

Freethinker

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MUSLIM TERROR

THERE WILL BE few people, religious or otherwise, who will not join in severely condemning the action of the Muslim religious leader in Dewsbury, Yorkshire, who caned twelve children, including girls aged eight, for going on a school visit to a zoo. The children were taken to the zoo by their headmaster and had their parents' permission to go. The real reason for the infliction of this punishment would seem to be that the children 'missed mosque' as the religious leaders put it. It has also been revealed that the Muslim girls in secondary schools are prevented from swimming and have to do P.T. wearing track suits, because of the Islamic custom that women past the age of puberty must be properly covered.

The local education authority has however, succeeded in persuading the religious leaders to allow *primary* school girls to swim and to do P.T. in the normal clothing. This agreement was presumably reached because the girls involved had not reached puberty. Nevertheless, unconfirmed reports would infer that the agreement has not been kept, since there are rumours that the primary school girls have been chastised for behaving in the way to which their religious leaders are supposed to have agreed.

Mr Joseph Clitheroe, Dewsbury's chief education officer, said recently: "We have had complaints in the past that the mosques are pulling in the opposite direction from the Educational system. I am very worried about this. I'm concerned not so much with the physical punishment, but with the fact that it is unfair on the children. They don't know what they should do."

Quite apart from the many arguments which can be put against corporal punishment in general, or its use on eight-year-old girls in particular, there would seem to be two main causes for concern arising from the happenings in Dewsbury.

First, is the fact that Muslim children from the age of five upwards are required to spend four hours at the mosque every school day. Most of the children have to arrive at the mosque at 6 a.m. and spend two hours there before going on to school. They then have to return after school at five o'clock for another two hour session. In winter these children have to get up shortly after 5 a.m. and begin work three hours before daylight. As David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, has said in a press statement: "It is surprising that even if children are expected to recite every genuine and forged 'saying of the Prophet' in arabic, such a period of R.I. should be necessary." This astounding assault on young children's minds makes humanists claims, that Christian R.I. in state schools is indoctrinatory, seem hardly worth making. It is clear that both children and parents have been indoctrinated to such a degree that the religious leaders have a terrifying degree of power over them. Those that think that the fight against religion is over would do well to ponder the position of these children. An those who are in favour of sending these people back to their own countries might also benefit from considering how much more chance there is of their minds being freed from crippling indoctrination if they are permitted to remain in Britain.



The second point to arise from this affair is the fact that the existing laws with regard to religious education, make it very hard for either the local education authority or the Secretary of State for Education and science, to intervene on behalf of children, who are being palpably maltreated both physically and mentally. For as the law stands, Roman Catholics, other Christian denominations and Jews can set up their own schools with aid from the state. There is no reason why Muslims, Hindus, Jains or anyone else should not demand the same aid in order to help established schools for their children. And if something isn't done about the law now, such demands will soon be made. It is obvious that such schools would be undesirable to a degree much greater than that of the present sectarian schools, for a Muslim school would create a division amongst the local young community, which would not be merely religious, but would reflect colour and race. Such establishments would become in the words of *The Times Educational Supplement* "Ghetto schools".

The only way this can be avoided is for the government to cease giving aid to denominational schools of any kind.

(Continued Overleaf)

Freethinker

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It is a sad reflection though, on the educational laws of this country that the strongest argument against the unethical policy of aiding denominational schools, is only brought to the fore when it becomes apparent that religious groupings, whose members are both non-christian and coloured, will soon be demanding aid to set up their own schools.

SHORT CLIMB DOWN

IT CAN BE SEEN from the preceding piece that it is fast becoming imperative that the government reorientate the whole of the existing law regarding the teaching of religion. There are now schools where well over half the pupils do not adhere to the Christian faith. In such schools large numbers are opted out of assembly. If denominational schools were to be outlawed, as they must be, the disparity of religions and sects in state schools would lay open the idea of a corporate religious assembly to even more ridicule than it receives at the moment.

It seems then that in addition to the ethical grounds for the cessation of religious instruction, practical grounds are building up as well. It is interesting therefore that Mr Edward Short, the Secretary of State for Education and science and hitherto unflagging supporter of the retention of the religious clauses in the 1944 Act, should suddenly have climbed down, albeit a very small step. Short, in the name of keeping Christian a country, in which a minute proportion of the population attend Christian churches with any degree of regularity, has repeatedly asserted his intention of maintaining R.I. in its present legal form. Suddenly he has publicly stated that he is in favour of abolishing compulsory religious education for children over sixteen, and

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 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.

INDOOR

London Young Humanists: Tuesday, July 29, 8 p.m.: A Coffee Evening at Christine Osborne's, 9 Upper Addison Gardens, London, W14 (nearest Tube—Shepherds Bush).

Trade Union, Labour, Co-operative—Democratic History Society: Exhibition at the Town Hall, Harlow, Essex: Until July 26, daily 10 a.m.—8 p.m.

that such a measure stands a fair chance of being included in the forthcoming education bill.

Brian MacArthur, *The Times'* Education correspondent, reporting Short's statement puts forward an interesting reason for the Secretary of State's unexpected change of heart: "...several million newly enfranchised 18 to 21-year-olds will be voting in the next election, and an astute politician nowadays starts catching his voters young."

Short made the announcement at Holloway School, where he was engaged in his first face to face confrontation with sixth formers. Before he arrived the headmaster had caused to be removed a poster, which proclaimed that 80 per cent of holloway's sixth formers resented compulsory religious instruction. A girl pupil, aged seventeen, asked Mr Short why religious education should be compulsory, when neither mathematics nor physics were formally required by law. Short predictably replied that it wasn't, and referred to the parental right of withdrawal. He then went on to outline how he thought religion should be taught. He said that it should not be evangelical but perfectly open, so that pupils could make up their own minds. *Its aim was not to arouse faith*, although it might do that, but to enable a pupil to ask: "Is there a God, or is it a lot of hooey?"

