

NEW ORGANISATION TO DEFEND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The inaugural meeting of the Council for Academic Freedom took place at Imperial College, London, last Saturday. The CAF (which will be run in conjunction with the National Council for Civil Liberties) has been formed to resist victimisation and discrimination in any area of higher education. Many of them feel that further attacks will be made by the State and university authorities who have already used the bizarre activities of some students as an excuse for whipping up hysteria against anyone who criticises the authoritarian and anti-democratic régimes in many centres of higher education. One of the disturbing developments is the way in which some academics, in association with university administrators, have used their influence to restrict academic freedom. The new CAF does not aim to be a rival or alternative to the Association of University Teachers or similar bodies; nevertheless its impact on the academic world is likely to be significant. Michael Lloyd-Jones, Martin Page, Professor Hyman Levy and Professor Julius Lewin represented the National Secular Society at the conference.

Victimised Lecturers

Michael Lloyd-Jones writes: The increasingly frequent dismissal of lecturers holding progressive views was an issue that dominated this conference. Many of those present were able to give first-hand accounts of the sackings at LSE, Guildford and Hornsey. The speakers included Dick Atkinson whose appointment to Birmingham University was vetoed because of his left-wing sympathies.

This aspect of the threat to academic freedom concerned the conference to such an extent that it seemed in danger of turning the proposed Council into nothing more than a legal aid scheme for victimised lecturers. Eventually the conference moved on to an analysis of the authoritarian power structure of universities and colleges which make this kind of discrimination and victimisation possible.

Student Participation

It soon became clear that academic freedom was only possible in a democratic context, and that universities and colleges should be run on democratic lines with full participation of staff and students. This view was reflected in changing the Council's name to the Council for Academic Freedom and Democracy. This endorsement of student participation will be welcomed by those students who are accustomed to hearing that student involvement represents the chief threat to academic freedom. But as Ralph Miliband of the LSE said in a background paper: "The student movement has for the most part been the best thing that has happened to higher education".

The threat to academic freedom comes not from students but from government, industry and the college authorities. The Guildford and Warwick affairs have clearly shown the dangers of the insidious control by government and industry. This must be stopped, as must be the ruthless intimidation of staff by local education authorities and university mandarins.

We must be concerned with freedom of thought wherever it is threatened. Now that lecturers have joined students in their struggle there can be no doubt that the fight for academic freedom must be one of our top priorities. Those wishing to contact the Council for Academic Freedom should do so through the National Council for Civil Liberties, 152 Camden High Street, London, NW1.

SURVEY REVEALS LARGE NUMBER OF UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES

Ann Cartwright's survey of parents and family planning services for the Institute of Community Studies was published last week. It will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the *Freethinker*.

David Tribe writes: Successive Secretaries of State for the Social Services have declined to consider the pressing need for expanded family planning advice and facilities on the grounds that they are awaiting the publication of an official report on present arrangements. Without official surveys it should be apparent to all that many local authorities have not exercised the permissive powers of the 1967 National Health Service (Family Planning) Act: that battered babies, juvenile delinquency and abortions are some indication of the prevalence of unwanted pregnancies; that the population explosion throughout the world is one of its most pressing problems; and that, while Britain's birth-rate is rising at a more limited rate than that of other countries, this is already a crowded island.

While awaiting the findings of the official report, the Government may like to consult that produced by Dr Ann Cartwright. This was based on research into the experiences and attitudes of mothers, fathers, GPs, health visitors and FPA clinic doctors associated with 1,800 legitimate births in 12 areas of England and Wales. From these apparently favourable circumstances it transpires that one third of the conceptions were undesired at the time they occurred and a half of these happened in spite of some sort of family planning arrangements at the period. Only 36 per cent of women who were prescribed the Pill by their GPs as distinct from a clinic doctor reported that they had been medically examined at the time. In such circumstances many tended to abandon the Pill or show undesirable side effects. Assessment of the adequacy of family planning arrangements in the local area ranged from a 78 per cent favourable response from GPs to 43 per cent from fathers. Some areas are clearly less adequate than others and these would appear to be places where there is a strong Roman Catholic influence.

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COLOUR, CITIZENSHIP AND BRITISH SOCIETY

KEVIN PAGE

Many of the popular myths relating to coloured immigrants are shown to be unsubstantiated by the evidence given in a highly informative and objective report by the Institute of Race Relations. A revised edition, by Nicholas Deakin, is now available.

The coloured community is now officially estimated at 1,185,000, or two per cent of the total population; but half the people of Britain believe that there are at least two million immigrants in this country. This illustrates how erroneous are the views of the Powellites and other extremists who fear that this country will be swamped by coloured immigrants overnight. It is true that they are concentrated in certain areas, but not quite so heavily as is sometimes imagined. There are only six local authority areas (all of them in London) where they constitute more than five per cent of the total population; and even in Brent, where the concentration is highest, only 7.4 per cent of the citizens are coloured.

