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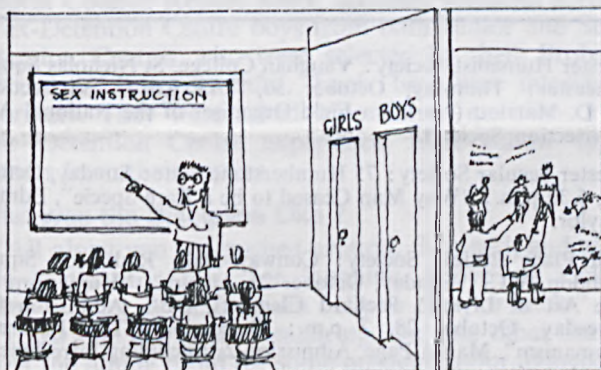
Saturday, October 25, 1969

Sixpence Weekly

A FUNNY OLD WORLD

THE FAMILIAR PHRASE, "It's a funny old world", so often used to fill in pregnant pauses in cocktail conversation, contains, unlike its little brothers "Would you like a nut" and "Umm", a large degree of truth. For we all know the world is old, and a glance at any newspaper, or an ear turned towards a radio at one o'clock on weekdays provides us with ample evidence of its funny qualities.

The FREETHINKER does not often give attention to the more curious items that turn up in the news. However, last week something came up which is of interest to freethinkers not only because of its superficially bizarre nature, but because of the issues it raises. I refer to the female psychiatrist who declared that books and pamphlets for sexual instruction in schools should not be illustrated, and didn't say that it was unhealthy for children to read war comics.



The idea of teaching children fundamental human anatomy without illustrations is about as ridiculous as teaching the pole vault without a pole. But then the lady psychiatrist went on to say that she considered sex instruction to be inappropriate for most school children anyway. Interviewed on the *World at One* she spoke of the 'pornographic' drawings that a nine-year-old had produced after receiving sex instruction. But those who sat round their radio sets with their tongues hanging out, were in for an anti-climax. The 'pornographic' drawings were of copulation—no frills, nothing kinky, just copulation.

Why is it that children are perfectly free to draw battle-ships, guns and soldiers? Because these are things that exist and children should not be kept from the truth. Why is there an outcry if a child draws copulation as she imagines it? Not, of course, because copulation doesn't exist but because for some reason people like to pretend it doesn't. People try to shield themselves from life-giving beauty, but are more than prepared to accept death in its most ugly forms. Its a funny old world, especially when one takes into account that the National Secular Society has just announced that their Education Committee "has begun an investigation into books and pamphlets of sexual instruction for schools". Why? "It has been suggested to us that many of these are inadequate and conservative."

DIEHARD DONS

THE AGREEMENT between university students and MPs as to the desirability of greater student representation on decision-making bodies, described in the FREETHINKER last week, should eventually lead to a satisfactory balance of power in British universities. Commenting on the report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Science this week, David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, depicted briefly and cogently the underlying reasons for the present unrest:

"In the mediaeval world universities developed as monastic institutions subject to rigid clerical discipline. This, at least, was the intention, though rioting was not uncommon. At this period, and up to comparatively recent times, students were, in addition, often very young. Gradually the university father-in-God became transformed into the lay guardian *in loco parentis*, fortified with a stern proctorial system and a lordly contempt for any advice or machinery of consultation inside or outside his domain. This attitude has died hard, where it has died at all.

Without even going into the legitimate demands of school children to be heard as individuals and allowed to participate in decision-making, society has to face up to the fact that almost all university students are now legally adults and should no longer be subjected to the petty tyranny of many halls of residence, occasional threats of losing a career if they indulge in political demonstrations, and the cavalier attitude of university and college administrations (even extending to their staff), of which that at the Guildford School of Art is the most notorious example."

In this Tribe agrees with the Select Committee that a good deal of the blame for the existing situation is to be laid at the door of die-hard university administrators. To remedy this the universities' "financial autonomy and disproportionate affluence—when compared with technical colleges and other tertiary institutions—for which there is less and less justification" must be reduced. "The argument for university autonomy has traditionally been that this preserves their status as 'liberal seats of learning' . . . it is to be doubted how liberal the old universities, with their dogmas and their pedants, their religious orthodoxy and narrow interpretation of what constitutes academic respectability used to be." In the present day "many universities are simply degree factories" and as such "it cannot

(Continued overleaf)

Freethinker

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be said that many of them are more than moderately successful at organisation and method study".

It is to be hoped that the government will take note of the select committee's recommendations, particularly those which seek to reduce the power of the individual university's administrative machine.

PAISLEY

ONE OR TWO letters have reached the FREETHINKER and indeed been published in our columns in support of the Reverend Ian Paisley. At the time one wondered whether the writers were in fact some kind of Protestants or anti-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

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

Humanitas Stamps: Help 5 Humanist charities. Buy stamps from/ or send them to Mrs A. C. Goodman, 51 Percy Road, Romford, RM7 8QX, Essex. British and African speciality. Send for list.

COMING EVENTS

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.

INDOOR

Conservation Society: Royal Commonwealth Society, Northumberland Avenue, London, WC2: Saturday, November 1, 2.30 p.m.: Presidential Address by Yehudi Menuhin, Hon. KBE—"Heaven upon Earth?"

