

# Freethinker

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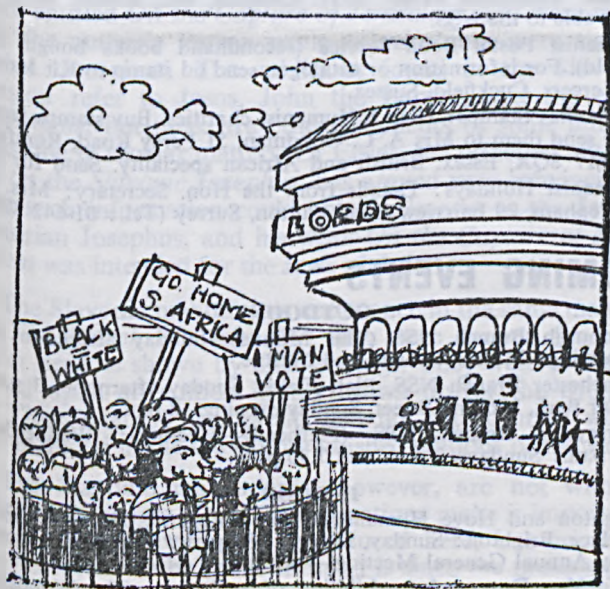
Sixpence Weekly

## DEMONSTRATIONS OR BOYCOTTS?

MR HAROLD WILSON, Mr John Arlott, The Archbishop of Canterbury, The British Council of Churches, and the TUC are amongst the motley collection of individuals and organisations who have recently made known their abhorrence of apartheid and advocated various courses of action with regard to the South African cricket tour.

While Mr Wilson has said that he hopes people will feel free to demonstrate, the British Council of Churches has called on Christians to do so. The Council took this decision by 38 votes to 31, the substantial proportion of the votes against being cast mainly because of the fear of violence arising from the demonstrations, or as one member expressed his belief in the Christian predilection for violence, "the greater number you get demonstrating the greater violence you get".

This is an unsound argument, for surely the more demonstrators there are who are determined that their protest shall be peaceful and who therefore conscientiously avoid any outbreaks of violence which might occur, the greater will be the incentive for the potentially rowdy elements to remain calm and the far greater will be the effect of the demonstration, both by dint of numbers and orderliness.



It is a pity then that the TUC has for the same reason called on its gigantic membership to boycott the matches played by the South Africans, rather than to use them to demonstrate peacefully. Those trade unionists who are bent on violence will doubtless indulge in it without regard for the TUC, while those whose peaceful protest might have ameliorated the violence will probably heed their general council's call for a boycott.

The British Council of Churches was unanimous in voting that further representations should be made to get the tour cancelled, and the TUC stated that it would have been far better if the tour had not been arranged. However, the

mutton-headedness of the MCC is unlikely to enable it to realise that it is presenting its liberal opponents, from anarchists to Harold Wilson, with a superb opportunity to cause the South Africans never to come here again, and thus the likelihood of the tour being cancelled, at least before it starts, is unhappily small. Mr Wilson while stating emphatically on television that the MCC had made a grave mistake in inviting the South Africans, did not allude to the possibility of a ban.

It would be interesting to know why the prime minister did not express his views earlier, and why, if he is so vehemently opposed to apartheid he does not put theory into practice by stopping the increasing investment of British capital in South Africa and the growing export of British manufactures to the horrible place. This is a vain hope but perhaps we can at least expect to see Mr Wilson alongside the other leading bundle of British hot air, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the head of the peaceful demonstrators. There should be plenty of Christians there, and one hopes plenty of humanists, even if the trade unionists stay away. The trade unionist, who are also Christians, will of course be too busy scratching their heads to do anything effective.

## NEWS ON RE

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLMASTERS has issued 'A discussion paper outlining suggestions for the content of a new act', entitled *Towards A new Education Act*. One of the more radical proposals made is that which calls for an end to the statutory requirements for religious education and worship. Stressing the ineffectiveness of the present law, the illogicality of treating religion differently from any other subject, the hypocrisy which it can cause among teachers and the fact that: "in recent years compulsory religious observance in schools has attracted a great deal of public comment", the Association suggests: "that the new Act should not make any reference to religious observance and instruction so far as maintained schools are concerned".

They do not think their proposal would lead to the end of religious education and worship, but "see no reason why religious education should not be treated by the academic board of a school in the same way as every other subject in the school curriculum". This would give the school boards the option of having RE or not, and if they decided to have it, the option of making it compulsory or voluntary.

That such a scheme represents progress is undeniable since the government's sanction of religion would be re-

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Editor: David Reynolds

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moved and some schools might abolish RE, as such, altogether. However, the proposal would give the school academic boards the opportunity to institute indoctrination in the same way as the government does now. The attitude of the NAS, which is normally held to be less progressive than the other teachers' organisation, the NUT, is nevertheless encouraging.

In a letter published in *The Times* on Tuesday, April 21, Mr H. J. Blackham, the Chairman of the Social Morality Council's Working Party on Moral and Religious Education in County Schools and ex-Director of the British Humanist Association, joined with the Reverend George Whitfield, the General Secretary of the Church of England Board of Education, in affirming that the statements recently issued by both bodies: "present very similar conclusions on the subject of worship in county schools".

In view of the recent attempts by the British Humanist Association to agree with leading Christians it is perhaps not surprising that Mr Blackham should go to such lengths. The Church of England proposals, which were analysed in last week's FREETHINKER by David Tribe, say that while it is not essential for every day to begin with worship, nor essential for a single act to be attended by all, it is nevertheless, *essential that worship should take place every day*. The board does not suggest that this worship should any more optional than it is already with the existing, and oft-quoted, parental right of withdrawal.

