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AND YOU CALL THIS DEMOCRACY MR. SHORT

THE STATEMENT made on January 10, by the Secretary of State for Education, Mr Edward Short, makes it inevitable that once again the front page of FREETHINKER be devoted to the question of Religious Education. Speaking at Alnwick, Northumberland, where he was opening the new Church of England Junior School, Mr Short said that the government intends to preserve compulsory provision of religious education in county schools and the daily act of worship in the new Education Act.

Mr Short and his colleagues, on whose support he doubtless counts, would, one imagines, describe themselves as democrats since they are governing what has long been glorified as a democracy. As democrats they would not deny that one of their fundamental principles is to ensure those they govern as much freedom as is possible, as long as their people's material comforts are safeguarded. Freedom of Speech would surely come very high on Mr Short's list of democratic priorities. How is it then that he seeks to restrict freedom of thought, without which he must realise that freedom of speech becomes a hollow tenet devoid of any meaning. The underlying principle of his attempts to protect Christianity is no different from the underlying principle of the communist countries, against whom his government endorses bloody strife—the principle that you can say what you like as long as you think along the right lines. This makes a mockery both of our exalted freedom of speech and our democracy, which the government considers worth defending to the tune of some £2,000 million annually.

As a justification for his support of compulsory religious education, Mr Short said: "In a national survey of parents conducted in 1965 it was found that 90 per cent of those interviewed thought that the present arrangements for religious education and daily worship in county schools should continue. A national survey just published covering 2,600 teachers in over 300 state schools indicated that 85 per cent agreed that the act of worship should be continued and 56 per cent thought that it should be held daily. With this wide support for continuing religious education in schools, there is no justification for altering the existing statutory requirements". The amount of credence that can be placed in surveys of this kind has been amply outlined by Maurice Hill in his booklet *RI and Surveys*, published by the National Secular Society. Inside this edition of FREETHINKER, Mr Hill turns his attention to the national survey of 1965, the results of which Mr Short uses as justification for despatching yet another generation of innocent British schoolchildren into the quagmire of unproven opinion and myth. The fallacies contained in this survey are inarguably shown up by Mr Hill. Suffice it to say here that if a wife has either eggs or a T-bone steak to offer her husband for supper, she does not ask him, "Would you like eggs this evening?"

Mr Short does not attempt to strengthen his case by making out that the present system is a success. On the contrary his stand on behalf of religion is considerably weak-

ened by a lengthy exhortation to teachers and parents to make it more palatable. "It is important to ensure that the religious teaching has something to say about the everyday problems and experiences of children. There is a danger that it can become a mixture of often rather unsavoury ancient history and Syrian geography—utterly remote from twentieth century life. *The object should be to lead young people to an awareness of the spiritual planes of existence*



—beyond the physical, beyond the intellectual; a feeling that the deep mystery in them is akin to the reality beyond the material world." Correction Mr Short: the object should never be to lead young people, or anyone else, to an awareness of anything that is not proven. By all means let them be aware that in some people's opinions there are "spiritual planes of existence", and indeed that throughout the world many different interpretations are placed on this, but also let them be aware that there are some people who believe there is nothing supernatural, others who are sceptical and many who find it of no matter whether there is or there isn't. As long as opinion is taught to our child-

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ren as fact, our whole educational system can be regarded as nothing less than unethical, and our precious democracy as a shameful pretence.

Mr Short went on to say "... good works alone are not enough. They are a splendid path to the goal of religious education but not the goal itself. This is the point at which we part company with the humanist and the point at which an increasingly violent attack is being made on religious education in schools". We part company purely because humanists are interested solely in teaching children the truth, while Mr Short and those who support him see it as fitting to load the dice—to indoctrinate. Humanists do not wish to ban Christianity by law, only to create an educational system in which children can be taught facts and can make up their own minds free from any external influence.

In a press release issued shortly after Mr Short's speech, David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, said: "... the Secretary of State has performed a grave disservice by announcing that whatever the feeling in the country the new Education Act will persist with religion. And to underline his partisan zeal he (Mr Short) is going off to a seminar to try to patch up a system which has miserably failed the young people of this country". Tragically it is a vain hope that any amount of reason can persuade Mr Short to accept the built-in failure of a system which deals in indoctrination. However, perhaps the following points made by Maurice Hill, when he was speaking of the need for certain amendments to the Education Act to the Comprehensive Schools Committee Conference on Saturday, January 17, can have some effect:

1. Compulsion in matters of faith and conscience is immoral.
2. Compulsory religions is incompatible with democratic freedom. Even Mr Edward Short supports the new wave of opinion in favour of democratising the schools.
3. Comprehensive schools seek to remove segregation according to so-called 'intelligence', class, wealth, colour, etc. It is wrong to have children segregated according to the religious beliefs of their parents.
4. Particularly in schools with a high immigrant population it is invidious to offer immigrants the choice of attending the rites of a faith they do not hold, or 'opting out' of the only whole-school assembly, and thus segregating themselves.

