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Friday,
December 15, 1967**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS**

THE ten Private Members' Bills to be introduced before Parliament this session may be expected to meet with the approval of the majority of Humanists while three, in particular, should gain much active support. William Wilson's controversial Divorce Reform Bill, William Hamling's Sunday Entertainments Bill and the Bill proposed by George Strauss to remove censorship from the arts and theatre comprise the three Bills which are most obviously Humanist.

Though perhaps less obviously Humanist, Eric Lubbock's Bill to protect the rights of caravan dwellers and itinerents such as gypsies (which has been campaigned for by the National Council for Civil Liberties), James Tinn's Bill to establish national lotteries from which the net proceeds would go to support medical research and social and charitable works, Frank Taylor's and Terence Higgin's Bills relating to pensions, Quintin Hogg's Bill for the maintenance of children living with unmarried or separated mothers and Walter Alldritt's Bill establishing the rights of children adopted abroad by British parents, should all expect approval and some support from the Humanist Movement.

The Bill for 'bulk-buying' introduced by William Hilton seems to be in a class of its own, and it would be difficult to estimate the degree of approval it may receive in Humanist circles.

William Hamling's Sunday Entertainments Bill follows the same lines as the Bill introduced in the House of Lords last year by Lord Willis. The latter, meeting with laboured-success in the Lords, was too late to get through the Commons in the same session; shortage of time for consideration may well prove the greatest obstacle to Mr Hamling's Bill also. The Divorce Bill proposed by Mr Wilson will gain extra time; it is to be hoped the Sunday Entertainments Bill too will receive extra time. There seems a strong possibility.

* * *
BHA NEWS**HUMANIST WEEK**

Over fifty meetings were held in response to the British Humanist Association's Humanist Week, thirteen local groups each drawing audiences of over

a hundred. Belfast Humanist Group, fast becoming the strongest Humanist Group in the British Isles, led by gaining an audience of approximately 450. Hampstead gained about 300, while both Oxford and Merseyside drew around 250 each.

SHEFFIELD

As a result of a Humanist Week meeting held in Sheffield, invitations have been made for speakers to address 60 boys at a local grammar school, and students at Sheffield College of Education.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Professor Edmund Leach, Provost of King's College, Cambridge, this year's Reith Lecturer, has accepted an appointment to the BHA's Advisory Committee.

HUMANISM FOR TEACHERS

Teachers of Religious Instruction are frequently asked questions about Humanism which they feel inadequate to answer. In an attempt to rectify this, the BHA held a meeting, specifically for such teachers, in which an account of Humanism was given by Harold Blackham (BHA Director), Dr Peter Draper (BHA Chairman) and Graham Kingsley (former BHA Chairman). Two teachers stood to make the point that they found teaching of religion an imposition, attributing the blame to the present system resulting from the 1944 Education Act. Four nuns also attended the meeting, but it was felt they had no special objections to make of this nature.

GROUP REPS' CONFERENCE

The BHA is to hold its first National Conference for Local Humanist Group Representatives at Conway Hall, London, on January 13. Delegates from

each affiliated Group are invited to take part in discussions on the place of the local group within the new BHA structure. After a soup-and-sandwiches lunch, Ivan Geffen will speak on: 'What Makes for a Lively Group'. This will be followed by refreshments, after which the various delegates and representatives will be invited to describe their own group and discuss any problems. The meeting will begin at 11.30 a.m. and continue until about 5.30 p.m.

REUNION

Also at Conway Hall will be held a 'Humanist Holiday Reunion' on Saturday, January 6. All who have attended a Humanist Holiday, or are interested in doing so, are welcome to attend this meeting.

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DEATH OF CARDINAL SPELLMAN

CARDINAL SPELLMAN, Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, died at the age of 78 on December 2 from what a hospital spokesman has mysteriously called "a massive cerebral accident".

His name, though apparently popular over the years in these columns, was not loved by Freethinkers and Humanists. He typified the extreme right-wing of the RC Church, was ultra-conservative in ecclesiastical matters, was foremost fund-raiser for the Vatican and created and ruled the world's richest diocese.

The horror of Vietnam he considered a holy war, insisting to the American servicemen that "anything less than a victory was inconceivable"; the Vietnam war was for civilisation, and the US servicemen were fighting for Christ.

He was appointed to the office of Archbishop of New York in 1939 when his friend Pius XII became Pope. His home was a small Gothic palace with a sitting-room dominated by a massive throne. He is said to have enjoyed a well-laid table and to have made ample provision for his guests though always excluding alcohol.

FREETHINKER

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EDITORIAL

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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, SE1. Telephone HOP 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Letter Network (International) and Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). 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

Enfield and Barnet Humanist Group, The Lecture Theatre, Southgate Technical College, High Street, London, N14, Wednesday, December 20th, 8 p.m.: BRIAN MEREDITH, "Human Rights".