The current issue of *New Scientist* reports that last November the California State Board of Education decided in an unanimous vote to adopt a policy of placing Darwin's theories alongside those of Genesis and Aristotle and ensuring that they are given equal weight in textbooks to be purchased by the Board. A few years ago this wouldn't have been too hard to believe, but since the 'monkey law' was abolished in Tennessee two years ago and subsequently in Arkansas, such efforts to maleducate innocents are not only distressing but shocking in the literal sense of the word. This extraordinary ruling is the crowning achievement of dedicated campaigners who have striven for seven years in the cause of fundamentalism". Among those who testified before the board was Dr Robert E. Kofahl, President of a Pasadena college. Of Ashley Montague's *Man: His First Million Years* he had this to say: "Any student who would believe the lies in this textbook would certainly be strongly inclined to reject the teachings of the Bible and the Christian faith". The doctor went on: "There is even propaganda for permissive child training, even collectivism. They don't miss a bet." The seriousness of this new development can only be appreciated when one realises that California buys 10 per cent of all the textbooks published in the US, and that therefore having met this one state's criteria the same books may well be distributed throughout the other 49 states as well.

## OBITUARY

WE REGET to announce the death of Mr Emile Pariente, a staunch supporter of the freethought movement for over half a century. Although in his 90th year, Mr Pariente's death was quite unexpected; he had been with the Humanist Holidays party during Easter, and had planned to attend the National Secular Society's annual dinner.

Emile Pariente was born in Tunis. He travelled widely, and will be remembered by his friends as a cultured, intelligent and kindly gentleman. He first came into contact with the British freethought movement during the first world war, and from then until his death was a FREETHINKER reader and NSS member. Mr Pariente was also a co-founder of the Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, and always purchased a supply of FREETHINKERS for distribution at its meetings. He did not seek the limelight, but worked unobtrusively and diligently to promote freethought and the interests of the movement. He will be sadly missed particularly by his Brighton friends, and our sympathy is extended to Mrs Pariente whose devoted care made her husband's last years so full and happy.

Friends and representatives of organisations with which Mr Pariente was associated attended the simple committal ceremony at the Downs Crematorium, Brighton, on April 23.

## 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. Mepham, 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

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group: Regency House, Oriental Place, Brighton: Sunday, May 3, 5.30 p.m.: Tea party followed by Annual General Meeting.

Julie Van Duren—An exhibition of sculpture: The Woodstock Gallery, Woodstock Street, London, W1 (near Bond Street Underground): until May 16

London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London, WC2: Thursday, May 14, 5 p.m.: The Eighth Auguste Comte Memorial Lecture—Professor S. J. Gould, "The Rational Society".

Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group: Adult Education Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street: Friday, May 8, 7.30 p.m.: "Propaganda Persuasion", Dr I. C. Thimann.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, May 3, 11 a.m.: "Racialism and Nationalism", Lord Sorensen. Admission free.

Derek Wilkes (tenor): The Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC2: Thursday, May 7, 7.30 p.m.: A song recital in aid of The Humanist Counselling Service with Bruno Raikin at the piano.

# THE SLAVONIC JOSEPHUS: NEW LIGHT ON JESUS THOMAS W. HOGAN

THE ORIGINS of the Christian religion present a perplexing problem for investigation. Since the death of Reimarus in 1768 the narratives of the New Testament have been the object of a scientific enquiry. A most intense literary, linguistic and historical study has been made of every manuscript which has come to light. This question is one to which there is no final answer. All interpretations, including the Christian, turn upon the importance we ascribe to the evidence. The present sum of our knowledge of Jesus is a morass of conjecture and opinion—it ranges from conventional acceptance to sceptical denial, from the spiritual to the mythical.

That the Dead Sea Scrolls have proven a disappointment in clearing up the enigma of New Testament origins is common knowledge. But it is little known that other evidence exists. This particularly applies to the works of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus who lived in that part of the world in the first century AD. Josephus is, of course, well known for his passage in *The Jewish Antiquities* concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That that passage is an interpolation into the Greek text is now generally accepted.<sup>1</sup> But I propose to examine here the possibility that other passages from his pen once existed showing Jesus and the early Christians in an uncomplimentary light.

In 1866 a Russian scholar, Popov, made an important discovery when sixteen manuscripts of Josephus in the old Slavonic language were noticed to be different from the standard Greek text of *The Jewish War*. They contained additions not found in the current text. These manuscripts were entitled *On the Capture of Jerusalem*, and were without the author's Patron name 'Flavius' but were simply styled 'Josephus'. The additions found in the Slavonic version refer to Jesus, John the Baptist, and the early Christians; but there are other fragments of some interest referring to secular matters. Dr Eisler, the principal authority on the *Slavonic Josephus*, has argued very convincingly that such information could only be known to the Jewish historian Josephus, and his work *On the Capture of Jerusalem* was intended for the Jews of Asia.

The Slavonic manuscripts commence in the same manner as *The Jewish War* but that they were derived from an older draft is shown by their endings. They were probably based upon an edition hastily drawn up for the triumph of Titus in AD 71, for events had not yet occurred which are included in the later more finished editions of the work.

The Slavonic manuscripts, however, are not without Christian changes. Space considerations make it impossible for the entire texts to be reproduced here; but primarily the corrective to be borne in mind is since the present passage in *The Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus' other work, has been proven to be a forgery then anything critical of Christianity must be his work; favourable texts are Christian additions to the original. The Loeb Classical Library furnishes the entire text; Freethinkers might profitably consult the book in that series.