Thus he admitted that the system is at fault, for if its object is not to arouse faith it is clearly failing if it does, and Short here admits that it might. Setting semantics aside one finds, oddly, that Short has put forward as the objects of compulsory religious education, precisely what the majority of humanists would consider to be the objects of making it non-compulsory. Coincidence? Vote catching? Or is somebody unaware of what the present system in fact does?

Surely, Mr Short, if the aim is to put pupils in a position to make up their own minds, one should teach them religion from every aspect and without any form of bias. One should teach them *about* every religion according to its popularity, importance and historical interest. One should further explain atheism and agnosticism to them. We know that many of the victims of compulsory R.I. decide that religion is "a lot of hooey". But surely that decision would be a more satisfactory and aware one, if it was made by someone who had been instructed fairly in both sides of the case.

If Mr Short really means what he says, one can only suggest that he joins with humanists, one of whose major occupations at the moment is an endeavour to work out the best way to implement the very ideas which Mr Short has outlined. But perhaps humanism is not much of a platform from which to fight an election. Or is it Mr Short?

OBSCENITY LAWS

THE ARTS COUNCIL'S Working party has now completed its report on the Obscenity laws. The report itself will not be published until it has been ratified by the Arts Council. However, on Tuesday July 15, at a meeting in London, presided over by Lord Goodman, the Chairman of the Arts Council, it was disclosed that the Working Party has recommended that the Obscene Publications Acts of 1959 and 1964 should be repealed and should not be replaced for a trial period of five years, and that the laws should lapse at the expiration of five years, unless Parliament should decide otherwise. The report also recommends that the Theatres Act of 1959 should be brought into line with this, and that certain other relevant acts should be amended or repealed.

(Continued on back page)

WHAT USE THE FAMILY TREE

OTTO WOLFGANG

"IN THE WHOLE TOWN of Arad there were only four arm-bearing men left during the Six-Day-War" said the Manchester don who returned from a two-year sojourn in the Negev. "The Bedouins as always were sitting on the fence, and had the war turned against us they would have exterminated us easily. However, as it was, they feigned loyalty—a sentiment alien to them".

The Bedouins (properly *Bedāwin* = peoples of the desert) are sheep and camel raising nomads, primarily given to hunting and raiding, who consider any regular occupation unworthy of man; and yet, the Israeli government has succeeded in settling a few clans of them in the Negev, and early in the morning we saw their children on mules riding to scattered schools. To assess the importance of this, it must be considered that individualism is deeply ingrained in the Bedāwi who was never socially conscious, concerned only with himself and the nearest members of his family and tribe; everyone outside this pale is a prospective enemy for the primitive man. He knows no discipline, no respect for order, authority or learning. In the words of the Qur'an (Koran) "the desert Arabians are most confirmed in unbelief and hypocrisy".

The raid (*Ghazw*, from which we have the corrupted word 'razzia')—or brigandage is a sort of national institution. Says Professor Philip K. Hitti in his short history of *The Arabs* (London, 1960):

"In desert land, where the fighting mood is a chronic mental condition, raiding is one of the few manly occupations. Christian tribes too practised it. An early poet gave expression to the guiding principles of such life in two verses: 'Our business is to make raids on the enemy, on our neighbour and on our brother, in case we find none to raid but a brother!'"

Patriarchal clan organisation is the basis of their society.

Every tent represents a family. Members of one encampment constitute a clan. A number of kindred clans grouped together make a tribe. All members of the same clan consider each other as of one blood, but clan kinship may be acquired by sucking a few drops of a member's blood. A senior member of the clan is their chief or *sheikh* but his authority does not go very far. He is only a titular head as counsellor and his tenure of office depends on the goodwill of the clan. A young beau as *sheikh* is one of the many spurious inventions of Hollywood. Only fellow clansmen can expect loyalty from their own clansmen, every other tribe is regarded as a legitimate victim and object of plunder and murder.

Rudiments of Semitic religion developed in oases—centred upon stones and springs (Black Stone and Zamzam Well in Islam, Bethel in Old Testament, etc.), but the Bedāwin, although superficially Muslim, mostly believe in Nature spirits (Djinn). The term 'Mohammedans' is disliked in the Islamic world because of comparison with 'Christians' who venerate Christ whilst Muhammed is not deified.

Women still enjoy a greater measure of freedom than their sedentary sisters, whose social depression started during the tenth century in the sensuous surrounding of Abbasid Baghdad. Man is the master of his polygamous family, but the woman is allowed to choose a husband and leave him if ill-treated.

Although a Palestinian nationalism did not exist prior to the foundation of the state of Israel (until then fre-

quently pitched battles were fought in the ancestral feud between Quays and Yaman members), the love for raids is enhanced by the fact that Arabs have always been word-sensuous; they can be stirred to fervour by the mere sound of rhetoric or good oratory, even if the meaning is only half understood. "The beauty of man—declares an Arabic adage—lies in the eloquence of the tongue. The rhymed prose of the Qur'an equals recitation, the foundation of Islam equals submission (exemplified in Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, if God wishes it), and this has set the standard until today for writers.