Havering Humanist Society, The Social Centre, Gubbins Lane, Harold Wood, Tuesday, December 19th, 8 p.m.: A speaker from the Society for Psychical Research.

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Sunday, December 17th, 6.30 p.m.: C. T. PERTWEE, "Going into Europe".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, December 17th, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "Ethical Humanism"; Tuesday, December 19th, 6.45 p.m.: Dr PETER DRAPER, "Ethics and Medical Services".

South Place Sunday Concerts, Conway Hall, London, WC1, Sunday, December 17th, 6.30 p.m.: Gabrieli String Quartet. Haydn, Mozart, Brahms. Admission 4/-.

West Kent Branch NSS. Commencing Wednesday, January 3rd, 1968, meetings will be held in the Public Library, The Drive, Sevenoaks, on the first Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m.

West Ham Branch NSS, Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead, London, E11. Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.

HUMAN life is characterised by isolation—mental, physical and emotional insularity—and finalised by death. Neither is usually welcome; both are inevitable. Fortunately, few are made to recognise their isolation; unfortunately, few are indifferent to death. Some, slowly dying in agony, may cry for the release which death brings, but death appears to take its own time with no regard for the welcome or lack of it; it comes and takes, very often, the young and happy, leaving behind those weary of life. It may come at any moment; for ourselves, or for those we most love. We have good reason to loathe it. Unwelcome, it's abhorrent.

The total separateness, the complete isolation, the awful 'aloneness' of each individual is a fact of life which may occasionally come into sharp focus for any one of us, and, when it does come, it can be a terrifying realisation.

The success of the multifarious supernaturalist religions may be directly attributed to the alternate picture they present as bearing upon these two aspects of life.

They present a vision of man as an immortal being. In some systems, he may be expected to bear a number of rebirths also, but still he has immortality. Immortality is for our loved ones also. The death of those we love is easier to bear when it is realised we will be re-united with them again. Nor is man alone; God is more aware of our innermost being than we are ourselves. Nor is man an isolated individual being. God is in us; we are part of God; we are 'one' with God. Other, occult, systems—not satisfied with this indifference to the injustices of life—propose cycles of re-incarnation in which we atone for the wrongs we have done, take the karmic punishment, reap the rewards of our good deeds and perfect ourselves in readiness for a state of indescribable bliss.

Here, again, we are not isolated beings but 'monads' swimming in a sea of 'Life Force', at 'one' not only with the Highest Being, but with all life, all matter, in fact with the whole universe.

It isn't difficult to see why so many cling to these beliefs; it's more difficult to see why so many reject them. Take Humanists for instance. To the Humanist, his death is the end of his total existence; there is nothing to follow. He sees his life as a blip on a radar-screen in comparison even with historical times. His life, her life, each other's lives, their child's lives, their parents lives—all may be cruelly snuffed-out at any time. He sees all things ruled by natural laws, and nature as hideously cruel. He is forever trying to grasp reality, however painful, and—deciding that life for the most part is bitterly cruel—he grasps it eagerly while joyfully bidding us all to make the most of it.

What makes a true grasp of reality so important? Why this desperate need to 'align with reality'? Are we mad? Or merely masochistic? No doubt you have your answer—and I have mine. But I have come to the bottom of my column.

SNOWBALLING FOR CHRIST

THE following missive was recently received by the son of a Humanist:

"The tape of this letter came from the Netherlands. Read Matt. 7:20. The contents of this letter have been round the world four times. The one who breaks the chain will have bad luck. Please copy this letter and see what happens in a few days time. Send this copy and four others to persons you wish good luck, and let it leave your house within 24 hours. Charles Hunter received £600 and lost it when he broke the chain; you will receive good luck in four days from today. This is not a joke; you will receive it by mail. Please put your name at the bottom of the list and leave off the top one . . ."

There were ten signatures—and the chain was broken by a Humanist.

WRONG RITES

IN September of this year, an uproar from Scottish Presbyterians followed the announcement made by a Minister of the Church of Scotland that he had known of a young man—a Protestant—being administered the "Last Rites" by a Roman Catholic priest in a Glasgow infirmary.

The Presbyteries of Hamilton and Glasgow, and the Free Presbytery of Glasgow sent letters to the Western Regional Board's Hospital Committee recommending that, where there was any doubt about the religion of an unknown accident victim, the official Church of Scotland chaplain should first be called. It was also recommended that, in future, arrangements be made to ensure that no patients would be given "Last Rites" by a Roman Catholic priest, unless the patient or his relatives asked for it or he was unmistakably identified as a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

But a hospital board has now confirmed that hospitals would make no change in their policy on the question of "Last Rites". The Chairman of the Western Regional Board, Mr Simpson Stevenson (no, not St John Stevas, 'Simpson Stevenson') stated that the Board was concerned with the problem of Last Rites, but look upon it as an extra burden of responsibility on the nurses. Presumably it's lighter work to call a Roman Catholic priest.

