

# FREETHINKER

Registered at the  
G.P.O. as a Newspaper

FOUNDED 1881 by G. W. FOOTE

Friday,  
July 22, 1966

## A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

IT IS ONLY FOUR YEARS since a Sussex Medical Officer of Health wrote:

"... following an unfavourable reaction from consultants and general practitioners, no plans have been put forward for large-scale cancer education of the public, as it was felt that it might lead to a widespread cancer phobia."

He added that health visitors and clinics were all on the lookout for early symptoms of the disease. Quite a lot of people, however, don't go near either, and far too many people were dying unnecessarily of a disease which might well have been stopped if caught at an early stage.

In four years the subject of cancer has come out into the open. Whereas the authorities were clearly afraid that the population would forever be prodding itself for lumps, or queueing up in surgeries to waste the doctors' time, it is now recognised that the "phobia" they were so afraid of, is, in fact, caused and stimulated by ignorance.

The opportunity for some women in some areas to benefit from the "cervical smear" test is a major advance, not only in medical research but in the thinking of medical men. At the same time there are far too many rumours, neither proved nor disproved, as to the reasons why people get cancer in all its different forms. Within the next few years perhaps we can hope for clarification, for hypochondria is not just an ailment of the neurotic or unbalanced, it can be induced in anyone who has reason for worry, is confused by such rumours, and is not able to find an expert with which to discuss the problem intelligently. Of course doctors must be allowed to discuss their theories in public, but they must not, then, complain if people listen to the discussion and wish someone would make up his mind.

And of course far too many people are still dying quite unnecessarily because there is not enough money for research or for the vital tests. There can be few people who do not frequently visualise the gain humanity might reap if funds went to such research instead of on weapons of mutual destruction, even if this is an "either/or" oversimplification.

There are some good, cheap *Cancer Manuals* about, "Not to Frighten, but to Enlighten". Questions and old

### INSIDE

EUTHANASIA—RIGHT OR WRONG? *Charles Hennis*

HOW I BECAME A HUMANIST *John Shaw*

THE TROUBLE WITH ROBERTS *Phyllis K. Graham*

RHODESIA: A DISCUSSION

"FREEDOM FOR RHODESIA" *David Tribe*

REVIEW *Margaret McIlroy*

NEWS AND NOTES : LECTURE NOTICES : LETTERS

wives' tales are dealt with honestly and helpfully. Symptoms are described, and the advice given that everyone should go to a doctor as soon as possible if such symptoms occur. But how often can people rely on their doctors reacting with a kindly patience to what may be a series of false alarms? I suspect that far too many are still unashamedly impatient of the person who only needs a regular check to enjoy peace of mind. The advice and treatment is most likely to be a bottle of indigestion mixture and a "flea in the ear". Of course doctors are overworked, but so are many of their patients. Of course there is the problem of time and staff, **but this is a question of life and death and very often of mental health.** Far too many women postpone important checks, just because they cannot bear to have it implied (as it probably will be implied) that they are fussing. The imaginative and sensitive patient is the most likely to be the victim of her own concern for the doctor, but such women should surely be actively encouraged to "come back in 6 or 12 months" and then welcomed and praised for their tenacity. For every one discourteous, thoughtless patient who goes to the surgery for company and a paid listener, there must be 25 who keep as far as possible from the whole set-up of prods and nods, guesswork and gassing.

If doctors are really too busy to pay attention to early warnings, then there is an urgent need for clinics for preventive medicine, where not only cancer can be detected in its very earliest stage, but also diabetes, TB and other diseases. The sooner people who are worried about themselves can go and discuss their problems in an atmosphere of mutual respect, the better. Doctors, too, can only benefit in the long run, and there could even be fewer beds occupied in our mental hospitals.

For every ten stories of medical brilliance, perseverance, skill and understanding, the public is likely to hear at least one of appalling medical bungling. Now that the doctor is no longer looked upon as a demi-god, he takes the risk of being considered a fool unless he begins to recognise that the public is not totally illiterate, and that any bad relations there are between doctors and patients are as much the doctors' fault as their patients'. The success in saving life will be even more appreciated, if and when the public really feels that the doctor is interested in preventing as well as in finding disease. Of course doctors are themselves the victims of a Victorian puritanism by which they are still made to suffer professionally for behaviour that is nobody's business but their own. Most of us really don't mind if they keep half a dozen mistresses or husbands, so long as they don't try and act god in the surgery and will co-operate. The strongest argument against the "second opinion" is still, I think, the lack of humility in the profession, and not the practical problems involved.

Simone de Beauvoir has written frankly and vividly

about her mother's dying in her *A Very Easy Death*. It is necessary for death to be treated with honesty, now that it has largely been taken out of the family circle and into the institution.

"There is no such thing as a natural death," she writes, "... all men must die: but for every man his death is an accident and, even if he knows it and consents to it, an unjustifiable violation."

Nevertheless, life can be lived longer and with less fear than ever before. It is not so long since diphtheria and TB were wiping out large sections of a young population.

## EUTHANASIA—RIGHT OR WRONG?

A SMALL BOY of three was moved from the children's ward in a London hospital into one of the men's wards because his continual screams upset the other children. He had a brain tumour which had both blinded him and caused partial deafness. The next day he was to be operated on, an operation which would cause at least some paralysis—for the blindness there was no cure.

The child was terrified, so he was drugged to stave off his agony—for a little while. A nurse that night turned the boy's face into his pillow and so ended the agony—for always.