Glasgow Humanist Group: George Service House, University Gardens: Sunday, October 26, 2.30 p.m.: Debate with Helensburgh Humanist Society—"Are Humanists too narrow in their outlook?"

Humanist Teachers' Association: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Saturday, November 1, 3 p.m.: "The New Education Act—The Future of Religion in Schools", Tyrrell Burgess

(Author of the Pelican *A Guide to English Schools* and formerly Director of the Advisory Centre for Education, Education Correspondent of *The Guardian* and Assistant Editor of *New Society*).

Catholic fanatics. However, if a speech by Lord Stonham in the Lords is anything to go by they are merely either very keen on world government or have an undue fixation with blasphemy. Stonham described the Irish firebrand as "the pseudo-cleric Paisley, who besmirches our flag every time he touches it and who so misuses the scriptures that it sounds to me like blasphemy".

PAMPHLETEERING PRIESTS

THE POPE'S International Synod, which gained such attention when it broke off its normal business to receive the American moonmen, has gained publicity in other ways. On October 15, the day on which the Pope's general audience in the Vatican basilica included a prayer for "serenity of judgement" for the Synod members, three Dutch priests were arrested in St Peter's Square for distributing leaflets. The leaflets, written in five languages, were being handed to pilgrims making their way to the Pope's audience in the Basilica. The leaflets told them that an audience meant the people attending it should be heard. "The Pope will hear you, but all that he will hear will be your shouts of enthusiasm and your applause". Their applause would be a sign of their agreement with the church as it is today. "This Church is the church of the rich. Look around you and judge if such a church can be the church of Jesus of Nazareth who had nowhere to lay his head."

Leicester Humanist Society: Vaughan College, St Nicholas Square, Leicester: Thursday, October 30, 7.45 p.m.: "Vivisection", R. D. Marriott (Northern Field Organiser of the National Anti-Vivisection Society).

Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate: Sunday, October 26, 6.30 p.m.: "Why Man Ceased to be a Rare Specie", Edmund Taylor.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, October 26, 11 a.m.: "Humanism and the Art of Living", Richard Clements, OBE. Admission free. Tuesday, October 28, 7 p.m.: Discussion—"The Future of Humanism", Martin Page. Admission 2s (including refreshments) members free.

Worthing Humanist Group: Morelands Hotel (opposite the pier): Sunday, October 26, 5.30 p.m.: "The Superstitions of Modern Science", Dr John Lewis.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

PUBLIC MEETING

CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, London, WC1 (Holborn Underground)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 7.30 p.m.

Speakers:

CANON L. JOHN COLLINS

LOUIS BLOM-COOPER

DAVID TRIBE

The Rt. Hon. KENNETH YOUNGER

Chairman: C. H. ROLPH

Organised by the

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London SE1. Tel. 01-407 2717

DETENTION CENTRES DAMAGE AND DISINTEGRATE

MARY ILES

"DETENTION CENTRES were created in 1948 specifically as an alternative to flogging and birching. Detention Centres were part of the price paid to abolish them." (Duncan Fairn, 20 years in the Home Office, speaking on Detention Centres at the Quaker Yearly Meeting, August 3, 1968.) Detention Centres therefore were set up as an irrational sop to Conservatives. That they are irrationally retained is proved conclusively by the re-conviction rates:

Re-conviction Rates

(Over a three-year period.)	CRIMINAL STATISTICS 1966.
Boys discharged 1962	Junior 66.2% Re-convicted. Senior 58.2% Re-convicted.
Ex-Approved School boys sent to Detention Centres)	Junior 87% Re-convicted. Senior 79.7% Re-convicted.

The results of a Home Office Committee of Inquiry into this Detention Centre failure is soon to be made public. Its findings can only condemn the system, but unless the Home Office can be assured of a majority of rational supporters there will be many a slip between a proposal for closure and closure itself. This is the time for a declaration by those who have freed themselves from a "religious" attitude to punishment, and who are concerned about its damaging effects on a boy's whole personality. Evidence of these disintegrating effects is given in the recent Prison Reform Council Report which contains verbatim accounts by ex-Detention Centre boys from both Junior and Senior Detention Centres who were selected by their Probation Officers as being truthful. Each boy was interviewed separately. They were asked general type questions about their Detention Centre experience. Here follow typical extracts from their replies.

What was the Discipline Like ?

"All along you get pushed around, thumped, and all for little things—for owt, for laughing. Shove or kick or thump . . . not in the face—in belly or chest or back."

"I saw one boy really beaten up, and one other dragged out of the dining room for some misdemeanour, punched in the eye, and smashed right into a door—after which his condition was accounted for by the official statement that he had fallen downstairs."

"If an officer hit a boy, the other officers present would mind their own business."

"Officer X would walk round hitting boys on the back of the head with an aluminium ladle every time he was on tea duty, which was once or twice a week. It didn't seem any joke to us. It was hard enough to bring up lumps. He hit you and said: 'Say "thank you sir"', and if you said nothing you got hit again. One day a boy was crying because his father was dying. X hit him on the head with the ladle and said 'Stop blabbing', and he knew why it was, because the boy told him. And the next day he took it out on that boy worse than ever."

