

# FREETHINKER

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## "... TO COME TO THE AID OF WHICH PARTY?"

SOME PEOPLE THINK that Calvinists in Holland all wear broad-brimmed hats, while the RCs are distinguishable by their heavy, black-rimmed spectacles. However I doubt if anyone in this country would claim to be able to tell one sort of Christian from another just by the appearance. Nor, thank goodness, can we tell which political party a person supports unless we ask. Every now and then a Humanist maintains that it is unthinkable that anyone sharing his Secularist convictions should be a Tory (Socialist or Liberal). Of course Secular Humanists come in all shades, from blue through yellow to pink. But if anyone were to insist that it is impossible to believe in Secular Humanism while at the same time being a committed, true-red Communist or indigo-blue black Fascist, I would agree without hesitation. Unlike many Christians, we have beliefs of which the democratic freedoms are an inherent part. Humanism cannot survive under any totalitarian régime, be it Fascist, Communist or Roman Catholic. **Speakers' Corner could well be a symbol for the Humanist Movement**, for free criticism is as important to us as free enquiry.

Some time ago when the BHA carried out a survey it discovered that there were rather more pink Humanists than there were blue. But if we start looking further back into history the whole issue is again confused by labels. The word "Tory" (Irish, originally meaning persecutor, robber or outlaw) was the nickname for the supporters of the Duke of York in 1679. Ten years later it was applied to any opponent of the Whigs. "Whig" (probably Scottish) was also at first a term of contempt. Then it was applied to the Scottish Presbyterians, to the English politicians who supported the dissenters and to those who took the lead in establishing William III and George I on the throne. "Liberal" was used in a derogatory sense about the more advanced Whigs and reformers, implying that they were on the side of the French Revolutionaries. Under Gladstone the "Whigs" became "Liberals" and were in power for 23 years between 1868 and 1914. The first "Labour" MP was of course Keir Hardie, elected in 1892, and the Labour Representation Committee became known as the Labour Party in 1906. But then we also have the label "Radical", which was applied to the des-

cendants of the French Revolutionaries in about 1816. Later it came to be applied to the progressive wing of the Liberals who were concerned with the extension of franchise and the limitation of exclusive privilege. The Radicals were the pioneers of the democratic movement.

How then can we say what the great Humanists of the past would have called themselves in modern terms? Charles Bradlaugh was a "Radical" who won his last election as a "Liberal" and was anti-Socialist". The "Father of British Socialism" was Robert Owen, one of the greatest Humanist reformers. Harriet Martineau wasn't really anti-socialist but she wasn't an Owenite. J. S. Mill, "the Saint of Rationalism", was anti-welfare-state. George Jacob Holyoake, the originator of Secularism, was the virtual founder of the co-operative movement. J. M. Robertson and Ingersoll were more anti-socialist, but G. B. Shaw was a Fabian, and so was Annie Besant at one time. All have served society well. We cannot say what colour rosettes they would be wearing today.

What we can say is this: the history of Freethought is the history of radical, progressive reform, in all aspects of our society from franchise to birth control and from education to legal justice. The FREETHINKER, although independent and not an organ of the National Secular Society, supports the Objects and Principles of that Society, and these include the following quite definite statements of political policy:

"The abolition of all privileges based on hereditary, racial and colour distinction, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood."

"The improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people in all lands, especially in towns and cities where insanitary and incommensurable dwellings and the want of open spaces cause physical weakness, disease and the deterioration of family life."

"The upholding of the right and duty of labour throughout the world to organise itself for its moral and economic advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations."

"The opening of all publicly-owned educational institutions to pupils and students irrespective of wealth, position or class . . ."

We are committed to our belief in education not just for those with white skins or High IQs, but for people of all races including the mentally handicapped. As Secular Humanists with respect for the dignity and potentialities of all human beings we must deplore the exploitation of any one race, nationality, class, sex or human group by

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another. We believe in toleration and must decide how and when to stop tolerating the intolerant. Such simplifications make it all sound very easy, but when we come to deciding which political party is the most likely to put our Secular Humanist ideals and reforms into positive and swift action, we are all free to face the complications as best we can and to decide for ourselves. We have no

priests to threaten us with excommunication if we vote against the wishes of their Overlords. We don't have a list of Humanist MPs to make us feel guilty for voting for a Christian. With reason and compassion to guide us we are free to choose a pink, blue or yellow rosette; and long may this continue to be so.

THE EDITOR

## THE SORGERER'S APPRENTICE

Otto Wolfgang

"Die ich rief, die Geister,  
Werd' ich nun nicht los!"—Goethe.

POPE JOHN wanted to give Catholicism a modern face-lift; he began by gradually weeding out Saints who were, originally pagan deities or just brazen inventions. His untimely death prevented the Vatican Council from doing a proper job in cutting off dead wood. Pope Paul is far less of a modernist and more of a clever diplomatist. He knows that once you start taking out stones from an old wall the whole structure must come tumbling down. So he did his very best to put brakes on conciliar deliberations. The result was a freak which merely puts on a new layer of varnish and can be presented to the world as a brand-new commodity. However, even this is a two-edged weapon and can be used against reactionary survivals and governments in the name of the Holy See.