Well over half the population believe that immigrants benefit disproportionately from the social services; again there is no evidence for this assertion when the services are taken as a whole. Coloured immigrants have on average, larger families than the English (though not the Irish); but their birth-rate appears to be decreasing. Immigrants do occupy a higher percentage of maternity beds relative to their numbers and resort more to child welfare services. On the other hand, they make very little use of the geriatric services. There is little evidence that coloured immigrants are a health hazard; for example, in 1968 only 59 out of 53,000 immigrants were rejected on health grounds. Moreover, 22 per cent of all our doctors and about 30 per cent of our nurses are from overseas.

Employment and Housing

There is still widespread discrimination against coloured workers in employment, especially in recruitment to "white-collar" and supervisory jobs. In many cases employers only engage coloured workers because of labour shortages. It is significant that although London Transport recruited labour direct from Barbados, it employed no coloured bus inspectors at all before 1968. Ironically, it is argued in the revised report that the immigrants rather than the indigenous population should be more amenable to technical progress, even though the former originated from countries with less advanced economies than our own.

Generally, coloured immigrants live in worse housing than the English. In London and the West Midlands, for instance, immigrants live in houses nearly twice as overcrowded as those inhabited by the rest of the population in those areas. Many local housing departments have done relatively little to alleviate the plight of coloured immigrants.

In 1963 the Department of Education initiated its policy of "dispersal", i.e. limiting immigrants to 30 per cent in any one school. This policy, however, overlooked the basic lack of human and material resources, and undermined the concept of neighbourhood schools. The report tends to play down the considerable problem of language in regard to immigrant pupils. Many immigrants, because of their lack of English, are placed in lower streams or even

remedial classes. Until recently, official educational policy was to train the immigrants to be good British citizens, rather than members of a diversified, multi-racial society.

Immigrants' Attitude to Britain

One of the most interesting sections of the report examines in depth the attitudes of the various immigrant groups towards this country. The West Indians, for example, were the most "assimilationist" of coloured immigrants, as they regarded themselves as being English. Contrary to popular belief, West Indian women are limiting their families, partly as a result of our environment. In the countries of origin of the West Indians, illegitimacy carries no stigma, but in England about half of them have their children legitimised. By sharp contrast, the Pakistanis see Britain as a foreign country, with their loyalties remaining firmly with their mother nation, village and kin. The Indians are the most homogeneous and best organised of the coloured immigrants. Since many of them arrived, their living standards have improved, and they have adopted a Western style of life with mothers and daughters going out to work.

The turning point in Government policy came in 1958 with the large influx of immigrants, and the race riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill. When it was set up in 1965, the Race Relations Board had inadequate powers. Although the Labour Government pioneered race relations legislation in this country, its own record in this field has been far from exemplary. James Callaghan, when Home Secretary, talked rather grandly of every citizen having equal rights and opportunities, but only one month later he introduced legislation which, in the words of Lord Stonham, "would remove from them (i.e. the "Kenyan" Asians) their right to United Kingdom citizenship".

The second Race Relations Act was courageous in scope, but employers were still allowed to operate racial quotas. The report does not consider the effect of such legislation in liberalizing the attitudes of every individual towards immigrants, which constitutes an essential ingredient of harmonious race relations. The race problem cannot be overcome simply by reducing the number of immigrants already here, either by voluntary repatriation, or, if that fails, deportation.

The Police

Police/immigrant relations have been steadily deteriorating for several years; and so it is more important than ever that the police disciplinary code should specifically prohibit discrimination on racial grounds. Complaints against the police should be reviewed by independent external bodies, and more coloured police should be recruited. Contrary to popular belief, crime rates for the coloured are generally lower than for the white population. The report justly censures the churches for not taking more active steps to promote racial harmony in Britain. It was found that only one in six of the white population was consistently prejudiced against coloured immigrants.

(Continued foot of next page)

TELEVISION: THE PERSONALITY CULT

PETER COTES

The first episode in Malcolm Muggeridge's new BBC series on his familiar religious *The Question Why*, was small beer when the question of whether violence is ever justified by the Christian religion was discussed. This was in relation to the Palestine guerilla fighters and the taking of hostages in particular. Malcolm M proved himself a worthy opponent to that other Malcolm (X) who would appear to favour power (violence being therefore invoked in achieving one's ends) rather than equality. The Muggeridge "personality" is nowadays wearing a bit thin and one yearns to have a few characters ventilating their views who are independent enough to say what the Bible really is—a very violent book indeed. But then perhaps they wouldn't get asked again? One member of the panel, thought the skyjacking less serious than some others present. He laughed a lot. We didn't.

