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FURTIVE AS THE FOXES THEY HUNT

MANY PEOPLE wondered what had happened when instead of the usual 'forum', the National Secular Society advertised a *Profile* on Blood Sports. The reason for this was that the society's forums have acquired a reputation for being two-sided debates at which the audience could expect to hear a wide variety of opinion and subsequently a lively debate. The profile on March 6 was by definition a one-sided affair at which there was no speaker to defend blood sports, and to call it a forum would have damaged the hitherto high reputation of these events. But why did the NSS not get at least one speaker to make the occasion into a forum? Had they come to the conclusion that blood sports were indefensible and felt justified in censoring the appearance of anyone who would defend it? Not a bit of it. The amazing truth is that the NSS were quite prepared to credit that someone could produce a case in favour of blood sports and therefore invited various proponents of this belief, but were unable to persuade a single person to appear. Thus bringing us to the conclusion that it is the very people, who practice blood sports who consider it indefensible, rather than the NSS.

In a recent statement to the press, William McLroy the National Secular Society's general secretary explained how he had invited Mr Marcus Kimball, MP, the Chairman of the British Field Sports Society to speak at what at that time was to have been a forum. Mr Kimball replied that he would keep the date free but that his decision would be subject to the advice of his society's publicity committee. The publicity committee decided that their chairman could not attend. Mr McLroy went on to say the "The National Coursing Club 'regretted that we have no speaker available'", and that "Six Masters of foxhounds also refused to participate".

If the British Field Sports Society, The National Coursing Club and the six persons mentioned above, who are no doubt revered in their own circle, consider Blood Sports indefensible, there can be little doubt about it. However, for those who still have doubts about this, permit me to report the three speeches which made up the *Profile*, which was competently chaired by the Editor of the *British Weekly*.

Mr Raymond Rowley, the Chairman of the League against Cruel Sports, began by pointing out that the only difference between the hunting that goes on now and that which flourished a thousand years ago is that then they did it to survive, while now they do it for fun, "lust", and "self-aggrandisement". He then indicated the anomaly of the 1911 Act which says that if any person shall hurt, injure, etc., any animal he shall be liable to a criminal offence, where in law any animal only means "cats, dogs, goats, cows and sheep". A practical observation of this law was made when the League brought an action against a hunt, who had pulled a hunted a stag from under a van which had run it over, dragged the conscious animal along a street into a yard, where they cut its throat while it was still conscious. The local magistrate ruled against the League, whose subsequent appeal was dismissed by Lord Parker because the League had no case in law. The Chief Justice did however, recommend that the law be changed. Mr. Rowley went on to quote various members of the hunting fraternity who had made inadvertent remarks in the past. These served to horrify the audience and convince them of the primitive beastliness both of the practice itself and the people who participate in it. Perhaps the most telling of these remarks was that of a huntsman who when questioned



as to whether a hind, which had been hunted to her death was pregnant, replied: "Of course it was in calf. They always are at this time of the year. We don't catch them unless they are".

Mr Rowley refuted the argument that the fox-hunters keep down pests, by producing irrefutable evidence that foxes are actually bred to be hunted and quoted a field sportsman who had told them that a large number of hunts would have to be disbanded if foxes were not bred for them to chase. Mr Rowley then made clear that it was perfectly practicable to control wild animals by humane killing and instanced Germany where the killing is done by men, who have to pass a test in order to obtain a licence.

The savagery of the whole appalling business was spotlighted when Mr Rowley told us how some Masters of Hounds daub the faces of newcomers to the hunt with the blood of the dead animal. Children are often encouraged to undertake this barbaric ritual. Mr Rowley finished by tell-

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ing us that a number of opinion polls, including Gallups, had found that 75 per cent of British people were against Blood Sports, while only 14 per cent were in favour.

David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, spoke next and said that thought Humanist movement had no St Francis of Assisi, Humanists, as people who put man before God, were deeply concerned about animals for two reasons. First, because of the special relationship or symbiosis between all animals, which meant that to throw out the balance of nature without forethought was dangerous and secondly, because man has a highly developed brain and is thus angered by cruelty. The ritual of the hunt destroys this feeling in the huntsman. "Animals feel a great deal but human beings feel more."

Mr Tribe was concerned not only about the effect that blood sports have on animals but also about its effect on the human participants. First, blood sportsmen have to lie. Propaganda in which they said that the animals actually enjoy the hunt testified to this, as well as their statements that they are keeping down vermin, encouraging riding, and that they love animals—"Look at our hounds". Secondly, "What we do determines what we are". Huntsmen tended to be archreactionaries—the type of people "in favour of capital punishment" and "gun-boat diplomacy", and opposed to social reforms. For children to be brought up in this atmosphere is to retard progress.

He finally made the interesting point that bear baiting and cock fighting were legislated against in the last century. Why only these? Because these were peasants' sports. And why has fox and stag hunting and hare coursing survived

COMING EVENTS

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 Moutat, 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

Glasgow Humanist Group: McLellan Galleries: Sunday, March 16, 2.30 p.m.: Public Meeting—"Man without God", Ludovic Kennedy.

Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate: Sunday, March 16, 6.30 p.m.: "What is Peace?", Mr Thomas Hose.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, March 16, 11 a.m.: "The Humanism of Bertrand Russell", H. J. Blackham, BA. Admission free. Tuesday, March 18, 6.45 p.m.: Discussion—"Psycho-analytical Aspects of Spiritual Development", Dr Blaise Maloney. Admission 2s (including refreshments), Members free.

as long as this? Because they have become widely advertised as part of our national heritage, like beekeepers and Windsor Castle. The myth is perpetuated by the mass media, particularly in the great soap opera "The Archers" where the gamekeeper Tom Forrest is adored by millions of listeners and where "dear old Brigadier Winstanley, the pillar of the British army and local community also happens to be joint-master of foxhounds and who is at present in hospital following a fall from his horse caused by a man with a placard demonstrating against blood sports!

