

POLICY NEEDED TO CURB POPULATION GROWTH 'MAKE THE TWO-CHILD FAMILY A NORM,' SAYS NSS PRESIDENT

We shall soon enter the last quarter of European Conservation Year, and although much has been achieved by official and voluntary bodies it is doubtful if some of the fundamental problems are even recognised. Britain's population nears the 54-million mark, and with a population density of 606 persons per square mile is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Our towns and cities are becoming increasingly affected by noise and congestion, and unless some current trends in farming methods are checked, the countryside will be changed beyond recognition within a generation or two. The quality of life depends greatly on the amount of land and the pressures on it; by this criterion, Britain is already seriously overcrowded. In some respects, Britain's population problem differs from that of most other countries. While we have one of the lowest population increases in the world, the high population density means much less room for manoeuvre.

A Population Policy

We have now reached the point at which the Government must formulate a policy on the population question and face the fact that the size of the population cannot continue to be a problem for voluntary bodies and some enlightened local authorities to deal with.



David Tribe

Photograph by Eric Willoughby

played a notable role in bringing the idea of family planning to the masses, and this is even more important today than then since the discovery of antibiotics and accelerating death control. In criticising the Vatican's attitude to contraception some liberals have said, unwisely, that the size of the family is a personal matter for the parents. While it certainly isn't the Pope's business it cannot be regarded as a purely personal matter. Persuasion—and, it may be disincentives—must be used to make the two-child family a norm".

Dr John Davoll, chairman of the Conservation Society, believes there has been much talk about protecting the environment, and too little action. Dr Davoll told the *Free-thinker*: "No great change can be expected until we recognise and begin to deal with the basic causes of our troubles—population growth and economic expansion—as a matter of urgency. Continued population growth continues to exacerbate almost all environmental problems, and economic growth, described as 'creating wealth' may be described equally as 'using up resources, often irreplaceable' and 'generating waste' since industrial processes, unlike natural ones, do not recycle materials to any important extent. Only when national policies demonstrate an acceptance of these realities can we afford a rational hope for the long-term future of Spaceship Earth".

Protecting the Countryside

As more and more acres are taken over for housing and industrial development the need to protect the countryside increases. Mr Roger Bush, senior information officer of the Country side Commission, is confident that people are becoming more aware of the need to preserve the amenities of the countryside. He feels that European Conservation Year has helped enormously in this respect: "One of the significant achievements of ECY has been the involvement of local groups, parish councils and individuals in the campaign, and this will, I feel, ensure a continuing interest after the Year has ended".

However, there is a less encouraging aspect of the situation. Mr John Yeoman, assistant secretary of the Council

A century ago freethinkers were pioneering the birth control movement in Britain. They caused controversy unimaginable in an age when family planning is widely regarded as right and respectable. It is not, perhaps, so widely recognised as a social duty, and the views of David Tribe, president of the National Secular Society will not be shared by everyone. He says: "Charles Bradlaugh

(Continued overleaf)

SHALL WE JOIN THE GENTLEMEN?

MARGARET PEARCE

The proliferation of articles about women and allied subjects, like abortion, equal pay and working mothers, in our national press today, makes me wonder whether the heart of the problem is being tackled. Believe it or not, women do constitute one half of the human race. They are, like everyone else, part of the species *homo sapiens*, and not an inferior, less intelligent sub-species which a certain type of man tends to class with aliens, property and domestic animals.

In their long fight for emancipation, women are well on the way to the same legal status as men, but there are other factors against which women are fighting today. They are combating their former subjection to men, inadequate goals, dead end jobs instead of careers, and the "double moral standard" that still operates in society, not least among some women.

There is still a residue of sexual discrimination in our education system today, namely on the assumed adult roles of boys and girls (just as there may be discrimination based upon a child's social background). In my personal experience girls are "pushed" into jobs like typing and domestic subjects, whereas boys of the same educational standard are "expected" to enter the professions. One only has to look at advertisements for jobs to see the attitudes of employers towards women. There is a justifiably growing resentment against being belittled, treated as second-class citizens, and being subservient to men in advertisements. (You seldom see a picture advertisement with a woman boss. It is time women were presented as *people* and not portrayed as mindless idiots or mere sexual objects, which the majority of advertisements imply. If it is desirable for men to be aggressive to succeed in life, why is this same characteristic disliked in women?)

Educational Inequality

It has been ascertained that on average the educational capacity of girls compares favourably with boys, yet a much smaller percentage of the former go on to higher education. Here a variety of factors are at work: girls reach maturity earlier, therefore they are said to be "side-tracked" by sex and romance earlier than boys. The immediate family can also be a great stumbling-block; girls are expected to help in the family home, especially with younger siblings and elderly parents. Why not boys as well? There should be much greater flexibility between traditionally "male" and "female" chores. Mothers tend to regard marriage as the ultimate purpose of their daughters' lives, and so, subconsciously, a girl thinks this is all she wants in life. It is still thought "not quite nice" for a girl to be "too clever"—implying that she will find it more difficult to "ensnare" a marriage partner; this may even be a real handicap.