Another member of the personality cult, Peter Ustinov, cut a poor show when he travelled around, with hand held cameras following in his wake, at the Expo 70 Japan programme recently shown on *Omnibus*. There was I in these columns recently extolling the virtues of *Omnibus* and they they come up with this silly thing. Something equally effortful had been done the previous week on the other channel in ITV's *Aquaris*, when there was a repeat of the Cannes Film Festival. One of the rival pet satirists walked around in much the same fashion as Ustinov, saying witless things and talking to dull people, at the same time dressed up for the occasion. The youthful jokester of *Aquarius* was dressed up as a King's Road hippy (or something resembling a typical product of the Saturday afternoon monkey-crawl so self-consciously put on for the delight of our transatlantic visitors), while Ustinov carried around a Union Jack for no apparent purpose than to try and be funny. Bad joke; especially coming from such a versatile chappie and in a series already made dignified by its portraits of Kathleen Ferrier, J. B. Priestley and Malcolm Arnold—not to mention the Ken Russell biographies, Elgar, Delius, *et al*.

Churchill in Decline

Continuing the personality cult, a far bigger subject, Winston Churchill, was the star of an episode in the Thames TV series, *The Day Before Yesterday* (1945/1963). Here the wartime leader of the nation was shown as a stubborn old boy who probably never should have been the Prime Minister in those fateful years, 1951-1955. And this despite Sir Edward Boyle, a former Tory MP with a good record in educational matters and noted for his liberal viewpoint, saying that this was a fine era of government. Sir Edward (now Lord Boyle) is always worth listening to and looking at. He was a youthful member in this Churchill government.

The whole thing was smartly edited and composed of old documentary features and interviews with old friends and colleagues. We were able to form an opinion of why the old "war horse" clung to office, even after his severe stroke in 1953. It was made manifestly clear that the party leader had no confidence in those members of his team to nominate a successor capable of following in his footsteps. Eden was in hospital in America at the time and it

was finally left to Macmillan to "persuade" Churchill that he was past his prime and that his reign was really proving a bit of an anti-climax. It was good documentary stuff, with J. R. Colville, Churchill's joint Principal Private Secretary at the time, disclosing why he had to break faith with his old master to defying instructions that he must not tell anybody that he'd had a stroke. Colville was a victim of mixed loyalties; he had been told by Lord Moran that Churchill would not live over the weekend and he had to make a rapid decision about the Tory party's next leader). Those out of this country knew about the stroke as it occurred. I recall being in New York at the time and reading in two American papers that Churchill had suffered a stroke. The Question Why indeed! What would Little Malcolm have done when faced with *this* one? Altogether, funny and sad. Rewarding viewing about a man who, whatever his faults, was really big; man of destiny, statesman, novelist, orator, painter and entertainer. A great entertainer. The only one of the personality cult in the recent weeks of viewing who one felt had greatness in his being, as distinct from having (what he indubitably had), greatness thrust upon him. Eden followed in due course, then came Suez—and the rest is by now only too well known to need repeating here.

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but over half the population regarded them as being innately inferior. Significantly, the original report, which found the vast majority of the British public tolerant towards coloured immigrants, had to be revised on this very point. Some people may be shocked to learn that many immigrants, especially Asians, regard the English as unclean, lazy, overfond of gambling and swearing and morally lax!

Recommendations

The original report made no less than 78 recommendations including non-discrimination clauses in Government contracts, legal reforms, a civil rights movement, and churches to release more buildings for community activities. Why should responsibility for racial integration rest with the Department of Health and Social Security, which is far too bureaucratic and inconsistent in its treatment of the underprivileged? Is it desirable that employers should classify their employees according to their ethnic origin? Paradoxically, the Commonwealth Immigration Acts provided the impetus for many immigrants and their dependants to settle permanently in Britain, contrary to the intention of these Acts.

Racial prejudice is far too commonplace, pervading all sectors of society. To a decreasing extent we are still an insular people, and our recent colonial past did intensify feelings of white supremacy. Even today many people are reluctant to treat any foreigner—let alone the Black British—as equal. In my opinion, immigration controls are justifiable to facilitate racial integration, but they must be applied, without fear or favour, to *all* those wishing to enter this country.

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 Mout, 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

South Place Ethical Society. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 11 October, 11 a.m. Victor Serebriakoff: "A Defence of Meritocracy". Same day, 3 p.m. Humanist Forum with H. J. Blackham, Philip Buttinger, the Rev A. B. Downing, the Rev Tony Cross and Lord Sorensen. Tuesday, 13 October, 7 p.m. John Papworth: "Politics is Mad so What do we do?"

Guildford Humanist Group. Guildford House, Thursday, 15 October, 7.45 p.m. "The Basis of Morality".

Irish Humanist Association and Northern Ireland Humanist Association. Rostrevor Hotel, Rostrevor, Co. Down, Saturday, 31 October and Sunday, 1 November. Second annual conference; theme: "Remember Your Humanity". Speakers include Margaret Knight and John Hewitt. Programmes from Basil Cooper, 46 Cadogan Park, Belfast BT9 6HH.

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1. United Nations Day, Saturday, 24 October, 7 p.m. Public meeting on South Africa. Speakers include Professor Julius Lewin; sponsors include National Secular Society.