In the standard text of *The Jewish War* there is an account of the Battle of Bedriacum in Gaul. The Slavonic version refers to a feature of the battle which could only be known to someone with access to campaign diaries, for this is not mentioned by any other historian. Thus in *The Jewish War*, we find: "In the battle fought at Bedriacum in Gaul, against Valens and Caecina, the generals of

Vitellius, on the first day Otho had the advantage, but on the second the troops of Vitellius".

In *On the Capture of Jerusalem* we find: "On the first day Otho was the victor but on the second Vitellius. For he had during the night strewn the ground with three-pronged irons. And in the morning, after they had drawn up in order of battle, when Vitellius feigned flight Otho pursued after them with his troops. And they reached the place where the irons were strewn. Then were the horses lamed, and it was impossible either for the horses or for the men to extricate themselves. And the soldiers of Vitellius, who had turned back, slew all who lay there. But Otho saw what had befallen and killed himself."

Of the foregoing passage Professor Brandon has this to say: "Now the recording of such a matter, unsupported as it is by any known writer, has far more the appearance of being the work of a writer who had access to first hand reports of the battle than one who was primarily concerned to undermine Christianity".<sup>2</sup> Even in his usual texts Josephus displayed a singular fascination for military tactics.

A word about Josephus himself may be appropriate here. He was appointed a General in the field at the outbreak of the First Jewish Revolt of AD 66-70; but later went over to the Romans. Throughout the whole campaign he was a lackey to his Roman overlords. On one occasion he narrowly escaped death at the hands of enraged Jews. Later in Rome he wrote an account of his life to refute a rival historian, Justus of Tiberias, who accused him of having more to do with the Jewish War than he was prepared to admit. It is this less laudatory aspect of his character, and not the famous forgery in *The Jewish Antiquities*, which the Jewish people have found so repugnant.

To Freethinkers it will come as no surprise to learn of ecclesiastical censorship. When the Christian Church became sufficiently powerful at the time of Constantine it exercised a ruthless campaign expunging manuscripts which did not conform with its views.<sup>3</sup> In fact very little survived. Celsus and Lucian, two early opponents of Christianity, are only preserved in the works of nascent Church Fathers who wished to refute the views of infidels. Others fared no better. The Roman historian Tacitus has not been handed down in his entirety; the literature mentioned in the preface to *The Jewish War*, and other historical works once known to exist have disappeared. Is it not possible that this lost literature was, like Josephus, mutilated because it laid charges against the founder of Christianity?

Part of this anti-Christian evidence has, however, been reconstructed, including that of Josephus who was writing his books about the time the New Testament was being written. Dr Eisler, the foremost authority on Slavonic scholarship, has claimed to have found fragments of the original Josephus in out of the way editions of his work, or when writers gave quotations from the unexpunged version. Eisler, who died in 1949, supplements the work of the first scholar to tackle New Testament origins, Reimarus.

<sup>1</sup> Brandon: *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*.  
<sup>2</sup> Brandon: *Ibid*.  
<sup>3</sup> Eisler: *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*.

# THE RENAISSANCE OF MARXIAN HUMANISM

MARTIN PAGE

ONE OF THE most significant developments in sociology and political theory since World War II has been the revived interest in Marxian socialism flowing from the discovery and close study of Marx's early and explicitly humanist writings, such as his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. As Marxism, for many, has now been raised to the status of a world religion, it does not appear surprising that the number and circulation of works on Marx and Marxian exegesis should rival the proverbial availability of the Bible and works of Christian apologetics; and one of the most interesting and stimulating books in English in recent years on Marxian humanism is surely that splendid collection of essays so ably edited and introduced by Erich Fromm: *Socialist Humanism* (The Penguin Press, 50s)—an international symposium that, in my opinion should be read by every self-avowed humanist and made readily available in the libraries of those countries where freedom of thought and discussion still survive, however imperfectly.

As Erich Fromm justly remarks in his luminous Introduction: "Humanism has always emerged as a reaction to the threat to mankind: in the Renaissance, to the threat of religious fanaticism; in the Enlightenment, to extreme nationalism and the enslavement of man by the machine and economic interests. The revival of humanism today is a new reaction to this latter threat in a more intensified form—the fear that man may become the slave of things, the prisoner of circumstances he himself has created—and the wholly new threat to mankind's physical existence posed by nuclear weapons" The essays in *Socialist Humanism*—all but five written specifically for this volume represents the opinions and reflections of a diversity of distinguished authors from both sides of the Iron Curtain and from non-aligned countries, but they all share a real sense of man's lost identity and unfulfilled potential—his alienation, in fact.

It is an outstanding merit—though also a defect—of Fromm's collection that in no case did he suggest the topic of a specific essay to the authors: he preferred to ask each of them to write on any topic that appeared most important to him "within the general frame of reference of socialist humanism". Almost inevitably, this approach has resulted in a certain amount of repetition of substantially the same points by the contributors—though, again, that is not entirely regrettable, for such a wide spectrum of agreement between Marxists and non-Marxists from countries with such diverse cultural backgrounds and political problems is a fact of considerable significance that deserves to be recorded. To recognise this, however, is to imply that the contributors emphasize the goals and theoretical aspects of socialist humanism rather than the practical and empirical problems of organisations and of means: the implication would be borne out by a close reading of the text. To analyse and evaluate in detail this important work running to over 400 pages would require a book about as long as *Socialist Humanism* itself—and so my comments here on various aspects of it are necessarily brief and selective.

