

FREETHINKER

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

FOUNDED 1881 by G. W. FOOTE

Friday,
May 26, 1967

OSTENTATIOUS CHRIST THE KING

ON Sunday, May 7th the new Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King was opened with solemn High Mass. It was a notable occasion, a triumph for British Roman Catholicism and a remarkable public demonstration of Christian unity. For Cardinal Heenan was accompanied by the Anglican Bishops of Liverpool and Warrington and by the devout, albeit non-conformist Mr Harold Wilson.

One should not be too surprised at this coming together of divergent sectarian Christians. As they themselves would point out, they stand on much common ground. All of them derive their Christian beliefs primarily from the New Testament. Take away the New Testament and you take away the basis for over a thousand years of Christianity. The New Testament is blasting-off point, the repository of the sacred biographies of Jesus Christ.

The question has been asked by sceptics many times and as many times ignored by the ardent pious, "How can you believe that the apostles recorded accurately what they had heard or seen so many years previously? And if you cannot place full trust in the accuracy of their reporting how can you accept what they wrote as being literally true?" The gospel reports suffer from so many internal discrepancies and incompatibilities that much of their testimony is invalidated. The reports as they stand are, in certain respects, so contradictory that no one can say which is correct and which not.

Supposing, two hundred years from now, an enquiring historian wished to know how many people had attended a certain important event in Liverpool on May 7th, 1967. What would he do? Would he be able to ask someone who was actually there? Unless the longevity of life had been increased substantially by that time the answer must be No. Would he call on a Spiritualist to get in touch with David Collis in Boo-Boo Land and ask him? Rather doubtful. What the enquiring historian would most likely

do would be to refer to whichever 1967 national or local newspapers had covered the event. He would read the reports and look for the figure of attendance. But what answer does he accept if one paper gives one figure and another paper gives another figure, and this a widely differing one? He may choose one figure or the other or neither. He may take the mean between the two or a little above or below whichever one seems to him to be the more reliable. But certainly he would be either arrogant or stupid or both to assert dogmatically that he *knew* the correct figure and that there could be no doubt about the matter. Likewise, if the Gospel accounts of Christ's sayings and doings conflict, and they do conflict, no one, Cardinal Heenan, the Anglican Bishops of Liverpool and Warrington, not even Mr Harold Wilson aided by his Ministry for Religious Education, can know which accounts, if any, are correct.

The day after the opening of the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral *The Guardian* reported that 'cold weather, the briefest of processional routes, and lack of encouragement kept the crowds outside small—about two thousand'. *The Times* reported: 'Huge crowds expected at today's official opening of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, were kept away by grey, damp weather and a chill wind blowing off the Mersey. There were 500 policemen and 200 first-aid workers on duty but the crowd of onlookers never exceeded 2,000'. *The Daily Telegraph* reported: 'Tens of thousands of Roman Catholics lined a processional route to the cathedral'. Now I ask you. One paper says the crowd outside numbered about 2,000, a second says less than 2,000, whilst the third differs considerably from the other two by reporting that there were tens of thousands. What would our enquiring historian two hundred years from now make of that? He would perhaps be intrigued to know how the *Daily Telegraph* reporter was able to know that these 'tens of thousands' of onlookers were Roman Catholics. He would doubtless wonder how, in these days of ecumenical brotherhood, one could tell which of the onlookers were Protestants and which were Catholics without actually asking each of the tens of thousands individually. The significant point is that these reports were all written on the day of the event and published for other eye-witnesses to read and dispute the very next day. No such facilities exist, or ever existed, for checking the reporting in the New Testament.

For hundreds of years millions of people have failed to apply common sense to this subject. Thus it is that monuments to superstition, ignorance and stupidity continue to rise in the twentieth century. Man may have progressed a great deal since the birth of the Christian era but he still has a long, long way to go.

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Harry Lamont

Speaking Personally

WHEN I was a schoolmaster I occasionally asked boys (not the same lot twice, I hope), the meaning of *respectable*. They made many guesses, but never gave me the definition I wanted, viz, doing what meets with our neighbours' approval.

In Calcutta I won a bet by walking about the city bare-footed, in a nightshirt, with a tea cosy on my head without attracting the least attention. But think of the furore such an outfit would cause in Bath, Bournemouth or Basingstoke!

We all seek to win our neighbours' esteem. I have lodged in houses where it would be considered a frightful *gaffe* to hang washing in the front garden. One genteel woman reprimanded me bitterly because I sat on the front doorstep in my shirtsleeves to read the evening paper. She complained that I lowered the tone of the establishment.

Passing a shop in Regent Street I fancied a deerstalker hat in the window, so went in to try it on. The assistant said: "Of course you can't wear it in town, Sir". I replied, "Can't I?" paid him, stuck it on my napper and sallied forth.

