

# Freethinker

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## A CHAPEL FOR A NEW UNIVERSITY?

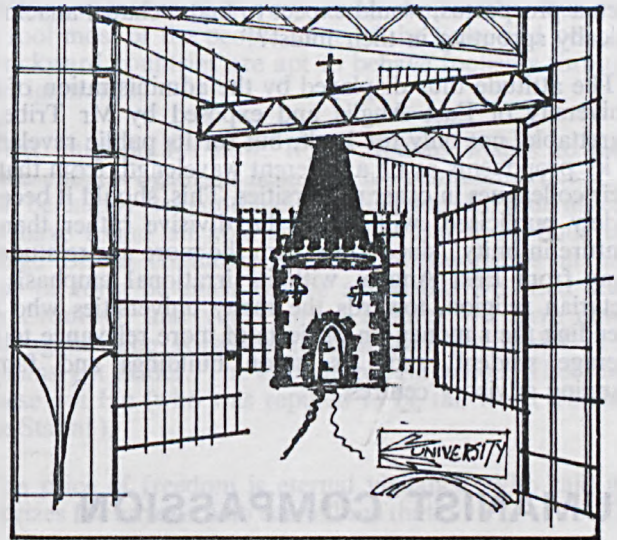
IN RECENT WEEKS much progress has been made towards evaluating the role of students in British society. The university Vice-Chancellors have officially recognised the need for, and value of, student participation in the running of universities. To the annoyance of none but Enoch Powell, they have endorsed the existence and desirability of the National Union of Students. A bill has been introduced into parliament by the government, which seeks, amongst other things, to make grants available for the maintenance not only of students' wives, but of women or men, who live with and are dependent upon students. It also makes provision for illegitimate children in the same terms as those born of parents between whom there is a legal contract.

All this would seem to add up to the long overdue recognition of students as workers with a contribution to make to society, equal to, if not greater than, the average worker. This fact seems at last to be influencing public opinion more than the less important fact that a minority of students wear their hair long, pay little heed to social convention and gain publicity for their political awareness. Or, as a contributor to BBC Radio's *Any Answers* on April 3, asked, why shouldn't a student who is paid £9 a week for a 12 hour day and a six day week be given help in starting a family, when his contemporaries who work in factories can easily afford either families or illegitimate children or both?

In the light of this progress towards a true recognition of the student's worth and rights, it is strange that a document entitled *Venture in Unity: University of East Anglia Chaplaincy Appeal* should suddenly be published. The document reached David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, who has subsequently released the text of the resulting correspondence which he had with the administration of East Anglia University.

Having realised that the document was not, "the reproduction of a medieval text", Mr Tribe wrote in his capacity as President of the NSS to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Mr Frank Thistlethwaite. He said that he was "disturbed" to see the brochure "seeking for £26,000 from the public and, more astonishingly, announcing a contribution from the university of £15,000 for the building of a chapel". He went on to deplore the efforts of "these propagandists who are determined to thrust 'the Christian message and challenge' upon 'the uncommitted majority within the precincts of their own community', to invite salesmen for the mainstream Christian sects on to the campus, and even to provide 'modest accommodation' for them as they relax between their exercises in proselytisation". Mr Tribe outlined the extreme anomaly of such endeavours with an institution dedicated to academic learning and points out that: "If the majority of your students are uncommitted to Christianity it may very well be that they have responded to the humane scientific Zeitgeist which was, we were all led to believe, the motivating force of the new universities". He disputes: "the right of a minority to use the funds of the University Grants Committee, derived from all taxpayers, to promote highly controversial sectarian interests. Far from being a 'venture in unity', nothing is more certain to divide the

university community. It is, therefore, the more disturbing to observe that you are yourself one of the sponsors of the appeal and presumably the prime mover in the offer of £15,000 from university funds".



Mr Tribe received a reply not from Mr Thistlethwaite but from Mr A. R. Jones, "Administrative Assistant", which merely made the point that the money came not from the University Grants Committee but from "The University's own Appeal Fund".

Of this Mr Tribe writes: "When the University of East Anglia was first mooted it was voted an income from the rates by the Local Authorities of Norfolk and Suffolk, the City and Town Councils of Norwich, Ipswich and Great Yarmouth and the County Councils of Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely. No doubt there were also private benefactors. What all these ratepayers and individual sponsors will now want to know is, what hint was there in the original Appeal Fund brochure, on behalf of a new university for modern technological and enlightened Britain, that part of the money collected would be diverted to perpetuating ancient brainwashings? How many supporters of an institution dedicated to science, culture and international

(Continued overleaf)

# Freethinker

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affairs actually earmarked money for the promotion of prescience, anti-culture and international dissension?"