Eric Heffer MP, whose bill to prohibit live hare coursing is at present going through parliament was the final speaker. He drew attention to the fact that no Act has been passed against Blood Sports since 1835. He then told us of the extreme difficulty involved in getting a bill through the Commons on this, despite the fact that the MPs in favour of abolition are in a "definite majority". It was the familiar story which has greeted so many reforming private members' bills in the past. If bad luck with the ballot does not ruin your chances, one man who is totally against you can. Mr Heffer stressed the importance of people writing either to the prime minister or to Mr Peart, the Leader of the House, to ask that time be made to give the bill a second reading.

He then systematically demolished the various objections that had been made to his bill. It had been said (un-true) that Mr Heffer had not seen hare coursing. So he went unannounced with two other MPs. They saw two greyhounds chase a hare and tear it apart while it was still alive. Lord Kenyon caught sight of the little group of MPs and the next hare's start was lengthened so that the greyhounds would not catch it. Mr Heffer was also told that hare coursing was a good working-class sport and that "All miners do it". However, the miner's union wrote to him supporting the bill, and Mr Heffer added, the roll call of a certain meet "read like the roll call of the House of Lords".

He was then bombarded with letters containing the kind of lies David Tribe had alluded to. People objected that if his bill went through, greyhound racing, horse racing, and fishing would stop. Children even wrote in saying they would be unable to ride their ponies. Mr Heffer described all this as "a tissue of lies intended to whip up atmosphere". Finally, Mr Heffer's opponents had argued that his bill would outlaw a tradition that dated from the Romans. One word to my mind answered that and Mr Heffer said it—"gladiators". He then told us that there were 637 packs of hounds in the world, 446 of them are in Great Britain and Ireland, 138 in the USA, 24 in Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia and Australia, two in India, and the continent of Europe has 33—figures revealing, some would say damning in themselves. Finally our attention was drawn to the fact that the RSPCA whom many regard as one of the most worthy and respectable societies there is, condone Blood Sports, but, said Mr Heffer, this is only because the British Field Sports Association has moved in and dominated their Annual General Meetings. He urged the audience to join the society and vote at the next Annual General Meeting.

Just to punch the point home the meeting was concluded with two short films, which told their own story, one on stag hunting and the second, so vile that one lady was overcome by tears, on otter hunting.

Thus the admission by the British Field Sports Association that their activities are indefensible was endorsed beyond a doubt.

SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH

ON Thursday, March 6, at Horwich College of Further Education a public meeting was held to hear an address by Dr Cecilia Hughes, the Head of the Department of Religious Studies at Didsbury College of Education, and to discuss various aspects of RI. The significance of this meeting is that it was organised by the Divisional Education Officer of Division 14 of the Lancashire Education Committee, and as has been pointed out by Kenneth Furness, the BHA press officer, this is "the first time a Local Education Authority has publicly challenged the statement of the Minister of Education, Edward Short, that the religious provisions of the 1944 Education Act would be retained in any new act".

In a memorandum inviting parents, teachers, senior pupils, governors and managers of schools, ministers of religion, and church organisations to the meeting the Education Officer outlines the provisions made in the 1944 Act for religious education in county and aided church schools, and draws attention to Edward Short's recent assurance that "provisions for religious education will be carried forward to any new education act". He then states that: "Various bodies, which have carried out opinion polls, claim that the majority of parents still wish their children to receive religious education", and continues: "On the other hand humanists and others assert that it is indefensible educationally to give religious indoctrination to children and that religious practice and positive religious beliefs no longer play a part in the lives of the majority of adults". He then lists five fundamental questions which, amongst others he hoped the audience would discuss at the meetings:

Is there any justification for religious education as a separate subject or for religious indoctrination of any kind in a county school?

In a society which is increasingly multi-racial and practises many religions, can religious education fairly be regarded as the same thing as Christian education?

Are young people capable of understanding abstract religious ideas?

Should the larger part of the cost of Church schools be met from taxation levied on the community at large?

If religious education is to continue in the schools, what ground should it cover and what methods of instruction should be used?

The bold admission contained throughout that Religious Education amount to indoctrination will be commended by secularists and all those concerned about the reactionary stance of Mr Edward Short. It is greatly to be hoped that other education authorities will follow this laudable precedent. Perhaps Mr Short will give more credence to expert opinions such as these, than he does to us pagans.

PLAY REVIEW

LUCY DANSIE

THE NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH

(Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London, S.W.1—until March 29)

EDWARD BOND was described recently by *Observer* Theatre critic, Ronald Bryden, as the most important new British playwright to emerge in the sixties. The English Stage Company, who manage the Royal Court, obviously hold him in high esteem as well, for they have accorded him the rare honour of holding a season of his plays in which three are being put on. To second Bryden's statement or to contest it would be to debate a superlative of little importance. Suffice it to say that something most important, not to say brilliant has well and truly emerged. Of the two plays, which

at the time of writing are running concurrently at the Royal Court, *Saved* and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (the third, *Early Morning* is to join them on March 13), the latter will be especially interesting to humanists since amongst other things it contains a devastating indictment of Christianity. However, to consider the play solely in this light would be both philistine with a capital P and an insult to the author.

The play is primarily an attack on colonialism. But to give such a tight interpretation is again to underestimate Bond, for though he vividly demonstrates the evil which is inevitably contained in a policy of colonialism, the play is really a not wholly cynical look at humanity and individuals.