Most of us are very conservative and intolerant. Long ago, if an ox violated the herd instinct it was gored or kicked to death. Men are much the same. You violate conventions at your peril. If in a small English town I decided to wear a top hat, football jersey, striped shorts, parti-coloured stockings and cricket boots to stroll through the streets, would I remain unmolested? I would attract a crowd of ribald scoffers who would jostle me until I fled. For a bet I once marched through the East End in a topper, with plus-fours and a gaudy blazer. I had to seek police protection. When a daring young woman first went cycling in bloomers, without a skirt, the angry mob stormed her father's house and beat him severely.

The mini skirt has aroused much controversy. They are OK for a filly with shapely legs, but rather incongruous on an ancient battle charger with shanks like tree trunks. In this connection the late Dean Inge wrote:

"Half an inch, half an inch,
Half an inch shorter,
Same skirts for mother,
Same skirts for daughter;
When the wind blows,
Everything shows,
Both that which should show
And what didn't oughter."

There is nothing too grotesque for women to wear if it is the fashion. I remember a damsel with a hobble skirt

RESPECTABILITY IS OUR GOD

getting stuck on the steps of a tram, while I struggled to dislodge her. I have seen females with hats so fantastic that one had to exercise all one's self-control not to howl with laughter in their faces.

For some time it has been the fashion for the youthful male slum-dwellers to wear crash helmets, very tight jeans, leather jackets with esoteric designs and winkle-pickers. Such an outfit seems to me comic and absurd, but the hoodlums think it the latest fashion and very cute.

I used to lodge with a navy and his wife. He was a rough diamond, but she had very strict ideas of decorum. For their Sunday stroll she insisted that he wore a bowler, canary gloves and a lurid fancy pullover with "I LOVE BILL" across the front. He used to swear and declare she made him look like a freak in a thunder-storm.

I asked a class of East End children why the man walks outside when accompanying a woman on the pavement. "So as 'e can spit in the gutter," replied a young tough.

There is an old saying that when in Rome we should do as the Romans do, in other words conform to local customs and avoid attracting attention. It used to irritate me profoundly to hear an English couple demanding porridge with eggs and bacon for breakfast in a remote continental village, while they loudly made disparaging remarks about the local cuisine.

As a student in France I shall never forget my first morning in a *pension de famille*. The landlady, tall, thin, austere, in black, stood before me at the breakfast table and asked in French: "Have you indeed everything that is necessary, Monsieur Lamont?" I looked at the tiny cup of *café au lait* and microscopic *croissant* and replied: "I suppose so, Madame". I used to feel very hungry in the middle of the morning, but soon got used to the frugal matutinal fare after a copious supper.

When I won a scholarship to the Swansea Grammar School my father made me a set of boards joined by straps to carry books instead of a bag. The first day I carried the contraption I was set upon by a howling mob that smashed it to pieces. I was fortunate to escape with my life.

When I was ten, sixty years ago, a tailor came to our village. He had numerous children and was desperately poor. My parents tried to help him by sending me to be measured for a suit of knickerbockers and Norfolk jacket. He measured me with string. The jacket made me look like a scarecrow and the pants had no seat. When I bent, the breeks split across the stern. When I wore the outfit to school I had to run the gauntlet. Every time they tore, my mother sewed or patched them. They seemed indestructible. For years I was called *Bock*, short for *knickerbocker*.

G. K. Chesterton said democracy would be all right if it were democratic, but the snobbery among the poor is startling. A clerk will not speak to his collier neighbour until the latter has removed the grime, and a policeman in uniform has to enter his home by the back door.

Of course respectability is relative. What suits the dwellers in terrace houses would seem a solecism to those who occupy ornate mansions.

In some old country churches there are special private pews for the gentry, where the occupants can do what they like, secure from observation by neighbours.

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I lodged with a couple who were not married. When they got drunk and quarrelled she implored him to make her a respectable woman. For a long time I did not understand what she meant.

In Scotland those guilty of a sexual offence had to sit in a special pew and do penance. Burns was a frequent transgressor. In one poem he wrote:

"The Church and State can go to hell,
And I'll go to my Annie."

The worship of respectability reached its apogee in the reign of Queen Victoria. A man could have a mistress and few would condemn him, provided he were discreet, but woe betide him if any scandal resulted! Parnell was ruined when his liaison with Mrs O'Shea leaked out.

Gladstone must have had tremendous moral courage to try to redeem prostitutes when they were ostracized by all respectable people. A biographer tried to besmirch his memory, but his sons and the Court vindicated him.