London Young Humanists. Party at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8, Sunday, 18 October, 8 p.m. Bring a bottle.

SURVEY REVEALS LARGE NUMBER OF UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES

(Continued from front page)

In face of the appalling problems of housing, hospital and school shortages, overcrowded roads, rising crime and delinquency, widespread abortion (though Secularists have been most active in fighting for the 1967 Abortion Act, they would prefer to obviate its necessity), the above figures are a national disgrace. I hope that urgent questions will be asked in the House the moment Parliament re-assembles.

NEWS

RESOLUTIONS ON PEACE AND POPULATION

Resolutions were passed on a wide range of subjects at the recent Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union in Boston, Mass., and we publish the texts of four of them.

1. Population Control, Family Planning and Abortion

The IHEU views with alarm the continuing increase in world population and recognizes this as one of the most urgent problems facing mankind.

Malnutrition, starvation, poverty, lack of medical and educational services, pollution of the environment, underdevelopment, conflict and war are already, and will continue to be, aggravated by excessive numbers of people.

The IHEU, in working to build a world where each child born should have an environment in which it may grow to reach its full human potential, and realising the impossibility of this if present population trends continue, calls on international agencies, national governments, Humanist organisations and people of goodwill everywhere to cooperate in order to limit population growth.

The IHEU wishes specifically to endorse and support the following principles and programmes:

(a) Family Planning

Education toward responsible parenthood and family planning should be encouraged, research into birth control intensified and scientifically sound contraception made available throughout the world.

(b) Legal Abortion on Request

Since the children born should preferably be wanted children, and since many women are faced with unwanted pregnancies as a result of unavailable, omitted or failed contraception, medical abortions should be available to women on request as a fundamental human right and as an additional means of population control.

(c) Voluntary Sterilisation

Voluntary sterilisation of men and women should not be discouraged. Legal restrictions against family planning, abortion and voluntary sterilisation should be removed in all countries.

2. Appeal to the Roman Catholic Church

The IHEU calls the attention of the world to the fact that traditional religious attitudes are often the major block to action toward population control.

In particular, the attitude of the leaders of the Catholic Church regarding voluntary contraception, sterilisation and abortion leads to appalling social consequences.

The IHEU, therefore, makes an urgent appeal to the Catholic Church to change its attitudes, and to stop opposing effective family planning and the liberalisation of abortion legislation, thus permitting freedom of conscience for the individual.

3. US Policy in South East Asia

In accordance with the motto of this Fifth Congress of the IHEU, "To Seek a Humane World", the International Humanist and Ethical Union hereby condemn the cruel

AND NOTES

and immoral American war of aggression in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and urges that the United States Government begin immediately, and complete by 1 January, 1971, withdrawal from these countries of all troops, aircraft and other military forces, as part of a general peace settlement.

4. Resolution on South East Asia and Czechoslovakia

The International Humanist and Ethical Union calls upon the US Government to cease its appalling destruction of life and liberty in South East Asia and to withdraw its forces without delay.

We also call upon the Government of the USSR to end its occupation of Czechoslovakia and its suppression of the freedom of the Czechoslovak people in their attempt to create "socialism with a human face".

The IHEU believes that it speaks for men and women throughout the world in condemning the intervention by the major military powers in the affairs of smaller nations in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We urge the Governments of the USA and the USSR to begin to use their resources to tackle effectively, the human problems of the world.

Those from Britain who attended the Congress included G. N. Deodhekar (National Secular Society), Peter Draper, Harold Blackham, Michael Lines, Fanny Lines, Kenneth Furness (British Humanist Association), Hector Hawton and Christopher Macy (Rationalist Press Association).

REPORT ON CENSORSHIP

Only President Nixon's nominee and two clergymen signed a dissenting statement when the findings of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography were issued last week. The Commission declared no real purpose is served by laws banning the distribution of obscene or pornographic matter, and that American adults should be free to buy openly any kind of sexual material they liked.

The report has already been condemned by the censorious as "a Magna Carta for the pornographer". Others will claim that a realistic and careful assessment of the situation led the majority of Commission members to conclude that there is no warrant for continuing Government interference with adults' freedom to read or view whatever they wish. Certainly the report will have wide repercussions in the United States and elsewhere.

FREETHINKER FUND

There was an increase of nearly £16 in donations to the Freethinker Fund during September. We thank the following contributors: H. A. Alexander 9/6; S. Berry 8/6; Lily Van Duren 5/-; H. Etherington 10/-; R. Reader 7/6; D. E. Heath 8/6; E. R. Grenda 6/-; Esperantist 18/6; H. R. Scobell 2/-; I. L. Brydon 3/6; A. C. Muller 4/-; A. Foster 19/-; J. Hudson 13/6; S. Venning £1; C. Byass £1; Professor G. Cunelli 9/-; W. R. Price £1; W. Adams £2 5/-; J. W. Bellamy £2; J. MacLennan £10; H. Eckersley £2/18/6. Total £26/8/-; already acknowledged £119/1/6; 1970 total to date: £145/9/6.