Mr Tribe further quoted the 1969-70 *Prospectus* of the University of East Anglia, which "points out that, like other new universities, it 'has taken this unique opportunity to embody academic ideals, methods and interests notably different from those of earlier university foundations' . . . At East Anglia the Schools of Studies are devoted to Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, English and American Studies, Environmental Sciences, European Studies, Fine Arts and Music, Mathematics and Physics, and Social Studies". Mr Tribe asked: "Who, on reading such a prospectus, would expect to find a chapel anachronistically sprouting in their midst?"

The attitude thus displayed by the administration of the University of East Anglia and exposed by Mr Tribe, is regrettable, not only for itself, but for its public revelation of its proponents as on a different wavelength from that of their colleagues in other universities. This, should it become widely publicised, will indeed be divisive rather than 'a venture in unity', since it will turn the more aware students away from East Anglia, with its irrational emphasis on sectarian religion, towards the many universities who are spending their money on projects of more relevance to the average student, such as union buildings and family planning advisory centres.

## HUMANIST COMPASSION

ON EASTER MONDAY, March 30, David Steel, Liberal MP for Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles, wrote in *The Guardian*: "The controversy over whether shops in England should be closed on Good Friday seems to contain all the elements of lip-service to Christianity". He goes on to regret that the *New English Bible* only updates language and not Christ's real meaning. Mr Steel translates the parable of The Good Samaritan into twentieth century terms, situating the event in Birmingham and turning the biblical priest into 'a local vicar', the Levite into 'a prominent local businessman' and the Samaritan into 'a Pakistani bus conductor'.

Mr Steel then makes the penetrating observation: "Both in Parliament and in public life generally, it is regrettable that on many social and political issues the self-proclaimed humanist often outdoes the self-proclaimed Christian in degrees of compassion and in loving his neighbour as himself. The Christian who appears devout and disciplined on the surface, in the sense that he faithfully observes the church calendar, is being less true to the spirit of Christ than the agnostic who finds no time for such observances but whose life is an example and inspiration to others".

*The Guardian* of March 31 carried a letter signed 'Agnostic', backing up Mr Steel's approval of humanists and condemnation of Christians by recounting the true story of: "a village where the only youth activity is the Scouts. In the troop has been an educationally subnormal boy, attending a special school and therefore cut off from the other village boys' daily activities. The Scouts have been his sole opportunity for pleasure outside his home and he has thoroughly enjoyed membership.

"The vicar has just been to see his parents and asked them to withdraw him from the troop 'because he is not up to it'".

## 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 Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Moutat, 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.

Humanist Holidays. Details from the Hon. Secretary: Mrs. M Mephem, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey (Tel.: 01-642 8796).

## 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

Belfast Humanist Group; NI War Memorial Building, Waring Street, Belfast: Monday, April 13, 8 p.m.: "Interpersonal Relations", Mrs Stein.

Independent Adoption Society: The Post Graduate Centre, Royal Northern Hospital, Holloway Road, London, N7: Saturday, April 25, 2.45 p.m.: Annual General Meeting and film "Who Am I?". All welcome.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, April 12, 11 a.m.: "The Paradoxical Genius of J. M. Robertson", Martin Page. Admission free. 3 p.m.: Humanist Forum—"Inside Franco's Gaols", Miguel Garcia Garcia and Stuart Christie. Admission free. Tuesday, April 14, 7 p.m.: Discussion—"Are We Europeans?", George K. Young, CB, CMG, MBE. Admission 2s (including refreshments), Members free.

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# VIETNAM AND MR. G. L. SIMONS

CLAUD WATSON

It was with some surprise and great interest that I read Mr Simons' article addressed to myself "and others". He has done me the courtesy to go into great detail over the legality of the communist case, so the least I can do is to present the anti-communist brief as I see it.

Mr Simons would make an excellent solicitor (I am assuming he is not one—but perhaps he is!). Why is it the average chap is so mistrustful of the machinations of the law? Because solicitors are trained to study *one side* of the case at issue. That is their job. The barrister expertly puts the arguments in favour of *his* client to the court.

Mr Simons' special pleading on behalf of the communist cause is splendidly done. But, alas, it is so unconvincing! He is indeed well informed on all the legal details, and has evidently made a special study of the problem. I suspect I am a bit older than he is, and can remember events of the pre-war decade with unpleasant vividness.

You see—we have been through all this sort of thing before with Hitler and Co. When dear Adolf rose to power in the Germany of the thirties the Nazis took great pains to convince us all that they were all so *legal*. Everything they did was so correct and constitutional. When they opened their concentration camps and stuffed them full of wretched Jews we were all assured that the Nazis were only doing their duty under German law. Were the Jews not enemies of the state? Anything and everything could be proved against them and so forth. It was all eyewash of course, and deceived nobody but themselves. But the awful thing was that under this cloak of legal respectability they got away with it and we all sat back helplessly and watched the ghastly farce run its gruesome course. We paid bitterly for it when 1939 arrived.