Mr Short, at the recent opening of a Wolverhampton school where 80 per cent of the pupils were coloured, stated his belief that the school "will mould the several races into one unified Christian community". Such an intention is immoral and intolerable.

5. Many Christians are dissatisfied with the present system, which has clearly failed in its stated purpose of gaining converts to the churches. More important is the fact that morality suffers. Compulsory religion must go if we are to get moral education into the schools, based on fact, reason and co-operation, not on myth, faith and obedience.

Even if Mr Short cannot see how his policy affronts democracy, one hopes some glimmer of the farce he is to create under the guise of 'comprehensive education' will become apparent to him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 01-407 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 and MCRAE.

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.

INDOORS

Aberdeen Humanist Group: The Saltire Room, Provost Ross's House, Shiprow, Aberdeen: Friday, January 31, 7.30 p.m.: "Sex on the Rates", Councillor R. Hughes.

Glasgow Humanist Group: Langside Hall: Sunday, January 26, 2.30 p.m.: Discussion, "Moral Education in Schools", Nigel Bruce (Edinburgh Humanist Society) and a representative from the committee on Moral and Religious Education which has been set up by the Secretary of State.

Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate: Sunday, January 26, 6.30 p.m.: "Bertrand Russell as a Hero of Freethought", H. J. Blackham.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, January 26, 11 a.m.: "Aggression in Speech and Writing", Professor T. H. Pear. Admission free. Tuesday, January 28, 6.45 p.m.: Discussion, "India in the Next Decade", Speaker from the High Commissioner's Office. Admission 2s (including refreshment), Members free.

Worthing Humanist Group: Morelands Hotel (opposite the pier): Sunday, January 26, 5.30 p.m.: "Health": Right, Duty or Privilege?", Dr David Stark Murray (Dr. Stark Murray, who holds a NATO research fellowship, has travelled widely during his work of reporting on health services in many countries).

Belfast Humanist Group: Conway Hotel, Dunmurry: Annual Dinner (including entertainment by John Windrum, the Irish folk-singer and Sean Maguire, violinist). Tickets 30s from Mr. K. Graham, 5 Kingsway Gardens, Belfast BT5 7DQ.

OF NATIONS AND APES

GONZALO QUIOGUE

EVEN ANTHROPOLOGISTS, sometimes, try to hide the fact that humans evolved from apes. Human pride cannot change the facts of our ape ancestry. It is often said: "We did not evolve from the apes, but from an animal which was the source of both apes and men. If we evolved from apes, there would have been no more apes today; for all apes would have evolved into humans".

Men and apes evolved from varieties of primitive apes called *dryopithecines* of the stock *dryopithecus*.¹ Some

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NOT BREAD ALONE

DAVID TRIBE

WITH SOME trepidation the Council for Education in World Citizenship, the junior section of the United Nations Association, devoted its 26th series of Christmas Holiday Lectures and Discussions to the theme of 'Not Bread Alone'. Whereas earlier series were devoted to tangible problems, the topic of personal belief was more inscrutable. While they operated on 'safe' material, this handled the potentially explosive magazine of faith. The result triumphantly vindicated the choice.

After the lectures there were, it is true, occasional explosions in discussion time, but they involved witnessing for Welsh nationalism or Israel rather than for Jesus or Jehovah. If the sample of 2,000 sixth formers, more girls than boys, from all parts of the United Kingdom and even from the United States, Canada, Scandinavia and Germany, be typical of young people today, they have little patience with creeds and decalogues, ghosts . . . or otherwise, devotional exercises and mysticism. I was frankly surprised by the extent of atheism. But even among those who regarded themselves as religious there was an unusual display of tentativeness and tolerance. Nobody seemed to believe that unbelievers were condemned to insufficiency in this life and hell-fire in the next; overwhelmingly it was the 'social gospel' which was extolled; an American said that when he was at the cinema or with his girl friend, that was religion.

But if there were few hanging on 'every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God', the students undoubtedly believed that 'man shall not live by bread alone'. They were very angry, be it noted, that many in the world should have no bread at all, but they felt that a personal philosophy of life—orthodox religion or humanism or marxism—was needed to give sense to the world and purpose to the individual, they wanted political reforms while not on the whole believing that the end justifies the means, and they valued imponderables like freedom and justice. With the exception of those who wanted some new or regional nationalism, they were, as befitted a UNA gathering, world-oriented. If they were angry with the United Nations—and many of them were—it wasn't for what it did but for what it didn't do. What especially disturbed them were double standards: the British who tried Nazis for operating chemical and biological warfare plants before themselves opening Porton Down, who echo and re-echo their censure of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia while supporting or at least condoning the United States in Vietnam and her gunboat diplomacy in Latin America, who quickly brought black rebels to heel while letting Ian Smith get away with it. Not surprisingly, they were very disillusioned with the world as it is, but had little faith in panaceas. They felt strenuous efforts to help the third world were necessary, though they were hesitant about dramatic steps like instituting world government for fear of the political instability during the transition. But they gave their greatest applause to internationalists like Lord Caradon and Ronald Segal.