REPLY TO CRITIC

Alexander Clarke's review of my booklet, *Abortion a Crime* (*Freethinker*, 5 September), is an interesting example of progressivist package-deal thinking. In the booklet I argued at some length and I think in a reasoned fashion that an unborn child was no less a human being than a child actually born. If this is indeed the case, then it would follow that the legal protection given to a born child should be accorded equally to the unborn child.

It is these hardly outrageous propositions which have brought forth Mr Clarke's hysterical diatribe. I am held guilty of all the sins in the progressive demonology—sympathy with the Spanish and South African dictatorships, Powellism, religious fanaticism, hatred of women and sex, and so on, and so on.

It would be foolish to attempt to reply to rant of this sort. Anyone who reads my booklet can see for himself that there is nothing whatever in it to justify such abuse. What is interesting and alarming is the way in which, by some extraordinary perversion of language, the pro-abortionist cause can be represented as, in any sense, a liberal one. In my booklet I described some of the methods of abortion, e.g., the Kerslake Operation by which "one is left with a jar full of blood with recognisable bits of baby floating about". I also mentioned the case referred to by a gynaecological registrar at Luton and Dunstable Hospital. Here a "foetus cried for half-an-hour but was still put in a bucket". I quoted a leader from the *British Medical Journal* for 30 May, 1970, which expressed alarm about cases where the admission to hospital of women with pelvic cancer was delayed because abortion cases were given priority.

Now, clearly, one can argue about these things and possibly the pro-abortionists can find some sort of justification for them. I only say again how extraordinary it is that opposition to abortion should be characterised as illiberal and an example of "religious fanaticism".

There is little doubt that an attempt could have been made to save the life of the child who was put in a bucket. It could, in fact, have been a "viable" life. Is it not the case that "the humane ethical and parental feeling of the plain man leads him to wish to extend the protection of the criminal law not only to the newly born child but to the viable child before birth"? It was not one of Mr Clarke's religious fanatics or a representative of the "black forces" in our society who said this but Professor Glanville Williams in his *The Sanctity of Life and the Criminal Law*. Readers of the *Freethinker* will, no doubt, be aware that Professor Glanville Williams is president of the Abortion Law Reform Association.

Mr Clarke also took exception to my scepticism about some of the wild figures relating to illegal abortions bandied about by the pro-abortionists. Here, again, let us turn to Professor Glanville Williams. In the same work he mentions an estimate of criminal abortions and says, "Dr Keith Simpson, like Professor Glass, thinks this to be an under estimate. Dr Eustace Chesser says that his most conservative estimate cannot be less than a quarter of a million every year". Glanville Williams adds that, "unfortunately these writers do not state the way in which they arrived at their conclusions". Unfortunately not!

To oppose abortion, then, it is not necessary to be a supporter of General Franco, capital punishment, etc. Mr Clarke undoubtedly finds it convenient to have his opinions neatly set out and packaged for him, one parcel labelled "progressive", another "reactionary", etc. Fortunately, not everyone thinks like him. If they did, I don't suppose so many humanists and atheists would be members of LIFE.

MARTIN MEARS

BOOKS

CAPITALIST SOCIETY AND MODERN SOCIOLOGY

by H. Frankel. Lawrence and Wishart, 65s.

If you want to find out how well-informed a friend is, ask him one of these two questions:

- (a) What percentage of the population of Britain today would you call working-class?
- (b) How is wealth divided between the rich on the one hand and the poor and the comfortable on the other?

Only a tiny proportion of those you question will get their answers roughly right; and many will be absurdly wide of the truth in their guesses. For your superior knowledge, then, note that the answer to (a) is about 70 per cent and the answer to (b) is that five per cent of the people own 75 per cent of the wealth.

These figures are drawn from Mr Frankel's excellent book which is squarely based on all the best sources of material. Its main object is to prove how false the idea is that the contemporary welfare state has seriously diminished economic inequality between the classes in our society. Conservatives have long encouraged the belief that heavy taxation of the rich and wider opportunities for the poor have really and truly advanced the cause of social justice greatly in the last 30 years. It is not so; and Mr Frankel provides a battery of figures and facts to prove his contention that Britain is still a capitalist country, full of blatant inequalities.

Of course, changes there have been. But their total effect is very much smaller than nine out of ten people imagine. The illusion that Britain in 1970 is a very different country from the Britain of 1939 rests in large part on the confusion of incomes with wealth. It is true that the gap between the highest and the lowest incomes has grown narrower. It is also true that absolute poverty has virtually been eliminated, in the sense that the number of people is small who get too little to eat; and this is a notable achievement. Poverty, however, is a relative matter, once sheer hunger and lack of shelter are not suffered. It is hardly possible to draw a poverty line, to say a person does or does not need this or that article because so much depends on what others are getting.