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SPEAKING OF VIETNAM AND ATHEISM

"We are engaged in a war of great ideology. . . . It is not just a casual argument . . . but freedom against slavery—Godliness against atheism."

GENERAL EISENHOWER

(speaking to the faculty of Columbia University, 1953).

"More precisely than in any other way, prayer places freedom and communism in opposition, one to the other. The communist can find no reserve of strength in prayer because his doctrine of materialism and statism denies the dignity of man and consequently the existence of God."

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

(*Associated Press* article, 1953).

"In contrast to our own adherence to a philosophy of common sonship, millions now live in an environment permeated with a philosophy which denies the existence of God."

GENERAL EISENHOWER

(special article written more recently for the *Detroit Free Press*).

"The pamphlets clearly indicate that a belief in God is the real basis and motive in our struggle against aggression."

ADMIRAL SALISBURY

(upon accepting copies of religious propaganda for distribution among Army, Navy and Air Force personnel, 1951).

"The essential issue between the communists and ourselves is belief in God . . . Communism denies and destroys every spiritual value. . . . No church and no church member can temporize with it."

J. EDGAR HOOVER.

"The communist system is inherently evil for the fundamental reason that it denies the principles of God and morality upon which human society must be founded."

FRANCIS E. WALTER

(Chairman, Un-American Activities Committee).

"This country is a fertile field for 'international atheism' which is what I prefer to call communism."

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN DORN

(as guest speaker before the Lions Club)

"Communism is definitely incompatible with any form of Christian belief, and for two reasons. First it is dogmatically atheist. Second, the communist must abdicate his faculty of moral judgment and become an active or passive accomplice in acts of cruelty, oppression and deceit."

WILLIAM H. CHAMBERLAIN

(*Wall Street Journal*).

"I say to my colleagues that when one deals with an atheist he deals with an individual who will break his word, an individual whose agreement is worthless, an individual who will rape, pillage, burn and murder."

SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

(*The Liberal*, April, 1959).

WHEN THE LAST TRUMPET SOUNDS

F. H. Snow

SPECULATING on belief in a literal heaven, still held by the bulk of our population, it occurs to me that if victims of the delusion applied to the subject anything like the reasoning they employ in connection with their earthly affairs, they would have uncomfortable qualms about the proposition put before them by their religious mentors. Believing that exposure of its absurdities is the most effective means of killing the superstition that hagrises us, I invite believers to an honest survey of their post-Judgment scenario.

All entrants into heaven will be clothed in white raiment, according to the writer of Revelation. The eligibles will be so great in number that no man could count them, but the job of calculation and manufacture will be simple for the Great Quartermaster, whose powers enable him to do anything—that is, except the small matter of coming within the sight of undecayed man, or giving a single demonstration of his might. However, God's guests, adult and juvenile, tall and small, fat and thin; the bearded and beardless, the handsome, ugly, grotesque; the white, black, brown, red and yellow-skinned, in their snowy garments, will be finally assembled before his throne. And what a throne, to confront all those people, plus the thousands and thousands of angels mentioned by John!

But, however God manages it, the throne idea looks suspiciously human. It suggests that John modelled his deity's personal furniture on that of earthly monarchs. What need has Eternal Almightyness of a seat? we wonder. Being upright for long periods is tiring and undignifying for mortal rulers, but one cannot soberly credit a Creator with needing something to put his backside on, even if glorified by the name of throne.

Getting back to the finitely uncountable host before the throne, its multitude of jargons will have small scope for exercise, save in praise of the glorious Lord, which praise, having been going on from time immemorial, through the medium of angels, cherubims and seraphim—with breaks, perhaps when God visited Adam, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Moses and others—will be participated in by earth's arrivals from the moment of admittance. With everlasting praise engaging them, there will be slim prospect of converse with loved ones, even if they can be found among the eulogising billions, unless, in his mysterious manner, God has made undivulged arrangements for the enjoying of amenities other than the singing of hosannas and twanging of harps. One has to trust that all will be all right, once the pearly gates are got through.

But there's the rub—it may be harder to get in than most people imagine. If belief suffice, nearly every Tom, Dick and Harry in the brain-washed Christian communities of many centuries will qualify; if observance of ritual and ceremonial, all the formalists Christ condemned will do so; if saintliness be the qualification, patrons of the comfortable religiosity which the almost total figurative interpretation of scriptural injunctions has made usual—the great majority of present-day Christians will not obtain ingress.

My television screen, at Sunday evening service time, shows people singing hymns, most of which allude to a heavenly hereafter. These songsters always impress me as great children—so trustful, so unthinkingly assured that, after death, however near or distant (though the more distant the better), they will some day awake to be favourably

judged by a loving God, and spirited to his realm beyond the visible universe. The picture could be shown of a thousand other congregations, glorifying the Lord who has mansions reserved for them in his golden home.