Intimate discussion began when the students divided into four sections, each with fifteen groups and four questions to explore. When the final reports came in a similar pattern of permissiveness and freethought emerged. The questions were related to life, the individual or the world rather than intermediate communities like the school, though Section B had to answer 'Should schools be more concerned

than they are with assisting their pupils towards a study of fundamental and lasting principles?' Compulsory religious education was almost unanimously rejected. It was considered that doctrinal instruction should take place outside the school. Its imposition inside led to resentment and tended 'to discredit Christian principles as well'. The students wanted to have discussions instead, ranging over all the world's faiths, technology and the arts, to assist in living together regardless of colour and creed. Section D was asked, 'Is a religion necessary to the living of a full and satisfying life?' They too, though not strictly asked to comment on it, censured RI as insufficiently 'comprehensive and relevant'.

One hopes, perhaps in vain, that educational authorities will take note of the reactions of sensitive and sensible young people and turn indoctrination into education.

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varieties of *dryopithecines* evolved into humans. But the others remained as apes and became gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons and orangutans. In other words, some primitive apes made evolutionary progress, while the others didn't. What happened to the apes seemed to be happening to present day nations. America, England, Russia, Germany and France have progressed in the sciences and industries, while nations of the brown race hardly progressed at all. In fairness to the brown peoples, we should mention the fact that for centuries Indonesia and India were under British rule; the Philippines, under Spain for three centuries and under America for fifty years. Colonies cannot be expected to be as progressive as the colonisers, considering the imperialisms of the colonisers and the exploitations of the colonies. But is this the only reason why Indonesia, the Philippines and India are among the underdeveloped countries of the world? Economic geographers insist that a hot climate retards the progress of a people. On the other hand racists insist that white people have more intelligence than coloured ones. But why is it that some *dryopithecines* (primitive apes) evolved into humans, while the other *dryopithecines* remained apes and became gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons and orangutans? Some religionists will probably argue that "God" selected some apes to evolve into humans.

Dr Ashley Montagu, an outstanding anthropologist today, briefly explains the mechanics of ape-human evolution thus:

"It began almost 2,000,000 years ago with the gradual disappearance of the great forests. Forced to adapt themselves to the new conditions of life on the plains, the earliest ancestors of man became hunters and meat eaters. Through gene mutation and natural selection, they lost their huge canine incisors, giving their brains space to enlarge. Slowly they became erect. Their hands became more precise and delicate. Man the tool-maker was born."¹

The ancestors of modern apes, the close-minded *dryopithecines*, insisted on living in the few forests left. They were hard-boiled conservatives, and so they remained as apes. On the other hand, the venturesome *dryopithecines* tried living on the plains. After thousands of years of mutations, the open-minded and venturesome *dryopithecines* had evolved into humans!

¹ *The Human Revolution*. Ashley Montagu.

SURVEYS ON RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

MAURICE HILL

SINCE THE publication by the National Secular Society of *RI and Surveys*, which exposed the flaws in the May and Johnston surveys of parents' and teachers' attitudes to religious education, some Christians have been suggesting that their case for compulsory religion is nevertheless supported by other, earlier surveys, notably that summarised by Ronald Goldman in *New Society* on May 27, 1965, and the Gallup Poll Survey *Television and Religion* which was carried out for ABC TV in 1964.

On the contrary, these two surveys demonstrate that no adequate survey on this question has yet been conducted, and indicate that people are primarily concerned that their children should learn the difference between right and wrong, not that they should be trained to follow the doctrines of a particular religion. Both surveys also show that very few parents regularly attend any form of worship themselves. Nothing that is said in them provides any support for the imposition by Christian parents of religious teaching upon other people's children.

It is important to bear in mind when considering these surveys that because of the authoritarian structure of our schools, very few parents who do not believe in God will remove their children from RI and worship as they are entitled to do; and even fewer of the children themselves will dare to object to what is being done to them. Many of them are afraid of reprisals.

If the authorities' support for indoctrination were removed, it is probable that the whole structure of religion in schools would collapse. This is the main reason why Christians try to insist that it should remain compulsory. If they really believed in parental choice and freedom of conscience, they would not want compulsion at all. If it is true, as they constantly claim, that almost all of our citizens are in favour of religious instruction and worship in schools, they can surely have no objection to making it entirely voluntary.

Mr P. R. May of Durham even had the audacity to claim (*Guardian*, March 23, 1968) that his parental survey, which contains not a single word about the views of the children themselves concerning school religion, "showed that the children wanted it as well"! In fact, where alternatives to worship are provided, the falsity of his guess is apparent: one Headmaster took the extraordinary step of informing parents of their rights under the 1944 Act, and offered an alternative non-religious Assembly for senior children. On the first day, 25 per cent of the children joined him in his secular assembly.

Most of our children still leave school at 15; the vast majority of these do not thereafter choose to attend worship of any sort, anywhere, nor do their parents dare to suggest 'compulsory daily worship' to them! These facts are mentioned to show that parents and children are voting with their feet. Even these surveys, in spite of protestations to the contrary, bear this out.