Fromm seems to be particularly impressed by the Czech and Yugoslav contributors; yet, to me, it is the Poles, who, as a national group, make the most vital and compelling contribution. The Pole Bogdan Suchodolski gives an admirably lucid valuation of "Renaissance Humanism and

Marxian Humanism"; Adam Schaff has written a highly competent essay on "Marxism and the Philosophy of Man"; Marek Fritzhand gives a superb account of "Marx's Ideal of Man". The Australian Eugene Kamenka, Fromm himself, and the West German Irving Fetscher have produced excellent papers on "Marxian Humanism and the Crisis in Socialist Ethics", "The Application of Humanist Psycho-analysis and Marx's Theory", and "Marx's Concretization of the Concept of Freedom", respectively. The Frenchman Maximilien Rubel offers lively, lucid and balanced "Reflections on Utopia and Revolution". The Yugoslav Veljko Korac has written a forthright and incisive essay, "In Search of Human Society". On the debit side, Raya Dunayevskaya, in her vague and somewhat confused contribution, dogmatizes rather than argues; and the Yugoslav Rudi Supek has produced a paper on "Freedom and Polydeterminism in Cultural Criticism" that could fairly be called presumptuous and meretricious.

Suchodolski indicates that Francis Bacon foreshadowed Marx's theory of alienation (pp. 32-3), while the Austrian Christians, Oskar Schatz and Ernst Florian Winter, credit Rousseau with being the first to express the importance of alienation (pp. 296-7). The Yugoslav Predrag Vranicki says of alienation today (p. 289): "The abolishment of those relationships in which the worker is cut off from participation in the entire organisation of labour, production, planning and the distribution of surplus labour is the *conditio sine non* to any solution of this fundamental problem of contemporary civilisation". Marx himself does not escape criticism. The Senegalese President Léopold Senghor points to some of the shortcomings of Marx's theories: "The *class struggle* is much more complex than Marx thought. . . . The peasants, whom Marx considered more or less impervious to revolutionary ferment and dedicated 'to the stupidity of rural life', have, in underdeveloped countries, belied his judgement. . . . Though periodic economic crises have not ceased, they are becoming rare, and we cannot reasonably foresee a general cataclysm ending the capitalist system. . . . 'Socialism' has not triumphed in the industrial nations of Western Europe as Marx predicted it would. . . . Marx did not pay enough attention to the role of co-operatives as preached by the utopian socialists. . . . His macro-economic theory and almost blind confidence in proletarian generosity and conscience prevented him from anticipating the opposition that would develop between colonisers from the dominant countries and proletarians in the dominated territories. It is a now commonplace fact that the European masses' standard of living has been able to rise only at the expense of the standard of living of the masses in Asia and Africa" (pp. 56-57).

In his stimulating essay on "Socialist Humanism?" Herbert Marcuse ("prophet" of the students' revolt) admits: "The developed Marxian theory retains an idea of man which now appears as too optimistic and idealistic. Marx did not foresee the great achievement of technological society: the assimilation of freedom and necessity, of satisfaction and repression" (p. 102). Eugene Kamenka concludes: "In developing a theory of freedom we can no longer follow Marx in his tacit reliance on the essentially co-operative nature of the human spirit, freed from economic bonds. If the growth of science and technology increasingly liberates man from physically unpleasant work and increasingly tends to eliminate the direct use of power

in allocating material resources, it also constantly increases the need for management and direction and the subtler economic and social dependence of man. If we have to revise, to some extent, Marx's concept of man, we must revise, far more radically, Marx's view of industrial society" (p. 117).

With characteristic perspicacity and subtlety, Kamenka points to the paradoxical attitude of many Marxists in Portugal, Italy and underdeveloped countries outside Europe: "instead of leading man from the *Gesellschaft* of capitalism into the free, fraternal *Gemeinschaft* of communism, the class struggle in their hands becomes at best a means for leading man from the oppressive *Gemeinschaft* of pre-capitalist society into the *Gesellschaft* of the modern industrial age. It is deeply significant that our most realistic hopes for genuine political liberalisation in the Soviet Union and—ultimately—in Communist China, rest on the growth of specialisation, the comparative overcoming of chronic shortages and the rise of a consumers' market: in short, on the increasing permeation of some of the values that distinguish capitalist society from traditional, authoritarian society". At the same time, the candid and well argued essay on "Socialism and the Problem of Alienation" the Yugoslav Predrag Vranicki refers to another paradox: "The problem of alienation is of vital and historical importance to socialism, not only because practical experience has shown that many deforming aspects of alienation are possible under socialism, but also because socialism must continue on the basis of various social forms which in themselves represent forms of alienation" (p. 285). The contemporary Yugoslav form of workers' control known as "social self-management" (although—or, because—it still retains characteristics associated with capitalism) provides generally encouraging experiment for a society that, although in a transitional stage, appears to be

firmly orientated in the direction of a fully developed socialist humanism.

The tragedy of "liberal" Czechoslovakia lay precisely in the fact that a society and a nation reaching out towards a mature democratic socialism were overwhelmed by the brutal forces of a Stalinist alienation whose spirit Czechoslovakia had sought to transcend; the profound significance of the Czech tragedy for our times cannot be overestimated. Yet the name of Jan Palach—as a symbol of "liberal" Czechoslovakia—will live for ever in the hearts and minds of those men and women throughout the world who are stirred by Marx's vision of man's Faustian and Promethean quest for human freedom and self-fulfilment. In the last analysis, to impose "liberation" on men in the name of a Stalin, a Marcuse, or a Marx is merely to give a new twist to their alienation and enslavement: as Marx realised, men must liberate themselves.