One of the factors that women have to contend with is the fight for their own identity. Our society still ordains that women do not have an identity or life-style until they get married, when they may acquire that of their husbands, both subconsciously and in fact. (Nearly all women—even progressive ones—gives up their surnames on marriage and subjugate their careers to their husbands'.) They are supposed to live their lives through their husbands and children to the exclusion of their real selves, with the result that they are open to exploitation as women, and are not accepted as people in their own right.

Much rubbish has been written on the subject of abortion. The fact is, until we get a free, 100 per cent effective,

impartial contraceptive service to *all* people from puberty onwards (16 is an arbitrary age), abortion is here to stay. Although the Pill is as yet for women only, contraception is still surely the responsibility of both parties involved. (And what's wrong with male sterilisation?) Why *not* abortion on demand? It seems to me the ultimate obscenity and act of barbarism to condemn a woman to what is virtually a "life sentence" just because the self-styled guardians of morality, mostly vociferous bachelors and "old women of both sexes" (note the perjorative use of "women" here) so deem it. Is it not the height of human injustice?

Oh Lord, Deliver us From our Friends

Extremist elements in the women's equality movement do hate men. This is, to say the least, a trifle neurotic, for there is no point in women claiming superiority; this, if effective, will merely invert the present situation. Most normal women want to *share* life with men.

The key words for most of our problems today are tolerance and understanding. Human rights, for all sexes, are far more important in the fight for justice than merely "equality for women". I should like to see far more flexibility in roles, jobs and status for men and women, as such.

Kinder, Kirche, Küche

Although in this country women have equal political rights, fewer of them are politically active (a complaint frequently voiced in the Humanist press). I think that because of indoctrination and discrimination women do not have the assurance that tends to come "naturally" to a man. An analogy can be drawn here between public / grammar school educated boys and *hoi polloi*. Also, too many men see women as sex objects only, and not as sentient beings in their own right.

The people we need to oppose are the cynical diehards who really believe that "a woman's place is in the home (and nowhere else)", and that in the field of employment the lure of traditional marriage will preclude her from holding a responsible position. Even within the Humanist movement we are all familiar with "rationalists" who hold such opinions. It saddens me that a disproportionate majority of the "big guns" in this movement are men. As Lena Jeger, MP, has said: "We are more than half the people of the earth, and we ought to be asking ourselves why not more of us are on the platforms of the world."

POLICY NEEDED TO CURB POPULATION GROWTH

(Continued from front page)

for the Protection of Rural England, told the *Freethinker* of the Council's concern at the widespread destruction of hedges. The figures vary, but it is known that thousands of miles of hedgerows are destroyed every year. The CPRE recognises that, for practical reasons, some hedges have to go, but they are strongly opposed to the "prairie farms" that are developing, particularly in East Anglia. Mr Yeoman says: "Prairie farming is greedy farming, and will cause incalculable harm to wild life and to the soil".

IS SEX SACRED?

A notable victory for those who oppose all forms of censorship in the arts was gained recently when it was announced that no action would be taken against Kenneth Tynan's erotic revue *Oh! Calcutta!* Before the decision was made public, the reactions of most of the self-appointed guardians of our morality were dreadfully predictable. The show would "tend to deprave and corrupt". The London councillor who made an unsuccessful application for a prosecution, described in horrified terms on television how he actually observed some members of the audience "playing with themselves" during a performance. Public masturbation! Whatever next? These absurdities apart, one rather unusual defence of censorship was made by Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 2 August which, I think, merits serious consideration.

In an article entitled *Who's for Sex?* Mr Worsthorne admits that pornography and obscenity "do very little corrupting or depraving. Or, if they do, the numbers affected are limited to a few nut-cases whose weaknesses cannot sensibly be made the basis for laws affecting society as a whole". He claims, however, that "those who favour censorship do so out of a desire to protect sex rather than disparage it, while those who oppose it do so out of a desire to degrade sex rather than elevate it". Kenneth Tynan hates sex, Mrs Whitehouse loves it. *Oh! Calcutta!* is "passionately and unmistakably anti-sex, treats the activity with contempt and derision, turns the whole business into a laughing matter". Now, apart from the fact that if *Oh! Calcutta!* is humorous it cannot be pornographic since pornography and humour are never found together, it will be seen that the last part of Mr Worsthorne's sentence does not follow from the first part. To find a thing funny does not mean that one necessarily hates it. Indeed, the ability to laugh sometimes at the most cherished objects of one's affection is often the strongest safeguard against fanaticism. As a Scottish Nationalist, I love my country; but I can also, I hope, enjoy jokes against Scotsmen and their foibles. If the leaders of the Arabs and the Israelis, the Americans and the North Vietnamese, the Russians and the Chinese could occasionally laugh at their respective ideals, there would be real hope of permanent peace in the world.