### Holy deadlock

The story goes that during the last days of the Hitler *Reich* a man was arrested for having beaten up an SS-man. His excuse was: "I thought one *might* now . . ." So everywhere good RC people are under the impression they may now demand more personal freedom in Church matters: the right of individual conscience and the obligation to pay decent respect to the faith of others. So the 6½ million Catholics of New York State have been called up to campaign for a change in New York's archaic divorce laws. The statutes—upheld for 179 years—permit only adultery as ground for divorce. Comments *Newsweek* (March 21):

They ensure, for example, that a woman whose husband might be serving a life sentence in prison cannot enter a public-housing project, since her family is fatherless, and any future children she bears must be illegitimate since her husband has no foreseeable chance to fornicate in jail.

People want the right to dissolve their "Holy Wedlock" once it has become a "Holy Deadlock". They are ignorant of the Vatican Council texts which, in fact, far from secularizing education, now make it a duty of governments to contribute to sectarian schools; so they argue that the Vatican—probably the wealthiest organization in the world—ought to pay for the right to have young children subjected to indoctrination, instead of exploiting state power to decree its own special beliefs as commandments binding the whole community.

It matters not whether the immediate question be divorce law here, or state bans upon birth-control information elsewhere, or official censorship of matter offensive to Catholics anywhere. For the folly in all such cases remains the constant irony: the clergy quickest to invoke state power when it serves their ends are also swiftest—when it does not—to decry all state trespassing in the realm of faith or morals (*ibid*).

### Bane in Spain

The most amazing instance of believers using the propaganda slogans of the Vatican Council as a ramming block against entrenched reaction comes from Franco

Spain, where Catholic Action stands in the forefront of the struggle against the fascist régime! No wonder the Caudillo considers "Comrade Montini" as one of his most dangerous adversaries. As in the days before the French Revolution, the Catholic hierarchy is split from top to bottom in that the lower clergy sides with the downtrodden masses whilst the Princes of the Church try to bolster up the powers-that-be.

The Vatican Council's decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, which calls for "the suppression of rights and privileges of election . . . conceded to civil authorities", would deprive Franco of a privilege which he has successfully used to secure the appointment of prelates friendly to his régime. So recently he ignored the Pope's personal choice of a native Catalan to succeed ailing Archbishop Gregorio Modrego y Casás of Barcelona as head of Spain's largest archdiocese. Instead he appointed a non-Catalan, thereby flouting both the Pope (anxious to ingratiate himself with the masses) and the Catalonian population. Much local unrest has resulted.

### Radical clergy

Whilst the Spanish hierarchy's right wing captured most of the major posts in the newly elected Episcopal Conference, Pope Paul is going out of his way to encourage a Christian Democratic movement to prevent a Castro-type development in Spain after Franco's death. Cardinal Quiroga y Palacios, a close friend of Franco, announced that although he would not be "more papal than the Pope, he would also not be more progressive than the Ecumenical Council" (*Newsweek*, March 28). Half of Spain's priests are under 40 and anxious to loosen the church's ties with the fascist government, so that they might identify more freely with the social and economic aspirations of the workers. In recent months, for example, young Basque priests have sheltered miners sought by the police for posting anti-Franco stickers. In a convent outside Barcelona 250 priests met without approval from their bishops to discuss the formation of democratic parties. In Asturias, several priests are meeting secretly with industrial workers to help organize Christian labour unions. And the *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Católicos* (Catholic Federation of Trades Unions) in Madrid has published a strongly critical reply to the Declaration of the Spanish Episcopal Conference.

The monthly *Libertad para España* quotes the Federation's response to a Declaration that "Spain is passing through an important phase of an ambitious plan of economic development":

The said plan is not ambitious and even less social but a piece of brazen (*descarado*) capitalistic exploitation denying the least feeling of justice. . . . There is no change for the betterment of the people but merely a further financial concentration for the benefit of an oligarchy which is oppressing and exploiting the country . . . the Declaration does not in the least mention any of the grave and manifest problems that afflict Spanish society, such as the curtailing of the most basic liberties.

**Anticlerical masses**

According to a survey of 15,000 industrial workers, prepared by the anti-Franco Catholic Workers' Brotherhood, only 7 per cent of the working class attend Mass on Sunday, while 89 per cent consider themselves anticlerical. *Acción Católica* leaders in Madrid are clamouring for the right to form political parties and free trades unions or workers' syndicates independent of the government. J. Olivares in *Madrid*, referring to the Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, demands legislation permitting civil weddings, and Octavio Fullat in *El Correo Catalán* requests the scrapping of obligatory religious indoctrination in schools.

**EASTER IN SEVILLE**

LET ME SAY at once that I am no authority on Spain, nor wish to be. I have never been there and I would sooner be in almost any other place on earth. As a Carmelite, Discalced, of the Teresian Reform, I spent twenty years under Spanish rule and gained a close acquaintance with a lot of "old Spanish customs" and the rigours of Spanish etiquette. Although this was somewhat mitigated by interpretation in the English tradition—which at least salted things with a little humour—it was more than enough to last a lifetime.

**Land of brutality**

Quite frankly the whole Spanish picture inspires me with horror, from the Inquisition and the *Conquistadores* to the brutal disparities between rich Church-and-aristocracy and the wretched poor which are to this day the shame of a European nation. As to the bullfights . . . I have nothing to say of them here, being concerned with other facets of authorized ritual barbarity.