The contemporary Marxian emphasis on alienation (which some no doubt regard as a quasi-metaphysical concept) might be interpreted as symptomatic of the *general* falsification by history of classical Marxism. Yet, like the dying and reviving saviour-gods of antiquity, neo-Marxism seems to be resurrected every year (though not always in the same form!); and the renaissance of Marxian humanism in our time is a measure both of our humanity and of the destructive forces released by man that imperil his own dignity and his own existence. "The criticism of religion ends in the teaching that *man is the highest being for man*, it ends with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a debased, forsaken, contemptible being forced into servitude". These magnificent words of the young Marx resound in our hearts and minds and provide at once a perpetual inspiration and a call to action.

## CELTIC COLONISATION

EVERYONE IN BRITAIN has heard of the Celts. Politicians even speak of the "Celtic Fringe" and some people even write about Celtic nationalism. The notion of equating Celtic-speaking with Celts is a fiction which first arose during the rise of the Romantic Movement of the eighteenth century and is still propagated by such polemicists as Berresford Ellis.

I have entitled this article "Celtic Colonisation" to emphasise the fact that the Celts were once "invaders of these islands, who subjugated the original inhabitants". That such peoples survive appears to astound some of the self-styled Celtic Nationalists—a "howler . . . a ridiculous statement . . . Halsteadian claptrap". In view of the Celts' history of banditry, looting and pillage throughout Europe, perhaps it is imagined that the Celts completely exterminated the original inhabitants of these islands. Well, they did not.

The Upper Palaeolithic and later Neolithic megalith builders who were responsible for the most famous prehistoric temple in Europe at Stonehenge had reached Britain from the Mediterranean via the Atlantic coasts of Spain and France. These people are known as Atlanto-Mediterranean (a type of the Mediterranean sub-group of the Caucasoid race) and are characterised by being tall, straight nosed, strongly dolichocephalic (long-headed) and exhibiting marked sexual dimorphism. There is a tendency

for these peoples to have the combination of dark hair and light eyes. This type is commonly found in Scotland and Ireland. Such people are not Celts but represent the pre-Celtic peoples of Mediterranean origin.

In contrast the true Celts belong to the Nordic sub-group which can also be distinguished skeletally. They are characterised by mesocephalic skulls which are low vaulted, have sloping foreheads and prominent noses. The homeland of the Celts was in the region of the headwaters of the Danube; from this source region they spread into many parts of Europe. For the present I will discuss their history in relation to the invasions of Britain. During the Bronze Age about 1800 BC the Celts made their first appearance in Britain and introduced the Celtic languages (Q Celtic in Ireland and Scotland, and P Celtic in Wales) and between about 1600 and 1300 BC the Bronze Age culture reached its heights. On the continent the Urnfield Culture was spreading and waves of refugees reached England's shores.

It was not until the succeeding Hallstatt culture that one can really begin to speak of the Celts as a genuine entity. The Hallstatt warriors welded the Celts into a nation in the sixth century BC. During this period of expansion and military conquest the Hallstatt culture was firmly established in south-east England. It appears that the chalklands of south-east England were settled by the fifth century BC although evidence of military activity of Hall-

L. BEVERLY HALSTEAD

statt warriors is to be found to the north and west. The waves of immigrants seem to have been on a very large scale—making all previous invasions shade into insignificance. This culture, the British Iron Age A Culture, spread during the next two centuries into the Midlands, the Welsh Marches and to the Pennines. The end of the Hallstatt culture gave rise to a new decorative art known as the La Tène Culture. However, it was not until the third century BC, that La Tène people invaded Britain, in particular Sussex. This new phase is known as the British Iron Age B Culture. They formed a new aristocracy and became established as far north as the Yorkshire Wolds and south-west Scotland. They developed an insular La Tène art style which is undoubtedly one of the most important elements of our cultural heritage. This was the acme of the Celtic contribution to our civilisation and certainly a major chapter in the history of mankind's creativity.

The last major Celtic invasion was in the first century BC when the Belgae settled the south-east of England. They were the main resistance fighters against the Romans during the Roman conquest.

All the waves of migration of the Celts were in the south-east of England from which they pushed both north and west. The same routeway as the later invaders; the Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, Norsemen and Normans.

The situation with regard to Ireland is rather different. There is no sign of any Celtic people prior to the sixth century BC, when the Hallstatt culture seems to have arrived from the Rhineland via Scotland as indicated by a site on the north-east coast. The La Tène art is only known from Ireland during the first century BC, and must have been derived from either south-west Scotland or Yorkshire. It could not have been introduced by refugees from Gaul as this art form had virtually died out on the continent. Only in Britain did it continue to flourish.

With the Roman occupation the entire pattern of Celtic society was changed. The Belgae conducted a bitter war of resistance against the occupiers only to be betrayed by other Celts. Although they were driven from the south and east of England, they survived in the west. The lowlands of England became Romanised and the harshness of life in the fastnesses of the mountains led to a gradual disintegration of Celtic society. The survival of Celtic traditions in Wales stems from quite different sources. Towards the end of the third century, south-west Wales was colonised by Irish invaders. They appear to have occupied the territory of a tribe whose land had never been taken over by the Romans. It has been suggested that this was a "client" tribe and hence there had been no need for a Roman military presence. In any event this newly established Irish dynasty lasted some five centuries.