1. *'Television and Religion' (ULP) 1964*

Only 42 per cent of those questioned believe in a personal God.

19 per cent claim to go to church 'most Sundays'. (In fact, on an average Sunday 7 per cent of C of E members actually go to church.)

14 per cent of those with young children send them regularly to Sunday School.

54 per cent neither read the Bible nor pray regularly.

45 per cent think that religion is 'largely old-fashioned and out of date'.

19 per cent attribute good behaviour to the influence of the church, but 65 per cent think the opinions of others have more influence.

95 per cent believe it is possible to lead a good and useful life without going to church.

So much for the fanciful picture of a Christian society eager to maintain and demonstrate its faith. As for worship, these non-church-going parents, who are said to be adamant in their demand for daily services for school-children, gave an 80 per cent vote against having any religious programmes on TV on any day except Sunday.

When asked what schools should do about religion, 37 per cent wanted 'regular religious instruction', and 27 per cent opted for 'just having scripture lessons', whatever this means. 30 per cent advocated comparative religion. Those who claim that this survey shows massive support for compulsory RI and worship should look again: the question of legal compulsion is not mentioned; more people want comparative religion than want lessons on the Bible; there is not a word about school worship in the entire survey.

2. *NOP survey for 'New Society', 1965*

This is a very limited survey containing only nine questions. What picture of our 'Christian society' does it give?

It begins with a ridiculously vague question: "By and large, do you think of Britain as a Christian country or not?" It is astonishing that pollsters should use such a question, with its undefined 'by and large' and 'Christian country', and its only outcome the gathering not of facts, but of unsupported opinion. It is worse that religious people should attempt to use the answers to such a question as if they were evidence of something.

80 per cent of respondents considered that Britain was 'a Christian country'. They were not asked to say what they meant. They may have meant that the Church of England is the Established Church, or that there are bishops in the House of Lords; they may have thought that the vast majority believe in God and fall on their knees in church every Sunday. They may have felt that Christian morality governs the actions of our politicians and businessmen, or that Britain must be a Christian country because the BBC spends so much time on religious broadcasts. They may even, as Ronald Goldman suggests in his report on the survey, count everyone born and baptised in a parish as a Christian! As it is, their opinions are worth very little.

The facts are, that of those questioned, only 24 per cent last attended church within the previous three months (and only 6 per cent within the previous 7 days!). Goldman recognises that this is consistent with other observations, and that the contrasting high claims of church membership are due to the fact that 'the majority are not willing to relinquish what is probably a nominal or even sentimental attachment to a particular church'.

It is not the fact of non-attendance at worship, however, but this very 'nominal or sentimental attachment' which is used to support claims for the continuation of compulsory religion in schools! Goldman concedes that this imposition could justifiably be attacked 'if the vast majority of people reject the idea of a Christian Britain'. Why a 'vast' majority? Why not even a large minority? Is the religious training of our own children to depend on the confused opinions of other people, however many of them there may be? Why not let the facts speak for themselves? The people are voting with their feet.

When we come to the questions on religion in schools we find the usual omission of alternatives. Respondents are asked whether the present arrangement should continue or not. This is a totally unsatisfactory question, and it is very sad that reputable persons should use answers to it as if they were valid judgments about education. Valid answers will come only from those who are fully aware of what is involved in the present arrangement, and who have considered the possible alternatives: for example, in secondary schools, a course aimed at developing moral standards by consideration of the problems and the behaviour of the children themselves, related to the needs and restraints of modern life, and based on mutual understanding and obligation; coupled with a survey of the historical and cultural background of religions, aimed at inter-religious and international understanding.

If such a course were offered as an alternative to Bible study, for example, it would be interesting to see the voting figures. Even this survey shows an increasing demand for alterations to traditional RI, for 37 per cent of the 21-24 age-group voted for comparative religion instead of Christianity.

90 per cent voted for the continuation of the present arrangement. We do not know how many would have said yes to a different administrative arrangement if one had been offered: for example, 'No children shall take part in RI and daily worship unless their parents write and ask for them to do so'. If Christians are so certain of parental wishes, what objection could they have to this arrangement?

Unfortunately the wishes of the children themselves are, as usual, ignored. We are discussing matters of faith and conscience, and it is improper for parents to force a pretence of worship upon non-believers, many of whom may be as old as 18.

Goldman tries to make capital out of the fact that a questionnaire in 1964 to parents of sixth formers showed a majority of 56 per cent of the parents in favour of RI. But *the sixth formers were not asked!* Is he being honest in implying that the beliefs and opinions of these young adults are of no consequence?

Similarly, because it had been suggested 'that compulsory religion is not appropriate for adolescents, who should choose for themselves', the *New Society* survey asked respondents to distinguish between primary and secondary schools. They made no significant distinction. But *the adolescents themselves were not asked*. So much for choosing for themselves.