It is necessary to differentiate between the Bedouins and the Arabs as well as between the ancient Hebrews and the modern Jews. The Hebrews—from *abar* meaning to pass over/through (a territory), transgress, wander—were also desert nomads of Semitic origin with all the characteristics mentioned above. They greatly enjoyed the pranks and ruses of a legendary tribal ancestor, Ja'aqōb (3rd masc. sing. Aorist of 'aqāb which denotes one who follows closely "on somebody else's heels"—e.g. in giving chase, in the sequence of succession, etc.—and with a second meaning of: to deceive, defraud (aqeb=heel, and stands for anything crooked).

However, during statehood Arabs and Hebrews experienced different cultural influences and admixtures.

"The word 'Semite'—writes Professor Hitti—has come to have a Jewish connotation, but the 'Semitic features' including the prominent nose, are not Semitic at all. They are exactly the characteristics which differentiate the Jew from the Semitic type and represent an acquisition from early intermarriage between the Hittite-Hurrians and the Hebrews."

The Jews therefore seem to resemble more the Armenians, and their specific traits have endured through enforced intermarriage, as for instance have those of the Catholic Irish. But within this basic pattern there are visible variations, as can be noticed in Israel in the communities from different cultures; so for instance, the Ashkenazim from Germany or Poland look quite different from the Jemenite Jews (whose girls, frequently, are of a dazzling beauty).

To make it quite clear that any 'racial' denomination is merely political juggling and quite unscientific, let us take the Normans who came to England as carriers of French culture. For originally they were Northmen (North-manni, Normanni) or Vikings (Old English *wieingas* = seafarer, with the natural connotation of pirate, Norse viking). In the tenth century a band of Northmen, by agreement with the King of West Francia, settled in what today is Normandy, intermarried with the Frankish population and, like the originally Germanic Franks, adopted the Romance language. (Similarly the originally Swedish "Rus" grew into the Slavic Russians.)

"The Rollo, who obtained the Duchy of Normandy from Charles the Simple in 911 by the verbal agreement of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte, sprang from the same race as the conquerors of the Danelaw. But after a century these two stems of a single breed had diverged so widely that Danes in England were calling Danes in France 'Frenchmen'. The English Danes had encountered a European civilisation which was still feebly rooted, and they left their mark upon it; but the Norman Danes, confronted by Rome in the form of France, had imbibed the Latin spirit with surprising speed." (André Maurois: *An illustrated History of England*.)

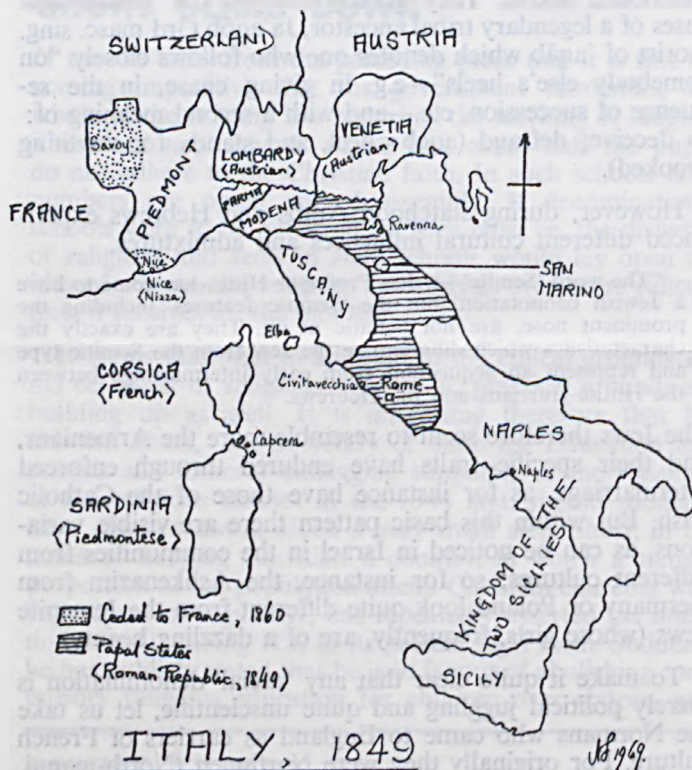
'Races' are the hobbyhorse of fascists; what matters is cultures and the upbringing in them. And the 'Sabra' is a many-rooted but novel entity in itself.

THE SIEGE OF ROME

NIGEL H. SINNOTT

JUNE OF THIS YEAR marks the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of one of the great battles for liberty in the last century, the famous Siege of the Roman Republic.

It will hardly surprise readers of the FREETHINKER to know that the nineteenth century Papal States (which had been re-established on the fall of the Napoleonic Empire) were among the most backward and corrupt of any country in Europe. The Bonapartes had not been loved over-much by the Italians, but after the treaty of Vienna, such social reforms as had taken place under French rule were abolished (The Code Napoléon, vaccination, street lighting, public draining), and Pope Gregory XVI even refused to allow the building of railways or telegraphs as they might "work harm to religion". Press censorship, spies, secret police, anti-semitism, political murder and the persecution of "thinkers" was the order of the day.



On the death of Gregory XVI in 1846 Cardinal Mastai-Ferretti was elected Pope and took the title Pius IX. He began his office as a reformer, but as the demands of the liberals and nationalists increased he became increasingly cautious, and finally turned his back on the revolt against tradition. The neighbouring states of Naples (and Sicily), Tuscany and Piedmont (and Sardinia) were equally repressive, but this did not stope abortive uprising, such as that of the Bandiera brothers at Naples in 1844.