The characters are not just symbols as they are in plays which seek only to convey a message or messages. The British governor is not there just in order that Bond may ridicule colonialism. The sage seeking enlightenment is not just a figure whose hilarious air of wisdom enables Bond to pour scorn on mysticism. Each character lives to the point where to dress them in lounge suits and set them down in a Surrey drawing room clutching whiskey and sodas would produce as revealing a satire as would dressing them in khaki, giving them rifles and putting them in a trench. In short Bond deals with people as well as colonialism, Christianity, dictators and the rest. That he chooses to set the play in Japan in what could be either the sixteenth or nineteenth century is relevant only in that it testifies to the wide scope on which Bond's skill enables him to draw.

To say more of Bond's intentions would be to encroach even further on what can only be his prerogative. It thus remains only to eulogise about his masterly use of dialogue, and draw the potential play-goers' attention to his very original use of the off-stage. This brings a new dimension into the play. In various ways Bond lets us know that something is going on offstage and we are enabled to see the effect this has on the players on stage. Coupled with this is a remarkable use of silences and pauses. One character remains motionless at the front of the stage with his mouth open for an unprecedented length of time. The effect of this inventive approach contributes much to the fascination of Bond. Credit must of course also go to the director, Jane Howell.

To recommend only *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* to humanists is to denigrate both the latter and *Saved*. To miss an opportunity to see either would be masochism.

National Secular Society

ANNUAL DINNER

BRIGID BROPHY

(Guest of Honour)

CHARLES OSBORNE

LORD RAGLAN

JOHN RYAN, M.P.

DAVID TRIBE

(Chairman)

The Paviour's Arms, Page Street
Westminster, S.W.1

Saturday, 29th March, 1969

Reception 6 p.m. Dinner 6.30 p.m.

Vegetarians Catered For

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THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

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ROBERTSON AND THE CASE AGAINST JESUS

MARTIN PAGE

J. M. ROBERTSON (1856-1933) was, in his lifetime, the foremost British exponent of the Mythicist school of thought on Christian origins. Armed with the immense knowledge secured by the progress of anthropology, Biblical criticism and comparative hierology during the 18th and 19th centuries, he sparked off a controversy that shook the very foundations of the Christian Churches and whose reverberations are heard to this day. That alone was a considerable historic achievement for one man; and in half a dozen volumes from *Christianity and Mythology* (1900) to *A Short History of Christianity* (1931), he gave a magnificent statement of the case for the non-historicity of Jesus, combined with his often devastating replies to Christian opponents who did not hesitate to distort and misrepresent his views.

But JMR put forward his "heretical" views only after years of careful thought and investigation: in his early twenties he was rather shaken when, after he had given a lecture on 'The Jesus of Renan and the Jesus of Strauss', he was asked by a friend: "Why do you take it for granted that there was a Jesus at all?" In 1886 he started work on *The Rise of Christianity, Sociologically Considered*: "I began by assuming a historical Jesus, and sought historically to trace him, regarding the birth myth and the others as mere accretions" (*The Jesus Problem*, p. 14). But it was a close study of the Pauline Epistles, together with the newly discovered 'Didache', that led him to re-examine his whole position. He later stressed the testimony of the Pauline Epistles to the divinity of Jesus and their silence as to his life and teaching—a remarkable silence for the master-builder of a cult whose crucified founder was his contemporary, a remarkable silence in view of the fact that the Pauline Epistles are commonly held to have been composed before the Gospels.

There are, as JMR said, vital differences between the account in the Fourth Gospel and the narratives of the other three—as well as glaring discrepancies between the Synoptics themselves. Matthew and Luke give Jesus incompatible genealogies and present contradictory versions of the events surrounding his birth and infancy; Mark knows nothing of Christ's childhood or of the Sermon on the Mount; Matthew (23:35) and Luke (11:51) make Jesus comment on an event that took place 40 years after his death. Yet all four Gospels associate Jesus with Nazareth, whose existence was apparently unknown before the fourth century A.D. What the Greek Evangelists do have in common is their unfamiliarity with the history and geography of Palestine.

"The claim to moral superiority collapses as soon as we compare the texts with the contemporary and previous ethical literature of the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Hindus. There is not one moral teaching in the gospels that is not there paralleled; and the passages which have been claimed as most characteristic—for instance, the Sermon on the Mount—are mere compilations of earlier Jewish utterances" (*A Short History of Christianity*, p. 11). Moreover, the supposed King of the Jews says nothing about the role of the State and other aspects of social life that pre-occupied moralists throughout the ancient world. The profound contradictions in Christ's behaviour and teaching rob his "personality" of moral unity: "through his supernatural mask there speak the warring sects and ideals of three centuries: wisdom and delusion, lenity and wrath, ventriloquise in turn in his name".

Indeed, the Jesus of the New Testament and of the Christian Creeds has all the attributes of a god, not of a man: in his virgin birth, miraculous healing, resurrection after death, and ascension, he resembles the crucified saviour-gods of the pre-Christian eras. For centuries B.C., the sign of the cross was a common sexual symbol of life and regeneration and was particularly associated with the solar deities. The Massacre of the Innocents is intelligible as reflecting "the universal myth of the attempted slaying of the Child-Sun-God". The Temptation, Robertson believed, was derived from "the Babylonian figures of the Goat-God (Capricorn) and the Sun-God on the Mountain of the World, representing the starting of the sun on his yearly course"—a symbolic victory of the lords of light over the forces of darkness that found frequent expression in mythological art. Christ's Descent in Hell probably reflected the primitive concept of the sun's passage through the underworld, and his sojourn there lasts three days, as in the myths of numerous saviour-gods.