Goldman uses the common Christian ploy of pointing to the very small proportion of children 'opted out' of school religion, and rashly concluding that all the rest are in favour of it, and that therefore—oddly enough—compulsion

is justified! Apart from the illogicality, he is well aware that this is not a valid argument, since many parents and children are afraid to opt out, in spite of their wish to do so. He refers to 'subtle conformist pressures', but he should also be aware of the intimidation and persecution carried on in the name of his religion. If Christians think this is not so, are they willing to remove the fear by removing the compulsion, and see what happens?

Goldman concludes his report with a comprehensive condemnation of the content of religious teaching today. Many adolescents find it 'ossified . . . , irrelevant to modern life'. Much of it is 'of 19th century vintage', Bible-centred, yet spectacularly inefficient even in imparting Bible knowledge. It 'seems only to reinforce crude, magical and immature ideas of God'. Its 'narrow and unrealistic aims' include 'pew fodder for the churches, and a detailed knowledge of the Old and New Testaments'.

If this confession had appeared at the head of the questionnaire, the results might have been different. Why were the facts not given? Is it not a fact that the general public have no clear idea of what is being done to their children?

The whole survey raises grave doubts about the propriety of religious instruction in schools, and certainly makes no case whatever for the continuation of compulsion, legal or moral. If a majority of people were one day found to be non-believers, would Christians accept this as a reason for ten years of compulsory indoctrination of children in atheism?

'Whatever the motives', Goldman says, 'muddled or perceptive, the vote is overwhelmingly favourable'. But some of us, unlike Ronald Goldman, care very much about motives, and are anxious that they should *not* be muddled, especially where it is a question of influencing the minds of children. Indeed, in view of the mass of confusion, illogicality and special pleading in his report, many of us are not happy about the motives of Ronald Goldman. Does he want to bolster his own view, or is he looking for the truth? He seems to want to transform the present system into something nearer the Humanist recommendations, while preserving the state-supported monopoly of Christians, the very people who have produced the present mess. Will he and other Christians agree to an honestly conducted survey putting the whole case before the people?

Conclusions

1. The vast majority of adults in Britain are not practising Christians.
2. They are not told exactly what happens to children in RI.
3. They are not made aware of any alternatives to the present system except an assumed moral, historical and cultural vacuum.
4. They do not distinguish between 5-year-old infants and 19-year-old adults.
5. They ignore the common rejection of RI by adolescents and assume that decisions on religious belief should rest only with parents.
6. They fail to send their children to church or Sunday School, yet insist on a system which forces other people's children to suffer religion every school morning.

FILM REVIEW

BOB CREW

In order to aid the build-up of material on 'The Arts' now appearing in "Freethinker", Bob Crew, whose name will not be unfamiliar to "Freethinker" readers, will be writing each month on a film or play which holds particular interest for secular-humanists.

"FACE TO FACE"

LAST MONTH the award-winning film *Face to Face*, came to the Institute of Contemporary Arts and the film director, Robert Manthoulis, flew from Paris—with the aid of an aeroplane—to talk to the audience. Mr Manthoulis—who is also a poet and film lecturer—emphasised how difficult it is to make a film in Greece because (a) there is no tradition of film production there, and



A still from "Face to Face"

(b) the conventional attitudes of society and, moreover, the state legislation, are restrictive and severe. He explained that the film, which is anti-bourgeois society and dictatorship, was made under the pretence of being something entirely innocent and only just managed to dodge the censorship through a cunning contrivance: as a result, it has been banned in Greece whilst Mr Manthoulis has become a refugee living in Geneva.

In addition to providing some interesting satire (visual and verbal) on conventional Greek attitudes to and, exploitation of, fear, sex and social inequality, the film pioneers apparently new techniques in film art. Perspectives, forward and backward projections, camera angles and speeds are variegated almost kaleidoscopically to introduce abstract and semi-abstract visions of human and representational situations, as well as purely visual symbolism of otherwise verbal communications.

There is a dining room scene in which people sitting at table are at first viewed horizontally and then, quite suddenly, are projected vertically from an overhead shot by which the audience is afforded the type of perspective that a fly might be expected to have from the ceiling. The perspective is confined to only the hands and arms of the people sitting round the table as they go greedily and—one gets the purely visual impression—aimlessly through the mechanical motions of yet another feast. Even the plates and exotic foods are made to appear as mere diagrams and patterns on the table. In quick contrast to this type of abstraction, there are, throughout the film, brief representational close-ups of such things as an ear-

ring worn by a woman; a woman's bust inside the neckline of her dress as it viewed from an angle behind and over her shoulder as she is playing cards; a woman's naked breast viewed under the arch of her armpit/arm and the side of her body (as she is laid on a bed and then turned on her back to reveal a further close-up of her stomach). In another scene, a young woman's tender words of love are flatly reduced by the answer-phone in the front door of her house, through which she is speaking from behind the authoritarian solidarity of the locked door.