Was she a murderess?

That child could not speak for himself and say what he wanted. But what about the woman paralysed from the neck down since she was two, and married to a badly crippled man:

"We are left to live out our lives unwanted, unlovely and unloved. No animal would be allowed to go through life as we have done. Are we then lower than the animals, that we should be denied the common humanity that would be extended to them?"

### Opposition to reform

The opponents of euthanasia are horrified. One wrote: "Euthanasia, if administered with the consent of the patient, is suicide; if without, murder. Therefore, since suicide and murder are wrong, euthanasia must and should be, condemned by the law of the country. Apart from this, once mercy killing had been introduced there is no knowing where it would end. Anyone who had any sort of chronic illness might become the victim of drugs administered by someone who wanted to get rid of him—or her."

To take the last part of this objection first, what supporters of euthanasia are pressing for is that anyone over twenty-one, suffering from an incurable disease, could apply for euthanasia. Two doctors would have to certify that the disease was incurable, and, after this, a referee would visit the patient to make sure that the applicant fully appreciated what he was doing. **Only after this would the fatal dose, or injection be administered by the doctor.** This is what is termed "**Voluntary Euthanasia**" and is strongly advocated by the Euthanasia Society to which I belong.

I do feel, however, that perhaps too much responsibility is placed on the doctors and too little on the person who wants his—or her—life ended. Of course doctors must decide about the seriousness of the disease, but why must they actually terminate the person's life? Why can't he wherever possible, like Socrates, take the fatal dose himself? It is a tragedy to be stricken by an incurable disease, and one can have nothing but admiration for the courage of those men and women who bravely accept this tragedy until death terminates their sufferings. But surely, on the one hand, these people should not be compelled to suffer

Few lived long enough to die of cancer in old age. Consumption was even a respectable disease, in novels or opera. But cancer is no less "respectable" than TB, while a case of diphtheria for lack of vaccination might well be considered a matter for shame. Thanks partly to the brave Richard Dimpleby, cancer can now be talked about. Britain is catching up again on Scandinavia, where, fifteen years ago a man introduced his mother; "She has just had a major operation for cancer", he explained. "Mother" is still very much alive today, aged 80.

Charles Hennis

beyond their reasonable endurance, nor, on the other hand, to die like an animal, at the hand of another. Why could we not allow them to end, with dignity, their own lives?

A Christian would be worried by fear of his god and fear of the hell he might be going to, but an atheist would have none of these fears. I know myself how atheism has helped in delivering me from the fear of an angry and vengeful god, and, when I have to face death, I shall know, as an atheist, that neither god nor devil is waiting for me.

I would suggest, too, that euthanasia might also be offered to those who have been condemned to life imprisonment that mean "life" and who would prefer death. A person in a prison cell has in one way a greater claim to euthanasia than one outside. He is already cut off from those he loves, wife, children, parents, but what about the husbands, wives and children of the incurably ill? Supposing they implore him not to end his life, even though it can hardly be called a life any longer but only an existence? Then the decision is obviously harder to make, but surely it is for the victim of the suffering to make it?

Life is infinitely precious, but do any of us want to exist in constant and unbearable pain? Must we always wait for death to come to us, or can we summon death? As the law stands at present we have no option but to wait for death. What I plead for is that those whom death has already earmarked but has not summoned should, if they so wish, be allowed to go forward at once into merciful oblivion.

We should not, unless the person accepts it, enforce needless and unnecessary suffering. We should offer the choice between an easy death and a hard one.

Some years ago a man who knew he was dying said to me, "Why have I got to go on suffering?"

That question still awaits an answer.

### EUTHANASIA

"You can find men who have gone so far as to profess wisdom and yet maintain that one should not offer violence to one's own life, and hold it accursed for a man to be the means of his own destruction; we should wait, say they, for the end decreed by nature. But one who says this does not see that he is shutting off the path to freedom. The best thing which eternal law ever ordained was that it allowed to us one entrance into life, but many exits. Must I await the cruelty either of disease or of man, when I can depart through the midst of torture, and shake off my troubles? This is the one reason why we cannot complain of life: it keeps no one against his will. Humanity is well situated, because no man is unhappy except by his own fault. Live, if you so desire; if not, you may return to the place whence you came."

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA (c. 4 BC—65AD)  
*Moral Epistles LXX* (quoted in *Humanist Anthology*  
compiled by Margaret Knight).

## HOW I BECAME A HUMANIST

John Shaw

ALTHOUGH I WAS INTERESTED in Rationalism in my twenties, it took several more years before I could describe myself as a humanist. Early upbringing as a Methodist, and being surrounded by a Methodist family and Methodist relatives made the progress slow.

But during my teens, in the thirties, I was a practising christian, attending chapel, Sunday school, then teaching in the Sunday school and becoming a Local Preacher. Like many other young Christians, I had occasional queries and doubts. My seniors however, who admitted to having had similar doubts in their own youth were able to assure me that my difficulties were due to my imperfect understanding; faith and prayer would lead me to comprehension. They were good people and had, by various comprises, arrived at a satisfactory faith for themselves. It was not to prove satisfactory for me, nor for many of my generation.