"The whole emphasis was on instant obedience and 'discipline'. It was all completely negative. There was no sense in anything. If the screws didn't like you, they'd say 'There's a button off there', and tug it off or cut it off with a razor blade—usually just before inspection by the Warden."

What about the PE and Circuit Training ?

"The PTI is a decent fellow, but he has a very bad temper. He threw me across the gym the first day we were there marching. . . . Z, the PTI, is all right till someone upsets him. When one boy does something wrong Z takes it out on all of them. Z dragged a lad who had had asthma

round the field. You had to run round three times wearing heavy boots. This lad was starting to go blue because he couldn't breathe, and said he couldn't make it. Z said, 'You'll make it' and dragged him and kicked him round."

"There were only two really vicious screws. One was the PT instructor, and I was lucky enough to get on the right side of him. He was an ex-mercenary from the Congo, and hated 'blacks'."

"V, one of the two PTIs was army type. During Circuit Training a lad passed out from exhaustion. V threw a fire bucket of water over him. When he came to, V made him mop up the mess."

"There was a lot of shouting, military style. In Circuit Training people were made to go on even when near collapse."

What Punishments were Given ?

"If anyone talks after hours in the dormitory, everyone has to stand out of bed for an hour—even if they had been asleep—or make and unmake and box the beds. This happened about a couple of times per week. During the period of my Detention it happened about five times in the middle of the night: about 1—2 a.m."

"With Punishments everyone was done just for one lad. Everyone would be on double PT until they found out who did something. Mostly it was for trivial things."

Detention Cell :

"My mate, who was at the Centre because of absconding from an Approved School, was taken to the cell block and made to scrub dustbins with sandpaper. The officer on duty would come in the night; waken him up; say 'Are you all right?' and give you a clout: 'Go back to sleep then'. *They would make you run while you had a meal; run while you collected it; go on running while you ate it, and then run back upstairs with it.* I have seen the officers running the boys down to the block, hitting them. They were usually kept there 24 hours."

Did You ever Complain ?

"No-one complained. Everyone takes it that clouts are normal—that is if you've been brought up that way, that you get a clout or a strap if you do owt wrong."

"The Warden was full of time (old). He seemed not to know what was going on. He would ask if I was all right, but I didn't tell him anything for two reasons: (1) you'd be done by the officers; and (2) you'd be done by the other lads who were scared of losing remission."

What Effect did the Detention Centre have on You ?

"It failed to make me change my political views, though it did succeed in losing me my flat and my job."

"*It just makes you hate them more than what you did already, and after a bit it gets on your nerves like. You just feel like going mad, hitting out, shouting.*"

"You were not allowed to think for yourself. I came out in a state where I couldn't add up two rows of figures."

"*It makes you worse. Makes you grudge against people—keep shoving you round. And when you get out, you feel you are free and you couldn't care about anybody.*"

"What would I like to see changed? *I don't have the right to say what should be done.*"

Undoubtedly the Detention Centre is a deranging, disintegrating experience, and one that is dangerous to the community not just in terms of re-conviction rates.

No Right to Speak. A Report on Detention Centres by Mary Iles for the Prison Reform Council, is obtainable free from 381 Marine Road East, Morecambe, Lancs.

THE EMANCIPATION OF MEN

G. L. SIMONS

HISTORY IS FULL of Good Causes—from getting children out of the mines to securing the recognition of trade unions—and one of the Best of Good Causes is the emancipation of women. It was not until 1928 that women were fully enfranchised, “fully” here meaning the right to vote unless mad, criminal or a member of the aristocracy—categories not always well defined. In the twenties and thirties, however, there were many barriers still to the social acceptance of women in various fields. Even today women are excluded from various professions and only 11 per cent in full-time employment receive the same money as men for equal work. To a large extent, however, the woman’s case is won: in logic and common sense female rights are acknowledged, and the barriers to full emancipation are usually economic rather than philosophical, i.e. “of course women are entitled to equal pay but can the country afford it?” Or in other words, capitalists have robbed a big chunk of working people for a long time, so why not carry on robbing them?

For FREETHINKER readers the case for female emancipation should be self-evident and I am not going to mess about on that theme any more in this article. But the corollary—men’s rights—does deserve attention, and I suggest that there are a number of fields in which men are still waiting for emancipation. The reason for this is that all societies define, by cultural convention, the social roles of both sexes. Sometimes the definitions vary from one society to another—but in general the definitions are clear and unmistakable. Historically the definitions have been created by men and so have favoured men, but I think it is a mistake to believe that tight concepts of socially acceptable sexual roles for men and women are in the best interest of human beings living together. Rather I would wish to see human sexuality developing according to the individual’s own propensities and not simply to conform with social acceptability. But enough waffle. Now an example:

If a woman chooses to stay at home and look after the kids no-one will think it odd; if a woman chooses to make a career there will not be many raised eyebrows today. But what if a couple decide that the woman is best fitted for a career and the man best fitted for looking after the children at home—with the nappy-changing, ironing, potty-training, vacuum-cleaning, shopping around for meat and veg., etc., that this entails? What would the neighbours think? Would they immediately remark in unison that such an arrangement exemplified the wisdom of allowing individual sexuality to develop spontaneously? Would they declare that the couple were quite right to adopt a mode of co-operation that suited them both? Emphatically they would not. They would regard the man as ‘effeminate’, as ‘lacking pride’, as being somehow disreputable in ‘living off a woman’. In English society it is respectable for a couple to be both bread-winners; but if the couple are only to have one bread-winner amongst them then society will only accept the man. Today the male role is more tightly defined than the female—and this situation is in the interest of neither man nor woman.