Our churches are too respectable. Christ said, let the one without sin cast the first stone, and in as much as ye did it unto the least one of these, my brethren, ye did it

unto me, but only the Salvation Army really seeks to bring in the outcasts.

A local parson protested against the proposal to build a prison in a certain district because the visitors would be wicked people. I advised him to read the Sermon on the Mount.

Many years ago I watched harlots in flimsy clothes on a bitterly cold day and wrote in my diary:

"Pale Prostitutes.
The slushy snow is ankle deep,
The biting blast cuts like a knife;
But harlots here their vigil keep;
It seems grotesque, but such is life.

Pale prostitutes, your clothes are thin;
You smile at me and touch my side;
In truth it is a ghastly grin,
Because, like Christ, you're crucified."

Several writers have declared that hypocrisy is the homage that vice renders to virtue. Even harlots pretend to be respectable. I heard of a notorious courtesan who protested sternly at any improper language.

IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEAD?

Margaret Green

WAS the Education Act of 1944, making Religious Instruction compulsory, justified? Mr Harold Loukes of the Department of Education, Oxford University, and one of the foremost figures in the field of Religious Education in this country, thinks not. He was speaking at a meeting arranged by the Wycombe Association for the Advancement of State Education in Beaconsfield, on 25th April, and said that before the Act all schools taught RI, so why make it compulsory, especially as this is the only compulsory subject required by law.

One theory he put forward was that of Archbishop William Temple, who said the country needed a Christian element guaranteed in order to safeguard a basic ideology of Christianity. Yet, children and the adult world are becoming more agnostic. (Of the 50 per cent children who attend church at 12 years, only 25 per cent attend at 15 years.)

The agreed syllabus set up was for Bible Study, daily worship, and for the school to be thought of as a Christian community.

Taking Bible Study, Mr Loukes said that this had failed in its objective, since questionnaires given to 15-year-olds, first in Sheffield then in other parts of the country, showed that less than a quarter were able to answer even the most basic questions. And this after 10 years of RI. Something was surely wrong. Most of the children didn't believe in God—yet thought Jesus the son of God. Religious Instruction was certainly confusing.

Morning Assembly caused boredom. But, Mr Loukes said, this didn't matter, since children should be bored sometime! The revolt against it was also by 15-year-olds who genuinely felt they were being forced to say things which they honestly could not believe. He called these the 'Seeking Agnostics', who were going through a process of discovery, and being thrust towards a commitment which they couldn't handle. They were often rebelling against their parents' thoughts and their early knowledge. "Maybe what goes wrong in secondary schools could be the result of the nonsense taught in primary schools, about the old gentleman sitting in the clouds", he said.

As for schools being a Christian community, Mr Loukes thought the best examples of Christian communities were schools. Not because of RI or Morning Assembly, but because of the sense of involvement, the love, the sharing and helping which is especially present in primary schools. "Morally speaking, I am quite happy to see RI vanish, because a school creates this moral understanding", he said. Yet, when he asked several teachers why they thought it a *Christian* community, none could answer, even though they agreed it is (perhaps if he had asked why it is a humanitarian one the teachers could have told him).

The idea of what the Bible is about, Mr Loukes believes to be beyond the concept of young children. They should learn about God through their own experiences in everyday life, and later be told what they felt then was God. (I wonder if young children would remember how they felt.) "Children walk barefoot on the grass, and are therefore nearer to God because they are aware of wonder", Mr Loukes said. This is certainly true, but I think if he had said nearer to 'life' it would have been truer, because a child's idea of God is the 'old gentleman sitting in the clouds'.

Mr Loukes went on to say that in adolescence children also need ethical values, as they begin to learn about other people, and need a broad view of life. But surely children learn about other people from a very early age, and can be helped in their understanding by learning Comparative Religion? This would enable them to appreciate what people in this and other countries believe, or don't believe. Mr Loukes' argument against Comparative Religion was simply that it was 'intellectually impossible', and that we don't teach 'comparative games'. But what about History or Geography?

Apart from dismissing Comparative Religion rather lightly, Mr Loukes gave very convincing reasons *against* compulsory Religious Instruction. But he said that although he and many other Christians would like the Act of 1944 repealed, this was not politically possible at the moment, but equally he would not like to see religion banned altogether in schools.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE self-appointed censors and guardians of public morality have found a new champion. One of the results of the recent Greater London Council elections was the return of Lady Dartmouth to public life, from which she had been mercifully absent for some time. A group of Richmond electors whose interest in London's affairs must have been roused to blood-heat, elected her as their representative.