Listening to **Easter in Seville** on the Bank Holiday radio programme (thank heaven only one's ears were assaulted: televised scenes of bleeding crucifixes, weeping madonnas, hooded penitents and surging devotees have reduced me to nausea before now) I was forcibly struck by the thought that here, in a University City of twentieth-century Spain, the Christian religion throws off completely its pretence of dignity and ultra-civilisation, and exposes to the world the primitive barbarity of its true nature.

Protestants have done their best to make things respectable. That they have succeeded only in making them dreary and boring should not detract from our gratitude for being spared the sadistic exhibitions of emotional Catholicism. After all, we are not—nowadays—dragged willy-nilly into their places of worship; their pious caterwaulings do not assail us from rooftops and balconies; nor do their Holy Week meditations materialize into monstrous representations that choke the city streets with Hogarthian bedlam-scenes. (Of course, there was that Good Friday procession with Cardinal Heenan, assorted nuns and the Salvation Army . . . which just shows what may be coming to us—if Freethinkers slacken the ropes ever so little . . .)

**Where the church visible is risible**

But can one ever imagine these excesses of religious *dementia* taking over England's principal cities—let alone her capital, "the most masculine city in the world"? Happily I think our rich assortment of humour is a fairly good safeguard—from the cockney's irrepressible sense of the ridiculous to the trenchant wit of north-country

This is maintained on the flimsy pretext of Spain being a monolithically Catholic country . . . But is this true? If "Catholic" means a person having been baptized in a Roman Catholic church, then there may be no further argument. But if by "Catholic" we understand a person who in fact professes the RC faith, then the boot is on the other foot. Nobody in good faith can pretend or seriously believe that Spaniards are thorough-going believers.

No wonder the Franco clique is alarmed about not the letter but the effect of Vatican Council declarations, and may come to appreciate Matthew 9, 16-17:

No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on to an old coat; for then the patch tears away from the coat and leaves a bigger hole. No more do you put new wine into old wine-skins.

Phyllis K. Graham

shrewdness. One can almost hear the sort of ribald comments that might greet "Little Mary" (seven to twelve feet high and solid brass and plaster) lurching perilously on the heaving shoulders of perspiring Knights of Saint Columba. There is also our innate dislike of airing our devotion in public, our acute distaste for anything that offends against religious decorum. At least, these saving qualities have up till now kept back the tide of holy slush—more or less: but when one suffers morning, noon and night from the torrents of religious slop that pour out from the BBC, one begins to wonder if the "sturdy British" are quite so sturdy as they were.

And we had better beware. A vast number of un-English elements ever increasing in our native population, plus the inclination to mob-hysteria sometimes evident among our youth, could be the dry tinder for starting up strange conflagrations. If not the fires of Smithfield, the flames of superstition could be relighted by an ever-watchful, ever-growing band of consecrated pyromaniacs. The red lamp that burns before the altar in Westminster Cathedral exists to "kindle such a fire in England this day as shall never be put out" . . . "this day", that is, of present effort, urgent, relentless, unremitting.

**English tolerance**

We English have a reputation—a just one, alas—for being caught napping. Two world wars took us by preposterous surprise, with a gun and a half to defend ourselves and nothing organized. Our easy-going tolerance, our incurable belief in "the other chap's" essential decency, have time and again been our undoing. (Or would have been, if our genius for getting down to the job in emergencies hadn't done us up again—at a cost). Are we, with our usual casual unconcern, strolling once again straight into the happily receptive jaws of the crocodile?

I have no idea what emotions swell the pectoral regions of His Grace of Canterbury as he views (if he does) the cream of Catholic devotion richly flowing in the streets of old Seville. Perhaps he simply prefers not to. I cannot bring myself to believe that he would wish to see England's green and pleasant land once again disfigured by the bloodier realities behind the symbols of Christian mythology. The Christian creed is a nightmare fantasy, an opium dream: but the passions and emotions that support it and give it continuity are grimly, anthropologically real. The waste land of man's savagery stretches far out beyond the careful cities of his civilisations, and its dust is the same soil on which the cities are built. There can be earthquakes.

(Continued on page 181)

## NEWS AND NOTES

### Cosmo Group

A SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL COUNCIL of the Cosmo Group has been formed. Those interested should contact the Organising Secretary, the Rev. Ronald Adkins, M.A., The Rectory, South Pool, Kingsbridge, Devon; or the Chairman, Major Edward St. John Albery, 3 Oaktree Close, Exmouth, Devon (Exmouth 4724).

### Over Forties

THE OVER FORTY ASSOCIATION for Women (Room 71, Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, Victoria, SW1) aims to help and advise older women over problems of employment or accommodation in LONDON.

### A new point in the old argument ?

A LINK BETWEEN FALLOUT AND FLUORIDATION has been discovered by a Russian scientist, Dr Va Knizhnikov who reports that the deposition of radioactive strontium (from fallout) in teeth and other bones was less in towns where the water supply contained a high natural level of fluorine.

### Head over Heart

THE FRENCH are the first to face squarely the problems involved in deciding when death has occurred (reports the *Observer*). France's highest medical authority has decided that a man whose heart is still beating may be ruled dead—if it can be proved that his brain will never again be able to resume control of his vital functions. This decision will enable French surgeons in certain clearly-defined cases, to remove living organs for transplanting from men with no hope of life.