Another field in which women have it better than men is that of sexual deviation. Most authorities agree that there are more male deviants—homosexuals, voyeurs, exhibitionists, fetishists, sado-masochists, etc.—among men than among women. Havelock Ellis remarked that more women

than men appear to derive sexual satisfaction from rubbing an animal’s fur—but this deviant trend appears to be exceptional. In general, sexual deviation is much more common among men than among women. But the social attitude to deviation favours the woman more than the man. . .

Lesbians may dance together in a public hall; if male homosexuals danced together it would be regarded as decidedly odd. Similarly in English society women may kiss, embrace and walk arm-in-arm, showing in fact great enjoyment in physical contact: men could scarcely do such things in public if physical pleasure were manifested. The law against male homosexuals has often been very harsh, both in this country and elsewhere. But in all cases the law against lesbians has been either milder or non-existent.

The same is true of other forms of deviant behaviour. There are facilities for female exhibitionists—in strip-tease clubs, ‘girlie’ magazines, etc., and only recently have men been allowed to undress in public—in such theatre productions as *Hair* and Tynan’s nude revue *Oh, Calcutta*. Consider also the case of the transvestite. In English society a woman may dress virtually as a man, with trousers, shirts, a tie, etc.; she may clip her hair and part it as does a man; she may carry a walking stick and wear heavy ‘male’ shoes. Society hardly notices. But suppose a man wears a dress and nylon panties; suppose he carries a handbag; suppose he uses false eye-lashes and thick lipstick. The social response varies from scorn to disgust.

Now back to more ‘normal’ behaviour. In heterosexual love-making the social roles for men and women are clearly defined. The man—at least in most Western societies—is expected to be dominant and active, the woman submissive and passive. The man is expected to pursue, the woman to allow herself to be caught. True there are many fringe variations but the general attitude is clear. The man who was always passive in bed, who always preferred his woman to take the initiative, who always expected her to awaken *his* sexual interest rather than the other way round, would be pitied and scorned. What of his manhood! What of his masculine pride! These and similar responses would be commonplace. The socially acceptable role, in English society, of the successful male lover involves activity and initiative, not passivity; the female role involves the concept of submissiveness. The man is the giver, the woman the receptor. This is obviously an over-simplification but it is broadly true, and it is regrettable. Sexual roles, as with other social roles, should be discovered for each individual. No individual should be expected to conform to preconceived roles if they do not suit his propensities, it should be socially acceptable for individuals to develop just as they incline—unless such inclinations are demonstrably anti-social, and in the sexual field this is only rarely the case.

This is not to say that well defined sexual roles would not emerge from such an enlightened society. Male and female sexuality are not identical and a free flowering may well result in what may broadly be termed ‘male’ and ‘female’ modes. But if such modes are to be justified they can only be so in the absence of social compulsion and taboo. The socially acceptable should be anything that is not demonstrably socially harmful—and the onus should always be on a person to prove the harm, not to prove the harmlessness.

Thus men should not incur scorn or disgust if they wish

to wash nappies in preference to working a lathe or sitting at a desk. Men should not be laughed at if they enjoy having a dominant wife. They should be allowed to dance together in public if they wish, to kiss together on cinema back rows as do males and females. They should be allowed to dress as women in public and incur neither amusement nor horror. There is nothing sacrosanct about the traditional roles of men and women. A totally free society may discover new roles, or the 'new' roles may largely resemble the old.

The important thing is that the roles be discovered by individuals for themselves, that society does not ordain how

a person shall behave in his sexual and other social capacities. As I say—and I stress this—role-types would probably merge for the sexes and with them a concept of masculinity and femininity. But it is important that the emergence of such role-types, in our hypothetical enlightened society, should not be used again to condemn the nonconformist and make him miserable with ridicule and persecution.

The only things that deserve ridicule and active opposition are modes of thinking and behaviour that restrict the potential richness of human development. In the sexual field, as in others, variety is part of that richness.

TO ABOLISH THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

An open letter to the Home Secretary

Dear Home Secretary,

This is a formal letter in reply to your answer in the House on the day before the start of the summer recess when you told Ben Whitaker that you would be very happy to see further research carried out into the subject of the Obscene Publications Acts because you could see 'no prospect of legislation *this* Session'.

Of course, there wasn't much left of the Session when you made the statement, and few of your friends anyway had had a chance of reading the Arts Council's Working Party's Report for themselves. But now that the summer recess is over and a new Session is beginning the position is quite different. In fact, if you've been doing any research yourself during this glorious summer, such as walking around the city centres and looking at bookshops, or going to a film or two, or, perhaps, passing a quiet hour at home with an occasional glance at the television programmes, you must have wondered if the obscenity Acts hadn't been quietly repealed behind your back, as though spirited away by some Gardineresque sleight-of-hand, like a few hundred other legal anachronisms that have faded into history during the last few years.