Her ladyship's posterior had scarcely warmed the chair at County Hall before she was on the warpath. The GLC Licensing Committee had given permission for showing the uncut version of Joseph Strick's film of the James Joyce novel *Ulysses*, and Lady Dartmouth was "horrified" when she heard this. She had not seen the film, but thought "it was the most horrible book I have ever read in my life". Her mother, novelist Barbara Cartland agrees: "I read the book when I was about 18 and was shocked to the core". Perhaps people were more easily shocked when Barbara Cartland was 18 than they are today.

The film of *Ulysses* has been widely praised in many countries, including the United States where the uncut version is being shown. It will be a scandal if British film-goers are able to see only a hacked version of the film because of pressure from the 20th century Mrs Grundys.

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Success is always an encouragement to the censorious prudes who wish to suppress any film, book or play that is likely to cause a single eyebrow to be raised in suburbia.

Fortunately, the GLC Licensing Committee stood firm at its meeting last week, and *Ulysses* will open at the Academy Cinema, London, on June 1st.

Absent friends

SEVERAL familiar faces were missing at the annual conference of the National Secular Society which was held at Manchester during Whitsun. William Griffiths—who was re-elected Honorary Treasurer—was absent for the first time in many years because of a recent operation. Fred Warner, a life-long worker for Freethought in the West Ham area, was unable to undertake the journey, and because of failing health has resigned from the Executive Committee.

There was a luncheon to celebrate the formation of the Manchester branch of the Society in 1917. Mr F. Monks, one of the founder members, was a Guest of Honour, and responded to a toast proposed by Mr H. Bayford. A toast was proposed to another veteran, Mr George Woodcock, who was a well-known figure in the streets of Manchester where he sold the *FREETHINKER*. Now in his eighties, he too was unable to attend, but this did not lessen the enthusiasm with which those present drank his health.

The conference passed a Resolution expressing full support for the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill. Another Resolution welcomed many constructive proposals in the Plowden Report, but criticised the Committee for not recommending a change in the law regarding RI and worship in schools.

David Tribe was re-elected President, and William Collins and Mrs E. Venton, Vice-Presidents of the Society.

An evil system

SEVENTY pastors representing all of South Africa's Evangelical Lutheran churches have condemned their Government's *apartheid* policy. In a memorandum to their congregations, they say that a policy of separate development is a deep and ever-increasing source of distress to members of the non-White community.

Ironically, this courageous stand has been taken at a time when a British Labour Government announces that during the Royal Navy's "cordial visit" to Cape Town, coloured members of their ships' company will be subjected to indignities and loss of human rights.

Police raid

Eight detectives from the Obscene Publications Department at Scotland Yard searched Jean Straker's Academy of Visual Arts at Soho Square, London, last week. They took away a large number of negatives and prints. The previous seizure of some 600 negatives is the subject of a petition to the European Commission on Human Rights.

Ecumenical news

AT Bagshot, the local Roman Catholic priest preached at Evensong in the Anglican parish church on Whit-Sunday.

The Vicar of Christ Church, Dover, has collected 800 signatures to a petition urging that the Town Council should withdraw permission granted for the building of a Jehovah's Witness' church.

E.A.

MORAL GROWTH AND RELIGIOUS VALUES: III

Dr Ronald Goldman

The Implications for a Secular System of Education

1. THE MORAL ROOTS of our society are still in the person of Christ, even though belief in Christ as the historic incarnation is accepted by only a small proportion of the population. Dr Cyril Bibby argues the Humanist case in the December issue of *New Education*¹ and remarks that most parents still adhere in principle to what is commonly mis-called 'the Christian ethic' and generally wish their children to be brought up to observe it. "I take it, therefore", says Dr Bibby, "that our schools are inescapably committed to the promotion of moral behaviour; and, moreover, that the morality they promote should be mainly consonant with that taught by Jesus of Nazareth". What is in dispute between Christians and Humanists is not evidently so much the *content* of moral teaching as the *authority* upon which it depends. Clearly then, Christian education has an important rôle to play in a secular system of education. In one article in reply to Dr Bibby in the same issue of *New Education*² I suggest that the religious clauses of the 1944 Education Act allow us sufficient flexibility to reform our present teaching of religion, to make it less monopolistic and to make it a more effective force for moral education.

2. In the primary school religious education has little directly to contribute to moral development, since we have seen this is largely a period of moral realism, where personal relationships provide the models and the examples for children. The religious teacher rather than the teacher of religion is of first importance, for it is the quality of caring, the warmth and interest, the friendly firmness which the child most needs at this stage in his development. I do not believe that Christians are the only teachers who supply these qualities. The Home Secretary may care to note that a student wrote a little time ago that in his view "all teachers should be convicted Christians". I do not share that view. But Christian teachers have a duty and an opportunity, to be the kind of adults who will help the child to be sensitive to others and assist him from moral realism towards autonomous morality. They will build up a child's ego-ideal rather than his super-ego by a positive relationship in which authority gives way to respect and then to friendship and so to responsible freedom. Teachers who rely upon external discipline, negative authority, criticism without support, fears and other sanctions are super-ego supporters, who may undermine the healthy development of their children. Some Christian teachers may have the right label, but the wrong attitudes towards their children; just as some humanist teachers may have no label but possess the right attitudes.

