married love". Because of his profession he is deprived of the blessings he promises others, and makes a moving appeal

to love and to be loved in the opportunity that marriage provides for creative giving. I desperately want to share the secrets of my love for God and His mercy in the intimacy of married love.

IN St Petersburg, Florida, Anthony Girandola has not waited for any possible change of heart by the Vatican. Refused a dispensation to marry (occasionally granted on condition that priests do not practise the ministry and

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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, MCRÆ 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

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelmescott, 4 Portland Place, Clifton), Tuesday, May 10th, 7.15 p.m.: Miss J. NEWSCOMBE, "A Humanist Group in a University".

Drian Galleries, 5-7 Porchester Place, London, W.2. Exhibition "Small Fantasies in Oils" by Oswald Blakeston. Until May 21st.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, May 8th, 11 a.m.:

Dr JOHN LEWIS "The Philosophy of T. S. Eliot".

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.c. to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

THIS WORLD continued

keep their marriage secret), he took a wife without permission. Now he plans to open a guest house for married priests, who, as Emmet McLoughlin (now declaring that Catholic theology approves the pill on the theory of Probabiliam) has pointed out, often find it difficult to work on leaving the ministry. He himself intends to continue to officiate if he can find suitable premises. *Once a priest always a priest.*

Catholic Democracy

CATHOLICS in South Vietnam (10 per cent of population) have denounced the country's Buddhists (70 per cent) as "traitors", and called on them to rally behind the Government (*American-backed military dictatorship*) in its fight against the Communists (*most North Vietnamese and many South Vietnamese*).

AN Irish mother who had had thirteen pregnancies in eighteen years of marriage turned Protestant. Against the wishes of her Catholic husband she has successfully applied to Dorset Quarter Sessions for an order for 6 of her 8 children to be raised as Protestants to escape the "wheel of rebirth". In an interview with the *Sunday Mirror* (April 24) she said:

If we had been able to plan our family we would still be as happy as when we married in Dublin in 1948. But things started going downhill when the first baby arrived after three

years and I became pregnant almost every year. I would have taken precautions, but my husband would not allow it because of his religion. The continual strain and miscarriages wore me out and affected by health.

THE Italian Parliament's Anti-Mafia Commission has prepared a very critical report of Sicilian Courts. They have shown bias towards the Mafia. The higher courts have been worse than the lower, often reversing their courageous decisions.

This encourages the Mafia and gives prestige to the Mafia man when he returns to his village.

Monkey Tricks

SEEING the piece about the "monkey trial" in the FREETHINKER (April 22), a correspondent, Mr Stuart Montague, has written to say that when he was in Miami in 1926, he went to a medical exhibition and began explaining the theory of evolution with the help of some specimens. Some doctors came over.

When they grasped what I was saying they went into hysterics and raved at me and my little audience that I was talking absolute nonsense. I remember that one of the doctors actually mentioned Adam and Eve and Adam's rib (*The Word*, November 1963).

Capital Punishment

THE Bristol Campaign (Jim Little, 70 Novers Park Road, Bristol 4) is extending its activities from Northern Ireland (where many capital crimes were removed in March by 27 votes to 11) to the Channel Islands (under the jurisdiction of the British Home Secretary, but still retentionist), France, Russia and the Philippines.

Human Ecology

THE PL is forming a group to study this subject. First meeting will be at 38 Primrose Gardens, London, NW3 on May 10 at 7.30 p.m. Matters for study are "food production, nutritional values, population problems, prevention of soil erosion and the impact of urban life on the countryside" (*Plan*, April).

About Education

THERE is the possibility of obtaining a centre in London for a project in social education. Suggestions for possible uses are invited by the HTA (Miss Dorothy Roberts, 213 Pennymead, Harlow, Essex).

THE Association has received a complaint from a primary school headmaster who was touted by the British and Foreign Bible Society to help promote their "Feed the Minds" Campaign. Needless to say, the minds were to be fed with Biblical ambrosia "and other literature". A complaint to the Minister brought no results.

THE NSS recived a complaint that Havering Council made a grant of £36 to the Christian Education Movement, and issued a press release inviting the ratepayers to consider legal action.

Obituary Extraordinary

IT is with deep regret that we announce the death of God. The deceased, who had been in poor health for some time, is thought to have passed away quietly in his sleep. The body was first discovered by Nietzsche a century ago, but priestly beneficiaries refused to believe the report, apparently preferring the world to believe the deceased was still alive. Many of them now however agree that the sad event did indeed take place. They discount the rumour that he died screaming for God, and believe that he was an atheist like themselves. He is thought to have died intestate but the point is purely academic as debts on the estate far outweigh assets.

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Richard Clements

Then, proceeding to explore other aspects of his work, she adds: "According to Teilhard the study of evolution reveals in the matter of the universe a tendency to organized complexification which inevitably gave rise to the phenomena we call life and thought".