To Mr Worsthorne (and Mrs Whitehouse) sex is sacred. It has "a special unique status" and must, therefore, never be mocked. "Everything deemed precious", writes Mr Worsthorne, "is always surrounded by taboos and inhibitions". Presumably, then, Mr Worsthorne must be in favour of banning the works of Petronius, Rabelais, Chaucer, Boccaccio, Fielding and Joyce, to name but a few of the celebrated authors who have guffawed heartily at man's sexual misadventures throughout the ages. This is surely puritanism gone mad. To Mr Worsthorne who is, I take it, a theist, I would suggest that the ludicrous posture which one must assume in order to perform the sexual act, indicates that the Almighty must have seen something funny in copulation from the creation.

Perhaps the most disturbing feature of Mr Worsthorne's article is that he seems to be in favour of extending censorship outside the area of sex altogether. Thus he writes: "No society allows the denigration of what it truly cares about. When Britain truly cared about Christianity, no man could blaspheme with impunity in a public place. When Britain really cared about the monarchy, no man could insult the Royal Family with impunity in a public

place". Do these ominous words mean that Mr Worsthorne would be in favour of legislation prohibiting the expression of all criticism of Christianity and the monarchy? The suspicion that they do, in fact, mean just this, reinforced by Mr Worsthorne's further comment: "Arguments about freedom are really beside the point". Thus have spoken all totalitarians from Genghis Khan to Mao-tse-Tung! Clearly there would be no joy for the *Free-thinker* in a Britain ruled by Chairman Peregrine the First.

In truth, both the censors and the pornographers adopt a superstitious and unnatural attitude towards sex, the former by deifying it and the latter by degrading it. One of the main arguments against censorship is that it encourages pornography. The best advertisement is the hanging of the word "verboden" in front of an exhibit, and all the evidence from Denmark and elsewhere seems to show that in fact the censor is the pornographer's greatest ally. Abolish the former, and the latter will die a natural death.

REPORT FROM BOSTON

GOVIND N. DEODHEKAR

Mr Deodhekar, honorary treasurer of the National Secular Society, attended the 5th Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union in Boston, Mass., and has sent this report.

Most delegates from Western Europe went to New York, California and elsewhere: I have been whisked off by friends on a tour of Shenandoah, Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains, and am therefore only able to write a few quick impressions of the Congress.

Delegates came from North America, Europe (Eastern and Western), India and Japan. The Yugoslav Humanist Union's application for affiliation to the IHEU was accepted.

Two of the resolutions passed are of particular significance. The first, condemning "the cruel American war in Vietnam" was proposed by Dr Corliss Lamont, the distinguished American philosopher and Humanist, and overwhelmingly carried. The second, on population, demanded the recognition of abortion as a basic human right and accepted its possible contribution, to the population problem. It also recognised the negative role of the Roman Catholic Church on birth control, and appealed for a revision of this attitude. The Canadian Humanists are apparently experiencing much opposition from the Catholics, and their president, Dr Margenthaler made a strong speech in support of the resolution.

There were many outstanding speeches, including those by Jo Grimond, MP, and Lord Ritchie Calder, but Professor Noam Chomsky, one of the few theoreticians of the New Left in America, stimulated the greatest amount of discussion among the groups. The Congress ended with an enjoyable dinner and dance.

The Congress and the resolutions passed will have a far-reaching impact.

FREETHINKER

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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 St., 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 Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

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

EVENTS

Humanist Holidays. Family Centre, Aberystwyth, Monday, 17 August until Tuesday, 1 September. Full board just over £2 per day with reductions for children. Details from Mrs Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone: 01-642 8796.

The Progressive League. Summer Conference at Haldon House, near Exeter from 29 August until 5 September. Charges are very reasonable, and children under 13 are accepted free. Details are obtainable from Ernest Seeley, 38 Primrose Gardens, London, NW3.

Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, 24 August—20 September. Exhibition of paintings and drawings by Oswald Blakeston. London Young Humanists, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 6 September, 7 p.m. Elaine Brace: "Nationalism, Catholicism and the Irish Language".

Sunday, 13 September, 1970

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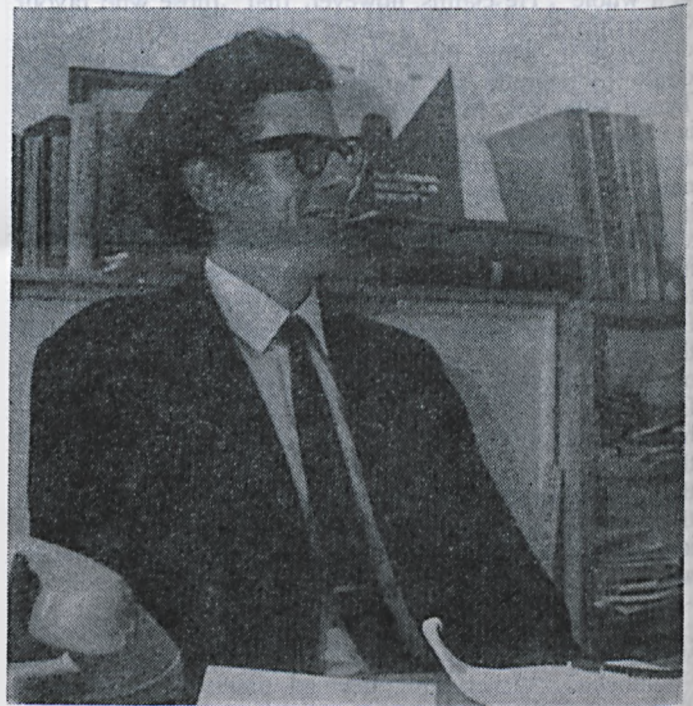
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NEWS