For heaven is of pure gold, according to the Bible's last book, save for its jasper wall and twelve gates of pearl, tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, crystal river, and the wall's twelve foundations (what a fancy God has for dozens!), each of a different precious stone. The Holy City is square, and a thousand furlongs in breadth, length and height. Thousand furlong high walls and gates! Unless heaven has a roof, and God could not keep intruders out and guests in by merely willing it, the purpose of those gates is baffling, especially as, on John's authority, they are never closed. How can anyone sane accept that they were not the creations of a crazed mind? As for the six-winged beasts, 'full of eyes before and behind', that figure in the New Jerusalem, they powerfully suggest pious dementia. John must have been in a state, on that island in the Aegean, round about two thousand years back.

I invite my Christian friends to view this hoary tale with the acumen with which they normally discount the preposterous, and ask themselves: "What would an omnipresent god want with a confined, material residence, complete with gates, however useless, and, of all things, foundations, resting, incidentally, on nothing?" Would he feasibly design to crowd that infeasible heaven with resurrected creatures, as reward for right living, when to turn their world into an amply-rewarding paradise, would ensure their eternal gratitude and adulation? Would a god not born in the minds of crazy seers, have condemned them to lives of hardship and suffering on an inhospitable planet, imbued them with the capacity to sin against him by transgressing his ordinances, and instituted a salvation scheme for the purpose of bringing those who escaped its dire penalties, to his celestial home? Would not, indeed, the first care of a factual god have been to make the world on which he put the beings he created in his likeness and for his pleasure, a paradise?

This story of a final transportation to a pearly-gated, golden-streeted elysium in the sky, after judgment for their recorded deeds (strange necessity, a Book of Life, for an all-remembering God!), should affront the intelligence even of the religious. This Revelation heaven should excite the risibility of every conversant person, but the effect of childhood indoctrination is strong upon us, and until and unless religious instruction is removed from the statute books, and the general awe of scriptural lore negated, the Patmos visionary's fantasy will continue to disgrace our so-called civilisation.

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

THE National Secular Society has now issued a statement on 'The Rights of Children' as a contribution to Human Rights Year. It has been commended by the press, and a particularly generous acknowledgement appeared in the *Guardian* (December 5). Copies may be obtained from 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

FREEDOM OF VISION

This is a transcription of a talk given by Jean Straker at a Forum on Censorship organised by the Manchester University Students' Union Debating Society in conjunction with the New Arts Group on Friday, November 24, 1967. The other speakers were: Det. Supt. Arnold Yates (rtd.), of the Manchester Police Force, who had been concerned with the censorship laws, Dr Bruce Jackson, a pathologist from the Manchester Eye Hospital, who is secretary of the Manchester Film Theatre, Martin Lucas, assistant lecturer in the Psychology Department at Manchester University, and Gaul Durbin, of the New Arts Group.

Jean Straker: The first thing I want to say is that I was with Avril Fox on Monday evening when she told me that she wasn't going to be able to come and she asked me to fly the flag for COSMO. This is a difficult requirement to place on me because I haven't a television set—I'm not a televiewer—and as much as I respect a freedom for all people to see what they want, I don't want you to think that by defending the right to broadcast anything you like that I am thereby supporting what is being broadcast as far as my own taste is concerned. As I say, I haven't got a television set so I cannot speak from personal experience about television. I have, however, Avril Fox's file of notes on Mary Whitehouse. If you want to have repeated to you any of the Mary Whitehouse comments which COSMO have collected in—for it is the purpose of COSMO to act as a watchdog over the Mary Whitehouse National Viewers and Listeners Association . . . (applause) . . . it's the Clean-Up TV Campaign—or something equally pompous. One would think that this was a voice of Authority with some official status—it's nothing of the sort: it's a group of people, in the main the kind of people who would also support Cyril Black's Moral Law Defence Association, Billy Graham's campaigns and Father Corbishley's London Obscenity Committee; these are, by and large, the forces in our society which are seeking to impose censorship.

I think that the previous speaker (Det. Supt. Arnold Yates) spoke in a line of authoritarian paternalism which bears no relevance to the situation as it is—and I want to introduce some facts about censorship as it is applied by the law at the present time. I tried last night to get Billy Hamling—William Hamling who is the Member of Parliament and is our anti-censorship spokesman in the House of Commons—I tried to get him to come up here with me this afternoon so that he too could talk to you—talk with you—but unfortunately he had to go to Liverpool—otherwise we might have replaced Avril Fox with William Hamling.

However I know, more or less, the position within the House of Commons—and I can tell you this—and this is particularly relevant and important—that we received just two days ago from Roy Jenkins, the Home Secretary, the following letter—in case there are any members of the press here, this is a scoop. But before I read it to you I want to tell you that—although I do not know if it happened—that it was intended that a question be asked of the Home Secretary as to whether he is considering the revision of the Obscene Publications Acts—we spoke to the Whips' office about ten-thirty last night to see if it was on the Order Paper, but couldn't get any confirmation. My campaign is not only for the revision of the Acts, but for their abolition too—for they are the grandest bit of legalistic cant that anybody could contrive—as you will see for

yourselves when I read you some of the wording from the Acts in a few minutes.