"Why should we not describe life", he writes (*The Future of Man*), "as the specific property of matter, the stuff of the universe, carried by evolution into the zone of the highest complexity?" ("At the stage of corpuscles reaching a million atoms in their complexity (viruses)," he adds, "we come to the first flush heralding the dawn of life".)

The passages quoted illustrate Chardin's approach to some of the old and complex problems of the nature of the universe and the evolutionary concept of life and consciousness. Miss Nott, having indicated what is distinctive in this account, which—let me repeat—few modern biologists would question, then directs her criticism to such matters as the trouble he encounters "when he tries to show how 'life' and 'thought' actually entered into the material universe". Here, again, she is sharply critical, as are most Rationalists and Freethinkers, when he engages in reckless speculation about such matters as "totalitarian experiments", "Noosphere", "Point Omega", "collective personality", etc etc.

Human co-operation

"Teilhard is very ready to by-pass what seems to many of us the present ambivalence of human feeling", Miss Nott continues, "hence to minimize the problem of evil-doing in general. Surely this can only be satisfying if you are able to identify the good with collectivization and with co-operation as such—without regard to goals. . . . The Great Train Robbery was a shining example of co-operation and teamwork—of the collective spirit. But obviously it has left many people in much greater moral confusion than they were in before".

The merit of this kind of appreciative but critical exposition of Chardin's scientific and philosophical ideas, especially at this time when a stream of his books (together with others about the man and his writings) is pouring from the presses, is that it helps readers to a better understanding of what is *living* and *progressive* in his philosophy and to a firm rejection of some of its more doubtful speculative accretions. Certainly the modern Humanist has much to learn from Chardin when he pleads for the coming together of men of all races to secure a one-world concept and the global welfare of mankind. There is also a crying need for a Secularist ethic that will deepen and enrich human relationships in all the spheres of life—international, economic, political, social and cultural.

Hunger

Mr N. W. Pirie's essay on "A Rational Approach to World Feeding" deals with an international problem of major importance; the menace of hunger. He accepts, as the Food and Agriculture Organization (and other bodies) say, "that about one-half the population of the world is malnourished and that a tenth or more is hungry; that during the past decade population has increased as fast as food supplies; and that there is no reason to think that the measures now being taken will abolish this lamentable state of affairs". He assumes the published food surveys are also correct when they show an even greater disparity in protein than caloric intake between the well- and ill-fed parts of the world. He favours, though it may disgruntle most of the specialists, an eclectic

approach to the problems arising from the given facts.

The reader will find this article packed with facts and ideas: it will repay the most careful study. For instance, how many people know that it costs twenty to thirty shillings a pound to deliver the protein in milk to the door in Britain? Or that this is about the cost of the useful protein in meat? Mr Pirie estimates that leaf protein would cost three shillings a pound if it were made from crops grown specially. He suggests it is very unlikely that the extension of present-day methods of husbandry will produce the amount of food needed, hence it follows of necessity that the problem will be solved, if it is solved, by the use of novel foods.

Then, again, are you a conservative in food habits? Most people, our author thinks, maintain "a wholly illogical set of beliefs about food that they acquired in infancy". He comments: "In Britain cows but not horses can be eaten, chickens must be fresh but pheasant putrid, the gut contents of molluscs and small fish can be eaten but not those of other animals, and so on. But prejudice varies dramatically from country to country and it is not static as is abundantly shown by the acceptance, after an initial phase of hostility, of potatoes, tomatoes, grapefruit, and canned or packaged food".

Religious theory

Enquirers into the validity and truth of religious claims, no matter to what school of thought they belong, will read with both pleasure and profit Mr Paul Edwards's lucid and closely reasoned article, "Is Fideistic Theology Irrefutable?" The object he has in mind is to show that, in spite of some concessions made to this standpoint by certain noted unbelievers—amongst them Bertrand Russell—in the only sense that concerns students of philosophy, fideistic theology is not at all impregnable to rational criticism. I commend this admirable essay to Secularist lecturers, debaters and writers.

Another article in this collection that merits close study is by Professor Hermann Bondi, who writes on "Science and Religion". It is a contribution that, for discerning readers, "opens windows in the mind".

Here are a few brief examples of points well made. "Religion differs basically from science", he writes, "when it relies on the testimony of the Bible or the Koran, for example, implicitly denying the fallibility of at least some human beings. In science we acknowledge that we may all be wrong, but in revealed religion exceptions must be made. . . . To suggest that anyone has private access to the truth so that he can impose his beliefs on others is directly contrary to what the development of science teaches us about human error".