However, in the thirties, I was more interested in cricket (Bradman, Hutton, Dennis Compton); constructing home radio sets (a common hobby); working for the London Matric. (G.C.E. today), and thinking of a future career on the assumption that there would be no war. Mr Chamberlain had said it was "Peace in our time", and Mr Chamberlain was a christian man, Prime Minister of a christian country. Britain had a vast territorial Empire. Every year we had a day off from school on Empire Day. One the form-room walls there were maps of the world with our possessions shown in red; every continent and ocean had liberal splashes of this colour. We were in trust to God to uphold christianity, decency and democracy in our territories, and it was this trust which made us great. Any country which took us on would have God against them as well.

### "... not peace but the sword"

Some questions continued to puzzle. Although Germany was ruled by evil men, she was a christian country as we were, and had a christian tradition as long as ours. In the Spanish civil war, there was appalling slaughter of civilians, and torture on both sides. Spain too, was a christian country with centuries of christian heritage. Christian Italy bombed defenceless christian Abyssinia; it seemed to us that these christian countries, protestant, catholic and coptic, were not so reliably Christian as we were.

### God on both sides

When we declared war on Germany, it was strange that they prayed to God to bless their war effort, whilst we prayed to Him to bless ours. Our priests and clergy blessed our Spitfires; the German clergy blessed their Stukas. Mussolini thanked God for the opportunity to send bombers over England. We wondered whether the Roman church would condemn this but the christians of Italy bombed their fellow British Christians.

Man's freewill was much spoken about. Because God was all powerful, He had it in His power to intervene and to stop the war. But by giving us free will, to intervene would have meant changing the divine plan. Thus He chose instead to suffer with suffering humanity. Thus He had to permit the indescribable murdering of six million Jews, the homelessness and wretchedness of millions of refugees, the countless dead or mutilated, drowned, burned, orphaned, deranged, mad.

### God, British after all

Although the Americans, the Russians and finally the atom bomb finished off the war, we and our allies were given the victory because we upheld the christian faith. God had been on our side. This was proclaimed from pulpits throughout the country at services of thanksgiving, and was published in religious and popular newspaper. The absurdity of the christian claims was so apparent that I was one of the many who came to abandon traditional christian faith and explanations. This was accelerated for me by talks with members of the clergy who privately would admit to reservations regarding doctrine, but publicly would support them. Anything published by a cleric which echoed private doubt was lapped up. Bishop Barnes of Birmingham wrote *The Rise of Christianity* which revealed the myths shielding the early days of the Church. There were waiting lists at the lending libraries for this book, and Archbishop Fisher publicly rebuked him.

But in rejecting christianity, what should be put in its place? Alternative religions were unacceptable, because they too depended on a revelation supposedly given to somebody else: and called for a supernatural power able to control events. (When this happened, it was a miracle; when it did not, it was the divine will.) A personal, fatherly God who cared for His children was belied by every edition of the morning papers. I drifted into agnosticism, deterred by my upbringing from taking the logical final step.

At last release and purpose came through atheism. The purpose of life is the purpose we give it. Human resources at present are being misused and wasted. Superstition hinders the development of human society. Religion diverts human energy from the control of the causes of war; religion encourages over-population and mass hunger; will not concede that futile incurable suffering should be ended; supports medieval legal enactments; controls immense wealth to support its restrictions. Atheism is the positive way ahead for the development of mankind. The history of the last thirty years alone shows that we control our own future.

Supernaturalists, whatever revelation they claim, however they harangue each other in peace or slaughter each other in war, unite in common condemnation of atheism. This, for them, is the final enemy. Atheism shows how arrogant are their claims for authority, how irrelevant their ceremonies, how dangerous their certainties, how futile their work for other lives beyond this one.

Thus the role of the humanist is twofold: to work for the improvement and enrichment of human life, and to combat the superstitions which unite to block such development. Should the task take centuries, we are on our way.

[Next week in this series Margaret Oakley describes how she Became a Humanist.]

**Religion: A Primitive Thinking Perpetuated.**—"Primitive thought naturally recognised the relationship of cause and effect, but it cannot recognise our view of an impersonal, mechanical and law-like functioning of causality. The primitive mind looks, not for the 'how' but for the 'who', when it looks for a cause." (H. Frankfort, *Before Philosophy*, p. 24, Pelican Books.)

Excerpted by G. S. SMELTERS

## NEWS AND NOTES

VANESSA REDGRAVE must surely be the most enchanting Humanist of all time. She recently won the Cannes Film Festival award for the best actress for her performance in "Morgan—a Suitable Case for Treatment". Shortly afterwards she was opening the Exhibition of the Trade Union, Labour, and Co-operative History Society at Congress House. "This is history", she said, "which I did not learn at school and which most children are not learning today" and in which of course Rationalists played their part. "It is too often taken for granted", Miss Redgrave went on, "that progress is as natural as a tree growing up. But there were always people ready to stamp the tree into the ground".

### Dangers from Sectarian Schools

THE *Times* of July 7th published a letter signed by "Cyril Bibby, Brigid Brophy, G. M. Carstairs, Chorley, H. J. Eysenck, Ronald Fletcher, A. G. N. Flew, Peter Fryer, Margaret Knight, Marghanita Laski, A. S. Neill, Harold Pinter, David Tribe, Willis, Colin Wilson and Wootton of Abinger c/o the National Secular Society", drawing attention to "the grave educational and social implications of the announcement by HM Government of an intention further to subsidise church schools".

### Controversy ends in defeat

CHURCHILL COLLEGE is to have a chapel after all. In 1958 one of the college's most distinguished scientists, atheist Dr Francis Crick, a Nobel Prize winner, resigned his fellowship in protest against the proposal to build a chapel. Then the Rev Timothy Beaumont offered the college £30,000 and work is to begin at the end of this month. The chapel is to be what is called "non-denominational".