In 1848 there was a wave of liberal revolt throughout Europe: the French overthrew the Orléans monarchy and declared the Second Republic; there were uprisings (suppressed) in Sicily and Naples; and Lombardy and Venetia rose against Austrian occupation, aided at first by Piedmont. In March of that year Pius IX granted a limited constitution, the Fundamental Statute, to the Papal States, but in April he delivered an Allocution refusing to join in the war against Austria, which by now was not going so well. In September he appointed Count Pelegrino Rossi, an

anti-democratic conservative, as prime minister, but on November 15 Rossi was stabbed to death outside the Palazzo della Cancelleria, probably by Luigi, son of the democratic leader Angelo Brunetti (nicknamed Ciceruacchio). There followed several days of violence and demonstrations after which the Pope appointed a few liberal ministers, then, on November 24 fled the city in the carriage of the Bavarian envoy, going to Gaeta over the Neapolitan border. From here, under the protection of the Bourbon King Ferdinand II ('Bomba'), he demanded the submission of the rebel Romans, who ignored him and elected a constituent assembly by universal suffrage.

On February 8, 1849, at the instigation of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Roman Republic was declared, and Pius called upon Austria, France, Naples and Spain to crush it. Ten days later a short-lived Tuscan Republic was also proclaimed, but on March 29 the Piedmontese were defeated at the battle of Novara and dropped out of the war. Tuscany was soon overrun by the Austrians, and the French government, bowing to the demands of its powerful clerical faction, sent an expeditionary force to Rome, which landed at Civitavecchia on April 25 under General Oudinot. Two days later Garibaldi and his famous red-shirts¹ returned to the city to defend it.

Garibaldi was already a famous and colourful figure with his flowing beard, shoulder-length hair, red shirt and white poncho. For some years he had been fighting in South America on behalf of the republics of Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay and had recruited the core of his Italian Legion in Montevideo. He had been on his way to join the rebels in Sicily and Venetia when the Pope fled Rome. Garibaldi was, of course, a freethinker, but of the continental, anti-clerical mould. He regarded the Italian priests as the "emanation from hell", "Black brood, pestilent scum of humanity", "Descendents of Torquemada" "the very scourge of that Italy which, seven or twenty times they have sold to the stranger", "ministers of falsehood", but it did not prevent him from maintaining a warm friendship with his chaplain, Father Ugo Bassi, who supported the Republic.

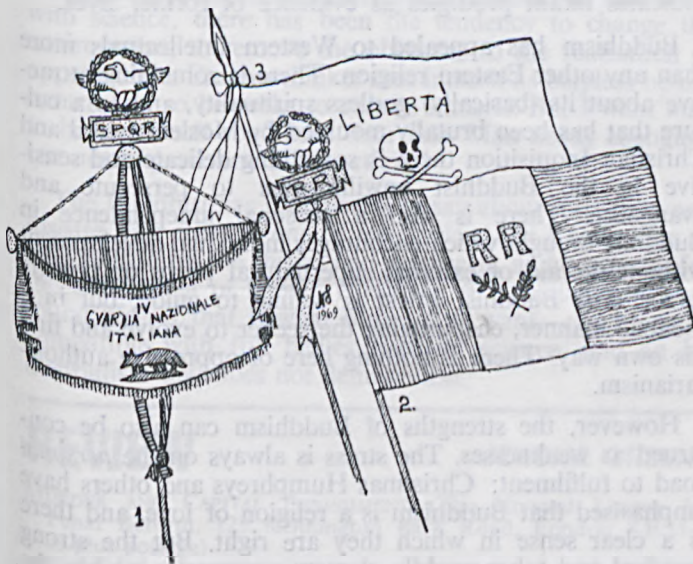
Including the Garibaldini, Rome had about 8,000 men to defend itself, and when Oudinot's army of 9,000 attacked the Vatican walls and the Western defences of the city on April 30, they were soundly beaten off, despite the fact that they were told they had gone to liberate the Romans from 'foreigners' (!), murderers of priests, and the Pope's pet bogies, liberals, socialists and communists. A truce was arranged with the French by Giuseppe Mazzini, and Garibaldi took advantage of it to leave Rome and drive away King 'Bomba's' Neapolitan armies which were advancing from the south. In the meantime the French government had sent the military engineer, General Vaillant, to join Oudinot, and played for time by sending Ferdinand de Lesseps to negotiate a treaty with Mazzini, the Republican leader.

On June 1 Oudinot notified the Republic that the truce was over, and at 3 a.m. on Sunday the 3rd they stormed the Villa Corsini (a strategic point overlooking the Janiculum walls) and various other houses near the Porta San Pancrazio. After a bitter day's fighting, and despite gallant attempts by the Garibaldini and Manara's Bersaglieri to retake it, the French were able to hold the Villa, also known as the 'House of the Four Winds'. From here they

were able to bombard the city's defences and the Trastevere slum quarter, whose inhabitants called the missiles *Pio Nono's*. Vaillant's engineers began to dig trenches with a view to breaching the Janiculum walls.

Although outnumbered by a French army of (now) 25,000 (rising to 30,000 by the end of the month), the Romans continued to hold out, hoping for a popular uprising in France or a change of heart from the French Assembly. There was an attempted rising in Paris, but it was suppressed, and Louis Napoléon remained hostile.

Time and time again the Republicans beat off attacks by "Cardinal Oudinot's Gallic-friars", but on the night of June 21 the French finally broke through several breaches in the wall of Urban VIII. Although further resistance seemed futile, the Italians formed a second line of defence along the older, Aurelian wall, and for another nine days a non-stop artillery battle raged, with intermittent hand-to-hand fighting. By June 30, however, they had lost nearly all their artillery and the French had extended their hold inside the walls. The Roman Assembly met to consider their position.