Talk of legality in communist regimes is apt to cause hollow laughter. Was there ever a Communist regime which rose to power except on a basis of terror, fraud and force? And once having got in power has a communist regime ever been dislodged by legal means? The healthy distrust of the average decent man for all dictatorships is a sound one—and is the main reason that most of us still live in constitutional democracies where the rule of law and ordinary decency still prevails. The price of freedom is indeed eternal vigilance. When the bulk of Eastern Europe was swallowed up by the communists after the war we knew they had lost their freedom for many many years to come. Feeble efforts by first the Hungarians and then the Czechs to get their freedom back were useless. They were ruthlessly suppressed by Russian might followed by the usual gruesome "purges" we are now so familiar with in the communist world.

It is reassuring to realise from the first paragraph of Mr Simons' article that he at least tacitly acknowledges that barbarities do occur on the North Vietnamese side. This is a remarkable admission coming from a Communist. (I very much doubt if the *Morning Star* would ever admit as much. Would it not be "antiparty" heresy—or whatever the current jargon may be; and put one on the black list for a "purge"?)

I remember Pearl Harbour. I wonder if Mr Simons is old enough? In one treacherous attack the American

Pacific Fleet was virtually crippled by the Japanese. Is it surprising if the Americans do not want a hostile communist regime to swallow up the whole of Vietnam? And after that the rest of South East Asia piece by piece? By what possible legal pretext could the North Vietnamese justify their army invading Cambodia? And after Cambodia is swallowed up it will be the turn of Siam; and so on.

To us in Europe the Vietnam nightmare is remote. As remote as Czechoslovakia was in 1938 before Hitler swallowed it up. (Yes—I remember Chamberlain and his silly bit of paper—I felt ashamed to be British!) But to the Americans it is only the other side of the Pacific, and they do *not* want another Pearl Harbour. Can you blame them?

If they have used a certain amount of subterfuge to keep a communist regime at bay they can hardly be blamed. It is quite possible that had a free election really been held in Germany in 1938 Hitler would have been voted in by an overwhelming majority. So what? Perhaps Ho Chi Minh and Co. *might* have got into power in a free election in Vietnam (although I very much doubt it!)—but you *can* fool most of the people *some* of the time; and peoples in backward countries are apt to behave foolishly through sheer ignorance.

That must do for now. If Mr Simons wishes to take up the cudgels again on behalf of his communist friends I shall be happy to continue the dialogue. In him indeed they have found an able spokesman. But if he finds the average Briton continues to detest dictatorships in any shape or form he must not be surprised. We tried once with Cromwell and voted him a failure. We have never tried again. The Russians tried it and got Stalin. The Germans got Hitler. The French got Napoleon. The Vietnamese got Ho (who was reputed to be the worst butcher since Stalin!).

The price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Who said it? No prizes for anyone who can tell me that!

It should be noted that Mr Watson's description of Mr Simons as 'a Communist' is purely his own opinion and is neither endorsed nor contested by the editor.

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# PROFESSOR H. J. EYSENCK

Interviewed by DAVID REYNOLDS

## PART I

This interview is being published in two parts. Part 2 will follow next week

*REYNOLDS: How did you come to be a humanist?*

EYSENCK: I think I was almost born one. I can never remember any stage of my intellectual development where I had the slightest religious views or opinions or had any idea that any intelligent person would take religion seriously. I've thought that as long as I can remember back.

*REYNOLDS: Your parents weren't religious?*

EYSENCK: My father is a Catholic and my mother was Protestant but in a mild sort of way. They didn't bother me. I did have religious instruction in school and I was confirmed but I didn't take it all that seriously. It seemed to be the done thing and did not have very much meaning for me. And even at school I was a bit of a maverick because when we were having instruction in the Christian religion, I said I was far more interested in Buddhism and beliefs of that sort and would like to know about those, but the teacher was unwilling or unable to supply any information so it was a bit of a stalemate. But I did have some interest. I remember I read the Koran when I was about fourteen and the Buddhist religious books and I found them interesting but not very convincing—no more convincing than the Bible.

*REYNOLDS: There must be a lot of people who've been brought up with no particular religion but they aren't consciously humanist. When did you first conceive of yourself as a humanist?*

EYSENCK: That's a rather difficult question. I think probably when I read about the persecution of atheists and agnostics in the last century and the attempts that religious people made to suppress scientific truths and facts and so on, and I was particularly impressed, like so many people, with the life of Galileo. I was always interested in science and meant to become a scientist and of course his trial was a tremendous event in the battle against superstition and this really made me begin to have some emotional feeling about religion in a negative sense and made me conscious that perhaps not everybody felt as I did. I must admit that very few of my fellow pupils in school or the people I later met at university had any strong religious feelings. In fact I find it very difficult nowadays to find anybody who has.