NEW SECRETARY

Martin Page, who recently became general secretary of the National Secular Society, is at 27 probably the youngest person to occupy this position. He was born at Fulmers Chase in Buckinghamshire, and after attending Colfe's Grammar School, Lewisham, went to St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he studied French and German literature. After teaching English for a year at Macon, France, he returned to Britain and held an administrative post which gained him wide experience in regional and central government.

Mr Page grew up in freethinking / humanist home atmosphere, and his interest in the history of the freethought movement was sharpened by his father's extensive library which includes the works of Joseph McCabe and J. M. Robertson. He was active in the university Humanist group, and for the last 18 months has been associate editor of the *Ethical Record*. Mr Page has contributed articles and reviews to many journals, and is planning to publish a biographical study of J. M. Robertson.



Martin Page

Photograph by Eric Willoughby

Martin Page strongly feels that, despite the steady decline in belief in the teachings of the churches, organisations like the NSS will have to continue the fight against religious superstition and privilege, and for the promotion of freedom of thought and enquiry. He says: "As the material manifestations of human progress are brought into being by intellectual and emotional revaluations, the vital ideological role of the NSS in British society becomes apparent; and the tragic experience of human irrationality in the 20th century has heightened, not diminished the necessity for rational thought and action".

The NSS is fortunate in being able to secure the services of a dedicated and experienced worker like Martin Page. And all who value freethought, tolerance and civil liberty, should raise their hats to those who work behind the scenes serving on the Society's committees, organising its activities and campaigning for its ideals.

AND NOTES

NEW DANGERS

There has been a storm of protest against the dumping of over 400 steel and concrete coffins containing deadly GB and XV nerve gas in the Atlantic, despite the brasshats' attempt to keep news of the operation from the American public and Congress itself. Criticism by opponents of chemical warfare, scientists and conservationists were predictable enough, but large numbers of people, normally indifferent to the environment and unconcerned about chemical warfare so long as it is a long distance from America, are now greatly alarmed by the revelation that thousands of tons of nerve gas rockets have been stockpiled on their own doorstep.

Here in Britain, Mr Eliot Slater of the Institute of Psychiatry made a strong attack on those who are polluting the land, sea and air, when he spoke at a symposium in London last week. He declared: "We do not hesitate to pour persistent chemicals, whose biotropic effects are unknown into earth oceans and air, to enter the food chain of which we are a part. We shovel our radioactive wastes under the carpet, as it were, to produce long-term effects which are entirely unpredictable. We behave as if what the world will be like 30 years from now does not matter at all. Future generations would think of this as one in which mankind multiplied without reason and without control, destroying the environment as it spread".

There has always been a certain amount of resentment about the way in which large areas are requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence for testing weapons. And there has been growing concern at the dangers arising from the manufacture, testing and transportation of chemical weapons.

Now comes the news of an organisation that has been formed to campaign for the closing of the nerve gas production unit at Nancekuke in Cornwall. They have issued a statement strongly criticising a Ministry of Defence report on the transportation of nerve agents from Nancekuke to the testing centre at Porton Down, in Wiltshire. The report was drawn up by a working party which met only twice and, according to the Close Nancekuke Now Group, it did not include a single person with a reputation for questioning the bland assurances of official spokesmen.

Although the CS gas being used in Northern Ireland is manufactured at Nancekuke, it is unlikely that an attempt will be made to attack the centre or hijack a lorry transporting it. But accidents can happen, and in its statement the CNN group refer to an accident in Utah involving less than ten litres of nerve gas, but 6,000 sheep were killed over a large area.

GODLESS BRITAIN

There was a time when adolescents were told that masturbation caused insanity, although it is unlikely that this dire warning was ever an effective deterrent. It seems, however, that a similar calamity threatens a big proportion of the population. The alarm has been sounded in the Blackburn diocesan magazine by the Bishop of Lancaster, the Right Rev. A. L. E. Hoskyns-Abrahall. According to the bishop—a former naval officer—godlessness is the cause of the growing incidence of mental breakdown. He claims that in one year 1,000 officers and men are discharged from the Services and the Merchant Navy because of mental breakdown. As the Christian churches with captive audiences, the bishop's illustration seems rather inapt.

PUBLICATIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	Price	Post
RI and Surveys	Maurice Hill	1/0	4d
Religion and Ethics in Schools	David Tribe	1/6	4d
Religious Education in State Schools	Brigid Brophy	2/6	4d
Ten Non Commandments	Ronald Fletcher	2/6	4d
The Cost of Church Schools	David Tribe	4/0	6d
A History of Sex	G. L. Simons	9/0	1/0
Humanism, Christianity and Sex	David Tribe	6d	4d
103: History of a House	Elizabeth Collins	1/0	4d
Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare	David Tribe	2/0	4d
The Necessity of Atheism	Percy Bysshe Shelley	1/6	4d
The Secular Responsibility	Marghanita Laski	2/0	4d
The Nun Who Lived Again	Phyllis Graham	6d	4d
An Analysis of Christian Origins	George Ory	2/6	4d
New Thinking on War and Peace	A. C. Thompson	1/0	4d
A Humanist Glossary	Robin Odell and Tom Barfield	3/6	6d
The Vatican Versus Mankind	Adrian Pigott	4/0	1/4
Evolution of the Papacy	F. A. Ridley	1/0	4d
Lift up Your Heads	William Kent	5/0	1/0
James Maxton and British Socialism	V. S. Anand and F. A. Ridley	4/0	6d
The Bible Handbook	G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball	7/6	1/2
What Humanism is About	Kit Mouat	10/6	1/6
The Humanist Revolution	Hector Hawton	10/6	1/6
Pioneers of Social Change	E. Royston Pike	10/6	1/6
The Golden Bough	J. G. Frazer	20/0	2/6
Religion in Secular Society	Bryan Wilson	15/0	1/3
The Humanist Outlook	Various	35/0	2/2
100 Years of Freethought	David Tribe	42/0	2/2
Catholic Terror Today	Avro Manhattan	12/6	1/6
Materialism Restated	Chapman Cohen	5/0	1/4
The Martyrdom of Man	Winwood Reade	10/6	1/9
Morality Without God	Chapman Cohen	6d	4d
Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom (secondhand)	Avro Manhattan	15/0	2/2
From Jewish Messianism to the Christian Church	Prosper Alfarc	6d	4d
Man His Own Master	Archibald Robertson	2/6	8d
The Outlines of Mythology	Lewis Spence	2/6	8d
The Dead Sea Scrolls	John Allegro	5/0	1/0
Age of Reason	Thomas Paine	3/6	4d
Rights of Man (paper)	Thomas Paine	7/0	1/4
Police and the Citizen	NCCL	4/0	5d
The Hanging Question	Edited by Louis Blom-Cooper	15/0	1/0
Rome or Reason	R. G. Ingersoll	1/0	5d
Thomas Paine	Chapman Cohen	1/0	5d
Morals Without Religion	Margaret Knight	12/6	1/2
The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism	Bertrand Russell	6/0	1/0
Why I am Not a Christian	Bertrand Russell	3/0	6d
Impact of Science on Society	Bertrand Russell	6/0	1/0
Mysticism and Logic	Bertrand Russell	6/0	1/0
Authority and the Individual	Bertrand Russell	7/0	1/0
Political Ideas	Bertrand Russell	6/0	1/0
The Conquest of Happiness	Bertrand Russell	9/0	1/2
Marriage and Morals	Bertrand Russell	8/0	1/2
Bertrand Russell's Best	Edited by Robert E. Egner	15/0	1/6
Humanism	H. J. Blackham	5/0	1/0
Comparative Religion	A. C. Bouquet	8/0	1/4
William James and Religion	Gabriel Richard Mason	1/0	5d
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BOOKS

THE BAD POPES

by E. R. Chamberlin. Hamish Hamilton, 60s.

Lack of Christian charity at first led me to believe that a book under this title would contain the history of the Roman Popes from Peter to Paul (VI); instead the author has focused his attention on eleven particularly unsavoury specimens who polluted the European scene from the turn of the first millennium to the sack of Rome in 1527.

Predictably, the book commences with a biography of Marozia, celebrated mistress of popes and princes, who can be said to have started an era known as the Roman Pornocracy which reached the depths of degradation during the reign of her grandson, Pope John XII. Prince of Rome and Supreme Pontiff of the Church at the age of 16, young Octavian lost little time in establishing a reputation equal to that of his debauched grandparents. John's attitude towards his pontifical duties is beautifully summarised by the author:

"In his relationship with the Church, John seems to have been urged toward a course of deliberate sacrilege that went far beyond the casual enjoyment of sensual pleasure. It was as though the dark element in his nature goaded him on to test the utmost extents of his powers, a Christian Caligula whose crimes were rendered peculiarly horrific by the office he held. Later, the charge was specifically made against him that he turned the Lateran into a brothel; that he and his gang violated female pilgrims in the very basilica of St Peter; that the offerings of the humble laid upon the altar were snatched up as casual booty."

John's debaucheries and political intrigues finally exhausted the patience of the German emperor Otto, who marched on Rome, assembled a synod and had John formally deposed. John eventually died a martyr to the cause of the deity he had served best, Venus:

"The champion of Christendom was an outraged cuckold who had caught his Holy Father in the act and cudgelled him so severely that he died three days afterwards."