'Standard and battle flags of the Roman Republic after contemporary water colours by L. Piroli (1 and 2) and the MS. diary of A. Bonelli (3) in the archives of the Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento, Rome.'

Some of the delegates were for surrender, others, like Mazzini, advocated a suicidal stand in the streets until the bitter end. Garibaldi was for carrying on the war in the hills: "Dovunque saremo, colà sarà Roma!"—"Where we are, there is Rome!" Finally the Assembly decided to let Garibaldi take his volunteers out of the city on the night of July 2 and the French entered the next day. Mazzini eventually fled to England, as did many other Italians thanks to the help of the United States ambassador and the British consul.

After their escape from Rome Garibaldi's column carried out a number of clever feints to throw off their French pursuers. They struck north, hoping to go to Venice, and were continually harrassed by the Austrian armies. Many were captured on the gruelling exodus, including Ciceruacchio and his sons, and Ugo Bassi (who had not borne arms) only to be flogged, tortured, and shot. Eventually the tattered army reached the relative safety of the Republic of San Marino, which gave them shelter, but Garibaldi took a small part to the east coast where, unfortunately, nearly all were captured by the Austrian navy, and

Garibaldi's faithful wife Anita, who had been ill and pregnant for some time, died soon afterwards in the marshes near Ravenna.

Eventually, despite a colossal reward offered by the Austrians for his capture, Garibaldi was smuggled through Tuscany by friends to the west coast, near Elba. From here he took a boat to Piedmont and exile. Ten years later, Garibaldi and the Thousand sailed to Sicily, overthrew the Bourbon regime in Naples, and declared Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont the first King of Italy. Rome remained under French protection until 1870 when the Franco-Prussian war broke out; the French troops were withdrawn and the Italians entered on November 3.

Giuseppe Garibaldi spent the rest of his days on his farm at Caprera in Sardinia. Here he kept donkeys, the ugliest two of which were called Antonelli (after the Pope's chief adviser) and Pio Nono. He also helped the legal aid committee for Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant when they were prosecuted in London for publishing the *Fruits of Philosophy* (1877). His friends included G. J. Holyoake, the veteran secularist and founder of the Co-operative movement.

Garibaldi died on June 2, 1882. His express wish to be cremated was overruled by the government for fear of offending the church, and he was buried near his house on Caprera. "And as though in protest at this violation of his wishes, the sky darkened when his body was lowered into the earth. . . . Then, suddenly and blindingly, the rain poured down; and a vast block of granite, which was later laid over his grave, cracked and broke."²

The Siege of Rome ended in the defeat of the defenders, but its legend inspired and fostered the dream of Italian independence which was to be fulfilled ten years later, as well as providing inspiration for such English speaking poets as the Brownings, Swinburne and Whittier.

*"Not vainly Roman hearts have bled
To feed the Crosier and the Crown,
If, roused thereby, the world shall tread
The twin-borne vampires down!"*
(Whittier, *To Pius IX*)

¹ Red shirts were worn only by officers of the Garibaldini until June 28, 1849, when all adopted it, including Anita Garibaldi and Ugo Bassi.

² Hibbert, C. (1965) *Garibaldi and his enemies*. London (p. 368). See also: Trevelyan, G. M. (1907) *Garibaldi's defence of the Roman Republic*. London.

SECULAR EDUCATION APPEAL

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BUDDHISM AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

G. L. SIMONS

LIKE CHRISTIANITY, Buddhism is many things and has a vast literature. Buddhism is commonly regarded as being atheistic and non-metaphysical, but this is only partly true. Gods are worshipped in some Mahayana sects and the Theravada doctrine of Karma cannot be explained without metaphysical presuppositions. To illustrate the rich diversity of Buddhism we can start with its early days.

Prince Siddhartha was born in 563 BC, grew up in palaces among the Indian aristocracy, and tired of his beautiful wife and son by the time he was 29. He left home to seek enlightenment which we are told he achieved by the age of thirty-five; he died aged eighty. Soon after his death the first Buddhist Council was held at Raja-grha to establish the canon of the Vinaya, the Discipline of the Order. But soon schism occurred and a second Council was held to settle points of controversy. The effort was not entirely successful, and the Third Buddhist Council was held at Pataliputra (249 BC): the present Pali Canon is thought to have derived from this Council. The Doctrine derived from the Third Council was termed Sthaviravada which subsequently evolved into the twenty schools of Hinayana (or Theravada). We are now in a position to indicate the two main schools of Buddhist thought and religion (the schools correspond, very roughly, to Catholicism and Protestantism in Christianity).

Theravada Buddhism may be regarded as a small circle with Buddha at the centre. The Theravada literature is ancient and well-defined, and is thought by adherents to relate specifically to the teachings of the master. By contrast Mahayana Buddhism is a larger, vaguer circle, spreading outwards with no clear boundary. In Mahayana there is a proliferation of sects that corresponds with Protestantism in Christianity, and Mahayana Buddhism is still developing. The adherents to Theravada regard Mahayana as degenerate and debased; the adherents to Mahayana regard Therava as underdeveloped and primitive.

The main teachings of Buddha, never written down by him but simply recorded by disciples, are common to most of the diverse schools. The teachings—in a greatly simplified form—may be represented as: The Four Noble Truths; the Noble Eightfold Path; and the Doctrine of Karma. The Truths are that suffering exists, has causes, ends, and can be induced to end. This doctrine of suffering is really the essence of Buddhism; the Buddhist, following the Master, sees the all-pervasiveness of suffering and seeks thereby the road to enlightenment to achieve peace-of-mind (Nirvana). In Theravada the disciple is basically concerned with his *own* peace-of-mind; some Mahayana sects have a more social orientation and polemic can enter in.