*REYNOLDS: Do you think there's any place for an organised humanist movement?*

EYSENCK: My feeling on this has always perhaps been rather unorthodox: that there is room for a humanist organisation but that it should go beyond just religious superstition. It should attack all superstition—political, social, any other kind whatsoever. In other words a kind of scientific humanism devoted to the whole of social life not just religion, because, after all, religion claims to cover more than just the after life. It claims to cover also our behaviour on this earth, and a great many things. I think humanists ought to be concerned with these wider aspects too, not just whether there is a God or there isn't a God and so on. I think that battle has been won. I think if that is all we're concerned with we might as well pack up shop.

*REYNOLDS? But what can we do practically other than fight religion?*

EYSENCK: Well, I think the essential need is for the introduction of rational, that is scientific, method into political questions. Most politicians argue not in rational, reasonable, scientific terms. They make up the facts to suit themselves as it were. Take for instance the battle over the comprehensive schools. Now you have two sides: the Labour party all in favour of comprehensives, the Conservative party perhaps not so wholeheartedly against comprehensives and in favour of retaining grammar schools, and selection. Both sides put forward arguments, but neither side really knows what the hell it's talking about. There are in fact no facts on which you could base all this. I think a humanist should raise the primary point that before you make any decisions of such far-reaching importance, you ought to do some research to find out what in fact would be the effects of making such changes, what are the effects of streaming, of having different schools and so on. In other words before you can make any reasonable decision you must have some facts and I think it should be the task of the humanist to point this out and to insist on the priority of research before you come to decisions which are so important to the future of our children and their education.

*REYNOLDS: So the humanist movement should really be a rational political . . .*

EYSENCK: Yes. It used to be called the Rationalist Association. I think this is essentially what I have in mind. To stress always the primacy of reason and rational argument and the basis on fact in anything that we do in the social field or the political field. Most people, after all, are agreed on what they would like to see done. This is no longer really an issue. The issue now is one of means not of ends, and means of course are the subject matter of science. Therefore the rationalist, the humanist, ought to be concerned with applying scientific method to social problems. That would be my answer.

*REYNOLDS: But as religion fades out, do you think we've got any responsibility to provide people with a substitute; apart from just telling them that they must believe in reason per se.*

EYSENCK: Well, I think that that raises the whole important question of how rational is ethics. That is a very difficult one of course. I think one can make a good case on evolutionary lines that there are certain types of conduct which are prejudicial to the survival of society and which therefore are wrong in an absolute sense, a reasonably absolute sense—nothing of course is quite absolute in a relativistic universe—and that one can, and should, try and build a system of rational ethics on this kind of foundation—what is in fact working towards survival and what is likely to kill us all off—and try to educate children in behaviour of the former kind and suppress, as far as that is possible, behaviour of the latter kind.

*REYNOLDS: In practical terms how can we give children a moral education? At the moment their moral education is based on the Christian religion—in Great Britain anyway. If we take away the religion how do we give them moral education?*

EYSENCK: I think there might be a series of courses based on biology, evolution and so on, which makes this

point very succinctly, that human kind has no absolute right to survive or to exist, that it has to earn it and that in order to do so certain types of practices and ways of conduct must be eliminated. And that if they are not, there simply will not be any human race surviving in the next century, and that on this basis certain things are desirable and other things are not. And then go on to explain the types of conduct which all religions, after all, are agreed on as being ethical which make perfectly good sense to me, even without the miraculous sanctions of God.

*REYNOLDS: But what about the children under eight, or whatever the age is where they begin to reason.*

*EYSENCK: I think as far as they're concerned families should try to inculcate a conscience in them in the way that I think that consciences have always been inculcated in children, which is through a process of conditioning. In other words punishment of wrong-doing with an explicit pointing out what is wrong about it—why it's bad to lie or to steal or to do the thing which we consider wrong. Not, of course, any kind of very severe punishment, which defeats its own ends and simply puts the children against the whole concept of right and wrong, against the authority of parents and others, but a rational type of upbringing based on modern psychological principles which would inculcate this kind of conditioned set of responses in them and make them behave in a reasonable sort of way, before they are able to understand anything about the reasons why this should be. You see you must start with some kind of conditioning, otherwise they wouldn't even survive.*

*REYNOLDS: Is this what you were getting at when you wrote recently in the American Humanist, that you thought young children should be, in a sense, brainwashed?*

*EYSENCK: Yes.*

*REYNOLDS: In what way did you mean this to be done?*

*EYSENCK: Well, the general point which I'm trying to make there is that what you might call the opposition, the people who believe in unreason—religious people, patriots, nationalists, racialists and so on—brainwash, or try to brainwash, children at school into their particular patterns. Now, if you want to safeguard a child against this, and if you believe in the supremacy of reason, if you take a very young child the best way to indoctrinate him against becoming indoctrinated would surely be to brainwash him into a belief in the supremacy of reason and fact. In other words to teach him right from the beginning that the one thing which makes him stand out in this world is his possession of reason, and the ability to argue from fact to produce theories which are testable, in fact the whole scientific enterprise. I mean that one should stress the importance of these things far more than is done at the moment. At present we still teach children all sorts of nonsense, that our nation whichever it happens to be is the best in the world and has always won all the wars and that all the wars that its ever been engaged in were just wars and so on. It's a load of rubbish. If you brainwash them to say: "What are the facts?", "Is this true?", "What does reason say to this?" I think you are in a far better state to contradict this kind of nonsense, whatever superstition it is, national, racial, religious or what.*