I was distressed, as many of you too must have been, that John Calder and Marion Boyars lost yesterday. My wife has sold some of her houses to help to fight for our Freedom of Vision campaign; I notice from this morning's press that Marion Boyars is also willing to sell her property to fight for the principles of free expression that she believes to be right. I think that the case was not conducted in accordance with the provisions of the law—and that there might be grounds for appeal on a point of law—and I will tell you why. Now for Roy Jenkins' letter:

"Dear Will,"—I call him Billy, but Roy calls him Will—I like people who are not standard—I like human variation in the largest degree and it doesn't seem to me to matter if a person has a dozen different names from his different friends—"You wrote to me on the 26th of October about the enclosed correspondence from Mr Jean Straker and certain aspects of the Obscene Publications Acts. I am sorry not to have been able to reply sooner." What was this correspondence that Billy Hamling sent to Roy Jenkins? The correspondence was three letters, two from Springfield Hospital in London and one from me to Springfield Hospital. The first letter from Springfield Hospital to me asked for certain pictures for use in behaviour therapy at the Hospital. As many of my negatives were in prison and I was not able to supply the sort of pictures they wanted without legal risk I replied that they'd have to get their pictures from Sweden—and I gave them an address of a firm in Sweden to get the pictures from. Springfield Hospital thanked me for the information regarding the Swedish supplier. This is the ridiculous position that we are in at the present time: that I cannot earn my living as a photographer—and keep my negatives—and supply—without risk of prosecution—a *bona fide* need to an English medical institution to carry out research being done within the National Health Service—while it has got to import pictures from Sweden, if it wants those pictures. And if you want to see the sort of pictures the Swedes are publishing, I've got here the correspondence which came back from the Home Office—because we also sent Roy Jenkins the illustrated leaflet which the Swedish firm is circulating—English mailing lists are being used to flood the country with photographic offers from Denmark, Sweden and Germany—but I can't trade because I've got 1,400 negatives in prison—and my pictures are vastly superior . . . (laughter and applause) . . . to the Scandinavian ones.

Roy Jenkins goes on: "*I note what you say about the possibility of Mr Straker appealing against his recent conviction and accordingly, like yourself, will make no comment on that case.*" Now I want you clearly to understand that as this matter is *sub judice*—as I am appealing against the recent conviction—that any remarks I might make about my pictures and the law do not apply to the case which is *sub judice*—but apply to previous cases, which are not *sub judice*.

Roy Jenkins goes on: "*As to the general issues my responsibility in matters of this kind is confined to the form of the law.*"—Note that.—"*I have no authority to intervene in individual cases because if the Home Secretary were to start to do that he would in fact be exercising a form of*

*executive censorship which it was the intention of Parliament to prevent. At the same time, when as a Private Member I piloted the Obscene Publications Act, 1959, through the House, it was very much my object to provide all possible safeguards to the serious artist in whatever medium. It was for this reason that the definition of obscenity was so drawn as to take account of the people or audience to which the publication was addressed; what might be obscene if directed to, say, the general public might well not be so if directed to serious students." So you see, obscenity is not something which is inherent in an article in itself—obscenity—in law—is related to the intention of the publisher as to the class of audience to which he directs his information. "More than that, the Act ensures that whenever criminal proceedings are taken the accused is able to put forward the defence of public good on the grounds of literary, artistic, scientific merit, or so on, and to have this tested before a jury." This, as you know, was done yesterday with *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. "This was intended to be a liberal law and I believe that experience since the Act was passed will bear me out that it is." I've been prosecuted three times, and a number of other publishers also. "That is not of course to say," and I am continuing to quote Roy Jenkins here, "that I personally would agree with every decision that the courts have come to; it would be surprising if I did; but if I were to try to intervene it would not only be improper but it would be setting a very dangerous precedent which might be followed in time by others with views very different from my own."*

Last paragraph: "*While for this reason I have avoided mentioning Mr Straker's case in this letter, the circumstances are very well known to us in the Home Office, not only because we have followed the proceedings, but because he, himself, has written to us many times about his Freedom of Vision campaign. I would be very ready to have a word with you about all this if you wish.*" And I shall report back that I came to you and read that letter to you.

Now, the 1959 Act which Roy Jenkins introduced was a very liberalising Act: it made it possible for an artist or a publisher for the first time in our history to defend himself. Prior to the passing of that Act there was no defence: you could not say, "Oh, not guilty", because no provision was made in law for a defence of justification on a charge of obscenity. This is the Act under which the *Last Exit to Brooklyn* prosecution was brought; it is the Act under which most of the actions—other than the Post Office Act actions—have been brought against me—but it is not the only Act which affects the laws of obscenity or indecency, which is another word used by Authority at will—or whim—when they do not want to allow a defence to a charge of obscenity. The basic difference between the words 'obscenity' and 'indecency' is quite simply this: if you are accused of obscenity you have a right of defence, if you are accused of indecency you have not right of defence—and this is not my interpretation—it comes from the Lord Chief Justice himself. (*DPP v Straker*, Court of Criminal Appeal, 16.2.65) For anything I say to you I have documentary evidence galore to substantiate anything you may wish to query.