The Noble Eightfold Path consists of eight steps which aid the search for enlightenment; right faith; right resolve; right speech; right action; right living; right effort; right thought; and right concentration. By such a composite approach—which is difficult to define in detail but which must be lived—one embarks upon the road to Nirvana. The Buddhist ethic is secular, but not hedonist or utilitarian; pleasure and happiness are equally condemned; human appetites are not to be indulged; if suffering comes through frustrated passion, then the passion must be diluted, channelled, sublimated. The Buddhist would not use such language for it has overtones of Western psychology, for which the Buddhist has little time.

The Doctrine of Karma is the aspect of Buddhism least likely to gain the sympathy of Western minds. Karma is regarded as a universal law, operating through all time and space and governing the lives of men. In the Pali Canon the word is Kamma which means 'action' or 'deed', and the operation of the Law of Karma has been linked to the cause/effect relationship known to Western science. The Law operates essentially with relevance to human acts and their merit or demerit, and determines the way in which a person is reborn into a subsequent life. Evidence for the operation of the Law is seen in personal affliction or family circumstances; for example in *Buddhism* Mrs Rhys Davids says (p. 124): 'Afflictions are for Buddhists so many forms, not of pre-payment, by which future compensation may be claimed, but of settlement of outstanding debts accruing from bad, that is to say from evil bringing, unhappiness-promoting acts, done either in this life or in previous lives'. And in a different book of the same name, Christmas Humphreys (founder of the Buddhist Society, London) indicates infant prodigies as evidence of former lives.

Buddhism has appealed to Western intellectuals more than any other Eastern religion. There is something attractive about its (basically) godless spirituality, and to a culture that has been brutally moulded by Moslem sword and Christian Inquisition there is something delicate and sensitive in the Buddhist unwillingness to persecute and evangelise. There is also a personal independence in Buddhist thought which encourages individual development without the aid of external supernatural props or priestly terror. The Buddhist priest is willing to guide, but in a didactic manner, encouraging the seeker to evolve and find his own way. There is nothing here of oppressive authoritarianism.

However, the strengths of Buddhism can also be construed as weaknesses. The stress is always on the *personal* road to fulfilment: Christmas Humphreys and others have emphasised that Buddhism is a religion of love, and there is a clear sense in which they are right. But the strong mystical and other-worldly element necessarily inhibits the incorporation of a powerful and *effective* social programme for the elimination of suffering (I do not regard the Saigon Buddhists as typical—such rebels have been effective insofar as they have been *political*, not insofar as they have been *Buddhist*.)

The ethical doctrine has been accused of being passive and selfish, and I think there is some truth in the charge. A degree of selfishness is inevitable in any creed that preaches personal salvation above all. Where the ethical doctrine is precise it tends to be trivial—a central Buddhist doctrine is very reminiscent of the Aristotelian Golden Mean which always strikes me as rather superficial.

The Doctrine of Karma I find quite groundless and somewhat callous. To see a newborn child with severe deformities as merely a sinner in a previous life who now gets just deserts is an unpleasant doctrine. I have no sympathy with the idea of punishment for sin whether such a notion comes in a godly Christian, atheistic Buddhist, secular communist or any other garb. And I have no reason for thinking that Karma is in fact a reality. I cannot help feeling that Buddhist metaphysicians could do with a good dose of Western scientific thought.

In the notions of salvation, soul, eternity, etc., Buddhism has much in common with Christianity; in the stress on

the conquering of passion it has much in common with Jainism; in the emphasis on personal development it is true also to the Hindu tradition based on the Upanishads and the Vedas (Buddhism is, of course, a breakaway from Hinduism, as Christianity is from Judaism). World religion and world thought are interconnected. Sometimes the lines of thought are remarkably similar and quite surprising. Buddhism was even able to embody a brand of materialism—in *The Philosophy of Ancient India* Garbe says (p. 25): 'Several vestiges show that even in the pre-Buddhistic India proclaimers of purely materialistic doctrines appeared', and the doctrines persisted in later Buddhist sects. And in *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy* Dr Chandradhar Sharma gives fascinating details (pp. 40-47) of the early materialist Charvaka school. But without the nourishment of a virile scientific tradition Indian materialism was never a powerful force.

Indian thought and religion, as represented in Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, various schools of Vedanta, etc., have reacted against suffering as have the credal systems in other cultures. But the Indian answer has always been to attack the human passion, to nullify the appetites. In the West, with science, there has been the tendency to change the environment, to remove the obstacles to the realisation of appetite. The Eastern thinker sees himself as helpless before nature and so he seeks to change himself. But I want man to be more self-confident than this. Man needs changing, but not to passiveness—to activity!

The Buddhist has little useful to say about starvation and disease. His creed is one of resignation. But I want man to take nature by the throat and subdue it, as he can do, for the enrichment of human existence. A 'spiritual' and profound life—if that is what some of us want—*can* be made compatible with full bellies, medical science, and an industrialism that does not dehumanise.

REVIEW

JEROME GREENE

MURDER AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 125 Kennington Park Road, London S.E.11—3s plus postage)

"Controversy is raging once again on the subject of capital punishment. This pamphlet retraces the changes that were introduced within the last 15 years, summarises the arguments and gives some relevant statistics."

The recent history of the campaign to abolish capital punishment is fairly well-known and has resulted in the total abolition for five years which began in November 1965. The campaign is thus hotting up at the present time, since parliament will have to take a decision on whether to continue the abolition or not before very long. As a weapon in that campaign this pamphlet fulfills its three-fold purpose, as outlined above.