*REYNOLDS: Should the rationalist take the brainwashing process to the same lengths as the racialist? Should the rationalist lay as much stress on reason?*

*EYSENCK: Yes.*

*REYNOLDS: Reason couldn't be inculcated by just not telling a child untruths and telling it only truths?*

*EYSENCK: You can fail to tell an untruth, but other people will not fail to do that. After all, my parents never told me that Germany is the most wonderful country in the world but everybody at school did. You can't escape it. In order to avoid this kind of propaganda you must counter-propagandise, as it were, in favour of what you believe in, which is reason. That's the point.*

*REYNOLDS: So you should teach a child reason in the same way as a Roman Catholic teaches it to worship God?*

*EYSENCK: Yes. I would have thought so, because if you do that then, of course, he becomes able to reason about the propaganda which you put out in favour of reason and if he wants, to reject it. Any other type of propaganda is making itself invulnerable by stressing the thing it teaches rather than reason. You are teaching the critical method, the essential nature of the critical response, to everything that is being taught. In other words in a way you are indoctrinating the child to contradict you, and to criticise you for what you are doing. That is the right thing to do, to inculcate a critical attitude.*

*REYNOLDS: This could almost be said to be indoctrinating it as a humanist?*

*EYSENCK: Yes. That's the whole point I'm trying to make.*

*REYNOLDS: What sort of educational system would be best for the sort of rational education, which you are advocating for the older children.*

*EYSENCK: Well, as I say, I think it should be integrated with the teaching of evolution, and possibly with the teaching of psychology. I've always felt that psychology should be taught in school. It is a thing which children are very much interested in—to learn about themselves, about what makes them tick and so on. I've often talked to school-children and find they are tremendously interested in these things, far more than in chemistry and physics, which are a little beyond their scope I think—certainly the younger ones—and which often tend to put them against science, particularly the way those subjects are taught. And in general I don't think children are that much interested in chemistry—in the way molecules join and so on. This is rather esoteric and a little more stuff for the university I think. But things like the measurement of intelligence; they're as excited as little fleas when you tell them about this. When you show them tests, they want to do them, and work on them. If you show them how skills are developed—how we learn to play cricket, what happens in the nervous system when you acquire these skills, that kind of thing interests them, because interest is the first need for learning anything effectively. Of course, I can see all the difficulties that this would create with the selection processes and preparation for examinations and so on, but talking on the purely rational level, I think it would be far more important for children to learn about psychology, which is they themselves, than to learn a bit about chemistry and promptly forget it again.*

*REYNOLDS: Do you think the syllabuses as they are at the moment should be altered radically?*

*EYSENCK: I have a shrewd suspicion the whole thing ought to be altered very much solely to make it more realistic to children. You see at the moment you have a*

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PROFESSOR H. J. EYSENCK

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very large number of children who really learn very little, if anything, at school and who don't like it at all, who hate the academic type of teaching which they get. Our teaching essentially is geared to the university. Two per cent perhaps go to university, the other 98 per cent suffer. Now this is not a reasonable way of doing things. What we should be concerned with for the 98 per cent is, not that they should get second best education, but that they should get an education which is useful to them, which is interesting to them and which keeps them happy at school. It's no great service we do them to give them the same kind of academic stuff which we give to those who go on to university, which they don't like, don't understand, don't want to have and immediately forget. So I think there really needs to be a good deal of rethinking of all our educational objectives and methods. And again, this is the kind of thing that a humanist ought to press for. The present system is bad. I don't think there's any doubt about it, and I don't think there are many school teachers who would disagree with this. But it is maintained on the basis of the almost pre-ordained sagacity of our forefathers, who introduced it three hundred years ago, and it is still going on along the same lines. I think it needs a very thorough refurbishing up.

*REYNOLDS: To what extent do you think your own field, psychology, can help to solve man's problems?*

EYSENCK: Well, my feeling, of course, is that most of our problems nowadays are psychological ones. We know about as much physics as we need to know to solve the problems we do have, power problems and so on. We are on the way to knowing enough biology to solve most of our problems there, the control of bacterial diseases and so on. Our problems are almost entirely psychological, aggressiveness, the things which make us go to war, go on strike, fight each other, behave in irrational manners, over-

populate the world. All these are largely psychological problems. Much of what passes as population problems, again are psychological. The Indians are almost certainly going to have a famine within the next ten years. One of the main problems is a psychological one; that Hindus will not kill and eat animals. Now you cannot solve their problem without changing their psychological outlook, their attitudes. It's completely irrational this. Psychologists have worked out methods of dealing with problems of that kind, but of course nobody is interested and nobody in fact knows that there are such methods, and of course no government is doing research into this or encouraging experiment. I have a very strong feeling that the answers to most of our problems must be psychological answers, because the problems are psychological. They are problems of our own manufacturing. I think the humanist should be primarily concerned with finding out what psychology has to say in a rational, scientific manner about human kind, human nature and the problems that humanity faces at the moment. In other words psychology should be supplanting religion as a guideline as to what should be done and what can be done. Of course I'm not suggesting that we've reached the point where we can answer all these questions, but we now know enough about ways of doing research into these problems to make it very likely that we can get rational answers.