### "Compel them to come in", if only by ignorance

THE *Richmond and Twickenham Times* reported that many Hindu and Moslem parents in the district do not know of their rights to have their children exempted from Christian RI in schools. Parents complained that headmasters often failed to make this clear. And don't we sympathise . . .

### Centenary publication

"THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS" is a booklet published by and about the National Secular Society which is available now on request.

### Humanist London Diary

PETER LEWIS is producing a most useful two-page sheet of Humanist events. Write for a copy to him at 59, The Chase, Norbury, SW16.

### "... in that state of life, unto which it shall please God . . ."

ROMAN JESUIT Père Galot has given his reasons for barring women from the RC priesthood: (a) Women are the more submissive sex, and this submissive element is vital to the running of the church; (b) Women have not the intellectual capacity for apprehending and developing doctrine, as the teaching Church must; (c) Their "wifely" and "motherly" qualities qualify them essentially as helpers of the clergy in fostering religion. The *Catholic Herald* has the grace or common sense (call it what you like) to question these arguments, but it is awfully difficult to believe that anyone reads that paper in Rome.

### Vatican Roulette in Manchester

IN THE LAST 12 months the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in Manchester has given 2,278 interviews to people wanting instruction in the "rhythm method" of birth control. But still no news from the Pope about the Pill.

### When politics are politics, and not just religion

AMERICAN tax officials are threatening to revoke the tax exemption granted to a religious publication, *The Churchman*, because it has been critical of President Johnson's Vietnam policy. In order to escape tax, religious periodicals are not meant to engage in politics. A US report admits this "neatly overlooks the aggressive political policies pursued by leading Catholic papers". The *Sunday Citizen* goes on to report that the Mormons own the largest holding in the Union Pacific Railroad, and their income from dividends is completely tax-free; the RC Church has majority control in many large industrial corporations, including Phillips Petroleum; the Jesuits own the controlling stock in the Bank of America; the Baptist Church owns Burlington Mills, and the Seventh-Day Adventists own Loma Linda food products. I suppose these are what are called "the unsearchable riches of Christ . . ."

### The dying shades of Calvin

THE SWISS GOVERNMENT is considering the advisability of suppressing the discriminatory laws by which Jesuits are banned from the country, and Jewish dietary laws and the number of convents are regulated. No word yet of giving women the vote.

### Exit American Saviour

THE REV B. GRAHAM has gone home leaving 39,329 "inquirers for Christ" at approximately £7 10s per head behind him. Come to think of it, we might even do better than that, given the same amount of cash. Has anyone £300,000 to spare for the experiment? Mind you, the BBC wouldn't give us the same facilities, but some of the Press could hardly be less enthusiastic than they were about God's PRO.

### Garden Party at Blackham House

THE HUMANIST HOUSING ASSOCIATION was as efficient as even in organising its second garden party at Blackham House, and, since its opening by Lord Willis two years ago, flower beds have been planted and are an additional attraction to the small but charming garden. Miss Rose Bush spoke in appreciation of the Association's supporters and beneficiaries, and Lindsay Burnet referred to the co-operation given to the project by both the NSS and the RPA. Members of all organisations are equally welcome when it comes to offering accommodation. A third house in Hampstead is being planned and it is hoped that readers of the FREETHINKER will be able to learn more about this admirable scheme before too long.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY  
CENTENARY LECTURE

## FREETHOUGHT AND THE ARTS

OSWELL BLAKESTON

JOHN CALDER

PETER COTES

JOAN MILLER

DAVID TRIBE

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 5th, 7.30 p.m.

## THE TROUBLE WITH ROBERTS

Phyllis K. Graham

(Concluded from page 221)

### The Reformer

Many have questioned, "How is it that a Jesuit, who puts obedience first, can take such a line at variance with precedent and with higher authority in the Church?" "For so many Catholics the blackest crime of all is *washing dirty linen (Catholic) in public*". "Scandal" must be avoided like the plague. But "scandal", says Archbishop Roberts, "is the magic word used to block self-criticism, change, most of all reform". "He feels that the question of scandal is fundamental, and that misconceptions about it are at the root of a number of controversies which have arisen *à propos* the Council agenda". This of course is how it seems to a dutiful son of the Church: to our more ribald way of thinking these "misconceptions" are merely automatic reactions of the defence-mechanism peculiar to a Church that never errs.

We have to admit, however, that the "rogue-elephant" (to quote the charming, if unnamed, insinuation of a fellow-bishop in a Lenten warning to the herd) has done more than shock the Saints with his trumpeting: quite a lot has ensued from his shakings and uprootings and the tramp of his mighty feet in the holy places. For instance:

"There are few Council reforms which he has not been advocating and in most cases putting into practice for years. Reform of the Curia and of the Liturgy; reappraisal of the Church's attitude to war and contraception; simplification of ecclesiastical pomp; responsibility of the laity; approach to separated brethren—all have been his passionate concern for years."

And now surely his "passionate concern" for justice "not only done, but *seen* to be done", as it is in the English system of Law which he so admires, and as it never is in the courts of the Church, will batter on the doors of those sly and furtive places where justice is travestied and human rights count for nothing. It may be long before the doors crash in—but at least the world, perhaps even sections of the Church, will be aware of the commotion.