In north Wales, in contrast the Irish invasion was repulsed. At the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth centuries north Wales was settled by a colony of the Celtic tribe the Votadini. They inhabited north-east England and co-operated with the Romans. In return for their 'freedom', they established a frontier colony to help maintain the integrity of the Roman occupation by driving out the Irish. However, they were a tribe that had maintained its Celtic traditions and it is due to them that this tradition still survives today in this area.

During the fourth century south-west Scotland was subjected to raids from Ireland but by the fifth century settlements were established and the Kingdom of Dalradia was in existence. The Irish raiders were called Scotti (from an Irish verb to plunder) and until the eleventh century Scotia referred to Ireland and not Scotland! The Gaelic language was introduced by the Scotti and in fact the surviving Celtic traditions today are entirely of Irish derivation. The Celtic branch represented by among others the Kingdom of Strathclyde was absorbed by the Celtic speaking Scots on the one side and the English speaking people on the other.

A further colonisation was effected during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries when in response to the pillaging of the land to the west of the Isle of Wight by the marauding Saxons, there was an exodus to the south. These people from Romanised England established themselves in the area which still bears their name: Brittany.

The Heroic Age of the Celts in the north of England and Wales was during the sixth century struggles against the Angles and Saxons. There was a great flowering of poetry and prose. In Ireland which had not suffered the Roman occupation nor the attentions of the Saxons the Golden Age of Celtic decorative art dawned. The Christian Church despite much expurgation was responsible for the preservation of part of this major segment of the cultural heritage of western civilisation.

Finally a word on the language question. Apart from Latin and Greek the Celtic languages are the oldest in Europe and it is vital that they should be kept alive and study and use of them encouraged. These languages have survived in peasant populations which include the ancient peoples conquered by the Celts, as well as further peoples that have been assimilated. Having a common language does not make a nation. There are more differences among the English speaking peoples of the world than I would care to enumerate.

If Berresford Ellis reads the abbreviated account of the history of the Celts I trust that he will admit that it is fairly complicated. The subsequent mixing of peoples since the sixth century, including the more recent invasions of Jews, Italians, West Indians, Pakistanis, all adds to the fabric of our society. Britain is a melting pot—the strength of the country is a consequence of its diversity. To single out one element be it Celt, Atlanto-Mediterranean, Dane, Saxon or whatever is impracticable. Autonomy for say Scotland and Wales is another matter. On one matter Berresford Ellis and I are in complete agreement we reject 'an awful world of unity through uniformity'. It is sad that Berresford Ellis's ignorance of the history of the Celts is equally matched by his ignorance of biology. A mixture of peoples produces greater diversity. It does not lead to increase in uniformity but the reverse. Genetic and cultural variety is indeed the spice of life. The concept of one nationality emerging dominant over others was indeed the ethos of the Nazis, as it is of their successors in South Africa. But the Nazis did not advocate any sort of mixing of Jews with Nordics, the Afrikaaner similarly does not strive to break down the barriers between the Africans and Europeans. No, they go to the most nauseous extremes to prevent normal human contacts. The emphasis on a home for the Celts is part of this same ethos. The Celts are completely mixed up racially in the population of these islands. The so-called Coloureds in South Africa cannot be returned to separate Blacks and Whites nor can the Celtic genes of our population be extracted. We are a magnificently diverse population. I trust we will remain so.

## LETTERS

**The British Humanist Association, the Social Morality Council and Religious Education**

I AM NOT SURE whether Mr Blackham (April 18) is right in saying that "all members of the BHA Education Committee had full copies of the Report and time to study it." For my part, I first saw it at the beginning of a committee meeting, where it was read through once, discussed, and voted on. In view of the difficulties the BHA has had over its own Policy Statements, it does seem rather hasty for the Executive Committee to express "wholehearted support" for the Report before it was released to the general public or its own members.

This would seem even more so if there were proposals in the Report which were contrary to BHA policy; yet this, I believe, is the case. One might wonder how the Humanist members of the WP could accept such proposals.

There are parts of the Report which are admirable. However, some of these parts are contradicted elsewhere in the Report. Who knows which parts will be publicly quoted as 'the Humanist view'?

BHA policy states: "The present law requiring an act of worship each day and instruction in religion should be repealed: and such practices should be excluded from state schools".

The Report, however, suggests various kinds of religious assemblies. How was this unanimously supported by the Humanist members? Their view is supposed to be that there is no place in schools for religious worship of any sort.

With RI, things are even worse. The major proposal is that it should become "RE". Are Humanist supporters of such suggestions aware of what would actually happen in the schools? If a religious department continues to exist in each school, and if it controls or appears to control Moral Education, the child will, on the whole, be given the same Christian material by the same Christian people; but now the Christians will be able to say, as they do in the Report, "this part of education cannot be optional".

There are in the Report the usual phrases about comparative religion, and the historico-cultural necessity for religious teaching. Comparative religion is out of the question for most of the children, and in any case no teachers (except a few Christians) are available to teach it. Historical aspects of Christianity should be dealt with in History lessons. There is no excuse for an RE department, except to provide a voluntary examination course for the handful of senior pupils who may want it. But what the Report is talking about is a common course in "RE, whose first concern is the relationship between God and man".

It is not the school's business "to encourage sympathetic understanding of a religious approach to life"; a moral approach, yes; a factual and rational approach certainly. But whether children have a sympathetic understanding of religions, or witchcraft, or any other body of myth and distortion, is their own business.

Moreover, Humanists should realise that to Christians this "sympathetic understanding" is often going to mean "acceptance". Promotion of acceptance is what their Christian faith commits them to, and this is what they will continue to work for. In the Primary School, the Report says, "quite young children can learn respect for religious beliefs and ways of life". How can a 7-year-old learn respect for religious beliefs except by having them presented to him as if they were true?