But what you would have noticed, had your research been thorough and rather more objective than subjective, would be that the photographs and the films, the erotic art and the plays were, in the main, imports, mostly from Europe and to a lesser extent from America—and you might have thought that if we haven't got into Europe, Europe has certainly got into us.

I know that there has been an effort to try to stop the flood: the Department proudly announced that some one-and-a-half million articles (books, magazines, photographs, etc.) had been seized during the financial year 1968/69. These, I fear, were the fish that were caught, for you didn't have the figures for those that got away. Unfortunately for the record the successful importers were not asked to provide their figures for the publications that were not seized and found their way quite easily to a law-abiding public very willing to pay over-the-odds for something special; perhaps some Government statistician can offer a little probability estimate to fill in this lacuna in the records of the nation's trading.

Or you might just look at the Department's files and pick out the reports from the FREETHINKER, which the Freedom of Vision Research Service has sent to you from time to time, ever since, in fact, Ben Whitaker, who took

the chair at the Hampstead teach-in on Censorship in the Arts in October 1966, said: "If anyone who is in favour of censorship has any scientific evidence, that what they want to censor does any harm that can be noted scientifically, I think that would be very relevant to our argument". That was three years and a lot of words ago and during this time much serious thinking, scientific and social, legal and philosophic has gone into the search for an assumed harm, as you will know from the reports which we have sent to you.

For instance, there was the recommendation of the Danish Permanent Criminal Law Committee, which had been asked to look into the subject of pornography, and came to a series of decisions which were, in effect, to set aside all restrictions on what may be published to adults.

This was, of course, a Danish domestic matter, but, as Freedom of Vision has consistently maintained, the effect of the unilateral denunciation by Denmark of the upholding Treaty, the 1923 Geneva Convention, has been to take away from our domestic obscenity laws the international agreement necessary to maintain them. As I said in my FREETHINKER article on June 7, 1968: "This virtually means that the authorities here are limited in their power to suppress, for any discovery here of obscene matter produced in Denmark can no longer be used to enforce suppression at the source".

I then also called the attention of the Home Office to the ridiculous legal position which made it impossible for a United Kingdom photographer to produce pictures of human anatomy and sexual behaviour of a type which any United Kingdom citizen could obtain by going to a Post Office and buying an international money order for direct purchase by mail from Denmark.

I know that the records show that some 6,000 postal packets were intercepted: would this be 10 per cent or so of those that got through? I am not aware that the interceptions have seriously affected a trade that has many operators in Denmark, Sweden and Western Germany, let alone the newcomers in the field, those very efficient mail order experts in the United States.

Now, even the services of the Post Office are unnecessary to meet the public demand because the local bookshops stock the stuff: special export sex for the English market, not quite as strong as the continental variety, but rather more explicit than the domestic product. Europeans have always jested about the English (and Scots) habit of copula-

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ting with clothes on, but it hardly seems necessary for us to maintain the Obscene Publications Acts to continue to require English publishers to confirm the practice.

You may well consider, as you further your research, that the randiness of Treasury Counsel, alleged in the Arts Council's report to be the determining factor in giving instructions to the Director of Public Prosecutions whether to prosecute or not may well be less a product of exposure to the facts of sex than to suggestions about the mysteries of sex. If this is so, then a possible answer to the population explosion may well lie not only in the repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts but also the immediate publication by HMSO of the full range of the British Museum's out-of-copyright restricted collection of erotic books. Making sex boring in this way could well be a better psychological service to family planning than any quantity of mechanical and chemical contraceptives—besides providing an additional source of revenue; we could even set up a National Erotic Publications Council!

But even if your researches have not taken you further than your own letterbox, you should still have learnt something—unless your name does not appear on any of the higher-income-group adult mailing lists or your mail is censored. Certainly if you have not personally received offers to increase your sexual ecstasy and your knowledge of the facts of life, many of your constituents can confirm that they have been favoured with such privileges. This was a problem which the United States authorities had to sort out when the courts there decided that the obscenity laws were in conflict with the First Article of the Bill of Rights. You may well consider a proposal to require all such direct mail shots to be overprinted with the words: *Unsolicited Adult Merchandise—If Unwanted Return to Sender*. A surcharge on returned second class mail could be quite a profitable side-line for the new Post Office, and certainly a better deal for the taxpayer than putting publishers in prison for trying to educate the masses.

I felt that you were less than fair when you said that certain provisions of the 1964 Act were intended to cover authors, artists and dramatists and that your conclusion was that interference with the freedom of these artists and authors was minimal. This was not very accurate research, for some of us feel that being put in prison, and being fined, and being told by the courts that we have to stop are hardly minimal deprivations. Would you look, please, at your reasons for making that statement again?