"Jesus is buried in a rock-tomb, as is Mithra, the rock-born Sun-God; and it is as Sun-God that he is born at the winter solstice; it is as Sun-God (though also as carrying over the administrative machinery of the Jewish Patriarch) that he is surrounded by Twelve Disciples; it is as Sun-God that, like Osiris, he is to judge men after death; it is as Sun-God passing through the zodiac that he is represented successively in art and lore by the Lamb and the Fishes; and it is as Sun-God that he enters Jerusalem on two asses—the ass and foal of one of the Greek signs of Cancer (the turning-point in the sun's course), on which Dionysos also rides" (*Christianity and Mythology*, 1910 edition, p. 34). No wonder the font in a thirteenth century Romney Marsh Church (Brooklands) bears the twelve signs of the Zodiac!

But long before Robertson and his great predecessors Taylor, Volney and Dupuis, Pope Paul III (1468-1549) had also maintains that Jesus was a sun-god, and for this Holy Father "the Adoration of the Magi was merely the ceremony in which the Zoroastrian priests offered to their god gold, incense and myrrh, three things sacred to the sun. The constellation of Virgo, or rather of Isis, which corresponds to the solstice and presided over the birth of Mithras, had also been chosen to symbolise the birth of Christ". No wonder the resurrection of Christ, 'the Lamb of God', has long been celebrated after the vernal equinox, which was the traditional time of year for commemorating the resurrection of solar and vegetation deities like Mithra, in whose honour a lamb was sacrificed (cf. "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed"—1 Cor. 5:7): Centuries before the crucifix, the fish—long associated with the signs of the Zodiac—was a common Christian symbol; and, as JMR pointed out, "the notion of a Fish God is deeply rooted in several of the older eastern religions" (*Pagan Christs*, 1911 edition, p. 301). No wonder that St Augustine, who believed the Gospels only on the Church's authority, declared: "The same thing which is now called the Christian Religion existed among the ancients".

Pope Paul III asserted that there was not a single document of unimpeachable authority which proved Christ's existence as a man and proclaimed that, in his opinion, Christ never had existed. The Jewish writings of the Christian era give us no information about Jesus: Jewish contemporaries like Justus of Tiberias (a fellow provincial) and the learned Philo do not mention him; the Talmud reveals that among the rabbis there was no record or tradition of the Gospel Jesus; and the only two passages in

Josephus which refer to Jesus are generally acknowledged—even by Christian scholars—to be forgeries. The Christian Justin Martyr (c. 100—c. 165 A.D.) deliberately placed the miraculous deeds of Jesus on a par with those of Jupiter and other gods; he made no reference to the Gospels or their authors; and his dialogue with Trypho the Jew indicates that the historicity of Jesus was denied by Jews, who accused the Christians of inventing him.

St. Paul's Roman judge, Porcius Festus, has no definite knowledge of Christ; when Paul arrives in Rome, he finds that his Jewish brethren, whom he has supposedly known for some time, are strangers both to him and to Jesus—and his publicity campaign for Christ succeeds only in dividing his brethren into two hostile groups (Acts 25, 26 and 28). John's first two Epistles fulminate against those false prophets—presumably, Docetic Gnostics—"who confess not that Christ is come in the flesh (2 : 7; 1 : 4, i-iii). Yet, as Professor W. B. Smith said: "the New Testament writings, from Acts to Revelation, are practically destitute of any allusion to or knowledge of a Life of Jesus, and the earliest non-canonical Christian literature is equally void of any such knowledge or allusion" (*The Birth of the Gospel*, 1957, p. 89).

The 'Didache' does not refer to the life, authority, personality or disciples of Jesus; the approximately contemporaneous 'Shepherd of Hermas'—which was extremely popular with second-century Christians—is equally silent about Jesus. When the first-century Christian Ignatius was asked for evidence to support his faith, he invoked only the Old Testament prophecies (see JMR's *Jesus and Judas*, pp. 122-3; also W. B. Smith, *op. cit.* 1957, p. 93). Ignatius, Clement and Polycarp apparently never appealed to the authority of the Gospels. In about 180 A.D., the Christian Irenaeus, who was the first to mention the four Gospels, wrote of Christ ascending to heaven *before* his crucifixion, which, he said, took place when he was "more than fifty years old".

The second-century Christian Gnostics Marcion and Valentinus denied the corporeal reality of Christ's flesh; and their co-religionist Baillides believed that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus. Their pagan contemporary Celsus said to the Christians: "You relate fables and do not even give them verisimilitude"; and he could find out nothing about Jesus and his disciples, except what he read in the Gospels. A century later, Porphyry maintained that the Evangelists had invented the Jesus stories; and St Jerome (345-420 A.D.) admitted that "while the Apostles were still living on earth, while the blood of Christ

was still fresh in Judea, the body of the Lord was declared to be a phantom" (*Dial. adv. Lucif.*, 23).

That a Roman Emperor should choose as his God a Jewish rebel condemned to ignominious death and executed by the Roman military; that the Romans should deliberately undermine their own authority by permitting Christ's triumphantly messianic entry into Jerusalem; and that the behaviour of Pontius Pilate before the Jews is simply ludicrous for a Roman procurator: are doubtless among history's little ironies for those who believe in the historicity of Jesus. Yet there is not one first-century Roman writer who bears unequivocal or indubitably authentic witness to Christ's existence as a man. Pliny the Younger refers only to Christians singing hymns "to Christ as to a god". The now notorious passage in Tacitus is almost certainly a forgery: as JMR said, scholars have brought "a crushing array of arguments" against its authenticity. Suetonius merely alludes to a certain "Chrestus" fomenting Jewish riots in Rome, and, as Robertson said, this briefly mentioned incident "has never been intelligibly connected with Christian history by any Christian historian".