There is an assumption in the Report that the 'new' RE will become acceptable to all. Nevertheless the purpose of RE is said to be understanding of religion, and "the centre of this understanding will be the Christian approach". We are to "help children to understand what Christian faith means". Not a historico-cultural survey of world thought: *Christian faith*. And what has all this to do with the Moral Education which Humanists want?

It may be helpful to mention other recent statements which make clear the general intention of the churches to continue and improve their evangelising in schools:

1. *Department of Education Report, No. 58* (September 1969).

In the Primary School the aim is to present "religious experience". "Christmas, Easter and Harvest afford special opportunities." In the early years "teachers often prefer to introduce the experience of worship". This is indoctrination, and it is incredible that Humanists should have accepted this document with cries of joy.

At secondary level, the Bible is still the basis, and "the life and teachings of Christ, newly interpreted, are as relevant as ever". This is certainly not Moral Education; but Edward Short calls this the new "open-ended RE", and suggests that it "would make opting out unnecessary". The WP Report says the same. As for worship, this should be retained, though the form should be

changed in order to eliminate "the divisive expedient of withdrawal". Get it?

2. *Religious and Moral Education* by a group of Christians and Humanists (1965).

"If our recommendations were carried out, the Christian faith would remain in a privileged position in our county schools, and we think this educationally desirable." Pupils should "share in an experience of the Christian religion". There will be "an integrated course of religious and moral education. The responsibility for it would normally fall to the teacher responsible for RE". 1. would be "easier to give the great majority of pupils experience twice a week of corporate worship".

3. *Evidence on the new Education Act from the Church of England Board of Education* (working closely with the Church of Wales and the National Society for Religious Education (April 1970).

This suggests "a more flexible approach". Daily worship "in some form" should still be required by law, for example, though it might take place in separate groups.

4. *Mr Edward Short* (March 1970) sees the only hope for society as "a return to religious and moral standards"—(note the equating of the two). Of RI he says "some of it has been counter-productive. Our aim must now be to improve its quality . . ." His purpose is clearly not to achieve an "open society", but to produce more Christians.

5. Article by *Hemming and Marratt* in *Let's Teach Them Right* (January 1970).

Like the WP Report, this contains much that is admirable; but at the end of the day Mr Marratt is declaring that "virtue in man is unattainable without a right relationship with God", and that all the fine new ideas are useless without religious experience.

6. *ILEA Agreed Syllabus* (1968).

"It should be possible to achieve a sense of unity within the community, so that excusal for conscientious reasons is minimised." But the purpose of the worship is "the establishment of a relationship with God and the recognition of his work".

7. *Religious Education in a Multi-Religious Society* (British Council of Churches Education Department with the Community Relations Commission) (July 1969).

"The aim of RE in the Primary School is . . . to develop favourable attitudes towards religion." "It would be valuable if immigrant children could remain in the assembly . . ." "These requirements can be met by introducing the type of worship that is relevant to all members of the community."

This is the background. Yet some Humanists seem hypnotised into thinking they are receiving great favours when they are allowed representation at conferences, and that such great progress is made when Christians at last admit the immorality of some of their activities in the past, that it becomes "intolerant" to oppose their immoral activities in the present.

Mr Blackham objects to the suggestion that the Report tends to equate RE and Moral Education, but there is certainly some confusion here. If RE continues, it will be seen by parents as the core of Moral Education (which they support). See 2 above. Indeed, if it is not a part of Moral Education, then it is a privileged imposition of a particular outlook, and as such has no place in schools. Christians thus are partly justifying its continuation by claiming moral value, while Mr Blackham wants *Religious* education to be a rational weighing-up of the reasons for and against belief.

The sort of thing he wants would seem best achieved in General or Social Studies, and in History. Why does he want to preserve an RE Department? Is he unconsciously making the assumption that our schools should teach children about the Christian God from 5-16, and that we are merely discussing ways of doing it?

Like Michael Lines, I am all for "openness and tolerance". That is precisely why I see the entrenched position of Christians in our educational system as a barrier to genuine moral education. How much tolerance will be found in Christians if we dare to advocate a rational policy: that matters of faith should be left to parents and churches, and that senior secondary pupils might have a brief survey of religious and philosophical theories and motivations in one or two terms of their social studies course? And to make tolerance complete, how about discussing this at a conference of Humanists, atheists, agnostics, rationalists and secularists, with two invited representatives of the faiths, and one Christian pupil to stand up and put the views of young believers?

We do not demand (or want) time set aside for pushing atheist views at children every day of their school life; we simply want

'the other side' to stop pushing theirs. Is this intolerant? Extremist? "An attitude of rigid rightness"? The antics of gods are no longer relevant to the children or to society. I cannot therefore support a vast paraphernalia of religious obfuscation, even if its purpose were elevated to enabling children to 'decide for themselves', after 11 years of study, whether or not to accept as empirical fact a virgin copulating with a ghost and giving birth to a god.

MAURICE HILL,

Secretary, Humanist Teachers' Association.

I MUCH REGRET that Michael Lines didn't receive a copy of my press release on the Social Morality Council's pamphlet, *Moral and Religious Education*. If only because I operate from home, I don't personally send out copies. Neither as I responsible for vagaries of the GPO. But I can assure him that I have never decreed that any interested party should not be circularised. Sometimes I particularly ask if a certain person has been remembered. It is true I did not, on this occasion, name Mr Lines; but Harold Blackham has, in another letter, stressed the lack of involvement of the BHA EC in the SMC Working Party. Let me state however, that I am assured that a copy of my press release was sent to *Humanist News* but that neither the NSS nor the FREETHINKER received (I don't recklessly assert no copy was thought "worth sending" or sent) the pamphlet in advance; so that I had to process it at a sitting and telephone my comments to the office.