It is true that you will find plenty of support for the retention of the obscenity laws in the trade; a survey of publishers would doubtless reveal that a majority is in favour of them, and particularly would this be the attitude of those publishers and distributors who have found trading in illegal and pseudo-illegal (which are far worse) publications a lucrative business—just as the American bootleggers opposed the repeal of prohibition. Your research will show that support for the abolition of the Obscene Publications Acts comes mainly from three groups, clearly defined in the membership records of the Freedom of Vision society, namely: the creators (authors and artists), the consumers (readers and teachers) and lawyers, excepting those few who have a corner in the particular branch of law—but this is a silly and sordid occupation for the members of a learned profession, sniggering in chambers, bargaining with the DPP, drooling on the bench.

As a magistrate at a recent seminar on the subject said: 'We would be better off without these laws'.

You say that your own view is that repeal would make the situation worse from the point of view of the average person in the country—and this brings us back to the question originally asked—is there any scientific evidence to support this view? All our researches have shown that there isn't a shred. Quite the contrary, the average person in the country—and the legal profession, and the economy, and the arts and sciences; not to mention the creative workers—would all be better off without a series of laws that perpetuate the hypocrisy and corruption of a century ago. It didn't take Lord Campbell very long to push his Bill through Parliament; it should take you less time to push it out.

May I hope that the Obscene Publications (Amendment) Bill will have the goodwill of the Home Office and will reach the Statute Book with a minimum of fatuous debate?

Your truly,

JEAN STRAKER.

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REVIEWS

DAVID TRIBE

Humanism and Christianity the Common Ground of Moral Education: James Hemming and Howard Marratt (1s in advance to Howard Marratt, Borough Road College, Isleworth, Middx.).

THIS PAPER is the successor of the controversial statement on *Religious and Moral Education* prepared in 1965 by a group of Christians and Humanists. In this, moral education was defined as 'a policy that affects the whole life of the school, that is the responsibility of all members of the staff, and finds expression in every school period'. Now this definition has been extended.

I assume the title should have a colon after 'Christianity', though there is little indication in the pamphlet that anyone other than a Christian or a Humanist might have views on moral education. Mainly it is concerned to find the maximal area of agreement between the authors (one a Modernist, the other an Ethicist) while indicating the points of controversy through the whole range of both ideologies. So that the 'fundamentalist' and the 'rigid-rationalist' are not forgotten, though their views are frequently ignored. On that ground alone there is unlikely to be universal acceptance among Christians and Humanists, to say nothing of non-Christian religionists and the uncommitted.

Compared with the earlier paper the new statement impresses with its honest attempt to spot light the points at issue between the two sides and not to paper them over. Not surprisingly they turn out to be, on the whole, theological or philosophical and to have little or nothing to do with morality. On strictly moral issues there is a large measure of agreement. Indeed if this were not so there would be little prospect of achieving moral education or social consensus at all. English Christianity and Humanism have arisen from a joint cultural heritage and have developed side by side for some considerable period. If there were no broad ideals like self-control, self-respect, consideration for others, honesty, 'responsible involvement in the long-term betterment of mankind' and the like on which they could agree, there would be little hope of establishing a national and ultimately a world society. But the authors do not quite seem to appreciate the difficulty of their undertaking.

If Edmund Leach is unduly pessimistic in asserting that having sex with one's mother is the only moral taboo on which the peoples of the world have ever been able to agree, he is not as far off the mark as Hemming and Marratt might suggest. In all innocence they frequently slip into assertions which are more controversial than they realise: 'Humanists regard Jesus as totally human in parentage and nature, as a great man, but no more than man.' 'Both Christians and Humanists accept the fact that man is imperfect and incomplete and that he is affected by his inner sense of incompleteness—a sense of falling short of what he might be—and that he longs to transform the alienation within himself to a condition of "at-onceness".' (At this stage we can only wonder whether 'at-onceness' was in the first draft.) 'For Humanists, self-transcendence is potentially within man as one aspect of a self-transforming creative process; for Christians, grace and salvation express a relationship with God which enhances, not undermines, man's status and hopes.'

It is all very civilised and ingratiating, reminiscent of the syllabuses of the old Moral Instruction League, certain to appeal to senior educationists of an agnostic or liberal Christian persuasion. But is the supposititious life of Jesus so satisfactory as a model, and will the other statements stand up to ruthless linguistic analysis? Above all, have these ideas—even if true—the slightest relevance to the ordinary classroom situation, the average teacher, or any pupil other than the introspective sixth-former? What about what is now politely called 'the Newsom child' (the 11-plus reject) or the Plowden infant? What about the slum kid from the broken home? Unfortunately those who will respond to this document are likely to be those least in need of it.

When the authors descend to practical suggestions new difficulties arise. They want specific moral and religious education but do not want 'an artificial synthesis of the moral precepts or standpoints of different and often conflicting belief-patterns or philosophies'. They call for 'education in ethical theory and analysis, and a study of the nature of ethical problems', but give no hint on how this is to be achieved before the age that most pupils leave school. Rightly they stress the value of literary or historical 'models' and 'pastoral care'; but they seem unaware of the potentiality for disagreement over the models chosen or the advice dispensed. Anxious to spread moral training across the syllabus, they suggest that 'pupils may be encouraged in mathematics to consider not only the mathematical facts but also the moral issues raised

by statistics, insurance, gambling, etc.' Vance Packard will need to add a new chapter to forthcoming editions of *The Hidden Persuaders*.