It is difficult to read this fascinating book and keep in mind the chill facts that the "hero" is a Roman Catholic, and what's more, a Jesuit and (I suppose) a Prince of the Holy Roman Church! The trouble is, the very Englishness of his character and approach almost blind us to the Romishness of his religion and profession. His blunt honesty stands out in such contrast to the shiftiness and deceit of the ecclesiastical scene that we find it hard to see him as part of it.

### Courage over Contraception

On no question of vital importance has there been so much intimidation of clergy and laity as that of contraception; but the Archbishop has always gone calmly ahead and said exactly what he thought. "I have discussed this question openly during the past years, and I have never hesitated to say that the reasons given by Catholic moralists for its condemnation have never been clear to me . . . the reasons supplied by Catholic theologians . . . do not strike me as cogent." He sees the Roman attitude as an obstacle to unity and says so boldly: "Non-Catholic observers must wonder what kind of a natural law it is that is discernible only by Roman Catholics, and if that is so, what there is about this kind of law that can properly be called 'natural.'" In an interview with the *Daily Mail* after the publication last year of *Contraception and Holiness* he could hardly have spoken with more candour:

"I personally believe it is un-Christian and unhealthy to forbid

married people to use contraceptives, or to dictate which ones are permissible. It causes prolonged suffering to many people and hits the poor more than the rich. It is far more difficult to practice abstinence if you have no option but to share one narrow bed. . . . The rhythm method was first approved by Pius XII. It meant that the Church, at long last, approved the contraceptive intention and was revolutionary thinking at the time. Since then many students have asked me why the Church uses phoney mathematics rather than intelligent physics for birth control, and all I can say is: 'I don't know.'"

Although bound, as a Jesuit, to the ideal of obedience, he has always interpreted it as "intelligent obedience", that is, neither slavish nor fearful nor blind, but given with the assent of the understanding and subject to the claims of conscience. This has been strongly underlined by his attitude to war, which has brought him into as much disrepute with his co-religionists as his stand on contraception.

When Archbishop Roberts began to question whether it really was the will of God that His children should kill one another horribly, he was often looked at askance by his brother-bishops, some of whom declined—not always politely—to let him speak in their dioceses.

He is particularly concerned with the right of the individual "freely to follow his own informed conscience" in the matter of accepting military service and involvement in a nuclear war.

"There has been little or no consideration given in practice to this matter until 1916 when England, introducing conscription, made allowance for the rights of conscientious objection. . . . The fact that Catholic influences have nearly always been in favour of the kind of absolute obedience of which Germany under Hitler gives us the extreme example, urgently needs examination. Professor Gordon Zahn has given irrefutable evidence of the length to which Catholic authority has gone in giving a blank cheque to the authors of an unjust war. It is tragic that essential human rights have been vindicated not by Catholic authority but by the secular judges of Nuremberg."

And he considers the Nuremberg Trials "are the most important things to have happened in our generation, because they are the condemnation of blind obedience carried to its logical conclusion, that is, that a superior assumes divine rights".

### Champion of Freethought

Curious that a mind capable of seeing this so clearly has not yet grasped the fact that such an attitude (while possibly mitigated here and there by a few enlightened superiors) must remain the inevitably fixed mentality of an "infallible" authoritarian Church. It would almost seem that the sheer daylight of his own sincerity blinds him to the dark night of dishonesty all round him, deeply as he has suffered from it and even while he has to fight its relentless opposition.

Yes, as one reads it is this quality of open-mindedness that blows like a healthy wind through the secrecy and "fetid horror" of the Catholic atmosphere. And against that artificial, inhuman background the man is human, real: one cannot withhold admiration, even affection. Until the last chapter . . . and then sentiment curls up a little and warm feeling recedes. We have reached "Gospel Bedrock"—the ground of Thomas Roberts' spiritual edifice—and the soil is too barren for me, at least, to go further.

Many think of him as a shocker. Some say he can hardly be the retiring and humble man he is supposed to be if he allows his story to be made public. Whatever one's opinion, the facts are that truth is bound to shock and truth-tellers can hardly avoid causing sensations. The

(Continued on page 232)

## RHODESIA: A DISCUSSION

ACCORDING TO Joseph McCabe (*Rationalist Encyclopaedia*, 1948) the Right Honourable Cecil John Rhodes, MA, DCL, PC (1853-1902) was an agnostic, son of a clergyman and originally destined for the Church. After emigrating to South Africa on account of his poor health, he became one of the leading business men in South Africa before he was made Premier of Cape Colony in 1890. His fraudulent ruses to extract a treaty with Lobengula, and the bribery by which the British Government was kept in ignorance of the fraud, are probably better known than the fact that he rejected the idea of an after-life and "thought the chances even whether there was a God or not". Whether it was "conscience money" or not, Rhodes left almost his entire fortune of about £6 million for educational and public purposes, including the 150 Rhodes scholarships of £300 a year each at Oxford University.

In the meantime the white man had fought a bloody war in order to get the African's land away from him, with the result that now he has virtually all the most fertile land (nearly 50 per cent of the whole land surface) most of the land of easy gradients, practically all the land with the highest rainfall and all the land along the line of communications. Only Africans live in the area of the tsetse fly. Africans who once bred their own large herds of cattle now live in increasing need and hunger, threatened by soil erosion, drought and illiteracy.

When Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing colony in 1923 the white population numbered 34,000 as against 750,000 Africans. In 1966 the population is thought to be about four million Africans and a quarter of a million Europeans. Only 50 per cent of the total are said to be literate. The biggest item of government expenditure is between £5 million and £6 million on African education. The average African wage is £114 as compared to £1,217 for Europeans. **Amnesty International** reports that to many Africans "a secure job and a living wage are more important than a vote".

In February 1966, Peter Benenson, Hon. President of Amnesty International, reported to the Heads of Commonwealth Countries on Human Rights in Rhodesia that a total of "approximately 1,100 Africans are detained without charge or trial. The régime dissimulates the extent of its resort to arbitrary imprisonment by only quoting figures of those 'restricted', the names of whom are belatedly published in the Government Gazette. No publication is made of the names of those detained, and it is an offence under the Emergency Regulations to refer to the fact of their detention or whereabouts".

"In addition to the 1,100 detained for a period of at least 3 months, there are many hundred more at any one time in the cells of police-stations under what is called the '30-day rule'. This enables the police to arrest and detain anyone for 30 days without charge . . ." And the report goes on to describe the practical effects of the Smith régime on the Africans. "The antagonism of the régime towards the Churches is partly to be explained by official objection to the work of the clergy and relief-workers in helping African families to avoid eviction. . . . The policy of segregation is being increasingly pursued not as in South Africa to provide any alternative for the Africans, but merely to break their spirit and humiliate them." Peter Benenson has proved himself to be dedicated to the cause of the "prisoner of conscience" no matter what his

political or religious views and Secular-Humanists wishing to know more about Amnesty International should write to: 12 Crane Court, London, EC4.

The Editor of the FREETHINKER recently received the following letters from Humanists living in Rhodesia. They are printed here with the knowledge and permission of the writers:

The Rhodesian police do not carry arms, except in the case of riot squads. As you know, mobs can be dangerous, and this is especially so with primitive Africans who have not the control over their emotions which civilised people have. I would say that the Church leaders are split on the Rhodesian issue, but that 90 per cent of the congregations support Ian Smith.

Left-wing and right-wing are relative terms. One can speak of a left and a right wing of the Rhodesian Front party, which won every seat (except the African seats, which they deliberately did not contest) in the last election; but the party itself would be considered right-wing, as we consider the Conservative party in Britain to be. I will quote a letter from England which appeared in our local newspaper, to substantiate what I said about the deliberate campaign in Britain against Rhodesia:

"Before the lines go down and it becomes treason here to speak well of Rhodesians, may I, a British subject and a professional writer whose books are published in 18 countries, put on record that I am bitterly ashamed (a) of the betrayal of the Central African Federation, including the then Southern Rhodesia, by our politicians of Left and Right and our so-called 'Liberal' press and TV; and (b) of the frequent outright dishonesty in this country on the subject of Rhodesia as she now is. Rhodesian readers who may still feel that there is some kind of freedom in England which does not exist in Rhodesia should know that, having spent 18 months studying Southern Africa and the UN and having visited both, and having changed my views as a result, I am not allowed to express the views I know are the truth. In theory there is free speech here, but in fact, not one of the 40 letters of mine written to our so-called 'liberal press' has been printed. I need hardly add that these letters express sympathy towards Rhodesia and Portugal, based on 30,000 miles travel and two million words read. I refuse to live in such a hypocritical country, and I am emigrating precisely because of the Rhodesian tragedy and for no other reason."

(Signed by James Barlow, Cromer, Norfolk, England.)

However, I do not base my statements merely on such letters, but mainly on the evidence I obtain from English immigrants to Rhodesia who have lived there long enough to know Rhodesia and have kept in touch with events in England. You have no idea how bitter these people have become because of British policy in Rhodesia. I would like to stress that Rhodesian Africans have expressed in their own democratic way their desire for independence from Britain. This was done at the famous Dombashawa Indaba which Britain and the USA, for reasons of their own, chose to boycott, though previously they had always insisted on obtaining the agreement of the Africans in just that way. We know the high standard of British justice, as it operated in Rhodesia too. ALL we ask is for British justice in the Rhodesia "problem" and that it be judged on its merits and without any suppression of the real facts in Britain. The great majority of Rhodesians are not reactionaries, and I do not consider myself any less a Humanist than any you could name in Britain. (I have been a member for 29 years.) Instead of members in Britain cleaning up their own slums, they interfere in our affairs of which they have no real knowledge, because of the colossal lying propaganda campaign which is being waged in Britain against Rhodesia, not only by the left-wing newspapers but by other news media.

I ask you to act according to your conscience and to do all you can to stop this madness, whereby the most progressive state in Africa, where Black and White truly live in amity, is singled out for vindictive sanctions while "illegal" states like Nigeria, Ghana, etc., are immediately recognised and the murder of their political opponents condoned."

Signed (Mr) C. R. MOORE, Salisbury.

I was amazed to hear that some Humanists claim that Africans are "not yet ready for education". When I first started teaching I worked for 18 months in an African school, and it wasn't until I

(Continued on page 231)

## FREETHINKER

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

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year £1 17s. 6d.; half year, 19s.; three months, 9s. 6d. in U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.25; half-year, \$2.75; three months, \$1.40.