In such circumstances the statement may be defective. I take very seriously Michael Lines' charge that it is "rambling and tendentious", as I always defer to expert opinion. In dictionaries of the future, "Prince of Wales Terrace prose" will have an honoured place. In this *genre* a "wholehearted welcome" is followed without embarrassment by certain reservation, and I am now vilified for, in effect, clarifying these reservations. Naturally the media gave less attention to them than to the welcome. Though I am naturally unable to know whether this was anticipated, from past experience I have my own views on this matter. Readers will recall that in my press release I made no comment on the BHA at all—though I was naturally unhappy about its "wholehearted" welcome—but gave an honest, and I believe moderate, review of a document for which the BHA is not in fact supposed to have any responsibility. If its secretary continues to respond gratuitously and offensively to objective literary criticism, I shall publish a full account of NSS-BHA relations which will, perhaps, make it clearer why in any document which is ambiguously worded and then wholeheartedly welcomed by the BHA, I, like Maurice Hill, suspect the worst.

The BHA and its associates have long enjoyed, and merited, a reputation for flowing prose; so flowing indeed that many have already drowned in it. Let that be my excuse if I have been led into "misunderstanding" as well as "misrepresentations". Was a mention of the American Saluting of the Flag all that outrageous in speculating what "a corporate celebration of common values" might mean? Every sociologist knows that there are not only national and regional differences over "common values" (which are factors to be considered, even in "community schools", with the current mobility of population), but differences between the generations and the classes. In all schools there are thus real value-judgement divisions between pupils and teachers. This is especially true of slum schools, where characteristically the staff, and the education authorities, subscribe to middle-class values and the pupils to working-class values. What is there that transcends all these differences other than the fostering of a patriotism based on the flag? If this is a "red herring", what is the authentic blue mackerel? In considering what is put forward as an "effective" blue print for legislation, we are entitled to know. If statements in this important field are vague, we are entitled to speculate. If our fears are groundless they can be set at rest without either abuse or boasting.

The same applies to RI. Michael Lloyd-Jones admirably clarifies the secular humanist's anxiety. It may perhaps be significant that, in outlining the changes in opinion that have occurred since 1944, the pamphlet makes no mention of the great increase in religious unbelief. Nor did I notice any insistence that atheism be included in the syllabus of comparative religion or RE-ME or whatever "working realistically" will lead us into. The impression created is that of the World Congress of Faith, viz. that there are many paths to God. How does Mr Lines think "sympathetic understanding of a religious approach to life" will be interpreted when, for obvious reasons, most RI specialists are Christians? It is interesting to note that the Association for Religious Education (their professional body) is "not happy about the Section of the Report dealing with Moral Education and RE" (press release, April 2). This section states that "moral values . . . are not necessarily based on religious beliefs and practices". The ARE is how-

ever "glad that at last the penny has dropped that modern RE is not indoctrination (para. 14) and parents should not need to exercise their right of withdrawing pupils (para. 3)".

I believe it is useful for humanists and religionists to meet to discuss their agreements and disagreements. That doesn't mean that the humanist movement should back any compromise document that may be produced, in this case I am not aware that any of the churches has done so, and the *Church Times* at least was very critical (for the document does go some way in our direction from the fundamentalist Christian position). However democratically elected, the BHA EC has neither a "right" nor a "duty" to speak for "humanists in general" on this or any other issue, especially in matters where, from the reception of the similar 1965 document in the movement, it must know in advance that controversy is likely to arise. If secularists wear a cloak it is to protect them from the *folie de grandeur* that rises like a miasma from Prince of Wales Terrace and drifts soggy across London.

DAVID TRIBE,

President, National Secular Society.

I WAS NOT AWARE that BHA policy as expressed at Conference demanded that moral and religious education should be "specially protected". This appears as an important item in the Social Morality Council's report. What does this, if not legal protection, that is, compulsion? The report also suggests group worship—not however compulsory on all children. Conference, in seeking to remove the 1944 compulsory clauses saw this, I have always understood, as the first step in the removal of all religious worship from schools. At any rate it was surely not intended to give it positive encouragement, as the report does. The BHA's suggestion to put this worship after school begs the question.

In their overall support for this report the Executive Committee have in these two instances supported policies for which they have not had the specific sanction of conference. In this sense they have been undemocratic. If these were small matters one would not quarrel with them, but they happen to be the two most vital issues. Is RE to be binding or not; are we to have worship or not? In the one case it concerns the intellectual freedom of the teacher, and in the other the very peace of the schools. The introduction of denominational worship, at whatever hour of the day and for whatever number of children, would be likely to highlight religious differences and therefore racial differences, with consequences that can be imagined. The religious experience, so valued by Mr Lines, can take a number of forms, not all of them mystical and not all of them pleasant.

Finally the position of RI teachers should be considered. The fact is they have not won academic or moral respect for their subject. But obviously we cannot throw them out of jobs. Fortunately most of them have acquired a second subject, and with the removal of worship and special privilege they might very well find themselves in a better position *vis à vis* their colleagues and the children. But don't let us weep crocodile tears for what has after all been false teaching, and which the RI teachers, over the years, have done precious little to improve.

MERLE TOLFREE.

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