Sir James Frazer initially accepted Christ's historicity on the ground that "great religious movements spring ultimately from the conscious and deliberate efforts of extraordinary minds". Robertson replied: (1) "extraordinary minds" may have played a part in the rise of Christianity, but it does not follow that Jesus was one of them; (2) the diffusion of religions has been due as much—if not more—to the "multitude of ordinary propagandists and favouring social conditions" as to "extraordinary" founders; (3) the growth of the Dionysiac cult, for example, did not presuppose an historical Dionysos; and (4) many extraordinary teachers have *not* created great popular movements.

As the Mythicist Dr Couchoud declared: "The historicity of Jesus is an article of faith". Bishop Gore came to the same conclusion: "Acceptance of the story of Christ remains an act of faith. There can be nothing demonstrable in history". Pope Leo X was careless enough to confess: "What profit hath not this fable of Jesus brought us!" But as Robertson pointed out in *Jesus and Judas* (p. 57): "for average Church of England purposes, it would never do to admit that the gospel Jesus is merely a 'Cult-Hero', like Adonis or Attis. The British taxpayer will never consent to support a Christian State Church of which the accredited leaders avow that Jesus Christ never really existed. The deans and chapters must find a more practicable solution than that".

CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL ADVANCE

G. L. SIMONS

SECOND OF FIVE ARTICLES

IT IS generally thought that a country's economic progress is an index of its health. When Britain stagnates we talk of the "sick man of Europe" and the "English disease". When Japan or America or Germany booms we see this as a sign of social health and national viability. To some extent politics intrude into this assessment: for the Westerner, Japanese expansion demonstrates the worth of industrious capitalism, but strangely enough, Chinese economic expansion reflects no credit on communism. But the Chinese communist official and the American capitalist are at one in the value they attach to economic development; their respective utopias cannot be built without a sound and expanding economic base.

Obviously economics is important in social organisation. The rights that all men have can only be realised when a

national economy is run on progressive and just lines. This means that gross national product is not the only indication of the worth of a society. A highly productive society may be unjust, as is the United States of America. But it is clear that whereas economic production cannot guarantee a just and humanitarian society, economic development is a prerequisite for the providing of decent lives for ordinary men and women: with economic development we may have a good society; without such development the possibility does not even arise.

One of the most remarkable events in recent years is the economic growth of China. In only twenty years, with a very meagre economic base to build on, China has developed her economy to the point where she feels able to disburse aid to various underdeveloped countries, export a

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wide range of sophisticated goods, and be virtually independent of other nations in the building of a modern economy. There is no historical precedent to the growth of modern China in industrial terms.

By 1964 China was producing between 85 and 90 per cent of her machinery and steel requirements, as against 60 and 75 per cent respectively in 1957. Today the percentages are even higher. China has achieved self-sufficiency in petroleum products, including high-octane aviation spirit, and the designing and building of refineries of 1m tons capacity. Nearly three-quarters of the 2,000-odd counties have now been electrified, and a wide range of plastics and synthetic rubber products are being made. Particularly significant are the Tientsin synthetic fibre plant, the Nanking kapron plant, and the Paoting cinema film factory. Tin-plate, previously imported, is now being produced, and complete chemical plants are being designed and built. Several hundred varieties and specifications of rolled steel are in serial production, more than half for agriculture, tractors, fertiliser plants, etc. China is also able to supply industrial plant and equipment to other countries such as Ceylon, Pakistan, Malaya, Egypt and Tanzania. In 1965 China contracted to supply Ceylon with 230,000 tons of rice, Cuba with 135,000 tons, and Indonesia with 100,000 tons. Between 1957 and 1964 China increased her tractors four-fold, the irrigation facilities 12-fold, the rural power supplies 22-fold, and chemical fertilisers three-fold. No new foreign debts were incurred, and most of China's foreign debt to the Soviet Union had been paid.

As far back as 1958, Dr J. T. Wilson, a Canadian scientist, visited China and declared on his return: "The government clearly believes in and supports education and science . . . I was impressed by the many new buildings and universities. The equipment was simple but far better and more abundant than I would have expected. . . . Some people have expressed a fear that scientific training in communist countries will produce nations of evil robots. I think this is balderdash. I saw no evidence of it". A year later Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, then President of the Royal Society, visited China and commented (in *The New Scientist*):

"Laboratories and equipment are good; . . . the vast and well-equipped workshops I found a revelation. Library facilities, both in books and journals, are admirable, I have seldom, if ever, seen such extensive collections of scientific journals in all languages as I saw in several universities and Academic Institutes . . . Students now learn both Russian and English . . . In some places, especially in Shanghai, there are well established research schools of very high quality . . ."

Between 1956 and 1957 the Chinese spent nearly £3¼ million to purchase scientific literature from non-communist countries. Dr Robert T. Beyer, a Brown University physicist, pointed out that "about one-third of the scientific papers originating at the nuclear research centre at Dubna, near Moscow, have Chinese names attached to them".

Today China is producing a wide range of goods that only the advanced countries can equal. Some examples are: stainless steel blades for steam turbines, television cameras and transmitting equipment, machines for making 100,000 medicinal tablets per hour, valve testers, automatic chemical analysis machines, motor cycles, cars and precision balances. China is now building her own computers and electron microscopes, radar equipment and guidance systems for ballistic rockets. And everyone knows that her physicists, without Soviet assistance, have mastered the techniques of producing a thermo-nuclear device.

All this is remarkable enough but it does not convey the full picture. Chinese application and ingenuity in the last

twenty years is seen to be quite fantastic when we realise the complete absence of a scientific and industrial base on which to build in 1949. It is instructive to compare the Chinese progress with that of India in the last two decades. The comparison is particularly apt since the starting points of the two nations in the post-war years were so similar. Both were vast countries with population and agricultural difficulties; both had a miserably poor peasantry comprising the bulk of the people; both had considerable untapped resources; both knew famine, social division and internal conflict.