### Stamp duty

PUPILS at West Bridgford infants' school, Nottingham, have collected a million used postage stamps. They will be sold and the proceeds used to publish Bibles.

### Distinguished Humanist commentator reprimands the President

PRESIDENT JOHNSON said recently at Princeton University that unlike nations in the past with vast power at their disposal, the United States has never sought to crush the autonomy of her neighbour. "Someone" (writes Walter Lippmann) "should explain to the President that a remark like that, showing that vast power is combined with perfect self-approval, grates badly on the nerves of many people in America and abroad. It is 'the taking of too much upon one's self as one's right' which, as the Oxford English Dictionary says, is what 'arrogance' is.

### In spite of rumours

IN 1963 (the last year for which statistics are available) only 25 per cent of all illegitimate births were to teenage girls.

### All the same . . .

BRITAIN HAS BEEN THE ONLY COUNTRY whose family planning association has refused to give advice to the unmarried as a matter of policy. On May 20 officials of the FPA decided that the problem should be reconsidered. An important factor is whether or not the association would be able to cope with increased demand for its services. However the FPA expressed its desire to help at least the "steady co-habitors" and the common law wife. If they continue to turn away the teenagers, the result of

course will be a higher rate of illegitimate births—not chastity.

### And for the world as a whole

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION "has at last accepted that family planning must be an integral part of its activities" (writes Lena Jeger in the *Guardian*). Roman Catholic obstruction to mercy is being broken down. However the resolution adopted on May 18 by which the WHO will give technical advice "on request" is considered much weaker than one put forward by 18 nations, under which the WHO would have been given the more specific rôle of "advising" governments on birth control. Speaking in support of the stronger resolution, Sir George Godber of Britain said the world population picture was desperate and should not be obscured by philosophical abstractions. "We have got to move now," he said, "we are already a generation too late."

### In Rome

CARDINAL OTTAVIANI, President of the Papal Commission on Birth Control, said that "according to the most widespread opinion" the Pope would open the way for the use of drugs that enable a woman to establish the period during which she is able to conceive! Which must be a great comfort, I am sure, to Roman Catholic women the world over. But then why should these celibate pseudo-Fathers of the Vatican worry about the *quality* of human life, so long as the *quantity* of pew-fodder is increased ?

### Church Schools in Britain

CARDINAL HEENAN has strongly criticised those members of his church who are advocating that church schools should be abandoned. He called attention to the efforts being made by Humanists to have RI withdrawn from the school syllabus, and said, "Looking at this, we surely have reasons to redouble rather than diminish our efforts to protect our children from godless education". Perhaps Humanists, looking at these two Cardinals will redouble *their* efforts to protect men, women and children from the teachings of the Church of Rome.

### The Bishops too

BISHOP HOLLAND of Salford has also deplored such liberalism in some Catholics, and remarked that Secularists were growing in numbers, were more organised and that this had been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Science. "We must not lose confidence . . ." he said.

### But his fellow believers are not helping him

A RC SCHOOL GOVERNOR writes to the *Catholic Herald* that he feels ". . . there is a very great need for an examination of the government of Catholic schools. I have seen priests on governing bodies behaving in a manner which can only be described as scandalous and which appeared quite shocking to non-Catholics used to different standards both from the point of education and from the point of view of elementary justice. . . . I have reason to believe that this experience is not unique. Anyone who protests against such abuses is regarded as a traitor of the Catholic cause . . ." And Secularists acknowledge his courage.

### Religion in Switzerland

SEVEN MEMBERS of an obscure religious sect were arrested in Zurich (the *Guardian* reports) after a 17-year-old girl had been beaten and whipped to death to exorcise the devil from her body. They included an excommunicated priest.

## FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1  
Telephone: HOP 0029

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Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

## 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

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelmescott, 4 Portland Street, Clifton), Saturday, June 11th, 3 p.m. Garden Party.  
Progressive League and Plan: enquiries to 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8.  
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, June 12th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Secularised Christianity".  
Unity Theatre (1 Goldington Street, London, NW1), "Inherit the Wind" by ROBERT E. LEE and JEROME LAWRENCE. Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 7.45 p.m. until July 17th. Tickets 3/6, 5/- and 7/6. Members only (membership 7/6 per year). Box office, EUSton 5391.  
West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, E.11). Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.  
World Union of Freethinkers, International Congress, Conway Hall, London, September 1st-5th. Interpreters and other helpers urgently required. Please contact Mr C. Bradlaugh Bonner, 23 Streathbourne Road, London, S.W.17. Telephone: BALham 3508.  
Humanist Letter Network (International): send s.a.e. to Kit Moutat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

NEXT TUESDAY, June 14 (Conway Hall, London, 6 p.m.) is the AGM of the Rationalist Press Association. There have been few times when rationalism has been more threatened from both within and without, and RPA members are urged to attend this meeting and help defend Secularist-Rationalist traditions.

## EASTER IN SEVILLE

(Continued from page 179)

landslides, upheavals of black primeval mud in the very heart of the fairest of cultures. So long as these passions and emotions are active beneath the surface—as they always will be while there are fat theocracies and vested interests to keep them going—not one of us is safe from a recurrence of the full Christian cataclysm.