Against a background of poor roads and no roads in Athens and the arranged marriage of a beautiful Greek girl to an insipid English gentleman, we hear, from outside a language school, that "all roads lead to Germany". In one scene the English gentleman is characterised wearing a wartime helmet with his civilian attire while firing a sten gun, alongside the Greek bourgeois family into which he is marrying, who are also characterised in Nazi storm-trooper helmets and civilian clothes as they fire their guns too. The Greek mother-in-law fires her gun and wears a helmet while attired in a minimum of underclothes and "kinky" boots. On another fully dressed occasion the mother-in-law observes that the public demonstrations of the proletariat in the streets beneath her balcony are similar to those she experienced in Egypt (at the time of Suez) which started in just the same way as in Greece and led to a situation in which one couldn't even trust one's servants; the scene reverts swiftly and coincidentally to the kitchen in which her servant, in perfect innocence, is seen to be sharpening knives to prepare food, the emphasis of the camera firmly on the sharpening!

The privileged few, it seems, are over-sexed, over-fed, over-spoilt, self-indulgent and over-didactic, while the masses are over-tolerant, over-exploited and under-estimated. As a protest, the film struck me as being very mild and not the least bit strenuous in its indictment of imperialism, facism and bourgeois society. The general tenor had every indication, to my mind, of being an oblique and thought-provocative reference (for the thoughtful) to the social condition of Greece in pre-revolution days, rather than a direct, scathing exposure or assassination of bad character elements in Greek society. The dialogue was as fragmentary as the vision was flexible and, as such, made for a very captivating presentation by no means bereft of dignity in its handling of subjects not naturally endowed. Sardonic rather than bizarre, appreciative rather than destructive, intellectual rather than passionate, philosophic and humorous rather than bitter and angry. It is difficult indeed to imagine how such a film could be regarded as subversive and this, in itself, is perhaps the most universal indictment of the Greek colonels who have suppressed it. I came away with the impression that Mr Manthoulis had created a picture of an irresponsible bourgeois and aristocratic society, bored with life and good, hedonistically, for laughs and a kick into the unknown whilst the proletariat was apparently good for nothing other than fear, confusion, disenchantment and, for the most part, resignation at the behaviour of their betters. If the upper and lower classes were guilty or capable of any worse or more unsavoury behaviour, it was not portrayed, but what probably disturbs the colonels most about this film is that recent events have more accurately and sinisterly spelt out the precise nature of the unknown against which Mr Manthoulis warned.

BOOK REVIEW

G. L. SIMONS

COUP D'ETAT by Edward Luttwak (The Penguin Press, 30s).

THIS IS an interesting book. Works on revolution and political militancy abound but there are very few that advise the reader how to take political power by force. Luttwak claims that the work is a practical handbook, a guide to the successful *coup*. He writes that the work is "not concerned with a theoretical analysis of the *coup d'etat*, but rather with the formulation of the techniques which can be employed to seize power within a state". But despite the author's disclaimer there is much here that may be regarded as an analysis of the *coup*. Indeed intelligent action could scarcely proceed without such analysis.

To distinguish the *coup* from revolution, civil war, pronouncement, putsch, liberation, war of national liberation, etc., it is defined: "A *coup* consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder". After an investigation of a number of *coups* in both advanced and underdeveloped countries Luttwak observes that the first pre-condition of a *coup* is: "The social and economic conditions of the target country must be such as to confine political participation to a small fraction of the population". This means that the more diffuse the political power within a state the more difficult the successful *coup*, since

there will be many possible sources of political initiative to counter the take-over attempt.

It is stressed that political power is not always concentrated in the country's government. Luttwak lists "the most important forces in British political life"—

- the two major political parties;
- the Trades Union Congress and certain major unions;
- the Confederation of British Industry;
- the senior civil service/academic complex;
- the City and its corporation;
- the press.

To neutralise the power of these organisations simultaneously—in the short time the organisers of the *coup* would have available—so that they could not react to preserve the *status quo* would be extremely difficult. This is not to say that violent change is impossible in British politics but mass participation may be essential—and according to Luttwak this would be revolution, not a *coup*.

Whatever the bureaucratic structure of the state and the political forces certain "temporary factors" weaken the state and increase the feasibility of the *coup*. These are listed as—

- (a) severe and prolonged economic crisis, with large-scale unemployment or runaway inflation;
- (b) a long and unsuccessful war or a major defeat, military or diplomatic;
- (c) chronic instability under a multi-party system.

Luttwak considers historical examples that fit into these categories. In fact what particularly impressed me was the author's grasp of the world scene. His theory is well grounded in practical cases, and he describes in detail *coups* in Egypt, Vietnam, Syria, Russia, France, Italy and other countries. He traces the political role played by nationalist groups, ethnic minorities and religion. Of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, Luttwak notes: "This is no vague influence . . . but rather a constant supervision of political activity, conducted at the provincial level by the bishops and at the national level by the Pope and his associates. At each level of the state bureaucracy the Church, directly or indirectly, exercises its influence . . ."