One tried the Western way, with a parliamentary political system, colossal Western aid, and capitalism. The other tried communism and economic independence. The results of these two experiments should now be obvious to all who can judge with objectivity.

Though left in 1947 by Britain with a more advanced industrial base, by 1962 India had increased her steel production only to 3,707,000 metric tons. Prior to 1949 China had never produced more than two million tons but by 1960 had increased production to 18.4 million metric tons—*five times the production of India*. In 1962 China's *per capita* grain production was 56 per cent higher than India's. By 1960 China's national investment was running at more than three times the Indian figure. India's investment was assisted by foreign aid, which, up to August 1962, amounted to more than \$6.5 billion. In 1948 the production of electrical energy in India was 5,725 (units in million Kwh) and 4,308 in China; in 1960 the Indian figure was 20,123 and the Chinese figure was 58,500. In 1950 China was producing about the same amount of crude steel as India; in 1963 she was producing over twice as much. In 1948 China and India were producing about the same amounts of nitrogenous fertilisers; by 1963 China was producing over nine times as much as India (and the importance of fertilisers cannot be too highly stressed in this context). (These figures are taken from the United Nations Statistical Yearbooks.)

The point may be made that whereas India was aided by the West, China received aid from the Soviet Union (subsequently curtailed). In *The Race War* Ronald Segal comments:

"As far is known from Soviet as well as Chinese sources, the Soviet Union gave China no single outright grant of equipment or money. The 'aid projects', amounting in value to some \$2,025 million were to be repaid . . . the burden of repayment fell mainly on the export of commodities—however urgently needed by China herself—to the Soviet Union."

And making reference to a Soviet publication *Essays in Economic Relations of the USSR with China*, Segal notes that "China appears to have paid, with commodity exports to the Soviet Union, even for the technical assistance she received from Soviet specialists". Thus Soviet aid to China was, by the early sixties (when it stopped altogether) about \$1,000 million less than the amount supplied to India—and India is smaller and had a better industrial base. Not only is China now out of debt but she is giving financial aid to other countries. By the end of 1961 she had pledged over \$1,500 million to North Korea. By 1964 China had pledged \$500 million to a number of underdeveloped countries.

The *per capita* income in China is increasing fast; in India it is actually falling. Starvation, but not malnutrition, has been eliminated in China; in India starvation and malnutrition are commonplace. In Calcutta there are two million people who are too poor to live in slums—they are born on the streets, they grow up, excrete, copulate and die there in the most miserable circumstances. At the same time the Indian nobility receives cash grants from the

government, free electricity for the palaces, and thinks nothing of spending £20,000 on a week-end banquet.

Some people may say that the Indians are 'free' and that the Chinese have paid too high a price for their advance. I cannot do better than quote from *A Curtain of Ignorance* by Felix Greene (p. 125):

"We need these reminders of the past, these tallics of the cost of stagnation, if only as milestones to see the prodigious distance the Chinese have come. Twenty thousand bodies, on average, picked up off the streets of Shanghai every year (37,000 in 1933): three million lives lost in 1931 in central China through flood and famine; over a million in Honan Province. And the landlords hoarding grain while babies ate grass and roots. And young girls sold to slavery or prostitution so at least they would eat . . . This was the China of the past, but it is not the China of today. This was the price the Chinese people were paying for stagnation, until with indescribable efforts they rose and shed their night-mare past.

In the light of these historic facts, one must ask: By what right do our well-paid writers and our comfortable scholars now presume to tell us that the Chinese people have paid too high a price for their advance? (Italics in original.)

China is winning. In 1958 Mr James Muir, President of the Royal Bank of Canada said, after a visit to China:

"We think the vast majority of the people of China have a government they want, a government which is improving their lot, a government in which they have confidence, a government which stands no chance of being supplanted". The achievements of China, the confidence and zest with which her people face the world, and their involvement with China's progress—as no Indian peasant is involved with India's destiny—show that this is still true today. The Chinese have a government and social scheme that are bringing immeasurable benefits. The Westerner may complain petulently from the sidelines—but the ordinary Chinese is enthusiastic about China today, as few ordinary Britains are about Britain, or Americans about America. There are lessons here to be learned.

be doing so because they don't want to or can't do whatever it is they say their spouse prevents.

Some of Dr Berne's ideas about these ulterior motives reflect classical psychoanalysis, which does not seem quite to fit with the rest of the book; but he presents them in a tentative way which suggests a laudable lack of confidence.

To return to my opening remarks, the core of *Games People Play* is a series of what might be outline plots for playlets, which, no doubt, will find their way onto the stage in due course in one form or another.

LETTERS

Logical statement required

I SUPPOSE I am one of Mr Tindall's "brothel-brained nitwits", and my views on sex the "oafish and emotive ejaculations of louts". Oddly enough, it is Mr Tindall's language that I find emotive.

How does he claim to know that in my bedroom I "insist on elegance and find nothing excusable about homosexuals"? As far as I know, he has never been in my bedroom.

His guesses are wrong. I am told that I am often quite inelegant in the bedroom; and as for homosexuals, I find them totally excusable, provided they keep within the law. Does Mr Tindall disapprove of the recent overdue reforms?

It might be interesting to have from our opponents of discussion of sex in English a logical statement of their reasons; the fact that they do not like certain words does not entitle them to censor everyone else. Do they think that freethinkers should not have, or should not express, views on important social topics like free love, abortion, homosexuality, education, censorship and racialism?

MAURICE HILL.

The last word!