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## BROADCASTING IN THE SEVENTIES

DAVID TRIBE

AT A MEETING in the House of Commons on March 25, called by the Radio and Television Safeguards Committee, it was unanimously agreed that

- (1) there was general dissatisfaction with BBC administration;
- (2) a necessity for the holding of a Public Inquiry existed;
- (3) the further implementation of the BBC's immediate plans should be postponed until after such an Inquiry had been held.

Among organisations represented at the meeting were the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians, Equity, the Writers' Guild of Great Britain and the National Secular Society. As the meeting, under the chairmanship of Hugh Jenkins, MP, generally agreed that the only effective short-term measure was industrial action, it was regretted that the Association of Broadcasting Staff was not officially represented.

Among the problems the safeguards committee had to face were the indisposition of the Government in a pre-election year to seem to be 'persecuting' the BBC and the

substantial autonomy granted to the Corporation by its Royal Charter, not renewable till 1976. In this way the BBC had been able to ignore those recommendations of the Beveridge and Pilkington Reports—e.g. in religious and humanist broadcasting—it chose to. Not too much could therefore be expected to result directly from a new Royal Commission on the media or a Parliamentary Select Committee on Broadcasting. Their value would however lie in providing the Postmaster General with a face-saving formula for belatedly intervening to hold up the BBC's plans and in focussing public attention on matters about which too many were disposed to be complacent. It would also facilitate full discussion of various alternatives in the financing of broadcasting, for which shortage of money was the central problem. This was among the difficulties which public service and commercial television had in common. It was therefore hoped that political polarization on the issue of commercial radio would not inhibit all-party protest against *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

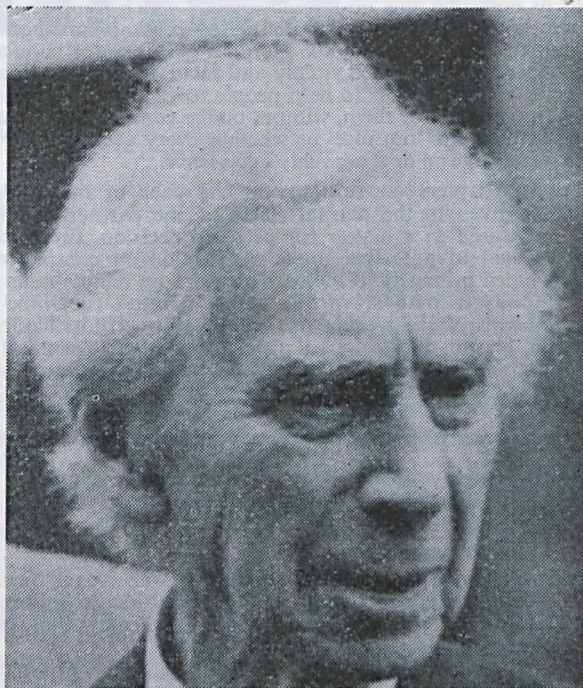
Meanwhile the MPs and Lords present at the meeting undertook to bombard the Government with questions and notices of motions, and the organisations to make as much noise in the country at large as they could.

# BERTRAND RUSSELL'S LAST WORDS

The following is the text of the message written by Bertrand Russell on January 31 this year, and sent to the International Conference of Parliamentarians which was held in Cairo in February. We are reproducing it here, because the press has given it very scant attention and very few other journals have reproduced it.

THE LATEST PHASE of the undeclared war in the Middle East is based upon a profound miscalculation. The bombing raids deep into Egyptian territory will not persuade the civilian population to surrender, but will stiffen their resolve to resist. This is the lesson of all aerial bombardment. The Vietnamese who have endured years of American heavy bombing have responded not by capitulation, but by shooting down more enemy aircraft. In 1940 my own fellow-countrymen resisted Hitler's bombing raids with an unprecedented unity and determination. For this reason, the present Israeli attacks will fail in their essential purpose, but at the same time they must be condemned vigorously throughout the world. The development of the crisis in the Middle East is both dangerous and instructive. For over twenty years Israel has expanded by force of arms. After every stage in this expansion Israel has appealed to "reason" and has suggested "negotiations". This is the traditional role of the imperial power, because it wishes to consolidate with the least difficulty what it has taken already by violence. Every new conquest becomes the new basis of the proposed negotiation from strength, which ignores the injustice of the previous aggression. The aggression committed by Israel must be condemned, not only because no State has the right to annex foreign territory, but because every expansion is also an experiment to discover how much more aggression the world will tolerate.