A change of importance has occurred in the composition and character of the intermediate class who fill new occupations in new industries based on changing technology. There has, for instance, been a big rise in the number of draughtsmen in the last 20 years; and many more men are employed in the motor, electronic, and aircraft industries. Such men commonly have a confused idea about their own status. "Class", it has been said, "depends on where your money comes from, and status on what it goes on".

What is not in doubt—though it is usually concealed—is the part played by the ownership of property as the major source of wealth. And here we mean by property much more than a small suburban house complete with mortgage. The significant form of property in this context is not private houses but stocks and shares in public companies. I hope Mr Frankel tells his students that they ought to visit the most important national institution in London—the Stock Exchange!

FREETHINKER

Incidentally, the need for a tax on wealth should be kept before the public. It is regrettable that the Labour Party only toyed with this proposal and then put it aside as a temptation to be avoided. No doubt the civil servants in Whitehall pointed out all the technical difficulties involved in this proposal. Some men have a difficulty for every solution; they decline to accept the fact that where there is a political will, there is an economic and financial way of achieving an end.

Mr Frankel is frankly and rightly critical of present-day sociologists who are eager to explain away or to obscure the persistent inequalities in British life. He remarks on his last page that "sociology came into existence in a continuous attempt to counter the growing influence of socialism". This point is valid, though one should not make too much of it. For one thing, it is current American sociology, embodied in countless books written in unreadable jargon, that has so unfortunately influenced British lecturers on the subject; and Americans in general are hardly liable to fall under the influence of socialism. What is beyond argument is the fact, stressed by Frankel, that the German sociologist Max Weber has been hailed as a prophet much superior to Marx. Yet Weber died 50 years ago, and I cannot help believing that there are more complex social phenomena in Britain today than he ever dreamt of. In a sense this is true also of Marx; and I wish Mr Frankel had relied less heavily on Marx. Since he knows that "British sociology inherits a radical tradition of its own", he might have told his readers something about great British sociologists like John A. Hobson (a sadly neglected figure), L. T. Hobhouse and Morris Ginsberg.

So bare a summary does less than justice to the richness of Mr Frankel's book. Knowing the field, I can say that students will find this the most instructive book about British sociology published in the last two decades. What is more, it is written in an admirably lucid style. I therefore hope that ordinary readers will not be put off it by its title or by the fear that sociology must always be unintelligible to the layman. Nor need anyone be a full-blooded Marxist to appreciate the powers of analysis as well as the immense care that has gone into the making of this book. Yet it is doubtful if it will be reviewed in many respectable journals, and is highly unlikely to be warmly recommended by any. Its implications are too radical to win it praise.

JULIUS LEWIN

THE BLACK DEATH

by Philip Ziegler. Pelican, 8s.

In this well-documented account of the plague known as the Black Death, Philip Ziegler fills a somewhat neglected gap in the history of an event which had far-reaching social and economic effects, and was instrumental in radically changing medieval Europe. Apart from a monograph by Dr Coulton, and a book by Cardinal Gasquet in 1893, there have been few detailed studies of the catastrophe that overwhelmed Europe in the 14th century. Since those works appeared new material has come to light and many ideas invalidated or modified.

REVIEWS

This realistic description of one of the greatest natural calamities ever to affect mankind must present to the intelligent reader an indictment of religious power as the serious barrier to progress in the Middle Ages, especially in the fields of medical science and education. Restriction in experimental anatomy and physiology, and the role of doctors as subordinate to that of priests are two instances. Mr Ziegler makes no claim to original research, only to synthesis in a single readable volume the works of contemporary chroniclers and those of later historians. In this he has succeeded admirably. He traces the origin of the plague from China where it was raging, spreading by means of traders along the silk and spice routes to Baghdad, up the Tigris to Asia Minor and the Black Sea trading posts—mostly Italian—from where, according to the chronicle of a Franciscan friar, twelve Genoese galleys brought it to Messina in Sicily. From there it made rapid progress to Italy, North Africa, along the Mediterranean coast to France and Spain. The state of Europe and the countries concerned each have a chapter devoted to them.

Europe was already in the grip of a recession and in no condition to withstand a pestilence of such magnitude. Owing to a succession of bad harvests many people were starving, and the great Fairs were declining, as was the cloth trade of Flanders and Brabant. Italy had suffered a series of severe earth quakes, whilst in 1345 six months of continuous rain had produced a disastrous effect on crops. The economic situation was so bad that in Florence some of the great banking houses like the Bardi went bankrupt. In that city the plague raged with exceptional intensity. A vivid description is given by Boccaccio in his introduction to the Decameron and is, according to Ziegler, "deservedly the best known account of the Black Death and probably the most celebrated eye-witness account of any pestilence in any epoch".