Next we have Benedict IX who ascended the fisherman's chair in 1032 at the ripe age of 14. Descent from a line of hilltop bandits superbly qualified him for the high office. Benedict enjoyed a few years of riotous living before deciding to get married, "... but the girl's father, although inured to the spectacle of papal depravity, balked at the idea. Benedict could have his daughter only if he resigned the papacy".

Benedict obliged, but was loath to forego the income that came with the job. So to overcome his impecuniosity he put up the Papacy itself for sale. The highest bid came from his uncle Gratiano and the deal was closed for 1,500 pounds of gold.

I fail to see the author's point in selecting the comparatively harmless bushwhacker Benedict for a slating, whilst barely mentioning the arch-villain Hildebrand, alias Gregory VII, who succeeded him a few years later. Surely, if ever there was a bad pope it was this arrogant high priest.

Boniface VIII also had all the characteristics we have come to expect from a medieval pope. Ambitious, arrogant, cruel, homicidal, rapacious, treacherous; you name it... Having engineered the abdication of his predecessor, the pious simpleton Celestine V, Boniface was soon on his way to become one of the most powerful popes in history. His eventual humiliation at the hands of the Colonna can be regarded as belated justice and fulfilled poor Celestine's prophesy: "You have entered like a fox, you will reign like a lion and you will die like a dog".

FREETHINKER

There follows a biography of Urban VI, a pope who attempted to curb the greed of his cardinals with unfortunate results; they elected a counter-pope.

And then there were the Borgias. A chapter headed "The Spanish Bull" records their misdeeds. Even after separating legend from fact, Alexander VI and his gifted, if depraved, son Cesare emerge as villains of unique stature.

In comparison with Alexander VI, the Medici Pope Leo X was a likable rogue. "God has given us the Papacy—let us enjoy it", he wrote after his election. And enjoy it he did. There were minor irritations like that quarrelsome monk Luther, but by the time the Reformation gained momentum, Leo was safely in his tomb and past caring.

Clement VII was less fortunate. A Medici by descent, the Romans expected him to re-create the "Golden Age" that had petered out under Leo's immediate successor Adrian, a Dutchman, who had the most peculiar notion "that the prime duty of the supreme pontiff was to give spiritual guidance and set a Christian example to Christians". Small wonder the Romans meant to erect a statue to his physician after his early demise, Clement was neither a charmer nor a competent intriguer, and when he finally fell foul of the Emperor Charles V, doom was swift to follow. An army of German, Italian and Spanish mercenaries took Rome and sacked it.

The Bad Popes is wittily written, well researched and illustrated. If nothing else, it may convince a few critics of our present day "permissive society" that Christianity is not necessarily synonymous with morality.

S. D. KUEBART

DECENT AND INDECENT: Our Personal and Political Behaviour, by Benjamin Spock. The Bodley Head, 30s.

Dr Benjamin Spock, who has long been well known to mothers for his invaluable books on child care, has in recent times become known also as an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam war, sentenced to a term of imprisonment for supporting young men trying to evade military service, but cleared on appeal. Now he has written a book in which he sets down his thoughts on all the obstacles to a good life for Americans.

Dr Spock shows both the strengths and weaknesses of and expert in another field come late to politics, and trying to cover in 200 pages such an infinite topic as "our personal and political behaviour". At times he appears superficial, but he is refreshingly free from preconceptions, and is not afraid occasionally to take up a position which progressives traditionally reject, sometimes without much thought.

Most interesting and, to *Freethinker* readers, most controversial, is the section "Problems of Sex and Sex Role". He gives a necessarily over-simplified account of the formation of personality in terms of Oedipal conflict and penis envy, without reference to the importance of relationships with siblings (a weakness not found in his advice to mothers). He feels that American women have gone too far in competing with men in what he considers had better

REVIEWS

remain men's activities, and reckons that this happens because women's proper role of child-rearing has been undervalued. His emphasis seems somewhat distorted, but, although he does not precisely draw this conclusion himself, the moral of what he is saying is perhaps that one avenue of advance that feminists sometimes neglect is the attainment of a proper status for child-rearing as an exciting and highly-skilled job of enormous social importance. It seems a pity that Spock should seem to impute peculiar subconscious motives to the man who learns to change the baby's nappy, and even to encourage the wife to look on such a husband as threatening to usurp her functions. Psychologically orientated people frequently overlook the practical results of social change; the fact is that usually narrowing down of the modern family so that it usually contains only one woman would make family life intolerable without a considerable breakdown of traditional barriers between men's and women's work in the home.

Dr Spock emphasises the innate temperamental differences between men and women, and goes on to suggest that these differences have been produced by natural selection, as contributing to a harmonious family life and the successful rearing of offspring. This is looking at the past through rose-coloured spectacles. The cost in human misery of the patriarchal family is immeasurable; generations of girls have had their horizons artificially limited, in many societies being degraded to the point where they dare not even argue against a husband's decision to throw a baby out to die—reduced below the level of a female rabbit, which will turn and fight a stoat in defence of its young. The recognition of the emotional and intellectual needs of young children, which Dr Spock has done so much to spread, was inconceivable before women were in a position to make important decisions in the family.