It seems all too obvious, but it needs saying, that a happy primary school is our greatest contribution to education in this country; and it is our greatest contribution to *moral* development, for it is only in that kind of climate that good relationships of children with trusted adults can really flourish.

3. In secondary schools the rôle of religious education plays a much more important part in moral development. While moral education up to adolescence is extra-curricular, depending upon school spirit and personal relation-

ships, during adolescence the pupil becomes aware of divisions in the world outside, differences in value systems, and is capable of voicing questions. When religion is taught well in an open-ended way, it raises all the important questions about the nature of man, about good and evil, about specific situational ethics, which can be explored, not with the dogmatic intention of arriving at the one right answer, but to search and examine the range of all possible answers man has found to these questions. Among these should feature prominently the Christian truths about life, but Christians are not true to their faith if they teach this narrowly and in a monopolistic spirit.

4. In addition to a broader based religious education syllabus there should be courses such as "Personal Relationships", "Adolescence" and "Human Behaviour". These again should not be only for conveying information to help adolescents overcome their anxieties about themselves, but opportunities for understanding in depth the particular period of life through which they are passing. These kinds of courses seem particularly appropriate towards the end of secondary schools. With the revising of the school-leaving age, they may very well become the concern of the new schools Council Curriculum Development Centres. We certainly need not only to work out such courses with care, but overcome teachers' fears and train them to value courses of this kind. For the less able young person the last year at school might more resemble the best kind of informal youth programme than a diluted grammar school timetable. We have not enough teachers of the right calibre to do this. In secondary schools we are strangely still authoritarian, in a paternal way, but still authoritarian. Why is there much greater freedom for infant school pupils, in the ways in which they work, the ease with which they move about the classroom and the school, their choice of activities, than we find in secondary schools? Is it because we mistrust our adolescents, or fear they will get out of hand? We seem to have turned the age of greater freedom and responsibility completely on its head, allowing less where they are needed most. What have Christian teachers to say to this?

5. When I observe the structure of our educational system it seems to me relevant to see how much freedom actually exists within it. A few weeks ago I interviewed on our College closed-circuit television series *Beliefs in Education* the great A. S. Neill. "Too much education," he said, "is anti-life". When pressed to explain why Summerhill was a private school he maintained he had to be free from interference, because the state would have run him out of education long ago if he had had to meet their requirements. As a supporter of the state system of education I felt some sympathy for him. Apart from our universities, and even here the threat is growing, how much academic freedom do teachers in schools and institutions of higher education really have? Theoretically they have a great deal, but in practise it can be seriously curtailed. It is true that those who pay the money should exercise some control, but teachers and lecturers and academics should participate in this control also. Our system is still too hierarchical and authoritarian, in which financial power is used coercively. Headteachers of schools and principals of colleges are expected to behave in an authoritarian manner in institutions where authority and freedom should be used educationally. If the teachers cannot do this effectively in their

own professional affairs, how can they be expected to create these conditions for their pupils and students?

This is why the Weaver Report about the government of colleges of education is such an important document. But it is only the beginning. We need further recommendations for colleges of all kinds, further education and technical colleges, and for schools also. The reform of the government of educational institutions is the key to progress and should be based upon the assumption that all affected by decisions should be involved in making them.³ It was very daring of the *Times Educational Supplement* on December 9th last to write a leading article on 'student opinion'. It took a look into the awful abyss opened up by the NUS asking for 'Student Participation in College Government'. But it drew back from the abyss just in time by claiming that an educational relationship "must involve paternalism". This is sheer nonsense. Our young people are not looking for paternal figures in higher education, just as teachers in schools and colleges do not look for benevolent paternalism in headmasters, principals or local authorities. They want partnership, consultation and participation in decision making. When this kind of responsibility is mutually exercised by all concerned we will have real educational institutions more able to engage upon realistic moral education. The two are bound very closely together. From a religious viewpoint it is the application of trust and love in human relationship at the professional level.

6. I have already spoken of how large impersonal institutions can create conditions in which irresponsible behaviour, because it is anonymous, can corrupt moral development. The larger the school the greater the number of teachers are needed to exercise pastoral care, and to man the specialist services all large schools need today. It was the large comprehensive schools in America which taught them that they needed counsellors, educational guidance workers, and even school-based social workers. How much larger will we allow schools to become before we see the danger signals? They are already evident. Schools may be contributing actively to delinquency and irresponsible behaviour among adolescents without being aware of it, by their very nature and size.