### Consumer response

Freethinkers may flee from their TV screens or switch off their radios in disgust, while the grotesqueries of intestinal Christianity are turned inside out to the public gaze. Let them remind themselves that the setting for this Walpurgis Night masquerade is *Europe*, 1966: no primitive Andalusian village but an important University City

and archiepiscopal see of an ancient European power, with the closest tradition of Church autocracy and Christian morality. The choicest product, in fine, of pure, undiluted, unadulterated, vintage Roman Catholicism. No doubt we shall fly with relief to our good old English Protestant beer and drink away the sickening taste of continental liqueur. But how long will our barrels last out? The horrid fear may even be assailing us that some of them are tainted already...

Not that our real danger lies in the invasion of our sober land by moaning hordes of painted-idol worshippers and all the extravaganza of a primitive cult. Oh, no: the big tycoons of Church industry are far too cute for that. Their business is to moderate the goods to suit the customer and to run their advertising on lines acceptable to the public taste. They know their England as they know their Spain, or their South America, or anywhere else on their papal-flagged map of the world. With the greatest of skill they will tone down the lurid hue of their pagan liquor to the delicate tints of English rose. With exquisite discernment they will cater for the quiet, refined tastes of Aunt Edna, and everything will be presented with the charm and moderation of the best type of English vicarage.

### Seville with a difference

E. M. Forster has called attention to this high degree of adaptability in ecclesiastical Big Business, which is in effect the skilful manipulation of resources in proportion to power.

Nothing could be more sensitive, cultivated and understanding than Roman Catholicism in an English University, where it must expect competition. Roman Catholicism in Ireland, where it is strong and unchecked, is a very different matter.

Thus, amply supported by Dr Ramsey and the higher circles of Reverent Humanists, we may be confident of obtaining none but the very best brand of anglicized catholicism, carefully toned to our spiritual needs and adapted to our insular peculiarities.

But you know and I know that it's only a matter of the packing, the label and the fancy bottle. The contents are simply the same old poisonous brew they sell in Seville.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

### CENTENARY LECTURES THE MEANING AND VALUE OF FREETHOUGHT

Chairman: DAVID TRIBE

Friday, June 10th  
FREETHOUGHT AND SCIENCE  
Dr. E. H. HUTTEN      Dr. DAVID STEWART  
Dr. LAWRENCE KOTKAS

Friday, June 24th  
FREETHOUGHT AND LAW REFORM  
DIANE MUNDAY      ANTONY GREY

Friday, July 8th  
FREETHOUGHT AND LIBERTY  
TOM SARGENT      AVRIL FOX      JAMES SHEPHERD  
MARTIN ENNALS

Friday, July 22nd  
FREETHOUGHT AND SOCIAL WORK  
PETER FRYER      KERSTINE RICHARDS

Friday, August 5th  
FREETHOUGHT AND THE ARTS  
OSWELL BLAKESTON      PETER COTES      JOAN MILLER  
JOHN CALDER      KATHLEEN EWART

Meetings commence at 7.30 p.m.  
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1

## THE REV. GRAHAM AT OXFORD

OXFORD HUMANISTS were busy handing out a leaflet entitled "DANGER: Psychologist at Work" to some 2,000 students who went into St Aldate's Church on Sunday, May 29. Outside, ITN was filming and interviewing Humanists, the crowd, and an agnostic from Balliol who had his own warning about Dr Graham duplicated. "Is there a point in life?" it ended; "We are not sure, but we are not prepared to look in his emotional swamp. THINK . . ." When the Rev. Graham did arrive there was a half-hearted murmur of, "Yankee beggars go home . . ." and he turned and beamed. With his attractive wife he posed while a clergyman took a photograph, and the sun shone on the black nylon and velvet gown trimmed with white silk.

Through the loudspeaker we had already heard the rector referring to the Humanist leaflet, of which he approved. The congregation was encouraged to give generously towards the enormous cost of the Crusade, but no mention was made of the expected total cost per British convert to the Graham-cum-Godly way of life. And before the visitor began his sermon, the offerings were gathered in.

The sermon was clearly modified for a town in which young people are presumed to be learning to think, but the anti-intellectual message was there nevertheless. Repent for Pentecost. Simplify all the problems and misery of the world into terms of Sin, the Bible, Faith and God, and mix well over a low hell-fire (much hotter, no doubt, in Earl's Court). Simmer a while so as to reduce thought to a minimum, add a drop of conviction, a few small quotations from T. S. Eliot, O'Neill and Nietzsche, then decorate with an imposing statistic: "97 per cent of American university students profess to believe in God"; and there you have it on a plate. The Absolute Answer *à la* Graham to Absolutely Nothing.

The theology was not exactly subtle. "All the evidence shows that there must be a Creator." "Something inside us . . ." and "Man is a worshipping creature". Man has also been given a Free Will, of course, but it so happens that if he decides freely to use it (and to disobey his Loving Father and Graham) then God will kick him in the teeth. Much better just settle for obedience. Do what Graham tells you, and you, too, can have a body (mind, soul and spirit) like his.

Our problems have nothing to do with environment we were told. The faults lie in our corrupted filthy, sinful and lusty hearts. If only we could stop going on about sex and be like Jesus . . . but presumably no one is meant to start whipping American money-spenders out of the British temples.

The Rev. Graham did *not* appeal (he made it quite clear) to the emotions. Oh no. It is just a matter of abandoning thought, accepting that we cannot understand very much, and then (quite unemotionally, of course) taking the leap in the dark into Blind Faith. You won't find the answers in science. Dr Graham has looked and they aren't there. Anyway, all the best scientists are believing Christians, if not actually converted by the Rev. himself.