Progress of the disease is followed from Marseilles westwards to Bordeaux and north to Avignon, Lyons and Paris, and on to Flanders and Germany, taking its terrible toll of lives. It is recorded that wolves coming down to attack sheep sensed something was wrong and fled back to their forests! The book mentions in some detail two unpleasant by-products of the plague in Germany—emergence of the Flagellant movement and persecution and massacre of Jews, for which the author claims the Catholic Church must bear some responsibility. People had become accustomed to blame Jews for the crucifixion and now blamed them for the pestilence. Mention is not made in this context of the high esteem in which Jews were held in Arab-Moorish Spain. There, the great Jewish teachers, philosophers and doctors flourished until Christianity was established.

Mr Ziegler deals with the backwardness of medical science which was hampered by the determination of the Church to keep the role of doctor secondary to that of priest. All medical training at universities was on lines laid down by the Church. The death roll is difficult to assess in various areas but some estimates are given. Public and private morality suffered in some places, the mood being one of reckless indulgence, "for tomorrow we die".

In England the plague first made its appearance at Melcombe Regis in Dorset, now part of Weymouth. From there it rapidly covered the rest of the British Isles. The

Bishop of Winchester considered it a just chastisement of the people for having provoked the Divine wrath. Poor simple Bishop! He duly prescribed penance, barefoot processions, and litanies to avert disaster. This book bears witness to the result of those pious exercises. The Church benefited considerably both in money and cattle from heriots (dues from the estates of the dead) it collected.

Overcrowded, insanitary London suffered badly. Thomas Walsingham deplored the decline in morality, John of Reading noted the increase of crime, especially that of sacrilege. One chapter is devoted to the reconstruction from scraps of authentic material of the atmosphere in a village suddenly struck by the plague. Social and economic consequences of the pestilence, its effects on education, agriculture and architecture are all critically examined and discussed; so is the question of whether the Peasants' Revolt can be attributed to the Black Death. Very little in English life survived it wholly unchanged. The disaster generated a mood of questioning and caused people to be more receptive to new ideas and reforms. Owing to a shortage of teachers of Latin there was an important advance in the growth of education in the vernacular—a factor in bringing about the Reformation.

The concluding chapter deals with the effects on the Church and on man's mind. People felt that the Church had let them down. Although many priests and friars did noble work during the visitation, it was evident, from Pope Clement VI's scathing letter to senior churchmen who had petitioned him to ban the friars, that he was voicing public opinion in Europe. Though the Church continued as a potent force, the authority it had formerly exercised was never to be recovered.

There is a double-page map (by Dr Carpenter) showing movement and extent of the plague in Europe, and an extensive bibliography giving both contemporary and later sources and a good index. *The Black Death* is a very readable and immensely interesting book.

ELIZABETH COLLINS

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LETTERS

Hunting

I am wholly in sympathy with the sentiments of Peter Cotes (12 September) and it would indeed be a great day if the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ceased to be pro-hunting. But it is mistaken to think that the Society's sympathy with the hunters rather than the hunted is a result of its royal patronage. This patronage may well be a drawback (the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has discussed the matter and decided it prefers to be called just "national"), but the RSPCA rot goes deeper. So long as its "top people" are of the hunting fraternity (particularly among the presidents and chairmen of its branches), it will cling to bloodsports.

When the RSPCA becomes totally discredited over the hunting issue it will be dropped without pity by the British Field Sports Society as no longer useful.

GWENDOLEN BARTER.

Joan of Arc

As a former theatre critic of the *Freethinker*, I wish to make some remarks about David Tribe's review of Bernard Shaws' *Saint Joan* at the Mermaid Theatre, London.

Every production of this play raises the question as to the kind of person Joan was. Mr Tribe thinks she was schizophrenic. Her name is surrounded in mystery because of what cannot be logically explained on the legendary story that has been spread by the Roman Catholic Church. If, as Mr Tribe says, he explored Joan of Arc's territory, then he has been to Domremy, Rouen, Orleans and Chinon, and has been able to assess the commercialisation of the figure that was canonised in Shaw's time, and must have inspired him to write the play.

It would be wiser to refute the idea that Joan was a Christian, and you can be assisted in this by reading Margaret Murray's *The God of the Witches* and *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*. If, after that, you still believe that she was Christian, then I am Jesus Christ. As a witch her Voices are explained as Officers of the Cult (named Michael, Catherine and Margaret) who were always close to her guiding her in what to do, for she was chosen in a dedicated mission as a devout follower of the Cult to lead the Dauphin's armies. They followed her because the rank and file were of the Witch Cult, and I believe that even "the scheming Archbishop of Rheims" must have known this, and closed an eye in the belief that it would help their cause.