IN REPLY to J. W. Nixon's letter (February 1) a 1759 dictionary in my possession suggests that the origin of the word "fuck" is possibly Greek, meaning "to plant".

There are, however, two other suggestions in this 210-year old dictionary about the word's more modern origin, namely, the Belgic word Fuyche, meaning "to thrust or knock", and the German word Fuchten, meaning "to beget".

There are, of course, many English words derived directly from the German, as *swimmen* (to swim), and *drinken* (to drink) and the most reasonable supposition, in my opinion, is that the current word "fuck" is but the German word *fuchten* shortened.

It is not "an Anglo-Saxon word", although it may well have been used by the Anglo-Saxons, since many of them came from what is now part of Germany.

This four-letter word, and "sexual intercourse" do mean the same thing, at least, nowadays—certainly on the Continent, when the act is colloquially mentioned in English, and if the Germanic origin is the correct one, properly so.

I think that why the four-letter word in question is considered indecent, and shocks people, may well be, firstly, because the sexual act between a man and a woman was not mentioned in polite conversation, whatever word was used; and secondly, because of the harsh sounding of the word "fuck". The more likely reason, I suggest, is the word's association with, and its popular use by, the illiterate, vulgar and common people in the English community for many centuries, which would effectively bar its use by all, or nearly all, respectable people, or those who wished to be considered respectable, which included the vast majority of the female sex.

If the word ever becomes general amongst the higher classes of the community, then its power to shock is likely to wear thin.

EDGAR M. KINGSTON.

TO BE CONSISTENT the advocates of a return to the speech of our (?) Anglo-Saxon ancestors should also defecate (pardon the euphemism) on their own or their neighbour's doorsteps. If these controversial words were to become acceptable and "respectable" and applied solely to their relative functions they would cease to attract those who so freely employ them as expletives to lend force to a natural paucity of vocabulary

COLLIN COATES.

Postage stamps please

CAN YOU BRING to the notice of your readers that the postage stamp group set up by Havering Humanist Society dealing with the collection and resale of postage stamps is making progress. We have sent £2 to Agnostics' Adoption Society, Scrove Hill School, Botswana and Humanist Housing Association since we started in January 1969.

Please help by sending stamps to Mrs Adrienne Goodman, 1 Percy Road, Romford, Essex, RM7 8QX, keeping them on the paper and cutting round leaving at least a quarter of an inch border.

Our thanks to those who have already sent stamps. We hope they appreciate it's impractical to reply individually.

ADRIENNE GOODMAN.

BOOK REVIEW

CHRISTOPHER MACY

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: Eric Berne (Penguin 5s).

A STANDARD CRITICISM of academic psychologists is that they have not contributed half as much to the understanding of human behaviour as the best novelists and playwrights. Shakespeare knew about unconscious motivation, Ibsen knew about sex and the family. Harold Pinter produces the cracked topskin of human life, through which can be seen the turgid truth swirling about beneath, with a skill which must drive Laing to frenzied envy. Somerset Maugham knew everything.

With Dr Berne the boot is on the other foot. Perhaps one should say plimsol, for *Games People Play* is written in the sardonic strain of the New York Jew and is lightened in both tone and stature as a consequence.

The important thing for both writers and psychologists is that human behaviour is not random but repetitive and repeatable. This means that psychologists can establish, say, that the variation in the strength of a stimulus detectable by human sense is a constant proportion of the stimulus. For the writer it means that the characters he draws, the situations and events he describes, are recognisable by his readers as real or plausible. They are good models of reality. The difference between psychologists (with a few exceptions), and writers is that writers have dealt with bigger chunks of behaviour and do not seek to explain but only describe.

A game is a chain behaviour or series of events which is structured by rules. Games theory has been established as a study since before the war as a sort of elaborate mathematical chess of probability. We are a long way from being able to describe human behaviour numerically, but Eric Berne has made a most important early step. He has explored one level in the hierarchy of rules we live by and selected a number of 'constants', and described them existentially.

The way you treat your spouse, your suitor, your creditor, your drinking pals or the Joneses; in any of these relationships you may find yourself playing a game, behaving in a way ritualised by your cultural milieu. Sometimes this is just 'time structuring', because you have nothing better to do. You may even want to avoid closer contact open relationships entail. There may be a deeper ulterior motive. Wives or husbands who play *If It Weren't For You* may

The Pursuit of Happiness

I AM MOST TOUCHED by M. J. O'Carroll's letter (March 1), expressing concern that "elementary errors and unscientific philosophies spoil (my) life". I suspect that the fact that I refuse to accept the prospect of personal extinction with equanimity as all good little humanists should is more a reflection of his own state of mind than mine. I am sure if I followed his enlightened advice "to concentrate on living (my) own life" I would be a much happier person, but am I then labouring under a misapprehension? I thought Secularists were supposed to care about other people's happiness.

I consider it the duty of Secular Humanists to attempt to make it possible for everybody to achieve as much happiness as he is capable of, but merely pointed out in my article "The Pursuit of Happiness" that in my opinion temperament made it impossible for some people never to be really happy. My articles are not regurgitations of "references to recorded evidence or to generally accepted psychological hypotheses", which are merely other people's opinions. (Perhaps Mr O'Carroll would like a philosophical discourse on the nature of "knowledge" and "belief"?) If he is seriously suggesting that one can freely choose whether one is to be happy or not I suggest he is being just a little presumptuous in criticising someone else's "unscientific philosophy".

As for "the great amount of success man now has" I wonder in what terms Mr O'Carroll measures success? Is it, for example, to have achieved a technology capable of feeding adequately several times the present population when two-thirds of that population remains undernourished? His attitude is typical of those blindly idealistic humanists who get hot under the collar when the reality of human misery is brought to their attention.