To the background of historical instances a description is given of the strategy, planning and execution of the *coup*, with hints on how to discover sympathetic officers in the armed forces, on how to "neutralise" the police, on how to direct and time one's efforts to best advantage, etc., etc.

Despite all this there is a clear sense in which the work is non-political: anyone (left or right) can make a *coup*, and Luttwak makes great play over this (tongue in cheek?): "if, as a result of this book, a greater number of people learn how to carry them [coups] out this is merely a step towards democratisation of the *coup*—a fact that all persons of liberal sentiments should applaud".

If the topic is of interest, if you want to make a *coup* (or prevent one), I recommend this book. Luttwak has an uncommon insight into political realities, and he has written an uncommon book.

SEX ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION for Educational Research has just published *Sex Attitudes of Young People*. Despite the wide scope of its title, this report concentrates almost exclusively on the correlation between a lack of sex education and the number of young people suffering from venereal disease.

The report confirms the findings of Michael Schofield's 1962-1965 research (*The Sexual Behaviour of Young People* just published (December) by Penguin) which showed that many teenagers are ignorant of the not always obvious symptoms of VD and may not go to a clinic if they are infected.

Sex Attitudes of Young People reports that in many cases there is no mention of VD in schools, at least until the sixth form. Although the report is rightly critical of this, one of its authors, Mrs Holmes, has been quoted by the *Time Educational Supplement* as saying that VD is one of the "seamier sides of sex". It will, of course, be

precisely so long as people continue to talk about the 'seamy' sides of sex, that these matters will be swept under the carpet and ignored in our schools.

When VD is mentioned in schools it is usually in the form of a practical threat against pre-marital intercourse. This, of course, is invalid; venereal disease is a warning against having intercourse with someone you don't know, not a warning against intercourse.

Some teachers are honest enough to admit that VD is a consequence of promiscuous behaviour not of intercourse between lovers, but often these teachers will not go one stage further and ask themselves why there is so much promiscuous behaviour today.

Some teenagers, and adults too, drift from one sexual affair to another, simply because they have not realised the significance of these relationships. Consistently casual sex relationships are almost entirely the consequences of an education which refuses to deal openly and honestly with sex.

There is obviously an immediate need for educational reform in this direction. Firstly we must educate people in the symptoms of venereal disease, so as to reduce its spread through ignorance. Secondly sex must be treated in schools in an open and honest way. By admitting that sex is a normal human experience we will reduce the number of people who, convinced that sex is wrong, seek their satisfaction in furtive encounters with prostitutes. Thirdly we must allow teenagers to discuss sex and its social emotional implications among themselves. It is only by allowing them to formulate their own attitudes in this way that teenagers will realise the futility of promiscuous behaviour and the harm that it can cause.

Sex Attitudes of Young People, however, does not look into the reasons for promiscuity. In fact it absolves education of any responsibility for this kind of behaviour: "Education does not affect the incidence of casual sexual relationships".

The problem of educating children so as to make them socially responsible and inter-dependent is one of the greatest challenges confronting teachers today. It is a challenge which this report seems unwilling to face.

Profile on

RACE RELATIONS

Speakers :

JOAN LESTOR, MP

(Labour MP for Eton and Slough)

JOHN LYTTLE

(Chief Conciliation Officer, Race Relations Board)

Dr DAVID PITT

DAVID TRIBE

(President, National Secular Society)

Chairman :

JOHN ENNALS

(Director General, United Nations Association)

Alliance Hall, Caxton Street, London, SW1

(St James's Park Underground)

Thursday, January 30th, 7.30 p.m.

Organised by the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

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LETTERS

ONE DOES NOT expect to read racist propaganda in your journal, and I can only hope that readers outside the humanist movement do not think F. H. Snow's article is representative.

Like the statements of Mr Powell himself, it is loaded with half-truths, and deliberate avoidance of some of the facts. For example, the housing shortage would still be with us if every single coloured person was deported; also our population would still double in thirty years or so. He mentions immigrants from Africa, Asia, West Indian, and Mediterranean, but ignores Eire, from whence the largest number come. To talk of a "heavily-breeding core", when surveys have shown that the average size of family chosen by coloured immigrants is little different from the indigenous population, and of "guests", when a higher proportion of immigrants are working and less on retirement pensions than the general population, is to ignore the truth.

Mr Powell gets his freedom of speech all right—so did Hitler. But freedom of speech should stop short at incitement to racial hatred. Mr Snow would do more good by reading Martin Page's article in the same issue of your journal and joining in pushing for a more realistic population policy, and housing policy, and education policy, and so on, than by getting emotional over a mere 2 per cent minority of our population. DEREK MARCUS.

I WAS appalled to read Mr F. H. Snow's article in support of Mr Enoch Powell.

One would have thought that as a Freethinker he would have been able to distinguish between genuine free speech, and as Mr Ted Heath so aptly put it the character assassination of a people. Does he not also forget that these views carried to the extreme led to the extermination of 6,000,000 people in the gas chambers.