The refugees who surround Palestine in their hundreds of thousands were described recently by the Washington journalist I. F. Stone as "the moral millstone around the neck of world Jewry". Many of the refugees are now well into the third decade of their precarious existence in temporary settlements. The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was "given" by a foreign Power to another people for the creation of a new State. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers have increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict. No people anywhere in the world would accept being expelled *en masse* from their own country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homelands is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East. We are frequently told that we must sympathise with Israel because of the suffering of the Jews in Europe at the hands of the Nazis. I see in this suggestion no reason to perpetuate any suffering. What Israel is doing today cannot be condoned, and to invoke the horrors of the past to justify those of the present is gross hypocrisy. Not only does Israel condemn a vast number of refugees to misery; not only are many Arabs under occupation condemned to military rule; but also Israel condemns the Arab nations, only recently emerging from colonial status, to continuing impoverishment as military demands take precedence over national development.



All who want to see an end to bloodshed in the Middle East must ensure that any settlement does not contain the seeds of future conflict. Justice requires that the first step towards a settlement must be an Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied in June 1967. A new world campaign is needed to help bring justice to the long-suffering people of the Middle East.

## Book Reviews

R. K. MEARS

*The Mad Lomasneys and other stories*: Frank O'Connor (Pan 5s).

THIS VOLUME contains half the stories published six years ago in hardback under the title *Collection Two*. The other half is to be published by Pan next year. Frank O'Connor can be classed as one of the leading writers of literary fiction in the English language. As a short story writer he is perhaps the best. His strength lies in his keeping to the subject matter with which he is most familiar, his acute observation of human behaviour, and his painstaking approach (*Collection Two* took him ten years to complete, the stories having been rewritten innumerable times). Thus he tells of Ireland and the Irish with the same brilliance that a great actor instils into a part by living it completely. One suspects that O'Connor these stories are fact rather than fiction and it is this which drives the author to his perfectionism.

Though all are fundamentally Irish the stories in this book encompass much, both within the Irish ethos and in terms of human behaviour. There is much of soldiers, lovers and priests, told with much wit, disrespect and sympathy. One story centres round a Catholic canon's hatred of Jesuits, another love between a Catholic and a Protestant, and another a youth torn between his widowed mother and a girl. For freethinkers perhaps the best is 'This Mortal Coil', a story of an agnostic and a stubborn atheist, who subsequently turns religious, containing the controversial line: "If you ask me, that's what atheism is—sentimental agnosticism".

DAVID TRIBE

*Sexual Techniques: An Illustrated Guide*: Mogens Toft and John Fowlie (Souvenir Press, 45s).

'THE UNWHOLESOME MORALISTICS in sex education are', states Dr Robert Ollendorff in his Preface to this manual, 'promoted by the ambivalence of our attitude to sex.' Probably it is this ambivalence which inspired his paragraph immediately before: 'This is

(Continued overleaf)

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a clean and clear book. There is no obscenity; no pornography and the book is all about education. Readers may or may not be pleased to note that this no-nonsense style, which flouts the rules of grammar as cheerfully as it defies the prudes, does not continue into the body of the book. Here 42 positions for copulation are described and illustrated simply and factually, without coyness or crassness. The object is to help people to gain the maximum of satisfaction possible for them, without undue concern over whether certain positions are 'not nice' or whether every occasion provides a full vaginal orgasm or a heavenly experience.

In useful chapters on sexology at the back of the book no attention is given to the marital status of the partners, which is rightly recognised as a matter for personal decision. Freethinkers will be pleased to note that there is a section on contraception. If it is included primarily to increase pleasure by removing anxiety it will usefully help to solve one of the greatest economic and moral problems of the world: unwanted children. Possible minor side-effects, yet not the serious if rare thrombotic dangers, of the pill are discussed, but these are primarily matters for the prescribing doctor.

## LETTERS

### The British Humanist Association

WHILE I find myself in general agreement with Nigel Sinnott's article ('A House Divided', March 28), I should like to correct one rather important misapprehension of his regarding the British Humanist Association.

The BHA does not intend to make advocacy of the Open Society "more or less its sole aim", and this has never been the intention. We were concerned to find a rationale for our diverse activities, and we believe we have found it in the notion of the Open Society; but the activities will continue, and the amount of energy available for direct campaigning for the Open Society will perforce be limited. As far as the churches are concerned, we are interested in the main in opposing their privileges, and these (their special position in schools, in tax law, in official institutions, in broadcasting, etc.) are quite unjustifiable in an Open Society in any case.

DAVID J. F. POLLOCK,

Vice-Chairman, British Humanist Association.

### J. M. Robertson

AS ROBERT F. TURNEY admits (March 28) that a recent letter to the FREETHINKER "literally throws me back into the past", I hope he does not fall down the stairs and die of a broken heart after reading my little missive.