We know so little of Joan because, when she was captured—and in order to disgrace the Dauphin—she was treated as a witch, and every portrait and likeness of her was destroyed. Since then she has not been allowed to survive as a person, because every historian has built his own image of her. The numerous plays written about her show a completely different picture each time, and among them is one of mine which treats her as a honest-to-goodness buxom, late teenager who was an Officer (or Maiden) of the Witch Cult. Unfortunately my play has not seen the light of day, for I have neither the wit nor the fame possessed by Shaw. Suffice it to say that Joan was not a schizophrenic and not a Christian, and because of being a Priestess of the Witch Cult the armies of the Dauphin rallied round her. But they did not wait for her to lead them into battle at Orleans. She was asleep when it started.

Furthermore, she was not burned at the stake (another heretic was burned in her place), and survived to marry. This is shown by evidence given in two books published in France, viz. *Qui Fut Jeanne D'Arc?* by M. and L. Forlière (1947), and *Jeanne D'Arc a-t-elle Eté Brulée?* by Jean Grimond (1952).

With all this one can well wonder about the saint who was supposed to be burned at the stake and was canonised in 1920.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

Is David Tribe's a-historical assumption that Jeanne d'Arc "was neither witch nor saint but schizophrenic" really enlightening? In pre-freethinking centuries the behaviour which today's psychiatrists call "schizophrenia" was that of both Saints and Witches, the latter thought to be possessed by the devil.

Many psychiatrists use the label "schizophrenia" for patients whose "illness" they can neither understand nor cure, because they fail to see them in their social embeddedness (which must, of course, be preceded by a detailed study of their physiology).

It seems to be advisable to avoid this term in general talk which is often mysterious for laymen.

PAUL ROM.

A Marxian Tragedy

Edward Blishen is to be congratulated on his review (*Freethinker*, 19 September) of Michael Hastings' novel about Eleanor Marx and Dr Edward Aveling. His verdict that in the last analysis this "romance" does not perhaps quite convince us, is judicious.

Convincing, well-documented accounts are to be found in Robert Payne's recent biography of Marx, and in Professor Lewis S. Feuer's article in *Encounter* (November 1962). Feuer says of Eleanor that she was a woman "transfigured by a cause . . . the cause could enclose one with evil too; it tied her life to Edward Aveling". Indeed, Eleanor herself wrote in reference to Aveling, "There are people who lack a certain moral sense just as others are deaf or short sighted . . . I have learnt to perceive this through long suffering".

As for Aveling, Feuer remarks that he "would have been ready to die for the Socialist Cause in some moment of supreme sacrifice; he was also ready to deceive it every day" and "nonchalantly appropriate socialist funds and seduce socialist women whenever he could". William Morris who knew Aveling well, called him "a disreputable dog". Olive Schreiner wrote of him, "I have a fear and horror . . . that does more to cripple my power of life and work than all the close personal sorrows of my life".

J. JUDEX.

Slapdash Blasphemy

Two dozen NSS members, tempted like everyone else by the lifting of sexual and religious taboos in the theatre, chose *Council of Love* at the Criterion Theatre, London (reviewed by David Tribe in the *Freethinker*, 29 August issue) for a party booking. Since the play is threatened by a prosecution for blasphemy I should like to be kind to it, but it really ought to be prosecuted under the Trade Descriptions Act, for it cheats the playgoer who expects a play.

We were certainly not cheated in the matter of sexual orgies in the papal court or fun at the expense of religious belief and practice, but we were cheated of such old-fashioned dramaturgical virtues as adequate research, consistency of idea, polished dialogue, and anything in the nature of a developed plot. The play—said to be written by Oscar Panizza at the turn of the century and now "adapted" by John Bird, the TV satirist, but in fact owing little to Panizza except its framework—has "slapdash television" stamped all over it. Had I been watching it on TV, with the less-than-whole attention one generally gives to TV, I should probably have thought it most entertaining; but paying for a West End theatre seat at today's prices tends to increase one's expectations and critical sense.

Half the point—both of fun and of serious comment—in a farcical play of this kind lies in the deliberate anachronisms, but when these jostle with quite pointless anachronisms which the author has not taken the trouble to resolve the effect is lost. For instance, while the action takes place in 1495 AD, the devil wears a black evening-suit of about the date of Panizza's original play and smokes modern filter-tipped cigarettes lit with a Ronson. His comment that no side-effects from smoking have been reported "so far" leaves one wondering "how far?"

Even worse, especially to a religion obsessed atheist, are simple theological errors in a theological satire. John Bird is apparently under the impression, for instance, that the doctrine of the immaculate conception is the same as that of the virgin birth—whereas, of course, as every Catholic schoolchild and adult atheist knows, the one refers to the conception of Mary and the other to that of Jesus. The playwright also seems to think that God the Father, not the Holy Ghost, impregnated the BVM. In fact, though the cast numbers 34, the population of heaven includes no Holy Ghost—an easy evasion, one suspects, of the production problems of presenting a figure who traditionally appeared as a dove or a tongue of flame. The Blessed Trinity in council is thus reduced to two (apart from the co-optation of Mary and Satan), a reduction which is rather noticeable to the conscientious student of theology, etymology and arithmetic.

BARBARA SMOKER.

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