Test of Obscenity: mark this, "*For the purpose of this Act an article shall be deemed to be obscene if its effect, or where the article comprises two or more distinct items . . .*"—notice, mathematicians, how the law defines: "*Although an article comprises two or more distinct items . . .*"—so you have an article which can be fragmented and still remain an article . . . (laughter) . . . "*the*

effect of any one of its items is, if taken as a whole . . ." (laughter) . . . I don't know how the Department of English would like to interpret the semantics of that statement—however I will carry on and read the rest to you—"is, if taken as a whole such as to tend . . ." (laughter) . . . "*to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely . . .*" (laughter) . . . "*having regard to all relevant circumstances . . .*" (laughter) . . . "*to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it.*" This is the sort of gibberish which became part of the Law of England. (Applause). And it's the sort of gibberish that you've got to take note of—because this is the nonsense that is making it impossible for you to look at what you will and read what you will—your intellectual advancement—your curiosity is being hampered all along the line. Does it make sense to you that for most of my lifetime it's been an offence at common law to publish an honest, natural photograph of a human being? The nature of my crime is quite simply this: that I refuse to falsify my photographs; if I show a photograph of a woman, that photograph must show pubic hair, the vulva and whatever other anatomical details she possesses. I refuse to retouch my pictures; I regard retouching as fraudulent. I say "What is a photograph worth if it's not honest?" And I contend that the type of blank space which appears in place of pubic hair on the nudes which proliferate in popular magazines is propagating half a truth.

Our paternal authoritarian Detective Superintendent talked about sub-normal people; I suggest you're going to make sub-normal people if you only show them half a truth, for they grow up with a false concept of what a woman looks like . . . (applause and laughter). In *Oxymoron*, which is the Oxford student magazine that the police referred to the DPP, I reported a case of an elderly Scot who came to my studio and said to me, "I've got a confession to make". He'd watched me working with a nude in the studio, he said: "I've got a confession to make: I'm a married man, with two grown-up sons, both of whom are married; in fact I'm a grandfather—and tonight, for the first time in my life I've seen a woman without clothes on—and that includes my wife." (Laughter). Now this is a Scot who in his sixties either has been so distressed at his inadequacy that he braved my door in Soho Square to come into my Academy—or he felt possibly that his wife could no longer care—I don't know—but he came to my studio—he watched me working—and now he's built himself a studio at the bottom of his garden . . . (laughter and applause). Another Scot—Scots seem to love making confessions—maybe it's something to do with their upbringing for I'm certainly not a father confessor—but another Scot told me that he had collected pictures of nudes and pin-up magazines throughout his youth—and that when he married and saw that his wife had pubic hair he had a fit—he thought she was a monster—and his wife said, "Well, if you don't like the pubic hair, dear, I'll shave it off" (hisses and boos). And he tells me that he's never been able to get over the psychological distress of his first experience with his wife (laughter). You may laugh at him—you may be sad for him—but these are facts of human experience which are derived from the falsification of visual information. You won't find any of my pictures of unretouched nudes in popular magazines—yet. But it is a fact of the way censorship operates at this moment—a fact that you are witnessing—that although you can look at me, you can't look at many of my pictures because the magistrate has put them in prison.

You may well say that Roy Jenkins's liberal Act provided me with every opportunity for defence, because it

says: "A person shall not be convicted of an offence against Section 2 of this Act . . ."—it does not say "A person shall not have committed an offence . . ." It says: "A person shall not be convicted of an offence if it proved that publication of the article in question is justified as being for the public good on the ground that it is in the interests of science, literature, art or learning, or other object of general concern." Yes, you may well ask why this provision did not protect me; you may well ask why this didn't operate with John Calder and Marion Boyars yesterday. The book *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was found to be obscene, but they were convicted of the offence in spite of the fact that some thirty very respectable people—some eminent, holding high positions in universities—seats of learning—came forward and gave sincere testimony that the book had some of the values that the Act defined—and it all meant nothing—the provisions of the Act were ignored completely—and that is a point of law on which I think an appeal can be based.