The summary of the arguments is perhaps the most interesting part of the publication. It begins by giving the arguments of the retentionists. "The most important of these, though it is not often stated, is retribution. This is, to some extent, based on the idea of vengeance, an eye for an eye, the lex talionis of the Old Testament." The writer points out that we all have aggressive feelings from time to time and that when someone, a murderer, acts out our fantasies we are angry and "need to feel that the offender is punished." One would have liked to have seen more space given to this particular argument because it explains why so many people, indeed the majority of the population if recent opinion polls are anything to go by, have managed to sweep aside the statistics and humanitarian and psychological arguments of the abolitionists. The writer is implying that the opposition to abolition arises more from an emotional feeling that is ingrained in a large number of people, than from logic. This same line of approach might be applied to other instances where a disproportionate weight of reaction makes itself shown. For there can be little doubt that a large amount of the resistance to reforms, which logically cannot be seen as anything but humanely motivated, stems from hearts rather than heads.

The pamphlet goes on to discuss the more logical arguments of the retentionists, but one cannot help but wonder how many of those who trot out these arguments do so because they believe in their rectitude and how many because of some deep-seated prejudice or desire for 'vengeance'. The stock justification for the retention of capital punishment is that it deters. This is adequately refuted, perhaps best by a quotation from the report of the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment which was published in 1953: "We have been told that the first thing a murderer says when he is arrested is often 'Shall I be hanged?' or 'I did it and therefore I am ready to swing for it', or something of that kind. What is the inference to be drawn from this? Clearly not that the death penalty is an affective deterrent, for he has not been deterred nor that he consciously considered the risk of the death penalty and accepted it."

Putting the argument for abolition the pamphlet discusses the question of an alternative to the death penalty. Naturally they recommend long terms of imprisonment, and stress that sentences should be indeterminate and ended at such a time as the prisoner is considered socially responsible, if ever.

The statistics which conclude the pamphlet show that the number of murders went down in the two years following the abolition, 1965 and 1966, but went up considerably in 1967, the last year for which figures are available. This increase is shown to have no reflection on the lack of deterrent, since there was a more than corresponding increase in the numbers of murders of relatives and murders which are followed by suicide. Clearly the perpetrators of the former are not professional criminals and the latter would not be deterred by the death penalty or anything else. The last set of figures given shows that in the United States fractionally more police officers are killed where the death penalty is maintained than in states which have abolished it.

Though the pamphlet fulfils its claims adequately and indeed puts a good case for abolition, one would like to see the Howard League get out something at the same sort of price, which would give more insight into the criminal mind and prove psychiatrically that the death penalty has nothing to commend it.

National Secular Society

Annual General Meeting

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

Sunday, 3rd August, 1969

in two sessions, 10 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

Members only. Representatives of affiliated organisations must be NSS members. 1969 membership cards to be shown at the door.

LETTER

FREE SPEECH

I AM GLAD Mr Page requests more information. If he is so eager to sit at my feet for further instruction he cannot be *wholly* lost.

1) Why does Mr Page believe in "scrupulous regard for accuracy" only for others and not for himself? He claims I have written five *Freethinker* articles praising the Maoist regime. I regret, Mr Page, I can only find four. The first article in the China series was devoted to historical China, the China of the Emperors. Would Mr Page explain to me how a description of Yeh Tzu-Chhi's work on sex hormones (in 1378 A.D.) constitutes praise for Mao Tse-Tung.

2) In one breath Mr Page claims that the works of Marx, Engels and Co are produced for a mass market, and in another breath denies that the masses are reading them. It seems rather remiss of our well-paid British businessmen to produce masses of books that the masses of people refuse to acquire. Another example of your rational argument, Mr Page?

continued overleaf

(Continued from previous page)

3) Mr Page asks for "the ideological source and basis" for my beliefs. I believe in *reasoning with facts*, unlike Mr Page who is not keen on either; I have no "ideology" other than a belief that our opinions should be self-consistent and in accord with our observations of the world. I am not a Marxist or a Maoist, but thought drives me to accept much of what I find in Marx and Mao, some of what I find in the *Bible*, and little of what I find in *Noddy in Toyland*.

4) Mr Page brings up the question of freedom in China. I would stress that I do not have to defend freedom in China to argue for its limitations in Britain—but I do not mind furthering Mr Page's education in this particular also. Freedoms are of several types. I quote from Felix Greene's *Awakened China* (pp 388-389):

A Chinese uses the word "freedom" in a very personal down-to-earth, non-theoretical sense. He is not talking about abstractions but experience. He means he is at last free to eat and not to starve; he is free of the landlord and moneylender; he is free to develop skills and exercise talents which would otherwise have remained hidden; he is free to send his children to school, and when they are ill there is a doctor to help to make them well; he is free to look at the future with hope and not with despair. For him these are all *new freedoms*. And it's not such a bad list.

Of course, in the other large Asian country, India, Mr Page's precious "intellectuals" can play their bourgeois word-games in pleasant quadrangles, while millions or starving, diseased and dying litter the streets in every major city. Presumably Mr Page prefers the Indian arrangement: I do not! And anyway, are we not in danger of underestimating the extent to which freedom of expression is possible in China? I quote from *A Quarter of Man-kind* by Dick Wilson (p. 269):

... the Chinese Communist attitude being that to publish something unfavourable to yourself proves that you are aware of it, and implies that you do not fear it but, on the contrary, are prepared for it. A good deal of domestic and foreign criticism of the Party's policy is thus printed in the Chinese newspapers (where readers could see, for example, the Dalia Lama's complaints against Peking after his flight, as well as the Russian Party's side of the ideological dispute.)