Apart from specialist services, are teachers themselves today providing enough stability for schools? The mobility of teachers within the profession is necessary, but some schools do not have a few teachers leaving each year: they have a veritable exodus of staff. The pursuit of promotion, responsibility allowances and pleasant places to live seem in some teachers to take precedence over their concern for the children they teach. What moral effect has this upon our pupils, when they need a stable community and trusting relationships upon which to lean? And are our Local Education Authorities behaving responsibly in this? I was horrified to see on the notice board of my own college when I first arrived, an advertisement for an LEA, which shall be nameless, which proclaimed to my students in large letters "TEACH IN BLANKTOWN AND RELAX!" and there followed a list of the beautiful surroundings and the recreational amenities available to teachers. Is this the challenge we want young teachers to face? We have only to read chapter 3 of the Newsom Report to see where the priorities should be. Visit any area like Paddington in London, Moss Side in Manchester, or Sparkbrook in Birmingham and see what we have created for our children.

Is the teaching profession so lacking in idealism that it

cannot mount a crusade against slum schools? Can it provide incentives to the best teachers to teach in such areas where children suffer such crippling social disadvantages? Why does it not press for compensatory programmes for such children, while the private-sector of education enjoys unprecedented privileges? And is it not the responsibility of the Government to implement responsible reports on its schools, not pigeon-hole them for years? The Newsom Report came out three years ago and now Plowden makes similar recommendations. What has the Government done, what does it intend to do and when, about Newsom's and Plowden's recommendations on slum schools? These areas are fast becoming ghettos, not only for those born there, but for hundreds of thousands of immigrant children whose parents run our transport, our hospitals, and other essential services. We are not providing an adequate education for children in these areas; we do not even appear to be interested in the nature of the problems they face. All we seem to want to do is to avoid facing the problems as long as possible. Have we no conscience about this appalling situation?

It was inevitable that I should come full circle on the implications for a secular society, to the question of responsibility. What it boils down to, when we recognise that education is an instrument for social change and for the development of moral persons, is that teachers alone cannot be held accountable. They can do a great deal, but without home support and without the support of society in general and more generous support from taxpayers in particular, the enormous task of mediating values cannot be fully achieved. Because of this mutual responsibility every society gets the adolescents and young adults it deserves.

¹ "Dishonest to God", *New Education*, December 1966, pp. 10-12.
² "Revised Version." *New Education*, December 1966, pp. 13-15.
³ See A. Etzioni, *A comparative analysis of complex organisations*, Free Press 1961.

(Concluded)

REPORT OF THE HUMANIST NETWORK (INTERNATIONAL)

Kit Moua†

IN THE FREETHINKER of September 9th last year I reported an active membership for the Network of 230; there are now (May 1967) 290 members with 34 more retired or 'lost'. This steady increase is encouraging, especially as I hear that a similar project has failed to get off the American ground. There are, I am glad to say, many Americans in the HLN(I), and I am very grateful to the American *Humanist*, which is going to insert an advertisement for me free of charge. With free regular help, too, from this paper and also now from our own monthly *Humanist*. I can be sure that the stream of enquiries will continue to grow and I am most grateful for such co-operation.

We are still sadly short of young unmarried women, which means that more than 70 men under the age of 30 are often disappointed. Propaganda and information about our Secularist organisations is still failing disastrously to reach the female masses, and I only wish we could find some way of making good this situation. Although I tend to regret news of my women members getting married (especially to non-Networkers!) just because there are so few of them, I am continually heartened by the number of

friendships that are resulting from the Network contacts. I am seriously considering begging for testimonials from satisfied members, or at least permission to quote letters for publicity purposes. (Could you help in this?) Inevitably there are still some failures, but no one who feels neglected should hesitate to send me a reminder and I shall continue to do all I can within the obvious limits.

The membership fee (for life) is now 3s, and funds which had fallen rather low are picking up again. As always, any profits there are go to Secular Humanist projects. Which brings me to the subject of my letter in the April *Humanist*: how should it be made clear that the Network is for non-religious Humanists to whom the label "Secularist" can accurately apply? HLN(I) is clumsy enough and I already have headed paper in stock. With a membership of Atheists, Freethinkers, Rationalists, Secularists and Agnostics I cannot usually do very much to help the "deist", "theist" or near-Unitarian, who, in fact, can probably find congenial company among Christians. The purpose of the Network has never been to act as an unofficial correspondence course with a view to conversion; only to try and help our lonely or isolated fellow-believers to make contact with each other through the post. It is, then, a *Secular Humanist Letter Network (International)* and it only remains to decide if and when the actual label should or can be altered. If you are interested I shall welcome your views. And if you would like to correspond with someone who shares your philosophical attitudes (and perhaps also your hobbies and other interests) send me a s.a.e. for more details. To all members and supporters may I once again send my sincere thanks.