He is well worth attending to when he points out what the movement to sexual licence can cost young women. Surveys show that young men usually have their first sexual experience with girls they do not love or plan to marry, whereas most girls say their first experience was with a man they loved. As these young people are largely talking about the same relationships, it is clear that for many girls their first love affair leads to a sad disillusionment. There is no automatic correlation between sexual freedom and happiness.

Spock's analysis of the nature of American actions in Vietnam is as devastating as any ever written. His points are so conclusive that no one not blinded by prejudice could fail to recognise their truth. His explanation in terms of the need of political leaders to appear virile and not lose face, seems more convincing than most.

He is equally forthright on race, describing the total irrationality of those whites who, in the face of continued repression and poverty of Negroes, actually "think that black people are now demanding and getting too much, as if they are specially a privileged group".

The author presents a gloomy picture of the American political scene, but he remains hopeful about the future, because of his confidence in and admiration for the present generation of students, who in the USA form a far higher proportion of the age-group than elsewhere. We can only hope his confidence is justified, while feeling once more that we are very fortunate to be British.

MARGARET McILROY

THEATRE

COUNCIL OF LOVE. Criterion Theatre, London.

IT ISN'T surprising that following the original version of this play Oscar Panizza did time for blasphemy in Kaiser Bill's Germany, though how his script compared with John Bird's re-write is far from clear. In the programme Panizza is thus justifiably acquitted of any charge of "cashing in on permissiveness"—a suspicion that arises with Jack Gold and Eleanor Fazan's colourful production. Certainly we could never have seen it while the Lord Chamberlain reigned supreme.

Bosoms and male frontals we have grown used to—or soon shall. Simulated copulations do not today heighten the rouge on an usherette's cheek. In the **Council of Love**, however, the orgies occur in the papal court of Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI) and the full frontal is a cardinal's. But even more to the consternation of the faithful, the earthly hierarchy is joined by the powers infernal and supernatural. From *Faust* and *Don Juan* legends we are familiar with Lucifer, though not his characterisation as a limping, smarmy wide-boy. Less familiar to theatre-goers is the heavenly host.

Among cherubin and seraphim cruises the Virgin Mary, knitting a shroud, as the grand and gracious Queen of Heaven who keeps on forgetting she isn't part of the Blessed Trinity. The shroud is intended for her loin-clothed Son, anaemic, whining hypochondriacal, resentful that the Atonement wasn't symbolic and squirming at every fresh sacrifice in the mass. Over all presides Almighty God, immemorial, wondrously robed and wheezing, vain, petulant and rather past-it. He is particularly riled at having to receive a little brat whom Holy Mother Church has sent up as a saint. Her qualifications are that she never joined the other children in their pranks, is looking forward to seeing them roasting in hell, has been raped 284 times, mostly by Benedictine monks, and hated every minute of it. This story prompts Jehovah to wonder just what is going on down below, and from this the rather inconsequential plot flows.

As might be expected Warren Mitchell is a splendidly seedy Satan, though even he cannot fully cope with an interminable monologue where ponderous quasi-theology is mixed with a quasi-poetic evocation of syphilis, amid a battery of creaking stage effects. As the pope Martin Boddey cleverly portrays a lecher who doesn't forget the mystique of his office; John Trigger makes the most of a "colourless" Jesus (Sample sick joke: "You've even made Jesus blush—which is saying something with the blood that he's got"); while Elizabeth Knight and Lally Bowers delight as the odious brat and the twee Virgin respectively. But, appropriately, the honours of the evening go to God. Peter Bayliss hams and rages, schemes and splutters, poses and prattles in a way that is not only hilarious but manages to combine vindictiveness with the pathos of a person of distinction surrounded by an impossible earthly and heavenly crew.

DAVID TRIBE

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LETTERS

The Ulster Problem

Mr James McMahon's letter is a sad document, but I wonder if I may reply to his many points in so far as space permits.

I agree that Ulster "is entitled to its share of public funds for development"; the trouble is that the only thing that does seem to develop in the north-eastern part is strife and bigotry. If the six north-eastern counties are an "integral" part of the UK why do they have a semi-autonomous Government at Stormont, a luxury enjoyed by no other part of the UK except the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, neither of which use this facility to perpetuate an anachronism like the Orange Order?

The decrease of Protestants in the Irish Republic may be attributed simply to two factors: (1) Most of the Unionist diehards who left the South at the time of the creation of the Free State in 1921 were Protestants; (2) Catholics generally have a higher birth-rate. Far more sinister, in view of (2) above, is the fact that the proportion of Catholics in Northern Ireland has risen only by a few fractions of one per cent, reasonable evidence I would suppose of differential emigration.