5) Tibet also worries Mr Page. I suggest that the central question here is whether or not Tibet is historically and legally a part of China. I will give him one quote to consider—from *The Race War* by Ronald Segal (p. 383):

Tibet had for countless centuries—and continuously—been recognised as Chinese. Britain herself had acknowledged Chinese suzerainty in 1792, and during Chiang Kai-shek's period of power the United States had refused to admit a Tibetan trade delegation without visas from the Kuomintang authorities.

Mr Page is very fond of talking about "accuracy" and "rational argument". On the day he starts thinking for himself instead of parroting the pathetic clichés of the capitalist press, there is a chance—I put it no higher—that he will start to make contributions of value.

If Mr Cook is a typical supporter of the Labour Government one begins to understand the reasons for its present unhappy plight. Let us consider his points:

1) He claims that the evidence I produce does not relate to the vast majority of trades unions leaders. Did he read the quotes?—"... militancy and success were now among the main attributes of British trades unionism", the leaders of the London Corresponding Society being "potential fomenters of a general working-class revolt", the "revolutionary objectives" of the early unions—could unions be like this without militant leadership? Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote in *The History of Trade Unionism* (p.63) that unionists were persecuted as "rebels and revolutionists" and that the unionists were driven into "violence and sedition". Or are these quotes also irrelevant, Mr Cook? And did he not notice my reference to the union and Chartist leaders—Hepburn, Taylor, Harney, O'Connor, Doherty and James Morrison? Consider also the militant agitator George Potter, leader of the Carpenters and Joiners in the mid-nineteenth century, of whom Lovell and Roberts write (in *A Short History of the TUC*, p.10):

In many respects, Potter represented the older concept of trade unionism which was giving way before the more highly developed, centrally controlled, professionally administered, large-scale national amalgamated societies.

And Potter believed that "the unions were only likely to earn the respect of employers and the Government by demonstrating their strength through militant industrial and political activities." Irrelevant again, Mr Cook?

2) Mr Cook's concept of militancy is incredibly narrow. To me militancy does not necessarily entail violence. A strike is usually an act of militancy, particularly so when the society is very repressive. It is absurd for Mr Cook to argue that because the 1889 London Dock Strike was peaceful it was not militant. Would he not agree, for instance, that an industrial strike in modern Greece or Portugal was a militant act?

3) So there are no poor children in British Secondary Schools! This is the most absurd statement that Mr Cook has so far managed. Even according to government figures there are over a hundred thousand *families* living in poverty; according to the figures produced by Abel Smith and Townsend there are seven million people in poverty in Britain. I suggest that Mr Cook quickly contact the Child Poverty Action Group.

4) I do not, as Mr Cook alleges, equate dividend returns and gross trading profits. But if profits are non-existent so will dividends be unless there is a carry-over from a previous trading year. Gross trading profits cover tax overheads, investment, the reserve fund, and dividends; high gross profits means the possibility of high dividends for that trading period—unless there is legislation to limit dividend distribution. Labour legislation on this point is largely irrelevant. On March 18 Mr Bruce-Gardyne asked in the Commons how many companies were allowed to increase their dividend distributions by more than three and a half per cent between 19/3/68 and 28/2/69 to restore reductions made in previous years, and how many requests had been disallowed. The answer, by Mr Diamond, was 355 and one respectively. An even if dividends had been held down by government action, it would only mean that company reserve funds would swell for dividend distribution at a later date. Try reading Hansard, Mr Cook!

Mr Cook has still not commented on my quote from *Board of Trade Journal* showing that despite our terrible economic crisis, profits are higher than they have ever been and rising fast! Perhaps he will grace us with his usual penetrating insight on this quotation from *The Financial Times*, 2/6/69:

For the first five months of the current calendar year, companies have reported profits 22.7 per cent higher than the previous year. This rate is double that achieved for 1968 of 11.1 per cent.

Courtauld's profits, for the year ending 31/3/69 were £75.3m, an increase of 39 per cent over the previous year.

And Mr Wilson is a threat to big business interests! This really is laughable. Consider these salary increases to company board chairman over the last two years: R. S. Jukes (BPB Industries) increase from £17,000 to £20,000 (increase of 17%); H. Vincent (Bovis Holdings) increase from £15,137 to £17,879 (increase of 18%); C. H. Tanner (Berk) increase from £11,236 to £16,064 (increase of 43%); Sir John Hunter (Swan Hunter Group) increase from £28,000 to £35,000 (increase of 25%). I could easily extend this list. What is your comment on these specific points, Mr Cook? No waffle—let's have some facts and figures for a change!

5) Mr Cook says that Tories and big business have not even noticed me and those who think as I do. Regarding me personally I would agree completely; regarding militant students in Britain I would also agree. But I would emphatically *not* agree regarding militant students in America, France, Italy, Japan, Argentina and many other countries. And I would say this also—if industrial militants have not been "noticed" by the Tories, why do the Tories propose penal legislation for unofficial strikers? Why was Labour itself almost stampeded into such reactionary legislation? The answer is clear—big business can be threatened by one thing only in the last resort, and that is a *militant working-class*.

Like Mr Cook, I once supported the Labour Party, but unlike him I am prepared to be taught by events. A party which allows untrammelled private profit and decaying social services at home and the establishment of a racist regime in a British territory abroad is not my party. And it should not be the party of any decent person.

G. L. SIMONS

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It is further suggested that the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1955, should remain on the statute book. It is also known that certain sub-missions made by David Tribe, President of the National Secular Society, and reported in the *FREETHINKER* of May 17 1969, have been included in the report.