It wasn't easy to tell how many were converted; how many stepped forward to commit themselves to being 1966 Crusaders against the Infidels; but converted they were. They filled in cards and were given literature and a gospel of St John. They repeated after their saviour, "I have asked Christ into my life for the first time. I have dedi-

cated my life . . ." and so on. While the Rev. Graham hurried off to "that other university" at Cambridge (he had been well briefed here, too!), he left his carefully chosen disciples (one from Oxford and one from Edinburgh universities) to speak more with the new members. The "Instant Conversion" of the arena with its choirs and searchlights is perhaps easier to understand. Give it to the Crusade, they may not know what they are selling, but they know how to sell. KM.

*THE NSS issued the following challenge on May 26:*

Dr Graham has expressed his willingness to debate vital matters on Television if an invitation is extended. As a concerned unbeliever I should be happy to accept an invitation to join him.

(Signed) DAVID TRIBE, *President NSS.*

## BOOK REVIEW

Peter Cotes

THERE HAVE BEEN quite a few novels about the film world and most of them have entertained, even when the mixture has been as before. But not since the immortal *What Makes Sammy Run* have I been so enthralled by a first novel about the "rat-race" aspect of entertainment as I have been by Peter Baker's *To Win a Prize on Sunday* (*Souvenir Press, 25s*). It is a bitter-sweet concoction; laughter very near throughout to tears, with a farcical front and a tragical background of Truth seen through a gigantic Lie. The author knows his film world. He is editor of one of the most liberal and forward looking periodicals in the country and he has specialised in writing about the film industry for a very long while past. What he has noted (quietly, shrewdly, patiently and penetratingly) is all set down here, without any punches pulled, for popular consumption. Movie moguls, deflated directors, phoney stars, moronic press agents, sensitive souls as well as horrible hucksters, are Peter Baker's "meat" when he writes about a film festival abroad and the almost religious fervour which is whipped up in more ways than one for the selling of "horror" films in one particular studio where Mr Baker's "hero" "Ben Blaze" reigns as supreme warlord. Mr Blaze has been seen before and drawn by, amongst others, such practitioners in the art of "send-up" as Budd Shulberg, George Kaufmann, Richard Brooks, Robert Muller, Noel Langley, Jeffery Dell and Lillian Ross. But never can the gross, the stupid and the obese have been presented more vividly whilst sitting in the hall of power on the throne of what was once Hollywood's "preserve" but is now the world's own special vulgarity. We see it on the stage and on the TV, but it is enshrined for posterity on the silver screen: in the "continental" peepshows around the west-end where flesh is peddled on celluloid, in the bigger super film houses which have still to be turned into Bingo halls and where every Biblical extravaganza on a wide screen and in colour has a cast of thousands and a celestial choir; and most of all at the film festivals where charlatans, duds, phoneys and tradesmen (some of them with artistic pretensions) congregate to "put across" their individual wares. It is about such a world that Mr Baker writes so wittily and well. A world of its own, offering commercialised sex and forcing down the throats of its audience commercialised religion for the sake more often than not of the dollars and shekels that come in the wake of these "end-products". I note that a learned contemporary reviewer, writing in one of the posh Sunday papers, has referred to this book as being crudely written in places. Well, it is a crudely run little world about which Mr Baker writes, but his style is always superior to his subject. Such a writer is hardly likely to be popular with the salesmen of Wardour Street or those tradesmen engaged in making conveyor-belt movies to be consumed like horror comics. But Mr Baker loves films and his fellow film lovers will love his book for what it says, for what it does, for what it is.

### COSMO GROUP

THERE WILL BE A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE COSMO GROUP, which exists to resist restrictive pressures on television and radio, at 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 17th June, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Further information from Adele Paul, Miranda, 1 Strawberry Vale, Twickenham (POP 5538)

## HOW IT IS DONE

WHEN THE NON-ROMANIST seeks for examples of Roman Catholic activity, he usually looks for large works of controversy. But it was Dr Coulton who taught him to look for the occasional remark which could tell in a Roman Catholic direction and who challenged writer after writer not on the ground of his work in general but of his *obiter dicta*. Slip in the odd remark and a whole legend may easily arise through unwary readers becoming trapped or those not so well informed accepting it at its face value. A case has just arisen which, even if it be unintentional, is a good illustration of the point. There has just appeared Volume I in the excellent Pelican series, *A Documentary History of England*, by J. J. Bagley and P. B. Rowley (Penguin, 5s).

The method adopted is reprinting various documents illustrative of the historical events of the period. On the whole, the series is an excellent innovation and should do much towards teaching the general reader to turn back to his sources. Each document is supplied with an editorial note and a bibliography. It is here that criticism may arise. The present volume covers the period 1066 to 1559. Its last entry is the *Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries, 1539*.

The introduction is somewhat neutral and certainly does not err on the side of hostility towards the system. A kindly interpretation is put upon the monastic appropriation of tithe and its abuses are certainly not underlined. There is reference to the visitation records of Norfolk, for example, although Dr Jessopp's edition is easily obtainable in the Camden Society series. A great deal more remains to be said than would appear in this introduction.