Lilian Middleton has obviously misunderstood my article. I do not consider happiness to be "a dirty word", but that some things such as truth and justice are more important. Nor did I express belief in an afterlife—merely that I would like to believe in one. Even the Catholic Church distinguishes between the virtues (?) of faith and hope.

MICHAEL GRAY.

Powellism

IT IS MY TURN to criticise Mr G. L. Simons, but I shall not use offensive language, as he did in condemning my 'racialism'. I agree with him that there should not be deliberate discrimination between our nationals and immigrants—nobody could be more definite as to that than I, and again I invite him to look up my article "This Freedom", as instance of it. Can we be confident, he asks, in his "Powellism" article (February 22), that the crimes committed by the Nazis could not happen here?—and that anyone confident in this is a fool. He quotes a British MP: "Not a day passes but English families are ruthlessly turned out to make room for foreign invaders. A house which formerly contained a couple of families in comparative decency is made to contain four or five families living under conditions which baffle description. It is only a matter of time before the population becomes entirely foreign. The rates are burdened with the education of thousands of children of foreign parents".

I see nothing objectionable in that statement save the words 'ruthlessly', 'invaders' and 'entirely foreign', and the phrase 'refuse and scum of other nations' in his quotation of Cathcart Wason. Nor do I see the justice of his remark that there has been persistent racialism in the British outlook, even if our colonial history has encouraged such an outlook. Naturally, there has been and is, considerable discrimination against immigrants, as one finds in other countries by the wilfully prejudiced, but that doesn't brand the generality of Britishers—nor Enoch Powell—with 'Powellism'.

Reverting to Mr Simons' statement that the crimes of the Nazis could happen here—without delusion as to the intense humanity of Britishers, I consider he badly oversteps the mark with that assertion. His objection to Powell's press and broadcasting facilities is not only contrary to the central ideal of Freethought but quite wrong, from my study of Enoch's speeches and writings. Mr Simons' fulminations will carry no weight with those whose mental vision is unclouded by a disproportionate idea of the rights of Britishers and the wrongs of immigrants.

F. H. SNOW.

Free Speech

MR PAGE does not understand the dynamics of social change. The vested interest groups in society do not yield up their wealth and privilege as a result of polite discussion as to what is right and just—they only yield when they are forced to by a combination more powerful than their own. The history of social change in Britain is not a history of free speech, but the history of strikes and threats, of hunger marches, mass meetings and demonstrations. We are continually told that militancy is against the British character. A close look at history does not support this view. The television appearances of Bertrand Russell and Tariq Ali are infre-

quent, stage-managed and completely ineffectual. All they do is to delude normally perceptive liberals like Mr Page into thinking that a useful degree of free speech exists. Why, Mr Page, do the industrialists, bankers, press-barons, and millionaires support your attitude to free speech? Simply because such an attitude is harmless to capital, harmless to massive vested interest. What the vested interest groups fear is militancy as this is the only thing that really challenges their position and promises a just society. If I were trying to *preserve the status quo* I would behave exactly as the BBC, the ITA and the press are behaving. They know what they are doing. It is very sad that well-meaning and articulate people like Mr Page have their energies squandered by being misled into playing the sterile liberal game according to the rules laid down by capitalists to preserve their vested interest.

G. L. SIMONS.

Criticism

I FIND freethinkers not so careful as they ought to be when criticising. You should, Mr Lloyd-Jones, have noticed that I used the qualifying word 'mainly' when writing that though the FREETHINKER should be used as the vehicle primarily for subjects concerned with the exposure of religious fallacy. Also, you should not have pluralised my articles in support of what you term racialism. Also, you should have been very careful to be sure that to point out the injustice of permitting our own similarly suffering folks to suffer in preference to, or, as prior citizens, to be quite equally victimised by distressing conditions with our unfortunate immigrants, is racialism—a very nasty word which should not be used against anyone with serious thought.

F. H. SNOW.

Herbert Cutner

THE PASSING of Herbert Cutner removes another of the old dedicated freethinkers of the past from our circles. I knew Cutner very well in my talks and meetings with him and Chapman Cohen at the old offices of Stonecutter Street, Faringdon Street, and Gray's Inn Road. Cutner had met and knew so many of the old school, he had a profound respect for J. M. Robertson and G.W. Foote. I think Cohen and Cutner, although they worked together for so many years did not altogether hit it off.

However, Cutner's devotion to Freethought was without question, a skilled artist who I am certain would have been much more successful in the material world if his devotion to the cause had not been so all consuming of his time and energy.

Politically a vigorous anti-socialist and an advocate of Malthusian ideas, but possibly as things have turned out in the modern socialist worlds—where personal freedom is non-existent—he was not after all so far wrong?

It may be of interest to the younger school of literary-minded freethinkers that in my day when I knew him, largely between the two wars, Cutner possessed an unique collection of old Freethinkers' library works. First editions of Carlile, Paine, Robert Taylor that if it was in any way possible might well be worth retrieving for a future collection of Freethought works.

Not very long after the death of Cohen, Cutner offered a fine copperplate etching of Cohen to readers of the paper for ten shillings which I still possess and hangs framed in my living room.

Indeed, a fine freethinker and a very clever man. His knowledge of French literature was quite extensive. May the old fellow remain long in our memory.

ROBERT F. TURNEY.

Huh?

THE ISSUE of February 1 had another anti-Israel book review. Where on earth do you dig up these obscure publications? You certainly seem to search them out. There have been several such venomous reviews during the past few months. I can only conclude that the editor must fit into one of three categories, each of which renders a person congenitally anti-semitic: he is an Arab, a Christian or a Marxist. A fair and rational person he can't be.

A. PACH, Johannesburg.

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