Mr McMahon's complaint about Catholic discrimination in recent (Irish) elections is not sufficient cause to hang the Republic. Firstly, public protest was made (and permitted to be made) by Conor Cruise O'Brien; secondly the same sort of thing happened on a smaller scale in the last British General Election (reported in the *Freethinker* a few weeks back); thirdly, there is at least proportional representation in the Republic, and no legally established church—a far cry from the gerrymandering in Londonderry and the "Protestant Ulster" of which the late Lord Craigavon used to boast. Indeed, were the Six Counties part of an all-Ireland state, their influence would help to counter more effectively any misuse of the machinery of government by any one religious group. Frankly, the North seems to be far more (Protestant) "priest-ridden" in its parliamentary institutions than the South.

I am not sure who the "earlier freethinkers" were who honoured William III, but I hope they did not also overlook the fact that his Parliament "welched" on the honourable terms that William had arranged at the treaty of Limerick, and so reduced the Irish Catholics to serfs and second-class citizens devoid of almost all legal and civil rights, an action whose legacy has hag-ridden Irish affairs down to the present day. I have no illusions about the Papacy, but it is also true to say that I know some Irish Catholics who are more liberal in their outlook than many Protestants—and some "freethinkers".

The fact that Irish is the official first language of the Republic in no way precludes any claims over north-eastern Ulster. Gaelic is the first spoken language of only a minority in the South; and, furthermore, in the UK there are still minorities who speak the Scottish form of Gaelic, and another Celtic language, Welsh (not to mention Cornish, Manx, etc., which are moribund). Incidentally, Mr McMahon's own name is Gaelic (*Mac Mathghamhna* or *Mac Mathúna*, "Son of Bear"), and Colonel Art McMahon was among many of that name who fought for James II.

NIGEL SINNOTT.

Wrong Image

What the Humanist movement sorely needs is a more cheerful public image. I don't deny that there is much to be sad about in the world. There always has been, but there is much to be happy about as well. My first real introduction to Humanism was Kit Mouat's *What Humanism is About* and on seeing the six dismal faces on the dust cover my wife remarked: "If that's what Humanism does for you, I don't want to know". In fact she was a Humanist without knowing it.

Apart from a few notable exceptions on the front cover of *Humanist* our literature is hardly designed to attract the young in heart although it may disturb the sensitive. How about a few pretty girls on Humanist holidays, happy children or even a "happy man"? Let's see more of the results Humanist influence is achieving and less of the results of inhumanist action. We need literature that will be passed around by the young because it invigorates, not just because it agrees with their gripes.

One area that seems to have been virtually ignored is the Community Association. There are well over 400 in this country, most of them secular by constitution, and the best are real ex-

amples of the open society. They can provide what is so often missing in the welfare state; real interest and friendship. Large grants are available to keep them growing (maximum £10,000) if well supported, and some even have dances on Sunday nights. These are the sort of organisations where Humanists can really make headway and will in time, I think, eventually replace the churches in their social function. (Further information may be obtained from the National Federation of Community Associations, 26 Bedford Square, London, W1.) Starting a Community Association can also bring considerable credit to a local Humanist group.

We must get rid of the "dead face" of Humanism if we are to get real public support. Philosophy is fine in its place, but most of it looks like "dry rot" to the average youngster. There is much to be done but it is so much easier to do it with a happy heart.

MIKE SKINNER.

Prison Visiting

May I please ask through your columns if there is any Freethinker / Humanist willing and able to visit a man (a well-educated alcoholic in his forties) in Wandsworth prison who has declared his beliefs to the authorities as "Humanist"? If so, could he or she contact me and I will give more details. Perhaps one day Humanists will be welcomed as official prison visitors, but so far the idea has not always met with Home Office approval. When we do get the chance to change the situation, it is a pity to miss it.

KIT MOUAT, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Courage

Peter Crommelin's personal experience of "emancipation from religion" (15 August) contributes much to surely the most effective way of encouraging others to "guard against self-deception". Indeed, the giving up of either religious belief or habit requires courage as well as rationality—something that Secular Humanist campaigners should not forget!

As regards Mr Crommelin's belief in what he calls his "free and rational will", I am unable to understand his position. For example, I cannot reconcile the following: "I am what I have chosen to be"; "What I am is determined by what I think".

CHARLES BYASS.

Apology

I do apologise for the clumsy injustice I did to Margaret Knight in my review of David Tribe's pamphlet *The Cost of Church Schools*. I had no intention of implying that her foreword was hostile. It was far from that. I should have been as honest as she was, and admitted that within me, too, there is something of a trimmer. It was really against my own normal tendency to look everywhere for allies, and therefore to speak softly, that I was using her phrase—or, as she points out, somewhat misusing it. I should have made this clear. Whenever Mr Tribe thunders, I tell myself that any real allies in the other camp cannot possibly be antagonised—they must surely recognise the sincerity and concern, and admire the bravura, of his argument. But in writing my review under the influence of this feeling, I should not have held Mrs Knight in front of me as a shield. I now put her down, most apologetically.

EDWARD BLISHEN.

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