### Authors and "Authorities"

But the bibliography caused us to raise our eyebrows. Dom David Knowles is entered as the most recent authoritative writer upon monasticism. This is probably fair enough. F. A. Gasquet's *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, is cited as "written from the Catholic point of view". The bibliography then goes on to mention G. Baskerville's *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* as being "from a viewpoint much less sympathetic towards the monks". The great work of Dr G. G. Coulton, *The Five Centuries of Religion*, is written "well of the period, but from a Protestant bias". So it is done! The reader who has not delved deeply into the sources will be apt to take Dom David Knowles as his chief authority and to feel that, although the late Cardinal Gasquet wrote from a Catholic standpoint, he is none the less reasonably reliable. Baskerville and Coulton may be names to mention but they are unsympathetic and biased.

As is so often the case when some such policy is pursued, this approach calls for its mode of criticism. It is going rather far to write off Baskerville in this manner. It is this learned author who has finished the pseudo-history of the late Mgr Banson's novel, *Come Rack, Come Rope*, with its host of imitators. Baskerville showed beyond all reasonable doubt that the ex-monks and nuns were either pensioned or recruited into the ranks of the new Protestant clergy. Again and again, the new Protestant vicar was an ex-monk of the local monastery. At Cartmel, for example, the first vicar was the ex-cellarer of the suppressed priory. Sometimes, the ex-abbot married the ex-abbess and they drew two pensions. The last pensions of the former monks were not paid till the year

of the Spanish Armada. No wonder Baskerville is not a popular author among Roman Catholics!

### GC versus CG

It would be a mere impertinence to charge Dr Coulton with bias for he was one of the most learned mediaevalists of his day and his *Scottish Abbeys and Social Life* was widely commended upon its appearance for its fair-minded approach. In any case, despite volumes of criticism written from the Roman Catholic side, Dr Coulton unlike Fr Thurston or Cardinal Gasquet, was never convicted of serious or far-reaching inaccuracy. But one may proceed further and recall that it was Dr Coulton who, in pamphlet after pamphlet, exposed Gasquet's many inaccuracies and blunders. Again and again, he incriminated the work of the Romanist historian for unscholarly misrepresentation.

After Coulton's exposures, all of which may be found carefully listed in the catalogue of the British Museum Library, Gasquet passed into oblivion and even Roman Catholic authors were not too ready to mention his name or base their arguments upon his work. Perhaps his final nemesis came in 1956 when Dom David Knowles, a co-religionist, delivered at London University his Creighton Lecture, *Cardinal Gasquet as an Historian*. Accepting the general drift of Coulton's criticisms, Knowles left Gasquet's reputation denuded as a serious contributor to historical science. For Knowles, Gasquet erred in his inaccuracies more and more as the years went by. Even when these were pointed out, he did not trouble to correct them in later editions of his work. His training had been inadequate and he never seems to have mastered the disciplines of history as a science. The indictment is merely damning and the reputation of Cardinal Gasquet as a writer of history had passed into its final stage.

### Higher Standards Sought

But so it is done! Baskerville is unsympathetic and Coulton biased. Gasquet gives a Catholic viewpoint. One may well ask whether this is a proper manner in which to provide a bibliography for the general reader. It certainly calls for sharp criticism and we trust that the authors of this useful volume will not follow the bad example of Gasquet but will, in a subsequent edition, repair the blemishes which lie across these few pages of a work otherwise of the greatest use to the student of the period.

#### NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

LUNCHEON - WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY AT  
THE BRADLAUGH STATUE - PUBLIC MEETING

## CENTENARY RALLY

### NORTHAMPTON

SUNDAY, JULY 17th

Speakers include:

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER    DAVID COLLIS  
REGINALD PAGET, QC, MP    DAVID TRIBE

Transport from—

BIRMINGHAM (Mr W. Miller, 62 Warwards Lane,  
Birmingham 29. Telephone: Selly Oak 1121)  
LONDON (Mr W. McIlroy, 103 Borough High Street,  
London, SE1. Telephone: HOP 2717)  
LEICESTER (Mrs Evans, 18 The Brianway, Leicester)

## STOP PRESS!

PROFESSOR A. J. AYER writes in the June *Encounter* that "the Humanist Movement is changing its character". The Anglican Church "has little or no political power", he goes on, and "even the Roman Catholic Church shows some signs of being willing to adapt its social outlook to the times". The President of the BHA concedes that this is not to say that the "religious battle has been entirely won". Readers of the FREETHINKER will be glad to note that this breath of realism has reached the city of dreaming spires—and professors. The BBC's virtual boycott of anti-Christian Secular Humanist material is, in the Professor's view, only a "minor grievance. The Humanist Association could hardly justify its existence if it had no greater function than to press for more time on the BBC". *Couldn't it?* How many rationalists fought for how many years in order that Professor Ayer should speak in the series on Humanism last October? The Editor of this paper is glad that the National Secular Society (which, Professor Ayer should acknowledge, is also part of the Humanist Movement) has at once a more realistic conception of the battles still to be won, with as firm an intention of winning them as it has ever had in its 100 years of activity!

## LETTERS

### Fluoridation

WHEN ONE READS THE CALL TO OPPOSE fluoridation of which Mr Corina is so proud, one is almost ashamed of being a freethinker. How can we hope that kindly religious people will at least see that we have a high moral code of our own, though differently based from theirs, if self-styled freethinkers oppose the addition of fluorides which save our children pain but cost us money while they condone the pollutions that kill people on a major scale but save us money, such as result from the use of Diesel engines and the discharge of unfiltered smoke into our city air?