Religious practice

On the subject of religious teaching in schools, Professor Bondi remarks: "Where religion is taught in schools . . . it should be made clear to children that people of the highest intelligence and integrity hold different views. I regard this as so important that it should be made compulsory. I do not believe that science provides the only method of understanding, but it is a unifying influence in the world, whereas religion is often divisive and should be treated with scepticism and tolerance".

There is much more that could be said about the contents of the 1966 *Rationalist Annual*. It deserves the widest possible circulation and study. Why not a special effort this year to have it put in all public libraries and reading rooms?

POPE PAUL'S STAIN-REMOVER

Otto Wolfgang

IT HAD been assumed that, when the Second Vatican Council was wound up, at its culmination Pope John would be beatified by the simple process of general acclaim. However, Pope Paul, known as a red-tape bureaucrat, insisted on the proper procedure which takes many years (the shortest duration since 1625 has been 28 years); and he insisted that at the same time Pius XII (Pacelli) should be considered for promotion to sanctity. "I had the great blessing for 25 years to serve him during his pontificate and to be near him day by day", declared Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Monti, called Pope Paul VI.

Upon which a Protestant observer from the US exclaimed: "It's no longer necessary to make John XXIII a saint; he is one already!" Whilst the personal record of Eugenio Pacelli, the "German Pope", still needs white-washing.

Roncalli's first act as Pope John was to send the "German Pope's" German confidante, Sister Pasquita, hurriedly packing, together with the aristocratic relations for whom Pacelli had secured Vatican sinecures. Therefore it does not appear to be in good taste to deal with these opposite characters at the same time. *Der Spiegel* of December 22 called Pius XII "the last pope of an epoch when the Vatican kept her distance from the world at large", a haughty authoritarian who condemned everything modern and liberal. Whereas Angelo Roncalli, the son of peasants, mixed with the ordinary people and propagated *aggiornamento*, ie adaptation of the Church to the prevailing conditions.

The trader of the Vatican

As successor to such antagonistic characters, Montini has tried to steer a middle course, which in practice means a policy of vacillation and shirking decisions. He is an innate authoritarian like his beloved late boss, but trying in vain to imitate in his speech his modest immediate predecessor. Last autumn he sent back a Council resolution with the pedantic correction: "It is wrong to say Protestants 'find' God in the Bible; they only 'look for Him' there". When flying to India, he called himself a "missionary" and in Bethlehem he prayed to the "Christ of the Church of Rome". He all but negated John's *dictum* that the dogmas, while remaining unalterable, have to be formulated in different ways today. Paul is not made of

the bold stuff of his reforming predecessor. He is, as *Time* magazine stated, a touchy, lonely, difficult and dilatory person; but irresolute people are generally also very obstinate in order to make up for this shortcoming. And uppermost in Paul's obsessions is his vain effort to white-wash his beloved model, Pacelli. He broke with the Vatican tradition of keeping archives secret for 100 years and, edited by three Jesuit historians, the first volume of documents dealing with the first 18 months of Pacelli's Pontificate has been published. (*Le Saint Siège et la guerre en Europe, Mars 1939—Août 1940*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1965; 556 pages; 5,000 lire).

Pius XII and Nazism

When, at 5.30 am on May 1940, Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg without any declaration of war, the representatives of France, Great Britain, Belgium and USA immediately demanded an audience of the Pope and requested him to publish a strong declaration of condemnation. Secretary of State Cardinal Maglione wrote in this sense to the *Osservatore Romano* after having received a Papal letter stating that peace-loving small nations ought not to be attacked. None of these documents was actually published, it was just shadow-boxing. If Montini wanted to counter Hochhuth's accusation, "this first volume definitely contains nothing to disprove" the *Representative*, states *Der Spiegel* of January 3. "The 379 published speeches, letters, memoranda and files show that since spring 1939 Pius has been talking of the boon of restored peace. At the same time it becomes clear that, even against better advice from his collaborators, he declined to criticize Hitler's policy openly", hiding behind the excuse that in Germany there lived 40 million Catholics (not all of whom were Nazis).

When Bullit (US Ambassador in Paris) asked Pius at least to excommunicate Hitler, Valeri, Apostolic Nuncio in Paris, rejected the idea. "One cannot ask the impossible. Who knows whether Hitler has ever been baptized?"

Pius sent comforting telegrams of sympathy to King Leopold of Belgium, Queen Wilhemina of Holland and the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, to "forestall further *demarches* of the Allies", but did not even mention the aggressor. Charles-Roux, France's Ambassador to the Holy See, remarked with disgust: "Showing the victims sympathy is one thing, to condemn a crime is another".

PROTESTANTISM IN SPAIN

Spanish Evangelical Messenger, February 1966

WHEN PROTESTANTS receive permission to open a chapel in Spain they are not allowed to erect any exterior sign indicating that it is a Protestant church. Usually such a church is merely two rooms converted into a meeting place and situated in an alley-way or back street. Often churches are damaged and members molested and victimised in various ways. Because of this, services still have to be conducted as private affairs in members' homes.