It was the same when I took Peter Daws, from the Department of Social Psychology at Leeds, to the magistrates' court on the last case, which is not *sub judice*. Peter Daws said (Marlborough Street Magistrates' Court, January 7th, 1966, before Edward Robey) that my Academy was a useful institution and had its parallel in the Kinsey Institute in Indiana, in an Institute in Vienna and in an Institute in Japan, and that I was doing a similar sort of work which was essential for certain types of sociological, psychological, anthropological enquiry. After all, we are not concerned with the fragmentation of disciplines—we're concerned with bringing them together—we're relating enquiry in one field to enquiry in another—so that people can understand each other—and the magistrate smiled, not only at Peter Daws evidence, but also at the fact that one of my research projects was in conjunction with the Department of Psycholinguistics in the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois. "What does all that mean?" said the magistrate. Well, how can one deal on these terms?

I had previously won under Roy Jenkins's 1959 Act. I won my first case all the way up to the House of Lords—and they gave me my negatives back—and my own MP, Henry Brooke (now Lord Brooke of Cumnor), who was the Home Secretary at that time, then introduced the 1964 Obscene Publications Bill—and this is what it says in the preamble—I'm reading from the Parliamentary printing of the Bill—and this is Roy Jenkins's own copy that I've got here—for he handed it to me when I sat in Committee and listened to the debates. It says: "Clause 2 of the Bill fills the gap disclosed in *Straker v. DPP* (1963 Queen's Bench 962) by extending the 1959 Act to other things intended to be used for the reproduction or manufacture of obscene articles, e.g. photographic negatives." So, in point of fact, what Henry Brooke did was to make it illegal for me to possess my own negatives. Now do you see how the law is working? You can publish obscene articles—without going into the question of what the word 'obscene' means—if their publication is in the interests of learning, art, science or other objects of public concern—but you can't possess them—because the 1964 Act makes it illegal for you to possess articles which you may legally publish—even if obscene—under the 1959 Act.

You may also say that this was thought of, at least by Niall MacDermot—because there was a significant debate in Committee over these words. (Standing Committee F, Obscene Publications Bill, Third Sitting, Thursday, June 18th, 1964). Now any members of the School of English

present, or the School of Law, will be interested to note this clause: "The question whether the article is obscene shall be determined by reference to any such publication for gain of the article as in the circumstances" the publisher "may fairly be supposed to have had in contemplation." Niall MacDermot said that the phrase 'may fairly be supposed' was a contradiction in terms in the text of our Criminal Law—that it was too intangible, too much like guesswork. He proposed, instead the words 'may reasonably be inferred' on the basis that reasonable inference from proven facts was fairer to a defendant on a criminal charge—the prosecution had to prove its case by evidence. Henry Brooke looked up at Niall MacDermot and said that he couldn't see the difference between those two statements and that he wouldn't oppose the amendment—so it went through.

But the magistrate didn't see the difference either. When I was before him I tried to explain that his determination had to be based upon what it may 'reasonably be inferred' that I had in contemplation—and I said that I should be entitled therefore, to produce documentary evidence as to what I had in contemplation—as the prosecution had produced no evidence other than possession—no evidence at all of publication of any picture to anyone. I said something like this: "You know, Sir, 'reasonably' is an ablative form of the word 'reason', and it means 'with, from or by reason'"—and he looked at me . . . (laughter) . . . and I said "inference is a form of logical analysis whereby you proceed either deductively from a premise or inductively from observed facts." I said, "You can't guess—you've got to go one way or the other"—and he looked at me again . . . (laughter) . . . and then he said something like this: "I suppose I'm a little more intelligent than the other members of this court, but I'm having the greatest difficulty in understanding what you're saying."

So this is the point: the laws are intended by Parliament to mean one thing—and they continue to be operated by magistrates and judges who don't understand them—with a kind of benevolent authoritarian paternalism that my Detective Superintendent predecessor displayed in the exposure of his concern for people who might need protection—and I can say that if people receive protection of this sort they'll never grow up and they'll never know anything.

CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, London, WC1

SOCIAL AND MORAL EDUCATION

PUBLIC MEETING

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 7.30 p.m.

DAVID TRIBE

President: National Secular Society
(Author "Religion and Ethics in Schools" and
"100 Years of Freethought")

Organised by the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London, SE1

Telephone: 01-407 2717

REVIEWS

By M. Hill

New Thinking on War and Peace by A. C. Thompson

A. C. THOMPSON, presenting the "Social Survival" theory, shows that Man has always aimed to preserve his own society at all costs. War between conflicting societies has therefore been a moral necessity. Attempts to achieve world peace can succeed only if we establish international law on rational principles. To this end it is essential to spread awareness of the real motivations of human beings; Mr Thompson's booklet is a significant contribution.

Hostility between primitive societies he attributes in part to sex taboos and tribal bans on intermarriage. Today such prejudices still bitterly divide us—but with no rational justification. Apartheid and religious divisions are examples of atavistic tendencies. If we fear people who are different, it is because we are ignorant.

Compulsory unity of belief is an attempt to preserve society. Hindus and Moslems, Jews and Arabs, do not hate without being taught to hate. If we trained children to tolerance and co-operation, would they manage to preserve their societies without war?