J. H. FREMLIN

IT WAS A REAL PLEASURE to read the article on "Fluoridation" by Mr Corina. What he had to say, needed to be said.

HERBERT MILNE

(This correspondence is now closed—Ed.)

### Tribute to Mr Tribe

IN COMMON WITH PERHAPS MOST OF YOUR HUMANIST READERS, may I say how pleased I am not only at the change of "lay-out" of the FREETHINKER, but also that at last you have got rid of the "Old Guard" with their preoccupation and distortion of "ecclesiastical history", and their arrogance and ignorance in pronouncing Jesus Christ as mythical, as well as such great historical figures as David, Peter, and Paul, just figments of the imagination.

Under your own wise and thoughtful leadership, it looks that the FREETHINKER will at long last regain its reputation as a journal worthy of being followed by all true Humanists, especially on "the social and political concerns of the modern world". We have long needed to get away from silly attacks on religion which are no longer needed, but guidance on world reforms which we never got. More power to your Humanist writing!

CHARLOTTE SMITH

### Canadian Viewpoint

DOES PRESIDENT JOHNSON NOT REALISE that US interference in Vietnam is illogical, inhumane, undemocratic and unjust? He is supporting Fascist ideology in appointing and supporting government leaders who hold and promote an ideology contrary to that held by the great majority of the Vietnamese people. This is rapidly leading to a third world war, the only alternative to which is a complete withdrawal of all US power and influence from Vietnam.

True democracy means liberty for each country to choose its own form of government without interference from outside. President Johnson knows well that if the Vietnamese were allowed a vote on the issue that the US would be debarred from Vietnam.

(Mrs) L. PRATT

### Dukes and Ducks

I WAS rather disappointed that you referred to the Duke of Edinburgh as "His Royal Highness". However, I must grudgingly admit that his article was well-written, and was a credit to your paper. May I say just one more word about the Duke of Edinburgh, please? His Christian moralising ill accords with his reported action of shooting 800 ducks and 400 pheasants in one day.

JOHN SUTHERLAND

### A million of us

F. J. CORINA quotes the recent Gallup survey showing that 2 per cent of those surveyed categorically stated that they do not believe in God. That 2 per cent would admit to this suggests that very many more do not believe. Practitioners of Motivational Research recognise that people do not necessarily give a true answer to a survey conducted by a stranger, but tend to give the answer which presents themselves in a favourable light. It still requires some courage for some people to admit no belief in God; therefore a figure higher than two per cent is likely to apply.

We can only ask why more people who think like us are not in the Movement. With the Roman Catholic Church in this country planning to open 1,000 new churches in the coming ten years (an average of two per week for ten years), we must undertake aggressive membership campaigns to greatly increase our own numbers. The fact that there were 6,000 members of the NSS in 1866 makes today's figure look a sorry one. There is nothing at all lacking in what we are offering to Unbelievers; they just don't know that we exist as a Society. *The first and obvious thing for us all to do is to get the FREETHINKER into our own public library branch, where hundreds will see it who don't now.* We have to expect a negative attitude at first from Librarians, but persistence will be rewarded. \*May I suggest that members successful in this may be reported in a weekly corner of the FREETHINKER devoted to this campaign?

JOHN SHAW, Birmingham Branch NSS.

(\*Will be glad to do.—Ed.)

### Humanism in Chicago

MY LETTER REGARDING SOCIOLOGICAL PHENOMENA as the proper concern of the State, appearing in the April 15 FREETHINKER, has enhanced the international prestige of Chicago. I am delighted that my widely circulated humanist handbook, *Spirit of Youth* (1965 Exposition, \$3), has evoked positive responses ranging from unknown high school youth to a world renowned Nobel laureate. Friends at home and abroad may be interested in knowing something about the Humanist Association of Metropolitan Chicago, of which I am a charter member. HAMC was incorporated in Illinois in 1965. It is an educational, non-profit association primarily concerned with attaining world peace and well-being, and with achieving better personal and social understanding among different individuals and groups in our community. Public interest in HAMC is enhanced by the United States Supreme Court ruling that non-theistic beliefs are legally equal to theistic religions. The United States Constitution—as interpreted by the Supreme Court as recently as 1961 (*Torcaso v. Watkins*)—carries the following meaning: "We repeat and again reaffirm that neither a State nor the Federal Government can constitutionally force a person to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion". Neither can constitutionally pass laws or impose requirements which aid those religions based on a belief in the existence of God as against those religions founded on different beliefs (367 US at 495)". The interest of fair employment appreciates that only the 1961 decision of the Supreme Court (*Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 US at 488, 1961) enabled atheist Torcaso to serve as a notary public in Maryland.

Consonant with a life-time study programme to enhance intellectual growth and civic responsibility, the Illini Humanists at the University of Illinois, Chicago Center, has been serving primarily as a forum, sponsoring Rudolf Dreikurs on "The Humanist View of Sex", a physician from Planned Parenthood who spoke on "Birth Control and the College Student", the student president from United World Federalists, and others. Those interested should write to HAMC, PO Box 3376, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

LEON ARNOLD MULLER

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