No, Mr Snow, the so-called immigration problem will not be solved by your narrow nationalist bigoted views, but only when people adopt genuine Humanist and Freethinking ideas. Then and only then will these problems disappear. L. LAZARUS.

The Sex War

WHILST congratulating G. L. Simons on this readable and assertive article (January 4), I feel I must correct one sentence in paragraph three on a point of fact. He states: 'No employer would seriously suggest paying bachelor less than married men for doing identical work'.

Surely he is not unaware of the anachronistic structure of pay and conditions of service in the Regular Army. Leaflet APD code 0318, 1.4.68 provides examples:

	£ (single)	£ (married)
2nd Lieutenant	794	1,226 (under 25) 1,349 (over 25)

leading for a very select few to:

General	6,607	7,436
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When married quarters are not provided, marriage allowance is increased by £109 10s. per year. Conditions are no doubt as inequitable for Private and non-Commissioned ranks.

A reference to the present situation was recently made in the BBC TV documentary 'Death or Glory—The 17th/21st Lancers'. It was brushed aside. I would suggest that here is one instance in which the employer should speedily correct the serious imbalance within the profession of Arms. I. HEBDON.

Sexual permissiveness

I WISH to strongly support F. H. Snow in his letter of protest published December 21 with reference to the use of the FREETHINKER for propagating views on sex. Let other channels be found for matters of that kind.

As a reader of your paper for over fifty years I have been very disappointed for some considerable time now to find so little space devoted to matters for which it was founded. I think back to the time when that eloquent speaker and hard-hitting writer, Chapman Cohen, edited the paper and its pages were devoted to attacking the out-worn themes of religion.

I hope that other readers, who wish to see the FREETHINKER use its limited space to further the aims of those who do not accept religious beliefs, will also write to you and that in the New Year we may see a resurgence of the old spirit in a vigorous freethought campaign. J. S. WRIGHT.

Immigration

LESS OVERCROWDING and more houses and schools; these seem to be the 'proposals' Joan Lestor is offering in her letter (January 11) concerning immigration and racial harmony. As proposals go, these are surely more idealistic than realistic—to say the least. CHARLES BYASS.

Animal slaughter

IN MY ARTICLE "Pagan Survival in Judaism" (Freethinker, November 16) I pointed out that ritual slaughter stems from a primitive blood superstition in which we nowadays no longer believe; consequently we could, logically, dispense with this atavism. However, it seems to be characteristic that a Jewish reader of the FREETHINKER feels hurt when ludicrous survivals in Judaism are criticised, since religion is in itself a compulsory neurosis (as I mentioned in the same article) and removed from rational argumentation. How many Jews are free from superstition all the year round until the Day of Atonement when they suddenly find some excuse or other to undertake their ritual fast. They and Gerald Samuel ought to read Luke 6:42, "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

O. WOLFGANG.

Free Will

P. G. ROY says I use the genetic argument to prohibit the punishment of criminals. In fact I never mentioned genetics in the article and allow the punishment of criminals in certain circumstances. Re-read the last paragraph, Mr Roy.

Mr Meulen does not understand my argument at all. In the first place quantum physics cannot demonstrate that causes do not operate in the sub-atomic field; it can only show that the causes (if there are any) are at present unknown to us. And in any case—and *this is the whole point of my article*—it doesn't matter two hoots whether there are spontaneous events or not. I took care to consider the possibilities of both *caused and uncaused* events. Mr Meulen says, "We all act on the assumption that we can freely choose", and thus he blandly misses the whole point that "free" cannot be usefully defined in either a *causal or non-causal* context.

I repeat—human choice is caused or not. If caused, we are machines (and all science works on this assumption); if uncaused, then human choice occurs in a complete "vacuum", and training, morality, etc. are futile. Of course, Mr Meulen, by "taking thought" we can change our actions. But why do we take thought? For a reason (i.e. caused), or for no reason (i.e. a random occurrence). I stress again, the strength of this case rests on its capacity to accommodate human choices, however they come to be made.

G. L. SIMONS.

Meaning and Usage

IN TWO ARTICLES (January 4), 40 *Heretical Theologians* and *A Well-meaning Muddle*, both writers indirectly expose the problem of meaning and usage. For instance, there is no reason to link the word truth with the definite article, the word religion with C of E Christianity, or the word scriptures with those published under the title *The Bible* to the exclusion of other writings.

Truth is a quality or state of being accurate, straight, balanced, reliable, honest, sincere, etc. A foreigner selecting from dictionary derivations might well use religion as the necessary restraint and training of rambler roses, and my distant relative of another nationality writes (I think correctly) at the end of a brief letter, "Apologies for the shortness of my scriptures caused by thinking another language and too long works".

I wish we could get this over to theologians, politicians, readers of the national and local press, educationists and, via the latter, to school children who might then be able to apply openly critical minds to the truth of all they learn, especially during periods called Scripture or RI on the timetable.

Unfortunately such essential understanding is not possible for very young children exposed to backdoor Christianity hidden, like a conditioning powder, in the bland bolus of an 'integrated' syllabus. ISOBEL GRAHAME.

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