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

- British Humanist Association. Fourth Annual Conference, City of Leicester College of Education, August 26th-29th. RICHARD HAUSER, MARGARET KNIGHT, JOE SANDERS and MICHAEL NICHOLSON. Details: 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8.  
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, July 24th, 11 a.m. HOWARD B. RADEST, "Youth—Protest and Promise".  
West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, E11). Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.  
Humanist Letter Network (International): send s.a.e. to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

## RHODESIA: A DISCUSSION

(Continued from page 230)

took my first post at a White school that I realised quite how low human intelligence could sink. Of course, the two schools weren't strictly comparable, as the African school was a grammar school and the White was comprehensive! However, whatever the respective "average IQs" may be (I don't know if it has been worked out for this country), since some Africans are definitely brighter than some Europeans, why not simply give to all the type of education—grammar, commercial or technical—that suits each individual best?

As a matter of fact, there was recently a very encouraging news report to the effect that the Smith government was planning a crash education programme for Africans. The aim is to build 300 new African secondary schools, so that within the next 10 years the normal minimum school leaving age for Africans will be 15, instead of 13 as it is at present. (At present only the "grammar school material" gets secondary education at all.) Some people say that this scheme was actually not initiated by the Smith government, but by the previous government. But, even if this is true, at least it's encouraging that the Smith régime is prepared to carry on with it, and to admit to its supporters that it thinks that African education is desirable.

I am not a Smith supporter. But he has aroused such a tremendous general wave of patriotism here that I don't see how any attempt to "undo UDI" can possibly succeed. The great danger, as I see it, is that the country may be blindly led through "Independence" to racialism. In the past, the Rhodesian Front has not been noted for its liberal attitude towards racial problems—to put it mildly! And some of its supporters would like nothing better than South African-type apartheid. There are many Rhodesians who share my own views about this. At present we are unorganised, but I hope we may be able to change this.

Needless to say, I don't like the political and racial views of our "friends", the dictatorship of Portugal, South Africa, White Supremacists, Ku Klux Klannists from America, and British Fascists. At present we are not "like that". But I only hope that we don't end up by becoming what the rest of the world expects us to be. I think it is desperately important that there should be some people who understand the situation here, and help us to maintain the multi-racial ideal, instead of pushing us towards white supremacy by indiscriminately abusing us, by blindly supporting the African Nationalists (who are as racialistic, in their own way as any White), or by praising us for our vices (as our "friends" do!).

Signed (Miss) "X", Rhodesia.

## FREEDOM FOR RHODESIA

David Tribe

JUNE 26, FREEDOM DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA, was an appropriate date for a great march from Hyde Park followed by a rally in Trafalgar Square, to support "Freedom for Rhodesia". On the plinth were some 30 MPs, Lords, writers (including John Grigg and Judith Todd), artists and representatives of ZANU, the United Nations Association, the National Union of Students, the Africa Bureau, Movement for Colonial Freedom, the British Council of Churches the National Secular Society and the organisers, the Anti-apartheid Movement. Messages were read out from Lords Russell and Calder.

First hand accounts were given of the workings of restrictions and 30-day detention legislation (modelled on that of South Africa) and of the 10-fold *per capita* discrepancy between education expenditure on blacks and whites. Much banned, arrested and imprisoned Mrs Hilda Bernstein, South African journalist and formerly Johannesburg City Councillor, emphasised that Rhodesia would long ago have collapsed without unofficial South African financial support, that the much-publicised tanker diversions were Mr Wilson's red herrings, and that the real reason why Britain was not getting tough in that part of world was that she had investments there of over £m1,000, returning a uniquely high dividend. Some speakers urged, others specifically repudiated the use of force to re-establish legality in "Zimbabwe".

At the close of proceedings a message was delivered to the Prime Minister urging Her Majesty's Government to take immediate steps to secure the authority of the UN Security Council in making economic sanctions against Rhodesia mandatory on all countries, and to plan immediately for a free and independent nation based on majority rule. The great crowd melted quietly away. So did the press and broadcasting units. Little national publicity was given. Only a handful of Empire Loyalists and a young white Rhodesian heckled. There was no violence, no rioting, nothing thrown. Nothing our publicity lords could call "news".

### WORLD UNION OF FREETHINKERS

(In association with the National Secular Society)

## INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

SEPTEMBER 1st—5th, 1966

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.C.1.

(by kind permission of the Committee)

## THE TROUBLE WITH ROBERTS

(Continued from page 229)

man whose keenest childhood memory is his mother's brooch with the family motto: *Patria cara: carior libertas* (Country dear but freedom dearer) has the courage to stand apart from his fellows and dissociate himself from pre-conceived, harmful and dogmatic ideas. Certain it is that the "rogue-elephant" will always cause agitation among the herd! Their trumpeting echo round the world.

"He's mad," foams a curate.

"Roberts? He's a rebel, of course," says a Canon.

"He is possessed of the devil," declaims an Irish actor.

"Courage and integrity are his paramount qualities," states his biographer.

"One of the recognisably saintly figures at the Council," concedes an Anglican divine.

"The trouble with Roberts," adjudicates a high ecclesiastic, perhaps with a modicum of understanding, "is that he's a hundred years ahead of his time."

Not quite so far ahead, I think. Our world cannot wait that long. And in my view the trouble with Roberts is *place* rather than *time*. A champion of freethought and human rights shouldn't be living at Farm Street.

## REVIEW

Margaret McIlroy

READERS OF THE FREETHINKER will probably remember two articles entitled *The Nun Who Lived Again*, in which Phyllis Graham, a former Carmelite, tells of her experiences. These articles have now been re-printed as a pamphlet (Pioneer Press, 6d), which deserves a wide sale.