While I am in the pulpit I would just like to add that my recently formed Postal Secondhand Book Service is not connected with the Network, but is equally at your service whether you are members of any of our organisations or not. The selection of Secularist books is limited, but I hope it will increase as I am able to sell. A catalogue will be sent in return for a stamped and addressed foolscap envelope. If I haven't got the books you want in stock, I may continue to be lucky in finding them.

If you are aware how much it costs to advertise and duplicate and publish, you will realise how much I need your help in giving publicity to these two small but active Secularist projects. In their turn they both often act for outsiders as the first signpost into the movement as a whole. By helping me run these projects, then, you are helping to strengthen Secularism and to prove that it is not just a talking shop for big-heads.

LETTERS

Population control

AFTER reading David Tribe's reply to my article, I feel depressed that he apparently views the Society's future with such pessimism. I had supposed that secularist ideas were steadily gaining ground, but when I read that "there is nothing for it but to keep a rational light burning in as much of society as we can reach", I begin to wonder if it is really we and not the churches who are on the defensive.

If secularism is in danger of becoming just part of a vague consensus of so-called "progressive" opinion, then I consider that the Society has got to re-assert its identity by adopting a simple, unequivocal policy which will make sense to any rational person who is able to understand plain facts and genuinely wants a better world for his descendants.

It is no exaggeration to claim that the whole of humanity's future may hang on the simple issue of population control.

Nothing can stop the world's population from trebling in the next two generations. The best that can be hoped for is that strict control now will then more or less stabilise these numbers. Otherwise, uncontrolled reproduction will surely lead to disaster. Now is the time for decision and yet, largely because of religious opposition, the public are not being informed and little is being done. It must be the government's responsibility in any emergency, such as this, to safeguard the future of its people and the latter will generally accept restriction on individual liberties if they are convinced that they are absolutely necessary.

I do not deny that the large families in existence now must be adequately cared for but they are a luxury we cannot afford in the future. I think David Tribe is wrong to think that withdrawal of family benefits will not distress the more affluent families. The rising birthrate which has accompanied rising living standards in Britain and the USA since 1955 seems to indicate that, for the middle classes, the size of family can be adjusted to suit the income (this also helps to explain the low birthrate in the 1930's). The present climate of opinion fostered by commercial and advertising interests not to mention the Royal family, favours three or four children as normal.

Turning to the young people whom Mr Tribe appears to regard with mixed feelings of pity and despair, what more exciting new idea could there be for them than planning (or as Dennis Gabor would say, inventing) their own future? Might not their present attitude of apparent boredom and indifference be due to the feeling that the course of events is beyond their control and that, with the Bomb and recurrent crises all over the world, they might as well make the most of what little time they may have left? The recent student revolts at Berkeley and LSE were evidently the release of just such pent-up feelings of frustration and will doubtless be followed by many more until youthful needs are recognised and their energies creatively employed.

But do we really want to appeal to a wider audience again? Or are we content just to preach sound sense to the already converted? In this case we may as well admit that any impact we have is bound to be limited and it is no use grizzling about it.

May I add that I am not questioning David Tribe's skill as a pianist, nor the extent of his repertoire, but does he not agree that it may be time to compose a more stirring tune?

CYNTHIA BLEZARD.

Scottish Nationalism

MAY I be allowed to comment on Mr I. S. Low's letter in the *FREETHINKER*, headed "Stop messing"?

As a secular-humanist and a member of the Scottish National Party, I strongly resent sentiments of this nature. Whether or not we want World Government has no connection with Nationalism. The SNP is fighting, not against World Government, but against economic exploitation by the London Government. I think most nationalists would agree with me in welcoming the ultimate establishment of a peaceful World Order, and that the best means to achieve this is through the United Nations.

As for nationalism being out of date, is Mr Low unaware that more colonial states are gaining their independence from imperialist domination than ever before?

I am sure that if England were "united" with a major power such as the USA, to its economic disadvantage, Mr Low would soon become an English Nationalist.

World Government is all very well, but we in the SNP do not want Scotland to be ruled by any external organisation which is less than a World Order.

GEORGE D. RODGER.

[This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.]

FREETHINKER FIGHTING FUND

THE *FREETHINKER* is the only weekly Secularist-Humanist paper in the country. It is still only 6d. How much do YOU care how many people it reaches? To advertise we need money, and our expenses are ever-increasing. Whose copy are you reading now? Have you got a subscription? Couldn't you contribute something to the Fighting Fund, say 6d or 6s or £6 or £60? How much do you really care about Freethought and helping other people to hear about it? Do, please, help if you can.