I don't wish to sound smug about this sincere and interesting document. In the past I have myself been guilty of pious and paternalistic generalisations, but we have reached the stage where practicality is an essential. As the generation-gap of *mores* grows ever wider we must become increasingly suspicious of attempts to educate the young in our own patterns of polite behaviour, which may turn out to be little but gentilities, prejudices and neuroses. All our attention should be directed to simple issues like ways to prevent cruelty, i.e. stop bullying and encourage permissiveness. But these are profound psychological maladies for which we have as yet not premedication, even if there were consensus on diagnosis and treatment. While seeking a family atmosphere, giving the maximum of honest information when it is asked for, and encouraging the discussion of personal problems, teachers should, I am convinced, say as little as possible about 'morality' in the school at large.

Religious Education in a Multi-religious Society (Community Relations Commission, Russell Square House, Russell Square, London, WC1).

THIS REPORT of a 'consultation' in the West Riding between the British Council of Churches and the Community Relations Commission, compiled by W. Weaver of the University of Leeds, is a well-intentioned document. Working on the assumption that 'in most multi-racial areas there exists a good deal of mutual fear and suspicion between the various sections of the community', the consultation came to a conclusion which will surprise FREETHINKER readers less by its nature than by its new converts:

For many years the existence of compulsory religious education with its predominantly Christian content has been the centre of controversial discussion and debate. This tension has increased as more immigrant children, representing a variety of religious traditions, have been incorporated into county schools. If religious education is concerned almost exclusively with Christian doctrine and ethics then more immigrant parents may want to press their legal rights of withdrawal. In schools containing a high percentage of immigrant pupils such a step would result in enormous administrative difficulties as well as disrupting the community spirit of the school by accentuating the differences between its members.

Fortunately for headteachers, 'many of the children . . . prefer to remain in assembly in order not to appear *different* from their friends. In most centres of dense immigrant settlement no alternative assemblies are arranged because the religious beliefs represented are so diverse'. Such assemblies are also, as it happens, illegal inside the school; but no one seems to worry about educational legality these days.

Helpfully the report recommends that children should 'at least begin to see that other religions are interesting in themselves and meaningful to their adherents', that 'religious and cultural differences have to be known and treated sympathetically', that there is an urgent need 'for the education of teachers already working in multi-racial schools', and that assembly should not be 'formalised, arid and removed from every other aspect of school life'. Only 30 per cent of colleges of education have hitherto responded to this call. But then the assumptions of the British Council of Churches rear up. Since RI is supposed 'to develop favourable attitudes towards religion', children should 'acquire a sense of respect for other religions'. Praise is given to a school in Batley which admits an imam every Friday for Muslim children, and to one at Leeds where 'prayers and readings from non-Christian traditions are frequently included in the morning assembly'. At this point a secularist asserts that the cultivation of a polygot polytheism is little advance on the present system, and that respect for individual religionists need not extend to respect for whatever superstition they or their parents chance to believe. Though its origin may be interesting its nature is usually degrading.

TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS

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LETTERS

Moral Education

I APOLOGISE for misunderstanding Mr R. Robson's letter of August 9. When I read his statement that "the type of this moral education is not disclosed", I was misled into thinking that he was not familiar with secularist suggestions as to how moral awareness in children might be fostered.

He is absolutely right in warning us of dangers that may exist even if our campaign against compulsory RI and worship is successful. 'Progressive' publications like the recent Department of Education Report No. 58, and the new Hemming/Marratt compromise pamphlet, make it clear that for the Christians the purpose of any religious or moral studies is still to bring the children to a belief in God.

Humanists are thus in danger of supporting 'compromise solutions' which will mean that the Christians indoctrinate all the children most of the time; and in return we obtain the great concession that children will not be indoctrinated the rest of the time!

As I wrote in my pamphlet *Moral Education in Secondary Schools*, I think that no lessons should be set aside for 'moral teaching'. Morality must arise from the everyday activities and the personal and social relationships of the children.

If 'morality lessons' do survive, the danger Mr Robson mentions will inevitably exist. The old traditional rubbish will be passed on by the old traditional teachers. It is a sad fact of life that teachers who were conditioned to religion all through their own schooling are often intent on conditioning their pupils in the same way, and are incapable of allowing the children freedom to think.

If children wish to assemble voluntarily outside school time for their own brand of religious conditioning, that is their own business; but we must make it our first priority that all worship and all specific 'morality teaching' must be removed from the school time-table.

MAURICE HILL.

A Freethinking Machine?

G. L. SIMONS concludes his article 'The Scientific View of Man' (October 4) with the dogmatic "scientific" statement that "the only people who have consistently attempted to present another . . . than a scientific view of man (which) renders him a machine . . . are the theologians . . ."

If that is so, I am a theologian and not a humanist. And Mr Simons a freethinking machine?

PAUL ROM.