Miss Graham shows the appeal of Roman Catholicism to an emotional young girl, who even in her Protestant childhood had been obsessed with a dualistic idea of God: "Jesus is very nice, and the Holy Ghost isn't bad—but God the Father is simply horrid!" She became a Catholic at the age of sixteen, and to her "the world no longer seemed hostile and terrible, but a warm, cosy place watched over by beneficent angels and saints, no corner of it untouched by the glory they reflected from God".

But the religion which has appeared so beautiful and satisfying to the adolescent girl frequently shows a different face to the woman. Many discover the price Catholicism exacts for its comforts when they find themselves prematurely aged through excessive childbearing. Miss Graham was to suffer in a different but no less excruciating way, for her dream beckoned her into a convent of the particularly austere Carmelite order, where not only was she deprived of all worldly pleasures, "but the consolations of religion itself were utterly and ruthlessly withdrawn". In this desolation Miss Graham existed for twenty years, constantly tormented by her questionings of the doctrine of Hell, which she was too decent, and too intelligent to be able to reconcile with her idea of a good God. There she would probably still be, had not her health broken down, so that she was at last released from her vows, and sent back—still a pious Catholic—into the world.

Miss Graham describes the steps by which her eyes were gradually opened to the reality of Catholicism—its basis in morbid fears, and its responsibility for the rise of Hitler. She was happy to become a Humanist, and she concludes: "My main reason for joining the Humanist movement is the expression of an ardent desire that all man should know freedom from fear and happiness based on truth".

Had Miss Graham been more robust physically she would never have had the opportunity to make these discoveries. (It is worth recalling here that another freethinking ex-nun—Mary Clare Blakison, author of *Odd Nun Out*—also escaped purely by a lucky chance.) One is left wondering how many women are still existing miserably in convents, regretting the youthful impulse that took them there, without the opportunity to think freely so as to find their way out. Miss Graham was fortunate, yet she endured twenty years misery and lost all her youth. Her parents also suffered terribly at being deprived of her companionship for so long. This pamphlet is a useful reminder of the cost of Catholicism in human suffering.

## LETTERS

### No Politics

I FOUND THE LETTER by W. E. Huxley in your June 3rd edition very provoking, in fact a religious bigot could not have written a letter more full of humbug. I shall comment on it point by point. "The Europeans developed land Rhodesia left virgin by the blacks." This land was obtained by typical imperialist means namely fraudulent treaties and gunboat diplomacy, also as elsewhere in the world, the white colonists were uninvited. "They thereby created wealth and gave lucrative employment to negroes." True they created wealth, for their own race and class, also gave employment (of a sort) to negroes, but certainly not "lucrative" employment. "We should disown the negroes, they are not of our family." What then is our family? The only true Britons are the Welsh. In 1938 scientists gave the lie to Nazi propaganda by proving that a pure race and a superior race do not exist. The words of W. E. Huxley here are more reminiscent of a fanatical Nazi as are those of Ian Smith.

From 1960 to 1964 I worked as a messenger for a South African bank in London. All our skins were white but in the eyes of the clerical staff (composed of British, Afrikaner, Holland-Dutch and Rhodesian elements) and in their twisted outlook we were the inferior, the serfs. When we complained of the disgusting working conditions, three of us were unjustly dismissed. In addition, this bank tried to deprive me of unemployment benefit (unsuccessfully) and tried to evict my family and me from our house (on which they hold the mortgage). No, Mr Huxley, white Rhodesians are *not* my kith and kin, I feel more kinship with the negro. In my present job I work with many non-whites and I find they are equal to any whites, given a square deal of course. Finally, as the Roman Empire was mentioned, true this was an Empire built on conquest, but the Romans did not practice racial discrimination (the Christians started that) and educated the barbarian races of which the *British* were one. I found the final sentence (a threat to stop reading the FREETHINKER) too childish for words.

A. BLOOD

### Reply form the Chairman of the BHA

AUTHORS are not supposed to answer back when their books are reviewed, but I shall be grateful if I am allowed to make one main point about my book which Mr McCall has reviewed. Sentences quoted out of context may be made to say almost anything. The argument of the book is what really matters, and it is this: religion is no longer a thinkable basis of society, and therefore Christians should give up thinking that it is; if Christians accept that the secular basis of society is in common institutions for general social purposes and agreed rules for living and working together, they have to re-think the place and rôle of religion in society. The book is addressed mainly to Christians, and unless the author takes them seriously he cannot expect them to take him seriously.

The short answer to my Secularist critics is that I am a more effective critic of the churches than they are.

If I may also say a word to Miss Graham, the talks between IHEU and the Vatican were duly authorised in a democratic manner by the representatives of all member-organisations on the Board of IHEU. There is no other way in which they could have been authorised.

H. J. BLACKHAM

(The fact that the IHEU took a decision democratically does not necessarily mean that the BHA had democratically authorised its representative to speak on behalf of British Humanists, or even that most members of the BHA agree that such dialogues are wise.—Ed.)

## OBITUARY

A LIFE-LONG Freethinker, Ellen MacQueen who died at the age of 91, was the widow of Mr William MacQueen of Leeds and Trenton, New Jersey. She leaves a son (Mr R. MacQueen, a member of the Manchester Branch NSS) and daughter to whom our sympathy is extended.

Mr W. Collins conducted the committal ceremony at Stockport Crematorium on July 5th.

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.