The *FREETHINKER*, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1

FREETHINKER

Published by G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.
(Pioneer Press)

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

Editor: DAVID COLLIS

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Editorial matter should be addressed to: THE EDITOR,
THE FREETHINKER, 103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER
office at least ten days before the date of publication.

National Secular Society. Details of membership 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. Cheques, etc., should be made
payable to the NSS.

Humanist Holidays, Art Holiday, Burton Galleries, Wirral
Cheshire, 29th July to 12th August. Small Youth Camp near
Yeovil, Somerset. Details of both from Mrs M. Mepham,
29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Humanist Letter Network (International) and Humanist Postal
Book Service. For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to
Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and
evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

Manchester Branch NSS, Platt Fields, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m.;
Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.

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

The Progressive League. Arts Weekend at Braziers Park, Ipsden,
Oxon., June 2nd-4th. Painting, Play-reading, Music, Poetry,
Discussion, Dancing. Fee £5. Details: Miss Terry Gabriel,
9 Russell Gardens, London, NW11.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London, WC1), Sunday, June 4th, 11 a.m.: LORD SORENSSEN,
"Free Thought and Social Necessities".

LETTERS

Planting trees

THERE is a golden opportunity for Humanism to lend its weight
in the struggle to overcome the most pernicious deterrent to peace
in the world today . . . deforestation which leads to erosion,
flooding, droughts, starvation and war!

We may be all up in arms over the saying of prayers in our
schools, we may be upset at the tax privileges of the churches,
we may revile against anti-sex laws and totally unrealistic abortion
statutes, but if our land erodes away, when the dust that follows
the drying flood waters sweeps the land, when hunger and starva-
tion face us, when nations that are covetous of our lands to
replace their worn out barren fields march again, of what avail is
criticism of Christian folly?

One man, in a lifetime, completely reforested a section in the
south of France transmuting it from a parched, bleak wasteland
to a fertile industrious forest. What could a thousand well-
intentioned Humanists do? What could a thousand well-calculating
Humanists do to stir the hearts of millions to get out and plant?
No, planting trees is not the answer to all the world's problems,
obviously. But it is one of the most important projects that can
be undertaken. It represents one of the most tangible works that
far-sighted men can evolve in their own interests and that of their
fellow man.

EARL W. CONROY (New Zealand).

Greek Military Coup

I WOULD like to appeal to all readers who love democracy and
fair play to play their small part by writing two letters of protest
at the recent Fascist Military coup in Greece and the ruthless
suppression of Democracy there: one letter to the Greek Ambas-
sador, Royal Hellenic Embassy, 51 Upper Brook Street, London-
W1, and another letter to their local MP. The situation in Greece
at present is an historical repetition of 1936 when King George II
suspended the constitution and gave the premier Metaxas power
of a dictator. A parallel situation had existed in Italy in 1924
and in Germany in 1933 when Mussolini and Hitler had seized
power. The same thing had just happened in Spain, but met more
resistance. The situation today is another link in the chain of
reaction which has stretched from South Vietnam, to Indonesia,
the Congo, Ghana and now to Greece. I appeal also for members
for the League for Democracy in Greece, 376 Grays Inn Road,
London, WC1. The minimum membership fee is 5/- annually.

A. BLOOD.

'Family Planning' stamps

READERS of the FREETHINKER will include some philatelists
and to my knowledge more than one of these has built up a fine
collection of postage stamps on the theme of religion over the
years.

I am writing to suggest that freethinkers may be interested in the
possibility of starting specialised thematic collections on the sub-
ject of "Family Planning". Last year the Indian government issued
the first ever (as far as I know) postage stamp issue openly advo-
cating the practice of Family Planning. The stamps are of 15 n.p.
value (about 2d) and come in sheets of 35 stamps. The inscription
reads "Plan your family. Family Planning week 1966", as well as
the vernacular equivalent. It shows a couple with two children,
a boy aged about 7 or 8 and a babe in arms of about 1 year.

It seems very probable to me that further governments will
bring out stamps on this theme and I would suggest that such
propaganda deserves the active support of those persons who are
both philatelists and supporters of the concept and practice of
family planning.

Any reputable philatelic dealer would probably consider filling
a standing order for such present and future issues, although until
such issues become more frequent, a dealer might only be prepared
to accept commissions to supply blocks or parts of sheets. As
single stamps would be an uneconomic proposition for him to
take on.

One such dealer is J. E. Lea Ltd. of 6 Albert Square, Man-
chester 2, who went to appreciable trouble to fill my (to him
bizarre) order for a sheet of the stamps referred to.

CHARLES W. MARSHALL.