Marx

IT IS A PITY that Mr Stuart Montague has not presented an abler defence of Marx: I looked in vain in his article (September 27) for references to Marx's concern for the humanisation of man and the realisation of human freedom—the very heart of classical Marxism. Mr Montague concedes that events have "modified" the theories of Karl Marx; and I am at once disappointed and flattered that he is "so overwhelmed" by my two articles on the case against Marxism that he can only make three unimpressive points in reply. Mr Montague presumes to write *In Defence of Marxism*, and he calls Rosa Luxemburg "the world renowned Marxist"; yet he is clearly ill-acquainted with Rosa Luxemburg's article in *Vorwärts* on the twentieth anniversary of Marx's death, for it is from this article that I have taken the quotation which he does not recognise. Moreover, he has missed the point of Rosa Luxemburg's remark: what "Red Rosa" meant was that Marxism, as a reflection and a product of the class struggle, could play no vital part in the evolution of classless society. Mr Montague's argument up to and including paragraph seven of his article is promptly undermined in paragraph eight. In paragraph nine he commits himself to the highly dubious statement that "Darwin discovered the *dialectical* laws of evolution in organic nature" (my italics). He quotes, but conspicuously fails to answer, my statement that "Marx did not explain how over-population would be prevented in the reconstructed society". Finally, Mr Montague is both highly misleading and sadly mistaken when he brashly asserts: "no one with the slightest smattering of socialist knowledge believes what is taking place in Russia and China today has anything whatsoever to do with Marxian scientific socialism/communism".

As regards the four specific points made by Merle Tolfree in her supposedly non-partisan letter (23/8/69): (1) How far Marx (as reported by his daughter Eleanor) used the term "metaphysical needs" ironically rather than figuratively remains a matter of opinion; to have spoken in such terms at all may be regarded as significant. (2) I did not mention "Absolute Beauty"; nor did I

equate "Absolute Good" with "God". I shall therefore leave such "religious" conceptions to Merle Tolfree, who, for some reason best known to herself, saw fit to introduce them. I merely drew attention to a difficulty inherent in Marxian aesthetics—a difficulty revealed by Marx himself in his conclusion to *Critique of Political Economy*. Merle Tolfree's implication that each age produces its own culture as if in a void, uninfluenced by previous culture, carries relativism to absurdity—and is profoundly anti-Marxist. Her suggestion that men have not copied artistic work of bygone ages is ludicrously untrue. She appears to have an absolute horror of absolutes; yet she posits "the *inexhaustible* curiosity of man"!

(3) I said: "In a sense, Marxism was a Christian heresy"—and I gave my reasons, which Merle Tolfree has not attempted to refute, though she has blantly ignored my introductory qualification; she conspicuously fails to point out that the similarities between Marxian socialism and early Christianity were openly admitted by Engels. (4) "Marx, like everyone else, was a man of his time". Precisely. Marx was a child of his age even in his nationalistic moments. Merle Tolfree refers to the internationalist sentiments in the *Communist Manifesto* (I alluded to these in Part I of my article); but she fails to point out: (a) that, in the same Manifesto, Marx and Engels supported Polish nationalism; (b) that they advocated the unification of Germany in the name of the very class which, scarcely a month before in the Manifesto, they declared "have no country"; (c) that they condemned the self-determination of the Czechs and others of "the Slavic riff-raff" who had come under Hungarian or German domination; (d) that they supported the Hungarian and Polish gentry against their "historyless" peasantry; and (e) that, after Prussia's armistice with Denmark over Schleswig-Holstein, Marx railed against "betrayal of the honour and interests of Germany" and declared, "The real capital of Denmark is Hamburg, not Copenhagen".

Contrary to Merle Tolfree's implication, I did not suggest that Marx was consistently prejudiced against the French workers: I merely pointed to one of his remarks during the Franco-Prussian War. But even if Marx understood "only too well" how the French workers were crushed in 1848, it does not follow that he was incapable of prejudice against them. If, as Merle Tolfree suggests, Marx was completely devoid of such prejudice, she has to explain (a) Marx's statement ("The French need a thrashing", etc.), which I quoted; and (b) how French socialists, syndicalists and anarchists could accuse Marx and Engels of being "Prussian Socialists" who wanted German supremacy in Europe and the supremacy of their ideas in the International. Merle Tolfree seems unaware that Marx's great rival Proudhon exerted a considerable influence on French workers, and that Marx's hostility to Proudhon coloured his claim in 1866 that the Paris workers were "strongly interested in the maintenance of the old order".

I would be the first to admit that Marx was a genius and that there is much of immense value in his work; but Merle Tolfree seems incapable of appreciating that such considerations can hardly be developed at length in an article on "The Case Against Marxism".

MARTIN PAGE.

WHAT IS THE FREETHINKER becoming? Another article this week indoctrinating us in the blessings of Marxism! This latest, by Mr Montague is the limit. "Can anyone dispute that Marxism is a permanent truth when Engels wrote . . . , is on a line with the believers in the Christian creed when they say that their doctrines are true because St Paul said so in his epistles to the apostles and because the Pope said so in his encyclical.

Can Mr Montague explain why millions of persons in the communist paradises would be only too anxious to leave if the frontiers were open?

J. W. NIXON.

[Mr Montague's article was written in reply to a two-part article entitled 'Robertson and the Case against Marxism'—Ed.]

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