His comparison of Robertson's work with *Das Kapital* is more complimentary to Robertson than a non-socialist like Mr Turney may suppose. If, as he claims, Robertson was "a bore almost without limit" whose books were "a struggle to read, about as interesting as *Das Kapital* and almost as unreadable", it remains to be explained why Mr Turney bothered to "read everything Robertson wrote with the exception of those awful works on Shakespearean exegesis"—a claim that, in any event, is unlikely to be true; and if Mr Turney has not read Robertson's works on Shakespearean exegesis, how can he fairly dismiss them as "awful"? Mr Turney attributes (without evidence) certain remarks on Robertson and Shakespeare to Chapman Cohen; yet he conspicuously fails to quote what Cohen, in his editorial in the FREETHINKER for January 15, 1933, actually said about Robertson's books on Shakespeare: "I have seen them referred to by Shakespearean critics as works that cannot be ignored by scholars, and they certainly display, even to a casual reader such as myself, an acquaintance with Elizabethan literature, a power of criticism, and a literary judgment that alone would establish a reputation".

It is hazardous to deduce someone's total character and personality from a few public platform appearances: consciousness of this fact constrains those who seek a balanced view, but not Mr Turney, who rushes in where rationalists fear to tread. Robertson had a keen wit, and the subtlety of his Scottish sense of humour was clearly lost on Mr Turney. I deplore Mr Turney's implication that a man's work is to be condemned out of hand if his style is demanding or if his brand of humour—or lack of it—does not suit Mr Turney. Incidentally, humour, as distinct from malice, was not exactly an outstanding trait of Joseph McCabe, whom Mr Turney apparently admires. In dismissing Robertson as "a dour Scot", Mr Turney, who feels compelled to brag about

his supposed knowledge of the writer he belittles, overlooks the lyricism, eloquence and intense humanity that animated so much of Robertson's work. It seems a curious tribute to Robertson's power of stimulation that, almost 40 years after his death, Mr Turney should vehemently proclaim that he was "a bore almost without limit"—in which case, why did Mr Turney go to hear him speak "several times", and why did so many in Robertson's lifetime and later find him so stimulating?

Mr Turney's evident belief in God and Heaven heightens my suspicion of his crypto-Christian mentality aroused by his refusal to say one good word for one of the most distinguished rationalists of modern times. In the debate between God and J. M. Robertson (which I regard as fictional, if Mr Turney does not), I have no doubt that Robertson would win, hands down. Nor need their confrontation be a long one, for Robertson might simply exclaim, with a touch of humour that even Mr Turney might appreciate: "Good God (or O Lord), you did not give me enough evidence".

MARTIN PAGE.

WITH REGARD TO Mr Robert F. Turney's rather harsh strictures on the "dour . . . bore" J. M. Robertson:

"Every hero becomes a bore at last."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

JMR is certainly one of the most fascinating "bores" I know of; and of the fact that he was one of the heroes of this movement there can be little doubt.

NIGEL H. SINNOTT.

### When Should we Debate?

MR SIMONS begs the question. His original article "When Should We Debate?" concluded with the demand that his moral judgements should be enacted into law and imposed upon all of us—whether we agreed with them or not. Now he has shifted the discussion over to the problem of the *proof* of value judgements, arguing that they can only rest "upon feeling alone".

Very well. Suppose X feels very strongly that "Jews" are the source of all the evils oppressing the "Aryan race". He then makes the value judgement that these evils can be ended by killing off Jews. Being a believer in the ethical attitude championed by Mr Simons, he succeeds in getting his *feelings* embodied in appropriate laws and the Jews are killed.

"Genocide", cries Mr Simons and brands X as a murderer.

"Why call me such a name?" replies X. "I simply followed my feelings in the matter and, since these feeling cannot be debated, I acted accordingly. My feelings told me that Jews are the oppressors of the Aryan race and so I had them killed. Thus was right done and oppression ended. To debate whether my feelings were wrong would have been simply yielding to effete liberalism, would it not Mr Simons?"

Now here are two apparently contrary value judgements both firmly rooted in "feeling alone". How can I, poor wight, decide which is "right" and which is "wrong". Neither side will let me debate their judgements. X already holds the gun of legal coercion in my ribs if I dare question *his* feeling, and Mr. Simons wants to get hold of the same gun so that I cannot question *his* feeling.

Perhaps Mr Simons can now understand why I look with such a jaundiced eye on his moral (and political) totalitarianism.

S. E. PARKER.

### Apology

WE SHOULD like to apologise to Scumas Mac a' Ghobhainn for the appearance of the expression 'Jim Smith' in the letter from Niall Sionóid of April 4, 1970. This was due to the accidental interpolation into the text from an appendix of (translation) notes.

NIALL AODH SIONOÍD.  
DAIBHÍ MAC RAGHNAILL.

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