Problems are still arising over the marriage of Protestants. The Roman Catholic authorities insist that baptism in the RC Church is binding for ever, which means that both priests and civil judges can refuse to allow a Protestant marriage to take place. Neither will they recognise such a marriage conducted by the pastors. This is a severe and bitter trial to lots of young people who can

find no way round this obstacle.

Sorrowful scenes have occurred at burials too. All hospitals are controlled by the Roman Catholic authorities and any person who dies therein is at once subject to the rites of the RC Church. It can be a very distressing affair when a dying person is in the hands of RC priest-controlled officialdom.

Sometimes burial in the cemetery is forbidden altogether. At other times the wishes of the deceased are completely disregarded, and a Roman Catholic funeral performed irrespective of the wishes of the Protestant family, who may be accompanied to the burial ground by police or soldiers so as to prevent any expression of faith by believers mourning the deceased Christian.

Christians in Spain are threatened with loss of work and

position if they refuse to give up their evangelical faith and attend Protestant meetings. Business and professional men may lose their clients and be overtaken by financial disaster if they attend evangelical services.

In spite of their degree of efficiency, Protestant nurses are not allowed to work in hospitals. Teachers who possess all the necessary diplomas and qualifications are prevented from opening their own schools because they will not agree to give Roman Catholic instruction to their pupils. In fact, it is extremely difficult for a Protestant to be employed anywhere in this land. In local government the rule is that the municipality is Roman Catholic and so must be its employees. Even young men doing their period of national service in the forces are faced with many hardships and trials when they refuse to go to mass.

There are many, many more instances of injustice which could be recorded, but we ask only your earnest prayers that we shall not be hindered much longer in our progress towards freedom of worship for all Spaniards. We believe that all men should be respected no matter what faith they profess and that we, as evangelical Christians, should be able to preach the Gospel of freedom in Christ Jesus our Lord to a very needy people.

NO COMMENT

"In the time of Charlemagne there was a famous scholar Paul the Deacon, who later lived at Monte Cassino. On one occasion when the honour fell to him of chanting the Hymn of Praise to the Paschal Candle (which we now sing at the Easter Vigil) he unfortunately developed a cold and lost his voice through hoarseness. He was most reluctant to forgo the honour of singing and so prayed earnestly to St John the Baptist. . . . Most Catholics lose their voice when it comes to singing the praises of God in church; perhaps a prayer to St John the Baptist might help!"—*Paschaltide Bulletin* (April 24).

'A Roman Catholic priest has attacked what he calls 'auctioning the dead'—a practice he says is carried out at Roman Catholic funeral services in parts of Ireland. Describing a funeral he attended recently, he said that after the Mass the priest placed a table by the altar rails. Then the congregation filed up to the table, placed sums of money on a plate and whispered their names and the amounts given. . . . The offering goes to the clergy and in some cases forms an accepted part of their income. Collections can exceed £250 at a 'good' funeral and have been known to total £1,000, says the priest"—*Reformer*, March/April.

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LETTERS

Good Friday

WHOEVER wrote the article "Bad Friday" in the *FREETHINKER* has certainly a blind hatred for Jesus, as well as a superficial knowledge of his tragic life. No man of genius or worth would ever criticise a noble character such as Jesus was. The writer of the article seems to think that Jesus acts out a perverse charade, and even though he does not believe Jesus ever existed he writes and criticises him as though he did. This, of course, makes a joke of his view that Jesus is a mythical character.

If one were to criticise Hamlet and Faust in the same manner there would be uproarious laughter. No: the *Via Dolorosa* was not a charade. Jesus must here have lost his faith. It would not have been much of a sacrifice for him had he walked to his death as the writer of the article suggests, knowing it was all playing-acting, knowing "I am God's son and will be resurrected". It is because of this difficulty that the ambiguously "incarnated" nature of Jesus led to many schisms. No, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" makes his a real sacrifice. He died without hope of resurrection, in despair, to help us believe in redemption.

Death in Christian teaching is not the answer to death as the writer of "Bad Friday" would have it. It is the spirit of Jesus that is the answer to death, hence "Good Friday" not "Bad Friday".

STUART MACDONALD (Dundee)

COMPLIMENTS and thanks to the writer (not named) of "Bad Friday" in the *FREETHINKER* of April 8. It represents a fine example of journalistic economy with forceful style and reasoning.

If only one could get more believers, or rather half-believers, to read so excellent a résumé of the Humanist position.

WALTER McMILTON

TRUST

Our parson preaches faith profound
In church and parish "mag";
I wonder why they pass around
A plate—and not a bag.

A. E. Carpenter