Freethinkers have a vital role to play. "Society" fears change and therefore indoctrinates its children; secularists want their children to think for themselves. In this distinction may lie the choice between war and the survival of the human species.

Those who have heard the Reith Lectures this year will find these articles very relevant.

New Thinking on War and Peace first appeared in the Freethinker (March-April, 1967) and is now available in booklet form (1/3 post inc.) from the Freethinker Bookshop, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1.

By Karl Hyde

Directory of British Associations (1967-68)

READERS who relish reference books, lap up lists and dig directories will find this new 2nd Edition a banquet. Any concerned with communications, with associations and societies has, here at his finger tips, fully 6,000 organisations to flip through. Secretaries seeking speakers have only to check the 2,700 headings in the subject index to find the relevant organisations; or, wishing to circulate material, there is the main list of organisations from which to draw up a list. Other handy compilations are the lists of official abbreviations and—most useful—the publications of the various organisations. The book provides in nearly 300 pages almost everything about every organisation one would normally need to know; names, dates of formation, addresses, telephone numbers, telex numbers, location or number of branches, list of specialist groups, definitions or explanations of spheres of interests, details of activities (conferences, education and training, research, etc.) and publications with frequency and price. The subject index

NEW THINKING ON WAR AND PEACE

By A. C. THOMPSON

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covers every interest to which an organisation could relate; from Alchemy to Zionism, from Humanism round to Hovercraft and from Zip fasteners back to Abbatoirs. The publications index naturally includes mention of other reference works, dictionaries, directories, glossaries, journals, manuals, etc.) as well as an eye-opening assortment of odd organs: *Alert* ("Brit. Temperance Soc."), *Censorship in the Arts* (Jean Straker—of course), *Five-Foot-Three* ("Rly. Preservation Soc."), *For Men* ("Church of England Men's Soc."), *Gut* ("Brit. Med. Assn.")—but NO *Freethinker* (I understand this is to be rectified in the next edition). The various Humanist organisations (BHA, NSS, PL, RPA and SPES) are all there also. The *Directory of British Associations* is published by CBD Research Ltd., of 114 High Street, Beckenham, Kent "the 2nd Edition contains 304 double-columned pages . . . I make it 293 double-columned pages. . . . A4 format, and is priced at £4." Ouch! We might expect stiff covers for £4. Still, it remains an invaluable general reference for all organisationally-minded-movement-members. No up-to-date organisation can afford to be without it.

LETTERS

Monism and Dualism

THE concepts of 'body' and 'mind' and 'soul' have often pre-occupied the philosophically inclined. The term 'soul' has supernatural implications and is used in contrast to the word 'body', where 'body' in this sense implies both 'mind and body'. But even disregarding the supernatural there may be a case for a purely naturalistic dualism in the use of the terms 'mind' and 'body'.

The 'soul' is usually regarded as some sort of spiritual essence, identical with the whole human personality, vaguely located somewhere in the individual during life, and departing for 'another world' when the individual dies.

This supposition involves certain problems of explanation when considered in the light of modern science. At what stage in evolution did our ape-man ancestor acquire a soul? At what stage during reproduction does the human foetus acquire a soul? Where in the body is the soul located, and does a soul change its nature along with environmental changes to the human character it represents? And after death does the soul remain fixed according to the character and stage-in-life of the deceased person, i.e. baby, youth, adult, or aged, etc.?

But even a naturalistic dualism of 'body' and 'mind' is possible or conceivable, especially since we humans have such proportionately large brains and such a great capacity for self-awareness. It is these factors which give us the impression that we function on a 'mind' and 'body' basis and not as a single, mind-body, monistic unit.

However, our supposed mental independence is of a rather tenuous nature. The toughest soldier, we are told, will break down under the stress of continuous front-line action and suffer from 'battle fatigue', unless given periods of rest. He can be reduced to a sub-human state—a real 'mental case'. Likewise the most intellectual and self-reliant individual can become completely devoid of 'mind' if subjected to a complete *absence* of external stimuli, e.g. by placing him in a padded suit, floating him in a tank of water, and blocking out all sound, sight, smell, touch, etc. Eventually his solitary mind runs out of those necessary external influences required to give it 'food for thought'. Again, the case of a child which has been lost in the jungle and brought up as a member of some animal family shows how dependent we are on the learning of language for our mental development. Intelligence may be there, but language is needed for its potential to be realised. On the other hand, the congenital idiot can never develop beyond a certain animalistic stage however favourable his environment.

What also of 'psycho-somatic' and 'functional' disorders of the human being? Similarly, what of those 'physical' ailments which tend to colour our 'mental' outlook? To what extent are heart-attacks and cancer due to emotional disturbance? How much neurosis is due to malnutrition?

Perhaps we need to consider the Whole Man and to coin new monistic words to describe the body-mind entity in which the brain and spinal column constitute merely one system (the nervous system) among many rather than see the 'mind' as distinct from the 'body'.

D. L. HUMPHRIES.